

### Commercial

Commercial harvesters are limited to a 10 inch minimum size limit. Rules for the commercial harvest of SH in LA changed substantially from 1995 through 1997. Commercial harvest methods were restricted in 1995 when the Marine Resources Conservation Act of 1995 (Act 1316 of the 1995 Regular Legislative Session) became effective. This act prohibited the use of “set” gill nets and trammel nets in saltwater areas of LA, and restricted SH harvest by the use of "strike" nets to the period between the third Monday in October and March 1 of the following year. A "Restricted Species Permit" issued by LDWF was required in order to harvest SH, and several criteria were established in order to qualify for that permit. After March 1, 1997, all SH harvest by gill and trammel nets was banned, and commercial harvesters were required to utilize other legal commercial gear to harvest sheepshead such as trawls, set lines, or hook and line.

### Recreational

There are currently no size or creel limit regulations for the recreational harvest of SH in LA.

## 1.3 Trends in Harvest

### Commercial

Commercial harvest of SH in LA was relatively light, between 0.05 and 0.31 million pounds, until the 1980s when commercial harvest expanded greatly (Figure 1). Commercial harvest rapidly increased in the early 1980s and into the 1990s, peaking at 3.76 million pounds in 1993. Landings remained high throughout the 1990s, averaging 2.99 million pounds. During the 2000s, commercial SH harvest declined from 2.60 million pounds in 2000 to 0.57 million pounds in 2006. Commercial landings in 2006 were greatly influenced by the passage of hurricanes Katrina and Rita the previous year, which caused extensive damage to infrastructure, vessels, and gear with the inshore and offshore trawl fleet. Commercial harvest of SH rebounded in the late 2000s with harvests around 1 million pounds. In 2013, 1.33 million pounds of sheepshead were commercially harvested in LA (Table 1).

Prior to commercial harvest regulation changes in 1995-97, the commercial SH fishery in LA was mainly an inshore gillnet and an offshore trawl fishery. In more recent years, hand lines, trawls, and skimmer nets became the main gears utilized in the fishery (Table 2). The commercial SH fishery had traditionally seen harvest peaks in the fall and early spring in and around larger bays, lakes and coastal offshore waters of LA (Pausina 2001). Timing of harvest peaks can vary depending on the availability of other target species, availability of sheepshead, and weather patterns. Monthly commercial landings of SH are generally greatest from November through April (Table 3). In 2013, the majority of SH were landed in