FWC Atlantic Red Snapper EFP Project: Year 1

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

SAFMC Meeting: December 2025

Project Principal Investigators

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FWC Atlantic Red Snapper EFP Projects

- 3 unique EFP Projects
- **Year 1:** August 2024 – July 2025
- **Goals**
  - Collaborate with anglers to obtain catch and discard data
  - Test innovative strategies to reduce discards
  - Allow additional red snapper harvest
  - Develop reporting app and education course
  - Evaluate angler satisfaction

Year 1 Complete!

Photo courtesy of Capt. Robert Holmquist

Study Area

NE Florida

SE Florida

	Study Fleet	Hot Spot Fleet	SE Florida Snapper Grouper Fleet
Where:	NE Florida		SE Florida
Who:	Private and for-hire vessels	Private anglers	
# of Participants:	Total: 40 (10/quarter)	Total: 800 (200/quarter)	
Summary:	- Test 15 fish aggregate bag limit -Full retention of red snapper (up to 60 vessel)	- Test 15 fish aggregate bag limit - Add. red snapper harvest opportunities (bag limit of 3 pp) - Experimental and control group selected via lottery	
Angler Requirements:	- Education course - Hail in/Hail out - Data validation	- Customized app for reporting - Angler satisfaction surveys - Angler incentives	

Proposal Components

Aggregate Bag Limit

- Designed to hit bag limit quicker, stop bottom fishing; thereby reducing discards
- Considers current federal regs, species stock status

Education Course

- 3 modules focused on project, best fishing practices, and fish ID
- Designed to educate participants and disseminate information

Customized App

- Include hail out, trip information, species catch and discards
- Testing angler self-reported data

Angler Satisfaction Surveys

- Pre and post surveys; semi-structure interviews
- Focused on understanding angler behavior and drivers

Lottery Fleets

- Declare trips 24 hrs. in advance
- Collect data during fishing trip (angler)
- Provide return trip information within 48hrs upon return
- Allow biologists to sample trips
  - Target: intercept 20% of trips
  - Interview angler about trip
  - Inspect harvested fish
  - Collect biological samples

Study Fleet

- Declare trips 24 hrs. in advance
- Collect data during fishing trip (vessel)
- Provide return trip information within 48hrs upon return
- Camera and/or observers on board
- Allow biologists sample trips
  - Target: intercept 100% of trips
  - Inspect harvested fish
  - Collect biological samples

EFP Application Summary: Year 1

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Aug. – Oct.	Nov. – Jan.	Feb. – April	May – July
Applications Received	7,722	3,524	5,052	5,830
Participants Selected	410	410	410	410

Over 22,100 applications in Year 1!

