



Red Drum Update

Finfish Advisory Panel Meeting

December 3, 2025

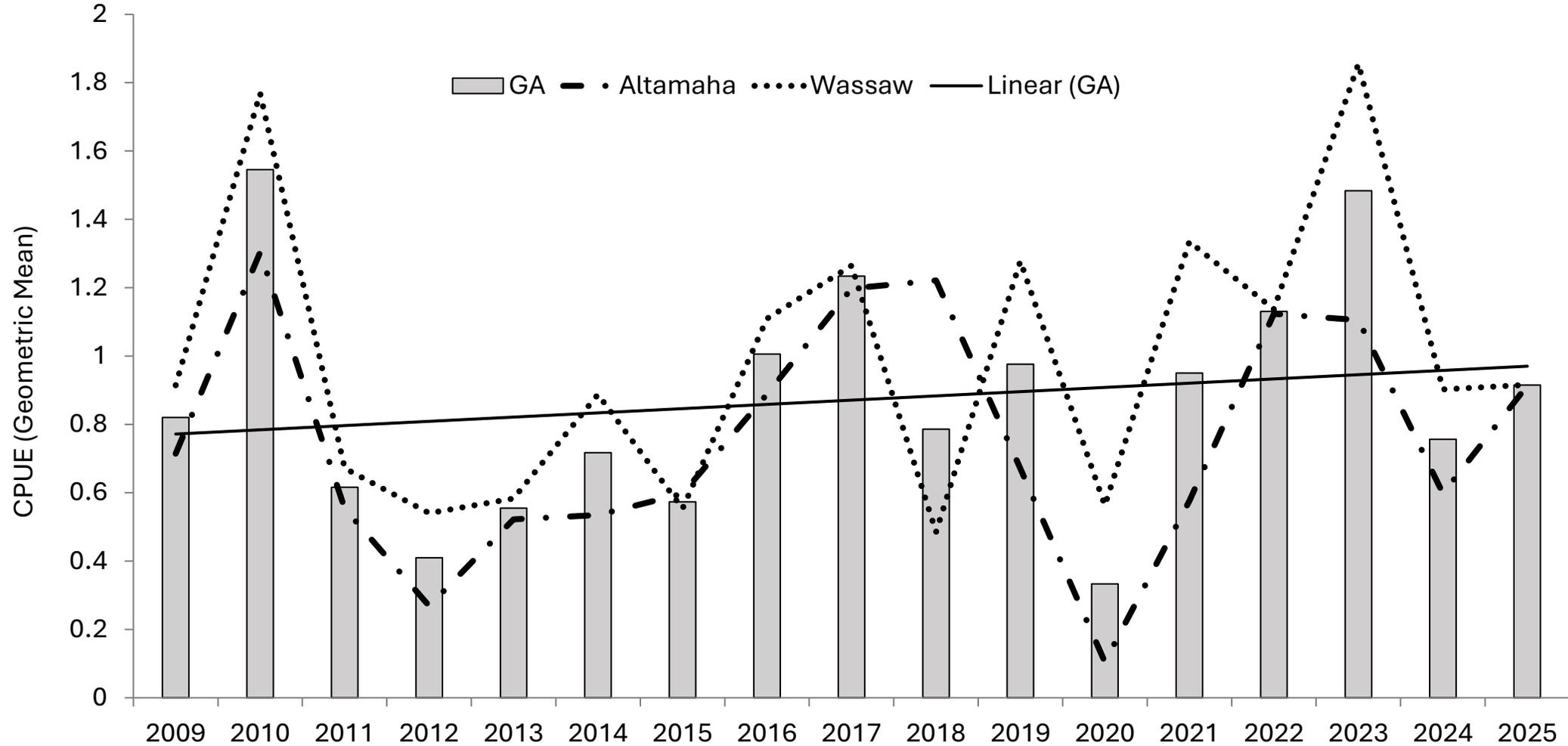
Mission Statement:

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.

