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6-13-1994

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Herbert M. Austin
Virginia Institute of Marine Science

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Recommended Citation

Austin, H. M. (1994) The Role of Tournaments as a Fishery Management Tool Data Collection. Marine Resource Report No. 94-4. Virginia Institute of Marine Science, College of William and Mary.
<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.25773/v5-hdy6-b528>

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The Role of Tournaments as a Fishery Management Tool
Data Collection

by

Herbert M. Austin
Department of Fisheries Science
School of Marine Science
Virginia Institute of Marine Science
College of William and Mary
Gloucester Point, VA 23062

Saltwater Fishing Tournament
Workshop

Convened by the:
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Plainview, LI, NY

13 June 1994

Virginia Marine Resource Report
Number 94-04

NOTES:

**WORKSHOP STEERING
COMMITTEE:**

Tina Berger

Atlantic States
Marine Fisheries Commission

Richard T. Christian

Atlantic States
Marine Fisheries Commission

Bruce Halgren

New Jersey Division of
Fish, Game and Wildlife

Dr. Lisa Kline

Atlantic States
Marine Fisheries Commission

Bill McGroarty

New York State
Dept. of Environmental Conservation

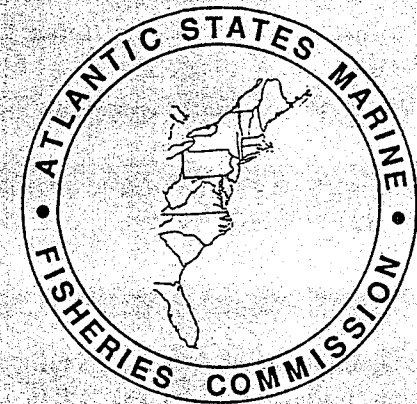
Charlie Moore

South Carolina
Wildlife & Marine Resources

Ron Schmied

National Marine
Fisheries Service, Southeast Region

**SALTWATER
FISHING
TOURNAMENT
WORKSHOP**



Convened by the:
***Atlantic States Marine
Fisheries Commission***

For additional information, contact:

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202)452-8700



The workshop is funded through a grant from the
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Federal Aid Sport
Fish Restoration Program.

Saltwater Fishing Tournament Workshop

Monday, June 13, 1994

Plainview, New York

OBJECTIVES

- (1) examine the role of tournaments as a sport fishery conservation and management tool;
- (2) encourage dialogue between tournament sponsors and fishery managers; and
- (3) heighten sensitivity on issues such as "kill" versus "catch and release" tournaments.

AUDIENCE

State managers, tournament sponsors/directors, recreational angling clubs, sport fishing industry, charterboat industry.

AGENDA

9:00am Introduction and Opening Remarks

-- Richard Christian, ASMFC & William McGroarty, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

9:40 History and Overview of

Tournament -- Ron Schmied, National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Region

- the evolution of tournaments into multi-dimensional events, outlining the different types of tournaments
- identify trends such as the movement from "kill" to "catch and release" tournaments
- the potential impact of tournaments on the management of popular target species

10:10 How to Plan, Organize and Conduct a Tournament -- Don Hammond, South Carolina Wildlife & Marine Resources

- the essential elements of planning, organizing and conducting fishing tournaments
- important contacts and sources of information on fishing tournaments

10:40 BREAK

The Role of Tournaments as a Fishery Management Tool

11:00 Data Collection -- Herb Austin, Virginia Institute of Marine Science

- an overview of the current and potential data collection opportunities provided by tournaments
- tagging and other data collection methodologies, including how the data are utilized

11:20 Promotion of Conservation Practices and Angler Ethics -- Jim Murray, North Carolina Sea Grant College

- an overview of the unique opportunities available at tournaments to promote conservation practices and angler ethics

11:40 LUNCH

1:00pm Fundraising -- Mike Leech, International Game Fish Association

- tournaments as a way to generate revenues for recreational fisheries education, conservation and

management activities

1:20 Social and Economic Considerations -- Robert Ditton, Texas A&M

- the social and economic impacts/benefits of tournaments to participation, tourism and local/regional economies (i.e., impacts of pulse fishing activity)
- motivations for holding and participating in tournaments and attempt to project future trends from these findings

1:50 Q&A

2:00 Manager/Tournament Sponsor Roundtable -- Panel Discussion

- incorporating information from the workshop, a panel of workshop participants will develop a model framework and checklist for planning, organizing and conducting saltwater fishing tournaments, which will meet the diverse needs of fishery managers and all interest groups.

