

Recreational For-Hire Catch Share Program Design & Achievements

Joint Council Workgroup for Section 102 of the Modernizing
Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2018

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History

- Request: Consider alternative management program for Headboat (HB) operators using an allocation-based management using an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP)
- Purpose:
 - Assess if alternative management program could achieve resource conservation and economic stability
 - Evaluate effectiveness of electronic reporting to providing accurate, real-time catch data
 - Evaluate using fish numbers instead of fish weight
- Method:
 - EFP for 2 years (2014-2015)
 - Two species: gag and red snapper
 - Collaborative management within EFP

Exempted Fishing Permit

- Exemption of:
 - Recreational season closures for both species
 - Closure of gag when target reached
- Not exempted from:
 - Size and bag limits
 - Feb-Mar shallow-water grouper closure >120 ft
 - Red snapper harvest prohibition once NMFS determines quota is met (MSA 407(d))



Design – Participation Requirements

Federal

- Valid federal Gulf for-hire permit
- Participant in the Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS) for at least 3 years
- No civil or criminal actions

Headboat Collaborative

- Annual application process
- Selection of vessel across Gulf
- Sign waiver to allow HB manager to view data
- Retain all legal-sized fish that appear mortally injured
- Vessel cease targeting when no remaining quota

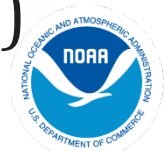
EFP

- Vessel can not join or leave mid-year
- Display EFP prominently
- EFP terminated if one participant violates terms & conditions



System Design

- Modified existing Catch Share system
 - Created new roles for collaborative program (HB Manager and HB Vessel)
 - Landings reported in numbers of fish
 - Linked to Southeast Region Headboat Survey data
- Reporting Requirements
 - Vessel monitoring system (VMS) and hail-out
 - 1 hr advance notice of landing
 - Land at pre-approved locations
 - Allow dockside sampling
 - Submit landing reports daily
 - Fish tagged (implemented by HBC not NMFS)



Quota Decisions

- **NMFS determined:**
 - Program quota proportions based on ratio of participants' historical landings to recreational landings by species
 - Converted fish weight to fish number using average weights by region by species
 - If quota in pounds reached, harvest would stop even if there was remaining allocation
 - No shares in this system
- **HB Collaborative determined:**
 - How to distribute allocation
 - Used historical landings data
 - Withheld 5% allocation for discrepancies (buffer)



Management & Monitoring

- Quota Monitoring

- VMS tracking
- Daily reporting
- Dockside validation
- Daily data audits

- Conversion

- Used pre-season ratios to convert to fish
- Used in-season ratios to monitor
 - Updated 15-30 days