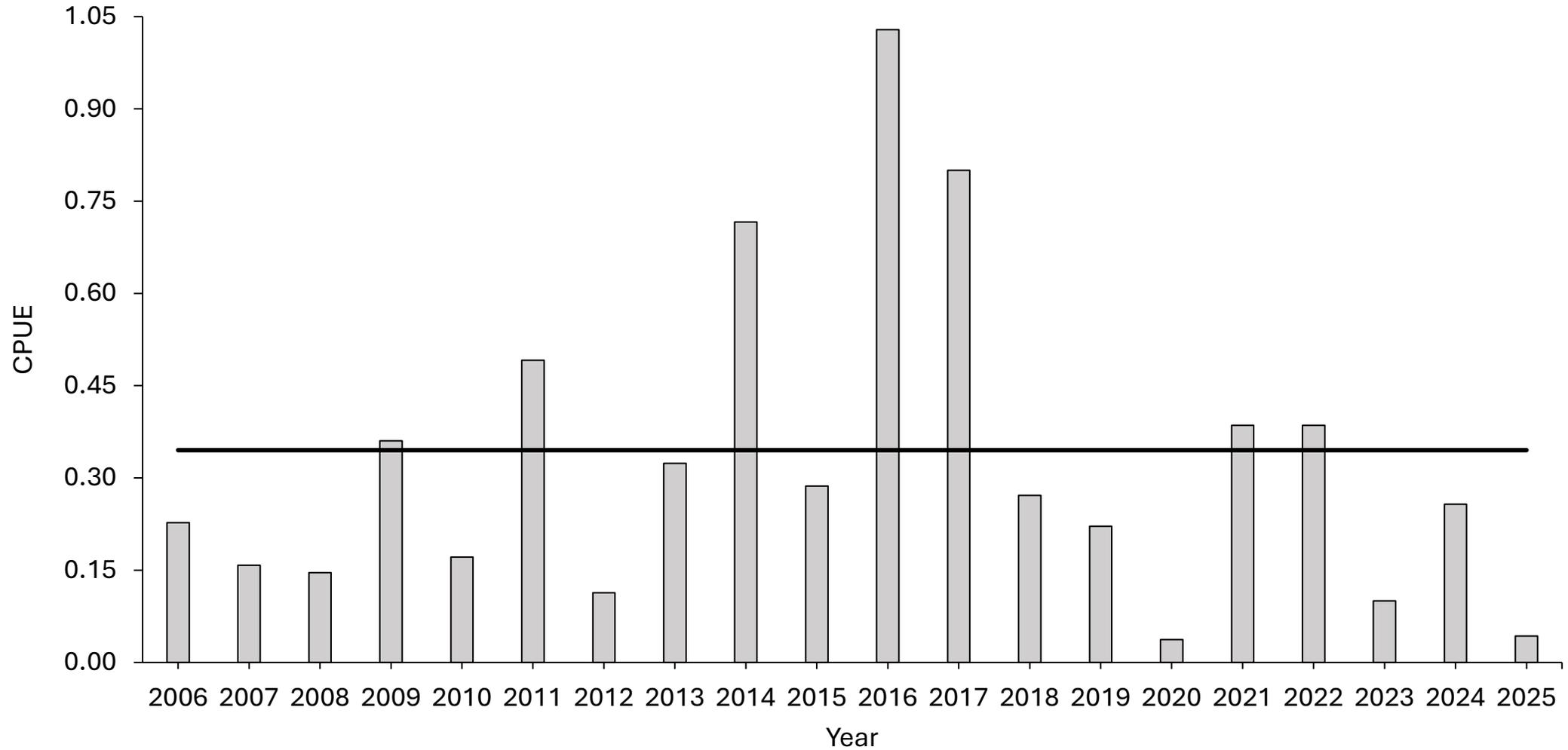
2025 Georgia Data Updates



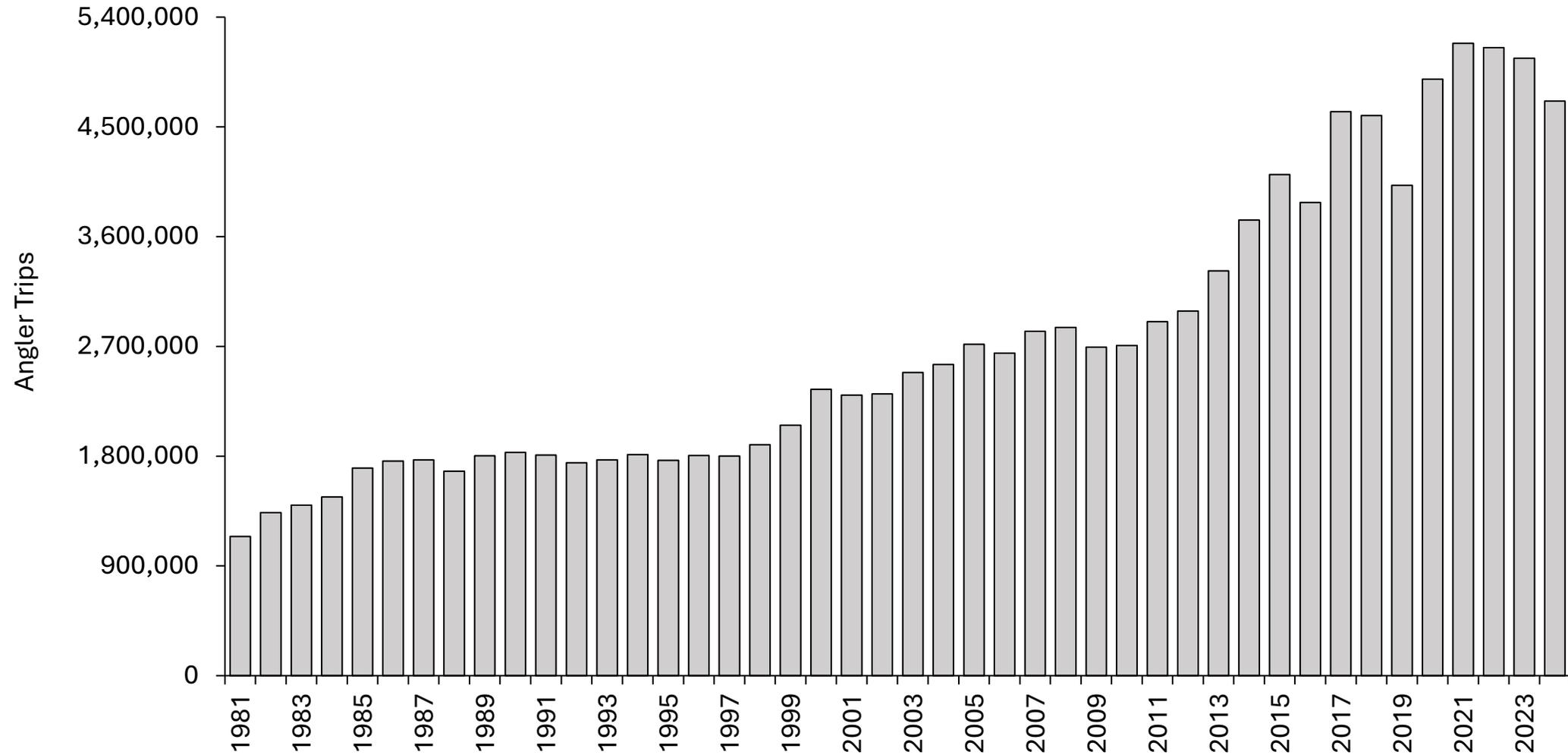
GA MSPHS Gilnet Survey



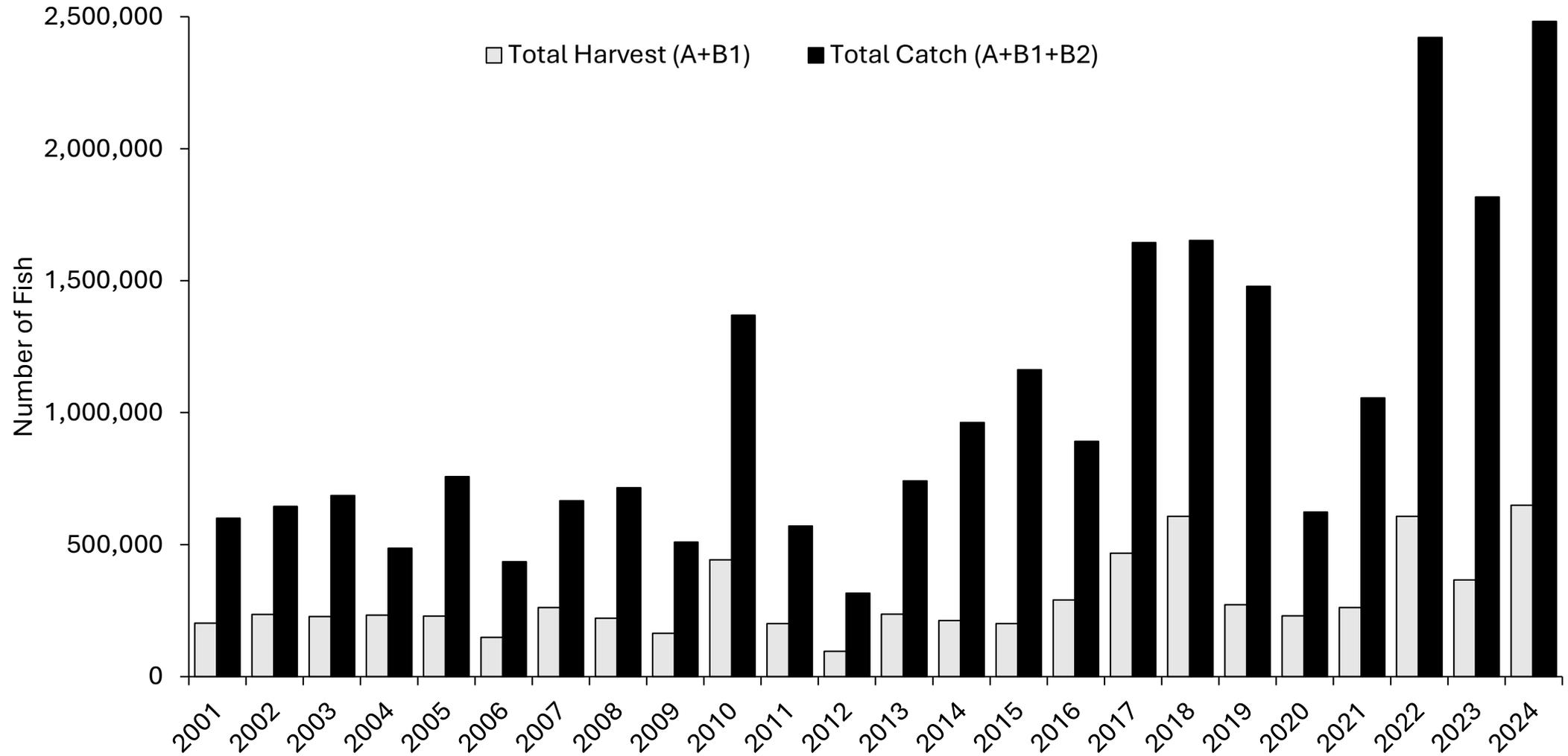
GA Coastal Longline Survey



