



COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION  
ONE CONSERVATION WAY • BRUNSWICK, GA 31520 • 912.264.7218  
COASTALGADNR.ORG

MARK WILLIAMS  
COMMISSIONER

DOUG HAYMANS  
DIRECTOR

## **Finfish Advisory Panel**

June 1, 2022 – 6:00PM-8:00PM  
In-Person (Shipman Building, CRH Brunswick)  
and Virtual Meeting (5:45PM – log on to Zoom)

- 6:00 Welcome & Introduction of New Member
- 6:10 Approve Agenda & Nov 2021 Draft Meeting Summary
- 6:15 Red Drum Research: 2021 data update
- 6:40 Discussion of Angler & Guide Satisfaction Survey
- 8:00 Adjourn

To join the meeting virtually through Zoom, click the web address below.

The meeting will begin at 6PM, so please log on by 5:45 to confirm connectivity.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88698857524?pwd=YIRTeG14enZEaU9mbDI0VE9CU2REZz09>

Meeting ID: 886 9885 7524

Passcode: 018573



# Status of Red Drum in Georgia 2022

**Finfish Advisory Panel Meeting**

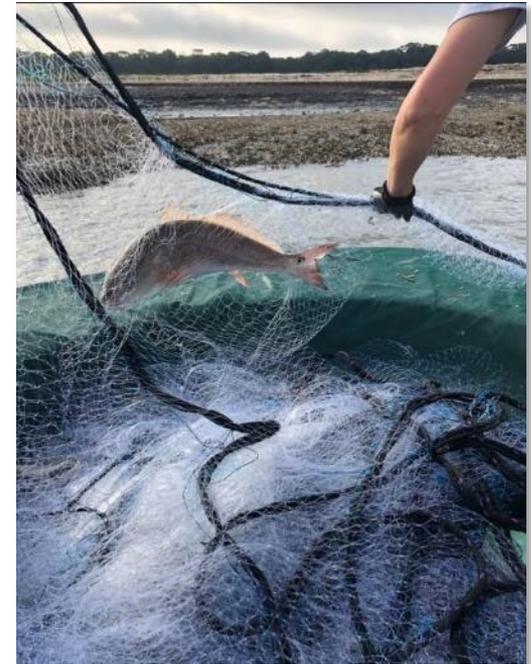
**June 1, 2022**

*Mission Statement:*

*To balance coastal development and protection of the coast's natural assets, socio-cultural heritage and recreational resources for the benefit of present and future generations.*

# CRD Sampling Surveys and Programs

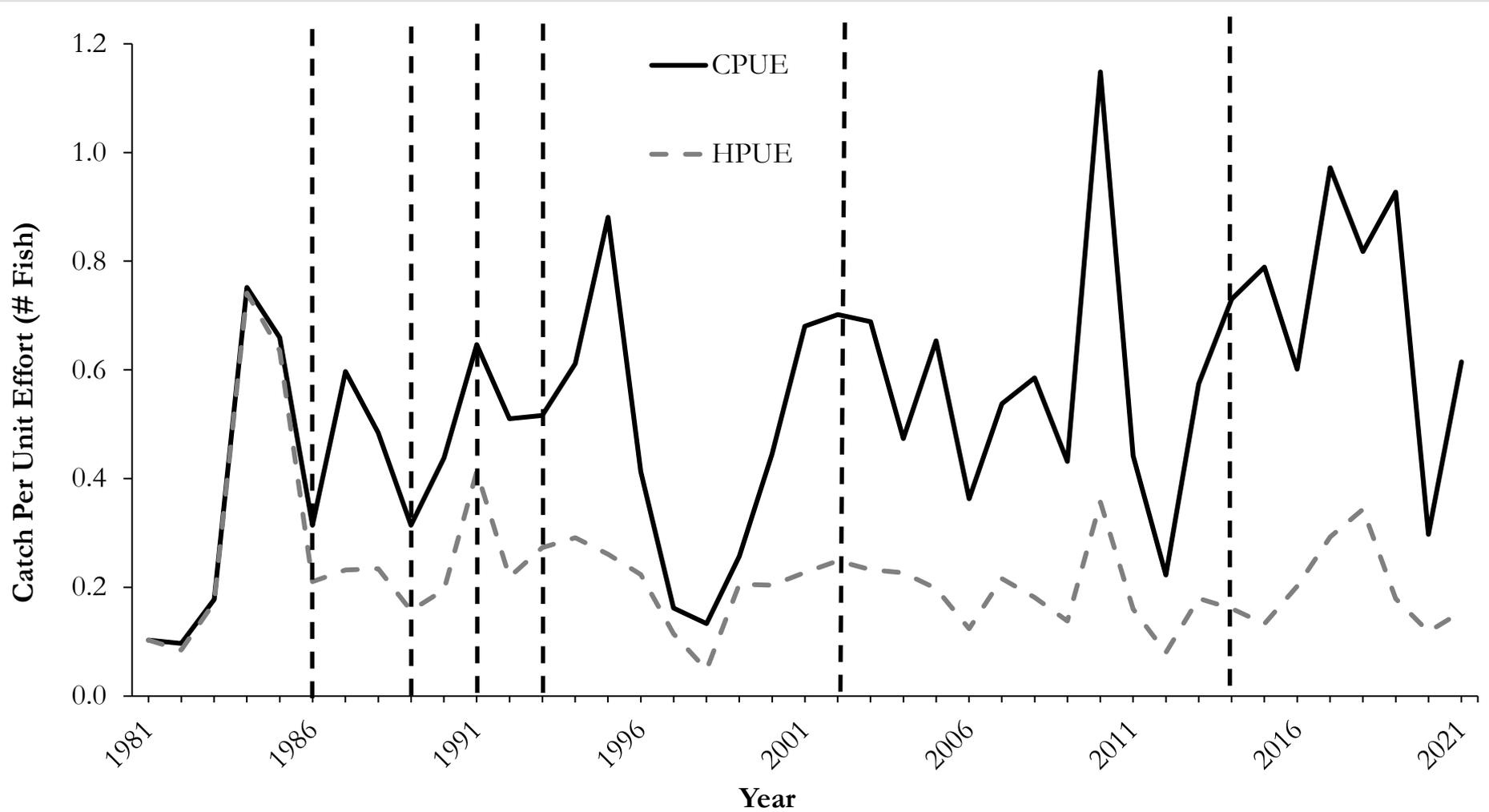
- Our surveys are design to sample across Red Drum life stages:
  - Marine Sportfish Population Health Survey (MSPHS) samples smaller Red Drum in Georgia estuaries
  - Coastal Longline Survey encounters large adult Red Drum offshore in state waters
  - Marine Sportfish Carcass Recovery Program samples legal-sized fish from the recreational fishery within the state
  - The Cooperative Angler Tagging Program samples Red Drum of various sizes with the help of anglers and can provide information within and outside the state
  - The Escapement Project targets older juveniles in Georgia estuaries, but tags can be detected outside of the state as fish age and emigrate from coastal waters



