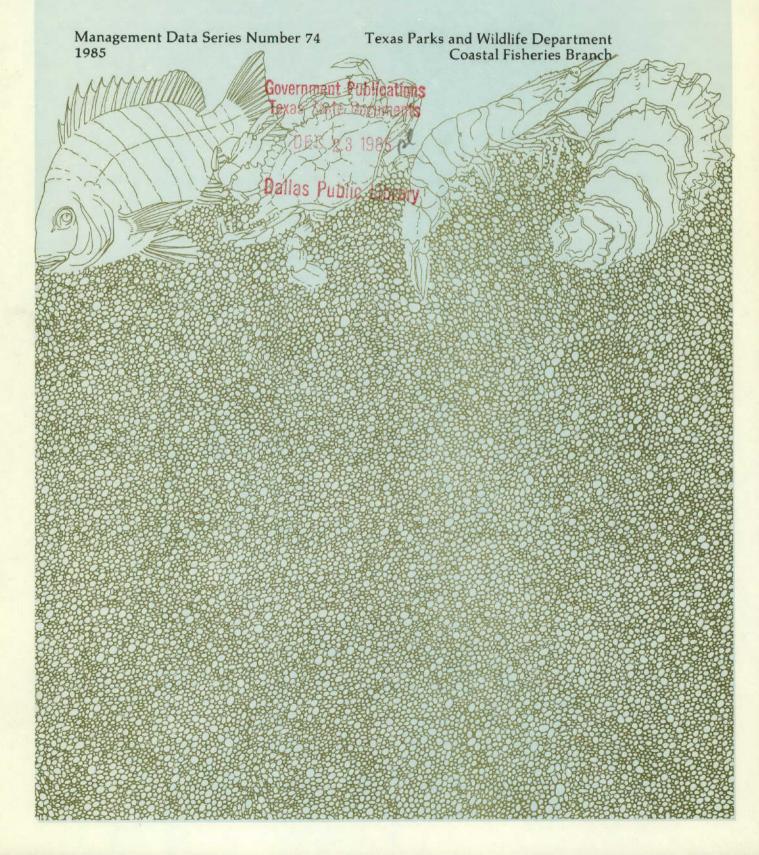
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Potential Catch in Sport Beach Seines On the Upper Texas Coast

by William B. Kittrell, Gary E. Saul, Roy B. Johnson and Gary C. Matlock



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Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Coastal Fisheries Branch 4200 Smith School Road Austin, Texas 78744

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ABSTRACT

Mean monthly catch rates of animals in a 91.4 m seine pulled at six randomly selected sites between Sea Rim State Park and Bolivar Roads were determined. The potential catch in sport beach seines was then determined by multiplying mean catch rates by the estimated sport seining effort. The estimated annual sport beach seine catch of the 45 species captured in this study ranged from 463,000 to 89,000,000 animals. The harvest by 1,800 net fishermen could equal or exceed the harvest of 93,000 weekend sport-boat fishermen using hook and line in Galveston Bay.

INTRODUCTION

Beach seines are a historical method of harvesting fish on the Texas coast. Farley (1974) stated that an increase in commercial landings of spotted seatrout (Cynoscion nebulosus) from 118,752 kg in 1972 to 240,907 kg in 1973 "resulted largely from beach seine catches on the upper Texas coast." Beach seines were also used by sport fishermen to harvest fish prior to Legislative actions protecting overfished populations of red drum and spotted seatrout (Johnson et al. 1985). These actions prohibited the use of nets by sport and commercial fishermen (Anonymous 1983). Although the primary food fish caught by sport beach seiners was spotted seatrout (Johnson et al. 1985), a considerable by-catch of other finfish and shellfish could be expected because it typically occurs in net fisheries. McFarland (1963) found that striped mullet (Mugil cephalus), Atlantic threadfin (Polydactylus octonemus), Gulf kingfish (Menticirrhus littoralis), barred grunt (Conodon nobilis), and Florida pompano (Trachinotus carolinus) were the most abundant (by weight) of 47 species caught in beach seine collections at Mustang Island, Texas.

Johnson et al. (1985) determined the impacts of estimated catch of spotted seatrout in sport beach seines on the upper Texas coast. The objective of this study was to determine species composition and estimated catch of all species captured in sport beach seines operated by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Beach seines used and methods of pulling the net were described by Johnson et al. (1985). From April 1983 to March 1984, a 91.4 m long seine with 3 meshes/15.2 cm was pulled each month at six randomly selected stations from Sea Rim State Park to the southwest tip of the Bolivar Peninsula (Figure 1). The seine was pulled parallel to the beach with one end on shore. All specimens collected were counted by species.

Mean monthly catch rates (No./drag) of marine organisms caught in ≥ 6 samples were compared (P ≤ 0.05) using a one-way analysis of variance (Sokal and Rohlf 1981). Catch rates (No./drag + 1) were transformed to \log_{10} prior to analysis to reduce variance heterogeneity. Comparisons among monthly means by species were made using the Duncan multiple range test (Sokal and Rohlf 1981).