Year 1: Project Statistics

22,100+
applicants

1,230
participants

1,019
fleet trips completed

866
education courses completed

5,019
red snapper otoliths collected

5,615
red snapper harvested

5,395
red snapper sampled

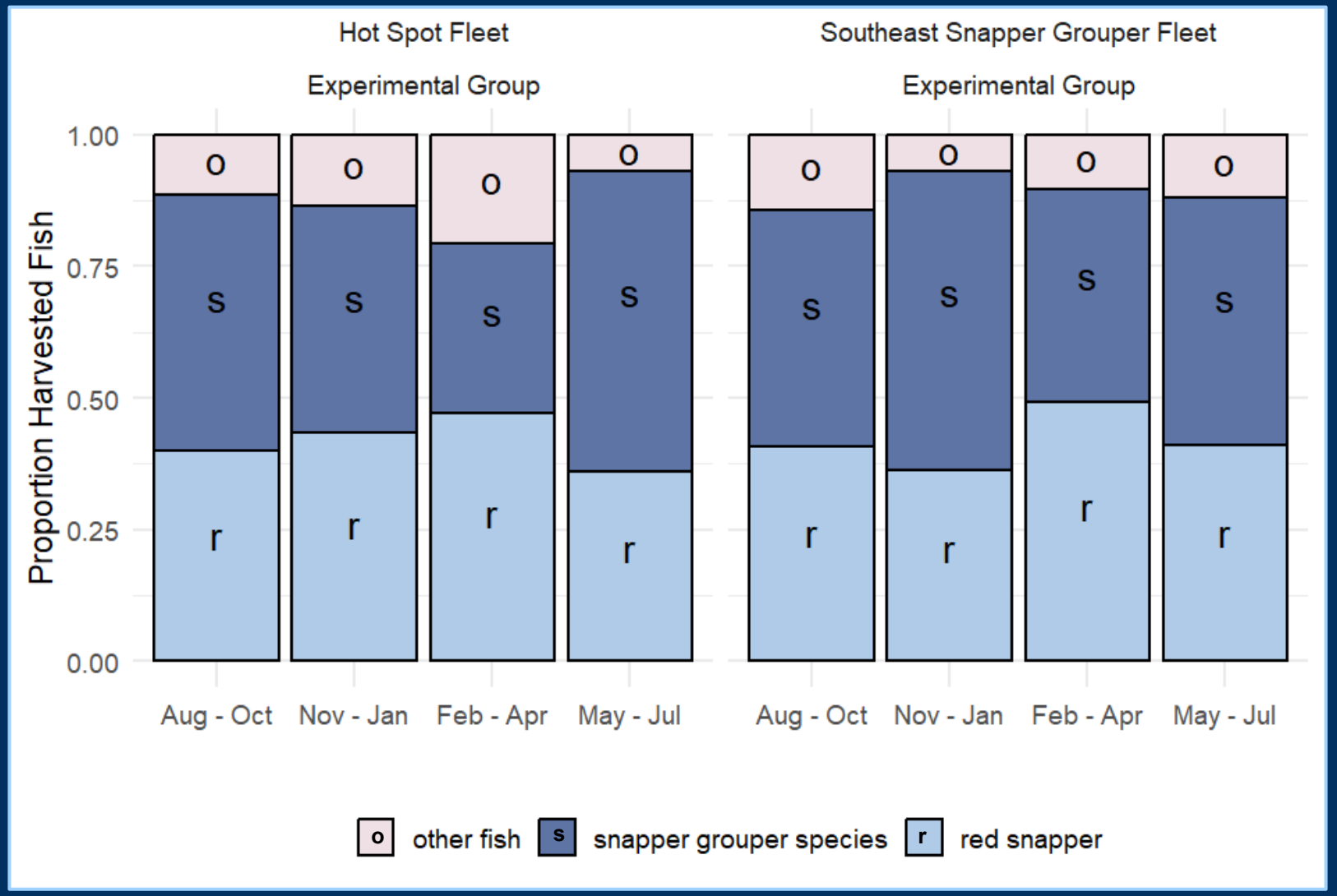
Photo courtesy of Sam Talluto

Year 1: Data Collected

