

# Mutton Snapper

Public Workshops

February 2016

**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**

Division of Marine Fisheries Management



## Workshop Ground Rules

- All points of view are valid
- Behave with courtesy and respect
- Discuss the topic and not the person
- Phones off (or on vibrate) and side conversations outside
- Please direct questions and comments to FWC staff





# Workshop Format

1. Overview
2. Questions
3. Public Comment



Please fill out a yellow card if you would like to comment



# Mutton Snapper Status and Management



- 2015 stock assessment
  - Stock is not overfished, overfishing not occurring
  - Estimate of adult population is smaller than previous assessment
  - Recommends a reduction in quota
- Mutton snapper management framework
  - Managed in state waters by FWC
  - Managed in federal waters by Gulf and South Atlantic Councils
  - Considered by Joint South Florida Committee
  - FWC is taking the lead on regulatory changes and coordinating with federal councils





## Why Are We Here?

- Gathering public input on possible changes to recreational and commercial mutton snapper rules
- New stock assessment shows a smaller population than previously estimated
  - Federal Councils considering a quota decrease and regulation changes
- Stakeholder requests to reduce mutton snapper recreational bag limits, implement a commercial trip limit, and consider special protections for mutton during spawning





# Stakeholder Concerns and Requests Heard thus Far



- The year-round recreational bag limit is too high and should be reduced
- There should be a trip limit for the commercial fishery throughout the year
- Regulations should be uniform across all management boundaries
- Mutton snapper are easy to target during the spawn and too many are harvested, so during peak spawning season:
  - Reduce commercial and recreational per person limits
  - Establish commercial and recreational vessel limits
  - Prohibit harvest of mutton snapper





## November 2015 FWC Meeting

- Commissioners discussed mutton snapper management and directed staff to hold workshops to gather input on:
  - Reducing recreational bag limits
  - Setting the commercial limit equal to the recreational limit during the spawning season
  - Establishing gear-specific commercial trip limits
  - Timing of spawning season regulations and ideas about Western Dry Rocks





# Current Mutton Snapper Regulations



| Harvest Regulations by Area |                 | All State Waters                                                     | South Atlantic Federal Waters | Gulf Federal Waters                          |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Recreational                | Size Limit      | 16 inches TL                                                         |                               |                                              |
|                             | Bag Limit       | 10 fish within 10-snapper aggregate (per person/day)                 |                               |                                              |
|                             | Closed Season   | None                                                                 |                               |                                              |
| Commercial                  | Size Limit      | 16 inches TL                                                         |                               |                                              |
|                             | Harvest Limits  | July-April: no restrictions;<br>May-June: 10 fish/person/day or trip |                               | None                                         |
|                             | Closed Season   | None                                                                 |                               |                                              |
|                             | Allowable Gears | Hook and line and spearing                                           |                               | Hook and line, spearing, and bottom longline |

\*Riley's Hump is closed year-round to all harvest





# Mutton Snapper Spawning



- Solitary, non-schooling fish that form large spawning aggregations around the full moon from April – August
  - Peak occurs May – July
  - Individual fish may spawn multiple times per season
- Aggregations occur at predictable locations:
  - Riley's Hump in federal waters
    - Closed to harvest → increased number of spawning fish
  - Western Dry Rocks in state waters
    - Currently open to harvest