MRIP Effort



MRIP Landings

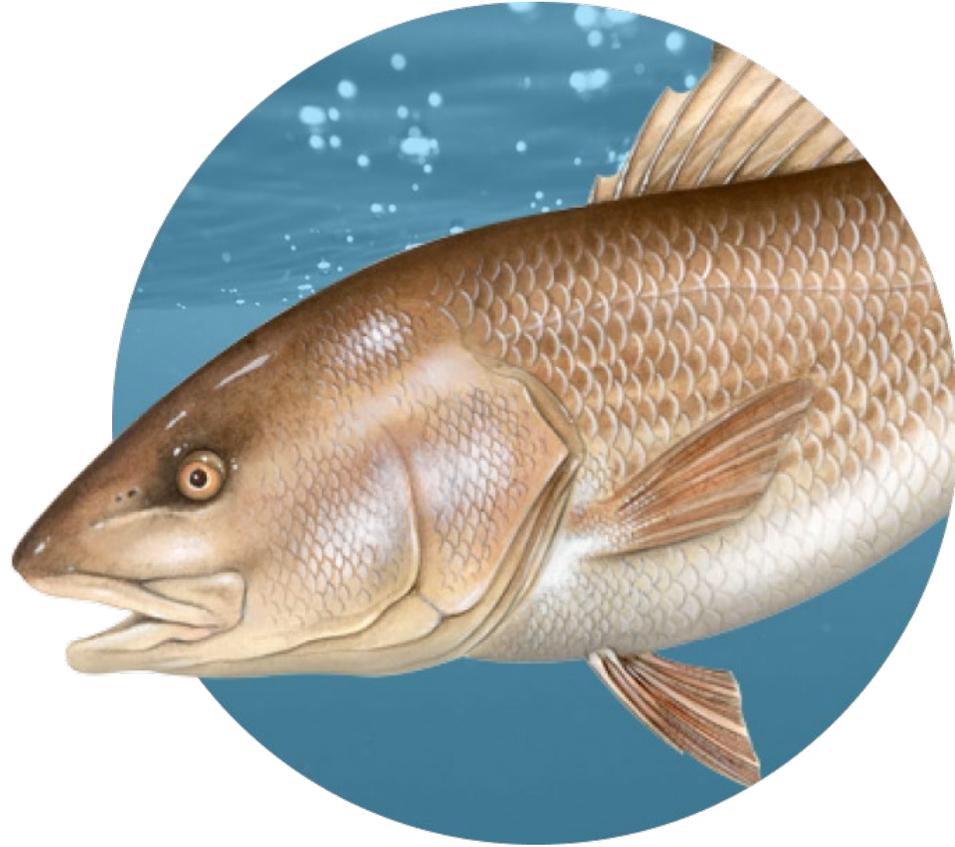


Outside Data

We have been made aware of erroneous Red Drum information and data circulating among the public in the past few weeks