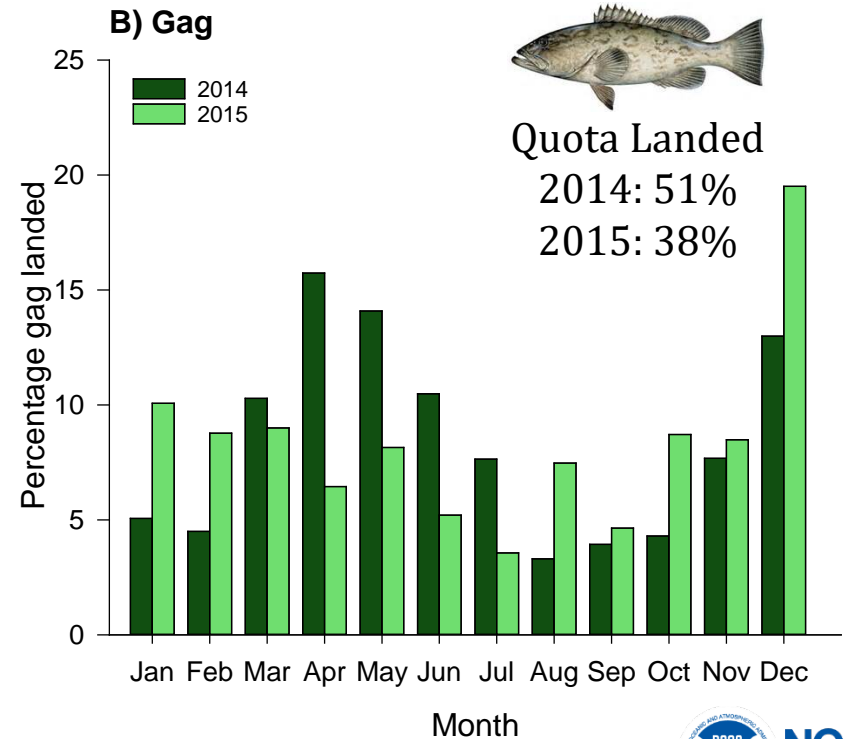
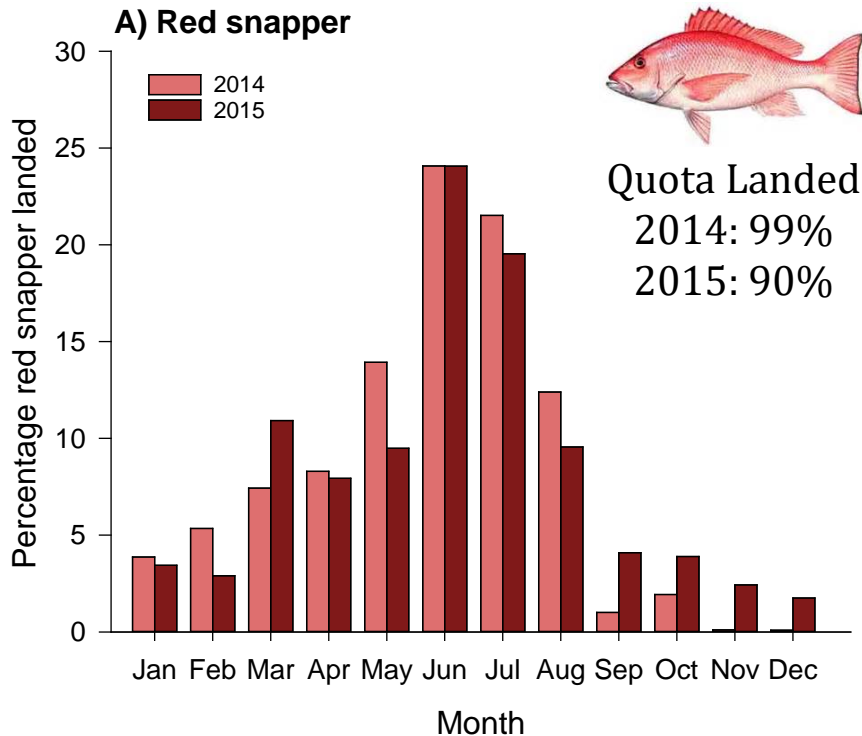
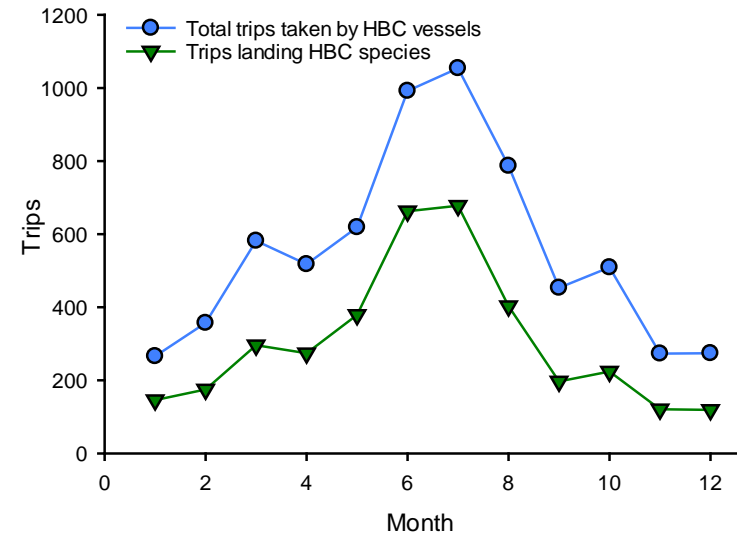
Results