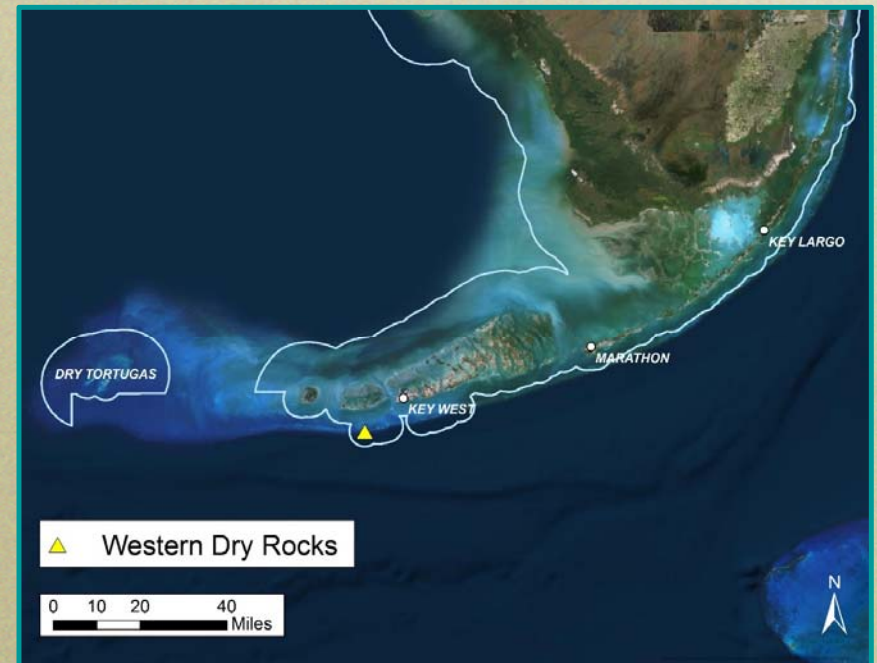
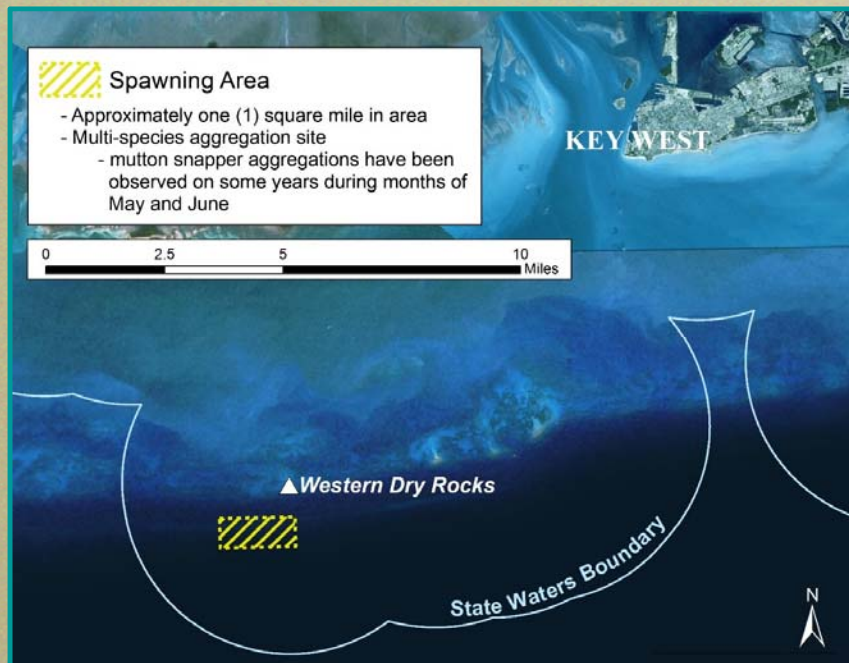




# Western Dry Rocks Spawning Area



Should there be special regulations for Western Dry Rocks?





# Recreational Regulations

## Should the mutton snapper bag limit be reduced?

- Bag limit of 5 or fewer fish/person within the 10-fish snapper aggregate bag limit year round

## Should harvest be further reduced during the spawning season?

- Bag limit of 2 fish/person within the 10-fish snapper aggregate bag limit during spawning season
- Vessel limit of 12 fish during spawning season

