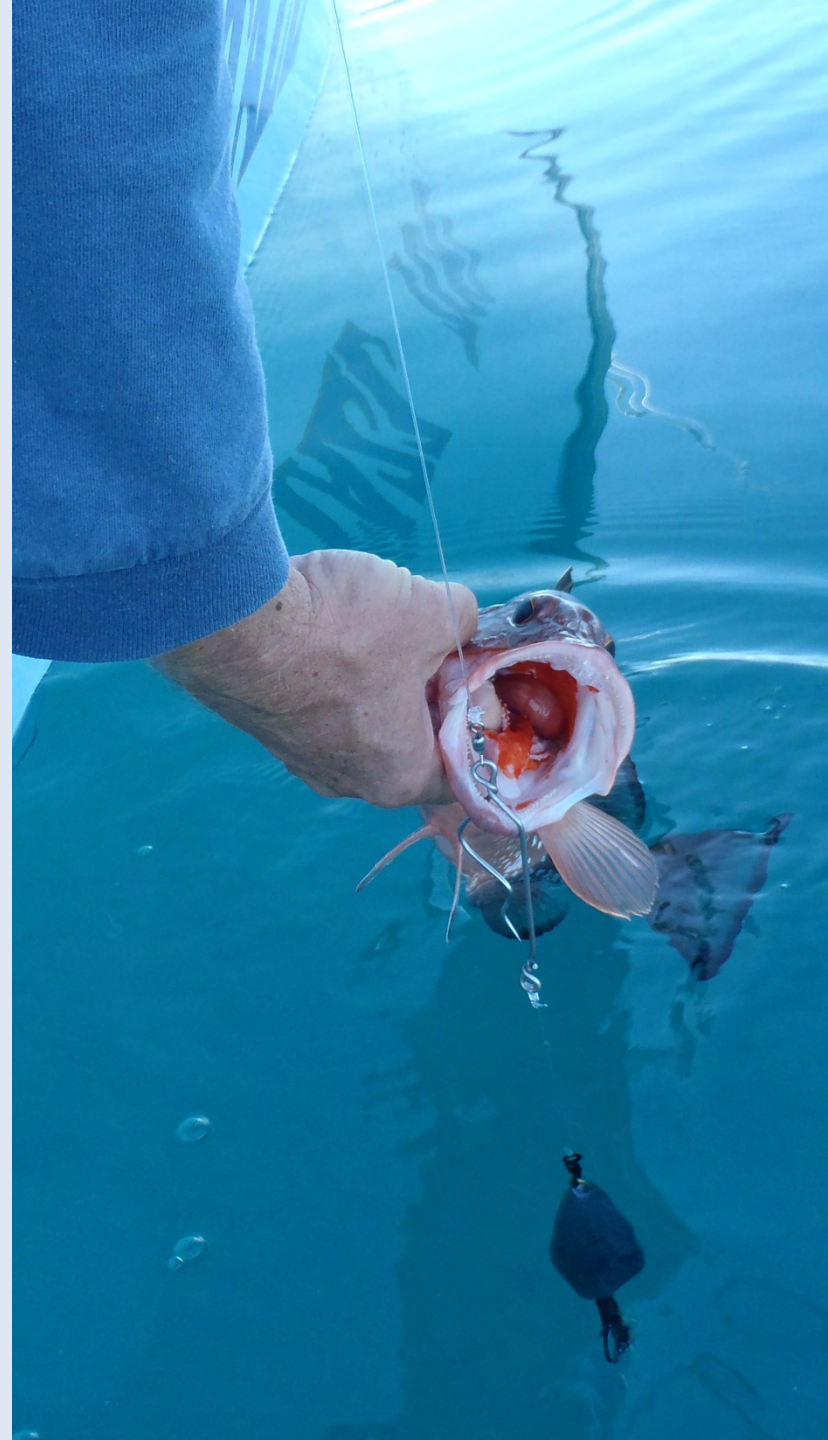


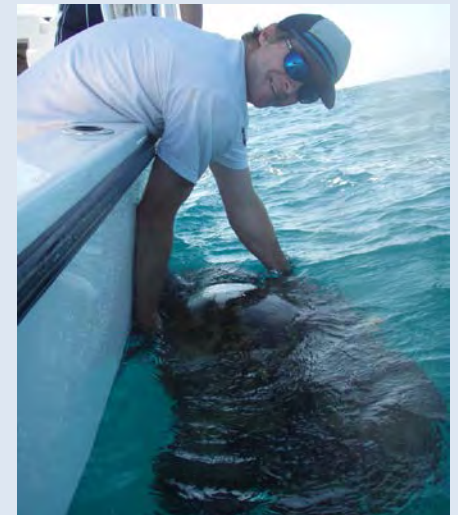
Practical Evaluation of Fish Recompression Tools

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Portland, OR



Gulf/South Atlantic Reef Fisheries



Project Objectives:

- Involve anglers in evaluating practically of recompression tools.
- Train a cadre of Florida Sea Grant Extension Agents in the use of recompression gear and strategies designed to improve survival of deep water released fish.