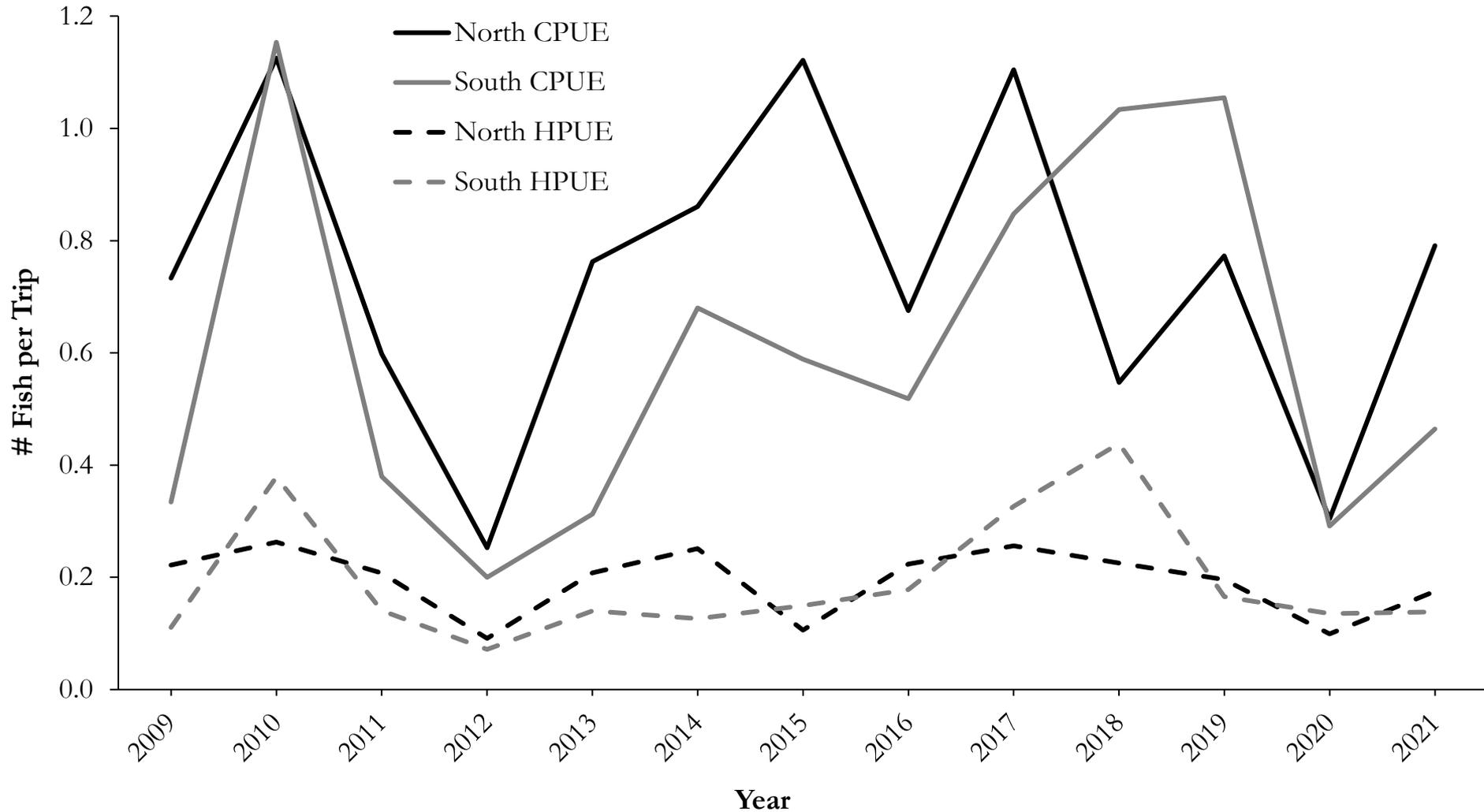
# Data and Results – Through 2021



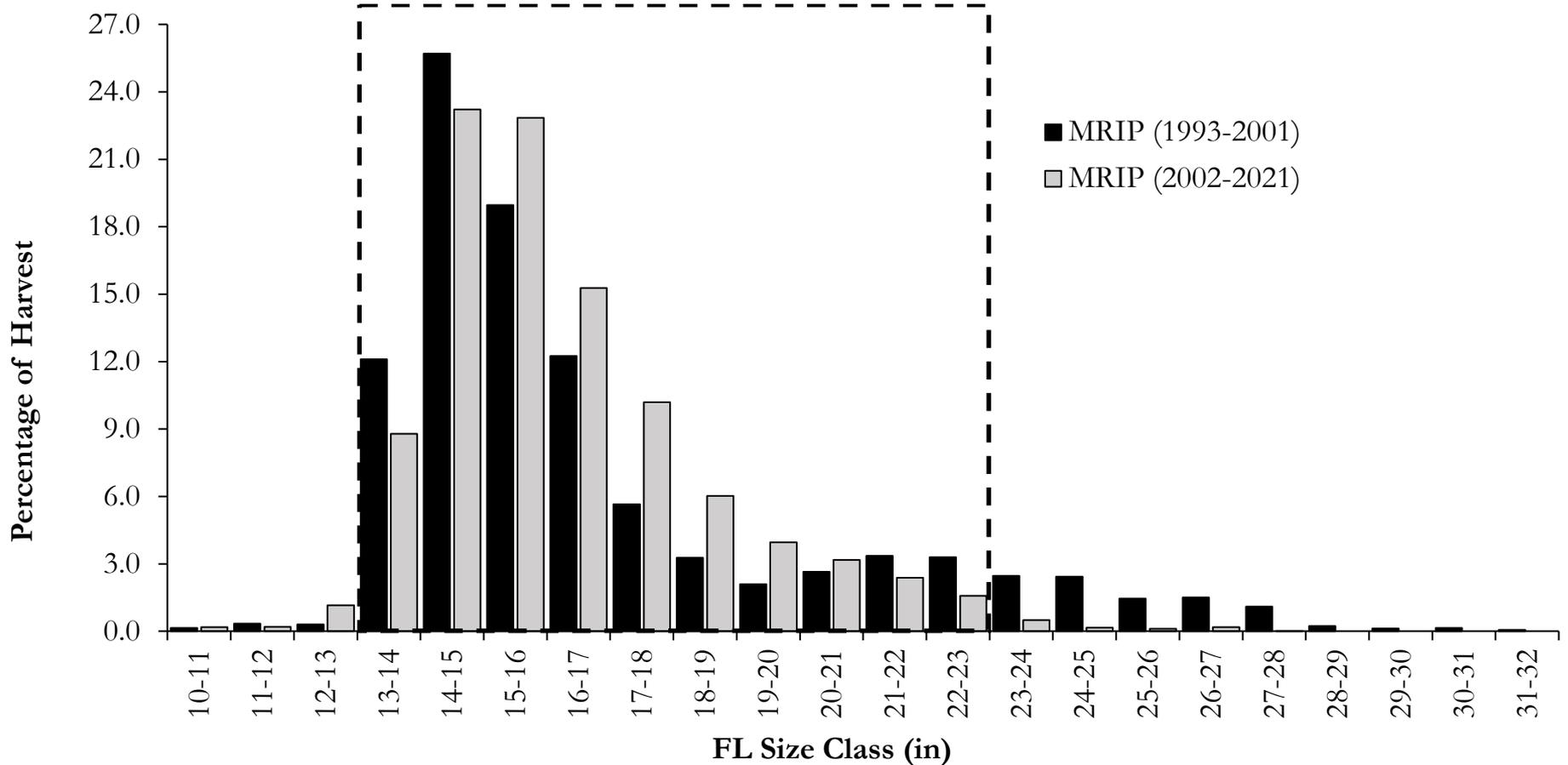
# Results – MRIP Catch and Harvest



# Results – MRIP Regional CPUE



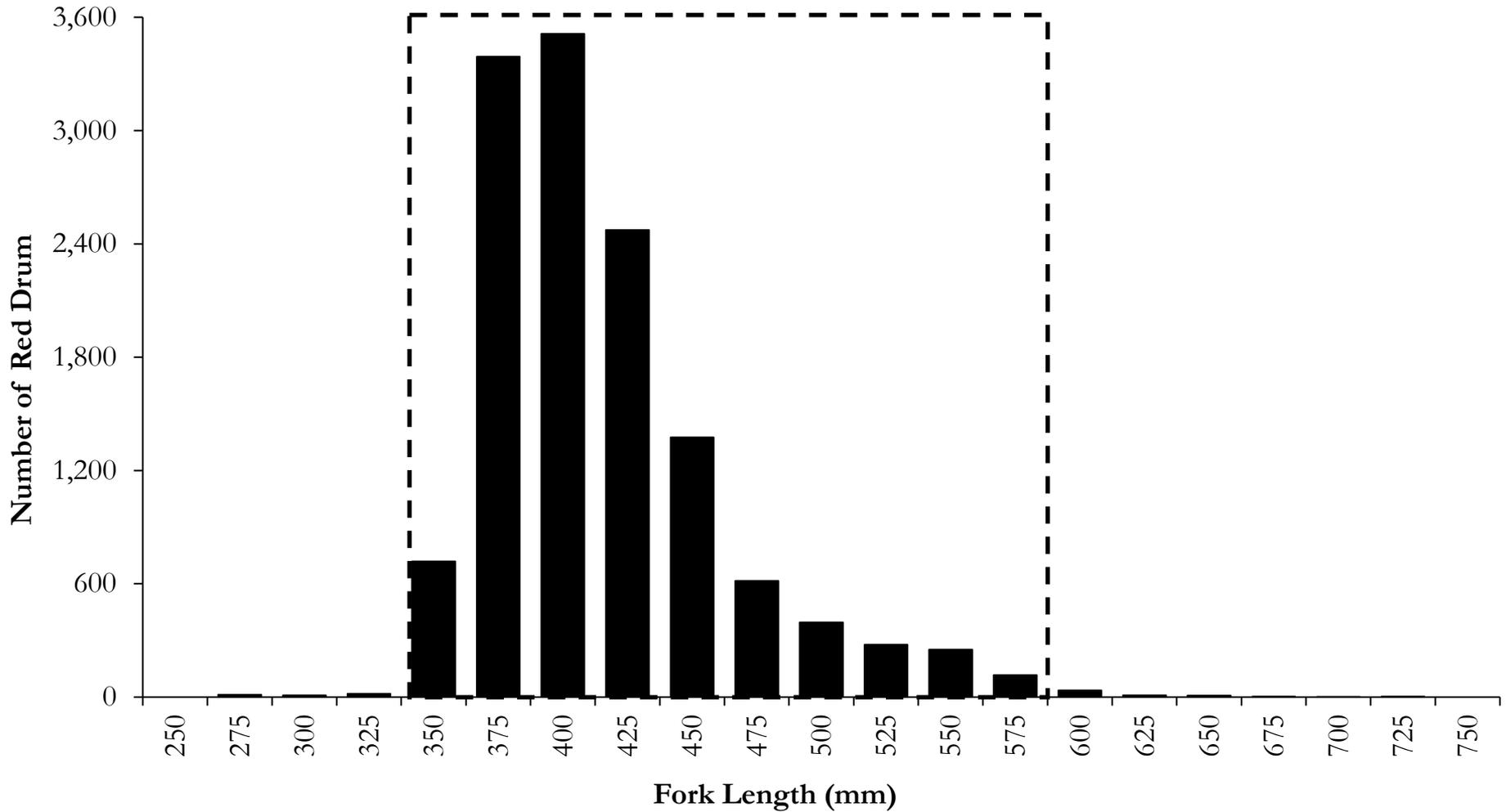
# Results – MRIP Harvest Length



**1993:** Year-round season; 14-27 inch slot; 5 fish daily creel and 5 fish possession limit

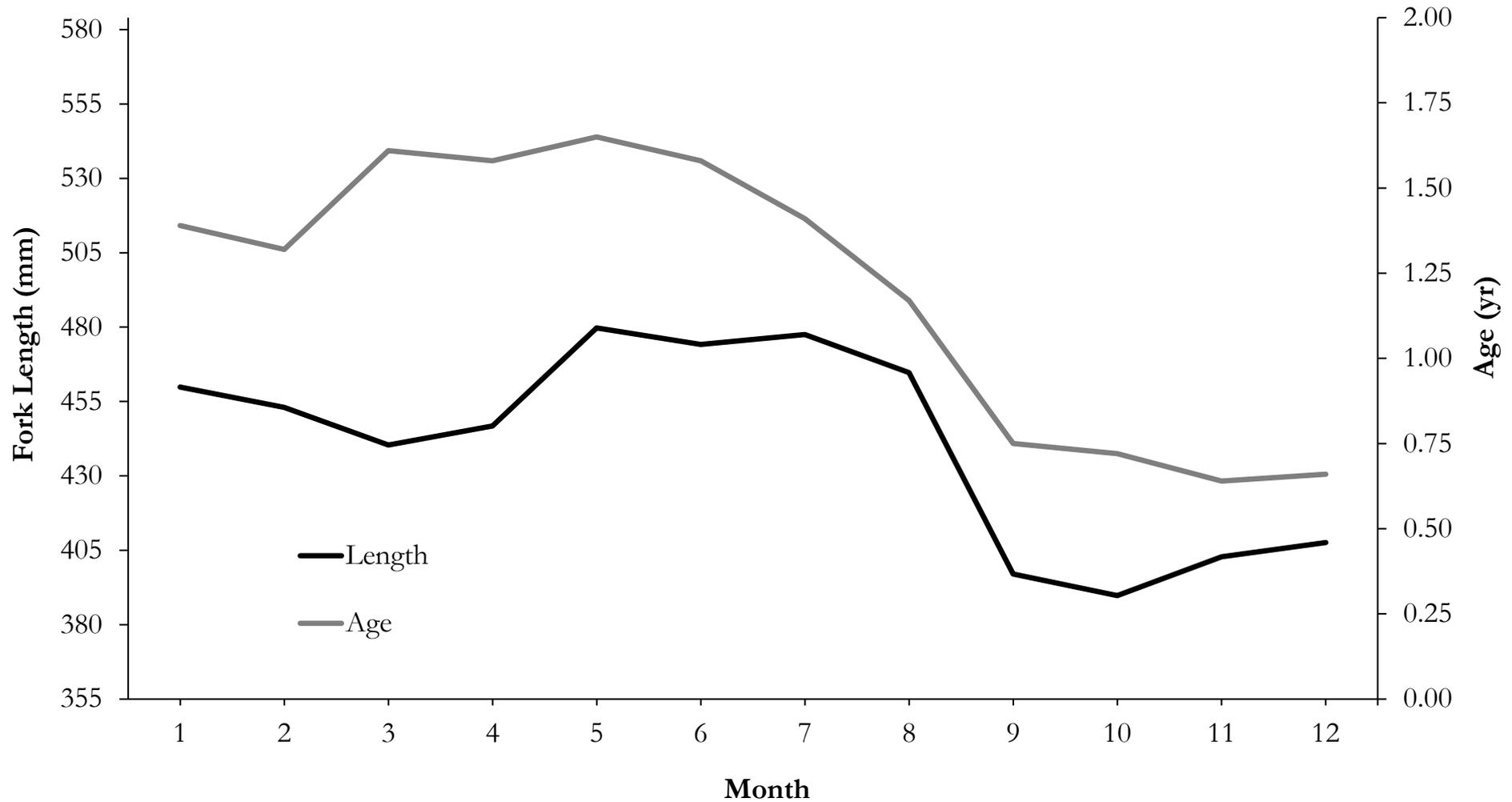
**2002:** Year-round season; 14-23 inch slot; 5 fish daily creel and 5 fish possession limit

# Results – Carcass Length Data 2002-2021

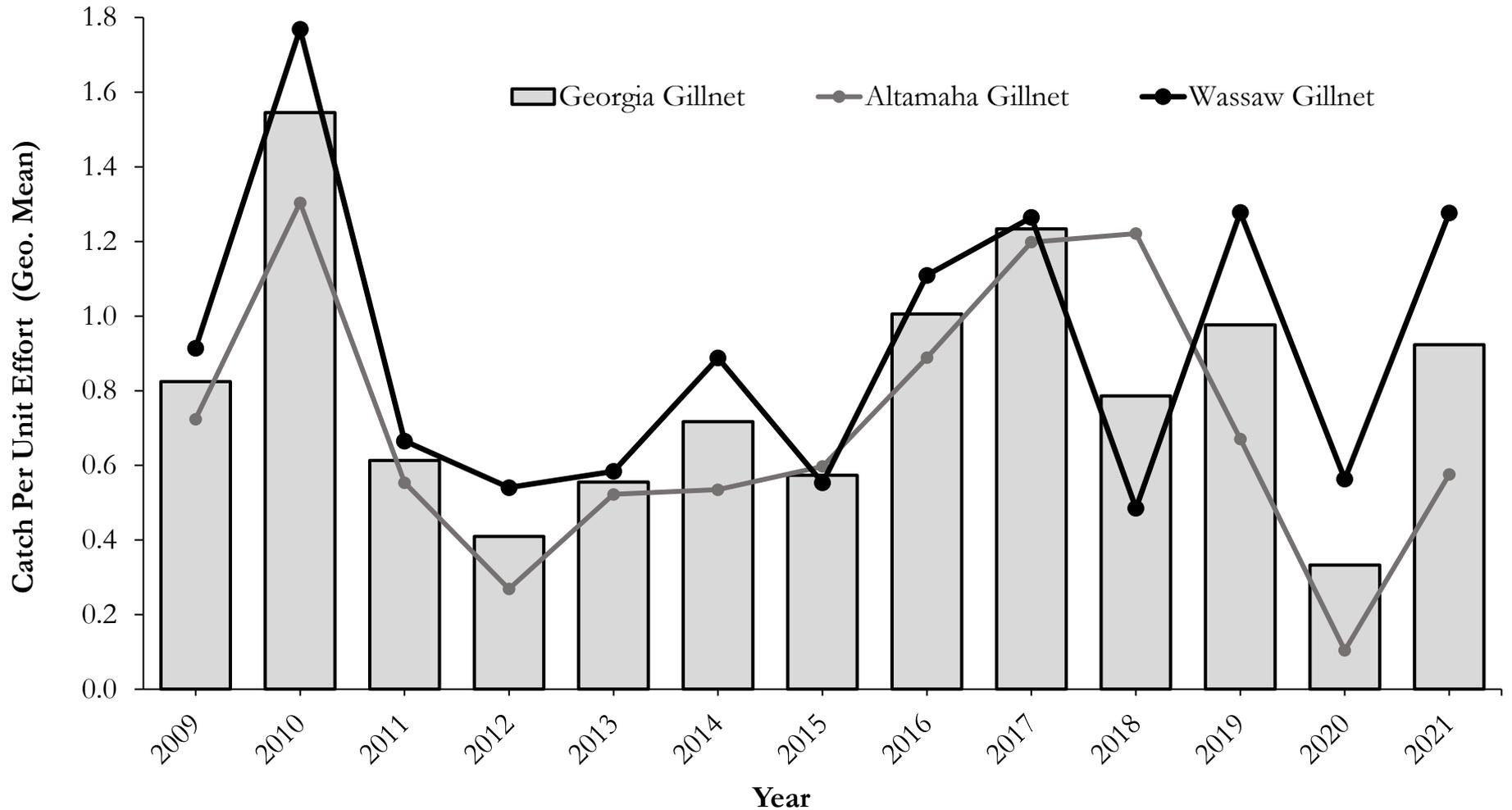


Slot is 355 mm – 584 mm (14 - 23 in)

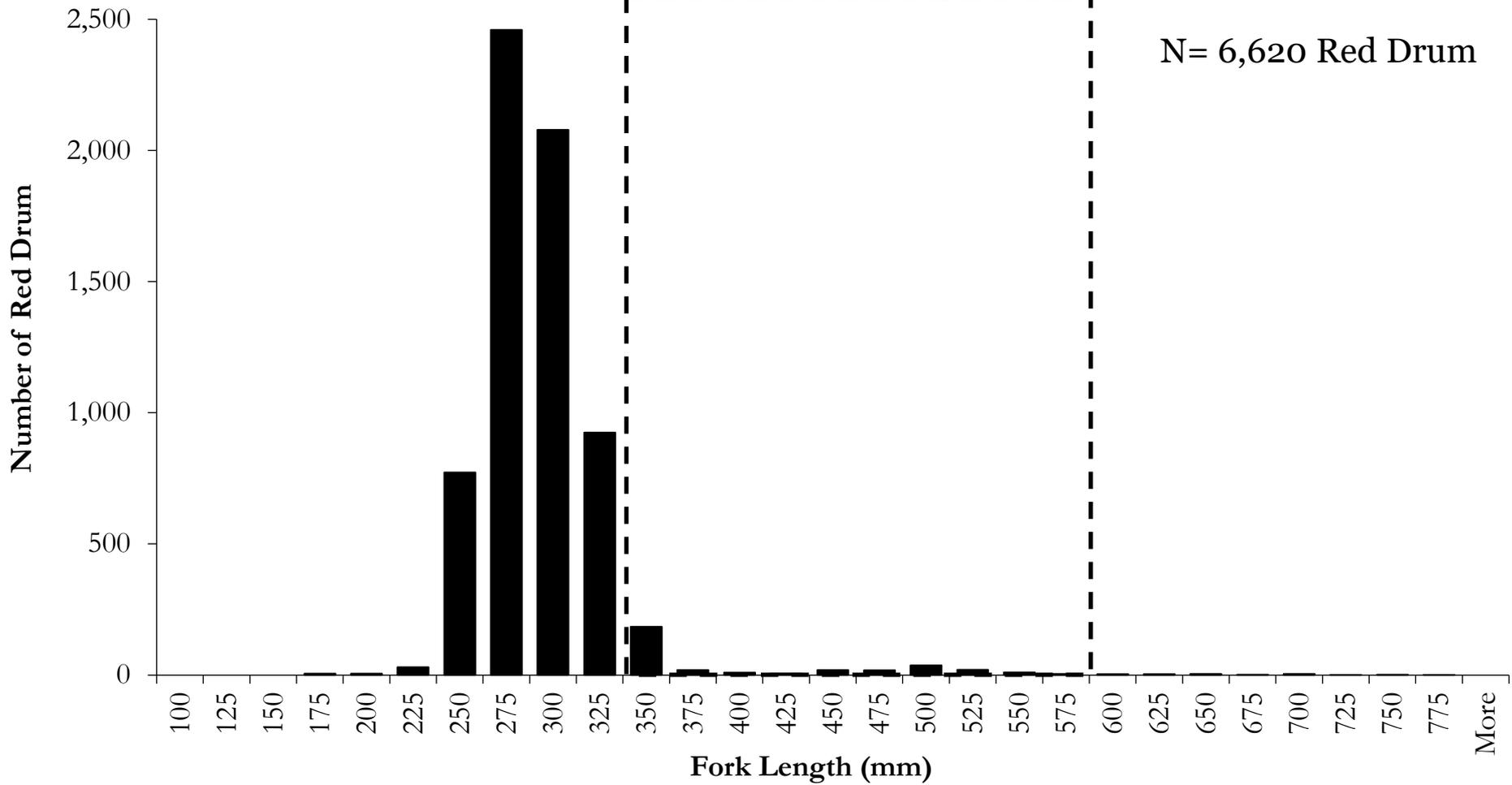
# Results – Carcass Monthly Mean Age and Length



