

BIG MONEY HUNTING & FISHING

Outfitters & Guides' Economic Contributions to New Mexico's Hunting & Fishing Economy



INTRODUCTION

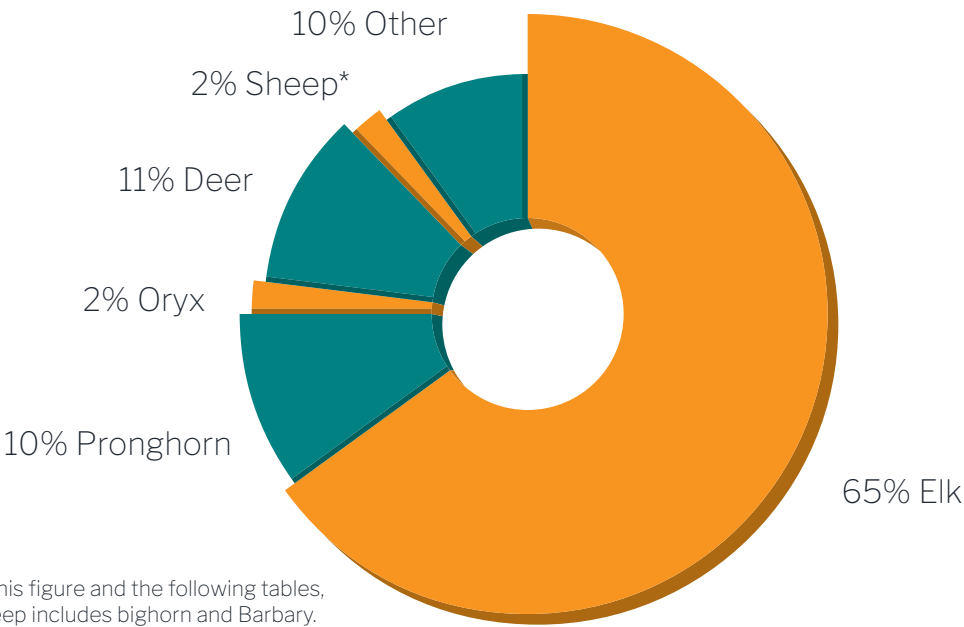
Our state is blessed with abundant land, providing opportunities to pursue some of the most incredible big game and trout species in the world. With highly sought species available such as elk, pronghorn, Rio Grande cutthroat and Gila trout, mule deer, sheep, and more, New Mexico is a top destination. The state attracts hunters and anglers from all over the world who, in turn, generate critical jobs and dollars for rural communities.

THE STUDY

In “Economic Contributions of New Mexico’s Outfitters and Guides,” a study conducted in 2024 by Southwick Associates, one of the nation’s leading outdoor research and economics firms, the importance of non-resident hunters and anglers to the state’s economy became clear. This detailed study used a combination of surveys and economic modeling techniques to determine the economic contributions generated by all guided nonresident hunters and anglers who employ outfitters and guides across all the major target species.

Researchers examined not only the direct expenditures made by nonresident hunters and anglers to purchase licenses, buy gear, pay for outfitters, and other trip-related expenses such as airline tickets, gas, hotels, food, and restaurants, but also the state-wide multiplier effects of those expenses. These include jobs supported from their expenditures, income, tax revenues, and other pass-along economic benefits created as people and businesses who directly receive nonresidents’ dollars in turn spend those dollars themselves. Results from the complete study are summarized here.

Species Targeted by Guided Nonresident Hunters (2023)



Packing out a bull taken from Gila Wilderness, unit 16B. The lottery-obtained license was used under outfitter-contracted services. 2023. Image courtesy of Lou Cornicelli

OVERVIEW

New Mexico hosted more than 16,000 guided nonresident hunters and 26,000 guided nonresident anglers in 2023. That same year, these visitors spent \$232 million on gear, travel, guides, and other goods and services in New Mexico which in turn generated economic benefits touching all corners of the state’s economy. Of this spending, 67% was for outfitters and guides across all targeted species. These dollars are then re-spent mostly in rural communities, supporting guides and many local businesses ranging from lodging to groceries, hardware to sporting goods stores, vehicle sales and maintenance, and many more. The hunters and anglers themselves inject millions more into local restaurants, motels, souvenir vendors, and more. These businesses in turn support local families and other businesses, providing critically needed jobs and tax revenues as hunters’ and anglers’ dollars change hands. In some rural communities, the loss of these nonresidents’ dollars would be the death knell for many businesses.