Potential catch of marine organisms by sport seines with appropriate standard errors (Sokal and Rohlf 1981) was estimated by multiplying mean monthly catch/effort times effort. Assumptions regarding the fishery were the same as made by Johnson et al. (1985): 1) all 1854 people signing a petition opposing the prohibition of sport beach seining in 1982 were seiners; 2) 3 people were required to operate a seine (TPWD used 3 people); 3) each drag required 1 hour (TPWD took 43.4 ± 2.3 minutes); 4) 2 hours/day were spent in non-seining activities; 5) there was no night seining; and 6) there was no illegal seining (i.e., no seines were pulled on weekends). The best estimate of effort was assumed to be from 100 to 600 seines operated annually with the same number of trips/year (18) and monthly distribution of trips (0.5 to 2.8 trips/month) as that of saltwater boat anglers (Ferguson and Green in preparation). The average trip length of 3.5 hours equals the average trip length of saltwater boat anglers (McEachron et al. 1981). Data for months with statistically similar catches/effort were combined to estimate a single mean prior to multiplying by the fishing effort for those months.

RESULTS

The best estimate of the annual sport beach seine catch ranges from 463,000 to 2,780,000 animals (Table 1). Potential annual catch in 600 sport beach seines could exceed 89,000,000 organisms including 37,000,000 striped mullet, 22,000,000 blue crabs (Callinectes sapidus), 7,000,000 Atlantic threadfin, 5,000,000 hardhead catfish (Arius felis), 4,000,000 spotted seatrout, 3,000,000 spot (Leiostomus xanthurus) and 3,000,000 cabbagehead (Stomolophus meleagris) (Table 2). The catch of black drum (Pogonias cromis), red drum (Scianops ocellatus), sheepshead (Archosargus probatocephalus), Atlantic croaker (Micropogonias undulatus), sand seatrout (C. arenarius), Florida pompano, and southern kingfish (M. americanus) could be 500,000 to 1,600,000 organisms.

Our beach seine catch consisted of 4,242 fish and shellfish representing 45 species (Table 3). Seven species (striped mullet, blue crab, Atlantic threadfin, hardhead catfish, spotted seatrout, cabbagehead and spot) were represented by ≥ 100 specimens. Of the 17 most frequently caught species, 13 had catch rates which varied significantly among months (Table 4). Nine species (Atlantic croaker, Atlantic threadfin, black drum, blue crab, Florida pompano, hardhead catfish, sand seatrout, southern kingfish and spotted seatrout) had highest catch rates during summer (Table 2, Figure 2). Red drum, spot and striped mullet had high catch rates during fall (Table 2, Figure 2).

DISCUSSION

Projected best estimates of fishes caught in beach seines indicate that harvest of some species by a relatively small net fishery could equal or exceed the landings by weekend sport-boat fishermen in Galveston Bay. In 1982-83, 93,000 sport-boat fishermen (Ditton and Fedler 1983) spent 788,000 man-hours on weekends alone to harvest 14,700 red drum and 34,500

black drum (McEachron and Green 1984). This compares to an estimated catch of 15,548 red drum and 47,533 black drum in 600 seines (1800 fishermen) fished 113,400 man-hours. A similar result was found for spotted seatrout (Johnson et al. 1985). Therefore, prohibition of beach seining has distributed the available resource to the greatest number of users.

Impacts of the estimated catch on animals depends on existing population levels, fisherman compliance with bag, possession and size limits and differential survival rates of released animals. The 1983-84 red drum limit of 10 fish per fisherman per day, for instance, would not be exceeded by estimated beach seine catches. However, since only 42% of the red drum caught would be of the 1983 legal size limit, it would be necessary to return fish to the water. Not all fishes (and presumably other animals) would survive after release. Survival rates vary among species (Hegen et al. 1984). Colura (1974) found no difference in survival of netted and control black drum in pond studies, but Hegen et al. (1982) reported that return rates of net-caught spotted seatrout were too low for use in tagging studies. The mortality of organisms caught in beach seines will vary according to species, handling procedures, exposure during netting activities, and physical stress and damage to the organism (such as that caused when fish are gilled).

The impacts of overfishing (Matlock 1982) and the loss of over 15 million animals during the freeze of December 1983 (McEachron et al. 1984) have resulted in fewer fish being available for capture. The prohibition of the use of nets by sport beach seiners has distributed the available catch to the greatest number of users.

