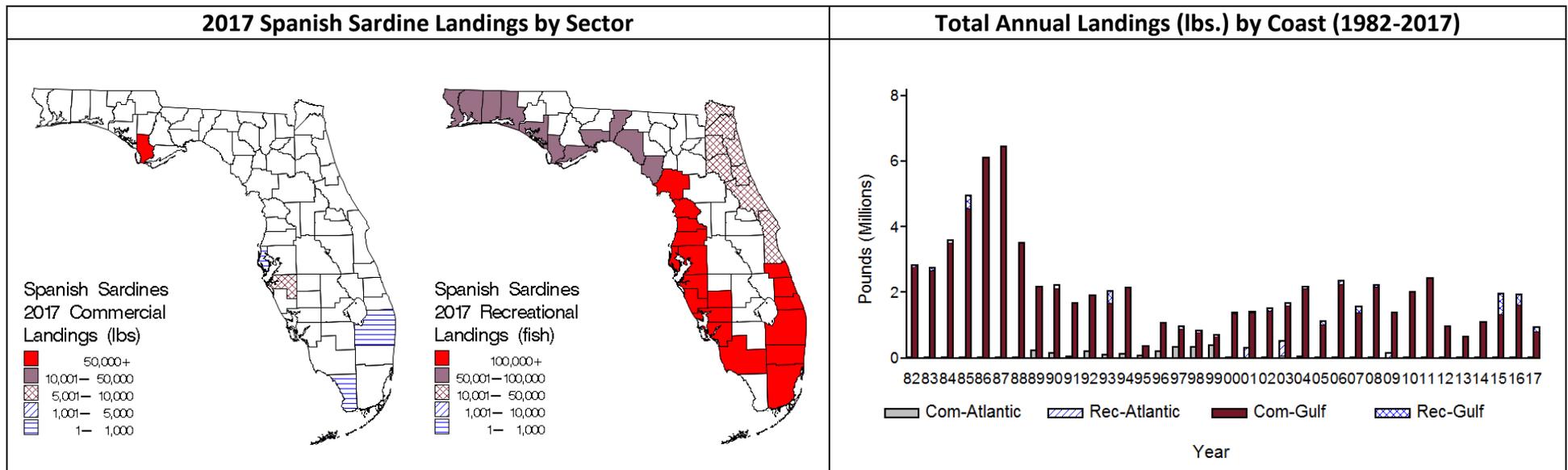


Spanish Sardine, *Sardinella aurita* (Valenciennes, 1847)

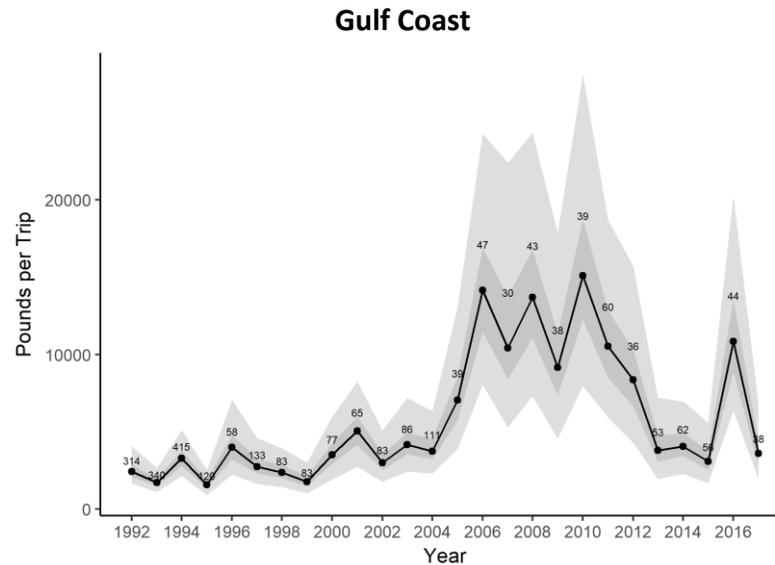


Life History

Spanish Sardines occur throughout Florida state waters, from waters on the continental shelf into the mouths of large estuaries. The species ranges from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Grall 1984). Eastern Gulf of Mexico individuals are composed of one genetic stock (Tringali and Wilson 1993), but the stock structure along the eastern U.S. seaboard and in the western Gulf of Mexico is unknown. In general, Spanish Sardines show low genetic diversity that appears to be the result of occasional large declines in abundance (population bottlenecks) and a high reproductive success of a small number of females (Chikhi *et al.* 1998). Morphological variation found in juvenile Spanish Sardine in Florida appeared to reflect short-term environmental differences (Kinsey *et al.* 1994). The distribution of Spanish Sardine extends from the beach to depths of about 100'–130', but the highest densities are usually found in the nearshore waters (15'– 65'). The species has a typical pelagic behavior with diel vertical migration; it remains in tight schools close to the bottom during the daytime and becomes more scattered throughout water column at night. Juvenile Spanish Sardines feed mainly on copepods and euphausiids. With growth, decapods and fish (mainly myctophid) become more important in the Spanish Sardine diet (Hildebrand 1964; Low 1973). Key predators of Spanish Sardine include king and spanish mackerels, little tunny, gag, bluefish, crevalle jack, yellowfin and bluefin tuna, and dolphin (Johnson and Vaught 1986).



Fishers landed 941,293 pounds in 2017 which were 29% lower than the previous 5-year average (2012-2016). Coast wide, 99% of these were from the Gulf. Commercial landings constituted 86% of total landings.



Standardized Commercial Catch Rates: Gulf coast commercial landings rates increased during 2005-2010 but there has been a recent decline in catch, although a stark increase in catch occurred in 2016. Dark grey ribbon represents the first and third quartiles while the light grey ribbons represent the 2.5% – 97.5% quantiles.

Stock Status

Current Condition: There have been no assessments of the Spanish Sardine stock.