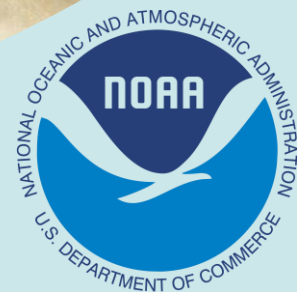


# Smalltooth Sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*)

## How Effective is the Final Recovery Plan?

Presentation for the National Marine Fisheries Service  
National Recovery Program Review |  
U.S. Department of Commerce | National  
Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |  
NOAA Fisheries | Southeast Regional Office |  
Page 1



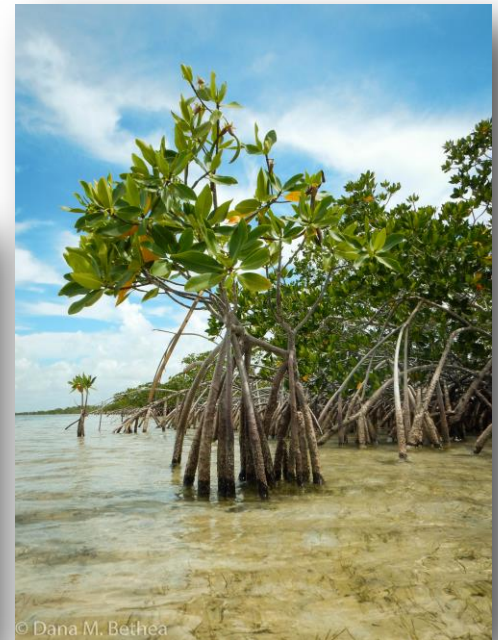
# Listing Status

In response to a 1999 listing petition from The Ocean Conservancy (formerly the Center for Marine Conservation), the U.S. DPS of smalltooth sawfish was listed as **endangered** under the ESA on Apr. 1, 2003 (68 FR 15674).

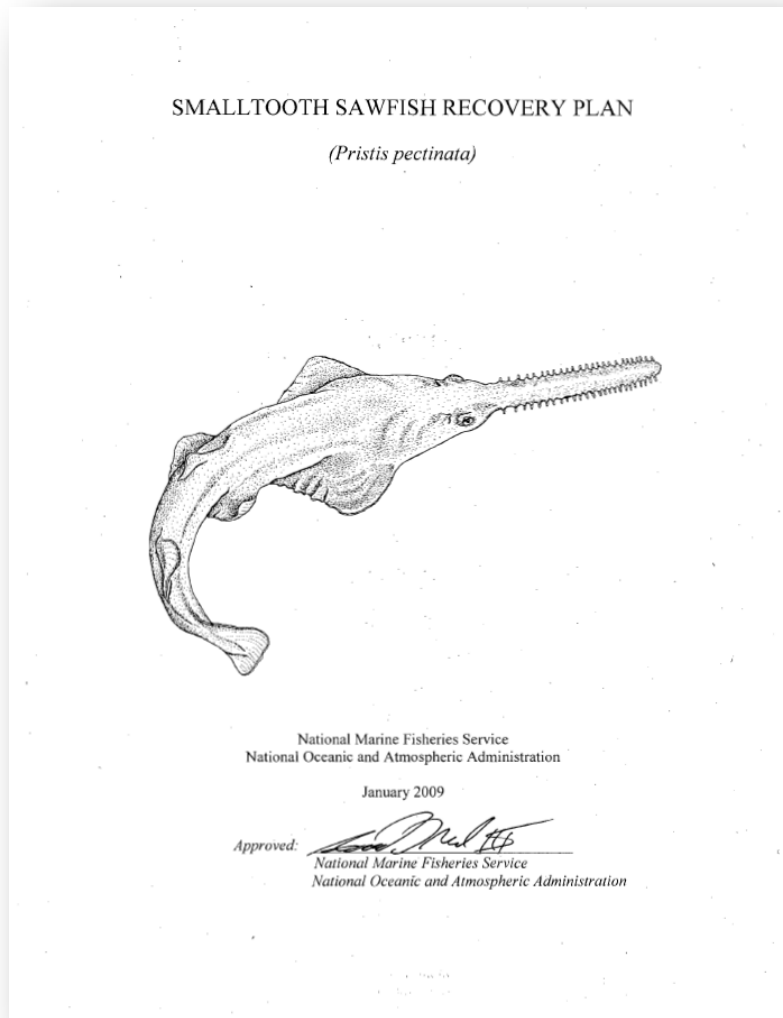
The primary reasons for population decline were fisheries bycatch and habitat loss.