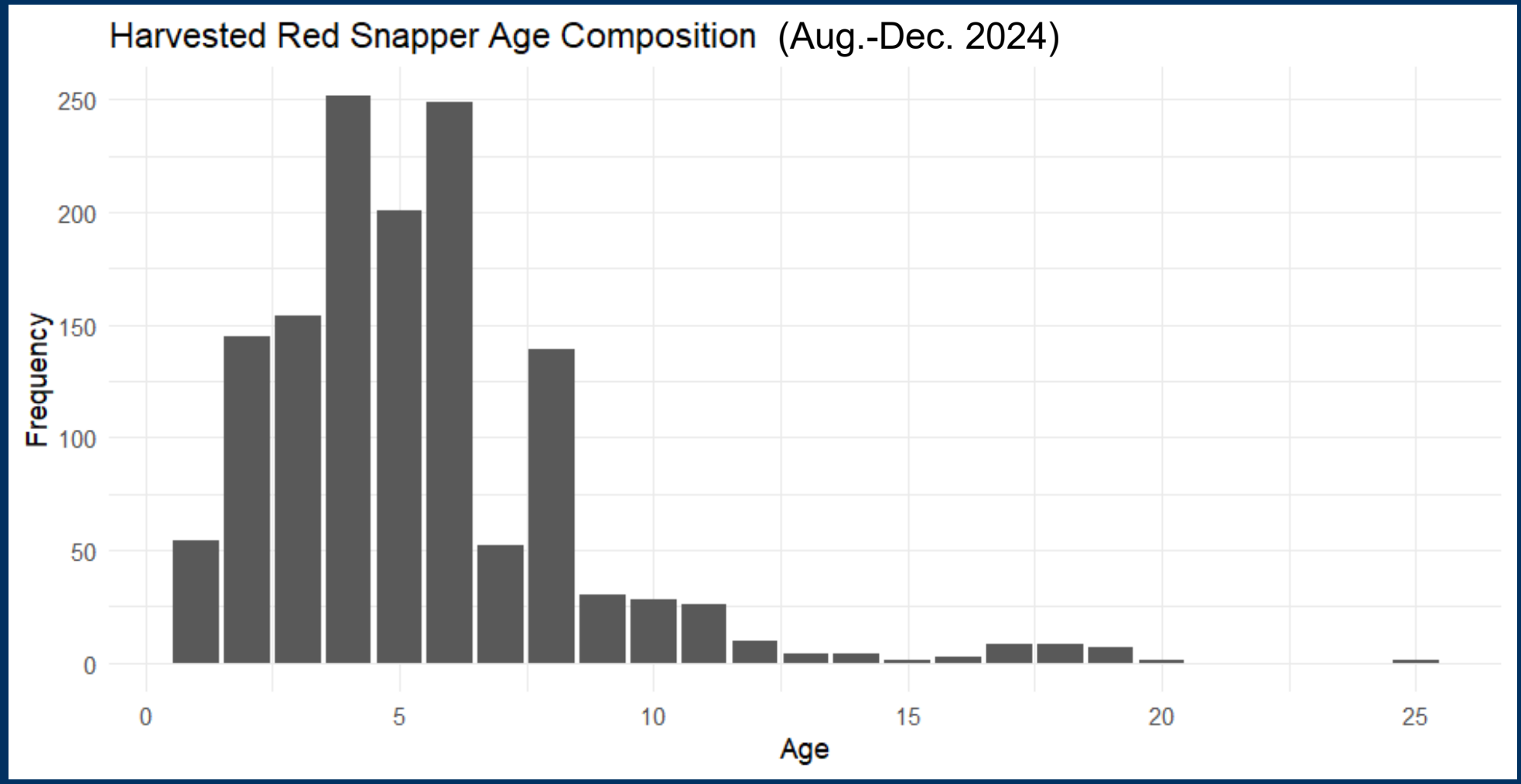
- Aggregate bag limit
- Fishing trip details
  - Time fished, depth, weather
- Seasonal variation
- Catch composition
  - Species, length, age
- Effort by quarter
- Reported harvest and discards
- Fleet comparison
- Angler satisfaction
- Multiple validation methods

