

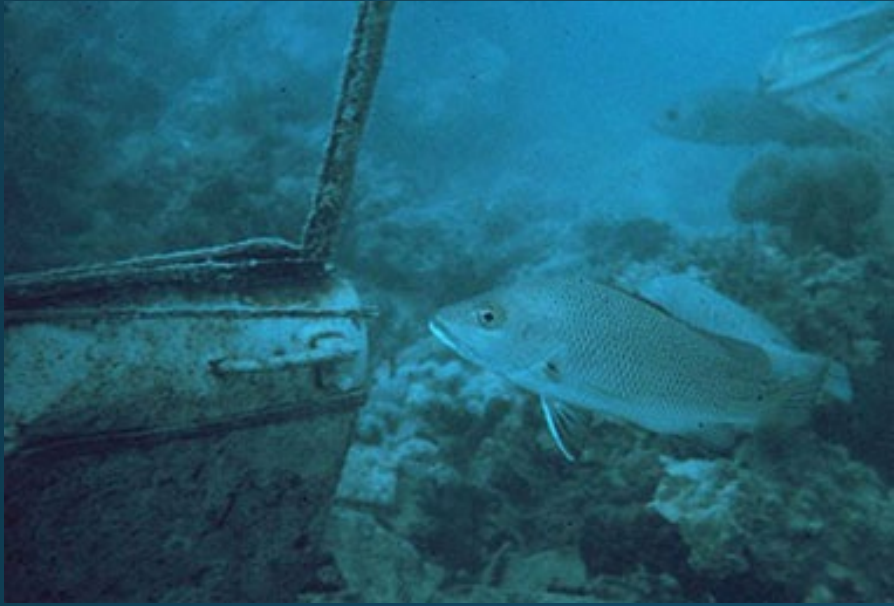
Gray (Mangrove) Snapper

Lutjanus griseus



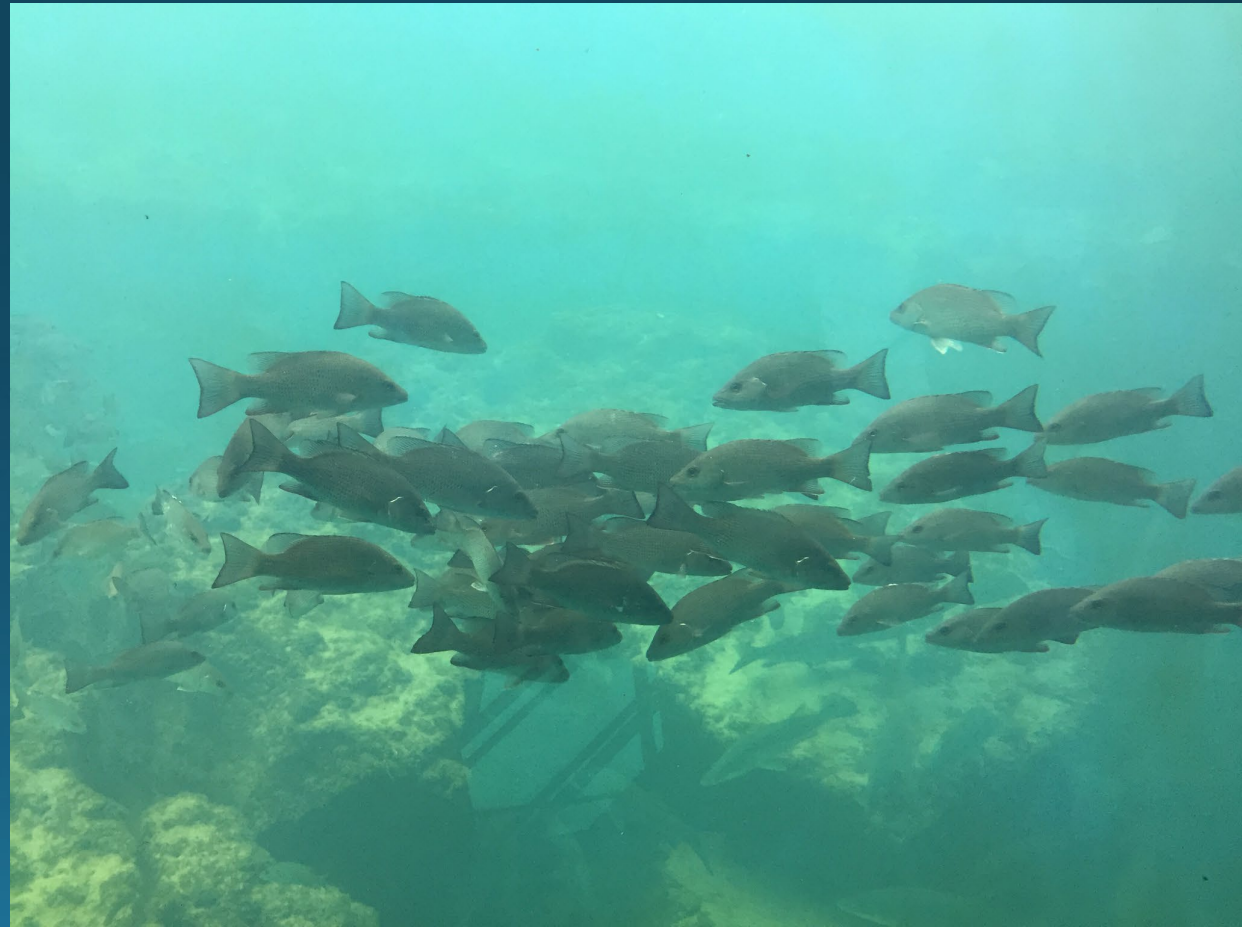
Gray Snapper, also called mangrove or “mangoes,” are found in tropical, subtropical and warm temperate waters throughout the Gulf of Mexico, western Atlantic, and Caribbean. Gray Snapper is one of the smaller snappers and can achieve a maximum age of 28 in the Gulf.