5:00 ADJOURN

The Workshop Steering Committee and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission would like to thank the workshop speakers and participants for the commitment of their valuable time and input to help make the workshop a success.

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Recreational fishing tournaments fall into two main categories. Those that catch and release, and those that catch and keep the fish. Catch and release tournaments include the freshwater black bass derbies that require the fish brought back alive in a live-well and released unharmed after weigh-in; and marine derbies or tournaments that tag and release the fish. Traditionally, however, the fish are kept and the tournaments or derbies have awarded prizes for the most fish, or the largest fish weighed-in at tournament headquarters. Within the decade of the 1980's there has been a move towards limiting the number of fish the angler or vessel can register. For many tournaments only two fish per boat can be registered, thus limiting the potential for a perceived or actual slaughter. Virginia has, since 1958, and more recently North Carolina

and Maryland have a seasonal Saltwater Fishing Tournament. These tournaments run all season (e.g. May to October) and the angler brings the fish to a certified weigh-in station anywhere in the state where a citation can be awarded for large trophy fish over a specified size.

The Citation tournaments of Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina have also evolved into another sub-category of catch and release tournaments. Citations are now awarded for some protected species (striped bass and tuna) if there is a witness of the catch and release.

From the perspective of scientific or management collection of data all tournaments offer some degree of potential data availability. The data are skewed of course as only the largest fish are brought in. On the other hand, this offers the opportunity to get data from the largest and oldest fish normally not available through creel surveys or port samplers. The best are those tournaments that have a central weigh-in site where a scientific crew can be assembled and take what ever hands-on measurements they need from the fish. These are particularly important sources of morphometric and meristic data for stock identification studies (Figure 1, Scoles 1990). The season-long citation tournaments, particularly when run for several years as Virginia's has, offer unique "time series" data on abundance and distribution of the very large fish (Figure 2, Barbieri 1994; Figure 3, Baines, personal communication).

Data available from most "hands on" tournaments include Length, weight and age (scales or otoliths) (Figure 4, Lowerre-Barbieri 1994; Figure 5, Austin, un publ. data). If the fish can be opened, and most tournaments want the body cavity examined for anthropomorphic weight increases (e.g. sinkers or ice), then sex and gonad stage can be determined, as well as fecundity estimates of these very large fish. Generally, tournament officials do not mind if organs are retained for later genetic and/or contaminant analyses in the laboratory. In some cases the entire carcass is available making otoliths assessable (Figure 6, Lowerre-Barbieri 1994).

Generally, while stomach contents are sometimes found, most recreational caught fish have tossed their contents on deck and little quantitative data can be collected. Never-the-less the author has, over the years, placed the contents on display, and more than once a bluefisherman who spent the day chumming the surface, after looking at the sea robins and flounder in the stomach, decided to fish deeper on the next day.

A non tangible benefit to the scientist or manager who can regularly attend the tournaments are the contacts with the anglers. In many cases this allows the scientist to explain the importance of the research and to provide feed-back to the angler of how the data are used; and permits the manager to explain the importance of current or impending management protocols. It also allows both to have an opportunity to provide literature to the tournament officials for distribution through registration packets or handouts (Figure 7).

Literature Cited

Barbieri, L. 1994. Life history, population dynamics, and yield-per-recruit modeling of Atlantic croaker, *Micropogonias undulatus* in the Chesapeake Bay area. PhD Dissertation, Sch. of Mar. Sci./Va. Inst. Mar. Sci, College of William and Mary, 139 pages.

Lowerre-Barbieri, S. K. 1994. Life history and fisheries ecology of weakfish, *Cynoscion regalis*, in the Chesapeake Bay region. PhD Dissertation, Sch. of Mar. Sci./Va. Inst. Mar. Sci., College of William and Mary, Gloucester Pt., VA, 224 pages.

Scoles, D. R. 1990. Stock identification of weakfish, *Cynoscion regalis* by discriminant function analysis of morphometric characters. MA thesis, Sch. of Mar. Sci./Va. Inst. Mar. Sci., College of William and Mary, Gloucester Pt., VA, 51 Pages.