Additional analyses ongoing!

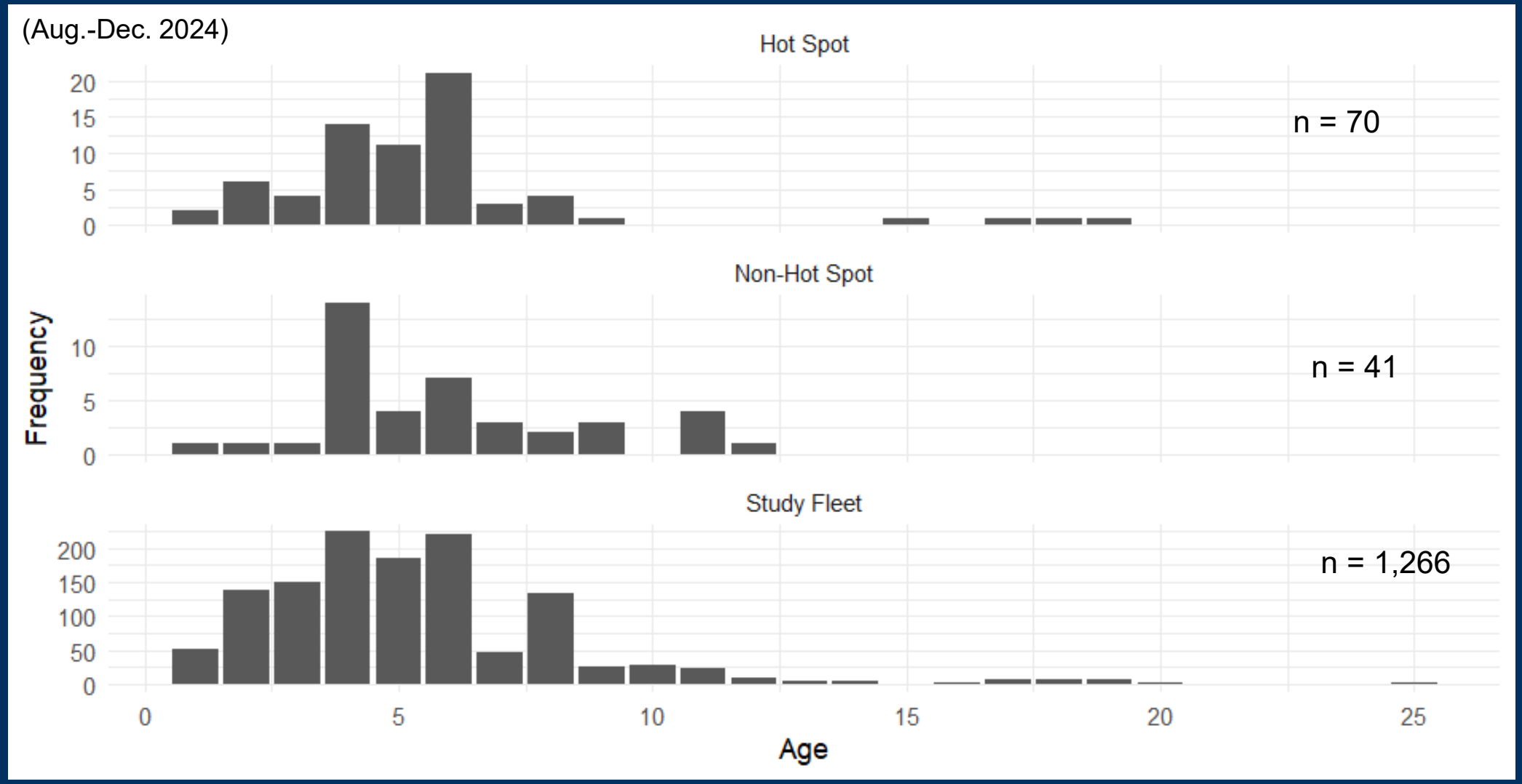
Harvested Species Composition



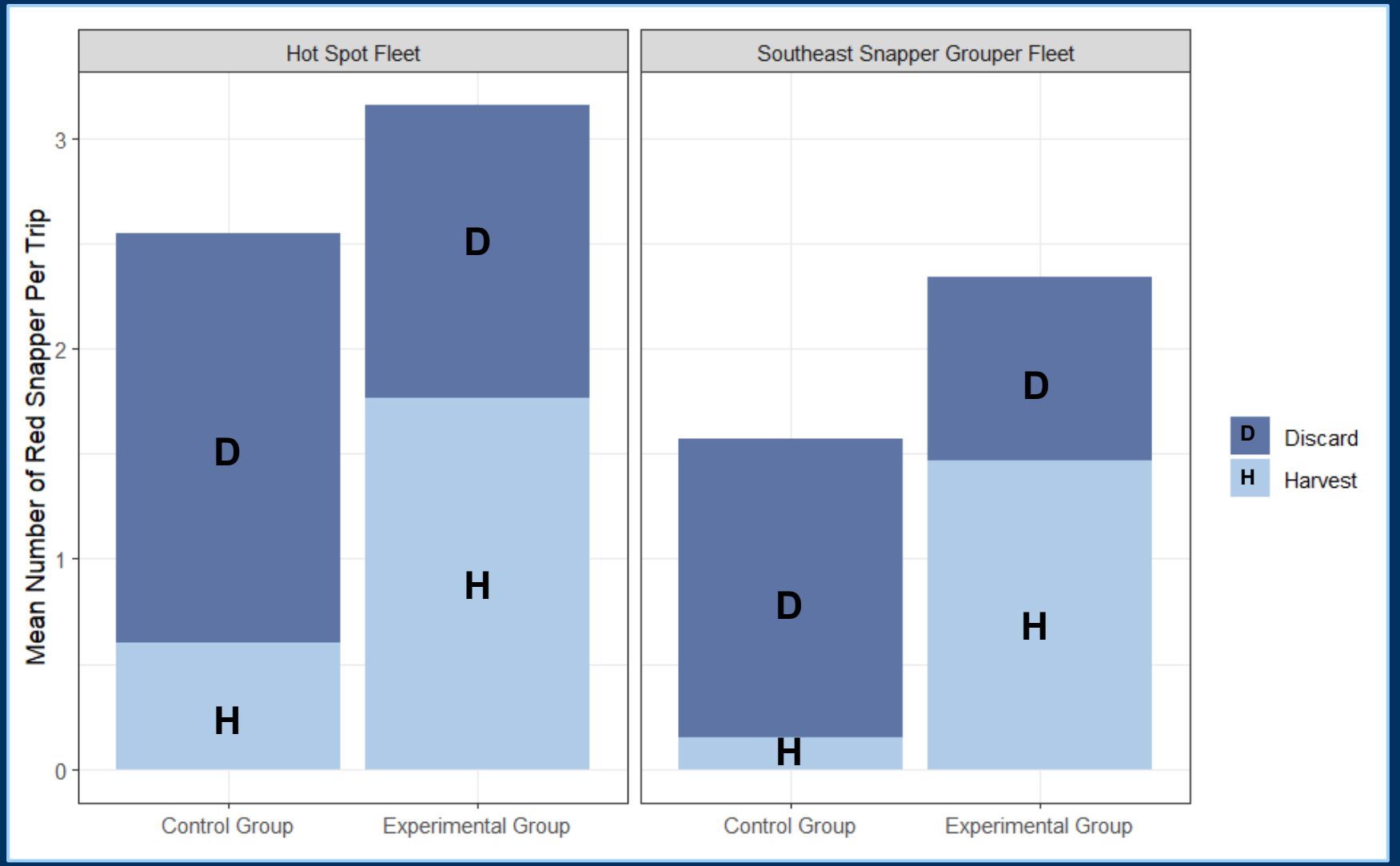
Harvested RS Age Composition Across Fleets



