



Citizen Science

Citizen Science Program Update

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel
November 2026



Project Update



Over 2,300 photos have been digitized & archived from the South Atlantic from the 1930s-2000s



Over 4,000 volunteers analyzed 1,950 photos

Validation Team reviewed 280 photos

Relative indices of abundance for King Mackerel & Red Snapper



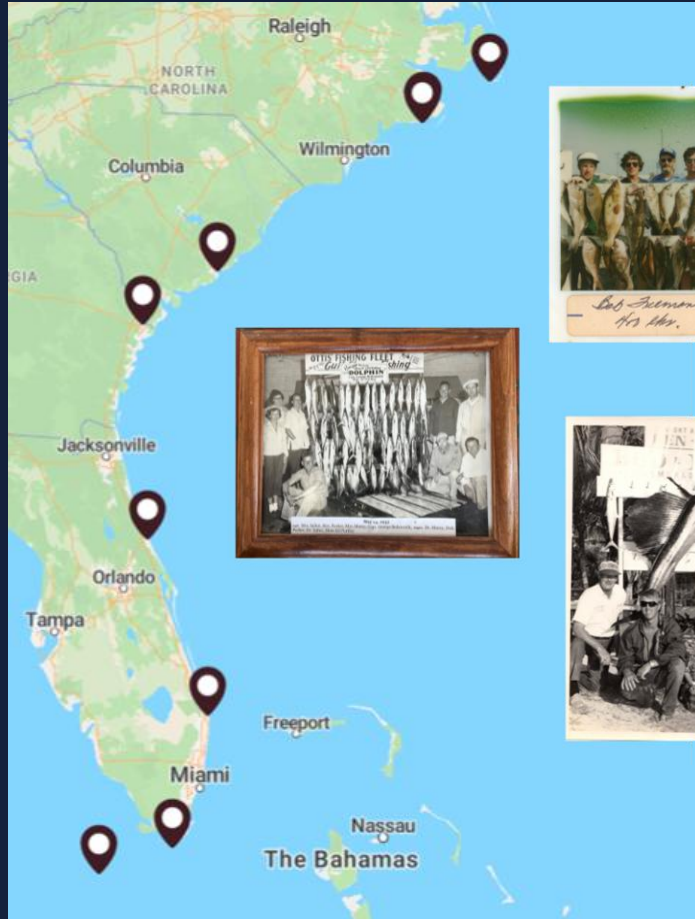
All King Mackerel & Red Snapper have been measured

Length compositions were produced for both species



To see project findings to date: visit [FISHstory Results](#) in Zooniverse or watch [NOAA Library Seminar Series on FISHstory](#)