Figure 1.

Classification Results Adult Weakfish

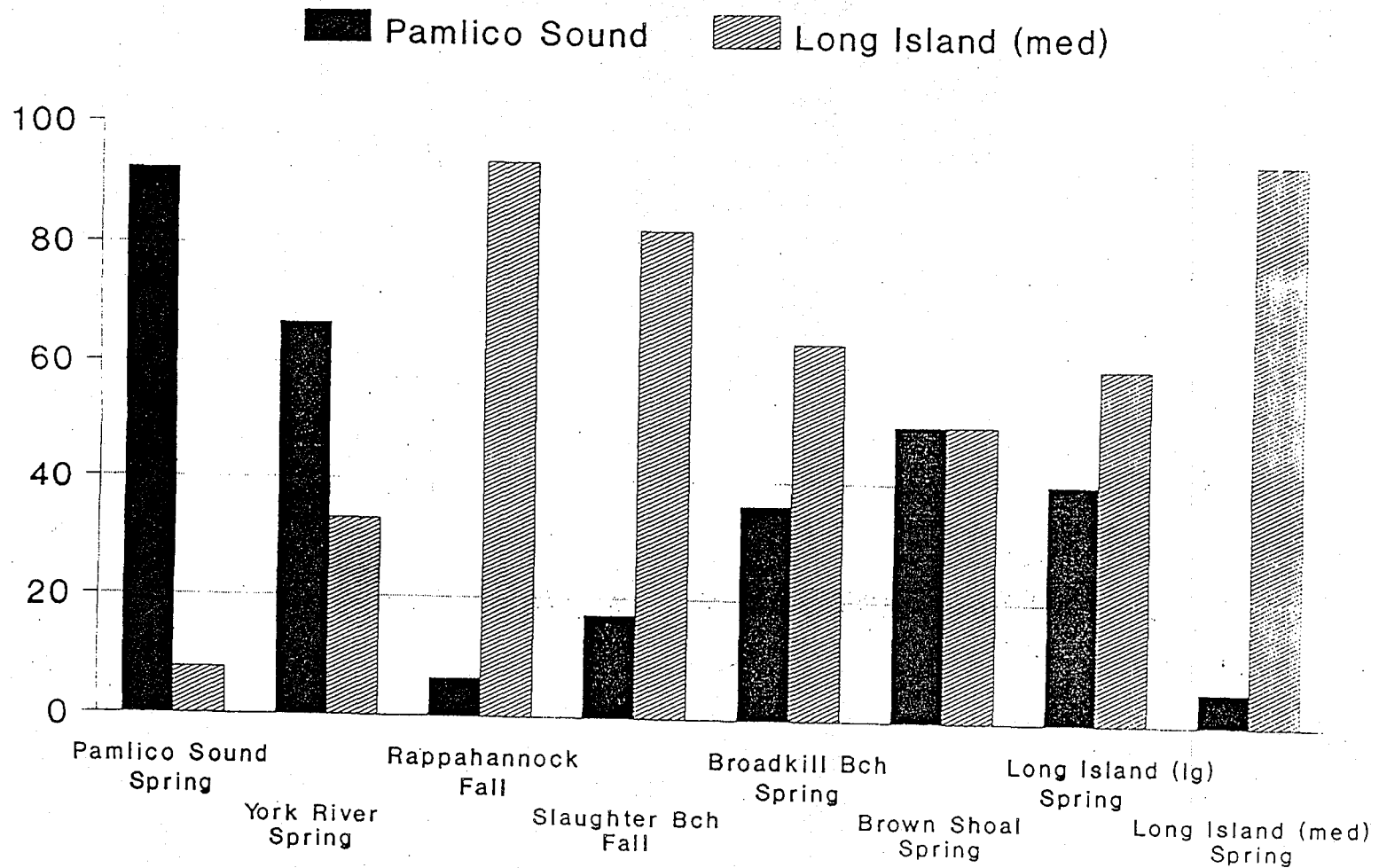


Figure 2.