Image credit: Bryan Fluech, FSG

Important: *Need permission to not use venting tools in Gulf.*

Comments from Anglers

- What, more new regulations?
- Are you know telling us venting is no good?
- Will we get more fish?
- What is this going to cost?

But.....

- “Floaters” are not a pretty sight!
- They would like to be involved in the evaluation process



Venting and Recompressing

Three important things to remember:

1. **Option of last resort**
2. **Option of last resort**
3. **Option of last resort**



Image credit: FWC

*There are always unintended consequences –
Increased handling*

Shelton Fish Descender

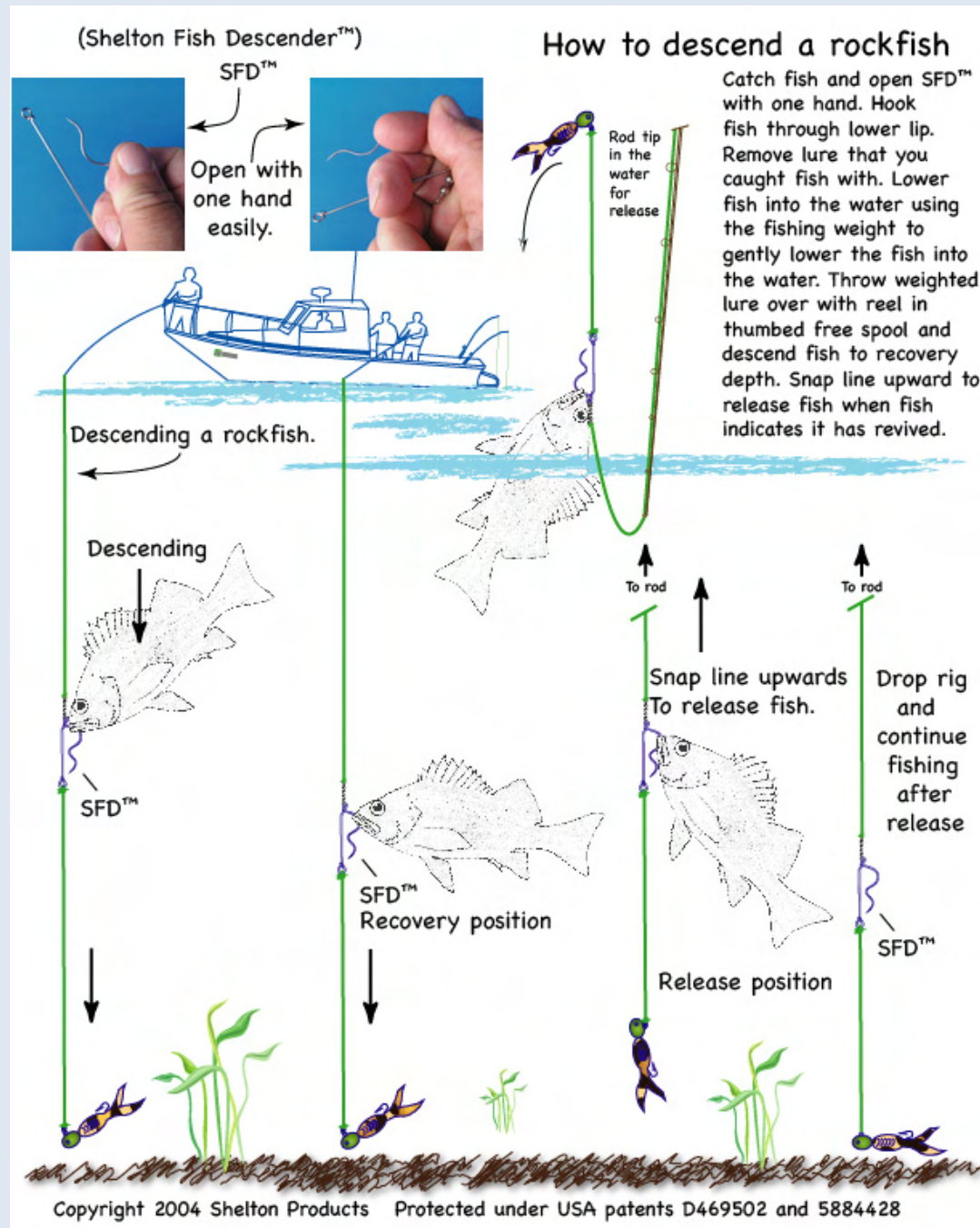


Image credit: Bryan Fluech, FSG

<http://www.sheltonproducts.com/SFD.html>

RockLees



Image credit: Bryan Fluech, FSG

<http://ecoleeser.com/product.html>



Image credit: John Stevely, FSG

Modified Cabela's Fish Gripper

- Not specifically designed for recompression, but...
- Perhaps could be redesigned



Image credit: Bryan Fluech, FSG

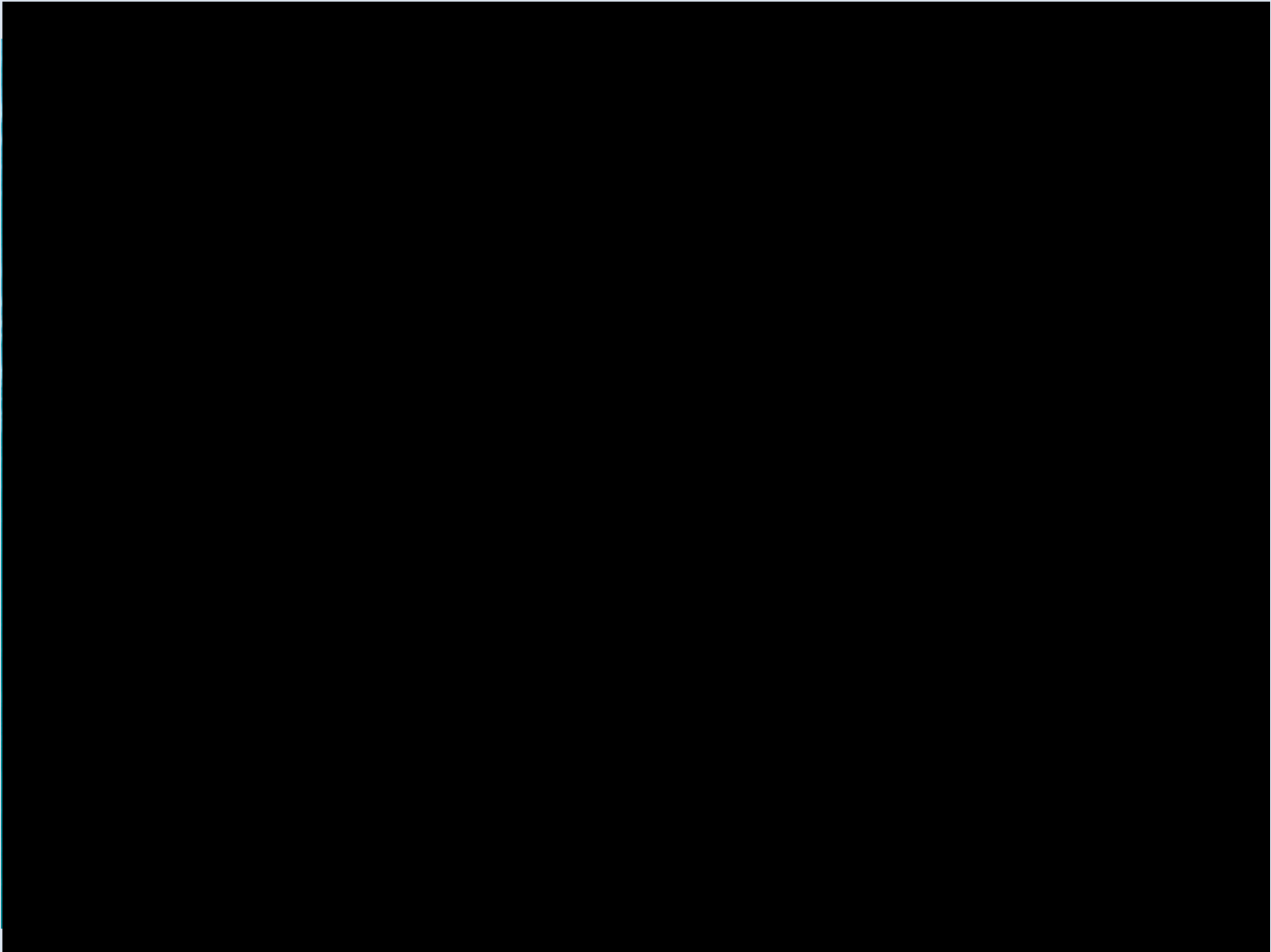
Ace Calloway Fish Descender (Blacktip)



