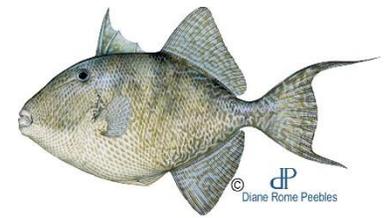


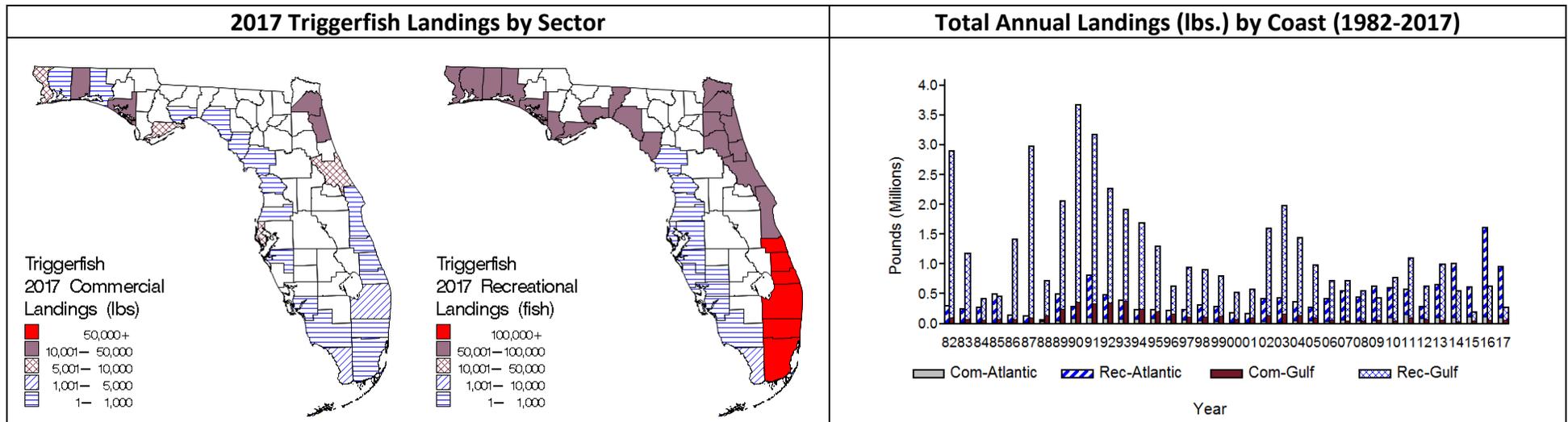
Triggerfishes, Family Balistidae

Gray Triggerfish, *Balistes capricus* (Gmelin, 1789)



