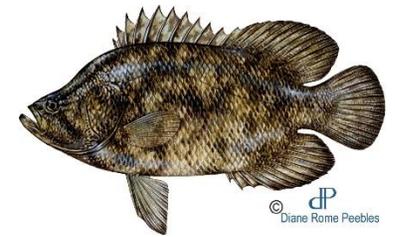
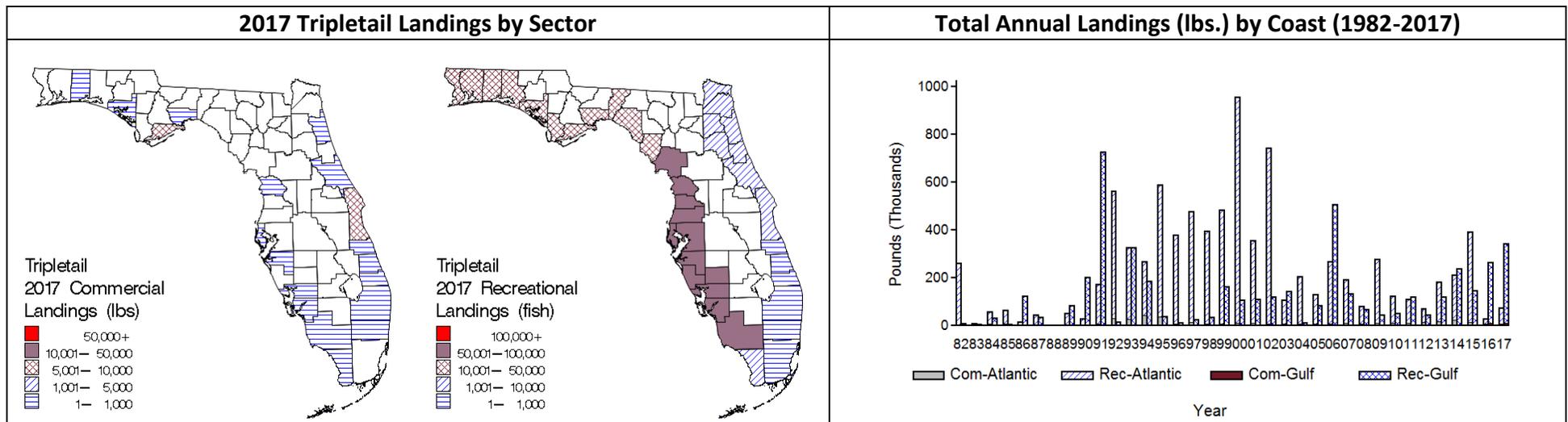


Tripletail, *Lobotes surinamensis* (Bloch, 1790)

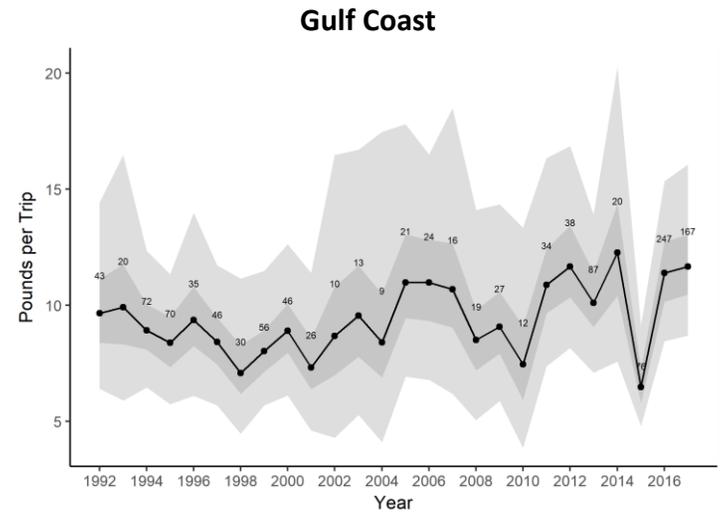
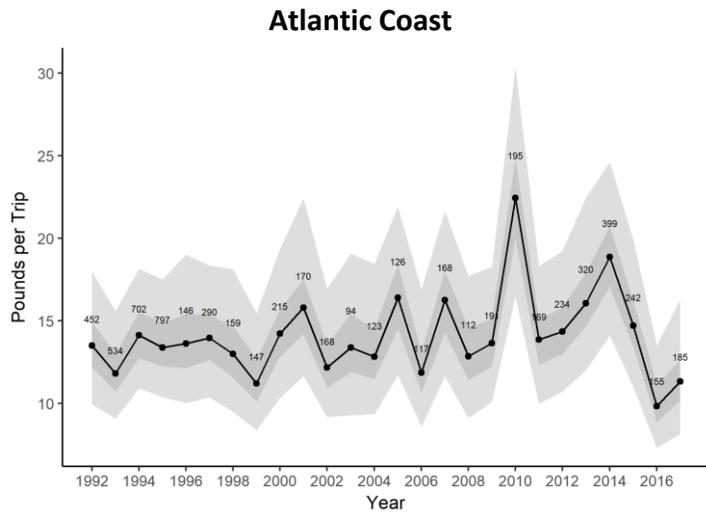