- This information is incorrect and misleading
- Important points
 - CRD does not release raw data to the public
 - Survey information for Red Drum are available in a variety of places including CRD status and stock assessment reports on CRD, SEDAR, and ASMFC websites
 - Real fisheries data is always “noisy”
 - Surveys have had low catch years, but never “0” catch
 - There is no draft CRD Addendum II compliance plan yet

Red Drum Management Activities



Red Drum Management

Red Drum are managed regionally by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

- Compact among states along the Atlantic Coast
- Georgia is a participant
 - Supply data and expertise to assessments and management
- Compelled to follow fishery management plans developed by ASMFC

ASMFC Fall 2024 stock assessment :

- Stock is **overfished** and **overfishing** is occurring
 - Assessment passed peer review
 - Accepted by ASMFC Sciaenids Board for management
 - Board requested additional information to inform management
- **Overfishing:** fish harvested faster than they can reproduce
- **Overfished:** fish stock is depleted to a level where its ability to replenish itself has been compromised



Management Response

- Sciaenids Board voted to revise Amendment 2 to the Red Drum FMP
 - Revised Amendment 2 goals:
 - Account for new assessment projections
 - Allow flexibility for regulation changes
 - Not unfairly punish states that have already taken management measures
- As part of the Southern Stock, Georgia must make changes to reduce fishing mortality levels
 - At minimum reductions must meet F30% threshold
 - Multiple options available to attain reduction

Fishery Management Plan Changes Over Time

- 1984 – Red Drum jointly managed between ASMFC and SAFMC
 - Main purpose: control growth overfishing and prevent recruitment overfishing
 - Lacked information on relative abundance for juveniles and adults
- 1991 – Amendment 1
 - Assessment conducted in 1990 determined stock was overfished → SSBR ratio was 2-3%
 - Defined OY → SSBR \geq 30%; 40% was considered too stringent at the time
 - Fishing rate would need to be reduced to allow for 30% escapement
 - Required measures implemented by states must attain an SSBR $>$ 10%
- 1998 – SAFMC adopted new OY and Overfishing definitions
 - OY = 40% SPR
 - Overfishing if below 30% SPR, with a threshold of 10% SPR
- 1999 – Red Drum shifted to ASMFC
- 2002 - Amendment 2
 - Overfishing still defined when SPR is below 30%, target fishing rate should allow for 40% SPR
 - SPR values had increased from 2-3% to 15-18%; Commission recognized tighter restrictions were needed
 - Focus continued to be on escapement rate

Current Red Drum Management

- **Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR):** reproductive capacity of a fish stock under fishing pressure compared to its unfished potential
- Current management target of 40% SPR with an overfished threshold of 30% SPR
- Management based on static SPR targets identified in 2002 FMP Amendment 2:
 - Assessment directly estimated an SPR value attained by regulations
 - GA 14-23”, 5 fish bag = SPR value of 42%
- The 2024 stock assessment used new methodology and could not reproduce these prior estimates
 - Instead estimated population projection estimates of SPR over time
 - Determined reduction of **fishing mortality (F)** needed to achieve target SPR levels
 - Based on various recruitment, selectivity, effort assumptions across the region
 - Change in methodology from 2004 to 2024 necessitated change in management approach

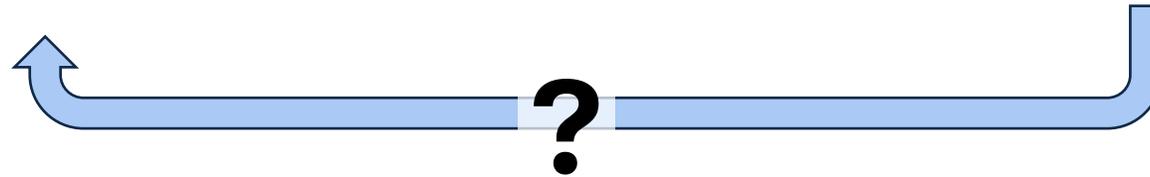
Red Drum Management Approaches

2002-Current

Regulations → Static SPR

2025+

Regulations → Reduction in F → Long-term dynamic SPR projections



Next steps

- South Carolina and Georgia will submit proposals by April 1, 2026 with regulatory options that, at minimum, achieve the 14.4% reduction associated with $F_{30\%}$
- The Board will review South Carolina and Georgia's proposals at its May 2026 meeting. The implementation date for all new measures for Maryland, PRFC, South Carolina, and Georgia is September 1, 2026
- In the meantime, CRD will seek public input for new regulations
 - “Straw poll” at September public meeting inconclusive
 - Will attempt to narrow options down to one or a few based on reduction level and input
 - Can submit potential options to the Sciaenids Board for approval
- After Sciaenids Board approval, will seek approval by DNR Board, then implementation

Georgia Regulations



Georgia 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

Where We Were in 2022

- In 2022 GA CRD investigated changes to Red Drum regulations in response to poor recruitment years and public comments
- Held a series of public town halls to explore options
- Proposed a 3 fish bag, 9 fish vessel limit, no captain retention for charters
 - Could not evaluate length limits at the time
- Chose to table any changes due to potential results of upcoming ASMFC Benchmark Stock Assessment
 - Could have potential changes in stock status
 - Could provide tools for evaluating length limits

Other State Regulations

South Carolina, Georgia, and east coast of Florida are in the Southern Stock

- South Carolina
 - Slot Limit: Not less than 15" no more than 23" total length
 - Daily Bag Limit: 2 fish per person per day; 6 fish per vessel limit
 - Changes being proposed (6 options):
 - 1 or 2 fish per day; 2-6 fish vessel limit
 - 17-19" min – 23-25" max (6-7" slot width)
- Florida
 - Changed prior to assessment
 - NE FL
 - Slot Limit: Not less than 18" no more than 27" total length
 - Daily Bag Limit: 1 fish per person per day; 4 fish per vessel limit
 - Indian River Lagoon
 - Catch and Release only