## Current Status

Stable  
(perhaps slightly increasing)



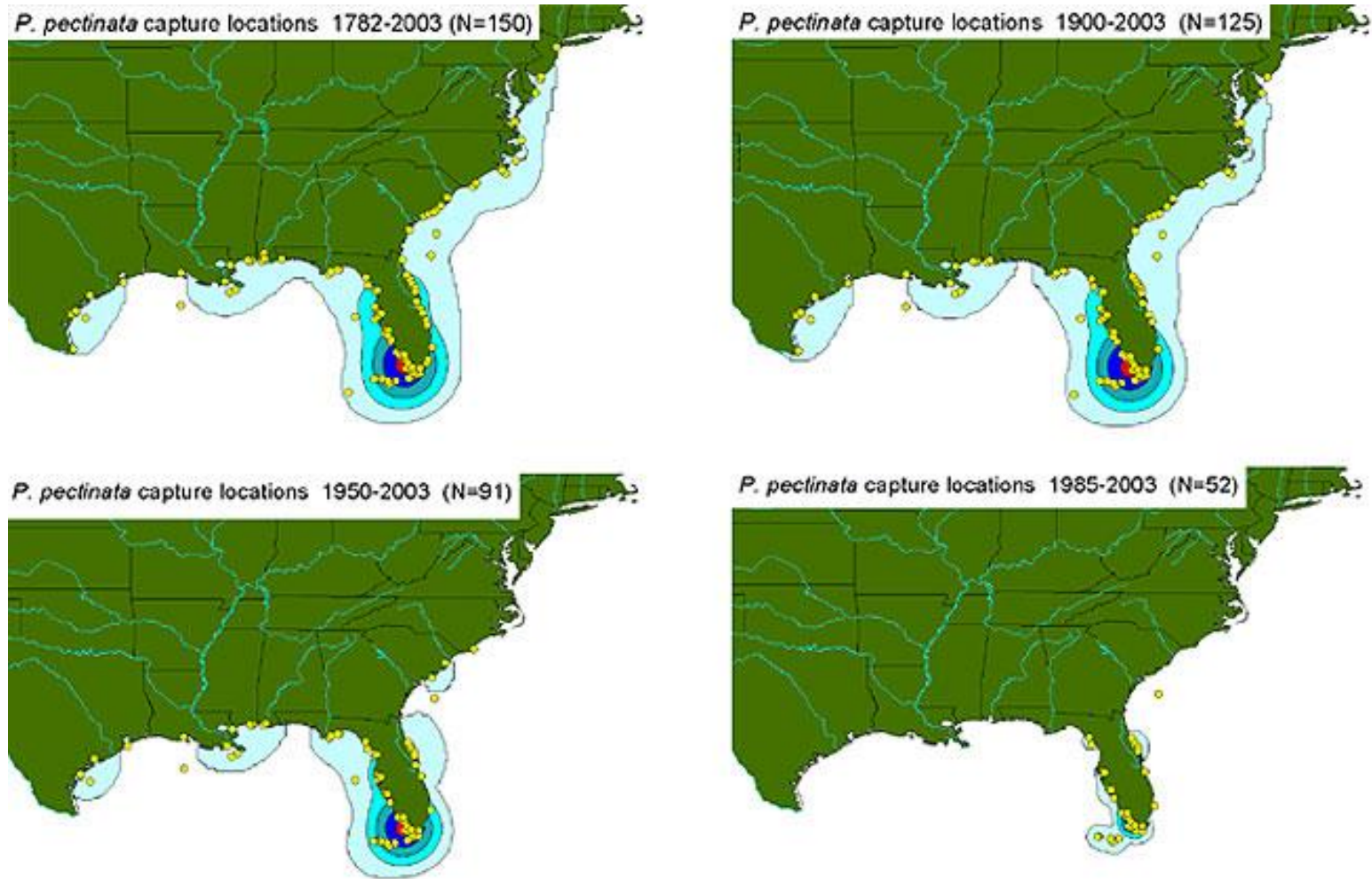
# Smalltooth Sawfish Recovery Plan



- Published in January 2009
- Prepared by a multi-agency Recovery Team
- Currently being updated