Image credit: John Stevely, FSG

<http://git-r-down.com/>

SeaQualizer



<http://theseaqualizer.com/SeaQualizer/welcome.html>

Inverted Utility Crate “Fish Elevator”

Releasing four fish on one drop



Image credit: Steve Theberge

Image credit: Bryan Fluech, FSG

Modified Dungeness Crab Hoop Net

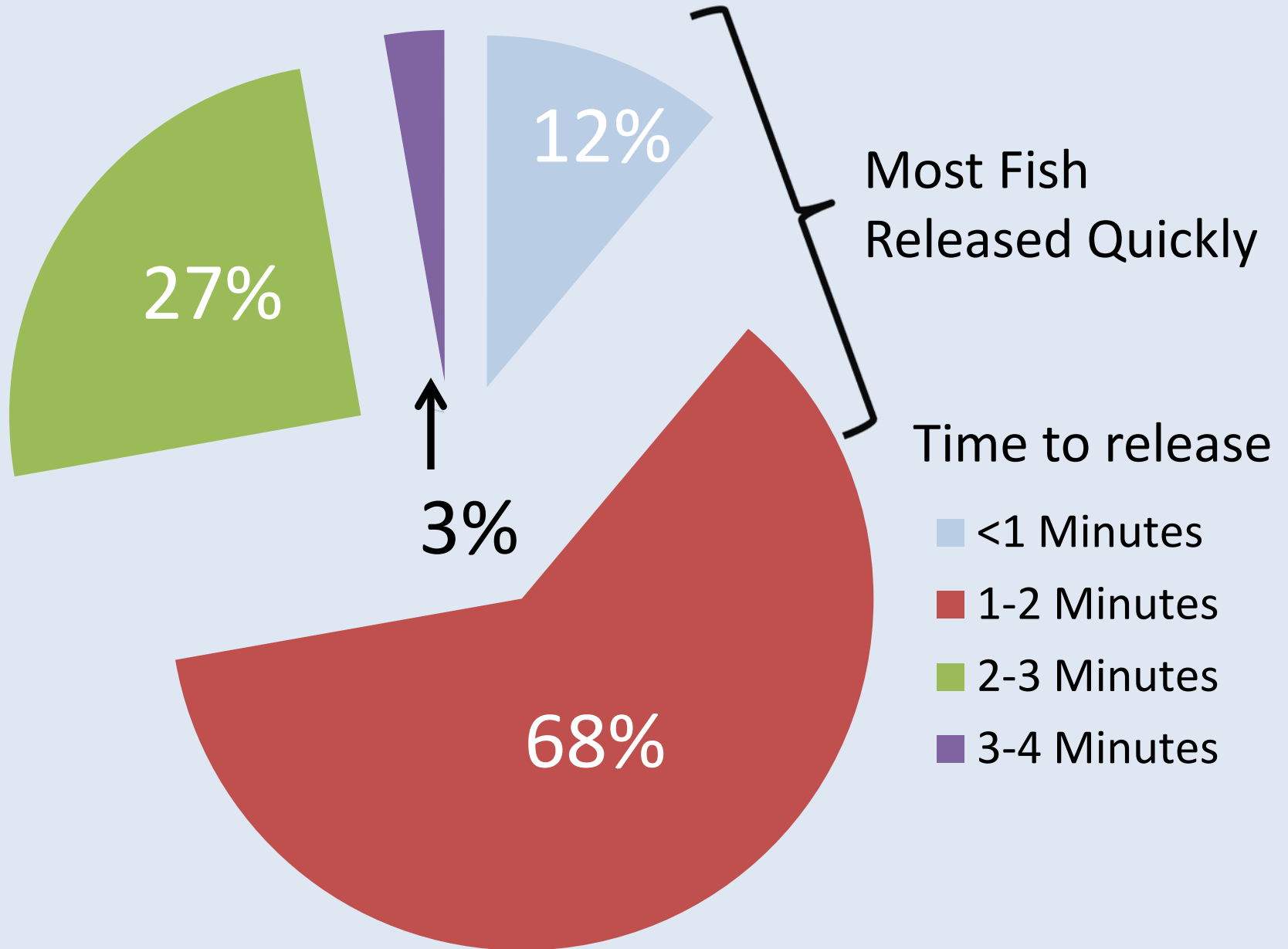


Project Summary to Date

- Seven trips: Six in Gulf, One in South Atlantic
- Gulf: fished 65-150 ft., predominant species-red grouper (*out numbered gag 4 to 1*), other species: snappers, porgy, white grunt, triggerfish, hogfish
- South Atlantic: fished 250-450 ft. Different species and conditions. (*snowy grouper, speckled hind, silk/vermillion snapper*)
- Caught 250+ fish.