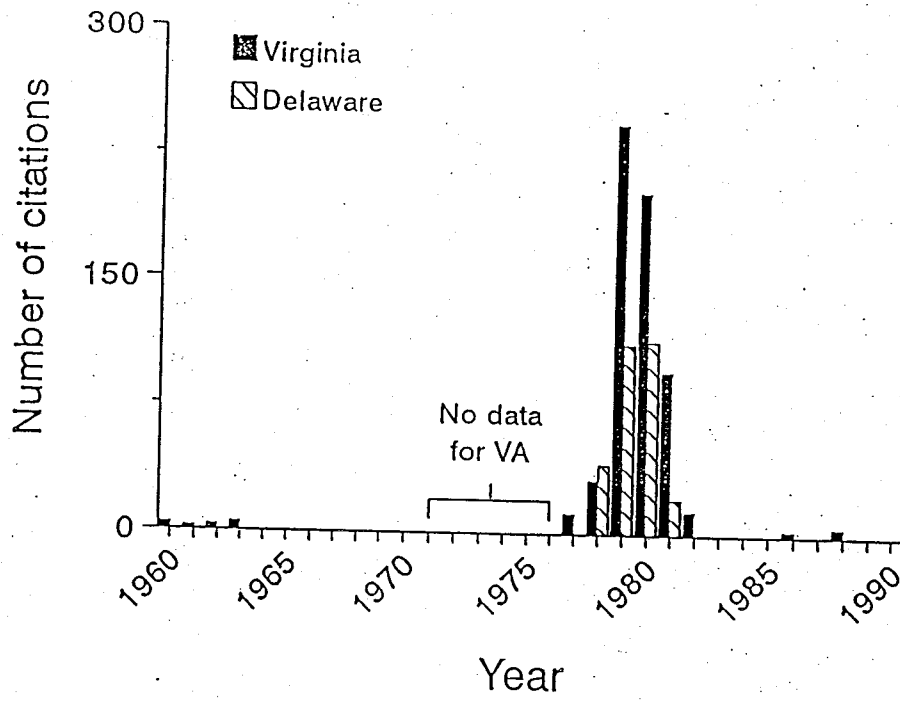


Figure 3.

Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament Tautog Citation Data By Location