Reduction Levels

- Stock assessment projections determined reductions in fishing mortality needed to achieve SSB levels

Projected Fishing Mortality	Catch Reduction Need from 2019-2021 Average F Catch	Years to SSB Threshold (9,917 mt)	Years to SSB Target (13,250 mt)
F _{40%}	28.1%	5	32
F _{35%}	21.4%	6	NA
F _{30%}	14.4%	23	NA

Options

Potential Regulation Options

Change regulations to meet fishing mortality reduction targets

- F30% = -14.4%
- F35% = -21.4%
- F40% = -28.1%



- **Recommend a target of F35% or higher reduction:**

- More precautionary approach for uncertainty in the fishery
- Uncertainty in how the fishery will respond
- Larger buffer given increasing fishing effort
- Greater potential for regional population recovery
- Less likely to have to make additional changes in the near future based on new assessments

Conclusion

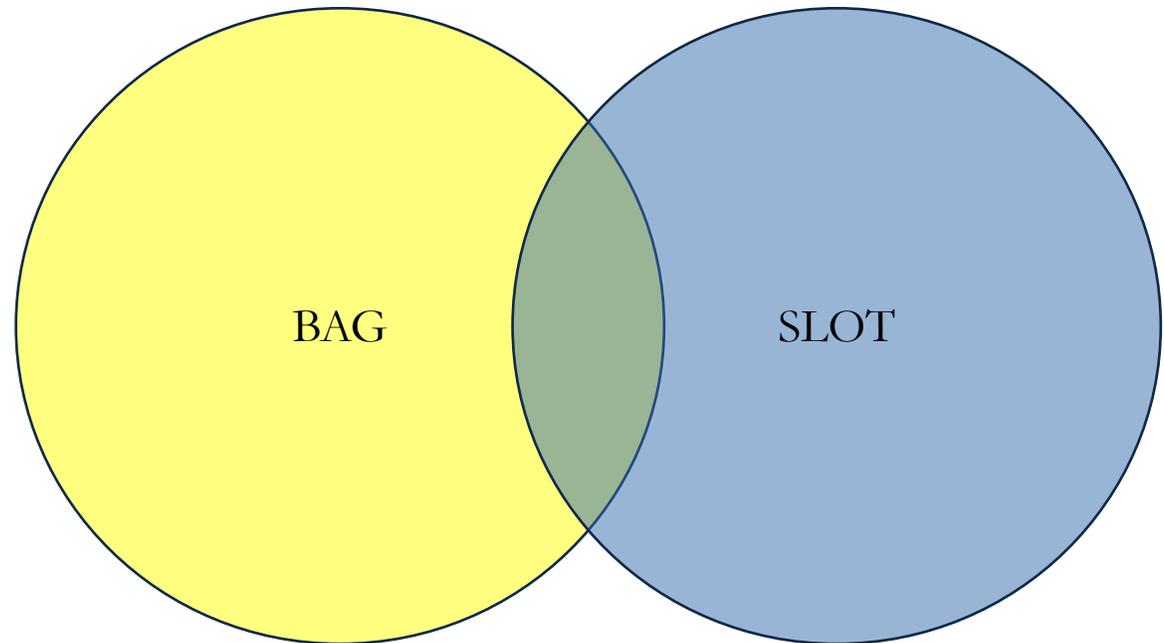
GA needs to make regulation changes in order to achieve reductions in F

- Prefer a minimum reduction in F to achieve at least an SPR of 35%
- New regulations could exceed 40% SPR
- Multiple regulation options exist to satisfy requirements
 - Bag
 - Slot
 - Bag + Slot
- Need public input for guidance, although ultimate decision will depend on various biological, social, and political factors

Options

Potential Regulation Options

- Bag only
 - Daily limit
 - Vessel limit
- Slot only
 - Raise lower limit
 - Maintain or change upper limit
 - Cannot retain Red Drum >27" TL - ASMFC
- Bag/Slot Combinations
- No charter captain retention
 - Beneficial, but minimal reduction
- Gear and handling practices
 - Beneficial, but not measurable



Regulations

- Bag only

Proposed Bag	Proposed Vessel	Percent Reduction
4	No Vessel	-6.2%
4	12	-6.2%
4	8	-7.1%
3	No Vessel	-12.5%
3	9	-12.5%
3	6	-14.3%
2	No Vessel	-21.7%
2	9	-21.7%
2	6	-21.7%
2	4	-23.9%

- Slot only

	Slot Only
15-23	-12.7%
15-24	-11.4%
15-25	-11.2%
15-26	-10.5%
15-27	-10.1%
16-23	-29.5%
16-24	-27.7%
16-25	-27.4%
16-26	-26.5%
16-27	-25.9%
18-27	-55.3%

*Cannot retain Red Drum >27" TL - ASMFC

- New reduction estimates not comparable to 2022 estimates

Regulations – 4 Fish Bag

Potential Options

- Slot and bag
 - F30% = -14.4%
 - F35% = -21.4%
 - F40% = -28.1%

4 / No Vessel		Lower				
		14	15	16	17	18
Upper	23	-10.7%	-18.1%	-33.9%	-49.2%	-62.7%
	24	-8.8%	-16.9%	-32.2%	-47.1%	-60.4%
	25	-8.5%	-16.7%	-31.9%	-46.7%	-59.9%
	26	-7.6%	-16.1%	-31.1%	-45.8%	-58.8%
	27	-6.9%	-15.7%	-30.5%	-45.1%	-58.1%

4 / 12 Vessel		Lower				
		14	15	16	17	18
Upper	23	-10.8%	-18.2%	-33.9%	-49.2%	-62.7%
	24	-8.9%	-16.9%	-32.2%	-47.1%	-60.4%
	25	-8.5%	-16.7%	-31.9%	-46.8%	-60.0%
	26	-7.6%	-16.1%	-31.1%	-45.8%	-58.8%
	27	-7.0%	-15.7%	-30.6%	-45.1%	-58.1%