Table 1. Total Spending by Guided Nonresident Hunters & Anglers in New Mexico

	Elk	Pronghorn	Deer	Sheep	Hunting Other Species	Fishing	Total
Outfitter Fees & Tips	\$96,074,737	\$7,310,837	\$8,900,461	\$1,807,135	\$9,838,175	\$31,934,055	\$155,865,400
Trip Related Expenses	\$18,731,818	\$2,367,853	\$2,559,563	\$547,865	\$4,573,493	\$28,712,835	\$57,493,427
Equipment	\$7,377,460	\$770,703	\$1,381,468	\$147,142	\$163,882	\$3,086,175	\$12,926,830
Repair & Other Services	\$3,723,045	\$161,327	\$337,979	\$32,992	\$753,237	\$0	\$5,008,580
Other	\$31,852	\$0	\$6,589	\$0	\$0	\$1,173,543	\$1,211,984
Total Spent in New Mexico	\$125,938,912	\$10,610,719	\$13,186,059	\$2,535,135	\$15,328,788	\$64,906,608	\$232,506,221

* Spending received by out of state businesses and individuals, such as airlines, fuel and food purchased prior to departure and similar are excluded.

Table 2. Per Person Spending by Guided Nonresident Hunters & Anglers in New Mexico

	Elk	Pronghorn	Deer	Sheep	Hunting Other Species	Fishing
Outfitter Fees & Tips	\$9,154	\$4,620	\$4,864	\$5,242	\$5,081	\$1,212
Trip Related Expenses	\$1,785	\$1,496	\$1,399	\$1,589	\$2,362	\$1,089
Equipment	\$703	\$487	\$755	\$427	\$85	\$117
Repair & Other Services	\$355	\$102	\$185	\$96	\$389	\$0
Other	\$3	\$0	\$4	\$0	\$0	\$45
Total Spent in New Mexico	\$11,999	\$6,706	\$7,207	\$7,353	\$7,917	\$2,463

Table 3. Guided Hunter Spending on Licenses, EPLUS Permits, & Gross Receipts Taxes

	Elk	Pronghorn	Deer	Sheep	Hunting Other Species	Fishing	Total
License Fees Paid to the State	\$5,835,434	\$572,890	\$738,083	\$207,617	\$1,516,444	\$1,019,222	\$9,889,689
Payments to Landowners for EPLUS Permits*	\$30,839,848	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$30,839,848
Gross Receipts Taxes Paid by Outfitters	\$6,428,123	\$567,686	\$716,047	\$145,399	\$822,216	\$2,372,232	\$11,051,704

*This total includes revenue from unguided hunters.

OVERVIEW (cont.)

The millions of dollars brought into New Mexico by guided nonresident hunters and anglers create important benefits for all New Mexico residents. In 2023, 8,700 jobs were supported, generating \$168 million in salaries, wages, and small business income plus \$12 million in state and local tax revenues; this equates to \$7.20 per New Mexico adult residing in the state. When it comes to economic growth, these visitors contributed \$221 million to New Mexico’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and \$306 million in total output or multiplier effect which reports the total rounds of spending stimulated across the state’s economy in 2023. In other words, if guided nonresident hunters and anglers stopped visiting New Mexico, the state’s economy would shrink by \$221 million.