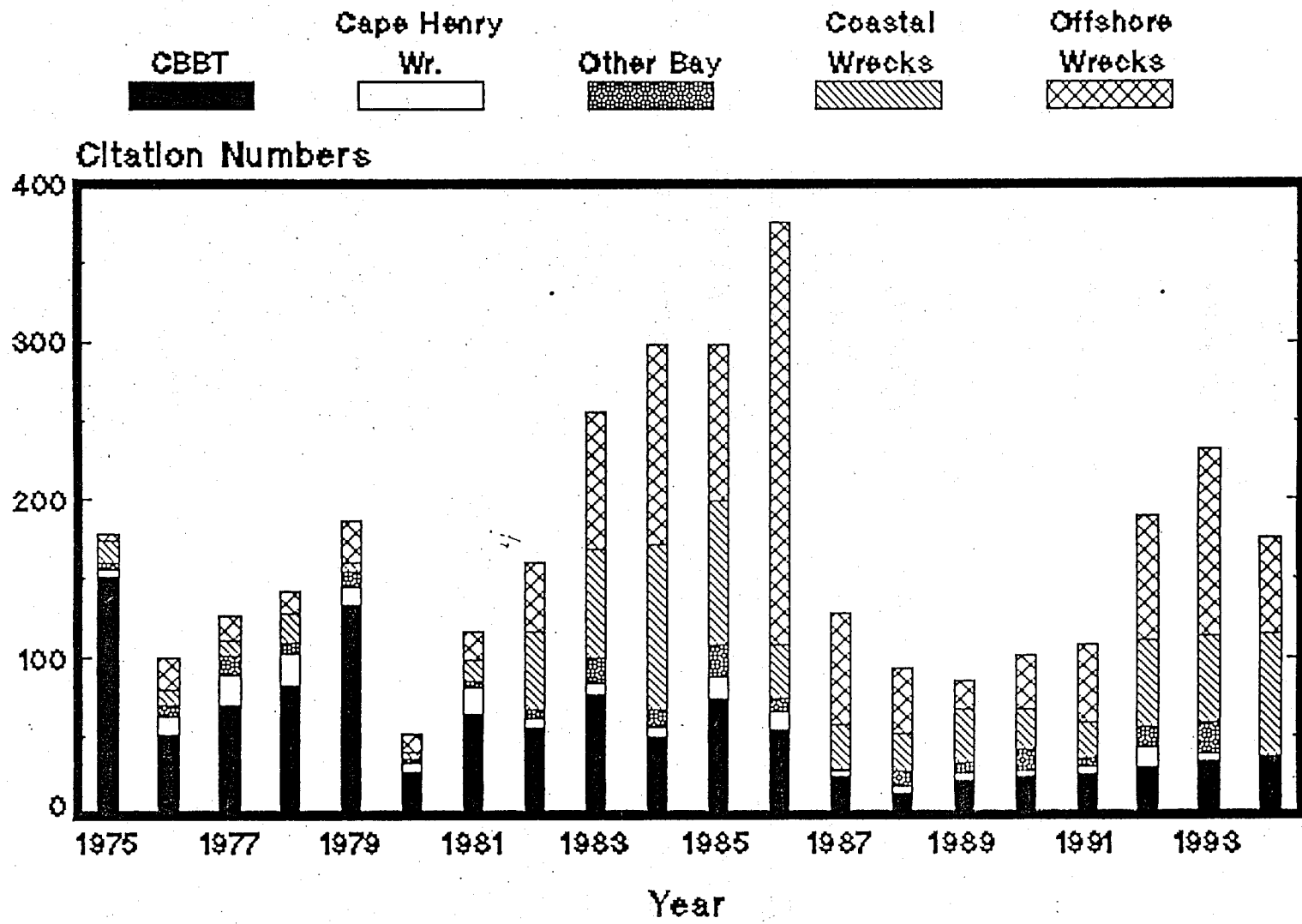
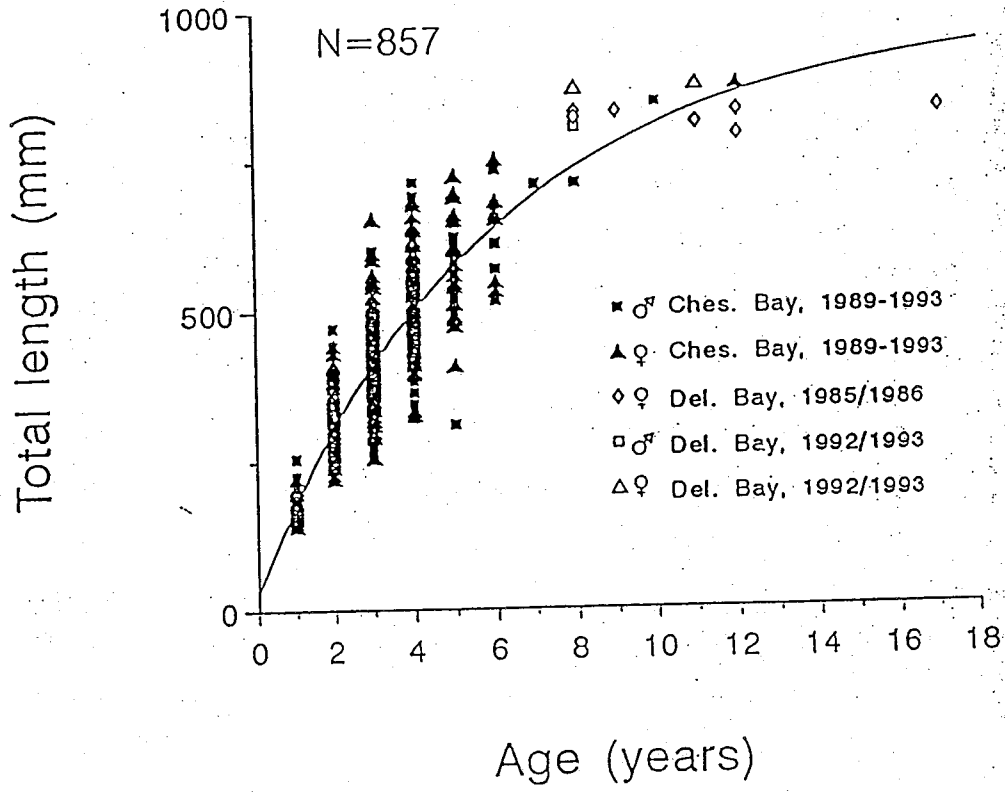