Historical Photo Locations



PC: B. Freeman; J. Garner & Sanitary Fish Market; and S Neilsen



North Carolina: 3%*

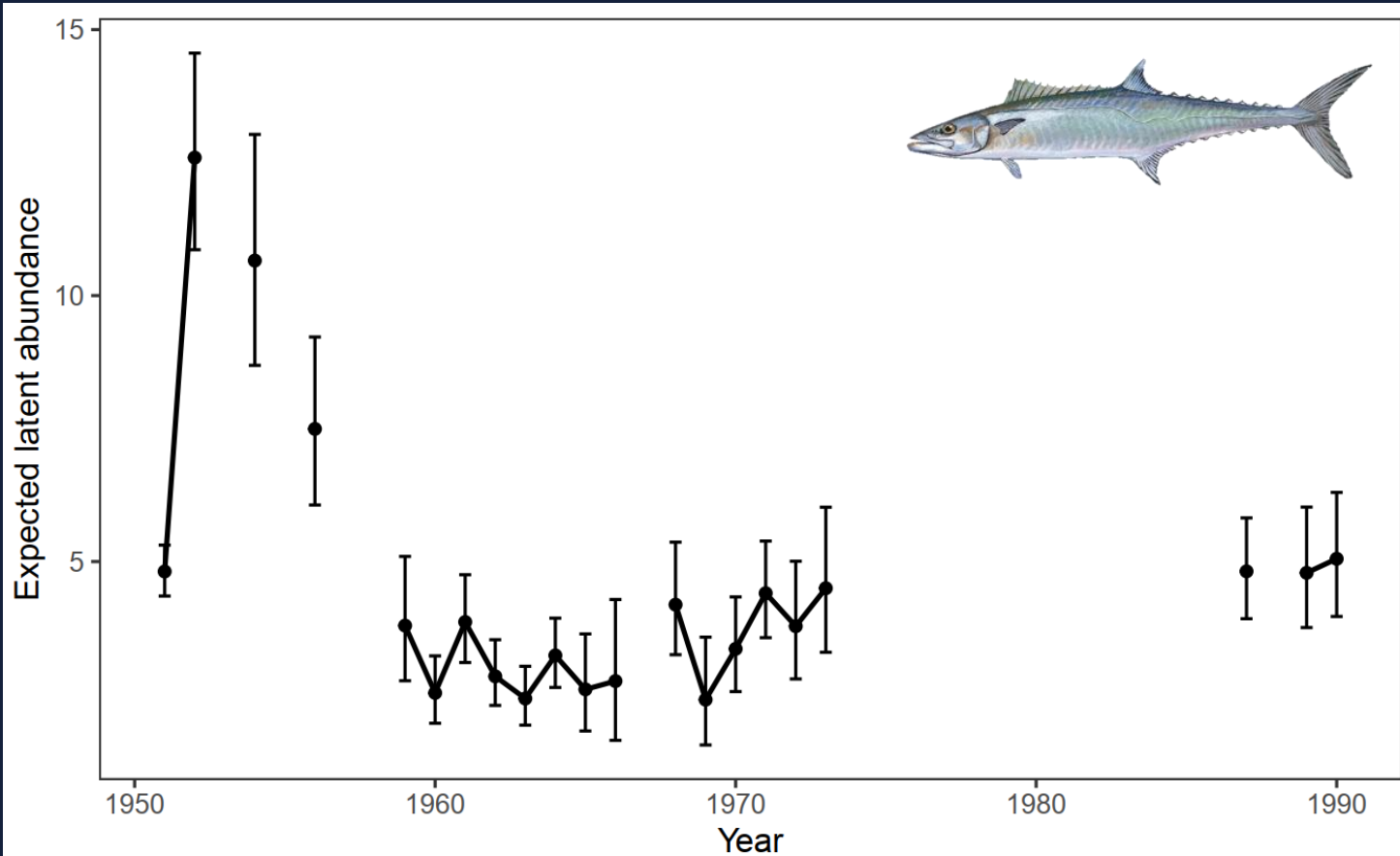
South Carolina: <1%

Georgia: <1%

Florida: 96%

* Late Oct 2026 trip to Outer Banks History Center

King Mackerel



Main pattern

Estimated abundance is generally higher early in the series and lower in later observed years.