4 / 8 Vessel		Lower				
		14	15	16	17	18
Upper	23	-11.4%	-18.7%	-34.4%	-49.6%	-63.0%
	24	-9.5%	-17.5%	-32.7%	-47.5%	-60.7%
	25	-9.2%	-17.3%	-32.4%	-47.1%	-60.2%
	26	-8.3%	-16.7%	-31.6%	-46.2%	-59.1%
	27	-7.6%	-16.3%	-31.1%	-45.5%	-58.4%

Regulations – 3 Fish Bag

Potential Options

- Slot and bag
 - F30% = -14.4%
 - F35% = -21.4%
 - F40% = -28.1%

		Lower				
		14	15	16	17	18
Upper	23	-16.7%	-23.6%	-38.3%	-52.6%	-65.2%
	24	-14.9%	-22.5%	-36.7%	-50.6%	-63.0%
	25	-14.6%	-22.3%	-36.5%	-50.3%	-62.6%
	26	-13.8%	-21.7%	-35.7%	-49.4%	-61.6%
	27	-13.2%	-21.4%	-35.2%	-48.8%	-60.9%

		Lower				
		14	15	16	17	18
Upper	23	-16.7%	-23.6%	-38.3%	-52.6%	-65.2%
	24	-15.0%	-22.5%	-36.7%	-50.7%	-63.0%
	25	-14.6%	-22.3%	-36.5%	-50.3%	-62.6%
	26	-13.8%	-21.7%	-35.7%	-49.4%	-61.6%
	27	-13.2%	-21.4%	-35.2%	-48.8%	-60.9%

		Lower				
		14	15	16	17	18
Upper	23	-18.4%	-25.2%	-39.6%	-53.5%	-65.9%
	24	-16.7%	-24.0%	-38.0%	-51.6%	-63.8%
	25	-16.3%	-23.8%	-37.7%	-51.3%	-63.4%
	26	-15.5%	-23.3%	-37.0%	-50.4%	-62.4%
	27	-14.9%	-22.9%	-36.5%	-49.8%	-61.7%

Regulations – 2 Fish Bag

Potential Options

- Slot and bag
 - F30% = -14.4%
 - F35% = -21.4%
 - F40% = -28.1%

2/ No Vessel		Lower				
		14	15	16	17	18
Upper	23	-25.4%	-31.6%	-44.8%	-57.6%	-68.9%
	24	-23.9%	-30.6%	-43.4%	-55.8%	-66.9%
	25	-23.6%	-30.4%	-43.1%	-55.5%	-66.5%
	26	-22.8%	-29.9%	-42.4%	-54.7%	-65.6%
	27	-22.3%	-29.6%	-42.0%	-54.1%	-65.0%

2/ 6 Vessel		Lower				
		14	15	16	17	18
Upper	23	-25.5%	-31.6%	-44.8%	-57.6%	-68.9%
	24	-23.9%	-30.6%	-43.4%	-55.8%	-66.9%
	25	-23.6%	-30.4%	-43.1%	-55.5%	-66.6%
	26	-22.8%	-29.9%	-42.5%	-54.7%	-65.6%
	27	-22.3%	-29.6%	-42.0%	-54.2%	-65.0%

2/ 4 Vessel		Lower				
		14	15	16	17	18
Upper	23	-27.5%	-33.5%	-46.4%	-58.7%	-69.7%
	24	-26.0%	-32.5%	-45.0%	-57.1%	-67.8%
	25	-25.7%	-32.4%	-44.7%	-56.8%	-67.5%
	26	-25.0%	-31.9%	-44.1%	-56.0%	-66.6%
	27	-24.5%	-31.6%	-43.6%	-55.4%	-66.0%

Regulations

Potential Options

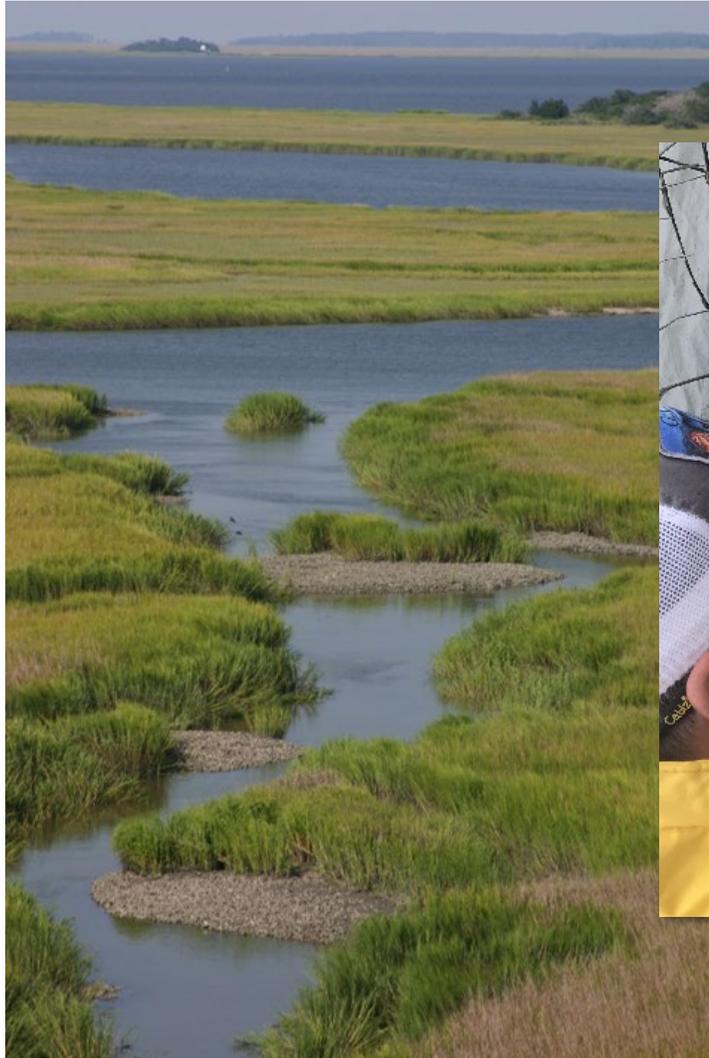
- Slot and bag
 - F30% = -14.4%
 - F35% = -21.4%
 - F40% = -28.1%