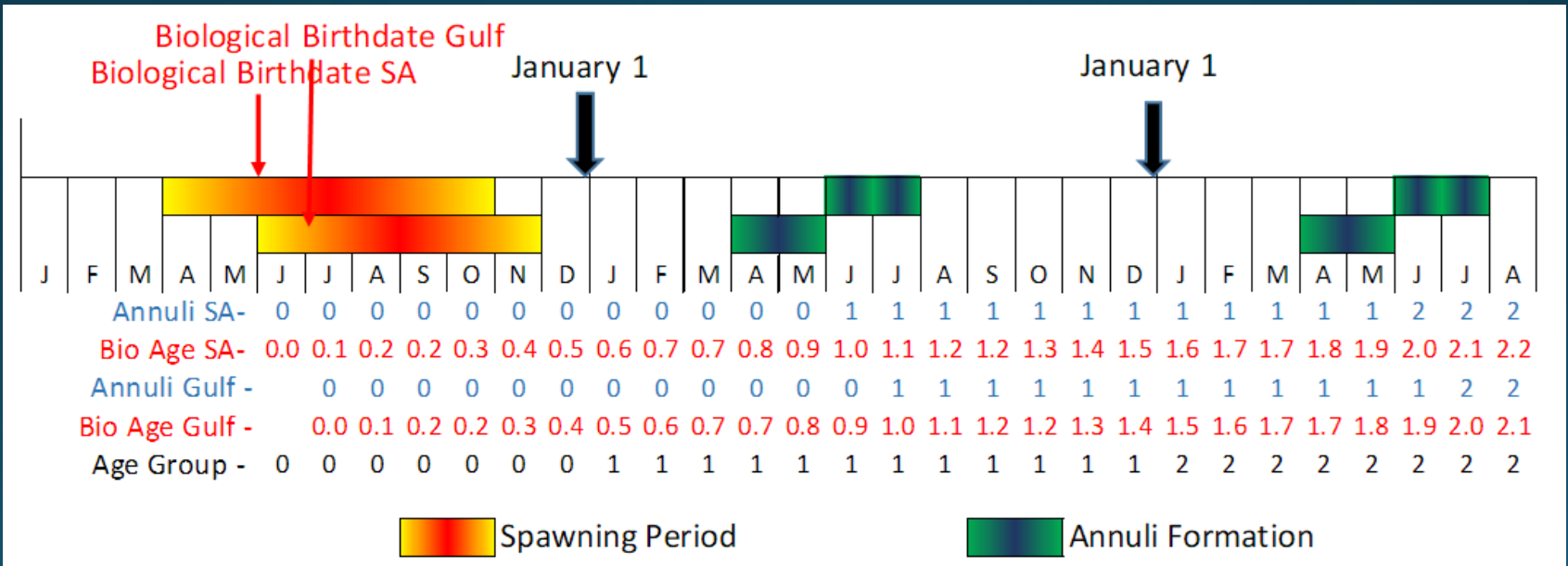


As juveniles, Gray Snapper settle nearshore in estuaries, seagrass beds or shallow reefs, and gradually move offshore as they grow larger where they associate with reefs and other structures. Spawning occurs in mid-summer typically around a full moon offshore and the larvae are transported inshore.