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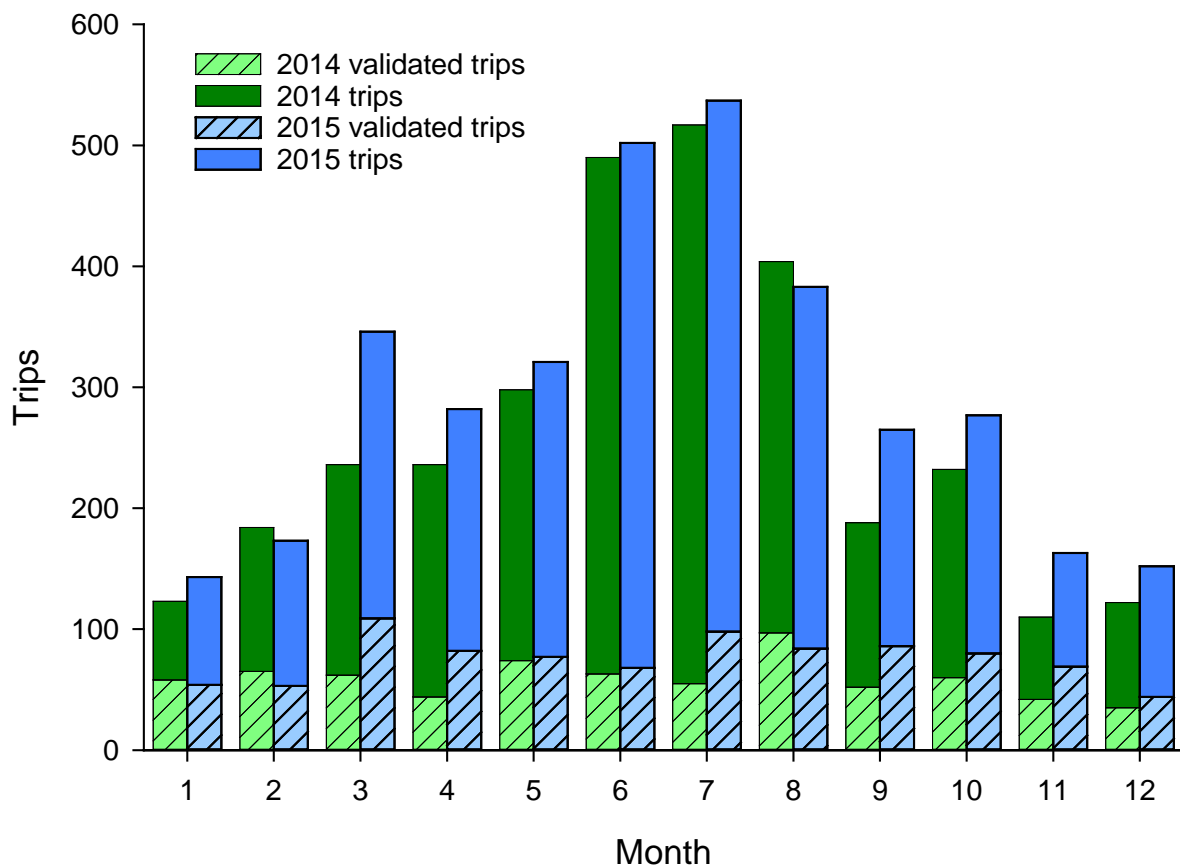
Results: Landings

- 3,100 – 3 500 trips per year
- 50-60% all trips landed HBC species
- Average 38 red snapper/trip
- Average 4 gag/trip



Results: Compliance

- 24% of trips validated
- 30 trips with discrepancies (avg. $\pm 1-2$ fish)
 - Discrepancies decreased significantly in the second year