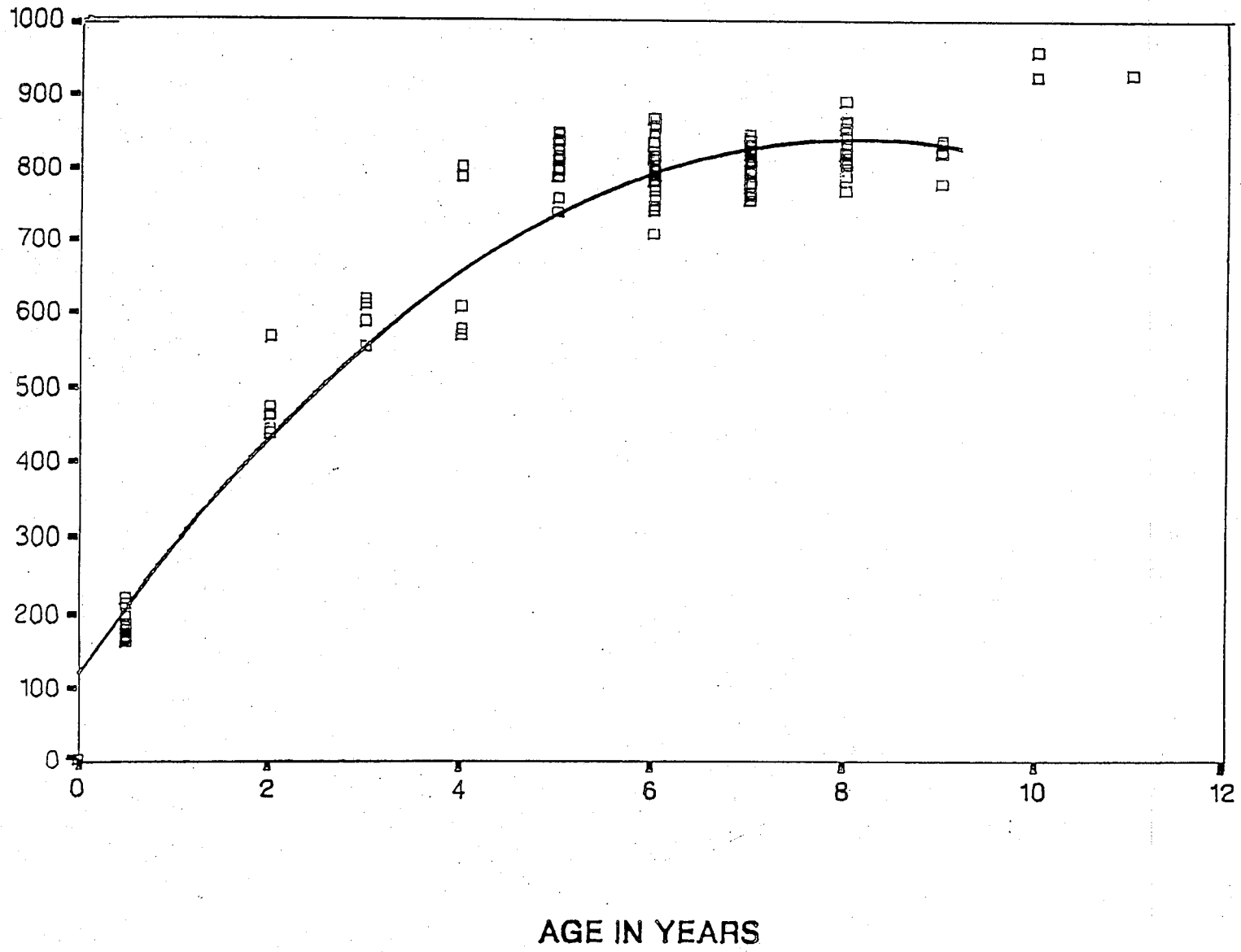
Figure 4.