Life History

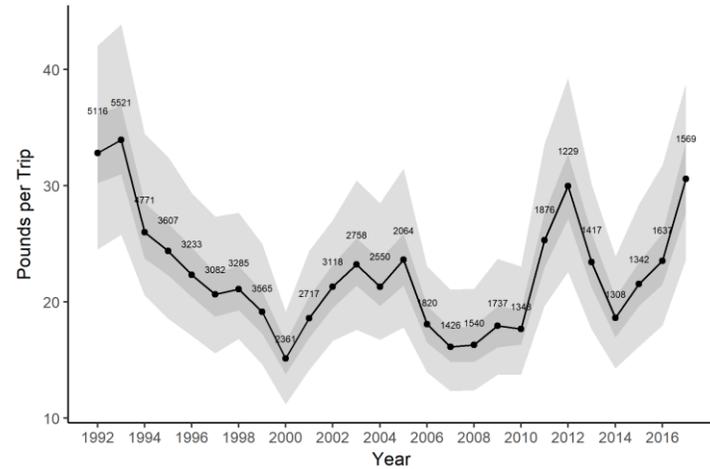
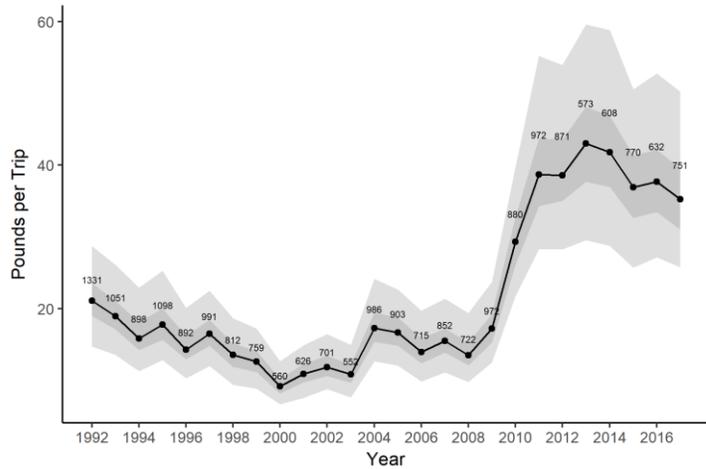
Triggerfishes are open water or structure-associated fishes with an enlarged first dorsal spine that can be locked in the upright position. The Gray Triggerfish, *Balistes capricus*, supports important fisheries in Florida, as, to a lesser extent, does the queen triggerfish, *Balistes vetula*. Gray Triggerfish are found in tropical and temperate waters of the Atlantic Ocean. In the western Atlantic, they range from Massachusetts south to Brazil. Spawning occurs during the summer months. Gray Triggerfish spawn as early as May in the northern Gulf of Mexico, and females deposit demersal eggs and may guard their nests. Young of the year may spend four to seven months in the pelagic zone before recruiting to benthic substrates with structure (i.e. reefs) (Simmons and Szedlmayer 2011). Females get larger and live longer than males (Manooch 1984). Overall, growth is to 8.9–11.7 inches fork length (FL) at age 2; triggerfish grow as large as 17.6–22.0 inches by age 10 (Johnson and Saloman 1984; Hood and Johnson 1997). The maximum age of Gray Triggerfish collected from the Atlantic coast and northeastern Gulf of Mexico is 10 and 13 years, respectively (Johnson and Saloman 1984; Moore 2001).



Fishers landed 1,211,745 pounds in 2017 which were 15% lower than the previous 5-year average (2012-2016). Coast wide, 78% of these were from the Atlantic and 22% were from the Gulf. Recreational landings constituted 87.3% of the total landings.