Adult Gray Snapper inhabit coastal as well as offshore waters around coral reefs, rocky areas, estuaries, mangrove areas, and sometimes in lower reaches of rivers (especially young). They often form large schools and feed on small fishes, shrimps, crabs, gastropods, cephalopods, and some planktonic items.



Gray Snapper along the Atlantic coast spawn from April to November with a peak in June and July. In the Gulf they spawn from June to November with a peak in July.



Gray Snapper are most often confused with the small Cubera Snapper, *Lutjanus Cyanopterus* (large canine teeth) and the Mutton Snapper, *Lutjanus Analis* (black spot on lateral line below rear of dorsal fin).

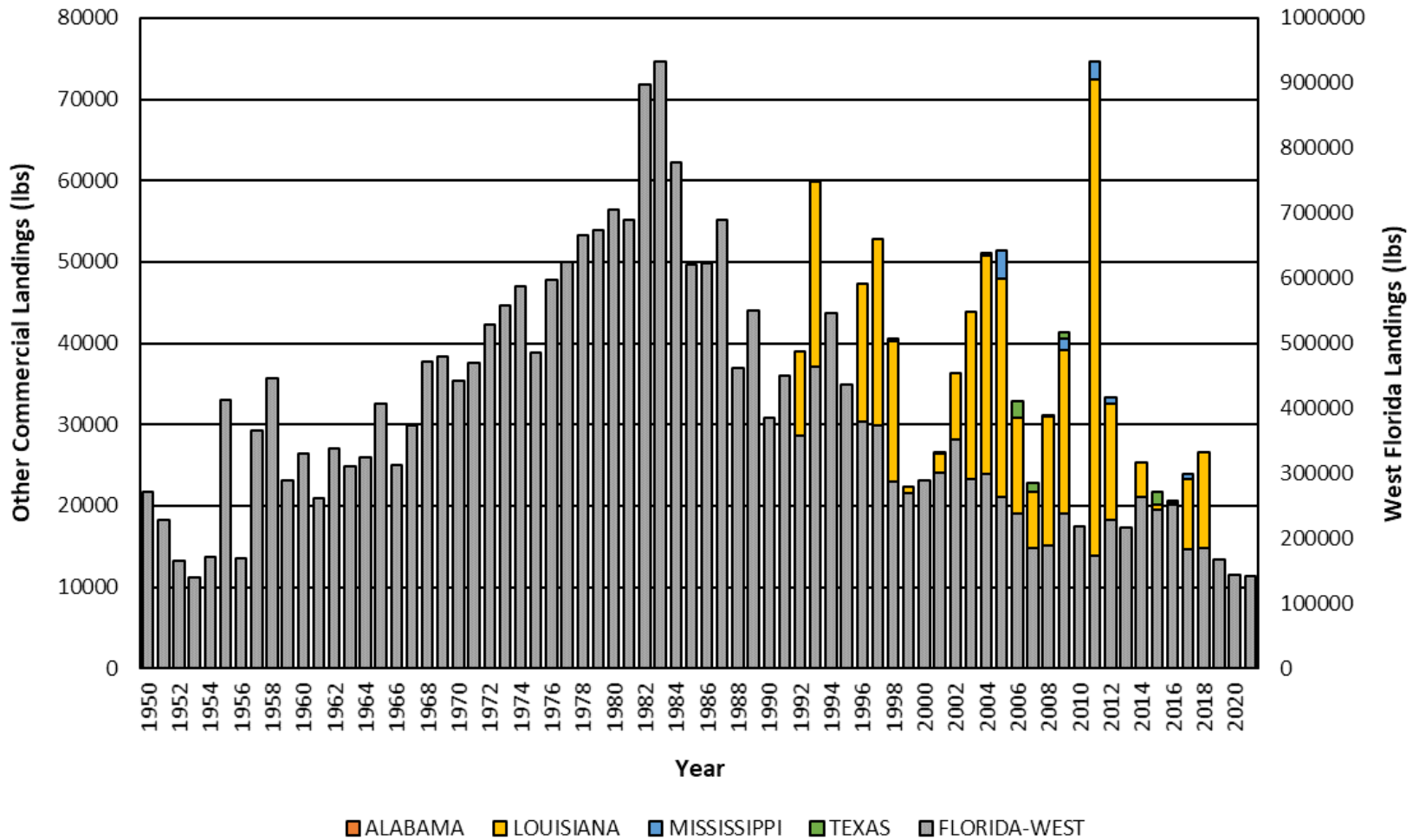


Commercial Fishery

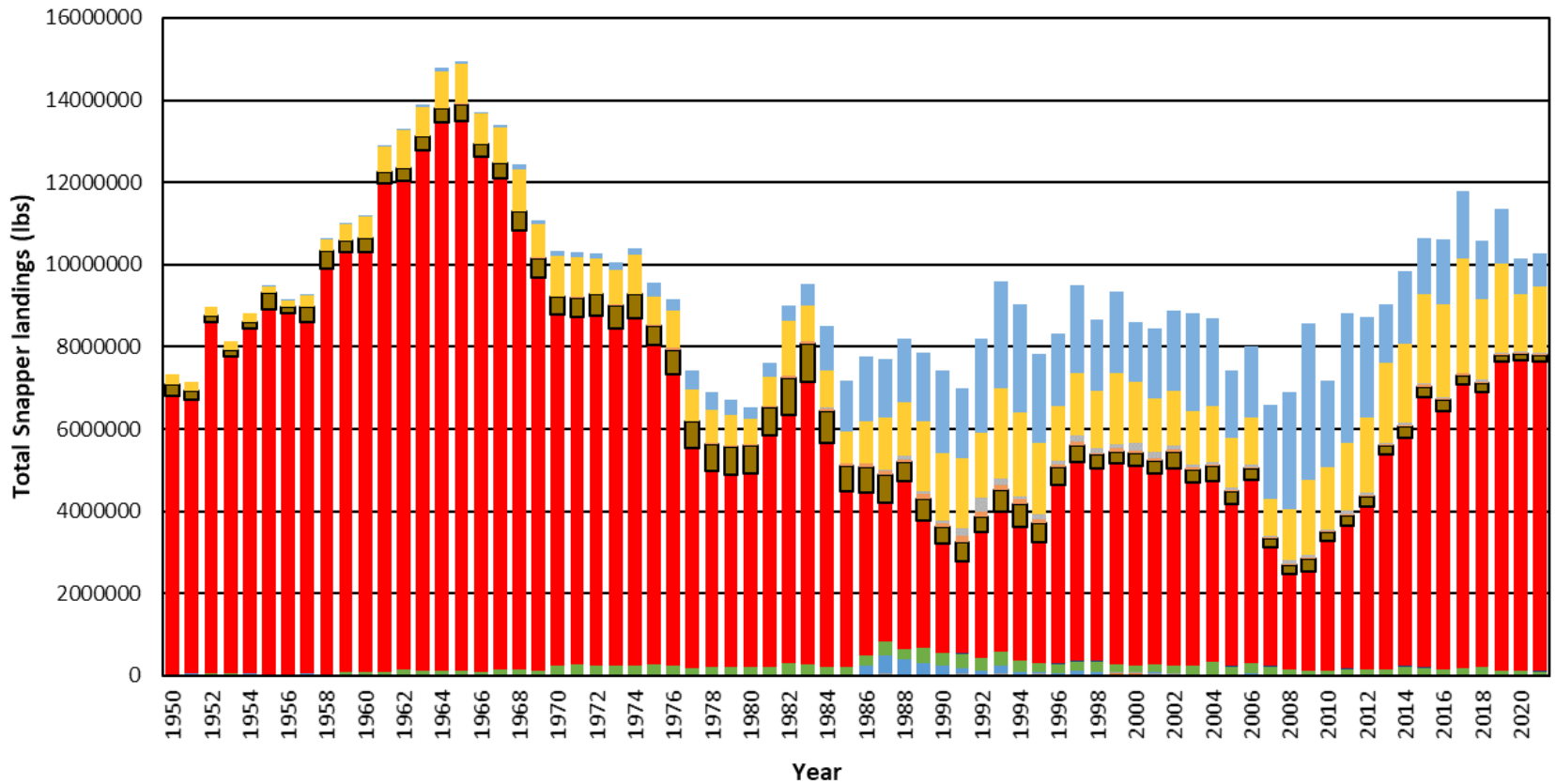
Although Gray Snapper are fished commercially with harvest rates smaller in comparison to other similar fisheries. They are frequently caught with angling gear, handlines, and spears.