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			Seines		
Species	Period	100	300	600	
FISH		•.	•		
<u></u>					
Atlantic croaker	Jul	2,377	7,132	14,263	
	Aug-Jun	2,239	6,716	13,432	
	Annual	4,616	13,848	27,695	
Atlantic threadfin	Jun-Jul	43,186	129,559	259,119	
	Aug-May	1,276	3,827	7,654	
	Annual	44,462	133,386	266,773	
Black drum	Jun-Jul	4,993	14,978	29,956	
	Aug-May	2,929	8,788	17,577	
	Annual	7,922	23,766	47,533	
Florida pompano	Jul	2,243	6,728	13,457	
• -	Aug-Jun	1,420	4,259	8,518	
	Annual	3,663	10,987	21,975	
Hardhead catfish	Jun-Jul	21,262	63,787	127,575	
	Aug-May	5,103	15,309	30,618	
	Annual	26,365	79,096	158,193	
Red drum	Sep	1,117	3,352	6,703	
	Oct-Aug	1,474	4,423	. 8,845	
	Annual	2,591	7,775	15,548	
Sand seatrout	Jun-Jul	3,544	10,631	21,262	
	Aug-May	472	1,417	2,835	
	Annual	4,016	12,048	24,097	
Sheepshead	Annual	4,095	12,285	24,570	
Southern flounder	Annual	1,512	4,536	9,072	
Southern kingfish	Jul	3,503	10,508	21,017	
e e	Aug-Jun	764		4,586	
· · ·	Annual	4,267	12,801	25,603	
Spot	Ju1/Oct	12,474	37,422	74,844	
· · ·	Remainder of year	2,315	6,946	13,891	
	Annual	14,789	44,368	88,735	
Spotted seatrout	Jun-Jul	17,057	51,171	102,343	
	Aug-May	4,252	12,757	25,515	
	Annual	21,309	63,928	127,858	

Table 1. Best estimate of potential sport beach seine catches by species in 100 to 600 seines in 18 annual fishing trips at 3.5 hours per trip_a. Months with statistically similar (P > 0.05) catch rates were combined.

Table 1. (Cont'd.).

Species	Period	100	300	600
Striped mullet	May/Oct	126,844	380,533	761,065
- · ·	Remainder of year	40,673	122,018	244,037
	Annual	167,517	502,551	1,005,102
White mullet	Annual	1,638	4,914	9,828
INVERTEBRATES				
Blue crab	Jul-Aug	116,025	348,075	696,150
	Sep-Jun	18,726	56,179	112,358
· · ·	Annual	134,751	404,254	808,508
Cabbagehead	Jun/Sep	16,411	49,234	98,469
	Remainder of year	1,654	4,961	9,922
	Annual	18,065	54,195	108,391
Speckled crab	Annual	1,638	4,914	9,828
Other species ^C	Annual	504	1,512	3,024
Total annual catch		463,720	1,391,164	2,782,333

^aNumber of trips per year and seasonality from Ferguson and Green (In preparation). ^bMean trip length from McEachron et al. (1981)

^cOther species includes 28 species (see Table 3).

Spanica	news, a	Days b		Seines		
Species	Periods ^a	fished ^b	Catch/drag	100	600	
FISH	;		• •			
· · · ·						
Atlantic croaker	Jul	22	2.83	62,260	373,560	
	Aug-Jun	242	0.41	99,220		
	Annual	264		161,480	595,320	
		204		101,400	968,880	
Atlantic threadfin	Jun-Jul	44	27.42	1,206,480	7,238,880	
	Aug-May	220	0.27	59,400	356,400	
	Annual	264		1,265,880		
	· · · · · ·	204		1,200,000	7,595,280	
Black drum	Jun-Jul	44	3.17	139,480	836,880	
	Aug-May	220	0.62	136,400	818,400	
	Annual	264	0002	275,880	•	
		204		279,000	1,655,280	
Florida pompano	Jul	22	2.67	58,740	352,440	
	Aug-Jun	242	0.26	62,920	377,520	
	Annual	264	0.20	121,660		
		201		121,000	729,960	
Hardhead catfish	Jun-Jul	44	13.50	594,000	3,564,000	
	Aug-May	220	1.08	237,600	1,425,600	
	Annual	264		831,600	4,989,600	
				001,000	4,505,000	
Red drum	Sep	22	1.33	29,260	175,560	
	Oct-Aug	242	0.27	65,340	392,040	
	Annual	264		94,600	567,600	
				,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,	507,000	
Sand seatrout	Jun-Jul	• 44	2.25	99,000	594,000	
	Aug-May	220	0.10	22,000	132,000	
	Annual	264	•	121,000	726,000	
			· ·	121,000	/10,000	
Sheepshead	Annual	264	0.65	171,600	1,029,600	
					.,,	
Southern flounder	Annual	264	0.24	63,360	380,160	
					*	
Southern kingfish	Jul	22 -	4.17	91,740	550,440	
	Aug-Jun	242	0.14	33,880	203,280	
	Annual	264		125,620	753,720	
	1.1/0		• •			
Spot	Jul/Oct	44	7.92	348,480	2,090,880	
	Remainder of year	220	0.49	107,800	646,800	
	Annual	264		456,280	2,737,680	
Spotted contract	Ť		10.00			
Spotted seatrout	Jun-Jul	44	10.83	476,520	2,859,120	
	Aug-May	220	0.90	198,000	1,188,000	
	Annual	264		674,520	4,047,120	

Table 2. Potential annual catch of species in 100 to 600 seines in 10 drags per day, 22 days fished per month. A seine is a 91.4 m beach seine operated by 3 persons.

Table 2. (Cont'd.).

