

Movement patterns of gray triggerfish, *Balistes capriscus*, around artificial reefs in the northern Gulf of Mexico

J. L. HERBIG & S. T. SZEDLMAYER

*School of Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Aquatic Sciences, Auburn University,
Fairhope, Alabama 36532, USA*

Corresponding author: Stephen T Szedlmayer, szedlst@auburn.edu,
School of Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Aquatic Sciences, Auburn University,
8300 State Highway 104, Fairhope, Alabama 36532, USA

Running title: ACOUSTIC TELMETERY OF GRAY TRIGGERFISH

This is the author manuscript accepted for publication and has undergone full peer review but has not been through the copyediting, typesetting, pagination and proofreading process, which may lead to differences between this version and the [Version of Record](#). Please cite this article as [doi: 10.1111/fme.12190](https://doi.org/10.1111/fme.12190)

This article is protected by copyright. All rights reserved

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29

Received Date : 23-Dec-2015

Revised Date : 24-Jun-2016

Accepted Date : 16-Jul-2016

Article type : Article

Title: Movement patterns of gray triggerfish, *Balistes capriscus*, around artificial reefs in the northern Gulf of Mexico.

Abstract Little is known about the movement patterns of gray triggerfish, *Balistes capriscus* Gmelin, in the northern Gulf of Mexico. To examine fine scale movements, gray triggerfish ($n = 17$) were tagged with transmitters and tracked with the VR2W Positioning System (VPS) from 17 Oct 2012 to 9 Dec 2013. Most (76 %) tagged fish survived and were tracked for 1 to 57 weeks. Tagged fish showed significantly larger home ranges and core areas in autumn than winter-spring and during day than night. Seasonal movement patterns were positively correlated with water temperature. Gray triggerfish stayed close to the reef (mean \pm SD distance = 35.9 ± 28.4 m), showed high site fidelity (64 %) and high residency (> 57 weeks). These patterns emphasize the importance of structured habitat for this species and suggest that artificial reef building in the northern Gulf of Mexico has enhanced this population.

Keywords: artificial reefs, kernel density, movement, residency, survival, telemetry

Introduction

Gray triggerfish, *Balistes capriscus* Gmelin, support an important sport and commercial fishery in the Gulf of Mexico (Simmons & Szedlmayer 2011; Simmons & Szedlmayer 2012; GMFMC 2012). Gray triggerfish have become even more important in recent years due to greater restrictions on other targeted species. For example, a short 10-day sport season in 2015 for red snapper, *Lutjanus campechanus* (Poey),

30 likely caused fishers to shift effort to gray triggerfish, which previously did not experience heavy fishing
31 pressure (Vale et al. 2001).

32 Presently, gray triggerfish in the Gulf of Mexico is considered overfished (SEDAR 2015). A
33 management plan to rebuild the population was put in place in 2008 (SEDAR 2015). Although the
34 interest in gray triggerfish has increased due to their increasing value, many important life history aspects
35 are not well documented. In particular, little is known concerning the importance of structured habitats
36 for gray triggerfish, either artificial- or natural-reef structures. Recent advances in telemetry technology
37 now allow measurement of fine scale (within 1 m) movement patterns of gray triggerfish around these
38 reefs. Telemetry studies will greatly improve our understanding of the importance of structured habitat
39 for gray triggerfish and provide estimations of home range, habitat use and residency.

40 Few studies have examined movement patterns in Balistidae. One of the earliest studies externally
41 tagged 58 gray triggerfish off the coast of Florida (Beaumariage 1969). Six of these tagged fish were
42 captured by fishers at their release site. Ingram and Patterson (2001) externally tagged 206 gray
43 triggerfish in the northern Gulf of Mexico and recaptured 42 fish; eight were recaptured more than once,
44 67 % were recaptured at their release site and 100 % were recaptured within 9 km of their release site. A
45 similar study tagged 256 gray triggerfish on artificial reef sites off northwest Florida (Addis et al. 2007).
46 They recaptured 40 fish, with 58 % caught at their release site and 100 % caught within 10 km of their
47 release site. One study internally tagged six ocean triggerfish, *Canthidermis sufflamen* (Mitchill) and
48 monitored their presence with a satellite-linked acoustic receiver attached to a fish aggregation device
49 (FAD) in the Indian Ocean (Dagorn et al. 2007). These satellite tagged fish were only detected around
50 the FAD for 15 days. Thus, very little is understood about gray triggerfish movement patterns and habitat
51 associations.

