

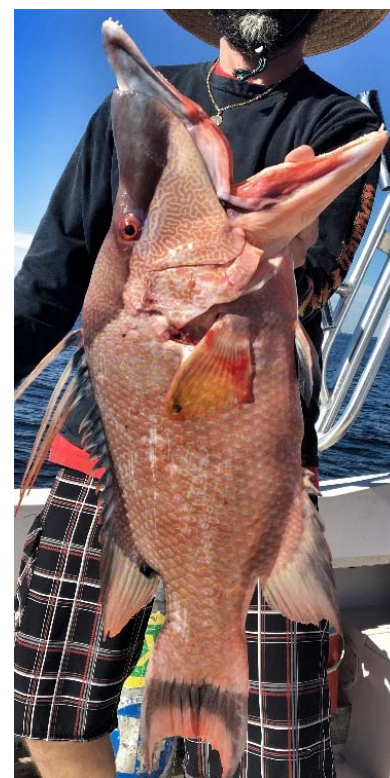
West Florida Hogfish (*Lachnolaimus maximus*)

Description:

Hogfish, or “hog snapper,” are actually a member of the wrasse family (Labridae). They boast bright orange, yellow, and blueish-purple colorations. Hogfish get their name from their elongated snout, which they use to root for crustaceans buried in the sediment. Their tail is moon-shaped. Males have a characteristic black spot behind their pectoral fins. Three stocks of hogfish are found in the southeastern US: the West Florida stock, the Florida Keys/East Florida stock, and the Georgia to North Carolina stock. The West Florida stock occupies the west Florida continental shelf south to about Cape Sable (29°N latitude).

West Florida Stock Characteristics: (SEDAR 37, 2014)

Natural mortality rate (M):	0.179/year (max age of 25 years)
50% are sexually mature:	<u>Females:</u> ~172 mm (6.8 in) fork length (FL); 1.25 years
	<u>Transition to males:</u> ~426 mm (16.8 in) FL; 6.5 years
Maximum observed age:	23 years
Maximum weight:	~11 kg (24.3 lbs) whole weight
Maximum length:	~91 cm (35.8 in) FL
Discard mortality:	10% hook-and-line; 100% spear



Life History and Distribution: (SEDAR 37, 2014)

Hogfish occur in tropical, subtropical and warm temperate waters from Brazil to Bermuda, and throughout the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. Hogfish are protogynous hermaphrodites, meaning they begin life as females and change sex to male at ~14 inches FL. While all fish older than 10 years are thought to be male, females change sex to male if more males are needed. Hogfish spend their first month of life in a larval phase, floating as plankton. As juveniles, hogfish settle nearshore in estuaries, seagrass beds or shallow reefs, and gradually move offshore as they grow larger. Adults are often reef-associated.

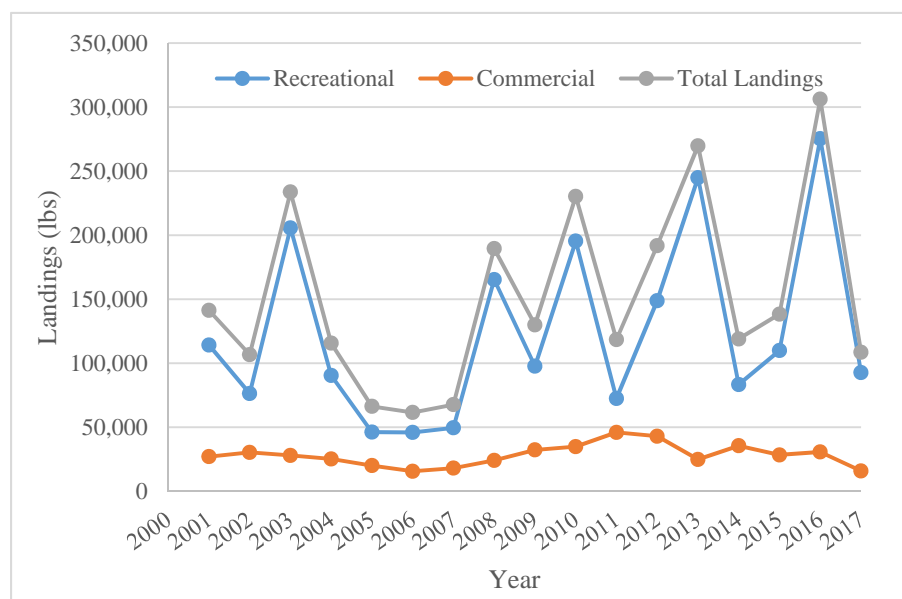


Figure: West Florida hogfish landings for 2001 – 2017.

Current Gulf Council Regulations:

Five per person, within the 20 fish per person reef fish aggregate bag limit. The minimum size limit is 14 inches FL. Size-limit hogfish weigh about 1 kg (~2.2 lbs), and are about four years old. The fishing season is year-round, and there are no sector allocations. West Florida hogfish are primarily harvested by spear.