Species-specific model

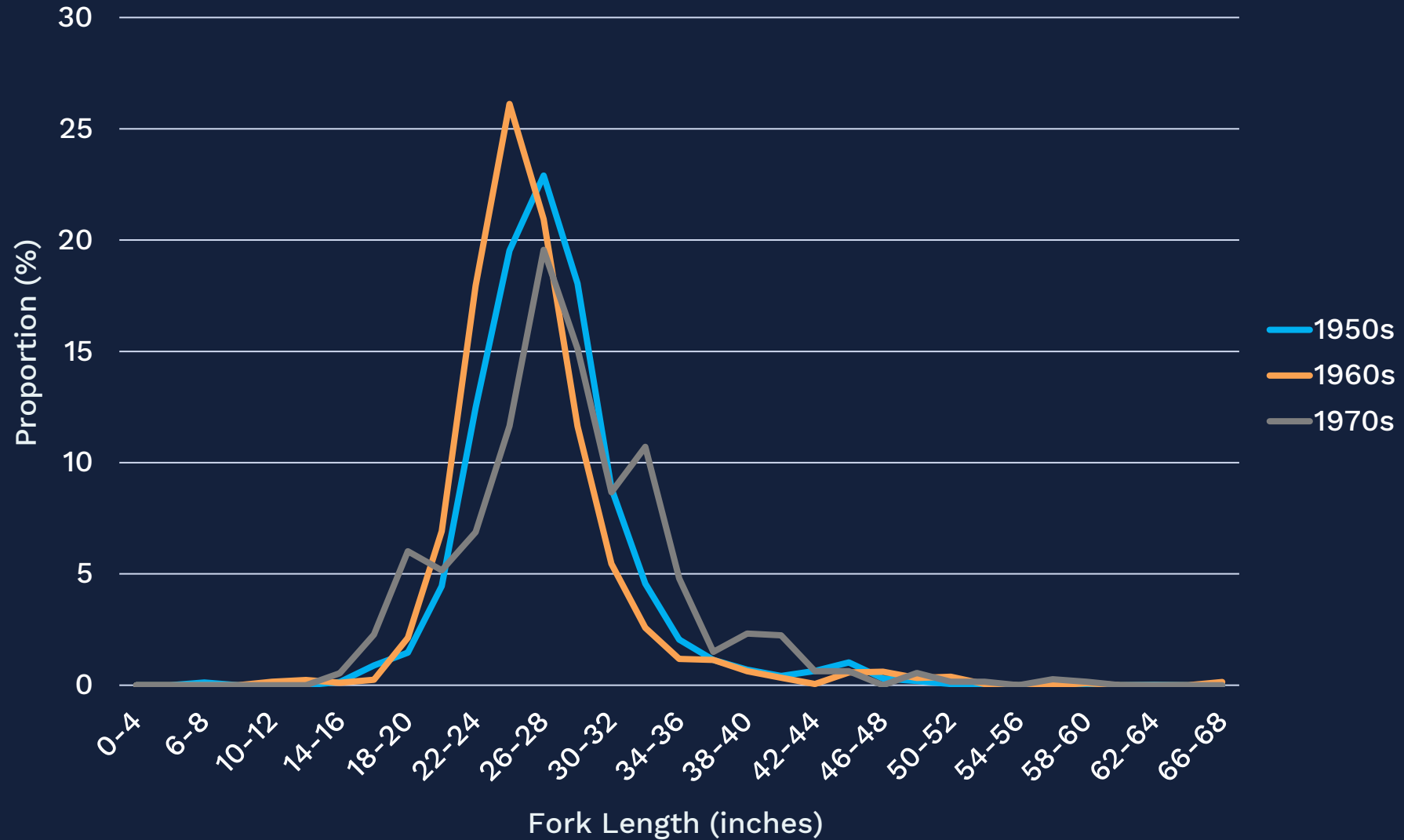
People count was estimated as a weak covariate; false positives were switched off for this case.

