FACT SHEET: River Economics

- **The Colorado River provides over $1.4 trillion** (two thirds of the Basin’s economic value) in annual economic benefits.¹

- **Over 16 million jobs in the Basin region, accounting for $871 billion** in wages and labor income, are dependent on flow in the Colorado River.¹

- **Tourism is the number one driver of Arizona’s economy,** ranking first in Arizona’s export-oriented business sectors, and **generated almost $3 billion in 2015 tax revenues.** This equals a $1,180 tax savings for every Arizona household.²

- **Outdoor Recreation** generates **$21.2 billion** in consumer spending, directly supports **201,000 jobs,** creates **$5.7 billion** in wages. More jobs in Arizona depend on outdoor recreation (201,000) than on the aerospace, defense, and tech sectors combined (184,000).³

- In 2007, **Arizona State Recreation Parks produced $156 million** in economic output, with $23 million of that in state and local taxes. Of those 14 recreation parks, 11 are river, stream, lake, or wetland-based recreation areas.⁴

- Each year, **wildlife watchers in Arizona spend over $2.3 billion** on travel, lodging, and equipment⁵, **bird watching alone** accounts for up to **$1.4 billion** in annual economic output.⁶

- **As much as 60% of Arizona’s resident wildlife depends on riverside habitat.⁷** For example, **45% of North America’s 900 bird species can be found on the San Pedro River alone.⁸**
References:

1 Arizona State University, L William Siedman Research Institute, W.P. Carey School of Business. Tim James, Dr. Anthony Evans, Eva Madly, and Cary Kelly. The Economic Importance of the Colorado River to the Basin Region. December 18, 2014.


7 Wild Kids: What is Riparian Habitats. Arizona Game and Fish Department - Education Branch and the Heritage Fund.