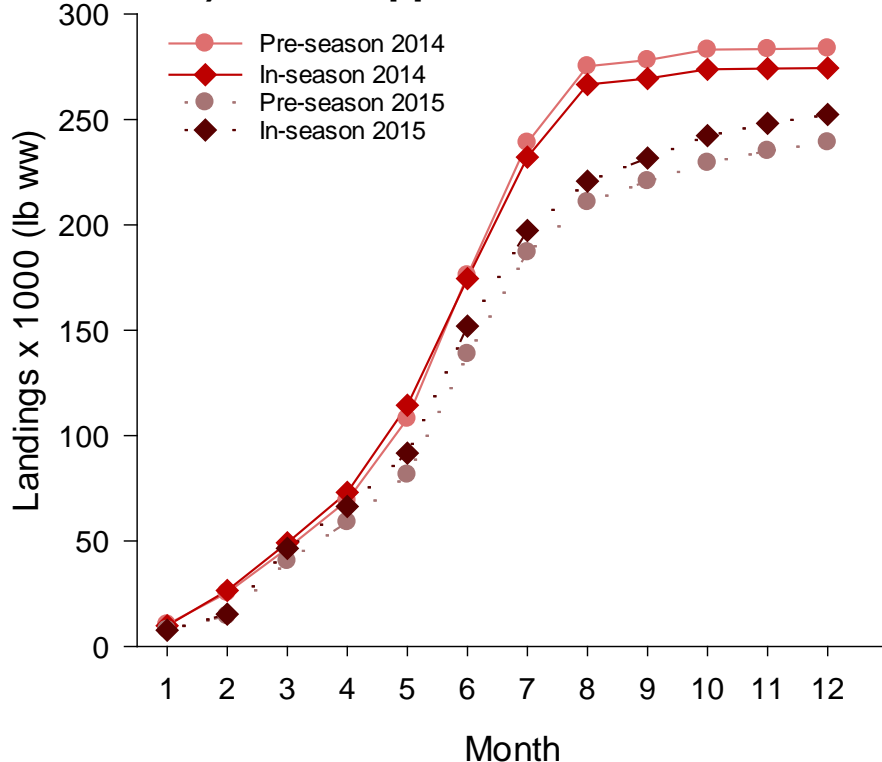
Cause of Errors:

- Captain unfamiliar with protocols
- Species selection error
- Transposing numbers
- Confounding same day trips
- Miscounting

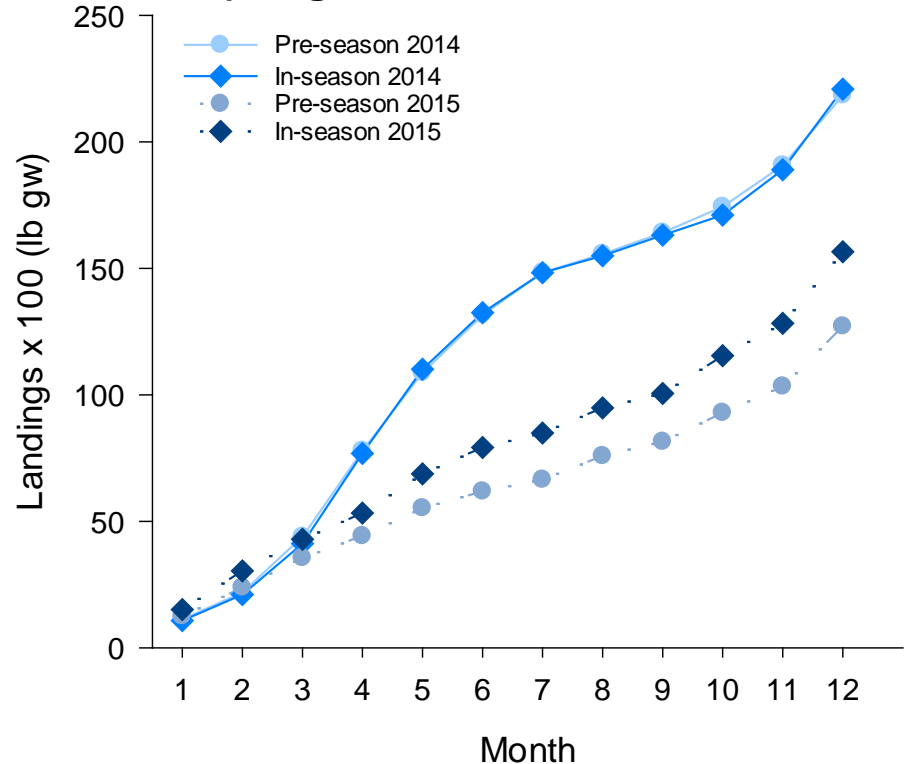
Results – Fish to weight conversion

- Weights varied by month and area
 - Sample size main contributing factor
- Minimal difference between pre-season and in-season weights