Interpret carefully

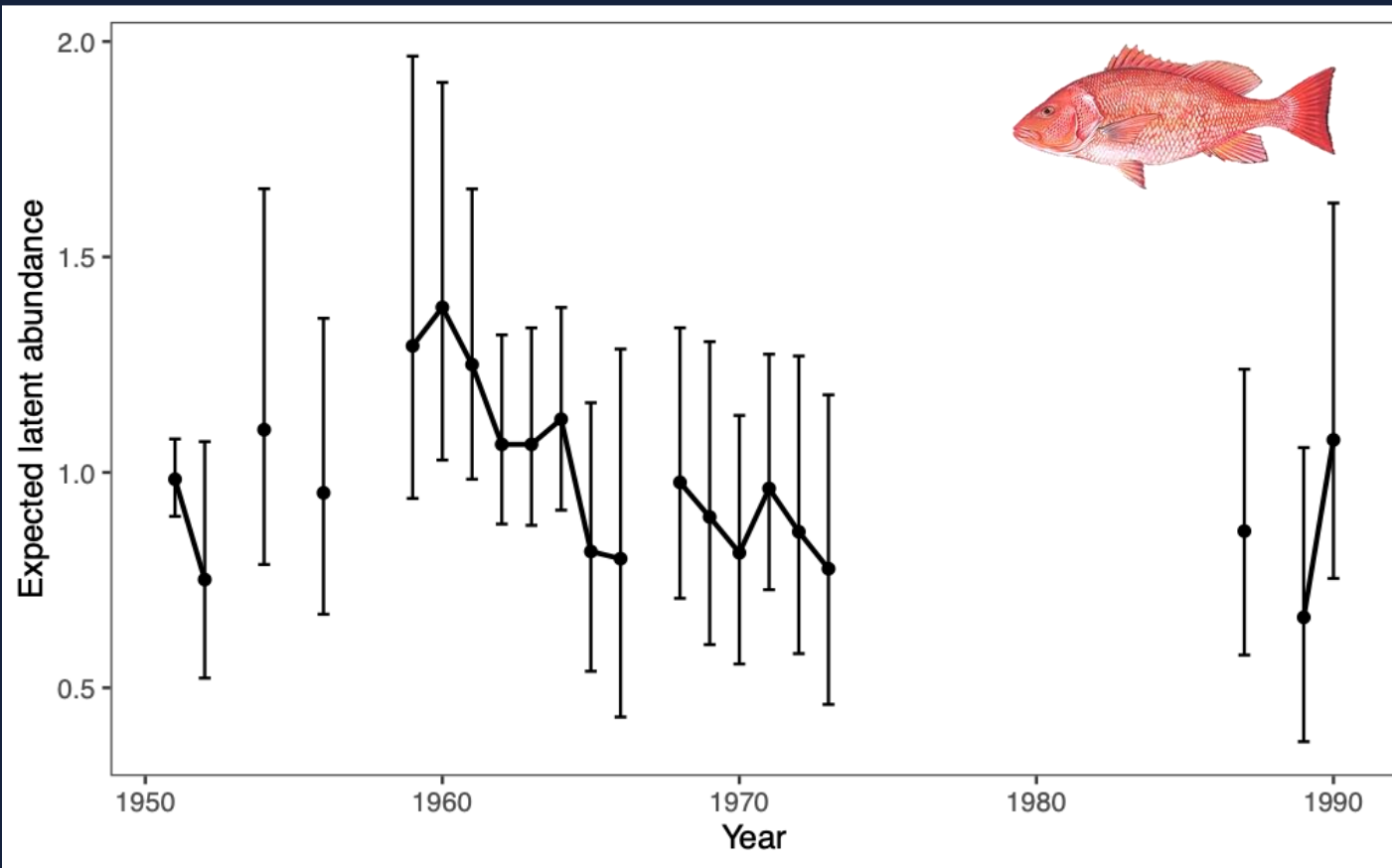
Broad uncertainty and missing years prevent strong conclusions about fine-scale trends.



King
Mackerel
FISHstory
length
compositions
by decade



Red Snapper



Main pattern

Temporal variation is modest, and credible intervals overlap in many adjacent years.

