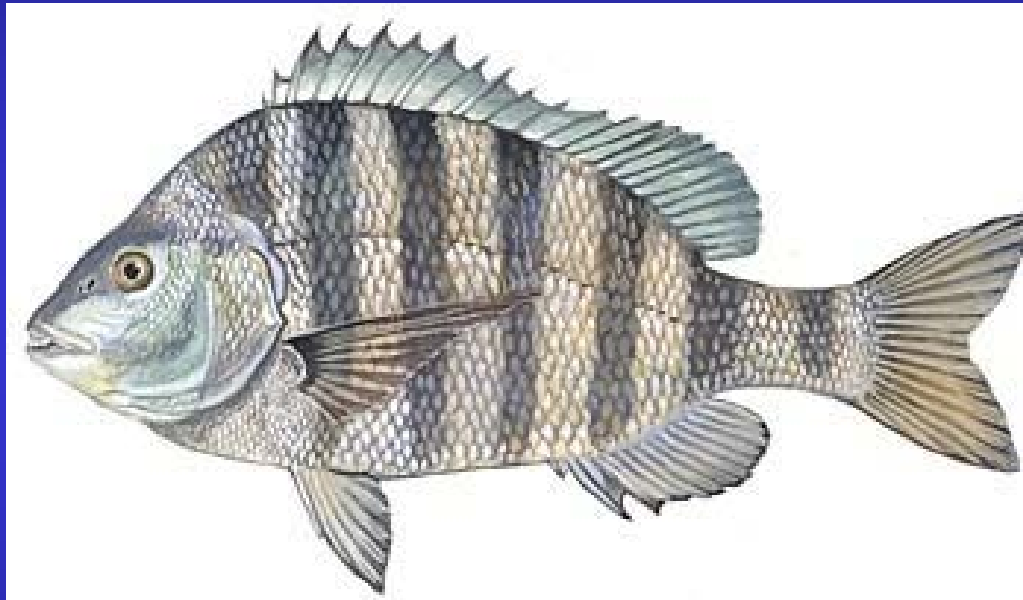


Determine Need For and Impacts of Sheepshead Size, Creel, and Trip Limits



N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission
May 21, 2015



Proclamation Authority

The Fisheries Director may, by proclamation, impose any or all of the following restrictions on the taking of sheepshead:

- (1) specify time;
- (2) specify area;
- (3) specify means and methods;
- (4) specify season;
- (5) specify size; and
- (6) specify quantity.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 113-221.1; 143B-289.52;

Eff. April 1, 2014.

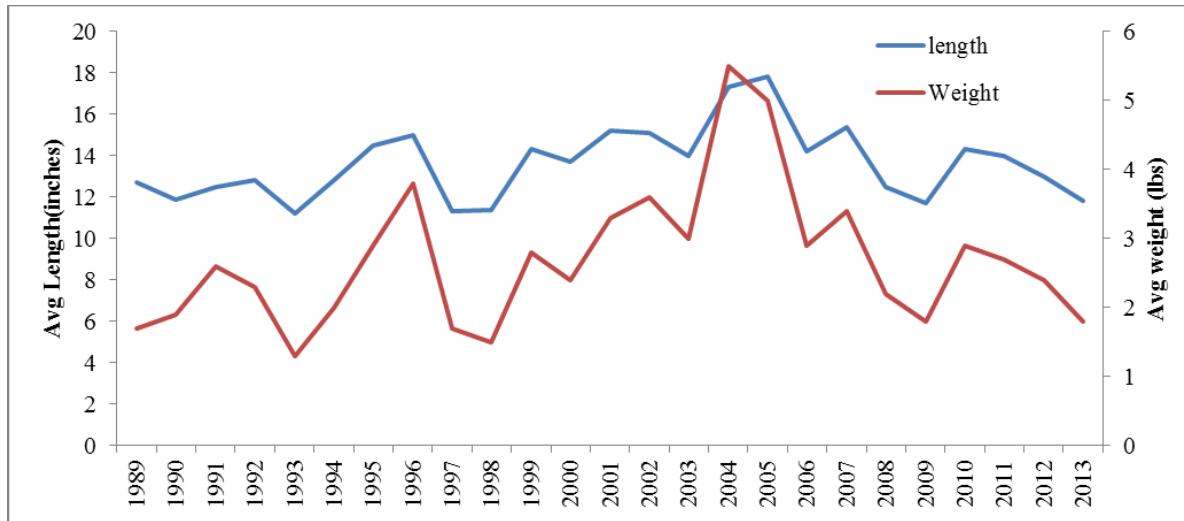


Other State Regulations

State	Size Limit	Recreational Limit	Commercial Limit
New Jersey	None	15 fish Aggregate	None
Delaware	None	None	None
Maryland	None	20 fish Aggregate	None
Virginia	None	4/person	500 lb.
North Carolina	None	None	None
South Carolina	13inch FL	10/person; 30/boat	10/person; 30/boat
Georgia	10inch FL	15/person	15/person
Florida	11inch FL	15/person	None / 50 lb.*

* FL has no commercial trip limits but does limit bycatch from shrimp trawls only to 50 lbs.





