

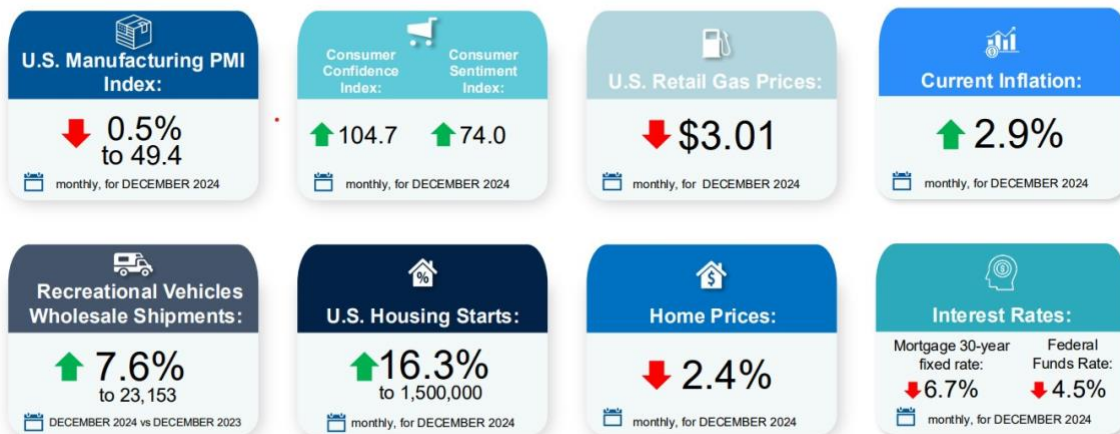
NMMA Confirms 9% Decline in 2024 New Boat Retail Sales as Industry Navigates Continued Economic Uncertainty

3/10/2025 12:00:00 AM | Statistics

RECREATIONAL BOATING ECONOMIC INDICATORS

NMMA

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



Data from tradingeconomics.com, cbs.org, & fred.stlouisfed.org

Amid last week's news on tariffs and the subsequent potential economic and industry impacts, NMMA has released its [Monthly Recreational Boating Industry Data Summary report](#), offering a comprehensive analysis of recreational boating powerboat unit sales and key economic indicators through December 2024. While these monthly NMMA reports cover a rolling 12-month period, this latest version for December offers a full look at calendar year 2024, confirming estimates for retail and wholesale sales declines. Released monthly, the report is based on data from NMMA member manufacturers and state governments in partnership with Info-Link and provide the most timely and detailed wholesale and retail analysis available in the market.

Key findings from the December 2024 report include:

- **Declining Retail Sales:** From January to December 2024, new powerboat retail unit sales fell by 9.1%, totaling 231,576 units—a significant year-over-year decline influenced by economic pressures and fluctuating consumer confidence.
- **Growth in Single-Family Construction:** Despite elevated mortgage rates and tight lending standards for construction and development loans, new single-family construction ended 2024 on a strong note. As the new year progresses, the

construction industry is seeing an easing in the regulatory environment and tax cuts as tailwinds and tariffs and higher deficits as dampening momentum. NMMA monitors single-family housing starts given correlations to boat buying consumers.

- *Softening Economic Indicators:* While demand remained in key areas, broader economic indicators affecting the boating industry remained in the "caution" category, signifying concerns over market stability and continued uncertainty.

From the close of 2024 to first quarter 2025, economic volatility has had a noticeable impact on consumer sentiment. The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index® declined by 7.0 points in February to 98.3, marking the largest monthly decline since August 2021. This is the third consecutive monthly decline, bringing the Index to the bottom of the range that has prevailed since 2022.

As the recreational boating industry manages lower retail sales, Info-Link Technologies, Inc. recently reported that as of year-end 2024, the median age of current boat owners in the U.S. is now 60 years old, with more boat owners in their 70s than in their 40s. Info-Link's Jack Ellis noted, "Many of the people who owned boats 25 years ago are the same people who own boats today, but they're 25 years older."

"The latest economic news, coupled with the median age milestone, reinforce the importance of industry-wide efforts to generate category awareness and excite potential boaters and watersports enthusiasts while retaining existing boaters through Discover Boating and related efforts from Take Me Fishing, especially in down cycles as this is key to maintaining our momentum and sustaining long-term growth," notes Ellen Bradley, NMMA chief brand officer. "NMMA's monthly data reports offer a glimpse into market conditions, however, we also need greater visibility into participation and changing consumer behavior as we work to engage next generation boaters -- these are two priorities for Discover Boating in the coming year as we work to boost demand and support members and the larger industry in making informed decisions related to everything from marketing to new product development."

Each NMMA monthly summary report is available on [nmma.org](https://www.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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