# Results – Gillnet Survey

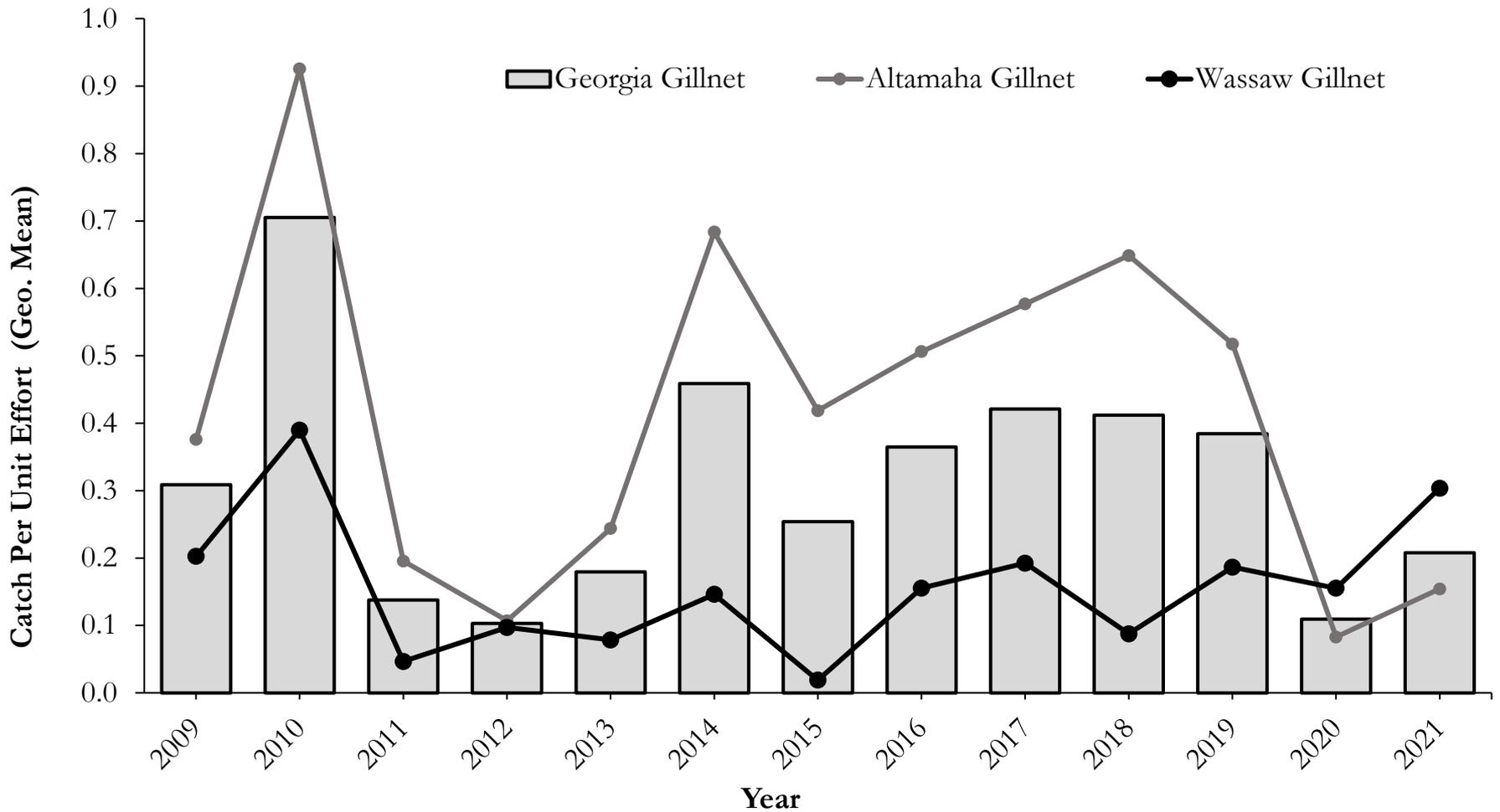


# Results – Gillnet Survey

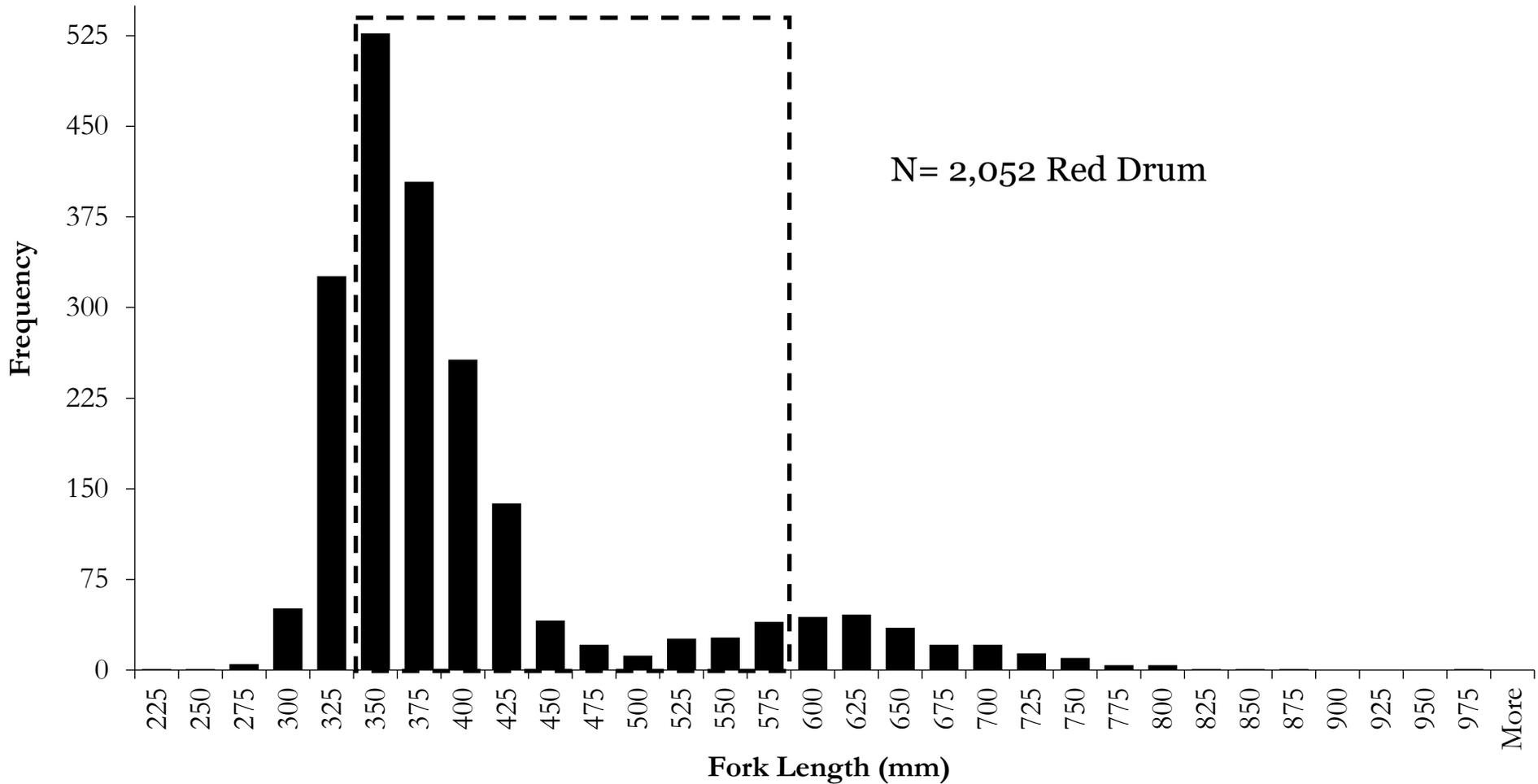


Slot is 355 mm – 584 mm (14 - 23 in)

# Results – Trammel Net Survey



# Results – Trammel Net Survey



Slot is 355 mm – 584 mm (14 - 23 in)

# Results – Cooperative Angler Tagging

## 2018-present

6,138 tags released, 1,021 total returns

- 95% returns in state, 3% Florida, 1% SC

- Double Tags

- 157 released
- 22 returns, >70% with both tags
- 100% retention in 2 week tank study

- High Reward Tags

- 73 tags released
- 22 returns
- ~ 70% estimated reporting rate



**REWARD**  
FOR TAGGED RED DRUM

← PINK TAG

**\$100 CASH REWARD**  
YOU MUST **REMOVE** PINK TAG.  
Record date, location of catch, your name, address and phone number.  
Retain or release fish as normal.

**Mail tag and information to:**  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
Cooperative Angler Tagging Project  
One Conservation Way,  
Brunswick, GA 31520

Fish must have **PINK** tag to be eligible for cash reward.  
YELLOW tags are eligible for other non-cash prizes.  
YELLOW tags may be removed or left in the fish.

Visit [CoastalGaDNR.org/FishTag](http://CoastalGaDNR.org/FishTag) or call 912-264-7218 for more information.

GEORGIA  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
COASTAL RESEARCH DIVISION

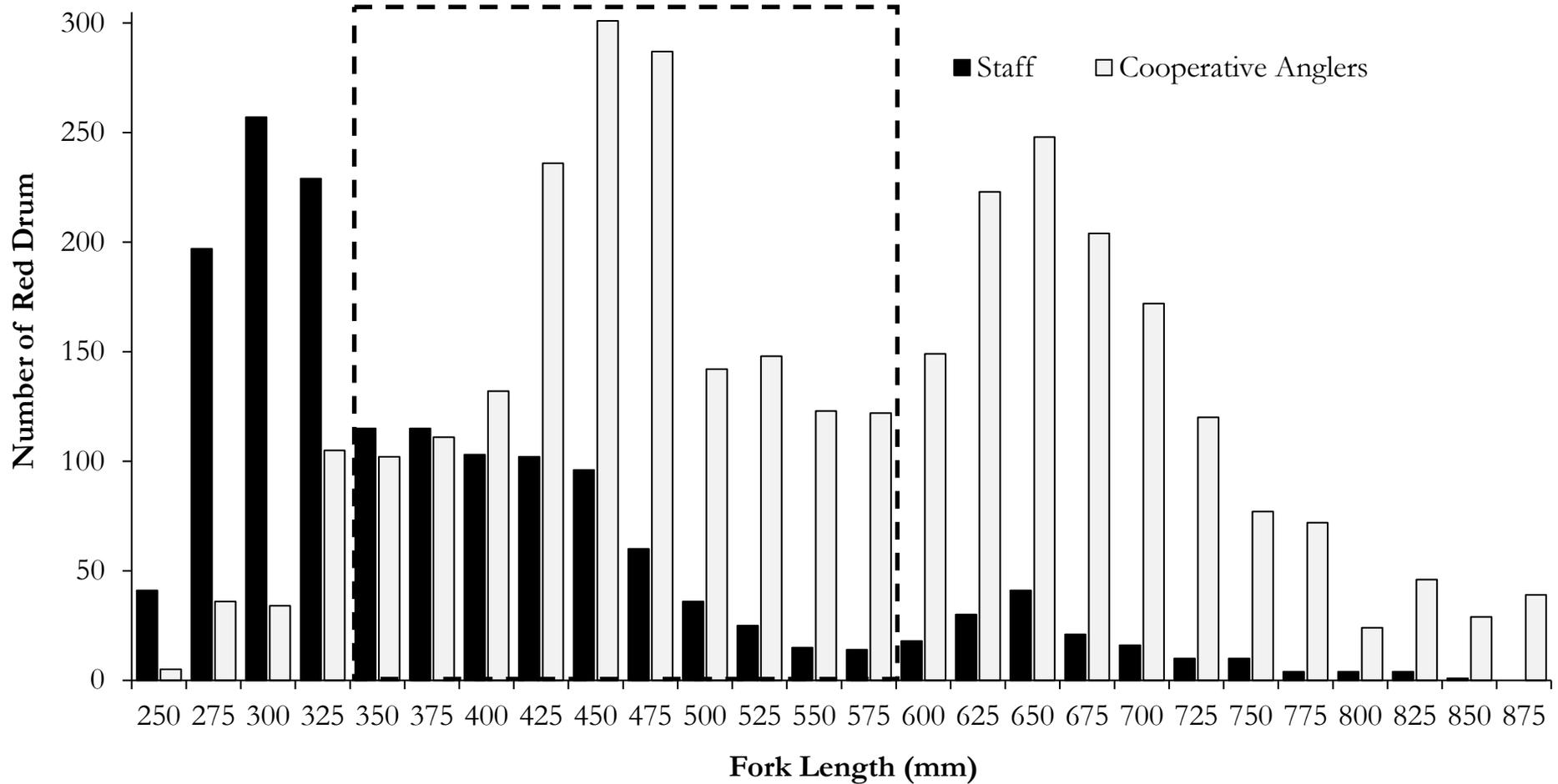
GEORGIA  
NATURAL RESOURCES PARTNERSHIP

# Results – Cooperative Tag Deployments 2020-21

	Cooperative Taggers			Staff			2020-2021 Grand Total
	Single	Double	Total	Single	Double	Total	
Savannah River	13	3	16				16
Wassaw	47	1	48	367	37	404	452
Ossabaw	126		126				126
St. Catherines	109		109				109
McQueen Inlet	30	11	41				41
Cabretta Inlet	1		1				1
Sapelo	361	62	423	29	5	34	457
Doboy	94	5	99	63	7	70	169
Altamaha	28		28	7		7	35
Hampton River	27		27	59	6	65	92
Village Creek	44		44	5	1	6	50
St. Simons	349	22	371	117	22	139	510
St. Andrew	86	1	87	201	17	218	305
Cumberland	111		111	31	3	34	182
Offshore	4		4				4
	1,430	105	1,535	499	52	551	2,585

\* Additionally, 73 high reward tags have been deployed by staff taggers

# Results – Cooperative Tagging Sizes 2020-21



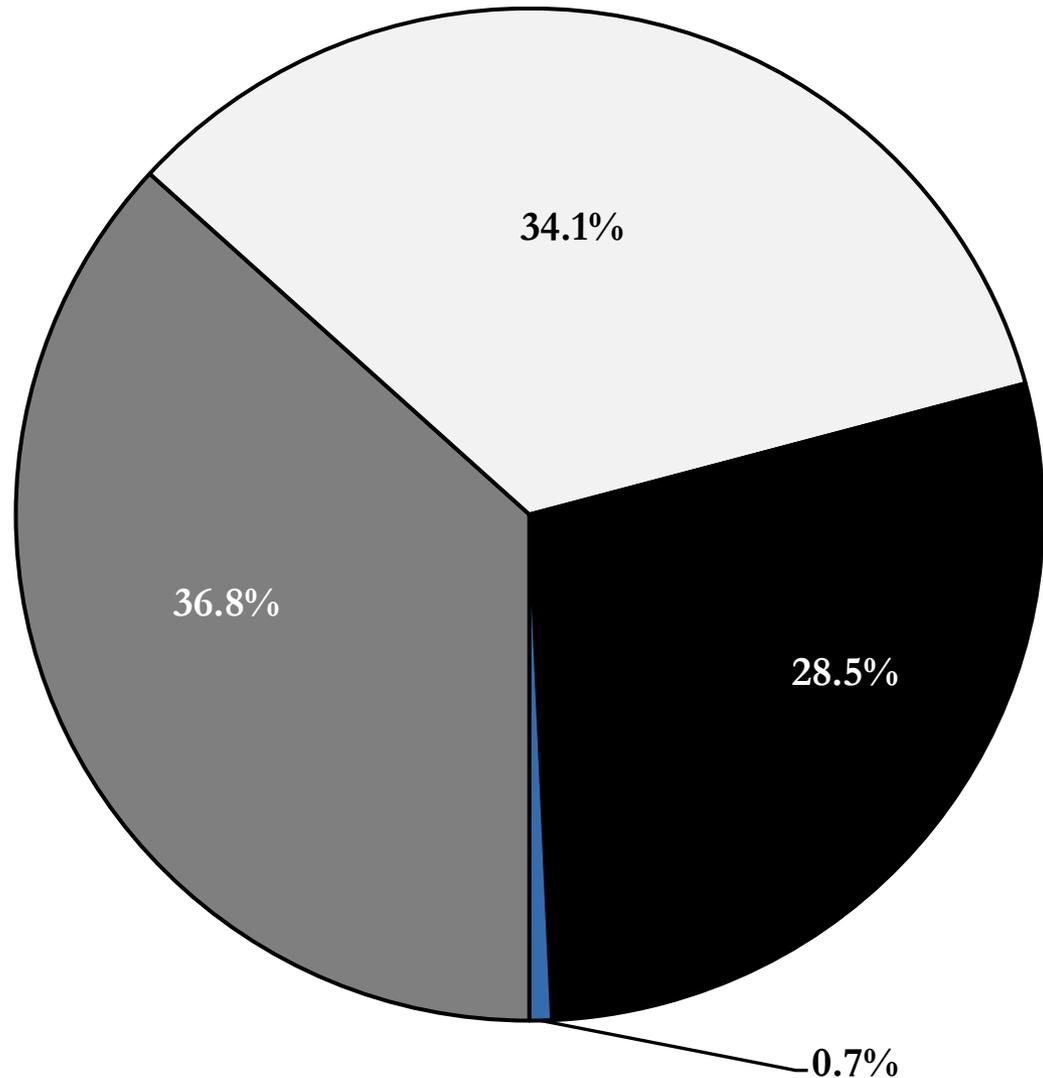
Slot is 355 mm – 584 mm (14 - 23 in)