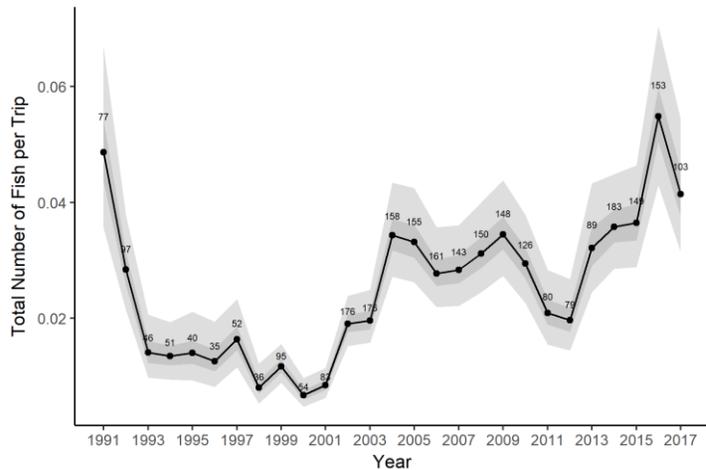
Atlantic Coast

Gulf Coast

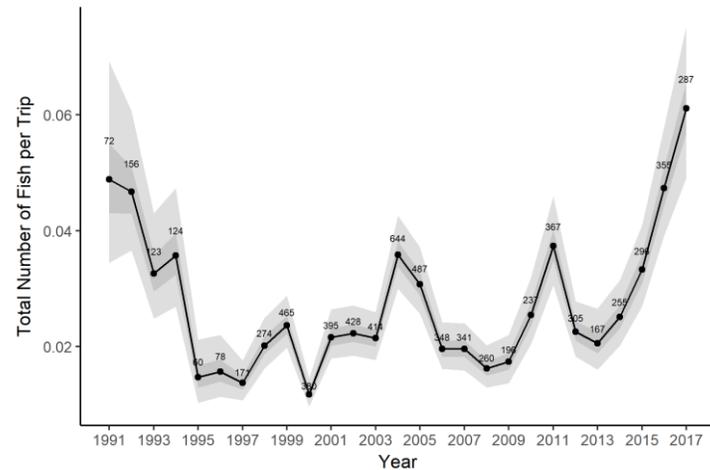


Standardized Commercial Catch Rates: Commercial landings rates on the Atlantic coast remained relatively stable through 2009, then increased markedly in 2010-2011, and have remained high. On the Gulf coast, landings were cyclic with lows in 2000, 2007-2008, and 2014 and highs in 1993, 2003, 2005, 2012, and 2017. Dark grey ribbons represent first and third quartiles while the light grey ribbons represent the 2.5% – 97.5% quantiles.

Atlantic Coast



Gulf Coast



Standardized Recreational Total Catch Rates: Total catch rates for recreational anglers also declined between the early or mid-1990s and 2000. On the Atlantic coast, catch rates increased overall despite dips in 2011-2012. On the Gulf coast, catches were variable without trend through 2013 with recent catches markedly increasing in trend through 2017. Dark grey ribbons represent first and third quartiles while the light grey ribbons represent the 2.5% – 97.5% quantiles.

Stock Status

Current Condition: Gulf of Mexico – not overfished nor undergoing overfishing (SEDAR 43); South Atlantic – not overfished not undergoing overfishing (SEDAR 41).

Management History: In the Gulf of Mexico, Gray Triggerfish is managed under the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan which includes recreational and commercial minimum size limits, bag and seasonal limits. As well, annual catch limits (ACL) are included with automatic triggers that will close the fishery to prevent overfishing should the ACL be exceeded.

In the South Atlantic, Gray Triggerfish is managed under the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan. This includes recreational and commercial fishery minimum length limits, recreational bag limits and ACLs with triggers.

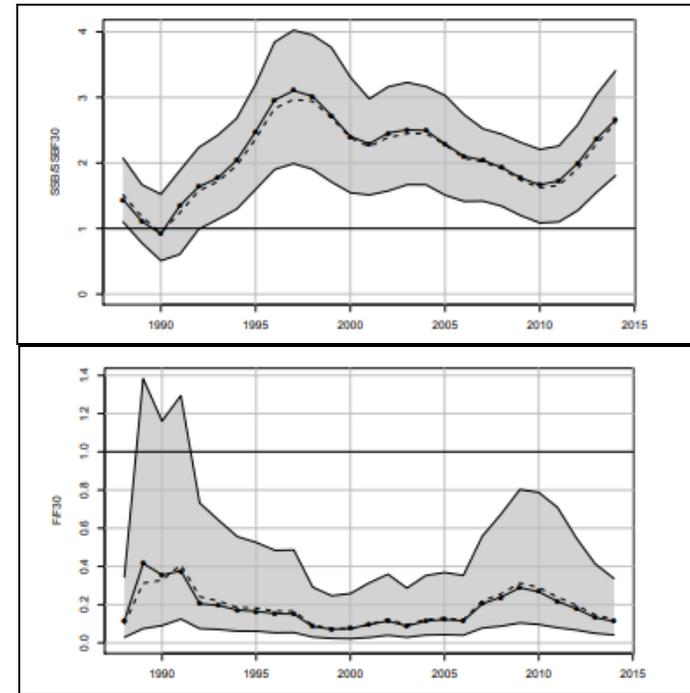


Figure 30 (from SEDAR 41): Estimated time series relative to benchmarks. Solid line indicates estimates from the base run of the BAM; dashed lines represent median values; gray error bands indicate 5th and 95th percentiles. Top panel: Spawning biomass relative to SSB(F30%). Bottom panel: F relative to F30%. Note: No equivalent plots are available in SEDAR 43.