	_	Days ,		Seines	
Species	Periods ^a	Days fished ^b	Catch/drag	100	600
Striped mullet	May/Oct	44	100.67	4,429,480	26,576,880
-	Remainder of year	220	8.07	1,775,400	10,652,400
- · · · ·	Annual	264		6,204,880	37,229,280
White mullet	Annual	264	0.26	68,640	411,840
INVERTEBRATES		·			
Blue crab	Jul-Aug	44	63.75	2,805,000	16,830,000
	Sep-Jun	220	4.18	919,600	5,517,600
	Annual	264		3,724,600	22,347,600
Cabbagehead	Jun/Sep	44	10.42	458,480	2,750,880
	Remainder of year	220	0.35	77,000	462,000
	Annual	264		535,480	3,212,880
Speckled crab	Annual	264	0.26	68,6 40	411,840
Other species	Annual	264	0.08	21,120	126,720
Total annual catch				14,986,840	89,921,040

^aMonths with significantly different catch rates (P \leq .05) are presented separately. ^bDays fished calculated according to the methods used by Johnson et al. 1985.

Samples Species Number containing Common name Scientific name caught organisms Catch/drag ± 1 SE FISH Atlantic bumper 0.99 ± 0.90 Chloroscombrus chrysurus 71 3 Atlantic croaker Micropogonias undulatus 44 13 0.61 ± 0.20 Atlantic needlefish Strongylura marina 1 0.01 ± 0.01 1 Atlantic spadefish Chaetodipterus faber 9 5 0.12 ± 0.06 Atlantic stingray 3 3 Dasyatis sabina 0.04 ± 0.02 Atlantic threadfin Polydactylus octonemus 345 13 4.79 ± 2.28 2 0.03 ± 0.02 Bay anchovy Anchoa mitchilli 2 Bighead searobin Prionotus tribulus 1 0.01 ± 0.01 1 Black drum 75 Pogonias cromis 31 1.04 ± 0.19 Blackcheek tonguefish Symphurus plagiusa 0.01 ± 0.01 1 1 Blacktip shark Carcharhinus limbatus 22 1 0.30 ± 0.30 Bluefish Pomatomus saltatrix 3 1 0.04 ± 0.04 Bluntnose jack Hemicaranx amblyrhynchus 2 2 0.03 ± 0.02 Crevalle jack Caranx hippos 1 0.01 ± 0.01 1 0.46 ± 0.15 Florida pompano Trachinotus carolinus 33 12 Gizzard shad Dorosoma cepedianum 4 3 0.05 ± 0.03 Gulf butterfish Peprilus burti 1 1 . 0.01 ± 0.01 Menticirrhus littoralis 2 2 Gulf kingfish 0.03 ± 0.02 Brevoortia patronus Gulf menhaden 9 4 0.12 ± 0.08 Hardhead catfish Arius felis 227 25 3.15 ± 1.03 Harvestfish 2 0.04 ± 0.03 Peprilus alepidotus 3 Lookdown Selene vomer 7 1 0.10 ± 0.10 2 Pigfish Orthopristis chrysoptera 2 0.03 ± 0.02 Pinfish Lagodon rhomboides 1 1 0.01 ± 0.01 Red drum Sciaenops ocellatus 26 12 0.36 ± 0.15 Sand seatrout 33 0.46 ± 0.17 Cynoscion arenarius 11 Sheepshead Archosargus probatocephalus 47 16 0.65 ± 0.21 Skipjack herring Alosa chrysochloris 3 0.04 ± 0.04 1 Southern flounder Paralichthys lethostigma 17 11 0.24 ± 0.08 Southern kingfish Menticirrhus americanus 34 9 0.47 ± 0.30 Southern stargazer Astroscopus y-graecum 1 1 0.01 ± 0.01 0.04 ± 0.04 Spanish sardine Sardinella aurita 3 1 Spot Leiostomus xanthurus 125 21 1.74 ± 0.51 Spotted seatrout Cynoscion nebulosus 184 31 2.55 ± 0.18 Star drum . Stellifer lanceolatus 9 2 0.12 ± 0.10 Striped mullet Mugil cephalus 1692 23.50 ± 7.42 61 Tripletail Lobotes surinamensis 0.01 ± 0.01 1 1 White mullet 19 Mugil curema 8 0.26 ± 0.10

Table 3. Number, frequency of catch, and annual catch per drag of species captured in beach seines during April 1983-March 1984.

Table 3. (Cont'd.).