What the model adds

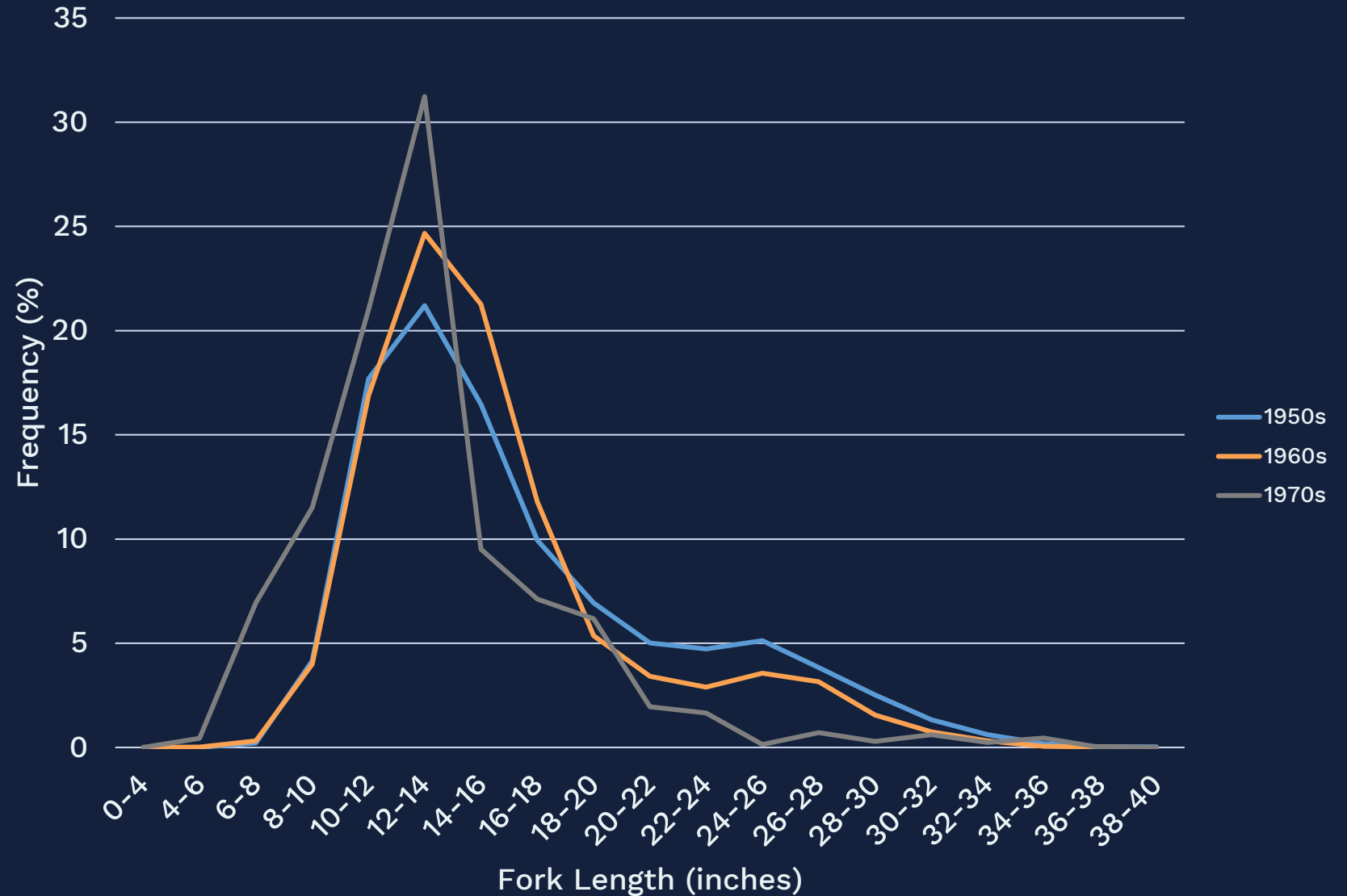
The index accounts for missed detections, false positives, and observer-specific count bias.