Commercial Fishery



Commercial Fishery



- *Apsilus dentatus*
- *Etelis oculatus*
- *Heteropriacanthus cruentatus*
- *Lutjanidae sp*
- *Lutjanus analis*
- *Lutjanus buccanella*
- *Lutjanus campechanus*
- *Lutjanus cyanopterus*
- *Lutjanus griseus*
- *Lutjanus jocu*
- *Lutjanus mahogoni*
- *Lutjanus purpureus*
- *Lutjanus synagris*
- *Lutjanus vivanus*
- *Ocyurus chrysurus*
- *Rhomboplites aurorubens*

Commercial Bycatch

Historically, shrimp trawlers accounted for a large portion of the juvenile Gray Snapper fishing mortality since the soft bottom habitats they prefer are also prime shrimping grounds.



Recreational

Gray Snapper can be found year around inshore around mangroves and structures making them easy to catch, and ideal for shore-based anglers. Adults occur in similar habitats as red and other snapper making them a common target throughout the year, especially when other seasons are open.



Recreational

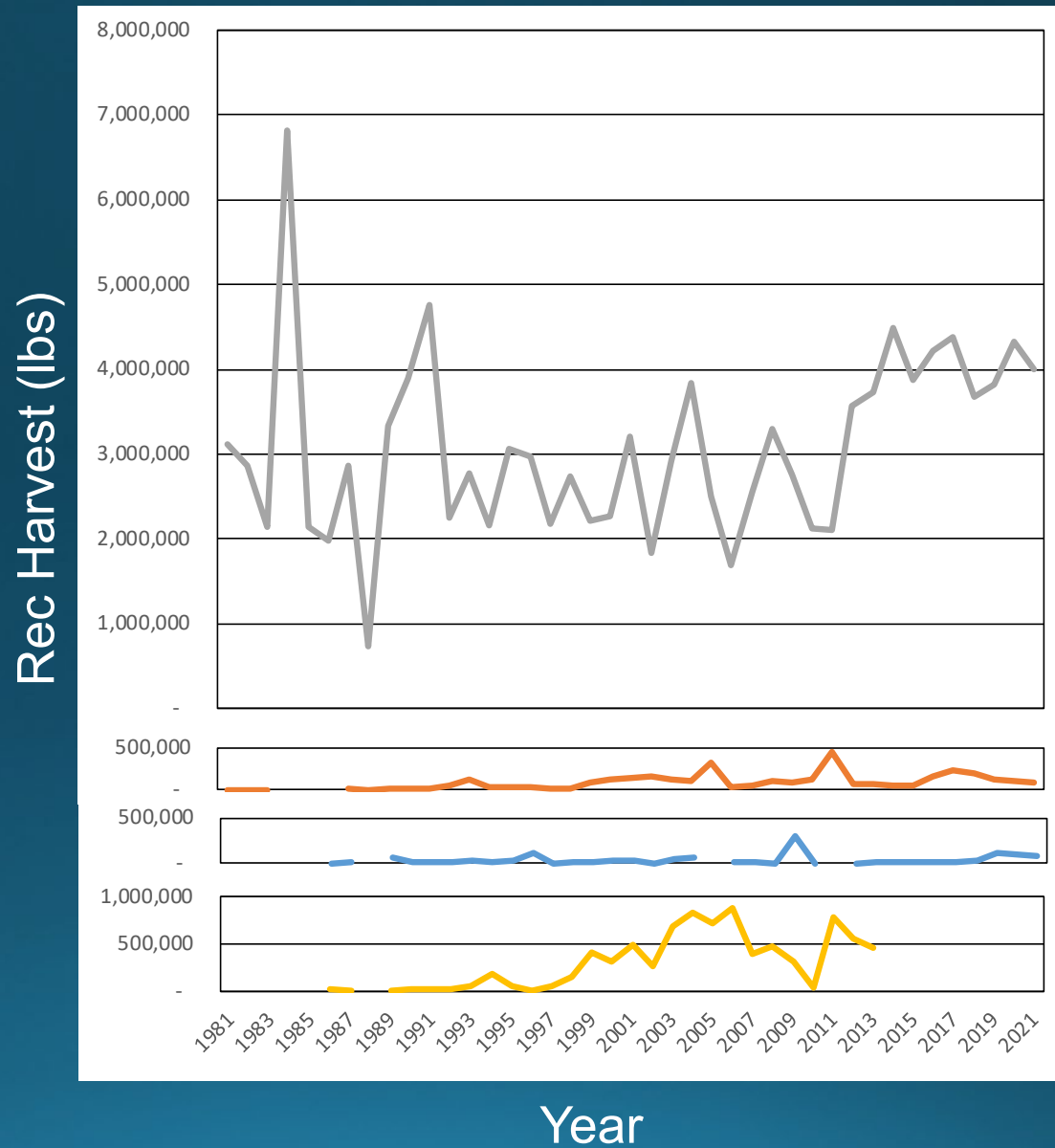
The current Gulf of Mexico recreational fishing records for Gray Snapper (including Florida East Coast).