Upper	2	Lower				
		14	15	16	17	18
	23	-25.5%	-31.6%	-44.8%	-57.6%	-68.9%
	24	-23.9%	-30.6%	-43.4%	-55.8%	-66.9%
	25	-23.6%	-30.4%	-43.1%	-55.5%	-66.6%
	26	-22.8%	-29.9%	-42.5%	-54.7%	-65.6%
	27	-22.3%	-29.6%	-42.0%	-54.2%	-65.0%

Higher	3	Lower				
		14	15	16	17	18
	23	-16.7%	-23.6%	-38.3%	-52.6%	-65.2%
	24	-15.0%	-22.5%	-36.7%	-50.7%	-63.0%
	25	-14.6%	-22.3%	-36.5%	-50.3%	-62.6%
	26	-13.8%	-21.7%	-35.7%	-49.4%	-61.6%
	27	-13.2%	-21.4%	-35.2%	-48.8%	-60.9%

Higher	4	Lower				
		14	15	16	17	18
	23	-10.8%	-18.2%	-33.9%	-49.2%	-62.7%
	24	-8.9%	-16.9%	-32.2%	-47.1%	-60.4%
	25	-8.5%	-16.7%	-31.9%	-46.8%	-60.0%
	26	-7.6%	-16.1%	-31.1%	-45.8%	-58.8%
	27	-7.0%	-15.7%	-30.6%	-45.1%	-58.1%

Questions?





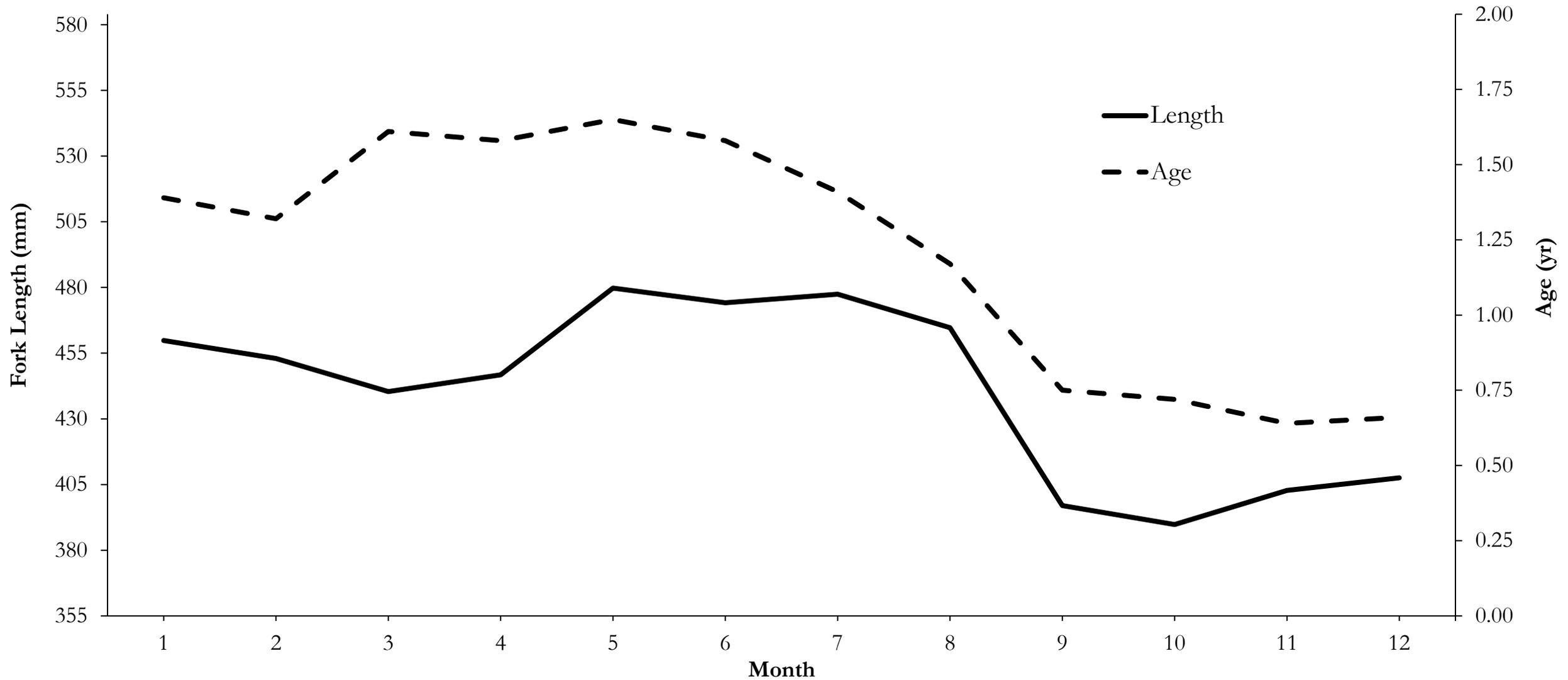
Fishery Management Plan Changes Over Time