# Results - Tag Fates 2019-present

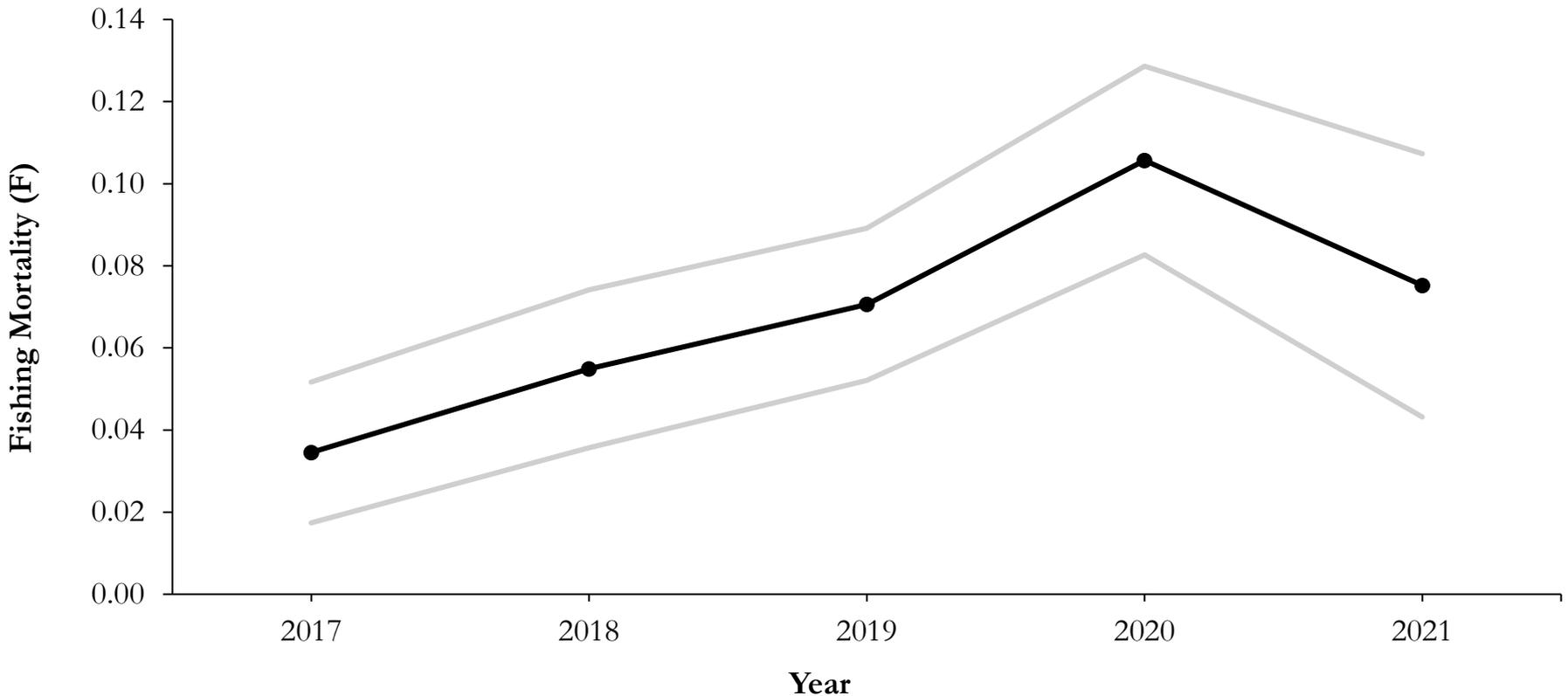
Of released, non-legal fish

- 23% were undersized
- 77% were oversized

- Released non-legal
- Released Legal
- Harvested Legal
- Harvested non-legal



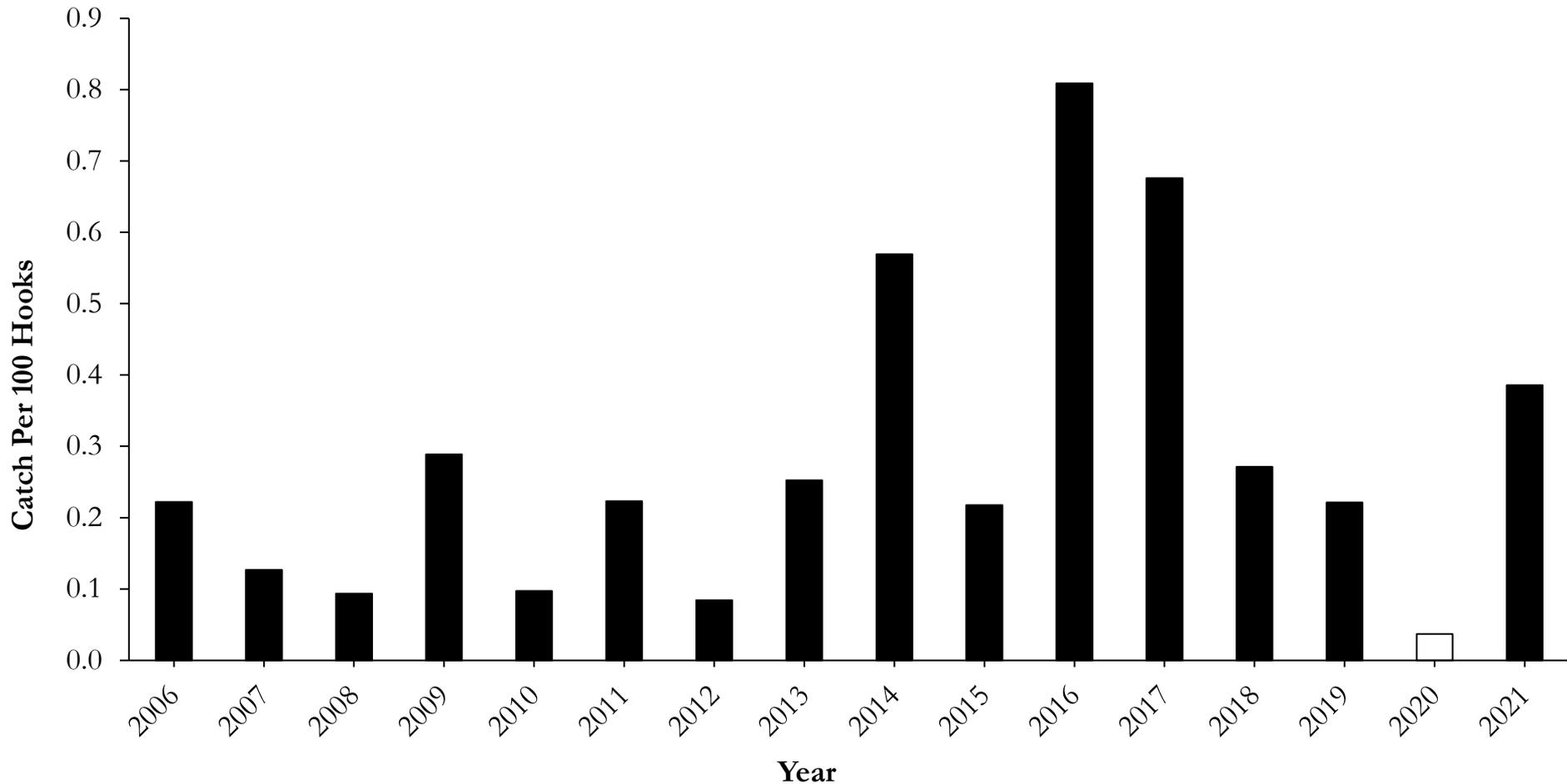
# Results – Tagging Mortality Estimates



Preliminary fishing mortality (F) estimates based on tag return data

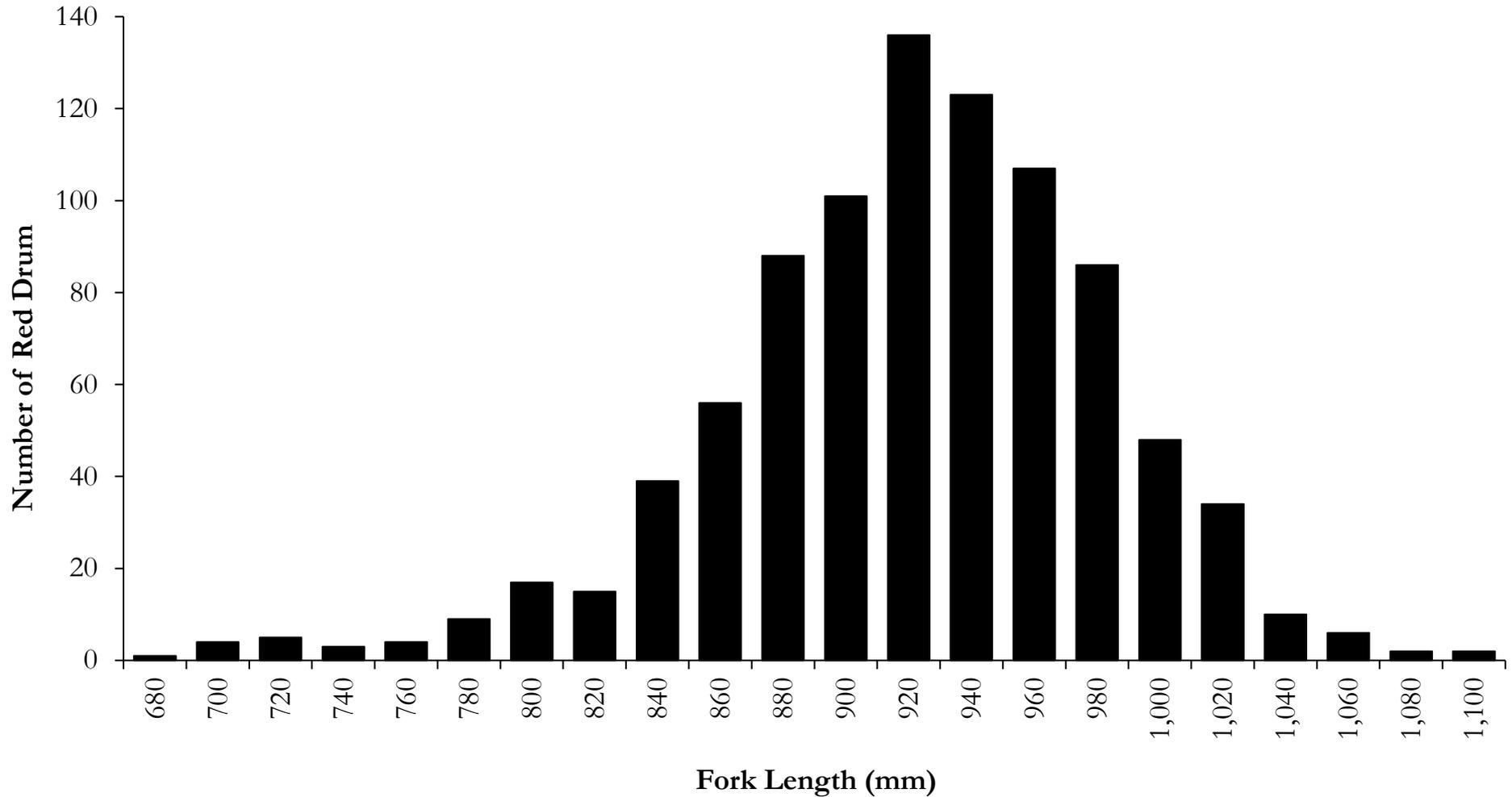
- Similar to F estimates in 2017 stock assessment
- Estimates will improve over time as more tags are returned
- Examine other models to improve estimates

# Results – Longline Survey CPUE



\* Only 2 Red Drum Caught in 2020 due to vessel issues restricting sampling

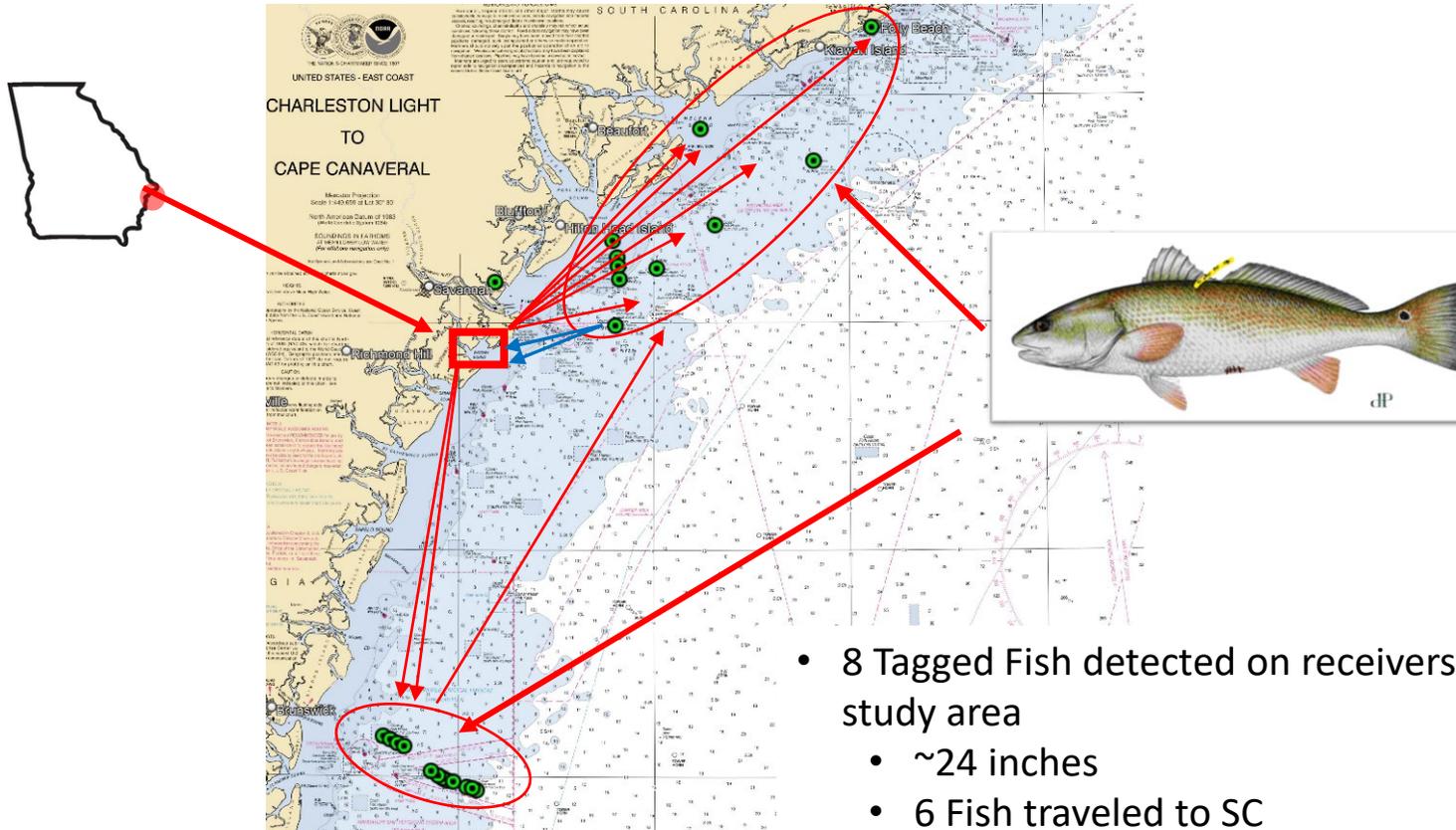
# Results – Longline Survey Length Distribution