Recreational Sheephead from 1989 -2012

Average

Length (in)	Average Weight (lb)
11.2	1.3
11.3	1.7
11.4	1.5
11.7	1.8
11.8	1.8
11.9	1.9
12.5	2.6
12.5	2.2
12.7	1.7
12.8	2.3
12.8	2
13	2.4
13.7	2.4
14	3
14	2.7
14.2	2.9
14.3	2.8
14.3	2.9
14.5	2.9
15	3.8
15.1	3.6
15.2	3.3
15.4	3.4
17.3	5.5
17.8	5

Mean lengths and weights from recreational harvest from 1989 through 2013.



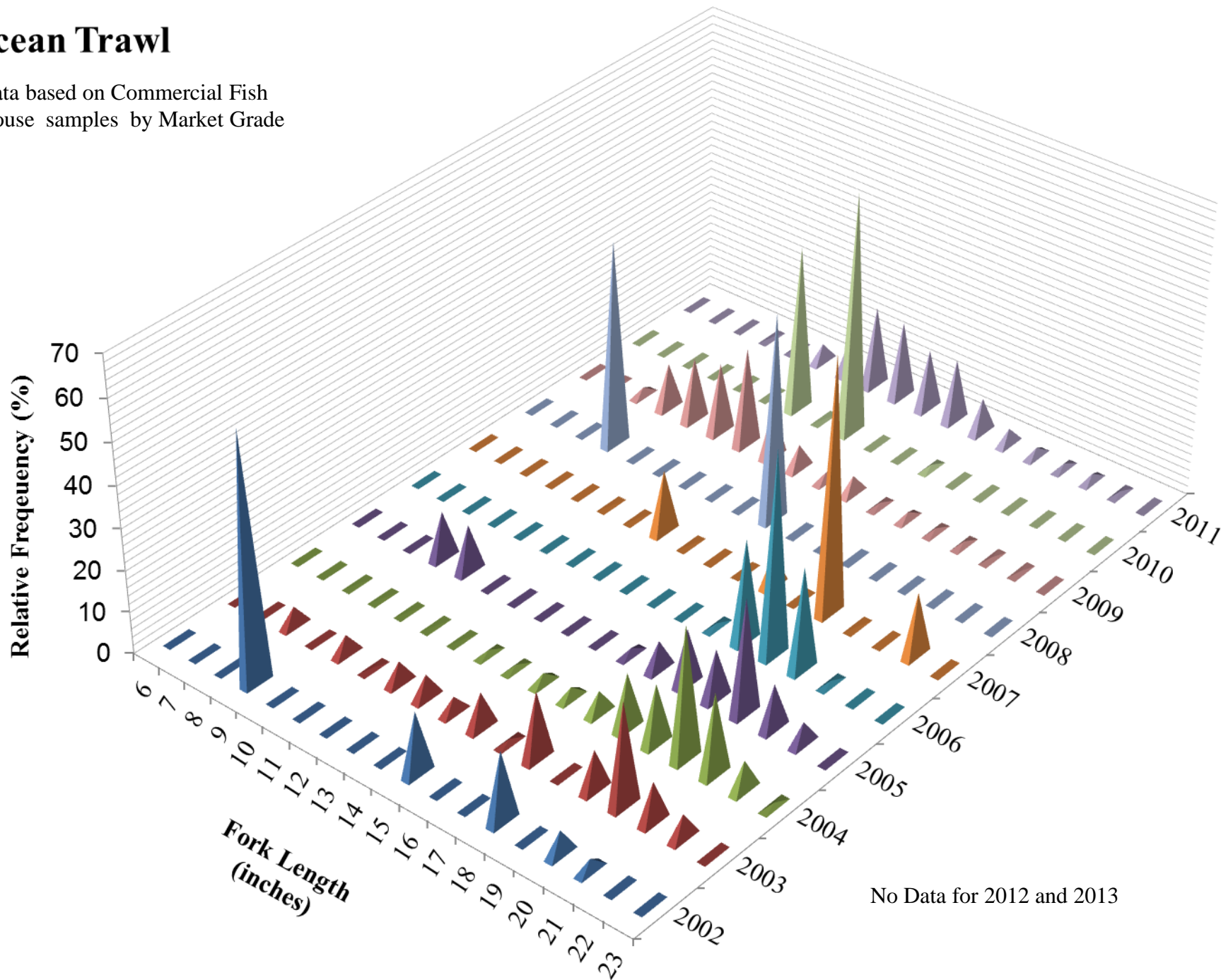
Percent of commercial trips landing sheephead by gear over a range of weight categories for pounds landed per trip, 2002 – 2013 in NC.