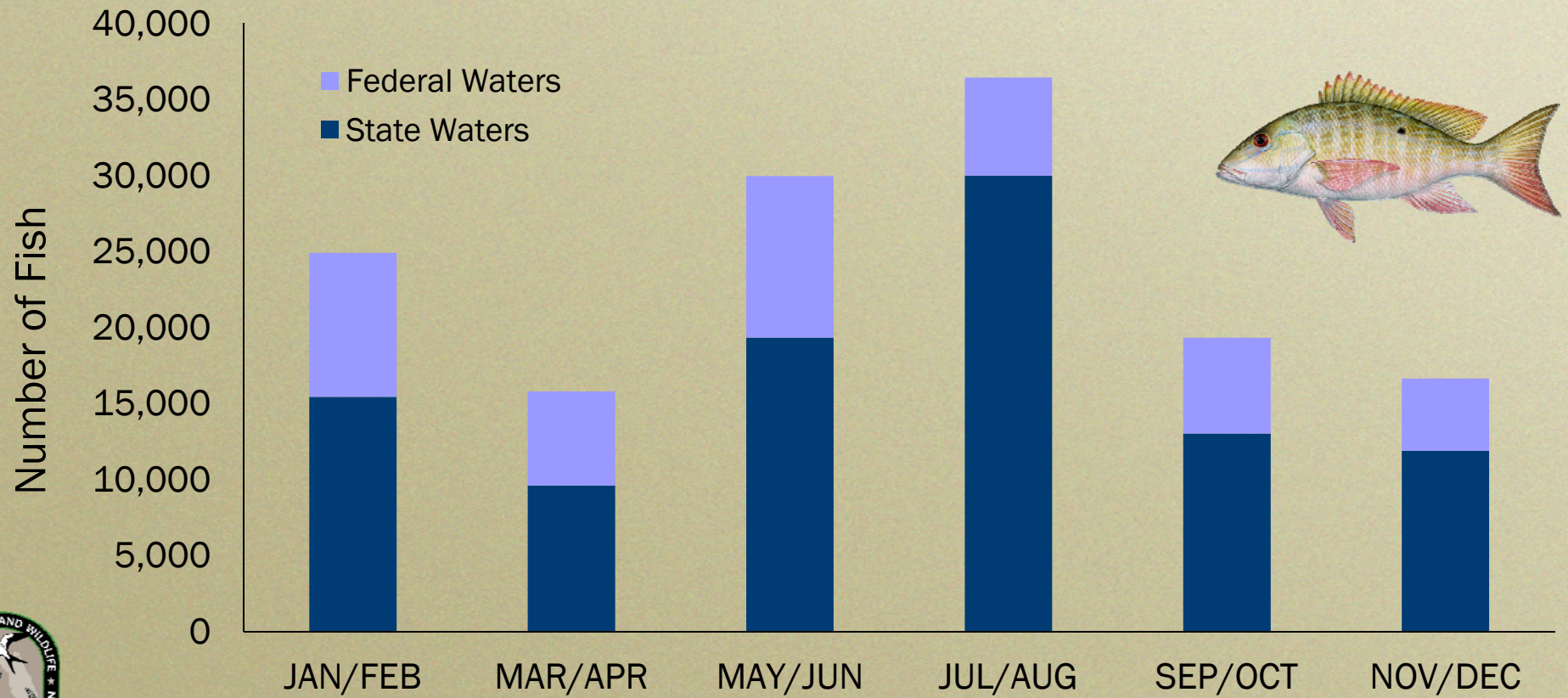
## During which months should spawning season regulations apply?

- May – June
- June – July
- May – July





# Average Florida Recreational Harvest, 2006-2015





# Commercial Regulations

Should a year-round mutton snapper commercial trip limit be established?

- Commercial trip limit of 300 pounds for hook and line

Should harvest be further reduced during the spawning season?

- Trip limit of 2 fish/person
- Vessel limit of 12 fish

During which months should spawning season regulations apply?