# Results – Escapement Study

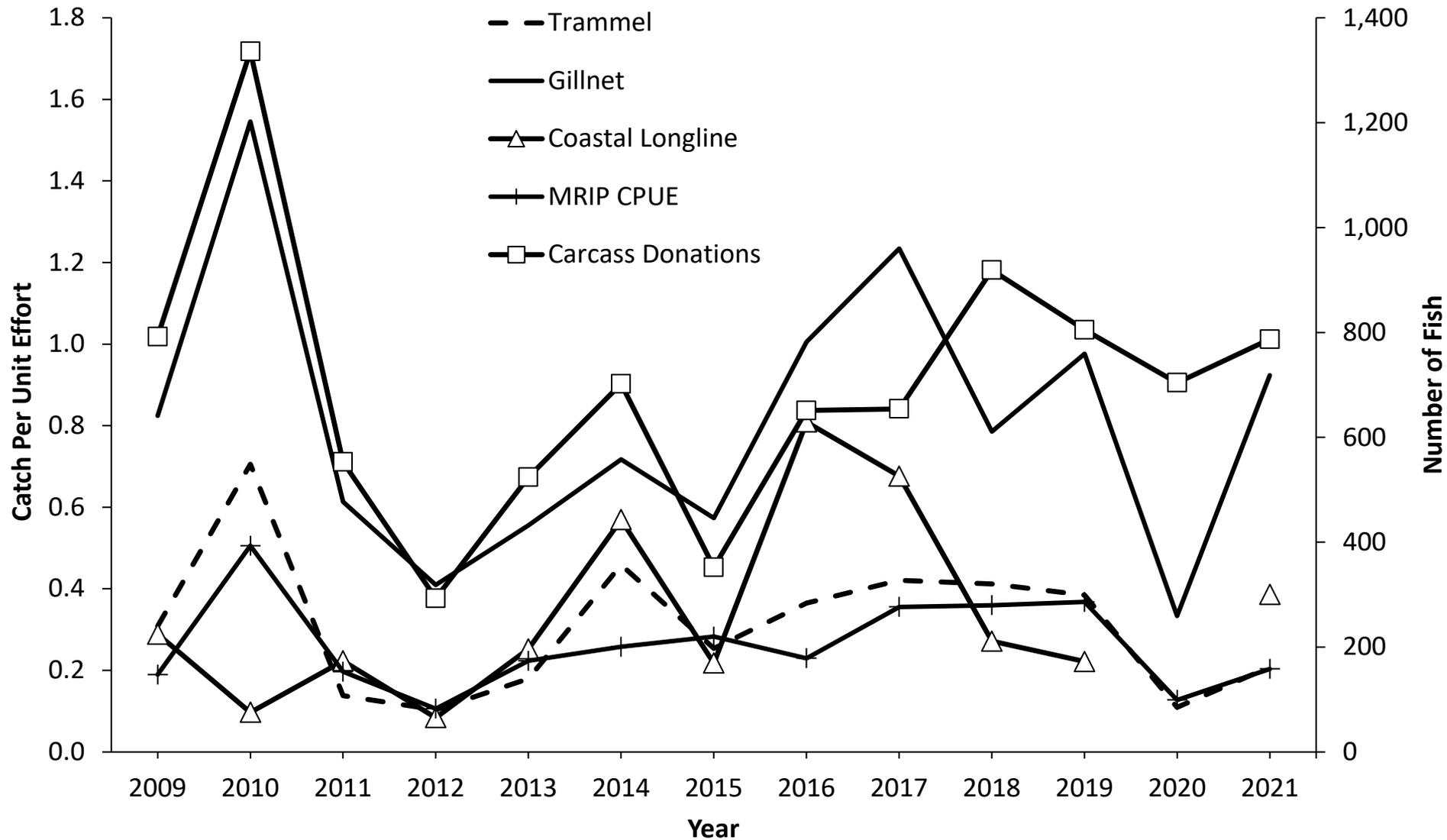
- A total of 63 Red Drum have been tagged to this point in Wassaw Sound
- Fish range in size from 345 - 680 mm FL (13.6-29.6 in)
- 29 have been detected by the array 440,477 times
  - 11 caught by anglers
  - 4 harvested
- 8 Tagged Fish detected on receivers outside of the study area
  - ~24 inches
  - 6 Fish traveled to SC
  - 2 Fish moved south in GA
    - 1 later moved N to SC
- Fish traveled as far as 75 miles N or S after leaving Wassaw Sound
- Smaller fish generally more stationary and remaining in the sound
- Larger fish more mobile and much more likely detected offshore
- St. Simons array in place
- Additional tagging will occur in these two systems over the next two years

# Offshore and Interstate Movement



- 8 Tagged Fish detected on receivers outside of the study area
  - ~24 inches
  - 6 Fish traveled to SC
  - 2 Fish moved south in GA
    - 1 later moved N to SC
- Fish traveled as far as 75 miles N or S after leaving Wassaw Sound

# Results – MRIP and State Surveys



# Discussion



# Discussion

- CRD surveys and MRIP data show similar trends in CPUE
  - Agreement among surveys suggest clear population characteristics
  - No difference in northern and southern GA coast trends – no localized effects
  - Longline adult and juvenile net surveys show related trends, but do not suggest a strong spawner-recruit trend
- Red Drum populations are stable over time with recruitment variability
  - 2020 was a low year, but 2021 saw rebounds
  - Previously observed fluctuation pattern
  - Same pattern seen regionally in stock assessments
  - The long lifespan of Red Drum allows populations to be resilient to poor recruitment years

# Discussion

- Environmental and regional population dynamics may play a large role in Red Drum abundance in Georgia
  - Abundance appears to be somewhat cyclic
  - Surveys show similar trends despite sampling different aspects of the population
  - Low year of 2012 was a record high year in Virginia and Delaware
  - Population could be experiencing effects of a long-term geographic shift
- Other threats to Red Drum populations (regionally and in GA)
  - Habitat degradation due to coastal development/pollution
  - Increased overall fishing effort
  - Increased targeting of mature adults

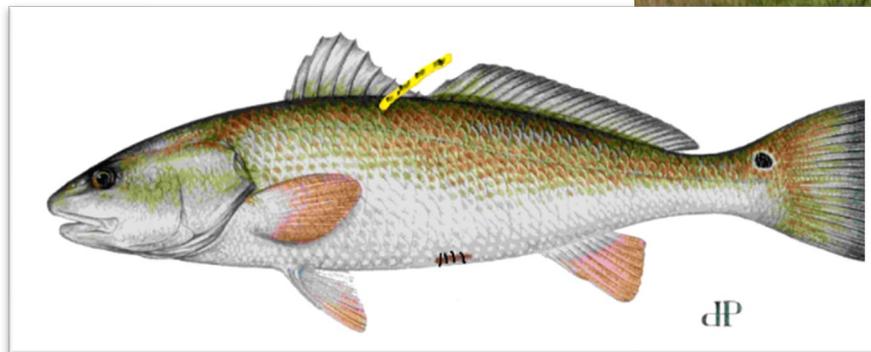
# Conclusions- Future Activities

- Ongoing ASMFC stock assessment will provide an update on regional population status
  - Step 1 – Simulation assessment to select the best model based on available data – completed 2022
  - Step 2 – Benchmark assessment using best model identified by simulation assessment – scheduled completed by 2024
  - CRD data used in the assessment
  - Results from ongoing regional stock assessment will help provide information at the broader population scale
- Continue to gather data through tagging and escapement programs
  - Longer timeframes allow more data to be collected and estimates to be improved
  - Greater time for tagged fish to grow, disperse, and be reported by anglers or researchers
- Continued sampling via field programs to monitor population

# Questions?

Jared Flowers

[jared.flowers@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:jared.flowers@dnr.ga.gov)





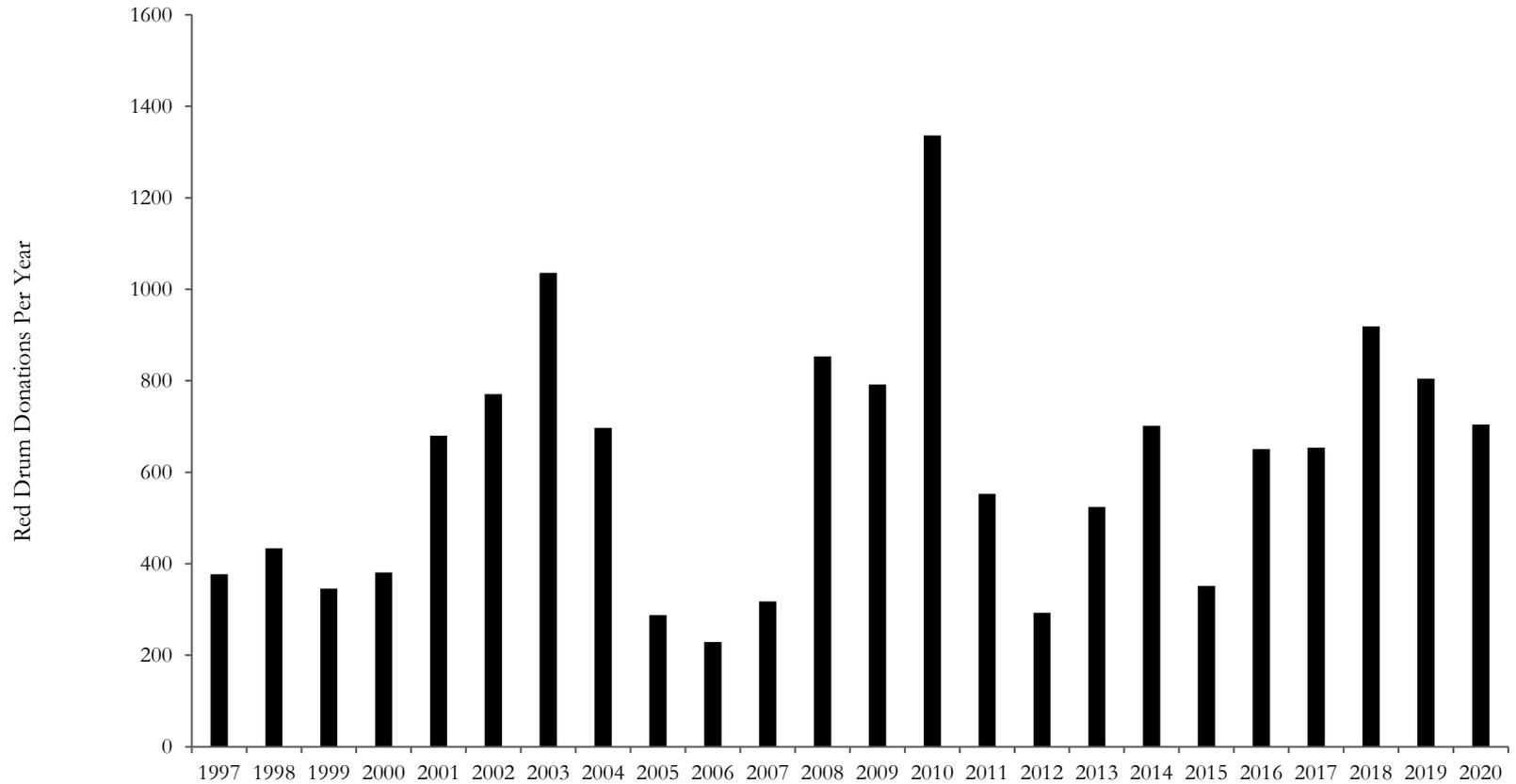
# Surveys and Data Sources



# Regulation History

Year	Regulation
1957	Prohibition of the use of gill nets in Georgia's estuarine waters (except for shad and diamondback terrapin)
1986	14-inch minimum-size and only 2 fish over 32-inches
1989	Year-round season; 14-inch minimum-size, 10 fish daily creel and only 2 fish over 32 inches
1989	Exclusive Economic Zone (3-200 miles) closed to harvest of Red Drum
1991	Year-round season; 14-inch minimum-size, 5 fish daily creel and only 1 fish over 27 inches
1992	Possession limit of 5 fish
1993	Year-round season; 14-27 inch slot; 5 fish daily creel and 5 fish possession limit
2002	Year-round season; 14-23 inch slot; 5 fish daily creel and 5 fish possession limit
2013	State implements game fish status

# Results – Carcass Donation Numbers





# Finfish Advisory Panel

## Wednesday, June 1, 2022

*Please stay tuned. The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m.*

# Coastlines

## GEORGIA

May 2022 • Vol. 5, Iss. 1

## Tarpon tips

Learn how to handle one of Georgia's most exciting game fish like a pro



*Also inside:*

Coastal Georgia scores 'A-' on report card  
Biologist explains shrimp season • Reducing runoff  
Things to remember before hurricane season

# Coastlines

GEORGIA

May 2022 • Volume 5, Issue 1

Coastlines Georgia is a quarterly publication of the Coastal Resources Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Mark Williams,  
Commissioner

Doug Haymans,  
Director

Tyler Jones,  
Editor

#### Contributors

Meghan Angelina, Alex Metz, Mark McKinnon, Eddie Leonard, Shannon Matzke, Ed Zmarzly, Jennifer Kline, Ryan Harrell, Paul Medders, Kathy Knowlton

#### Common Acronyms

Throughout Coastlines Georgia, we have shortened the use of certain names of organizations to avoid repetition. The following acronyms are used for brevity:

**CRD** - Coastal Resources Division of DNR

**DNR** - Georgia Department of Natural Resources

**EPD** - Environmental Protection Division of DNR

**NOAA** - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**WRD** - Wildlife Resources Division of DNR



COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION

ONE CONSERVATION WAY  
BRUNSWICK, GA 31520  
912-264-7218

WWW.COASTALGADNR.ORG



Photo by Tyler Jones/CRD

A boater navigates an estuary in the marshes off Sapelo Island on opening day of Georgia's shrimp season June 8, 2021.

# Welcome (back) to Coastlines

By TYLER JONES

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER  
COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION



When James Oglethorpe landed on Yamacraw Bluff in present-day Savannah on Feb. 12, 1733, he'd been entrusted to establish the 13th colony with a spirit of selflessness. The motto of the original trustees that oversaw this new colony of Georgia was "Non sibi sed aliis"--a Latin phrase meaning "Not for self, but for others."

Nearly 290 years later, Georgia remains a state of dedicated individuals who continue that tradition of service.

Since its creation in 1972,

Georgia DNR has attracted employees who have devoted their lives to conserving our natural resources for present and future generations.

This magazine is a nod to that history of service. Coastlines Georgia was originally published by CRD in 1978, and ran until approximately 1985. Today, we are reviving it in hopes of honoring those who served the state before us, and continuing that heritage of dedication to others.

We hope you will enjoy reading this new edition, and that it may inform you of the important work done by hardworking DNR employees across the coast. ▀

I N M E M O R I A M

# JOHN M. PAFFORD SR.

1 9 4 7 - 2 0 2 2

**I**n Coastal Georgia, what do boat ramps, Kids Fishing Events, and the stomach contents of spotted seatrout all have in common? An amazing biologist, mentor, and friend named John Pafford.

Certainly, many folks can accomplish a great deal during a 34-year career. But John's covered an astounding breadth and variety that consistently highlighted his passion for Coastal Georgia and the opportunity to personally experience it.

Within just a few years of being hired as a marine biologist with CRD, he and a colleague completed a seminal 382-page report on movement, age and growth, maturity, and food preferences of eleven Georgia marine finfish species. The report provided detailed data from 1979-1982 that has served as a benchmark for generations of students and fishery managers since its publication.

His enthusiasm was not limited just to the technical aspects of data collection and analysis. He wanted everyone, regardless of age or economic status, to experience—and have access to—the wonder and abundance of marine life in Coastal Georgia.

Growing up in Glynn County, John knew first hand the challenges of getting from the high ground above the marsh to the water below. For the public



Nature Trail, you can thank John for its design.

Throughout his career, John would see a need, and either directly solve it, or lead the group effort. He had the same answer whether we needed a new fish measuring board, bookshelves, or an add-on structure for our outdoor fish ageing lab ... "I'll built it."

Though, at 6-feet, 4-inches, John was a very tall man, he carried himself with humility and quiet grace, always leading by example, and being an incredible advocate for his staff.

Long before the phrase "team meeting" entered our professional vocabularies, John would randomly gather his staff to go out for breakfast and talk about the projects we were working on. Before we started calling it "work-life balance," he intrinsically understood the importance of working hard, while reserving time for family and community.

He let us know it was OK to stumble and make a mistake, always saying, "if you're not making mistakes, you're just not working."

John was funny, loyal, and kind. His impact on our understanding of and ability to access the coast was significant.

So, it is only fitting that we dedicate the first reissue of "Coastlines Georgia" in John's honor. ▀

- Kathy Knowlton, DNR/CRD

to access the water, you have to build a structure that can prevail in the pluff mud, withstand our 6- to 9-foot tides and harsh marine environment, and allow for the convenience and safety of anglers, whether fishing from an offshore vessel, inshore john boat, kayak, or wheelchair on a fishing pier. He was involved in every step of creating that public access, including teaching plans needed for construction.

Thanks, in part, to his efforts in the mid-1990s, more federal funds were allocated to CRD for this public access development, as well as increasing the number of staff and marine fishery projects conducted at CRD.

John was the heart and soul of a Kids Fishing Events that will celebrate its 30th anniversary later this summer.

If you come to the Brunswick DNR property and enjoy walking around and observing the wildlife along the Earth Day



# SHRIMP SEASON

... is on the horizon as CRD celebrates 20,000 trawls

By **EDDIE LEONARD**  
MARINE BIOLOGIST  
COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION



CRD marked a milestone in April when the division's Ecological Monitoring Trawl Survey (EMTS) pulled its 20,000th trawl.

The ETMS, formerly conducted aboard the now-retired Research Vessel Anna, and continuing aboard the 2020-christened R/V Reid W. Harris has been gathering data about shrimp, blue crab and finfish populations on the Georgia Coast since 1976, and represents one of the longest-running datasets of its kind on the East Coast.

Wild-caught shrimp are the most economically important of Georgia's commercial fisheries and, many would argue, the most delicious shrimp on the market.