Species		Number	Samples containing	
Common name	Scientific name	caught	organisms	Catch/drag ± 1 SE
INVERTEBRATES				
Blue crab	Callinectes sapidus	1003	39	14.1 ± 4.96
Cabbagehead	Stomolophus meleagris	146	14	2.03 ± 1.08
Lesser blue crab	Callinectes similis	1	1	0.01 ± 0.01
Speckled crab	Arenaeus cribrarius	19	12	0.26 ± 0.09
Spider crab	Libinia emarginata	1	1	0.01 ± 0.01
Stone crab	Menippe mercenaria	3	3	0.04 ± 0.02
White shrimp	Penaeus setiferus	6	2	0.08 ± 0.05

-	Table 4.	Summary	of or	ie-way	analyse	es of	vai	riance	of	mean	monthly	catches
	(catch/dra	ag + 1,	log,	transi	formed)	for	the	most	fre	quentl	ly caught	species
	during Apr	ril 1983	-Marci	n 1984.	•							

	Source of	Degrees of	Mean	
Group	variation	freedom	square	F
FISH				
Atlantic croaker	Total	71		
Atlantic cloaker	Months	11	0.109	2.14*
	Error	60	0.051	2011
Atlantic threadfin	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.793	6.43*
	Error	60	0.123	
Black drum	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.217	4.47*
	Error	60	0.048	
Florida pompano	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.133	4.50*
	Error	60	0.030	
Hardhead catfish	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.562	4.32*
	Error	60	0.130	
Red drum	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.065	2.31*
	Error	60	0.028	
Sand seatrout	Total	71		
•	Months	11	0.136	4.68*
	Error	60	0.029	
Sheepshead	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.064	1.08
	Error	60	0.048	
Southern flounder	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.028	1.35
	Error	60	0.021	•
Southern kingfish	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.080	2.36*
	Error	60	0.034	

*_ ·

`a -

Table 4. (Cont'd.).

Group	Source of variation	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F
Spot	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.390	4.30*
· ·	Error	60	0.091	4,50
Spotted seatrout	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.546	5.85*
	Error	60	0.093	
Striped mullet	Total	71		
	Months	11	1.001	3.17*
	Error	60	0.316	
White mullet	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.032	1.18
	Error	60	0.027	
INVERTEBRATES				
Blue crab	Total	71	,	
	Months	11	1.320	5.22*
	Érror	60	0.253	
Cabbagehead	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.250	2.38*
	Error	60	0.105	
Speckled crab	Total	71		
	Months	11	0.025	1.06
·	Error	60	0.024	

*P < 0.05

Figure 1.

Area in which beach seine samples were collected, April 1983-March 1984.

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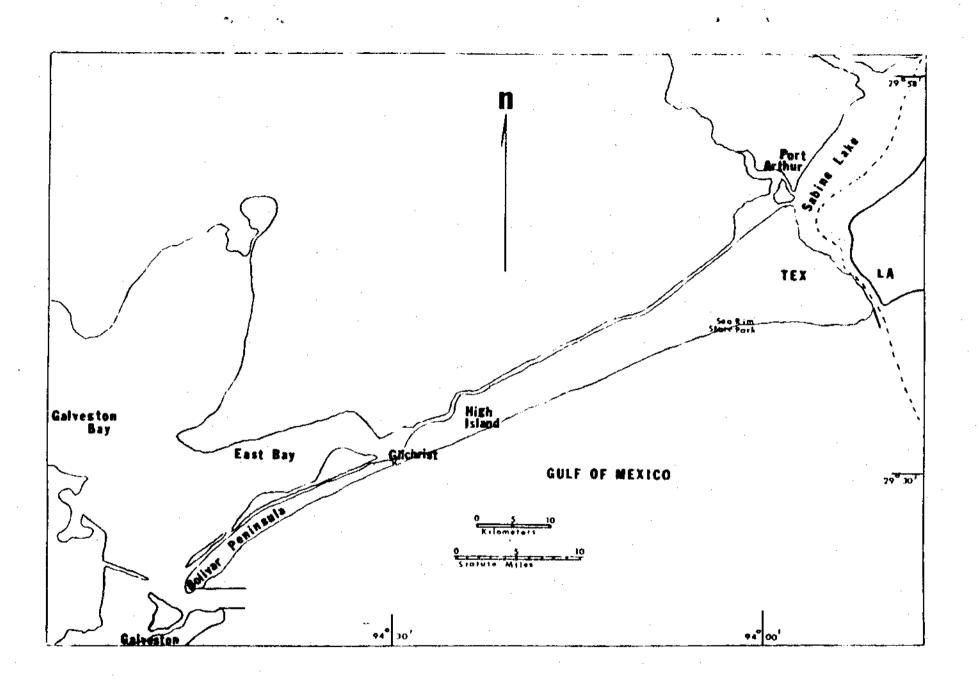
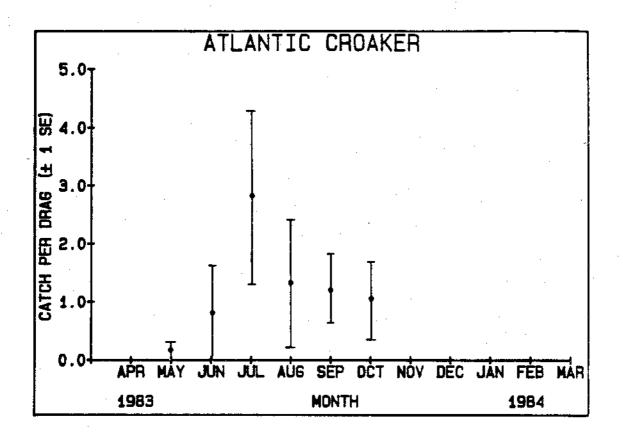
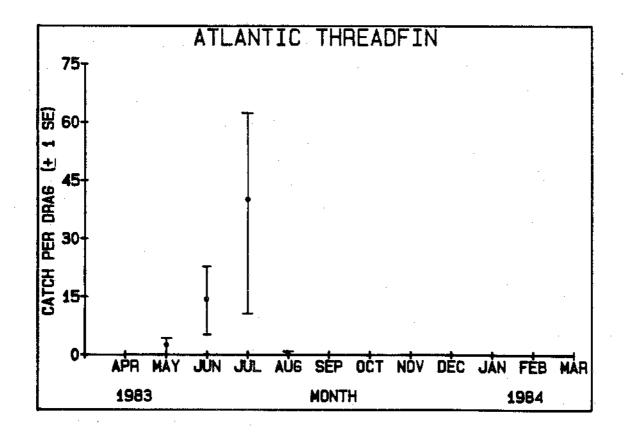
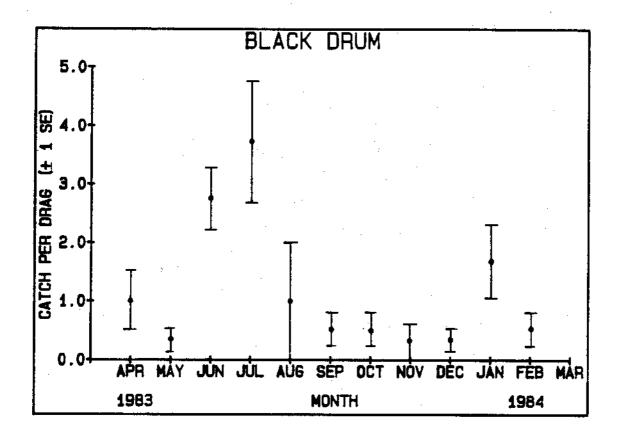