Fishery	1-100 lbs.		101-200 lbs.		201-300 lbs.		301-400 lbs.		401-500 lbs.		> 500 lbs.		Total trips
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Estuarine Gill Net	38,838	99.3	181	0.5	48	0.1	14	0.0	9	0.0	11	0.0	39,101
Pound Net	5,289	87.2	359	5.9	133	2.2	73	1.2	63	1.0	151	2.5	6,068
Gig	1,855	98.0	29	1.5	6	0.3	1	0.1	-	0.0	1	0.1	1,892
Long Haul	1,521	80.9	190	10.1	62	3.3	44	2.3	23	1.2	41	2.2	1,881
Ocean Gill Net	1,711	99.2	9	0.5	2	0.1	2	0.1	-	0.0	1	0.1	1,725
Ocean Trawl	122	63.5	17	8.9	13	6.8	5	2.6	3	1.6	32	16.7	192
Spear/Diving	138	61.9	57	25.6	19	8.5	6	2.7	3	1.3	-	-	223



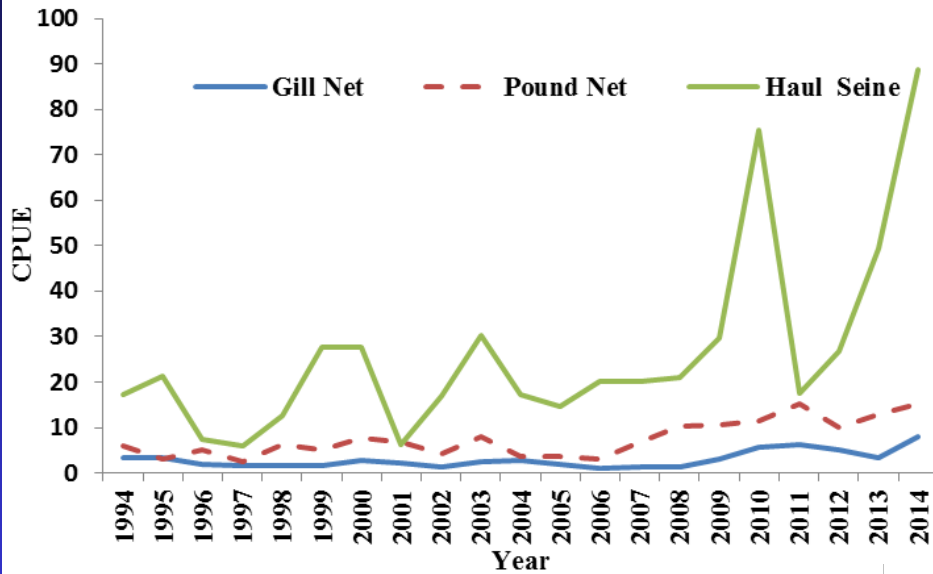
Ocean Trawl

Data based on Commercial Fish
House samples by Market Grade

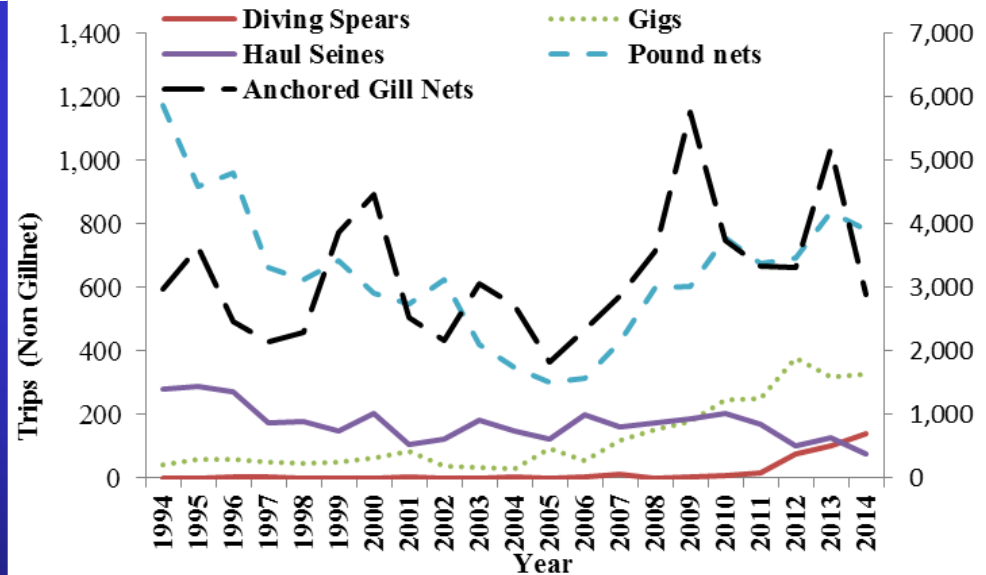


No Data for 2012 and 2013

The Stephens-McCall generated CPUE.