The long-term viability of this fishery is critical to the well-being of many harvesters and coastal communities, and CRD is responsible for the management of this important fishery. To best accomplish management goals, the EMTS conducts direct sampling of coastal waters, independent of the commercial fisheries' landings.

This data gives biologists a look at target populations before they are vulnerable to harvest. This provides a holistic and unbiased view of the animals' population.

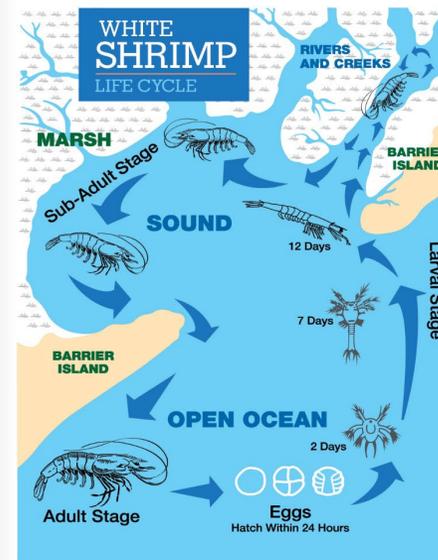
The EMTS samples 36 pre-determined locations along the Georgia coast once per month, 12 months per year. Six sites are sampled within six of Georgia's estuary areas or "sounds", (Wassaw, Ossabaw, Sapelo, St. Simons, St. Andrew, and Cumberland Sounds). The sample sites were selected to represent



Photos by Tyler Jones/CRD  
**Above**, commercial shrimpers trawl on opening day of shrimp season June 8, 2021. **Below**, the Research Vessel Reid W. Harris in Wassaw Sound in 2021.

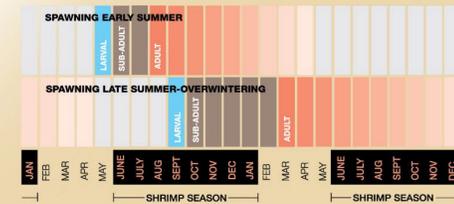
three "sectors" of each estuary: rivers and creeks, sounds, and offshore within state waters.

At each of these locations, the R/V Reid W. Harris pulls a 40-foot net, called a flat otter trawl, along the seabed for 15 minutes. The net is then hauled aboard the vessel and the contents are placed in a large sorting area. All animals in the catch are identified, separated by species, measured,



## GEORGIA WHITE SHRIMP

- Spawn from May to September with peak spawning in May and June
  - Can spawn up to four times in one season
  - Average life span is less than 12 months (maximum is 18 months)
  - Grow on average one inch per month during warmer months
  - The number of shrimp per pound is known as count size
  - Season opening and closing is determined by count size, stage of maturity, abundance, and water temperature
- In general shrimp season is mid-June to mid-January
  - White shrimp make up nearly 80% of the landings annually at nearly 1.9 million pounds
  - Shrimp is the #1 seafood product consumed in the U.S. with about 90% being imported. Ask for Georgia wild caught shrimp at markets and restaurants



weighed, and cataloged in a database.

The primary data collected for shrimp are abundance, size, and reproductive condition. While shrimp and crabs are the primary targets, all species captured are recorded. This "bycatch" data collection was permanently added to the sampling effort in 2003, and provides information on several species of interest to commercial and recreational fishers.

The data are also a very useful tool for monitoring general estuary health. Once the data are collected and stored in the database, they can be used for a variety of purposes from informing management decision making, inclusion in federal compliance reporting, and more.

The most immediately impactful use of the data is in helping to decide on the annual

opening and closing date for the commercial and recreational food shrimp harvest in Georgia's state waters. According to Georgia law, the fishery may be open in the spring as early as May 15 and will close on Dec. 31, unless extended.

The actual opening and closing dates must be established by the Commissioner of DNR. The Commissioner receives a recommendation from CRD on when to open and close the fishery from the Shrimp Advisory Panel (SAP). The SAP is a group of citizens from the commercial fishing industry, academia, and other representative user groups who meet on at least a biennial basis to review and discuss current conditions and make a recommendation to the Commissioner for the spring opening and winter closing.

The Commissioner's decision is constrained by law to shrimp of a certain size range, but reproductive status and shrimp abundance are also considered.

The EMTS survey provides the only scientific data considered by the SAP, who also discuss industry forces and other observations.

Each May, CRD closely evaluates and characterizes the status of the shrimp population as harvesters prepare for the spring opening. This May is no different.

With a relatively warm winter and no major rainfall or drought conditions at hand, we should see a good harvest in the spring in Georgia's state waters. Preliminary data from the EMTS for March and April are showing white shrimp in good numbers and early spawning condition.

To learn more about the EMTS, visit [CoastalGaDNR.org/EcologicalMonitoringSurvey](http://CoastalGaDNR.org/EcologicalMonitoringSurvey). ▀

# Fishing guide shares TARPON TIPS

for a sustainable future

Words by TYLER JONES  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER  
COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION

Photos by AARON ADAMS  
DIR. OF SCIENCE & CONSERVATION  
BONEFISH AND TARPON TRUST

It may be safe to say tarpon had Greg Hildreth hooked long before he hooked a tarpon. Years before he became a successful Georgia fishing guide and charter captain, Hildreth was a wide-eyed high schooler with a copy of the magazine *Florida Sportsman* and a few fishing buddies.

"I saw an article about tarpon fishing, and my friends and I thought it looked cool," he said. "We wanted to try it."

He and his friends took a john boat to Apalachicola Bay to try their hand, not sure what they were getting into.

"We were just high school kids with no money, and we didn't really know what we were doing," he said. "We pulled into West Pass (an area in the bay), and I saw a guy hook one. It jumped out of the water, and I thought, 'I've got to do that.'"

While Hildreth would eventually do just that, his fishing trip in 1979 was not the day.

"Three years later, I still hadn't hooked one, so I called the guy who wrote that article," he said. "He agreed to take me out, and we still didn't catch any tarpon that day, but he showed me everything I was doing wrong."

The next day, Hildreth finally got his goal.

"We must have hooked about 15 that day with artificial lures," he said. "It was one of the most thrilling things I've ever done. I always tell people that God must love duck hunting, turkey hunting and tarpon fishing, because none of those seasons overlap, so you don't have to choose which one to do."

Several decades after that first unsuccessful tarpon trip with the *Florida Sportsman* writer, Hildreth has managed to turn one of his favorite activities into a career. As a Brunswick-based charter captain, he specializes in taking clients tarpon fishing when the season comes around in late summer.

"I love to catch them," he said. "But they are hard and tricky to figure out, especially

here. Even though you might see them, you won't catch them every time. People love to catch them—they come from all over."

Over the years, though, Hildreth has learned a lot about conservation and what it takes to keep tarpon populations healthy for future generations. These massive game fish can grow up to 100 inches in length and take a decade to reach maturity. Although the state men's record in Georgia is 161 pounds, tarpon have been known to grow well over 200 pounds. Keeping the tarpon population healthy means fish must be able to reach reproductive adulthood. One way anglers can

help ensure a healthy tarpon population is by handling them properly, Hildreth said.

"I try to encourage people to leave them in the water," Hildreth said. "I carry two gloves, and I'll bring the fish boat side, and once he's sideways in the water, you pretty much have him. I'll let people hold the lower jaw and get a photo from above with the fish in the water."

Removing the fish from the water can present plenty of problems, not the least of which is trying to handle a massive, unpredictable animal. Taking the fish out of the water can also seal its fate and result in its untimely death, Hildreth cautioned.

"Once you start trying to pick that fish up out of the water, that's

when you have problems," he said. "If you pick it up by the lower jaw, you're going to break that throat latch. He may swim off, but he's not fine. He's going to die. The best thing is to leave them in the water."

Hildreth recommends handling tarpon in the water and using your hand to hold the fish's lower jaw. When it's time to release the fish, turn it upright in the water with the mouth facing toward the front of the boat, directly into the current.

"The current will get oxygen into his gills," Hildreth said. "He will let you know when he's ready to go. He'll shake his head, wag his tail, and swim off."

It's tips like these Hildreth has learned in his years as a charter captain. Over the years, the importance of conservation has grown in his mind, and he's hoping



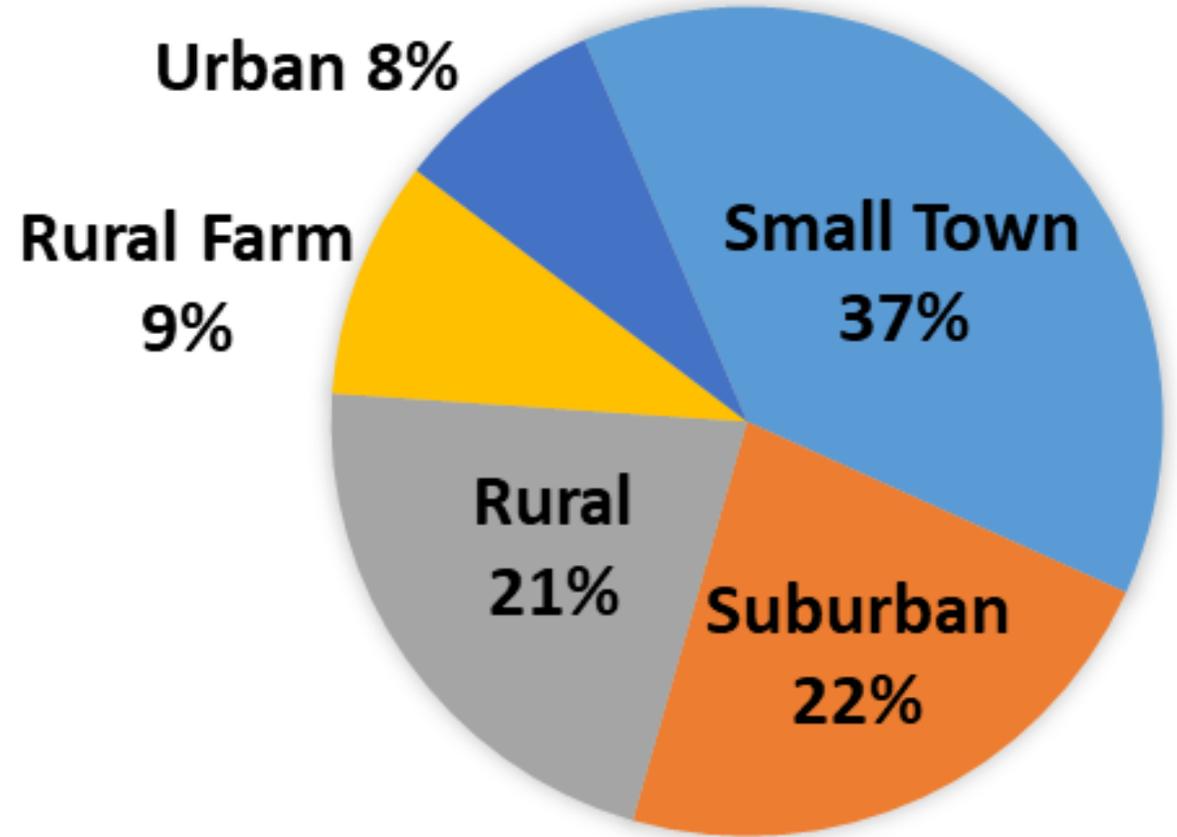
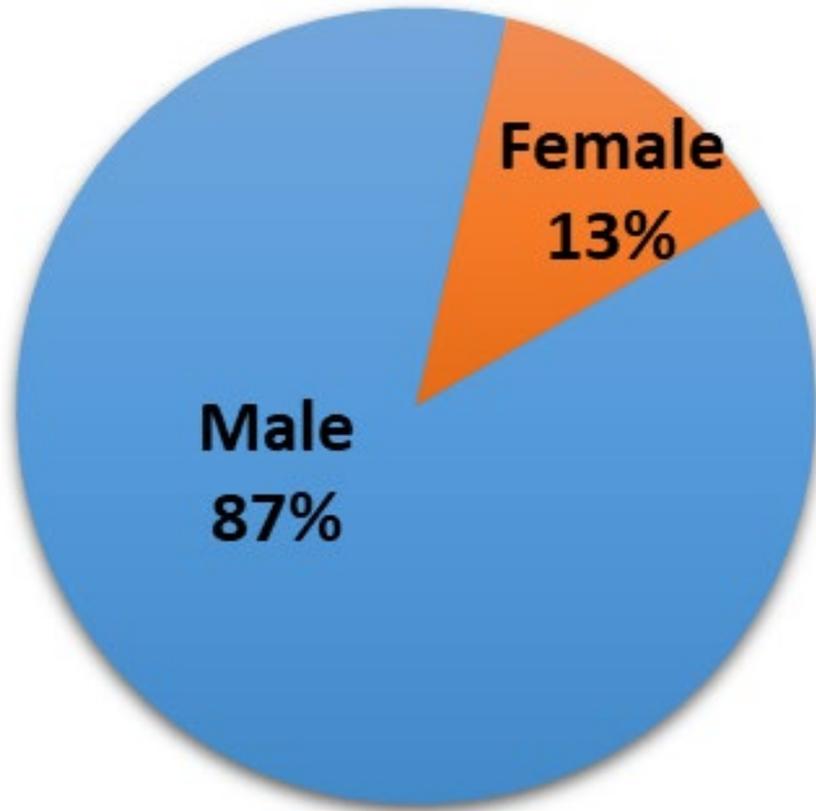
# Saltwater Fishing Satisfaction Survey



# Angler & Guide Saltwater Satisfaction Survey

- Survey Conducted by Responsive Management
- Majority questions same 2017 & 2021
- **ANGLERS**
  - Resident anglers randomly selected from SIP permits (~230,000 annually)
  - Telephone and/or online
  - 2,026 completed interviews
    - 144 Georgia counties
    - 11 coastal counties = 45% of interviews
  - Data cross-tabulated
    - coastal vs noncoastal
    - Avid > 10 days vs less avid ≤ 10 days (per year)
- **GUIDES**
  - All 194 licensed resident saltwater guides invited to participate
  - 107 captains (55%) completed interviews

# Angler Demographics



# Angler & Guide Demographics

## Top 3 Angler Responses:

- Race/Ethnicity: 86% Caucasian, 6% African-American, 2% Hispanic/Latino
- Highest Education Level: 24% bachelor's degree, 23% some college/trade school, 20% high school
- Total Household Income (before taxes):
  - 26%  $\geq$ \$120,000
  - 12% \$60,000-\$79,000
  - 12% \$40,000-\$59,000