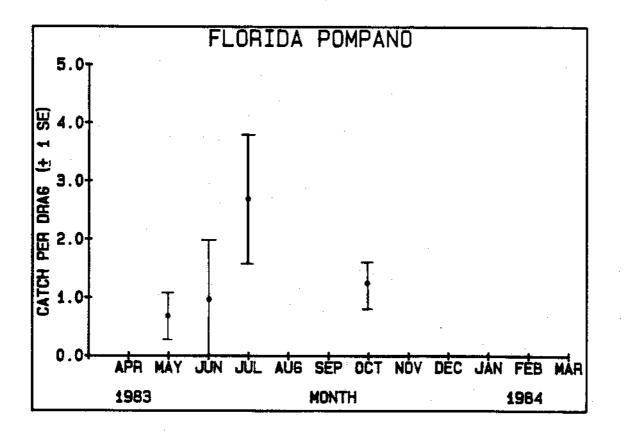
Figure 2. Mean monthly catch rates (No./drag ± 1 SE) of 17 most frequently caught species in beach seines during April 1983-March 1984.

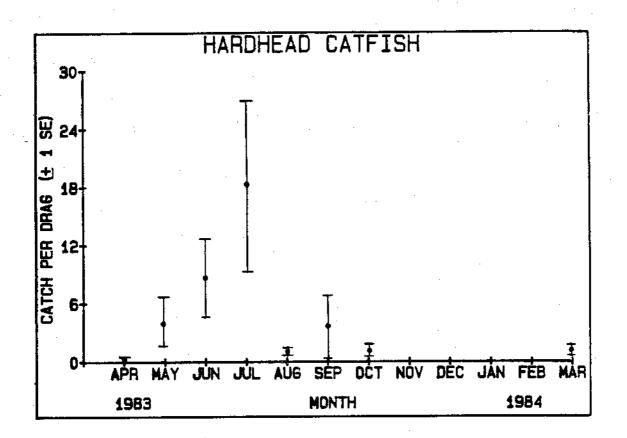
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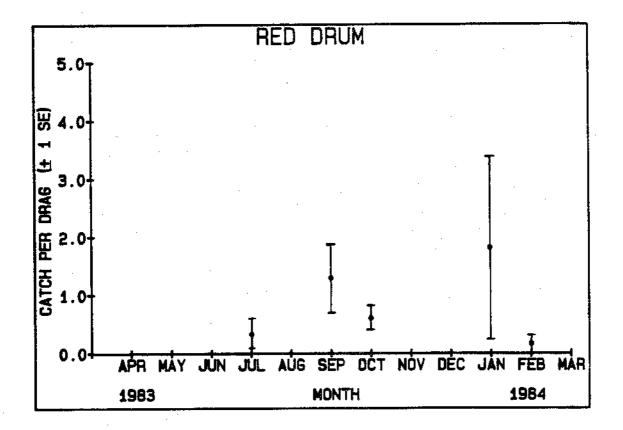