BLUEFISH AGE vs LENGTH

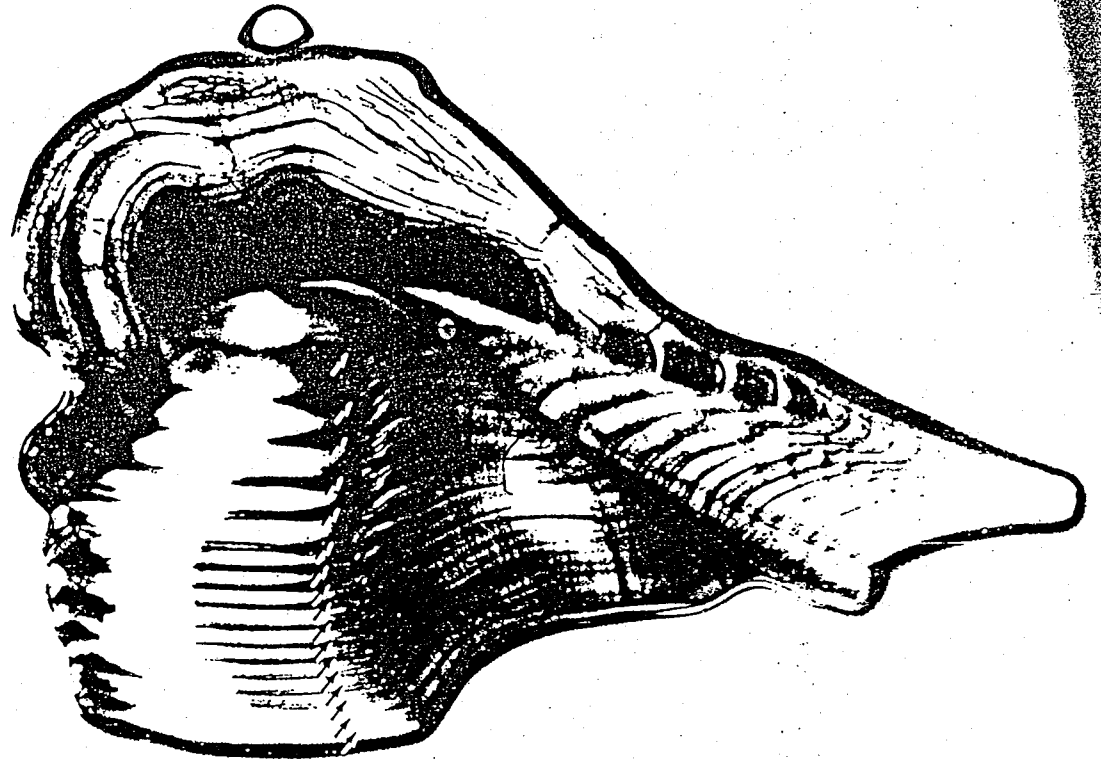
Figure 5.

FORK LENGTH



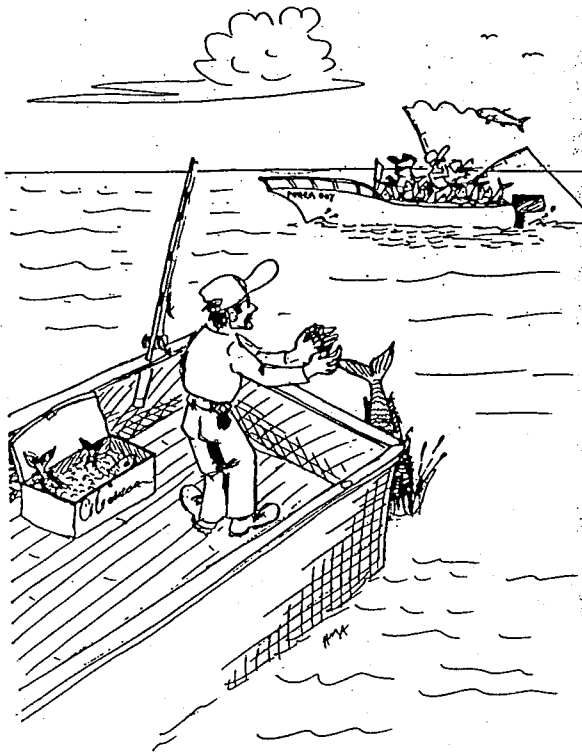
Data Prepared by Heidi

Figure 6.



**INVEST IN YOUR
BLUEFISH
FISHING FUTURE**

Release a Fish Today ...



... for Better Fishing Tomorrow

**Atlantic States Marine
Fisheries Commission
1400 Sixteenth St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036**