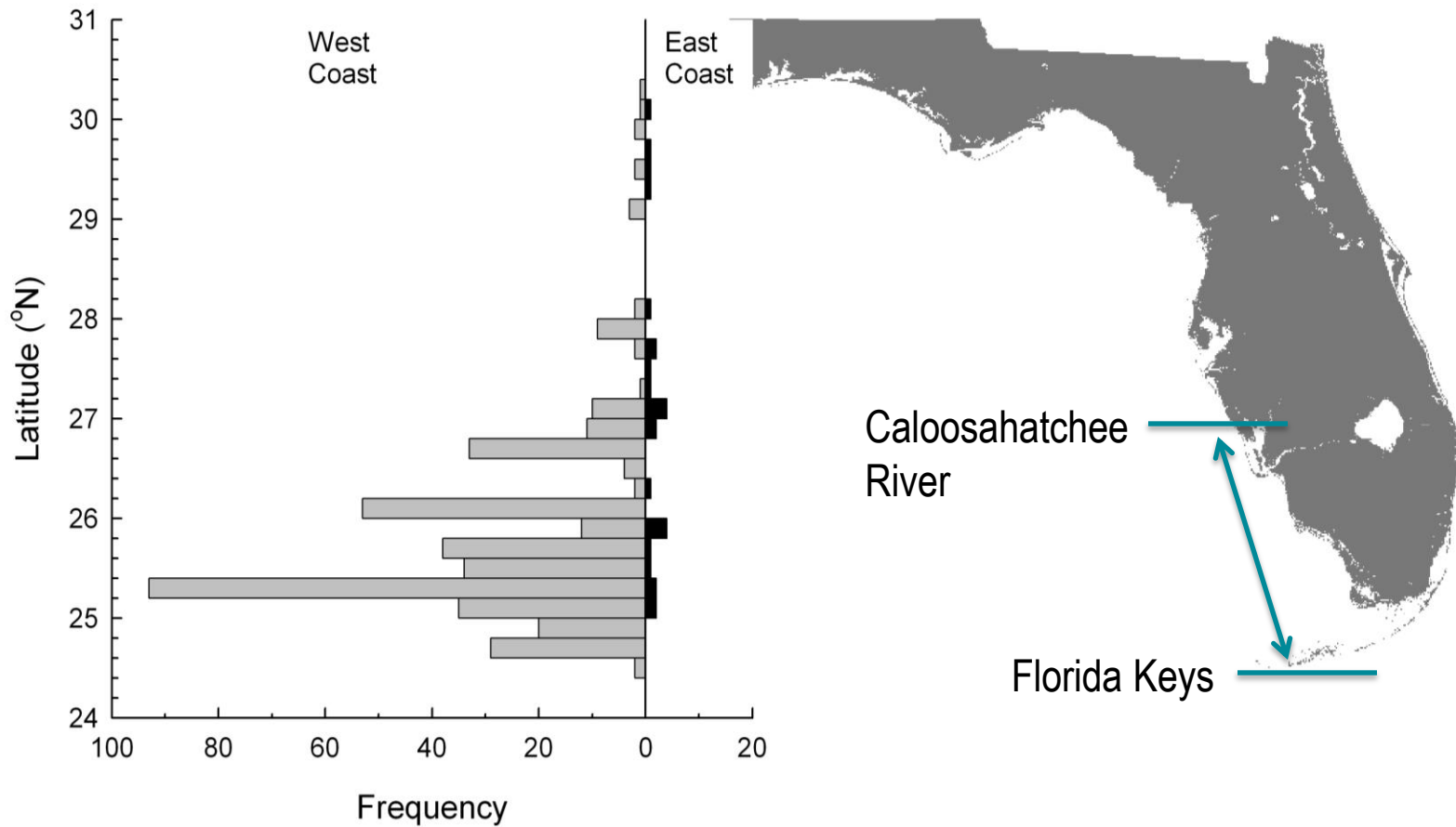


# Smalltooth Sawfish Distribution in U.S.



**Recovery Plan Figure 2.** Historic and Current Distribution of Smalltooth Sawfish in the U.S. based on public encounters. Darker areas indicate greater concentration of records. From Burgess and Curtis (2003).

# Smalltooth Sawfish Distribution in FL



**Recovery Plan Figure 3.** Latitudinal Distribution of Smalltooth Sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) Encounters on the East and West Coasts of Florida, 1998-2004. The map of Florida is adjacent for orientation only. From Simpfendorfer and Wiley (2005a).

# Recovery Criteria

Are there recovery criteria? Yes, several under 3 objectives.

1. Minimize human interactions and associated injury and mortality
2. Protect and/or restore habitats
3. Ensure abundance increases substantially and the species reoccupies areas from which it had been previously extirpated

Are the recovery criteria ...