Table 4. Total Economic Impact of Nonresident Guided Hunters in New Mexico (2023)

	Elk	Pronghorn	Deer	Sheep	Other Species	All Guided Hunting
Direct Spending	\$125,938,912	\$10,610,719	\$13,186,059	\$2,535,135	\$15,328,788	\$167,599,613
Jobs	5,395	397	448	87	489	6,816
Salaries & Wages	\$98,375,738	\$7,354,467	\$8,575,594	\$1,654,709	\$9,475,254	\$125,435,762
GDP Contributions	\$124,814,152	\$9,777,517	\$11,425,869	\$2,198,782	\$12,889,639	\$161,105,958
Total Multiplier Effect (output)	\$166,669,269	\$13,246,082	\$15,885,465	\$3,026,844	\$18,414,535	\$217,242,195
State & Local Tax Effects	\$5,771,823	\$422,692	\$557,341	\$108,152	\$673,733	\$7,533,742

Table 5. Total Economic Impact of Nonresident Anglers in New Mexico (2023)

	Fishing
Direct Spending	\$64,906,608
Jobs	1,917
Salaries & Wages	\$42,718,983
GDP Contributions	\$60,152,149
Total Multiplier Effect (output)	\$89,150,479
State & Local Tax Effects	\$4,452,128

Table 6. Total Economic Impact of Nonresident Hunters & Anglers in New Mexico (2023)

	Hunting & Fishing
Direct Spending	\$232,506,221
Jobs	8,733
Salaries & Wages	\$168,154,745
GDP Contributions	\$221,258,107
Total Multiplier Effect (output)	\$306,392,674
State & Local Tax Effects	\$11,985,870

Hunters and anglers contribute in other ways, too. High-quality hunting and fishing is not by chance in New Mexico. Each year, nonresident hunters and anglers purchase \$9.9 million in state hunting and fishing licenses and tags, helping to ensure quality future outdoor opportunities. In addition, the outfitters, guides and other businesses serving nonresidents support local government services by providing millions of dollars through the State’s gross receipts tax – an income source sorely needed in the rural areas that host nonresident hunters and anglers.



IMPORTANCE OF ELK & EPLUS

Elk drives New Mexico’s outfitting and guides industry. With 65% of visiting hunters targeting elk and given their above-average spending per hunter, they generate 75% of the total dollars brought into the state. Likewise, 79% of the jobs supported by the hunting-related outfitter and guides industry in New Mexico is attributed to elk.

The Elk Private Land Use System, or EPLUS, is critical for attracting these hunters and their much-needed dollars. Through EPLUS, landowners are issued a specific number of hunting permits they can then award to outfitters and hunters, creating an incentive to open more lands to elk hunting and to protect elk habitat. Of the 10,495 nonresidents who pursued elk in 2023, 82% did so under an EPLUS tag.

CONCLUSION

For a state like New Mexico, rural in nature and limited on big industry, hunting and fishing is a critical business and the numbers above testify to this fact. Despite the ups and down of many traditional rural industries such as timber and mining, well-managed wildlife resources will continue to provide New Mexico’s economy with a steady source of jobs and dollars for decades to come.

LEARN MORE

For examples of how hunting and fishing benefits rural communities, see the special articles explaining nonresident hunters’ role in supporting Chama and Reserve, NM available from the New Mexico Council of Outfitters and Guides (NMCOG). Details on the data sources and methods used to generate these estimates are available in a technical report available from the NMCOG.



ABOUT NMCOG

As the official organization for New Mexico's outfitters and guides, we are proud to represent the finest hunting and fishing professionals in the state of New Mexico. Established in 1978, NMCOG strives to promote and enhance the outdoor recreation industry by supporting ethical hunting practices and wildlife conservation. Our members spend thousands of hours in the field annually and have a practical knowledge regarding location, health, and quality of game populations.

51 Bogan Rd. Stanley, NM 87056 • (505)440-5258 • info@nmoutfitters.com

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NMCOG acknowledges the generous donors who made this research possible

- 92 NM hunters, anglers, & landowners
- Dallas Safari Club
- Dallas Safari Club New Mexico
- Four Corners Chapter of Safari Club International
- Safari Club International
- SCI Life Hunter Advocate Society
- Southern NM Chapter Safari Club International

CITATION

"Big Money from Hunting & Fishing: Outfitters and Guides' Economic Contributions to New Mexico's Hunting and Fishing Economy." Produced by Southwick Associates, Inc. for the New Mexico Council of Outfitters and Guides. 2025.

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Alex Evans • OneDeskSolutions LLC • onedesksolutionsllc@gmail.com

Image courtesy of Land of Enchantment Guides