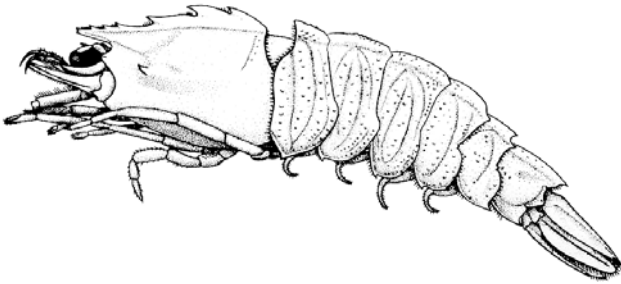


Rock shrimp, *Sicyonia brevirostris*



Rock shrimp occur from about Norfolk, Virginia south throughout the Gulf of Mexico to Cabo Catoche, Yucatan. They are typically found in water 33'–240' deep, but exploitable populations occur between 112' and 180'. The planktonic stage (from spawning until the first postlarval stage) lasts for about 30 days (Cook and Murphy 1965). Animals in this stage can be retained within coastal gyres (Criales and Lee 1995). Maximum life span was estimated to be 20–22 months. Females mature at lengths as small as 0.7 inches carapace length (CL); nearly all females reach maturity by 1.0 inch CL. Spawning occurs from November to January off east-central Florida, and females may spawn up to 3 times in one season (Kennedy *et al.* 1977).

In 2005, rock shrimp landings in Florida totaled 554,094 pounds. Gulf coast landings of rock shrimp accounted for 77% of statewide landings. Rock shrimp on the Atlantic coast were landed in Duval, Flagler, and Brevard Counties (Fig. 1). The highest landings on the gulf coast were made in Pinellas, Hillsborough, Franklin and Gulf Counties in 2005.

The 2005 statewide total landings of rock shrimp were 90% lower than the average landings in the previous five years (2000–2004) and were 90% lower than the 1982–2005 historical average landings (Fig 2). On the Atlantic coast, landings from 1993 to 1995 averaged about 5.9 million pounds before spiking at 21.8 million pounds landed in 1996 (Fig. 2). On the gulf coast, landings have fluctuated widely without trend, averaging around 1.4 million pounds during 2003–2005.

Standardized annual catch rates for rock shrimp follow a similar trend to those found in the landings. On the Atlantic coast, commercial catch rates increased dramatically in 1996 then declined and remained low from 1997 to 1999 after a portion of the fishing grounds was closed to protect the *Oculina* reefs (Fig. 3). Atlantic coast catch rates have fluctuated since 1992 with the 2005 rate among the lowest since 1992. Gulf coast catch rates have been consistently low, except in 1992 and 1998, catch rates for 2005 were the lowest since 1992 (Fig. 4).

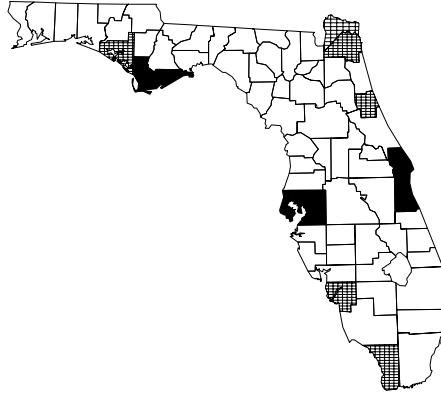


Figure 1. Geographic distribution of commercial landings of rock shrimp during 2005

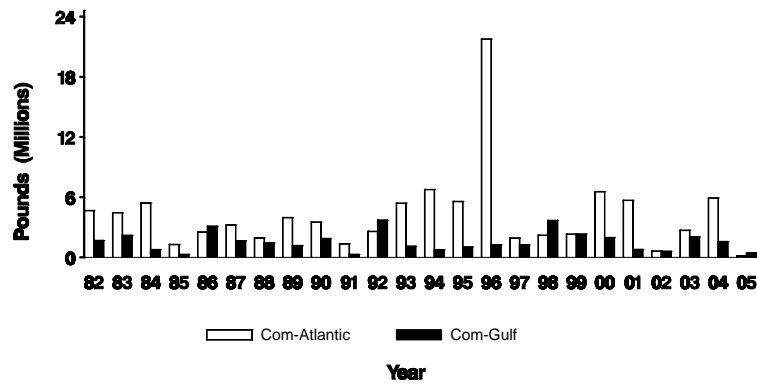


Figure 2. Total annual commercial landings of rock shrimp on the Atlantic and gulf coasts of Florida, 1982–2005

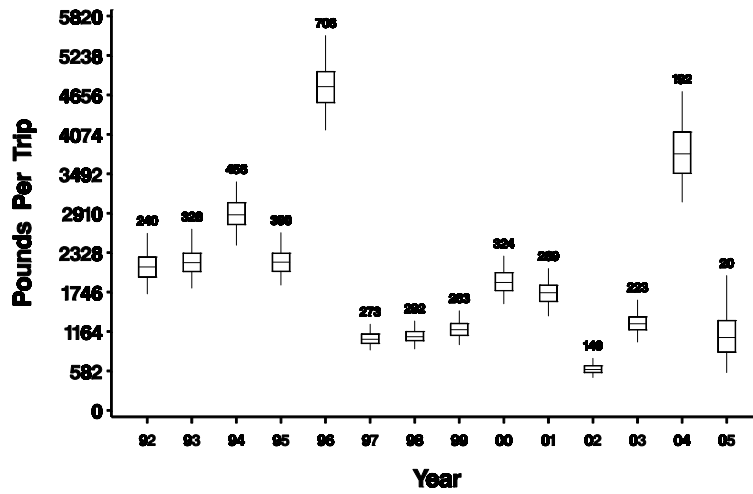


Figure 3. Annual standardized commercial catch rates (pounds) for rock shrimp on the Atlantic coast of Florida, 1992–2005

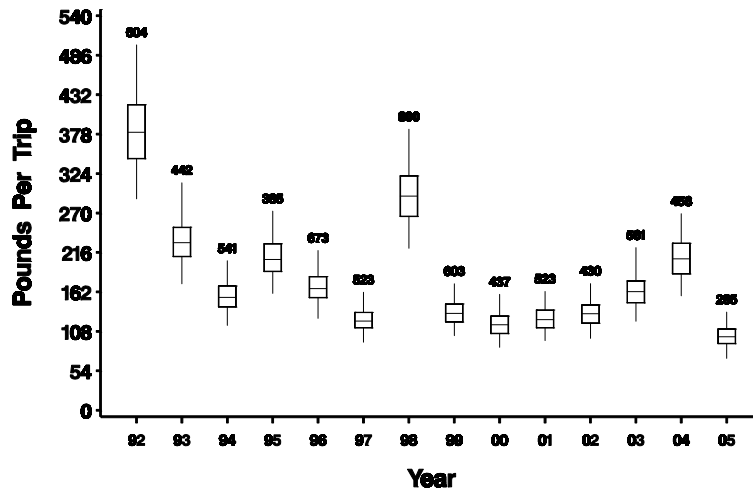


Figure 4. Annual standardized commercial catch rates (pounds) for rock shrimp on the Gulf coast of Florida, 1992–2005