Mean Years Saltwater Fishing  
Median Age

Angler = 21

Guide = 12

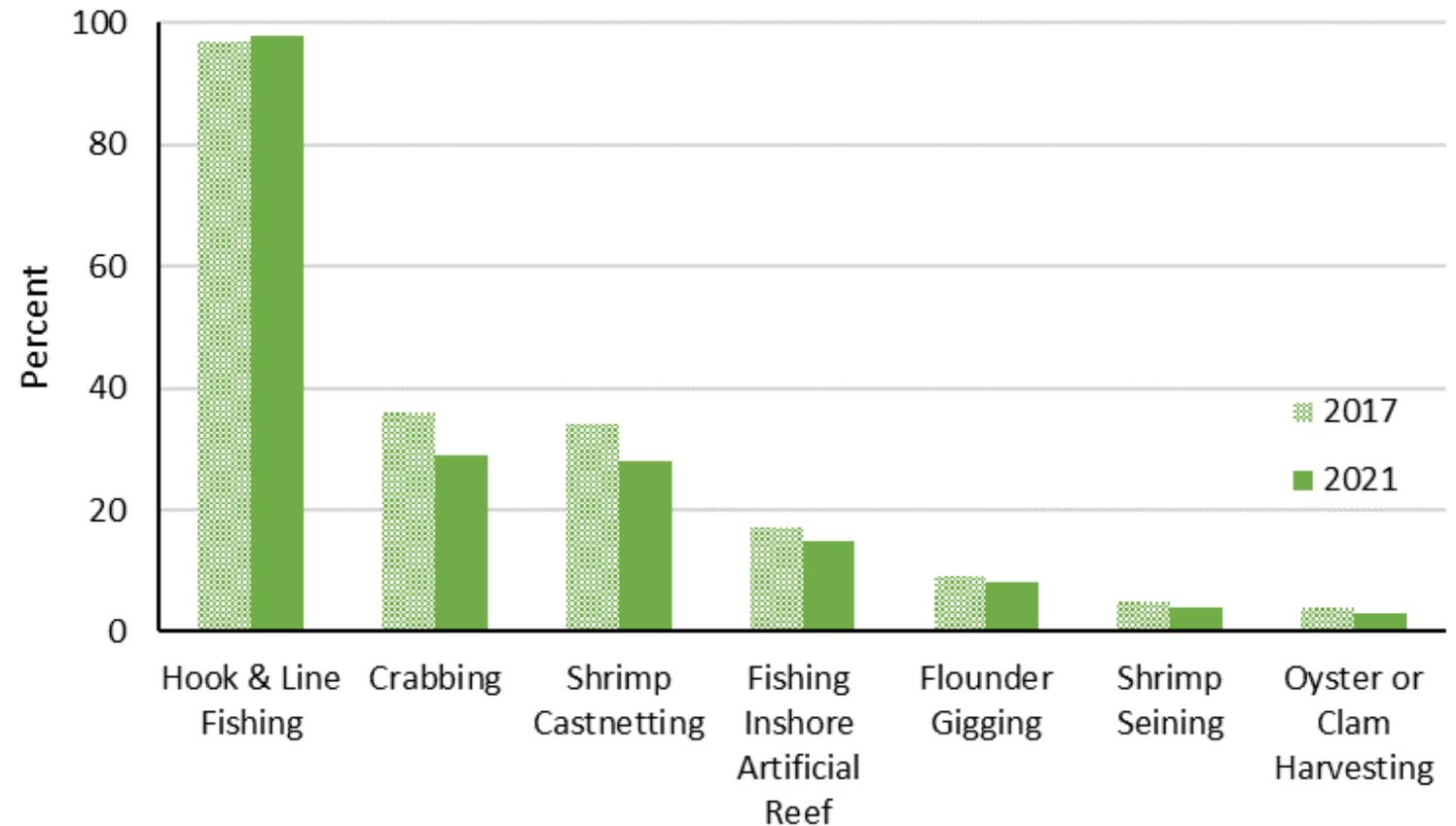
Angler = 54

Guide = 48

# Which of the following saltwater fishing activities did you do during 2021 in Georgia's inshore & nearshore waters?

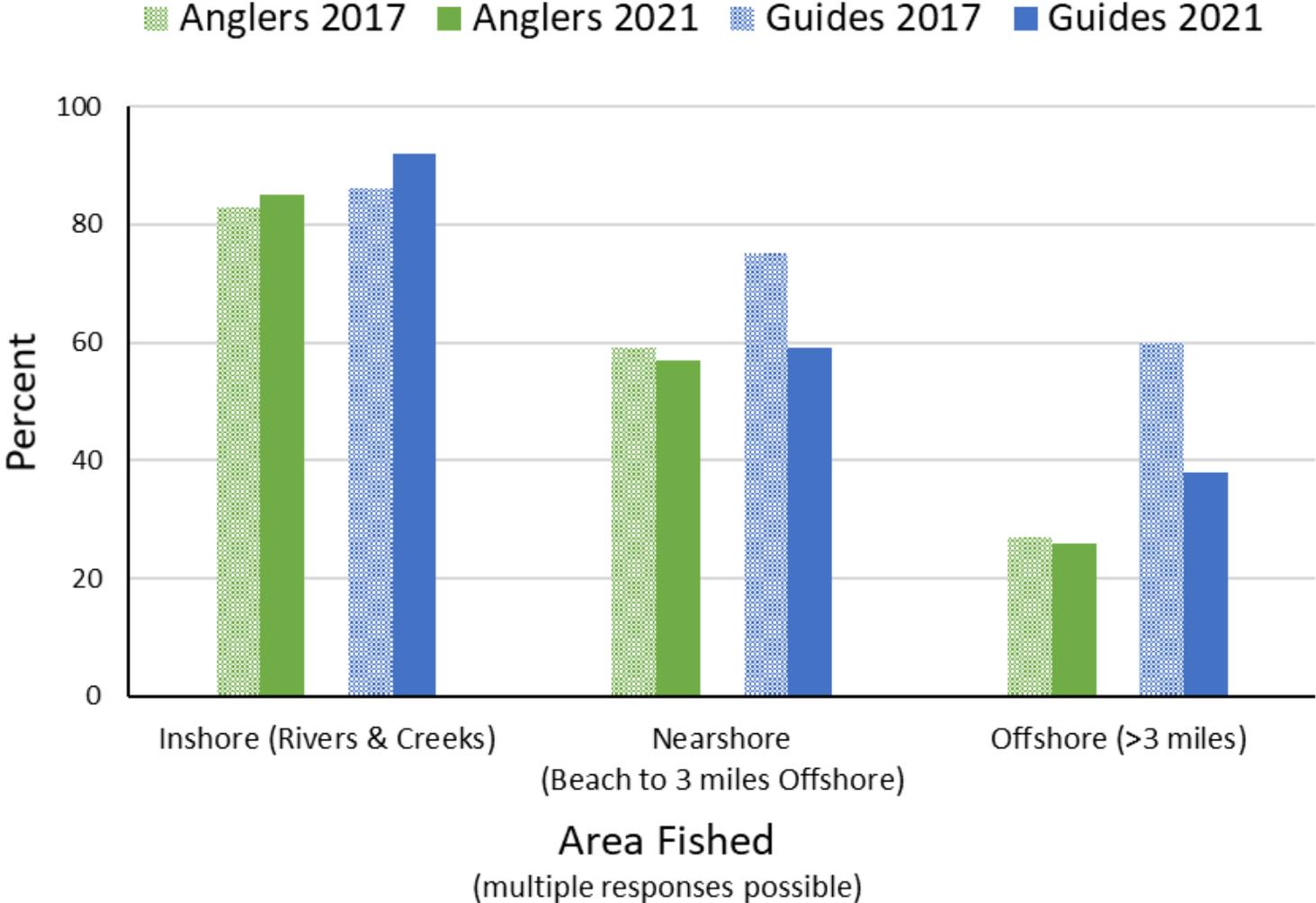


**Average number days fishing with hook and line = 24 days**



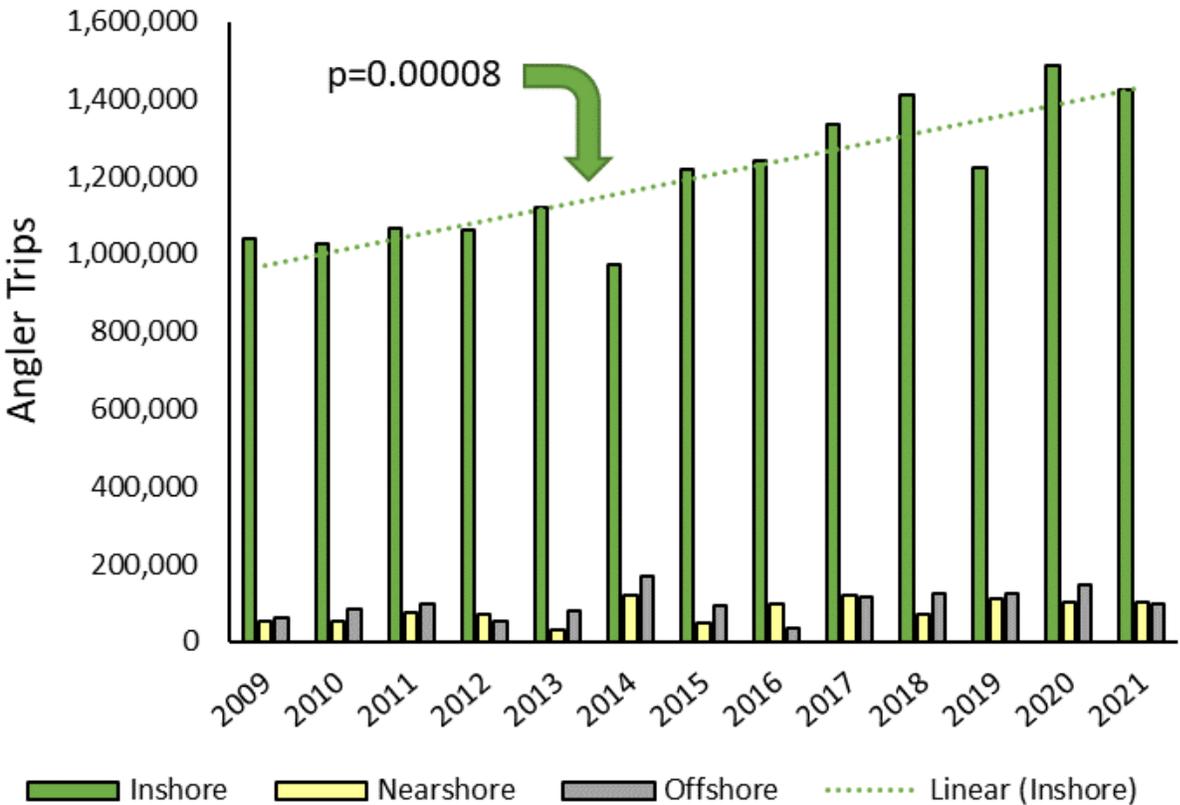
**Saltwater Fishing Activities**  
(multiple responses possible)

# In which of the following types of waters did you saltwater fish in Georgia during 2021?

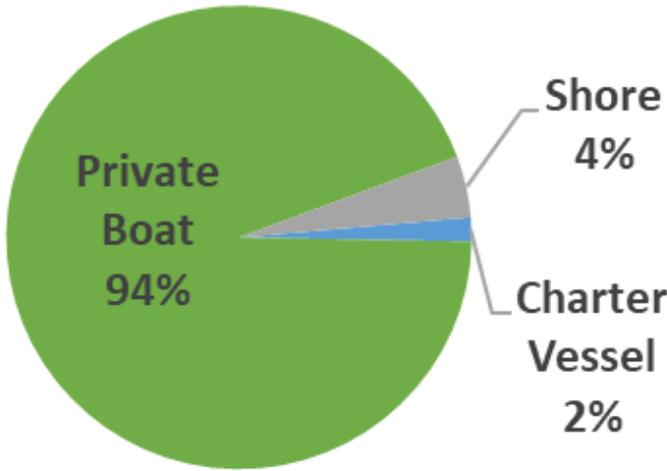


# Catch & Effort Data (MRIP)

Private Boat Angler Trips per Area Fished



Red Drum Harvest by Fishing Mode 2017-2021



Average # INSHORE trips (2017-2021)

**Anglers = 1,374,000**

**Guides = 20,800**

# Red Drum Fishing



	Anglers		Guides	
	2017	2021	2017	2021
Do you typically fish for Red Drum?	54%	52%	80%	89%
How many DAYS did you fish for Red Drum in last 12 months?	18	22	64	78
			2-week increase	

# What percent of LEGAL Red Drum do you release?

	Anglers		Guides	
	2017	2021	2017	2021
All/Nearly All	23%	21%	26%	28%
Average	57%	51%	67%	63%
None	14%	19%	3%	3%

# Why do you release legal size Red Drum?

For those **anglers** that indicated they sometimes released legal red drum:

(multiple responses possible)

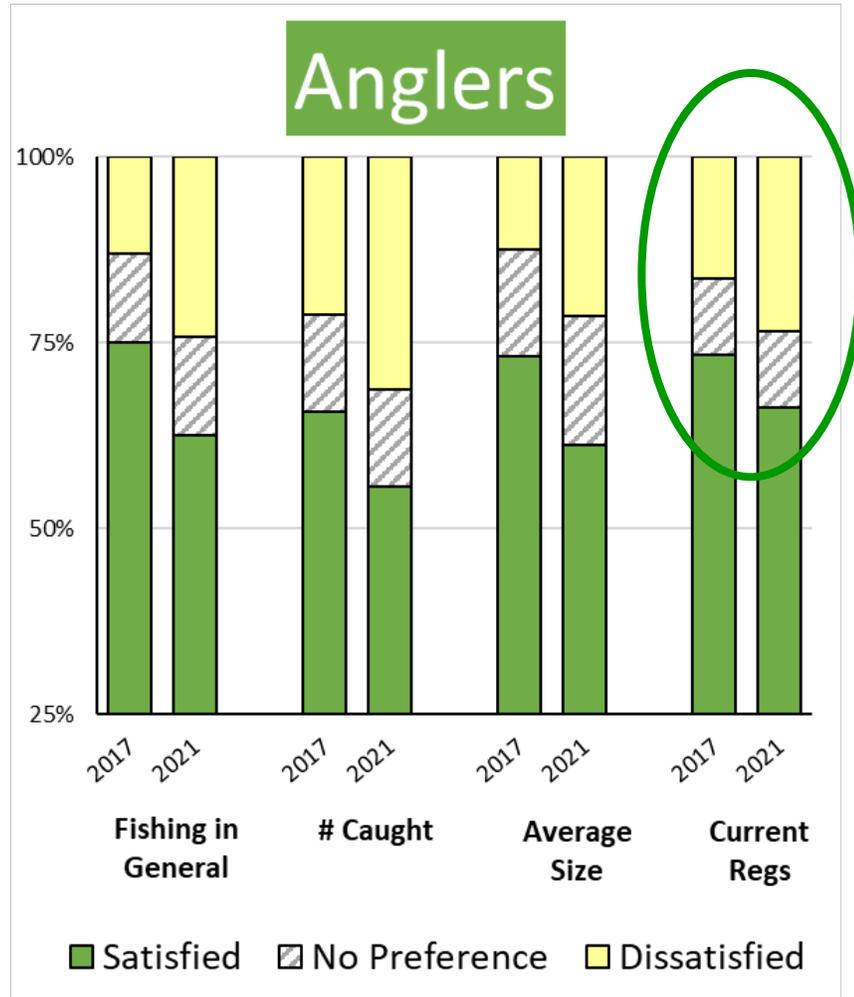
- Catch & Release (59%)
- Already Have Enough (36%)
  - Split evenly between
    - Reached Bag Limit
    - Don't want anymore regardless of whether reached limit or not
- Targeting Larger Legal Red Drum (21%)



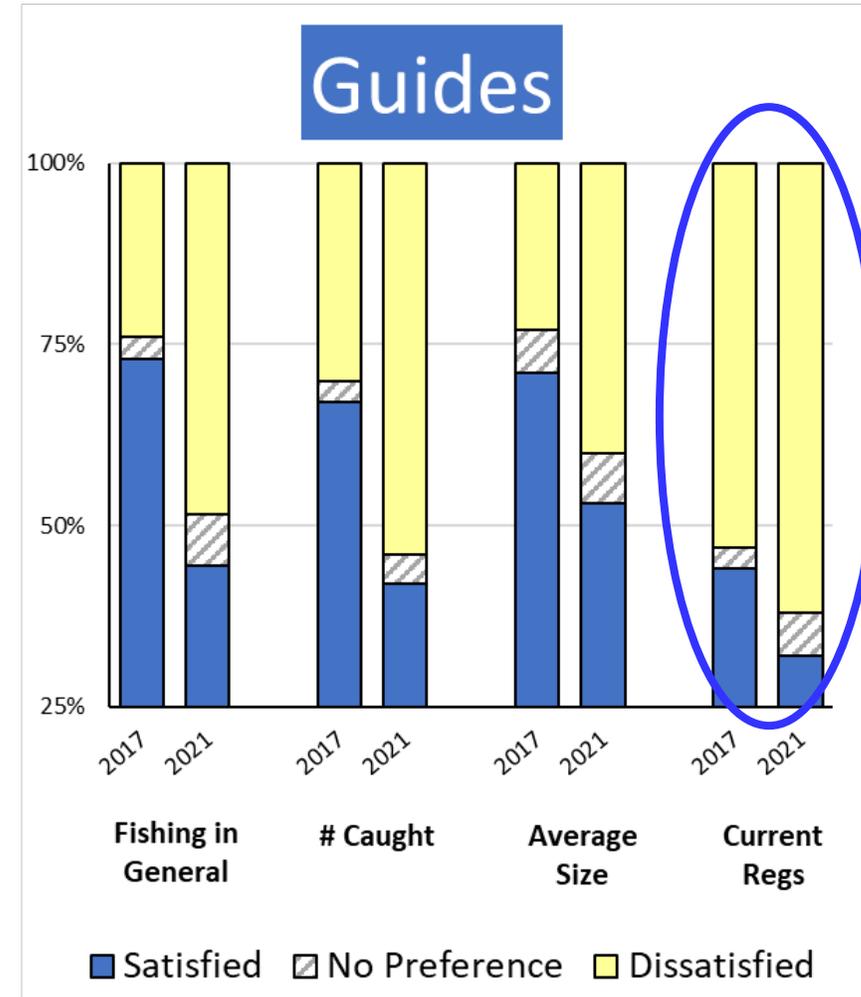
# Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your Red Drum fishing?