Florida	S. Maddox	Port Canaveral, FL	17.00 lbs	June 1992
Alabama	P. Ward	Fairhope, AL	18.0 lbs	July 2007
Mississippi	J. Rizzuto	-	15.9 lb	July 2024
Louisiana *	T. Champagne	Cocodrie, LA	18.63 lbs	July 2015
Texas	S. Pumilia	Gulf of Mexico	18.67 lbs	May 1998

* IGFA World Record

Recreational

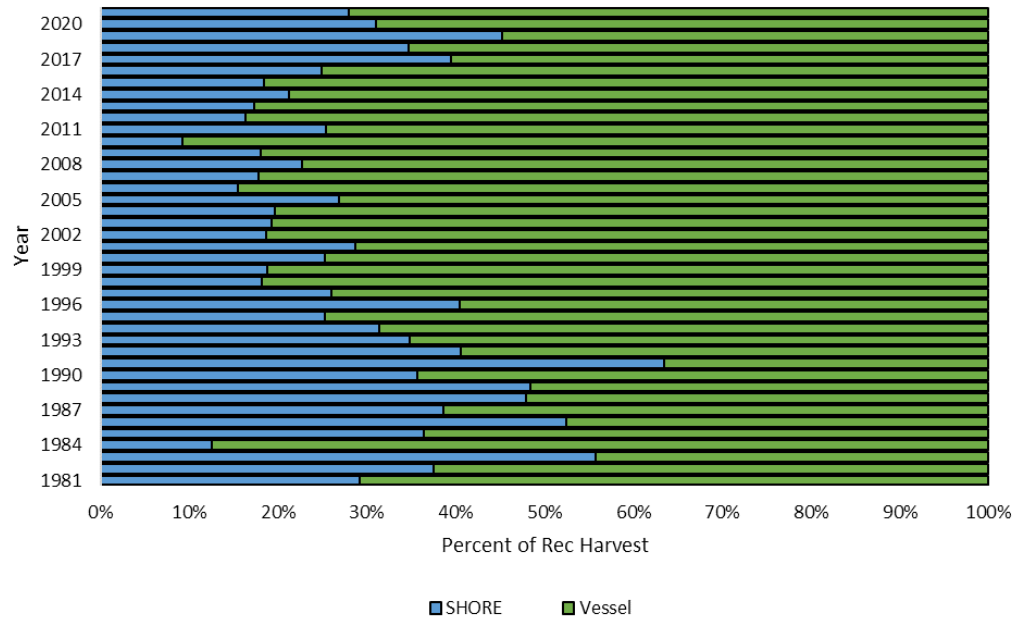
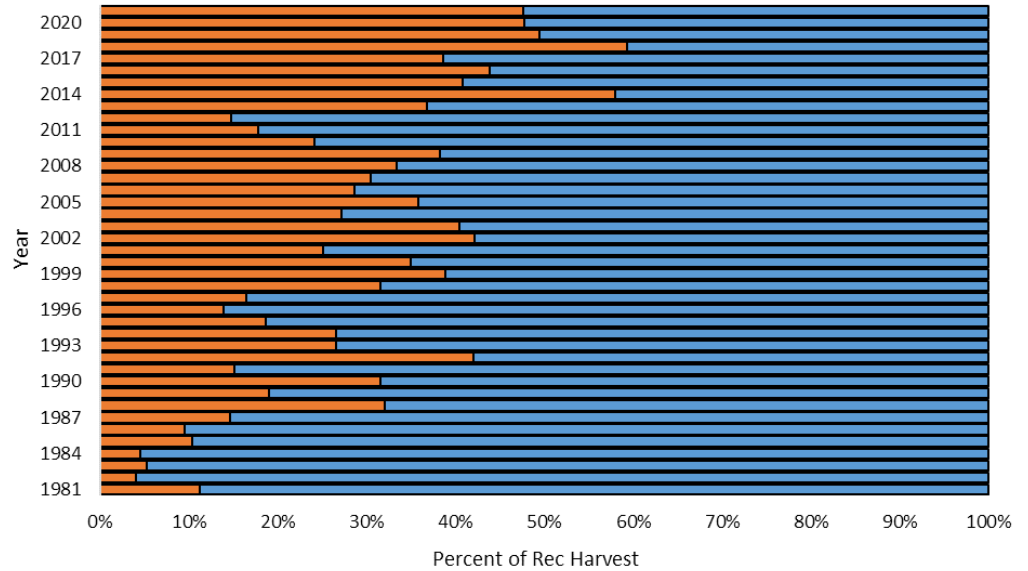
The majority of the recreational harvest originates from the middle and south Florida coast. There are minimum catches from the other three states. Texas data by weight is not included.