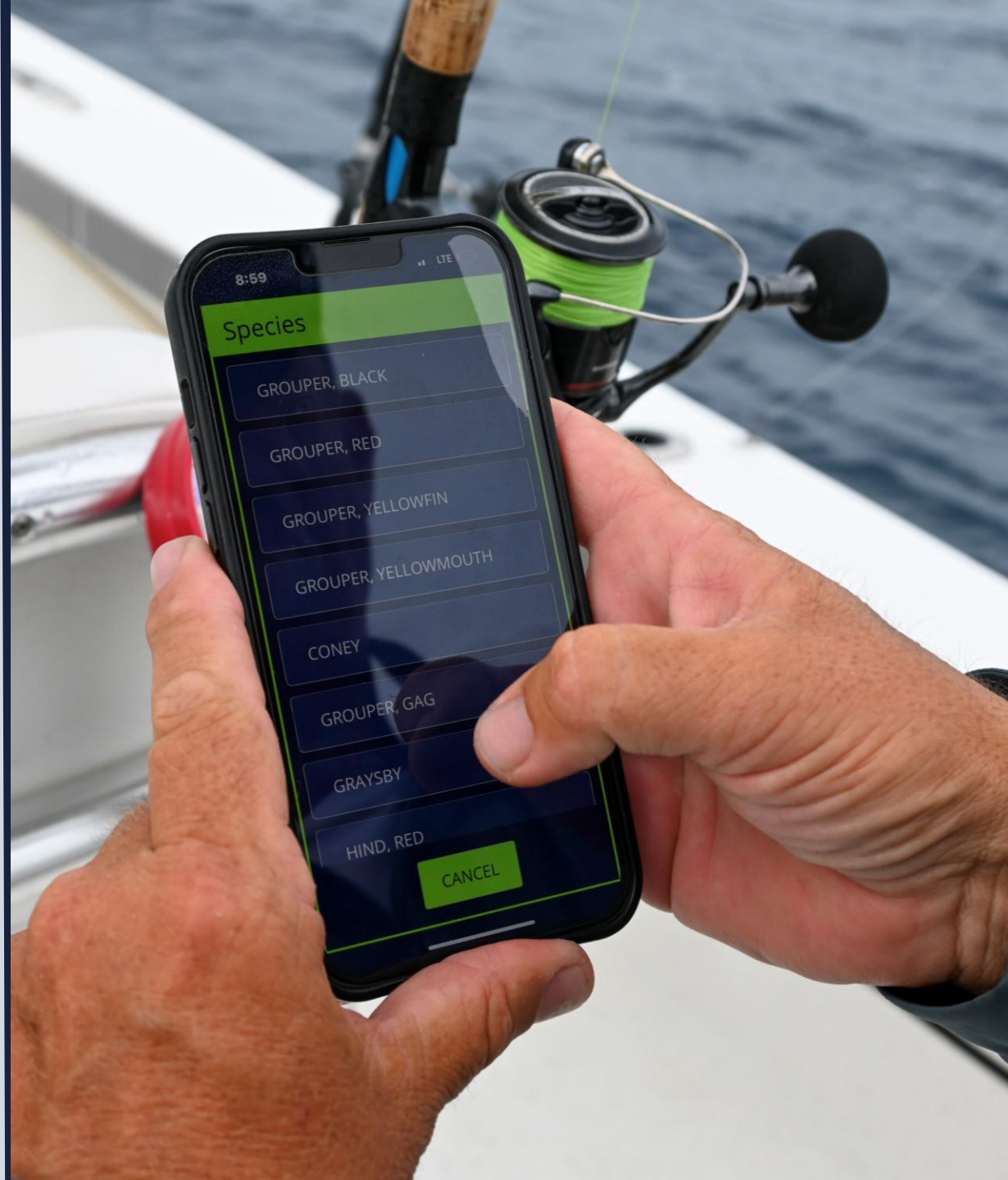
Interpret carefully

A historical fishery-dependent sample - not a coastwide abundance index.