10% less satisfied



21% less satisfied



Satisfaction = "Very" + "Somewhat"

# Red Drum Fishing Satisfaction

If responded “**not satisfied**” with current regulations, what would make them more satisfied?

(open ended question with multiple responses possible)

Top 2 responses for BOTH **Anglers** & **Guides**

1. Decrease creel limit
2. Increase size



# Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your Red Drum fishing?

	Red Fishing in General	Number of Reds	Size of Reds	Current Red Regs
<b>Coastal</b>				<b>27%</b>
<b>Noncoastal</b>				<b>19%</b>
<b>Avid (&gt;10)</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Less Avid(≤10)</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Northern Guides</b>	<b>SATISFIED</b>	<b>SAT/DISS</b>	<b>SATISFIED</b>	<b>DISSATISFIED</b>
<b>Southern Guides</b>	<b>DISSATISFIED</b>	<b>DISSATISFIED</b>	<b>DISSATISFIED</b>	<b>DISSATISFIED</b>

# What would you like the slot size and creel limit to be?

## Support Creel Limit Reduction (<5 fish):

**Anglers**      2017 = 15%  
                    2021 = 30%

**Guides**        2017 = 68%  
                    2021 = 68%

## Support Slot Size Limit Change:

**Anglers** and **Guides** support increase of maximum size limit (>23")

**Guides** more likely to support increase of minimum size limit (>14")



# Out of these choices, what would you like the slot size to be?

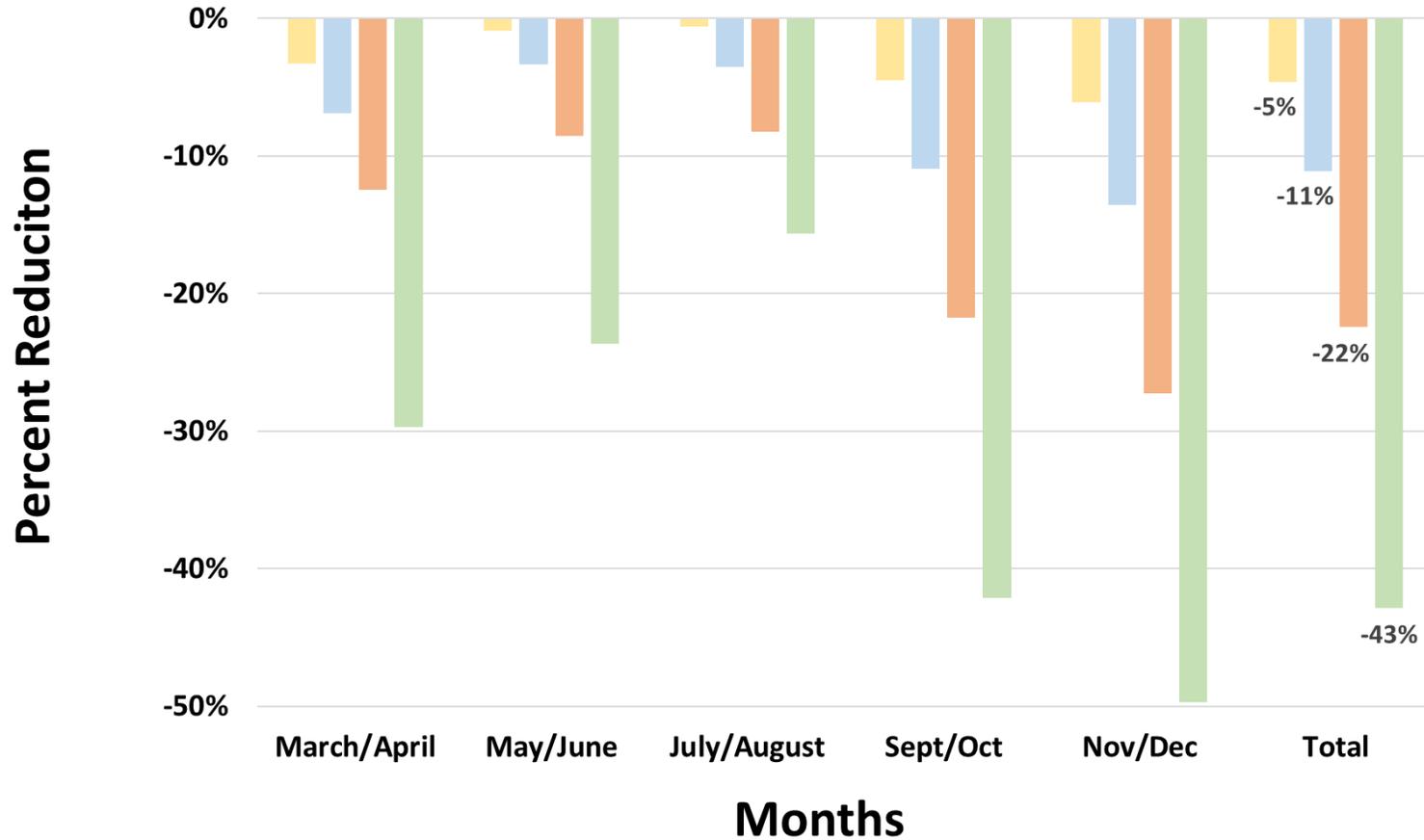
Slot Size	Anglers		Guides	
	2017	2021	2017	2021
14"-23" current	2	1*		3
14"-24"				
14"-25"	1	1*	3	
15"-23"			1	
15"-24"				
15"-25"	3	3	2	2
Other	N/A		N/A	1

# Slot & Creel Limits that Achieve 40% Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR)

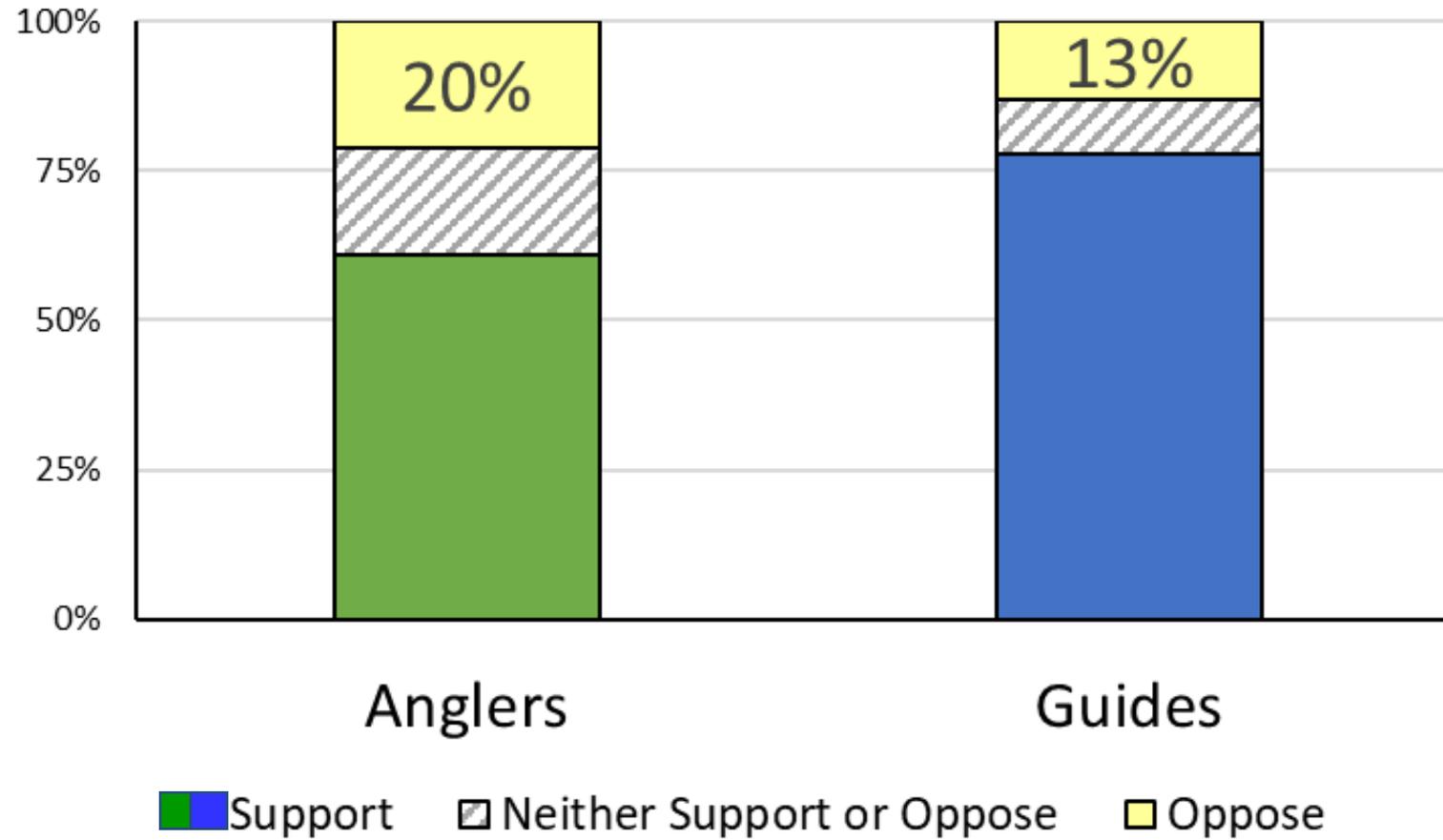
Creel	Slot Size			
	14"-23" current	14"-25"	15"-23"	15"-25"
1	52%	47%	53%	47%
2	47%	41%	48%	41%
3	44%	37%	46%	38%
4	43%	36%	45%	37%
5	42%	35%	44%	36%

# Red Drum ANGLER Bag Analysis Percent Reduction

<b>Average 2009-2021</b>	<b>4 fish -5%</b>	<b>3 fish -11%</b>	<b>2 fish -23%</b>	<b>1 fish -43%</b>
------------------------------	-----------------------	------------------------	------------------------	------------------------



# Would you support or oppose a vessel limit?

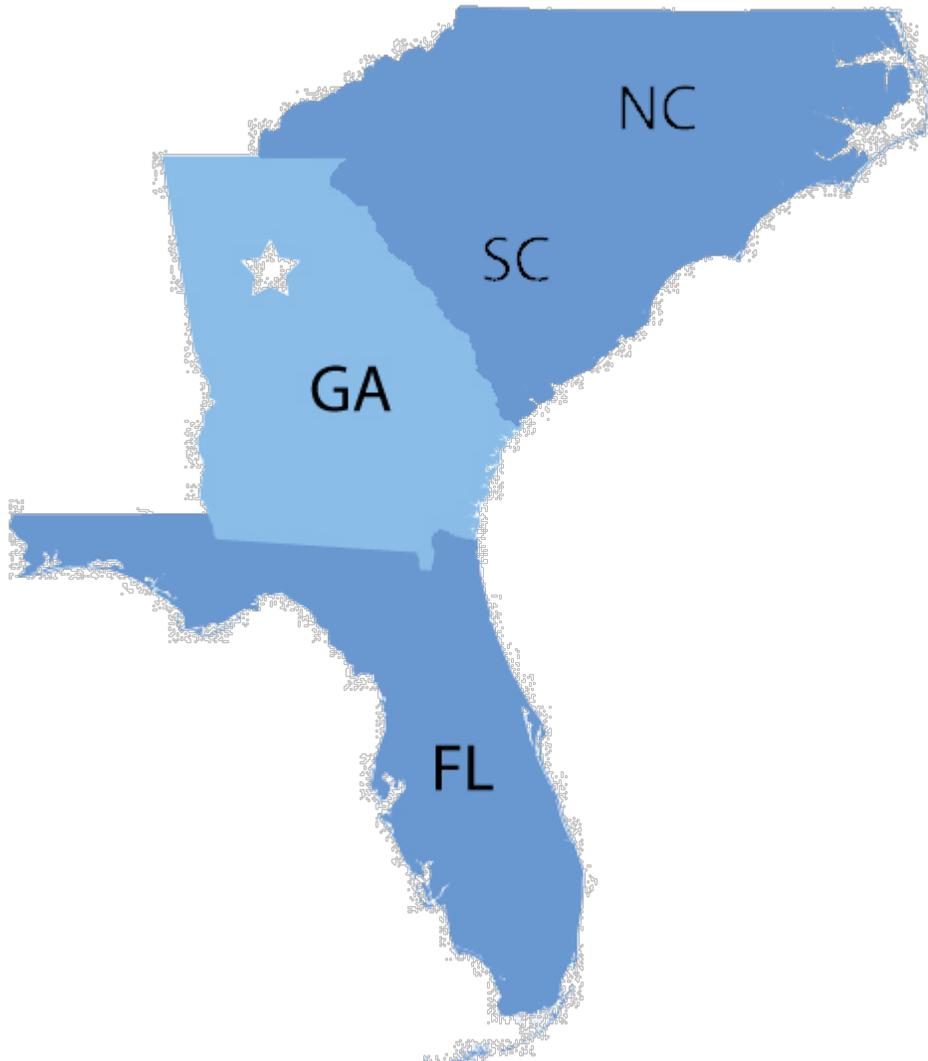


# Red Drum VESSEL Bag Analysis Percent Reduction

<b>Average 2009-2021</b>	<b>20 fish 0%</b>	<b>15 fish 0%</b>	<b>10 fish -2%</b>	<b>5 fish -15%</b>
------------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	------------------------	------------------------

<b>Average 2009-2021</b>	<b>10 fish -2%</b>	<b>9 fish -4%</b>	<b>8 fish -6%</b>	<b>7 fish -8%</b>	<b>6 fish -11%</b>	<b>5 fish -15%</b>
------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	------------------------	------------------------

# Southeast Red Drum Recreational Regulations



NC: 18"-27" 1/angler  
commercial harvest allowed

SC: 15"-23" 2/angler 6/vessel

GA: 14"-23" 5/angler

NEFL: 18"-27" 2/angler 8/vessel  
2022 change: **no capt/crew bag**  
reduce vessel limit to 4

# Next Steps

- Finfish Advisory Panel
  - June 1 - Brunswick
- Town Halls
  - June 6 - Savannah
  - June 9 - Brunswick
- Possible Rule briefing – August DNR Board
  - Public Hearing/Comment - September
- Possible Rule action – October DNR Board
- January 2023 implementation



# Questions?



# Red Drum ANGLER Bag Analysis: Percent Reduction

<b>Year</b>	<b>4 fish</b>	<b>3 fish</b>	<b>2 fish</b>	<b>1 fish</b>
<b>2009</b>	-5%	-11%	-22%	-40%
<b>2010</b>	-6%	-15%	-28%	-52%
<b>2011</b>	-3%	-6%	-14%	-37%
<b>2012</b>	-2%	-6%	-16%	-36%
<b>2013</b>	-4%	-9%	-18%	-43%
<b>2014</b>	-4%	-11%	-25%	-48%
<b>2015</b>	-4%	-9%	-19%	-37%
<b>2016</b>	-6%	-13%	-25%	-46%
<b>2017</b>	-4%	-10%	-20%	-41%
<b>2018</b>	-11%	-22%	-36%	-55%
<b>2019</b>	-6%	-15%	-30%	-49%
<b>2020</b>	-5%	-12%	-20%	-34%
<b>2021</b>	-3%	-8%	-21%	-44%
<b>Average</b>	<b>-5%</b>	<b>-11%</b>	<b>-23%</b>	<b>-43%</b>

# In general, are there any things that take away from your saltwater fishing satisfaction or cause you not to fish as much as you would like in saltwater in Georgia?

## Nothing Did

### Anglers

2017 = 46%

2021 = 30%

12% not enough time & 12% restrictive regulations

27% not enough time & 21% distance/travel time

### Guides

2017 = 48%

2021 = 45%

17% not enough fish & 17% restrictive regulations

25% not enough fish & 11% red snapper  
limits/overabundant

(open ended question with multiple responses possible)