Recreational

Gray Snapper rec harvest from 'inland' waters in Florida have been steadily increasing over the last two decades.

In addition, around 25-30% of the harvest are derived from 'shore' based anglers without boats.



Population Status

Gray Snapper life history information is limited. Additional information about their lifestyle and behavioral patterns including specific details on age, growth, longevity, movement patterns, diet, habitat use, and reproduction would aid in understanding of the stock.

In the benchmark SEDAR 51, there was no clear evidence of a stock separation between the Gulf and Atlantic and dividing recreational data from Monroe County was problematic; therefore, the stock boundary was set as the Monroe – Miami Dade County line.

Population Status

The 2018 assessment found the Gray Snapper stock biomass was below MSST from 1989-1995 but was above MSST since that period. The assessment concluded that the current stock status was found to be not overfished ($SSB_{2015}/SSB_{SPR30} = 0.703$) but had been experiencing overfishing since 1976 and currently undergoing overfishing ($F_{current}/F_{SPR30} = 1.20$).

According to the 2022 update, the stock is not undergoing overfishing ($F_{current} < MFMT$) and is not overfished ($SSB_{2020} > MSST$).

Discussion Topics from TTF

- Overall habitat/biomass – Is there a link between offshore platforms/high profile structures and biomass of Gray Snapper?
- Spawning behavior – Multiple observations of large groups of fish around single structures up in the water column. Is this linked to spawning behavior or a general characteristic of the species?
- Economics/Fishery Behavior – With no IFQ's or seasonal restrictions, the species has the ability to be quite profitable if harvested in moderate quantities. With limited concerns of biomass and range throughout the gulf, is it simply catchability that leads to the low levels of observed harvest?

Discussion Topics from TTF

- Landings, effort, and counts of fishery participants were discussed at length to best describe the general pattern observed in the fishery. After much discussion, the TTF decided to include the USFWS counts of certified licenses to show the general pattern of recreational fishing across the gulf.
- Out of country landings were discussed, but absent of more detailed information it is difficult to separate snapper landings into individual species.
- Increasing catch/presence of large individuals in nearshore and estuarine habitats was discussed as positive trend in the fishery for numerous states.

Research Recommendations

- One of the highest priorities is to establish the connectivity between nearshore and offshore areas to determine how and when juveniles/immature individuals are transiting offshore to the adult population
- Life history studies
- Genetic information to establish stock ID
- Spawning behavior
- Market viability?
- Whatever primary additional recs we can add

So where does that leave us?

It leaves us with the need for a LOT of additional research!

The recommendations in SEDARs 51 and 75 have likely not been met.