Red Snapper
FISHstory
length
compositions
by decade





Sectors



Species



Red
Snapper



Scamp



Graysby



Black



Yellow-
mouth



Gag



Rock
Hind



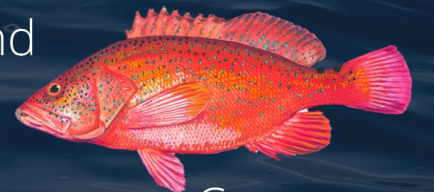
Yellowfin



Red Hind



Red

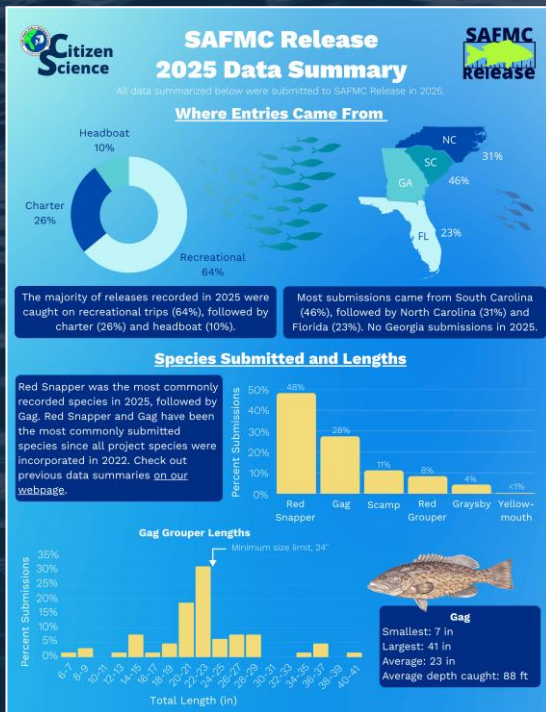


Coney

Project Activities



Annual Data Summary



safmc.net/documents/release-2025-data-summary-final/

Participant Recognition Program

SAFMC Release Participant Recognition Program

- About the Program -

The SAFMC Release Participant Recognition Program (PRP) is designed to celebrate the achievements of our project participants. With every released shallow water grouper and Red Snapper our participants record, they're helping us better understand the size and survival rates of released fish and supporting their snapper grouper fishery. We're excited to thank them for all their efforts!

Important Information:

- Some ways in which participants may be recognized include being featured in the SAFMC Release newsletter and mentioned in the annual data summary. See below for more details.
- We do not share sensitive information through this program. Some information that could be shared includes name, number of releases, species released, fish lengths, and a photo of a release.
- Participants who meet a milestone will be notified via email, using the email address associated with their SciFish account.
- If there is a tie for a milestone, all individuals will be recognized, except the Release Champion milestone. See below for more details.
- Some milestones require length validation photos. Photo guidance can be found at the end of this document.
- All milestones reset at the end of the calendar year.
- To opt out of the recognition program, email meg.withers@safmc.net.