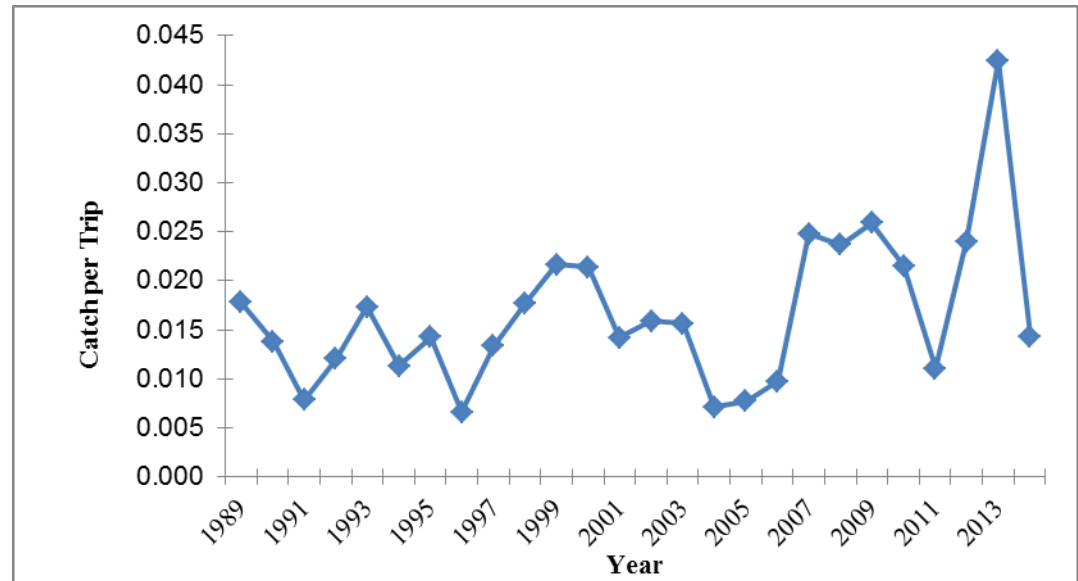


Number of trips by gear.



Recreational CPUE

Based on Recreational Data from Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)



Catch of Sheepshead per Trip by Recreational Means from 1989 through 2014.



PROPOSED MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

- A. Status quo – no management measures in place – Director has proclamation authority via (Rule 15A NCAC 03M .0521)
Continue to sample and monitor the species and landings

- B. Establish a 10-inch FL minimum size limit for both recreational and commercial and a 20-fish/day bag limit for recreational. (23.5 percent reduction) No commercial trip limits.

- C. Establish a 10-inch FL minimum size limit for both recreational and commercial, a 20-fish/day bag limit for recreational, and a 500-pound commercial trip limit.



PROPOSED MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

- D. Establish a 12-inch FL minimum size limit and a 10 fish/day bag limit (44.9 percent reduction)
- E. Establish a 14-inch FL minimum size limit and a 10 fish/day bag recreational limit (61.1 percent reduction –largest reduction)
- F. Establish a 12-inch to 20-inch FL recreational slot limit and a 500-pound commercial trip limit (~40 to 60 percent reduction)
- G. Recommend the division develop a fishery management plan for sheephead



Southern Regional Advisory Committee Meeting

April 8, 2015

- Implement a 12-inch FL minimum size limit
- 20-fish recreational bag limit
- 500-pound commercial trip limit
- Request the division look into the issue of spear fishing/spotlighting in the southern area
- Immediately implement a 100-pound per vessel commercial trip limit for spear fishing for sheephead
- Recommended initiating the fishery management plan process



Northern Regional Advisory Committee Meeting

April 9, 2015

- Status quo
- Request the division begin collecting necessary data for a stock assessment
- (Just in case one is needed in the future)



The Finfish Advisory Committee Meeting

April 15, 2015

- Status quo
- Request the Division gather data on catch per unit effort and size structure through time for both the commercial and recreational fishery
- Other pertinent data that could identify the status of the N.C. sheepshead fishery
- This information be presented to the commission at its May meeting.



The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries' Recommendation

- 10-inch fork length minimum size limit for both the recreational and commercial sectors
- 10-fish bag limit for recreational sector
- 10-fish limit for commercial spears and gigs, per person per day or per trip if a trip occurs over more than one calendar day
- 300-pound commercial trip limit for all other gears



Next Steps

Marine Fisheries Commission selects its preferred management option



Questions?