Life History

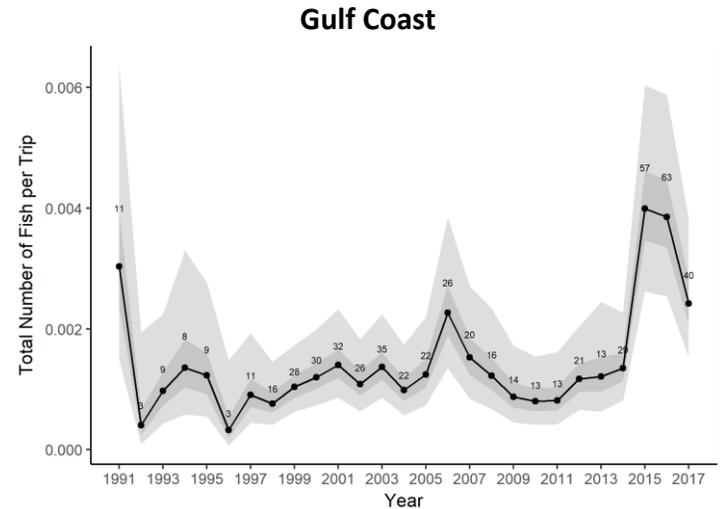
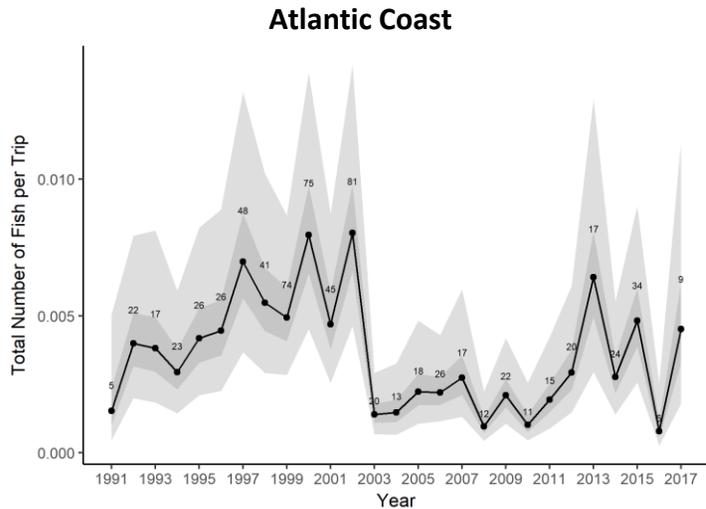
Tripletail occur worldwide in warm seas. In the western Atlantic Ocean, they occur from Cape Cod to Argentina and throughout the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. Tripletail are attracted to floating objects and are often caught around buoys, channel markers, and floating debris. While little information on their biology is available, a preliminary analysis of samples taken from commercial fishery landings made in Florida has provided some information on their age, growth, and reproduction (Armstrong *et al.* 1996a). Apparent maximum ages in these samples were 6 years for males and 7 years for females (Armstrong *et al.* 1996a). The ages from otoliths, although preliminary and unvalidated, indicate that Tripletail grow rapidly during their first few years of life. Females were slightly larger than males. The smallest mature male found was 11.8 inches total length (TL), and the smallest mature female was 14.2 inches. It was estimated that males mature at about 11.8–15.7 inches and females at about 13.8–19.7 inches TL.



Fishers landed 413,274 pounds in 2017 which were 24% higher than the previous 5-year average (2012-2016). Coastwide, 82.5% of these were from the Gulf and 17.5% were from the Atlantic. Recreational landings constituted 97% of the total landings.



Standardized Commercial Catch Rates: Commercial landings on the Atlantic coast has been variable but steady through the timeseries with recent lows in 2016-2017. On the Gulf coast, landings have also been variable but steady despite a recent low in 2015. Dark grey bands represent first and third quartiles while the light grey bands represent the 2.5% – 97.5% quantiles.



Standardized Recreational Total Catch Rates: Recreational catch rates on the Atlantic coast increased variably through 2002, steeply declined in 2003 and remained low before becoming more variable in 2013-2017. On the Gulf coast total catch rates have been low and fairly stable with notable increases in 2015-2016. Dark grey error bands represent first and third quartiles while the light grey error bands represent the 2.5% – 97.5% quantiles.

Stock Status

Current Condition: The present condition of the Tripletail stock in Florida is unknown due to uncertainties associated with available life history information and poor estimates of recreational landings (Armstrong et al. 1996a).

Management History: In 1996, regulations for the recreational and commercial catch of Tripletail were established (Chapter 68B-49). The current regulations for Tripletail harvest include a 15” minimum size, a 2 fish per day recreational harvest and possession limit, and 10 fish per day commercial vessel limit. In addition, the regulations on commercial fisheries only permit the use of hook and line gear, allowing a 2 fish per day by-catch for Tripletail otherwise legally harvested in nonconforming gear. The regulations also designate the species as a "restricted species" and prohibit the use of multiple hooks in conjunction with natural bait and snagging (snatch hooking). Effective August 1998 the sale of undersize Tripletail was also prohibited.