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NICB: U.S. Watercraft Thefts Drop Three Percent in 2015  
*Theft rate continues downward trend*

DES PLAINES, Ill. — As boating season nears, the National Insurance Crime Bureau’s (NICB) annual study of watercraft theft reports that watercraft theft declined three percent in 2015. A total of 5,051 watercraft were reported stolen between January 1 and December 31, 2015. The report is based on theft data contained in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The **top five states** for thefts in descending order were:

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|  | **State** | **Thefts** | **Recovery Rate** |
| **1** | Florida | 1,205 | 36% |
| **2** | California | 528 | 50% |
| **3** | Texas | 399 | 36% |
| **4** | North Carolina | 192 | 32% |
| **5** | Washington | 173 | 46% |

The **top five cities** for thefts in descending order were:

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|  | **City** | **Thefts** | **Recovery Rate** |
| **1** | Miami | 192 | 38% |
| **2** | Tampa, Fla. | 63 | 27% |
| **3** | Fort Lauderdale, Fla. | 59 | 19% |
| **4** | Fort Myers, Fla. | 53 | 30% |
| **5** | Hialeah, Fla. | 44 | 14% |

The **top five types** of watercraft stolen were:

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|  | **Watercraft Type\*** | **Thefts** | **Recovery Rate** |
| **1** | Personal Watercraft | 1,108 | 34% |
| **2** | Runabout | 678 | 49% |
| **3** | Utility | 278 | 41% |
| **4** | Cruiser | 181 | 50% |
| **5** | Sailboat | 52 | 54% |

The **top five manufacturers** for watercraft thefts were:

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|  | **Manufacturer** | **Thefts** | **Recovery Rate** |
| **1** | Yamaha Motor Corp.,USA | 573 | 16% |
| **2** | Bombardier Corp.\*\* | 428 | 34% |
| **3** | Kawasaki Motors Mfg. | 163 | 40% |
| **4** | Alumacraft Boat Co. | 129 | 35% |
| **5** | Bass Tracker Corp. | 108 | 36% |

On average, there were approximately 14 watercraft thefts per day, 97 per week, or 421 per month in 2015. Most thefts occurred during the spring and summer months with July recording the highest number with 612. February recorded the fewest with 251.

Download the complete [watercraft report](https://www.nicb.org/File%20Library/Public%20Affairs/Watercraft-ForeCAST-2015.pdf).

Boat owners are reminded to practice safe and smart boating. That includes personal safety while on the water, as well as theft prevention.

**NICB recommends the following tips** to protect your watercraft from theft:

* When you “*dock it, lock it”* and secure it to the dock with a steel cable
* Remove expensive equipment when not in use
* Chain and lock detachable motors to the boat
* Do not leave title or registration papers in the craft
* Disable the craft by shutting fuel lines or removing batteries
* Use a trailer hitch lock after parking a boat on its trailer
* Install a kill switch in the ignition system
* Ensure your marine insurance policy includes your equipment, boat and trailer
* Take photos of the boat and mark it with a Hull Identification Number (HIN)

More anti-theft information can be found in our [boat theft brochure](https://www.nicb.org/File%20Library/Theft%20and%20Fraud%20Prevention/Brochures/13734_BoatTheft_Eng.pdf).

\* Described below are the 13 watercraft types as found in the NCIC code manual, one of which is “Jet Ski”—NCIC’s universal name for all personal watercraft without regard to manufacturer. Jet Ski is also the registered trademark for Kawasaki Motor Corporation’s line of personal watercraft.

Airboat: not defined

Commercial: ferry, oyster boat, motor barge, towboat, tug, clam dredge, coaster, riverboat, smack boat, etc.

Cruiser: a boat with an inboard motor that is at least 25 feet long, but no longer than 50 feet

Houseboat: not defined

Hovercraft: not defined

Hydrofoil: not defined

Hydroplane: not defined

Jet-Ski (PWC): aqua bike

Runabout: launch, motorboat, outrider, speedboat, etc.

Sailboat: cat, catamaran, cutter, bark, ketch, lateen, lugger, pinnace, schooner, sloop, yawl, etc.

Utility: fisherman, sedan, etc.

Yacht: a boat with an inboard motor that is more than 50 feet long and is used mainly for pleasure or recreation

All other: canoe, dinghy, dory, johnboat, kayak, lifeboat, paddleboat, rowboat, skull, skiff, etc.

\*\*In 2003, Bombardier Corp. sold off its recreational products division. The Sea-Doo personal watercraft is now produced by Bombardier Recreational Products, Inc. Thus, the 428 thefts would include pre-2003 models.

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*Anyone with information concerning insurance fraud or vehicle theft can report it anonymously by calling toll-free 800-TEL-NICB (800-835-6422), texting keyword “fraud” to TIP411 (847411) or submitting a* [*form*](https://www.nicb.org/about-nicb/report-fraud) *on our website. Or, download the* [*NICB Fraud Tips app*](https://www.nicb.org/public-affairs/nicb-fraud-tips-app) *on your iPhone or Android device.*

***About the National Insurance Crime Bureau:*** *Headquartered in Des Plaines, Ill., the NICB is the nation's leading not-for-profit organization exclusively dedicated to preventing, detecting and defeating insurance fraud and vehicle theft through data analytics, investigations, training, legislative advocacy and public awareness. The NICB is supported by more than 1,100 property and casualty insurance companies and self-insured organizations. NICB member companies wrote over $413 billion in insurance premiums in 2015, or more than 79 percent of the nation's property/casualty insurance. That includes more than 94 percent ($187 billion) of the nation's personal auto insurance. To learn more visit* [*www.nicb.org*](http://www.nicb.org)*.*

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