

Tagging Red Drum and Spotted Seatrout in Mississippi Coastal Waters, 2019 – 2021: Overview

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Abstract

The Red Drum and Spotted Seatrout tagging project was implemented in the fall of 2019 by the USM Center for Fisheries Research and Development (CFRD) as a new initiative in CFRD's long established, multi-species Cooperative Sport Fish Tag and Release Program funded by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Sport Fish Restoration Program. While the biology of both species is relatively well understood, the primary objective of this tagging project is to expand scientific understanding of the movement patterns of both species in Mississippi coastal waters through the efforts of volunteer anglers, captains and guides participating in the project. Red Drum measuring between 13" – 30" in total length (TL) and Spotted Seatrout greater than 13" TL are the focus of the project. By the end of 2021, 1,709 Red Drum and 1,083 Spotted Seatrout had been tagged and released along the Mississippi coast, resulting in reported recaptures of 184 tagged Red Drum and 37 tagged Spotted Seatrout. While the majority of recaptures occurred within close proximity to their tag-release locations, others occurred several miles away, often exhibiting seasonal movements. Tag-release and recapture information is shared with participants in the project, and data developed by the project serves to inform the management of both species in local waters. The CFRD Cooperative Sport Fish Tag and Release Program's online presence includes a webpage that provides information about the overall program, including profiles of all species currently being tagged. Online forms are provided where anglers can request a tagging kit, as well as report recaptures of previously tagged fish.

Bio

Dyan Gibson is a Research Associate with the USM Center for Fisheries Research and Development (CFRD) located at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory. She received her undergraduate degree in 1993 from Colorado State University in Wildlife Biology, and received her MS degree in Coastal Sciences from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2011. During the course of her career, Dyan has worked extensively with age and growth of various fish species through otolith and spine preparation and analysis; Blue Crab aquaculture, including the construction, operation, and maintenance of recirculating aquaculture systems and cultivation, harvest, and transport of larvae and early-stage juveniles; and trophic ecology of Yellowfin Tuna, Red Snapper and various reef fishes through stomach content analysis. Dyan is coordinator of the CFRD Cooperative Sport Fish Tag and Release Program which provides an open line of communication and shared activities between CFRD fisheries scientists and anglers both locally and along the Gulf of Mexico and US South Atlantic coasts. The Program provides tagging data which inform the management of resident and migratory sport fishes important in the Mississippi recreational fishery.