A) Red snapper

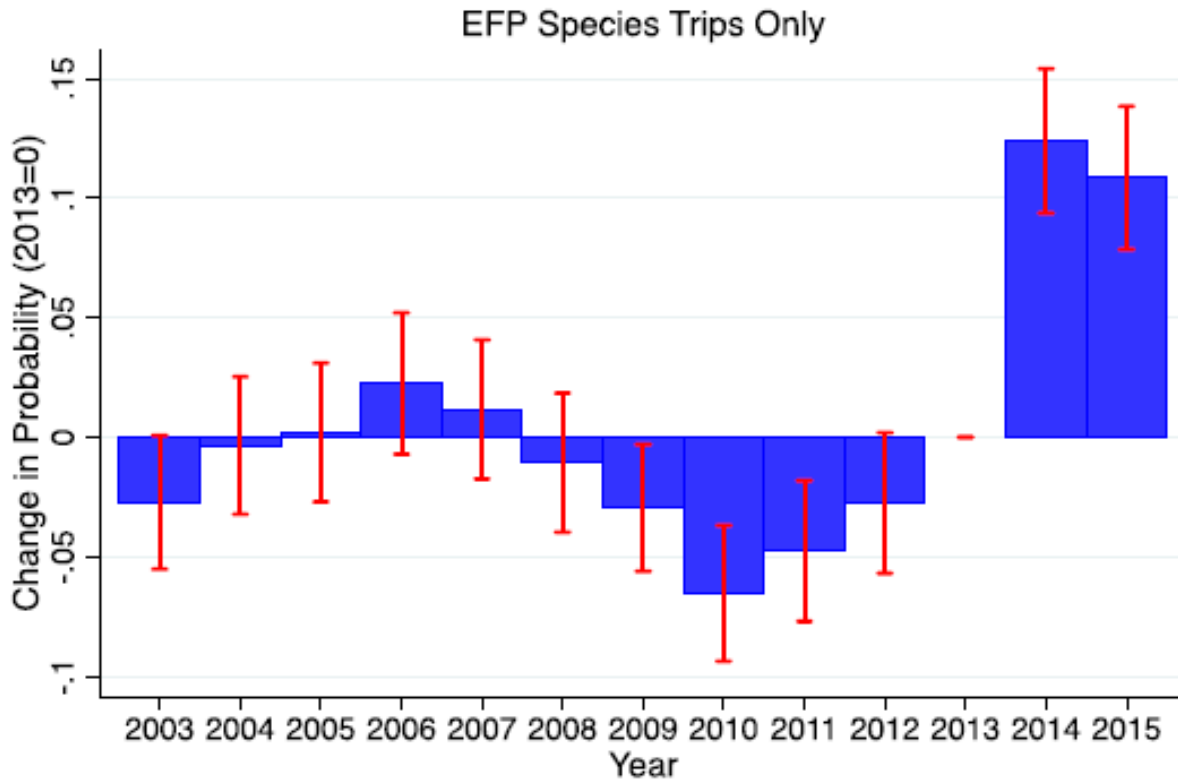


B) Gag



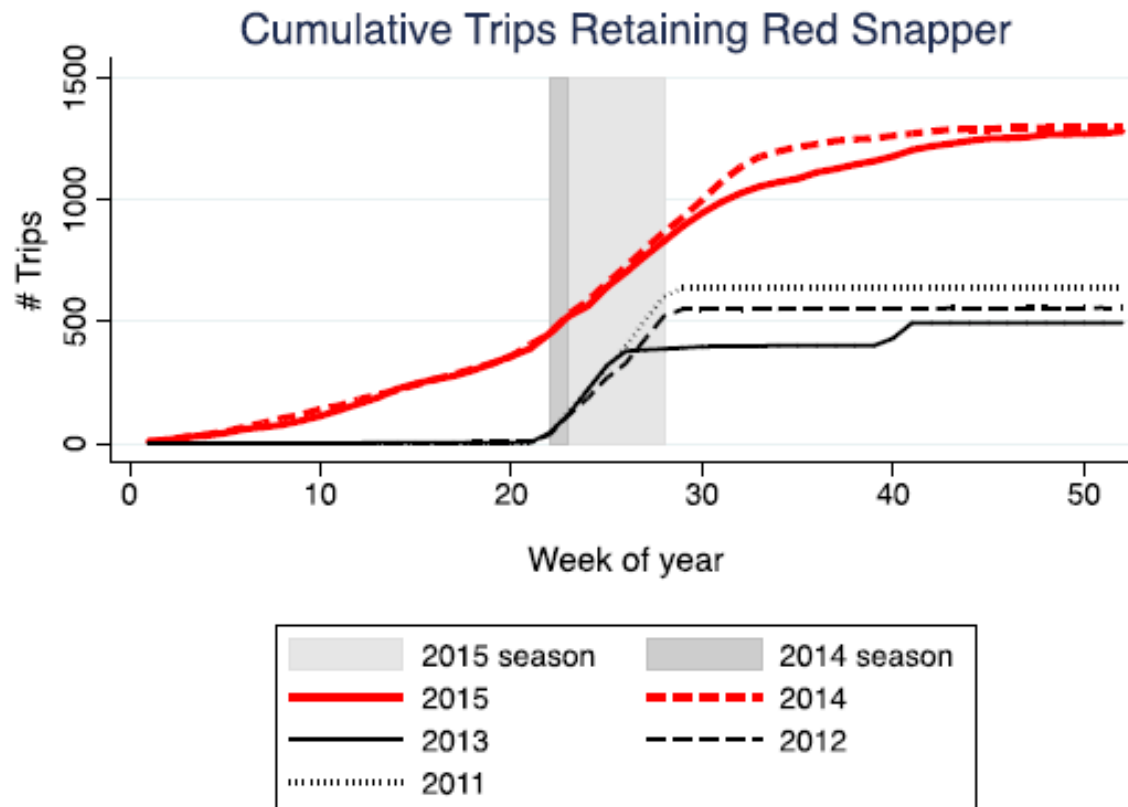
Results: Trip length

- Increased number of full-day trips
 - Baseline year was 2013
- Potential economic savings in full-day trips



Results: Retention

- Trips retaining HBC species were more spread out in time
- Vessels increased number of trips retaining HBC species



Conclusions & Recommendations

- **Achieved resource conservation**
 - Landings less than quota
 - Increased access for anglers – more trips and anglers retaining HBC species
 - Influenced by captain-imposed stricter bag limits
 - Influenced by limiting vessels targeting HBC
 - Less discards of HBC species
- **Economic Stability**
 - More total trips
 - More full-day trips



Conclusions & Recommendations

- Electronic Reporting (ER)
 - ER worked but changes needed for scalability
- Fish numbers
 - Minimal difference between pre-season and in-season weight averages
 - Potential to be scalable, but must consider:
 - Increased sample size
 - Conversion metric for allocation transfers between regions with different average weights



Conclusions & Recommendations

- Changes would be needed for scalability
- Recreational catch share program can allow each operator to adapt its offerings, pricing, and marketing approach to reflect its local context and customers
- Could offer year round harvest



Supplemental Slides



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Participating Vessels



Maximum vessels that can participate = 20
17 vessels in 2014 and 19 vessels in 2015