Release Time Using Recompression Gear



Position of Circle Hook

Gut Hooked 6%

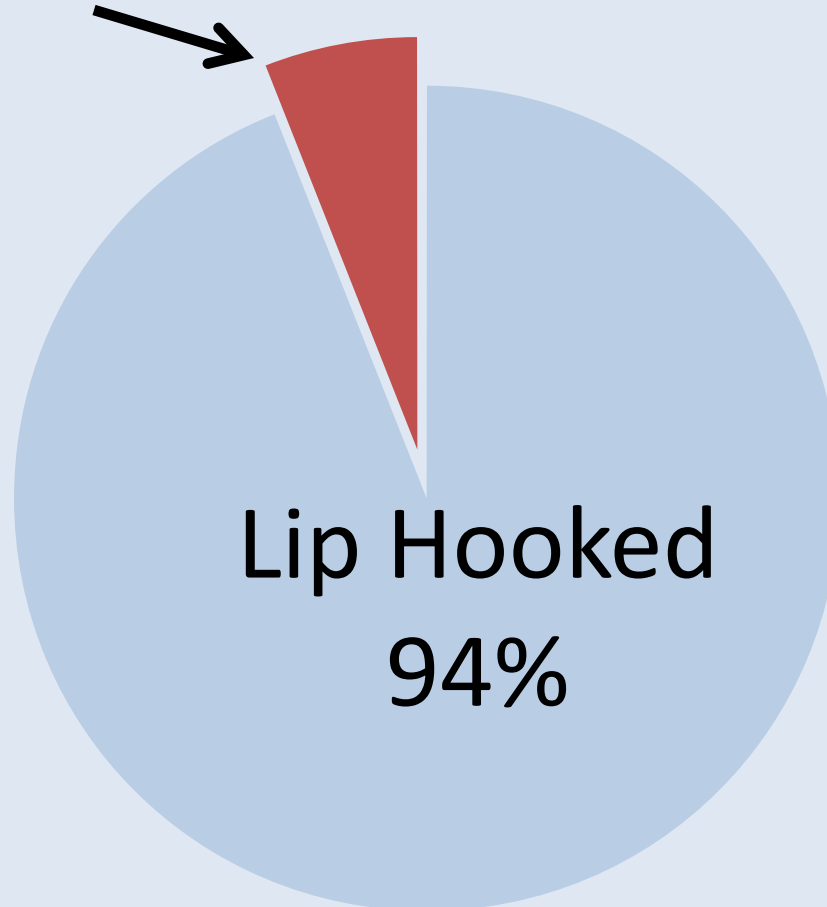


Image credit: Bryan Fluech, FSG

Some Observations

- Sometimes difficult to determine if treatment is necessary. See bloating, but some fish can return to bottom. 65-100 ft of water.
 - Gag tend to be better than red grouper in this depth range in terms of getting back down (limited observation).

