

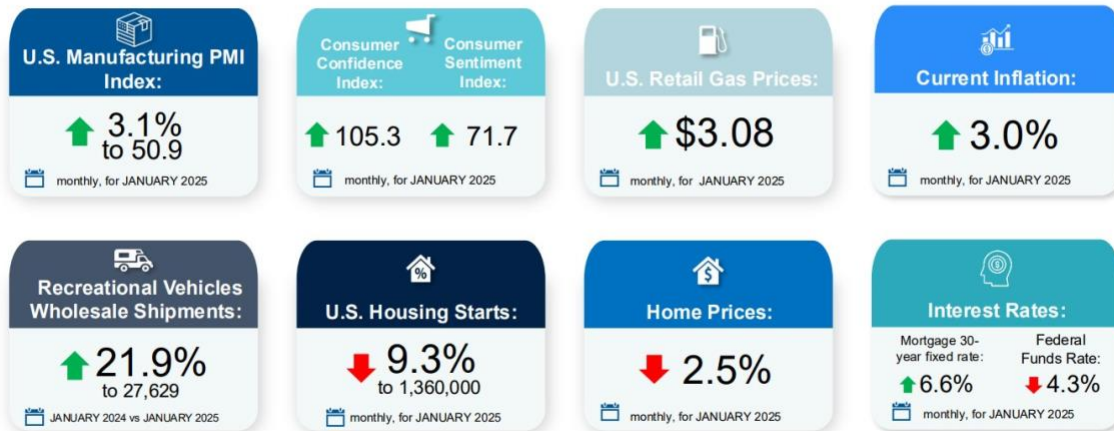
Mixed Economic Environment Reflected in Early-Year Boat Sales Data

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RECREATIONAL BOATING ECONOMIC INDICATORS

These are the economic factors that influence consumer behavior, particularly when it comes to significant purchases like boats.



Data from [statista.com](https://www.statista.com), tradingeconomics.com, [nyfja.com](https://www.nyfja.com), [conference-board.com](https://www.conference-board.com), & fred.stlouisfed.com



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As economic headwinds continue to shape consumer sentiment, the latest [Monthly Recreational Boating Industry Data Summary](#) report analyzes January 2025 data, offering a look at year-over-year trends and how 2025 kicked-off ahead of the tariff and trade tensions. The report, published this week, shows total new powerboat retail unit sales fell 8.2% year-over-year for the 12-month period ending January 2025, pointing to ongoing softening in discretionary purchases amid sustained concerns around inflation and interest rates.

While there was a decline for the 12-month YOY period, looking at the month of January 2025 compared to January 2024, new retail unit sales were up 1% (7,809 vs 7,765 units), the first-time sales increased during the month of January since 2021. This data reflects sentiment from early-season boat shows that consumers were buying in certain segments and markets, and that while sales were mixed, there was a sense of optimism.

Released monthly, the report is based on data from NMMA member manufacturers and state governments in partnership with Info-Link and provides the most timely and detailed wholesale and retail analysis available in the market.

“There was positive momentum peeking through in January that we saw playing out at our boat shows—while overall traffic was flat or down, buyers were out and bringing

signs of a return to growth as we kicked off the New Year,” noted Ellen Bradley, Chief Brand Officer for the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA).

Key findings from the January 2025 report include:

- Wholesale shipments saw an even sharper decline, **down 23.2% over the same period**, pointing to tightening inventory strategies across the supply chain.
- Despite a **1% uptick in year-to-date** (January 2025) retail unit sales—driven primarily by freshwater fishing boats—the broader picture remains cautious.
- The freshwater fishing boat segment posted a **3.8% year-over-year increase** in retail sales, including a **19.8% boost in January 2025** compared to the same month last year. NMMA attributes this resilience to the category’s accessibility and broad appeal among middle-income households.

Impacting this January 2025 industry sales data was January 2025’s Consumer Confidence Index, as measured by The Conference Board, which stood at 105.3, down slightly from the prior month. On the inflation front, the annual rate crept up to 3.0% in January, while the average 30-year fixed mortgage rate rose slightly to 6.9%, making borrowing more expensive across the board. Though the federal funds rate eased to 4.3%, interest-sensitive purchases like boats continue to be weighed down by financing costs.

“The tariff headwinds and economic uncertainty we’re seeing now, coupled with the glimmer of growth we saw in January before this really set in, underscore the importance of the industry leaning into nurturing demand amid Americans’ desire for long-term value, wellness, and community—all of which being on the water uniquely delivers,” added Bradley. “We’re watching consumer behavior and confidence closely in order to nimbly manage our approach with everything from messaging to media to timing across our Discover Boating marketing. Bottom line, there’s an opportunity right now to break through by helping people find ways to explore the memories and moments only boating can provide and to support and nurture that interest for long-term industry growth.”

Each NMMA monthly summary report is available on nmma.org the first week of the month. The reports feature the most up-to-date data available from members on the wholesale side and from state government on new boat registrations, as well as the most recent comprehensive look into the market available.

NMMA’s *Monthly Recreational Boating Industry Data Summary* report is available at no cost for members. Associate members can purchase an annual subscription for \$1,800. [Download the latest report here](#)

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