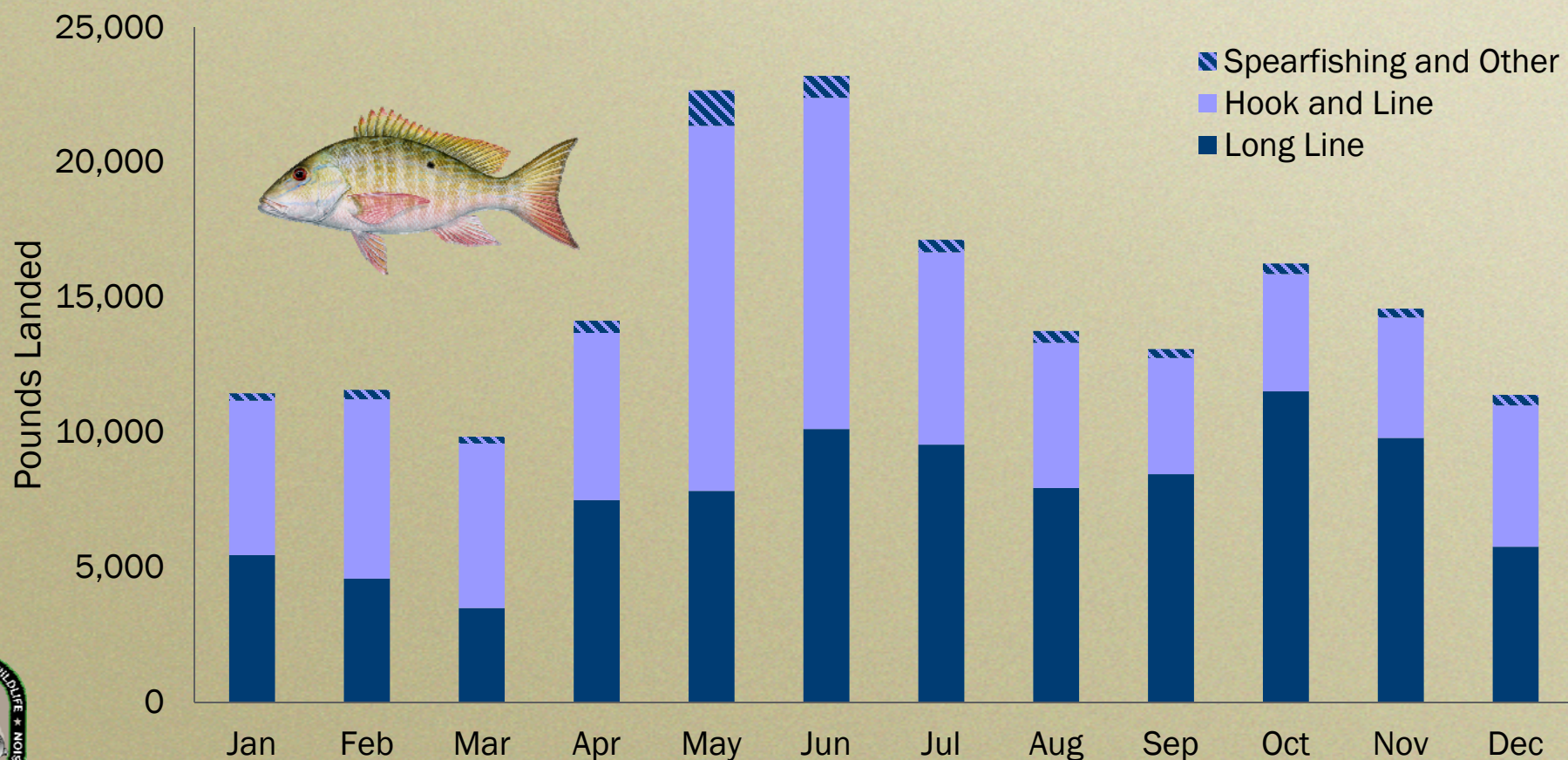
- May – June
- June – July
- May – July

Should there be different regulations for long-line gear?





# Average Monthly Florida Commercial Landings by Gear, 2004-2014





## Next Steps

- Feb. 2015: Public workshops
  - Feb. 1 – Ft. Lauderdale
  - Feb. 2 – Duck Key
  - Feb. 3 – Key West
  - Feb. 4 – Key Largo (FWC only)
  - Feb. 15 – St. Petersburg (FWC only)
  - Feb. 16 – Naples (FWC only)
  - Feb. 17 – Stuart (FWC only)
  - Feb. 24 – Webinar (FWC only)
- Apr. 13-14: FWC meeting in Jupiter – draft rule
- June 21-23: FWC meeting in Apalachicola – final public hearing
- Councils will consider action later in 2016





# Workshop Format

1. Overview
2. Questions
3. Public Comment



Please fill out a yellow card if you would like to comment



# Workshop Format

1. Overview
2. Questions
3. **Public Comment**



Please fill out a yellow card if you would like to comment