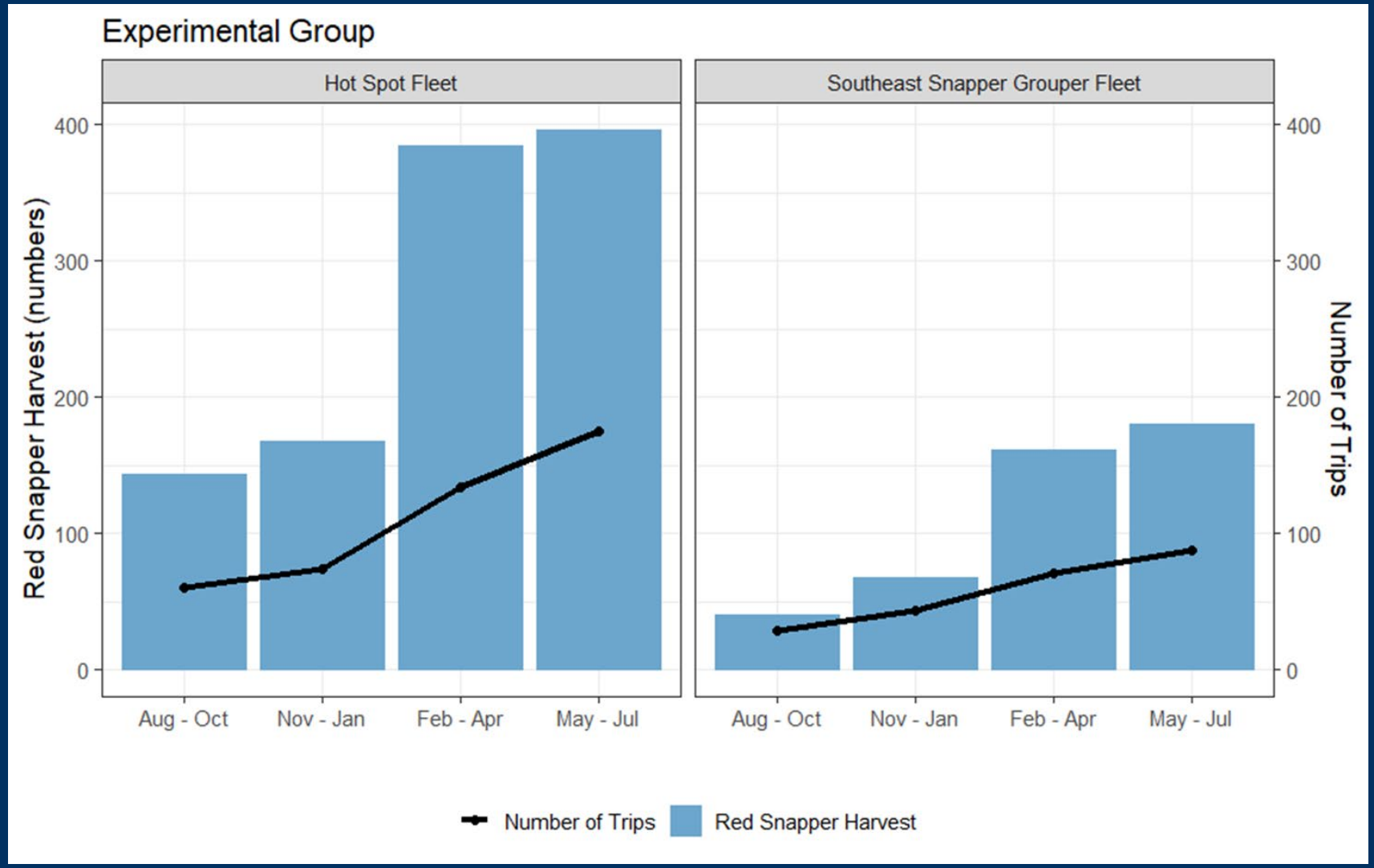
Harvested RS Age Composition by Fleet



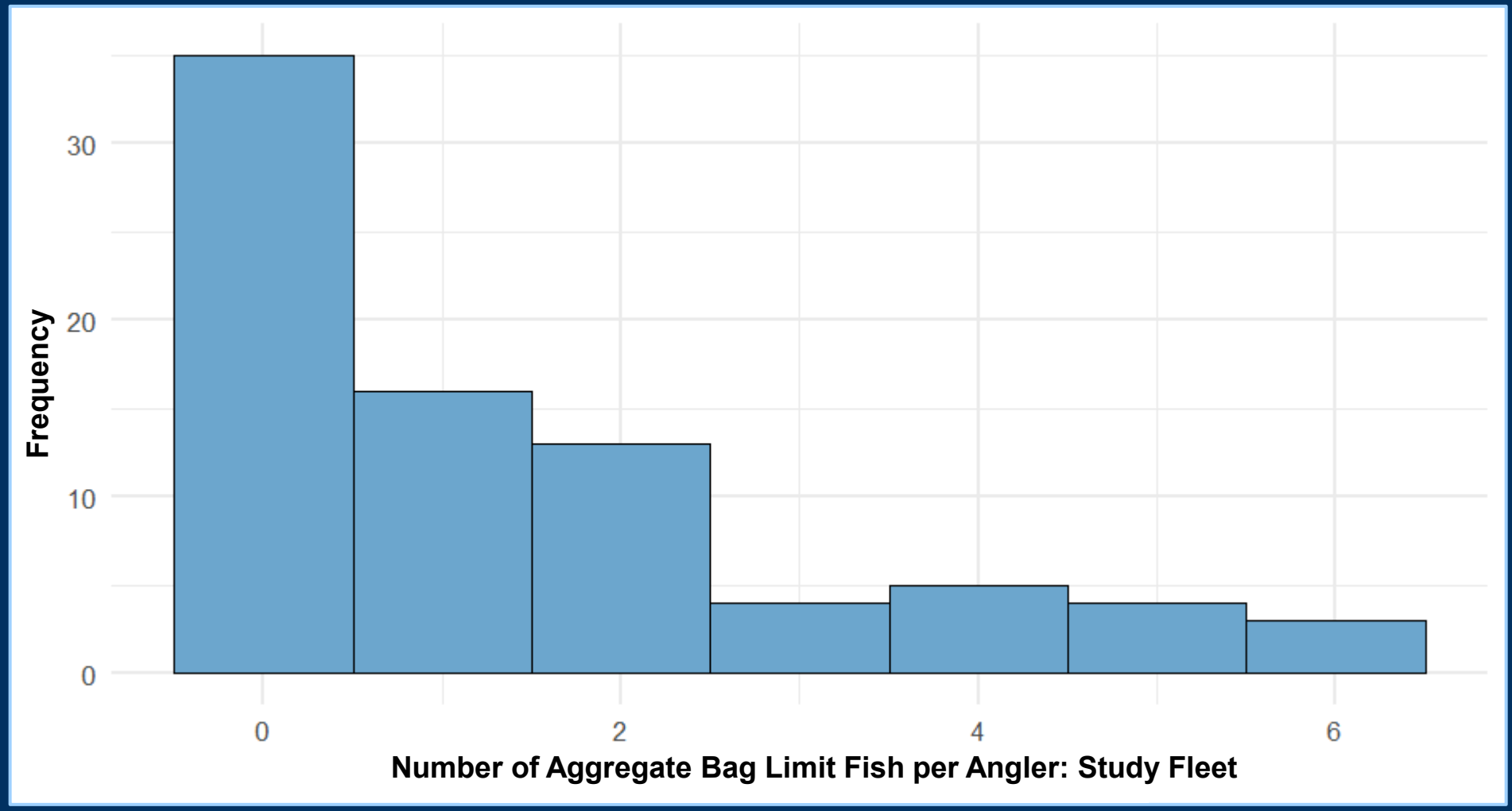
Red Snapper Discards



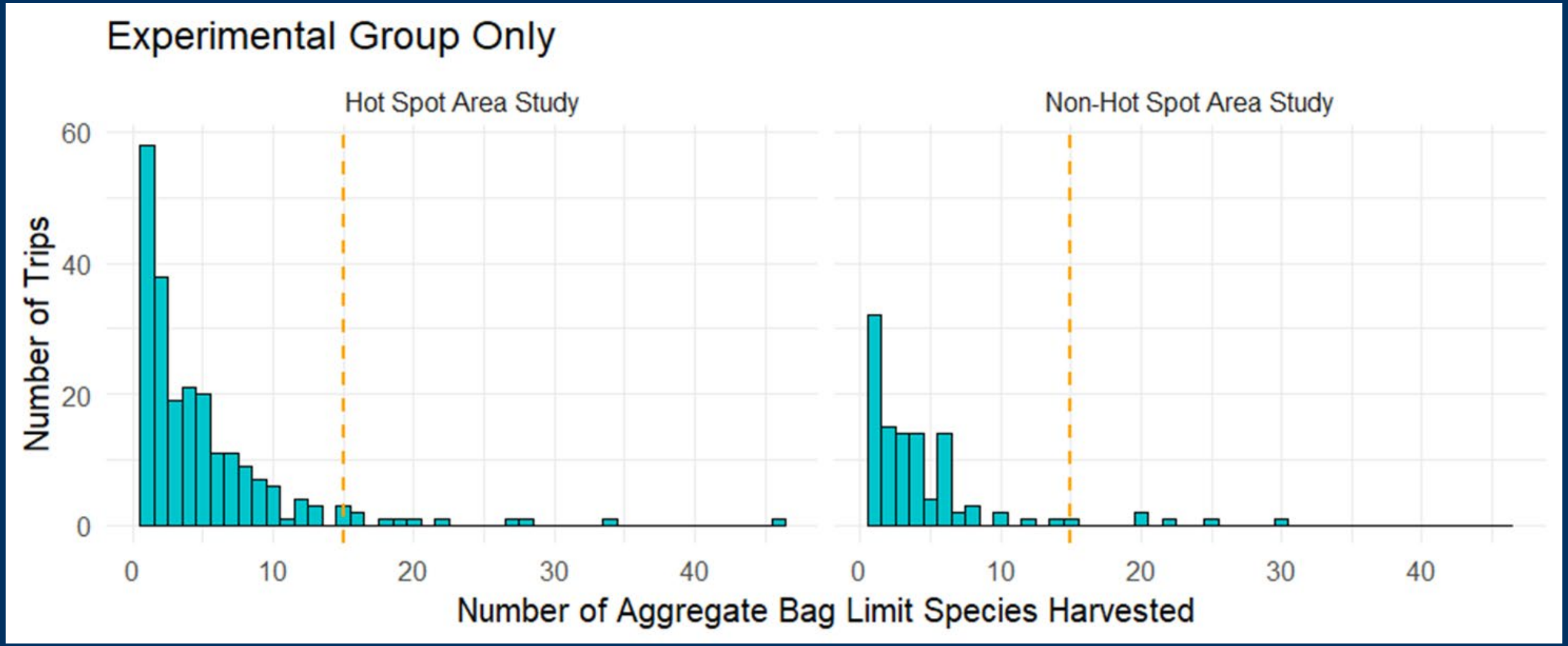
Red Snapper Harvest by Quarter



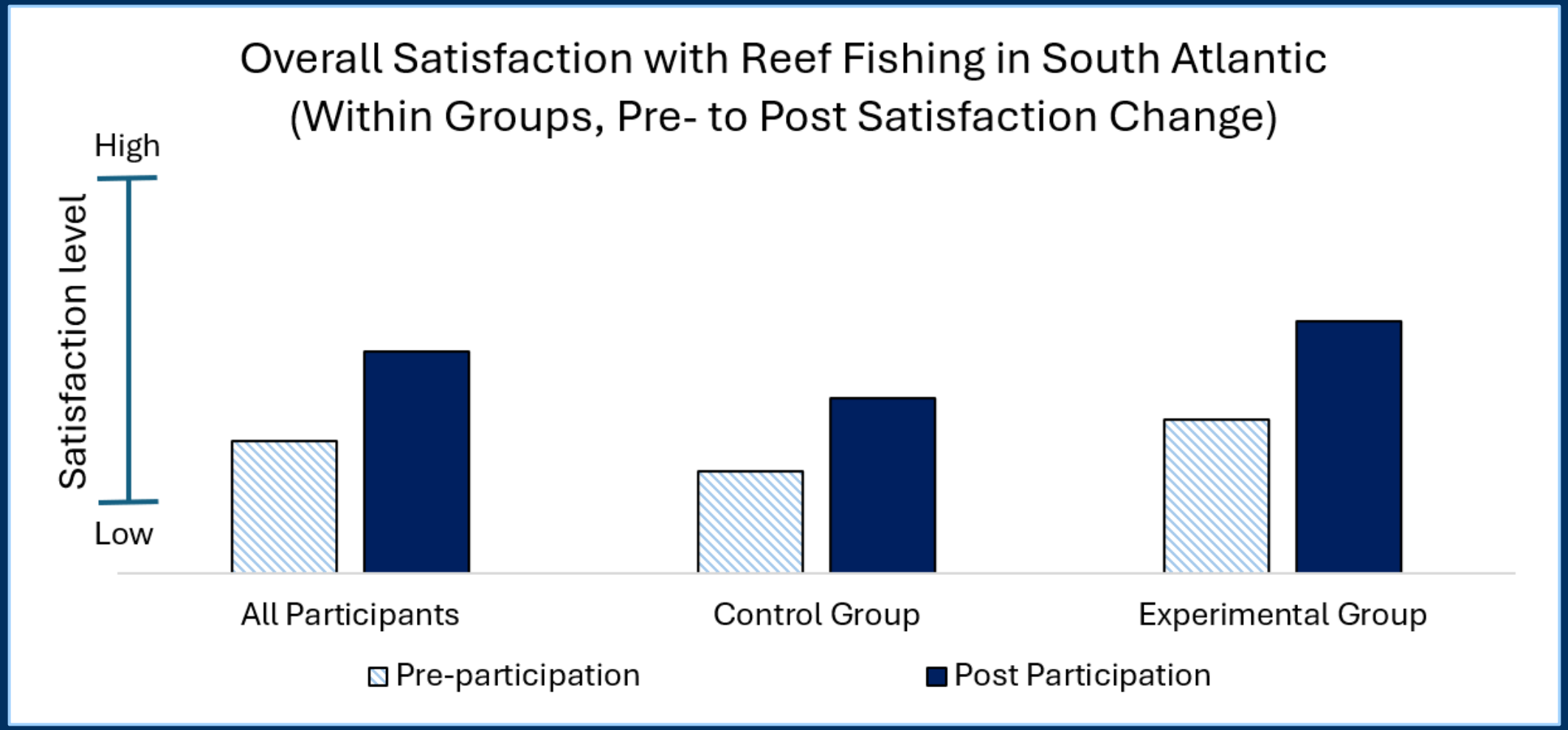
Snapper Grouper Aggregate Harvest: Study Fleet



Snapper Grouper Aggregate Harvest: Lottery Fleets



Angler Satisfaction



Participant Feedback

- ***“I’ve never been part of anything like that before**, so it was interesting and honestly fun. Being out on the water and seeing the process firsthand was great.”*