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Calculation of Quotas

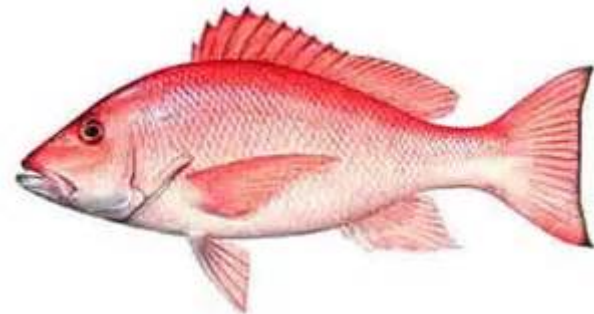
$\frac{2011 \text{ Collaborative landings}}{2011 \text{ Recreational Landings}} \times 2014 \text{ recreational quotas}$



$\frac{2014 \text{ Collaborative pounds}}{\text{Pre-season avg pounds}} = \# \text{ of fish}$

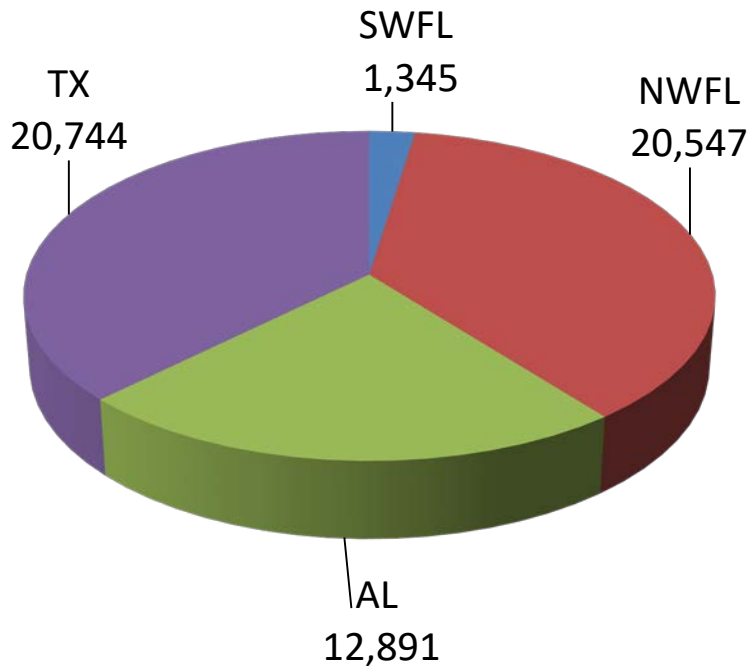


2.8343%
43,053 lbs gw
6,017 fish

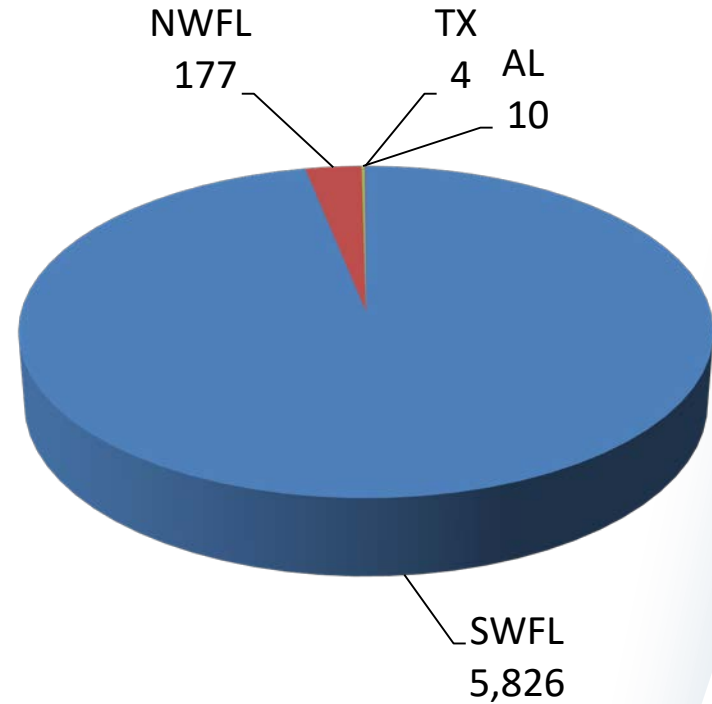


5.3146%
286,457 lbs ww
55,527 fish

Distribution of Quota by Area



Red Snapper



Gag