safmc.net/documents/2026-prp-milestones-updated/

Sea Grant South Atlantic Release Rodeo



gulfseagrant.org/reef-fish-extension/safmc-release-rodeo/

Keep Up with the Project



safmc.net/citizen-science/safmc-release/

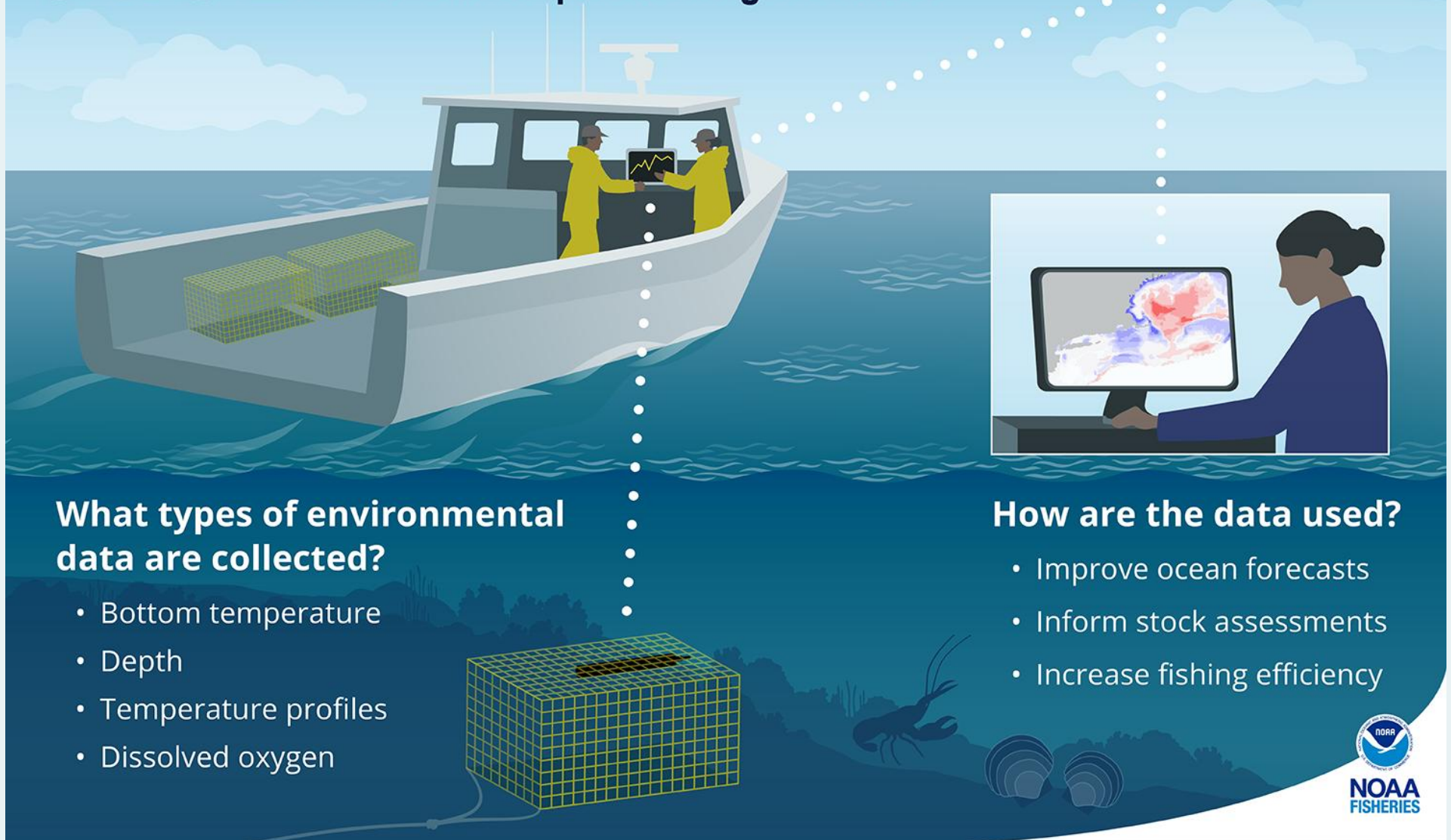
Project Idea

Partner with fishermen to collect environmental data

- Exploring development of a project in the South Atlantic that aims to partner with fishermen to collect bottom temperature data
- [eMOLT](#): successful cooperative ocean observing program in the Northeast administered through NOAA's NEFSC and the Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation
- Could South Atlantic develop a similar pilot project?

eMOLT

Environmental Monitors on Lobster Traps and Large Trawlers



What types of environmental data are collected?

- Bottom temperature
- Depth
- Temperature profiles
- Dissolved oxygen

How are the data used?

- Improve ocean forecasts
- Inform stock assessments
- Increase fishing efficiency



Project Idea

Partner with fishermen to collect bottom temperature

Example deck box and sensors



<https://www.zebra-tech.co.nz/moana-td-sensor/>

Project Idea

Partner with fishermen to collect bottom temperature

- Does bottom temperature play a role in deciding where or when you fish? How do you access that info now?
- Would it be helpful to have real time bottom temperature info or access to this info when you are back onshore?
- What are your initial thoughts on what a project like this could look like in the South Atlantic – gear, logistics, or anything else?
- Are there benefits that would make you or others interested in participating in a project like this?
- Are there things that might make you hesitant or prevent you from participating in a project like this?

Citizen Science Advisory Panels

- Participants members of the [CitSci Pool](#) and/or be a member of another Council AP



Operations Committee

Programmatic guidance

3-5 year terms

Meet 2 times per year

Appointments will be made in
Dec 2023



Projects Advisory Committee

Research priorities, volunteer
engagement, etc.

Members of other Council APs

Term dependent on AP tenure

Meet 1 time per year



Ad-hoc Committees

Typically serve as review for
program components

Currently no active ad-hoc
committees

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Up to 2 representatives per AP

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Meet 1 time per year



**Mackerel Cobia AP
representation:**

Thomas Newman

**Is there another AP
member interested in
joining this group?**



**Keep up with projects
& the Program!**

safmc.net/citizen-science-program/



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