- *“At the management level, **they have done nothing but instill trust and follow through on what they have been saying**. We may not want to hear it, we may not like their answer, but they're very straightforward and they're very honest about it. And we have, we appreciate that.”*

- ***"We’ve learned a lot about the snapper fishery** by working with the biologists who come out to sample the catch. They’re fantastic, really a great team. **We’ve gained a much better understanding of the current snapper population**.”*

Photo courtesy of Erika Jordan

Year 1: Takeaways

- Strong cross- agency coordination and cooperation
- 15-fish snapper grouper aggregate is too large
- Anglers content with being able to hit their red snapper limit and stop bottom fishing
- Discards are reduced; turning discards into harvest
- Effort varies by season
- Anglers support reporting data to FWC
- Participation increased angler satisfaction
- Positive feedback with high interest

Additional analyses ongoing!

Lessons Learned

- Keep requirements minimal to ensure participation
- Not all fishing days are created equal
- Anglers are open and responsive to change in fishing behavior and management strategies
- Anglers are willing and eager to assist in providing better data
- Building trust and relationships is key to conserving resource

Photo courtesy of Hudson Davis

Results informed FWC state management EFP proposal

FWC Atlantic Red Snapper EFP Project: Year 2

- Continuation of Year 1
- Changes include:
  - Adding headboat component
  - Modifying red snapper retention limits
  - Adjusting snapper grouper aggregate
  - Removing control group
  - Streamlining data reporting

Quarter 2 is underway!

Photo courtesy of Jesse Bowling

Thank you to all participants, sponsors, and supporters of the project!

Acknowledgements

Project Team

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Thank you to all who have made this project a success!

Questions?