



Juvenile. Photo credit: US Geological Survey.

Current Status:

Demographic and Genetic Diversity Concerns:

The stock has not been assessed and population size is unknown. Available information suggests there has been a decline mean size, mean age, and percentage of males of speckled hind in the South Atlantic (Ziskin 2008).

Existing Protections and Conservation Actions:

Both recreational and commercial fisheries for speckled hind are currently regulated in the South Atlantic with a one fish per vessel trip limit. In the South Atlantic, speckled hind is undergoing **overfishing** but the **overfished** status is unknown. In the Gulf of Mexico, status is unknown, but there is a one fish per vessel trip limit for the recreational fishery. Possession limits for commercial vessels exist. In early 2009, the National Marine Fishery Service established 8 marine protected areas to conserve 529 nautical square miles of area for deepwater species including speckled hind.

KEY INFORMATION

Area of Concern

Western Atlantic: South Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico.

Year Identified as “Species of Concern”

1997

Factors for Decline

- Recreational fishing
- Commercial fishing
- Bycatch

Conservation Designations

IUCN: Critically Endangered
American Fisheries Society: Endangered



Species of Concern

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

Brief Species Description:

Speckled hind derive their name from the multitude of tiny white spots that cover their reddish-brown head, body, and fins. Juvenile specimens tend to have yellow body color with white spots (Ross 1988). Adults inhabit offshore rocky habitat in depths of 80 to 1300 feet (25 to 400 m) but are most common between 200 and 400 feet (60 and 120 m). Bullock and Smith (1991) indicate most commercial catches are taken from depths of 164 ft (50 m) or more. Preferred habitats include high- and low-profile hard bottoms. Juveniles occur in shallower water (SAFMC 2005). Speckled hind are protogynous hermaphrodites (change sex from female to male); females mature at 4 or 5 years of age and 18 to 24 inches (45-60 cm) length. Spawning occurs from May to October in spawning aggregations (SAFMC 2005, Ziskin 2008). Maximum size is about 43 inches (110 cm) and maximum weight is 66 pounds (30 kg). Maximum age is at least 25 years (Ziskin 2008). Prey items include fishes, crabs, shrimps, lobsters, and mollusks, including squids.

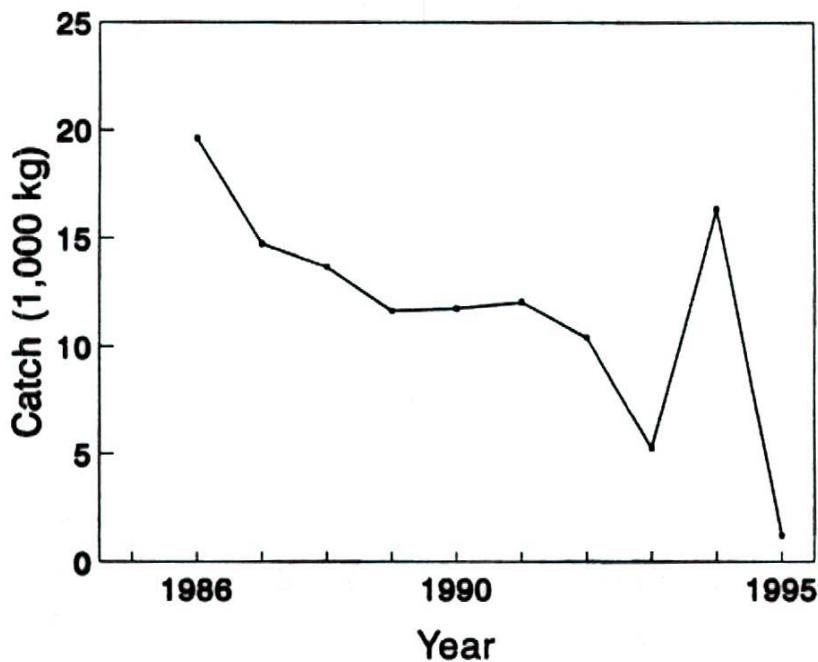


Figure 1. Speckled hind catch (kg), all fisheries combined (Parker and Mays 1998).

Contact Information

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- Ziskin, G.L. 2008. Age, growth, and reproduction of speckled hind, *Epinephelus drummondhayi*, off the Atlantic coast of the Southeast United States. Masters Thesis, The College of Charleston.