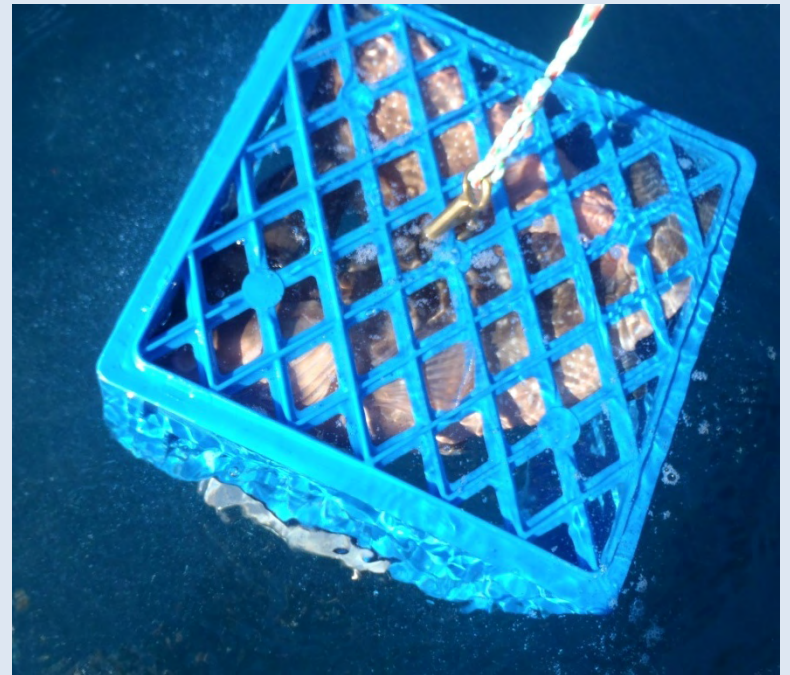


Observations

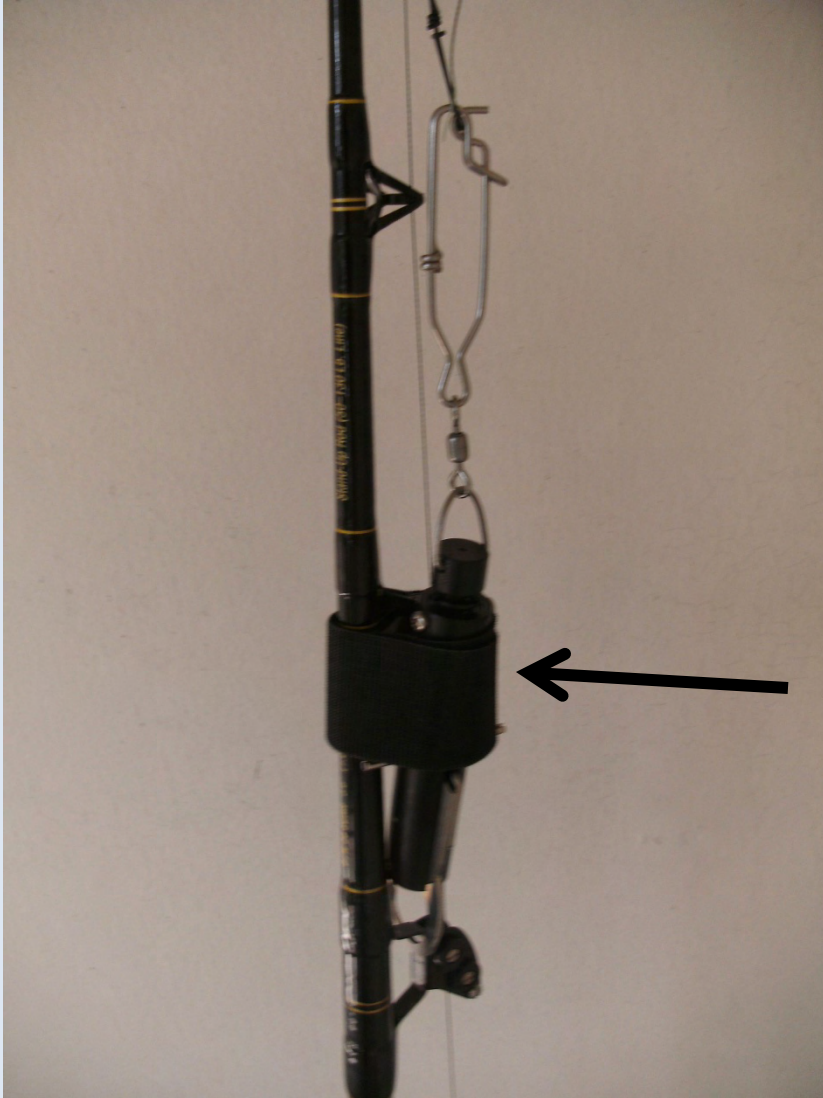
A Variety of Tools is Needed

For Example:

- Inverted utility crate seems to work well on southwest coast (calm days, little current, water depth 65-100 ft.
- Completely impractical in higher current , deeper waters.



Tips



- Weights and devices can reek havoc on gear and gel-coat
 - *Plan accordingly*
- Velcro strap securing decompression device
 - *Rig weights on site*

Conclusions

- *At a minimum*, improved catch and release practices (including venting and recompression) do some fish some good.
- Not at a point yet where we can measure how much good.
- From what we know so far, recompression devices are probably a good tool for anglers to have.
- Angler involvement critical



Thank You!



<http://catchandrelease.org>