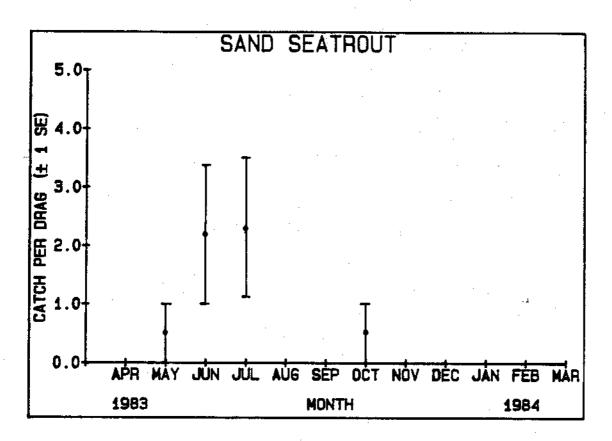


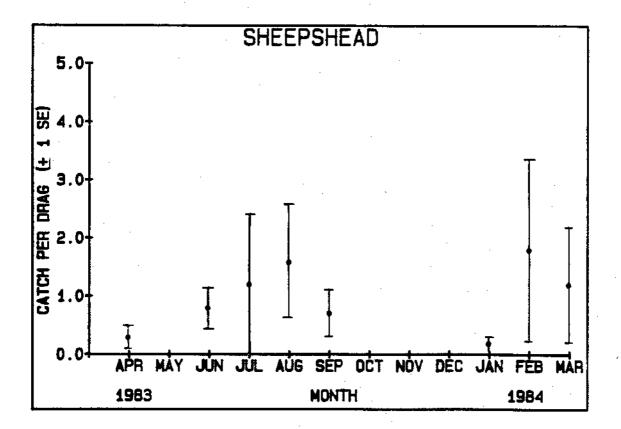


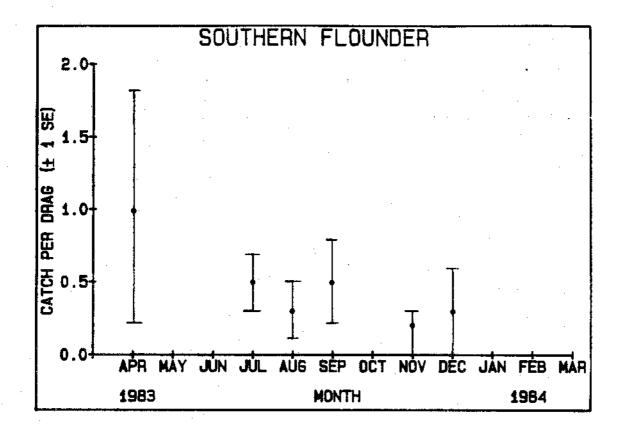


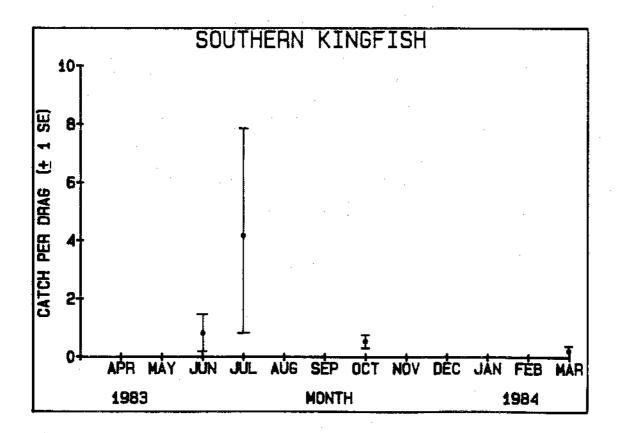


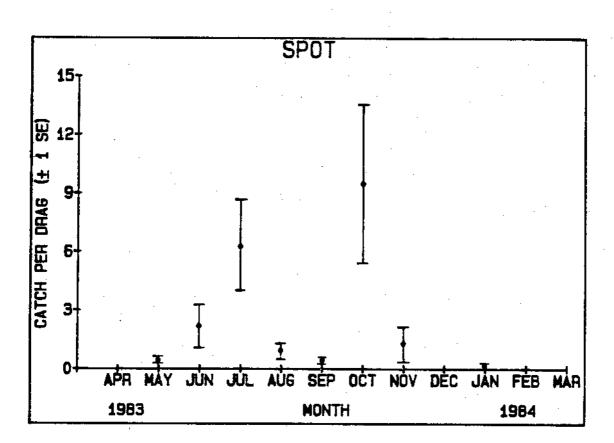


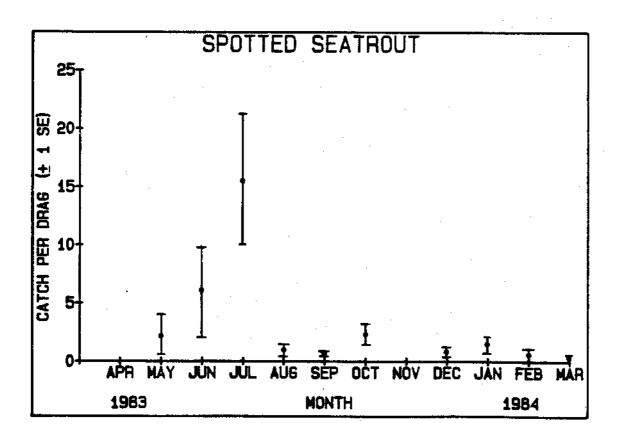