Objective?	Yes
Measurable?	Most but not all
Appropriate?	Most but not all



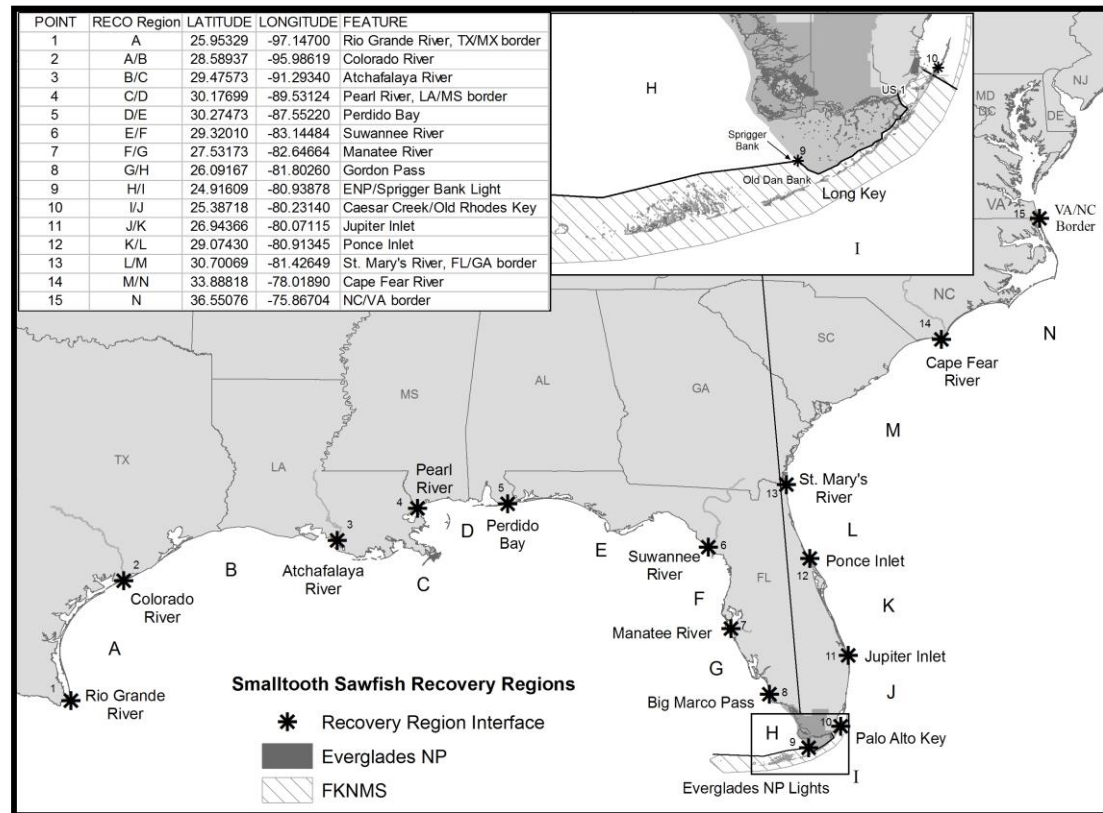
# Site-Specific Recovery Actions

- No site-specific recovery actions
  - Why?
    - Lack of data at the time of plan development
    - Small geographic range of the species
- But...

# Region-specific Recovery Criteria

## 14 Recovery Regions (A-N)

- Takes into account biogeographic boundaries and information about the historic and current distribution.
- Florida contains 8 of the 14 regions (E-L) and the entire core population (G-I).
- Recovery criteria are tied to abundance and habitat features within each region especially G, H, and I.



**Recovery Plan Figure 9.** Recovery Regions for Smalltooth Sawfish Along the Gulf of Mexico and U.S. Atlantic Coast.



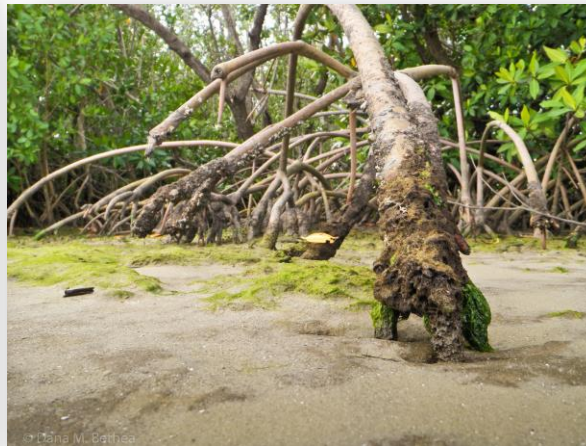
# Recovery Plan Effectiveness

Is the format effective for the public? Yes.

- NOAA SERO Protected Resources Division maintains a webpage with contact information, outreach guidance, and key documents
- Easy to find on the internet - Search “Smalltooth Sawfish Recovery Plan” and a PDF is among the top 3 links
- Recovery goal, objectives, criteria, and actions are easy to locate within the document.
  - Executive summary
  - Table of contents
  - Table for the implementation schedule
- Recovery Actions clearly linked with each of the 3 objectives
- Could be a bit more clear as to who we expect to complete certain actions

# Recovery Plan Effectiveness

- Is the format effective for team members? Yes
  - Prioritized action items provide the team with direct and measurable tasks (e.g., creation of standardized abundance surveys)
  - However, a lack of appropriate funding is a major issue when achieving action items



# Is the Recovery Plan Current?

- No, but we are currently working to update it.
- Why is it not current?
  - Very little was known at the time of listing
  - Data obtained during the last 6.5 years of research (as guided by the recovery plan) has changed our thinking about the biological requirements for recovery and the characteristics of a recovered population



# Synthesis

- Recovery plan has been extremely effective in guiding research efforts and building our knowledge base over the past 6.5 years
- The knowledge gained from conducting research, as determined by the plan, has been instrumental in making management and recovery decisions
  - Outreach example
- Advances in our understanding of the species have made it clear that some recovery criteria are not realistic or achievable, thus the need to update the plan



# Successes...

- A very active implementation team
- Framework for monitoring recovery is in place
- 1<sup>st</sup> iteration laid the foundation for the updated plan

# Remaining Challenges...

- Limited knowledge on certain aspects of sawfish life history
- Balancing recovery goals and real world expectations
  - E.g., maintaining juvenile habitats above 95% of the acreage at the time of listing
- Expectations of recovery based on the original data used for the listing (historic encounter data)
- Pet projects -vs- recovery priorities