- 1984 – Red Drum jointly managed between the Commission and the South Atlantic Council
 - Main purpose: control growth overfishing and prevent recruitment overfishing
 - Lacked information on relative abundance for juveniles and adults
 - Could not estimate MSY or YPR
 - Concerns centered around increasing fishing pressure and loss of suitable habitat as coastal areas continue to develop
 - Implemented minimum size of 14” TL, maximum size of 32” TL allowing for 2 fish over 32”
- 1991 – Amendment 1
 - Assessment was conducted in 1990
 - Determined stock was overfished → SSBR ratio was 2-3%
 - Concerns centered around the possible development of an EEZ fishery and high fishing pressure on juvenile Red Drum was impacting escapement rates
 - Defined OY → SSBR \geq 30%; 40% was considered too stringent at the time
 - Fishing rate would need to be reduced to allow for 30% escapement
 - Required the following for implementation
 - Measures implemented by states must attain an SSBR $>$ 10%
 - Two scenarios were proposed: 18 – 27” TL 5 fish, with one fish $>$ 27” 14 – 27” TL 5 Fish
 - Federal prohibition on harvest

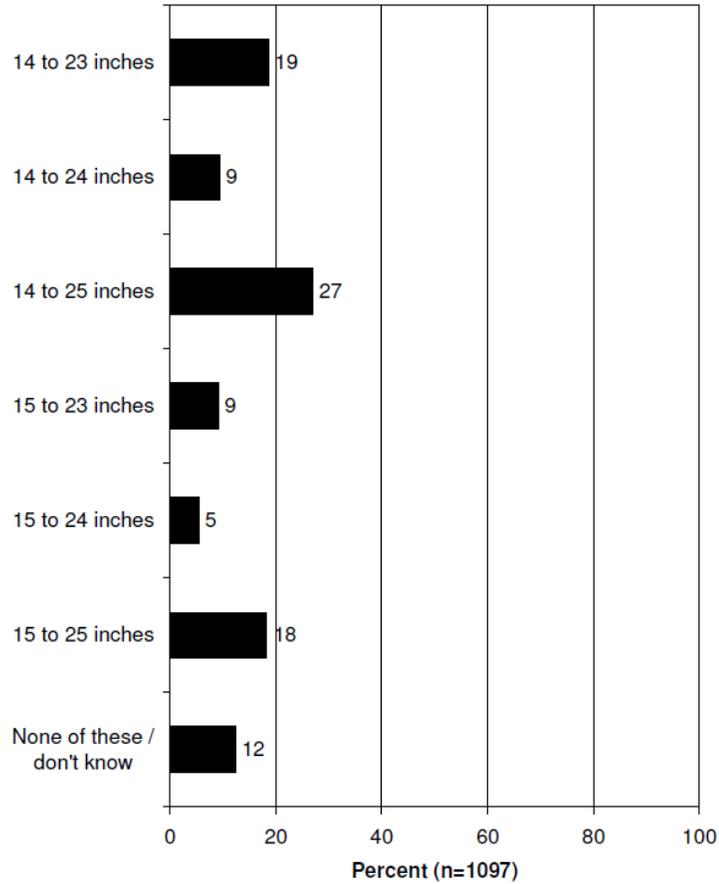
Fishery Management Plan Changes Over Time

- 1998
 - Council adopted new OY and Overfishing definitions
 - OY = 40% SPR
 - Overfishing if below 30% SPR, with a threshold of 10% SPR
 - Discussions about Red Drum management being shifted solely to the Commission began
- 1999 – Red Drum shifted to the Commission
- 2002 - Amendment 2
 - Overfishing still defined when SPR is below 30%
 - SPR values had increased from 2-3% to 15-18%; Commission recognized tighter restrictions were needed
 - Focus continued to be on escapement rate
 - Target fishing rate should allow for 40% SPR

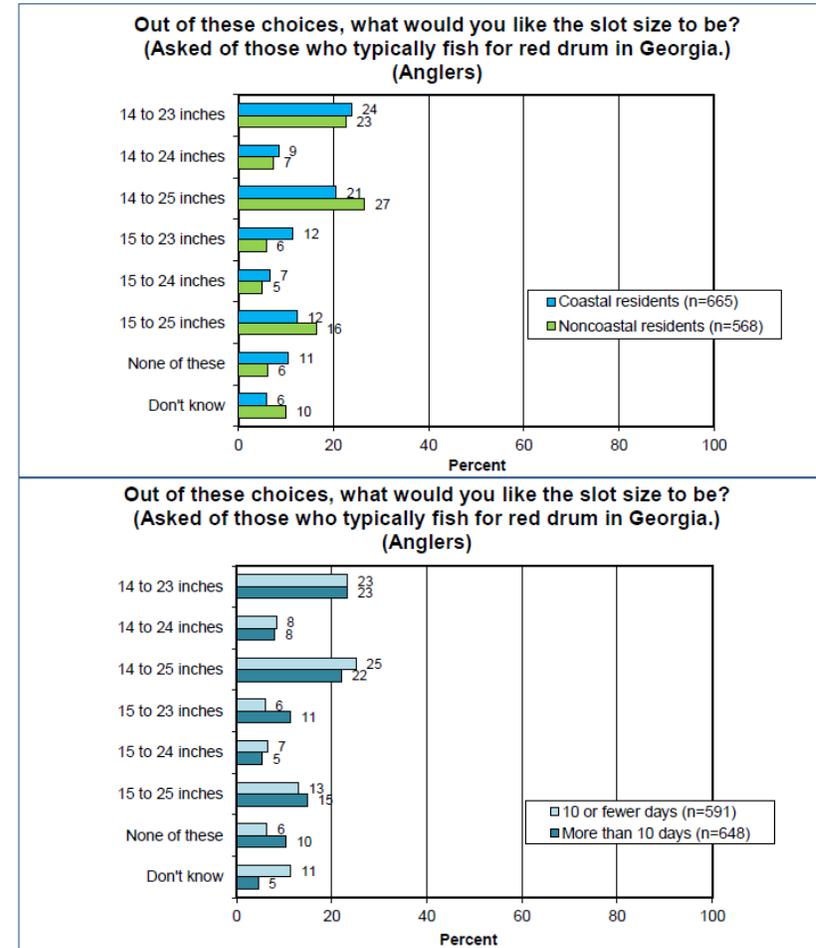
Results – Carcass Monthly Mean Age and Length



Prior Angler Input



2017 Angler Satisfaction Survey



2022 Angler Satisfaction Survey