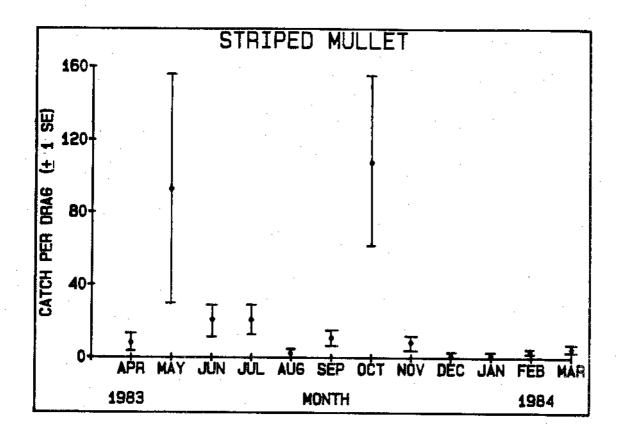


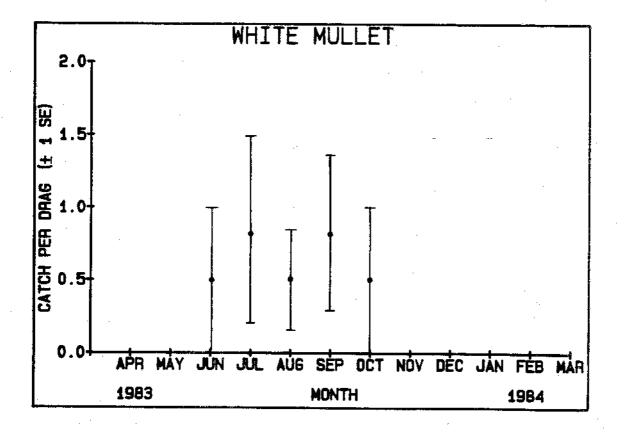


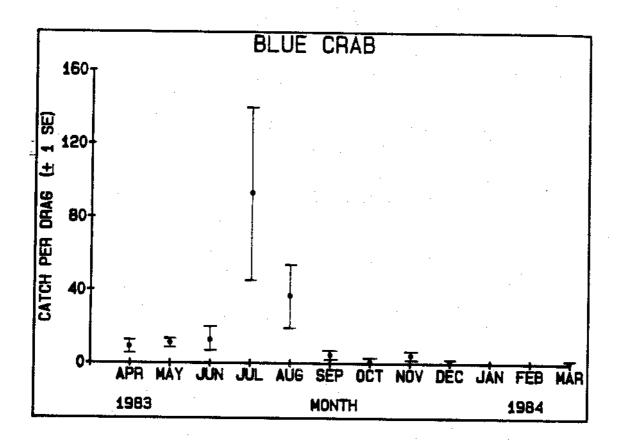


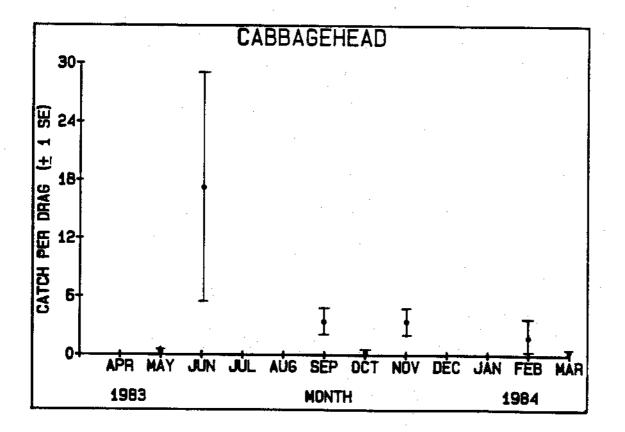


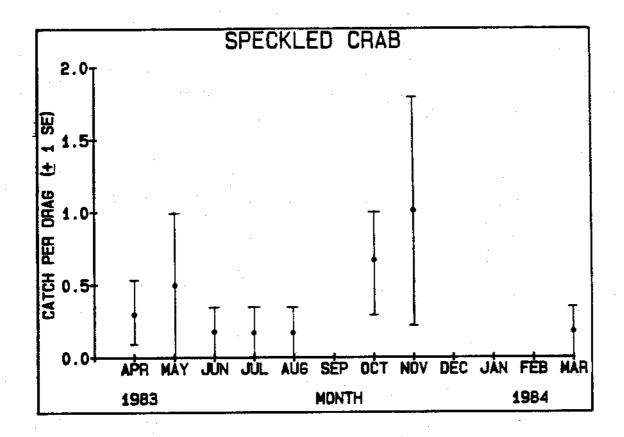












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