52 In the present study, a Vemco VR2W positioning system (VPS, Vemco Ltd, Bedford, NS) was used to
53 assess the use of structured habitat by gray triggerfish. These new VPS methods have proven successful
54 with red snapper in the northern Gulf of Mexico (Piraino & Szedlmayer 2014; Williams & Szedlmayer in
55 press). The present study examined whether gray triggerfish can survive transmitter implantation and
56 behave “normally” and then applied VPS tracking methods to examine fine scale movements around
57 artificial reefs. Such information could be used to examine important life history aspects in gray
58 triggerfish that could aid management attempts to rebuild gray triggerfish stocks.

61 **Methods**

62

63 Study Area

64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97

Gray triggerfish were tagged on artificial reefs in the northern Gulf of Mexico 25 - 30 km south of Dauphin Island, Alabama (Fig. 1). Telemetry study sites were set up on two VPS artificial reefs: site R3 (depth 20 m) and site R4 (depth 27 m). These sites were selected because they had abundant (> 10) gray triggerfish needed for multiple tagging. Both reefs were 2.5 x 1.3 x 2.4 m steel cages. Receivers were also placed on 24 surrounding reefs of the same design (Fig. 1). The combination of VPS and surrounding reef sites with receivers allowed for continuous monitoring over a large area (64 km²).

Fine-Scale Tracking

A VPS tracking array set up as per Piraino and Szedlmayer (2014) was used to record the fine-scale movements of tagged gray triggerfish. Each VPS site included an array of acoustic receivers (n = 5; Vemco VR2W), with all receivers positioned 4.5 m above the seafloor on anchored lines. At each VPS reef site, a receiver was positioned adjacent to the artificial reef (~ 20 m north, center receiver) and at 300 m north, south, east and west of center. Based on a 400-m detection range determined by Piraino and Szedlmayer (2014), this five-receiver array provided 100 % detection by at least three receivers of all transmitter signals within the 0.6 km² VPS array area. Fish positions were calculated by time differential of signal arrival at the different receivers through VEMCO post processing. Calibration of transmitter locations were previously verified by control transmitters and showed ~ 1 m accuracy of known transmitter positions (Piraino & Szedlmayer 2014). At each reef site, temperature loggers (n = 2, U22 Water Temp Pro v2, Onset HOBO, Bourne, MA) attached to the center receiver line at 4.5 m above and at the seafloor recorded water temperature at 1 h intervals. Synchronization transmitters (sync tags; Vemco V16-6x; 69 kHz; transmission delay 540-720 sec) were attached to receiver lines 1 m above all receivers to synchronize the receiver clocks, which is critical for accurate positioning of a tagged fish. A control transmitter (same type as used to tag fish) was also placed within the array and used to verify continuous detections of tagged fish (Topping & Szedlmayer 2011a; Piraino & Szedlmayer 2014). Transmitter detections were downloaded from the five receivers about every 3 months and processed by Vemco, which then reported fish positions.

In addition to the five receivers at each VPS site, single receivers (VR2W) were placed 1.3 - 1.7 km apart at 24 surrounding artificial reefs (Fig. 1). These receivers were deployed to validate emigrations away from VPS sites (identified by VPS tracking patterns within the VPS arrays) and to estimate the direction, distance and timing of emigrations. In addition, if tagged gray triggerfish established new residency on one of these surrounding reefs, residency time on these new reefs could be estimated.

98 Tagging Procedure

99

100 Adult gray triggerfish (> 250 mm fork length) were caught by hook-and-line, weighed, measured and
101 anesthetised on the research vessel in a 70 L container of seawater and MS-222 (150 mg tricaine
102 methanesulfonate L⁻¹ seawater for 2 min). Fish were tagged and released on different days from 17 Oct
103 2012 to 13 Oct 2013 due to the difficulty of catching fish at the VPS reef sites and monitored from 17 Oct
104 2012 to 9 Dec 2013. Fish tagging procedures followed Topping & Szedlmayer (2011a, b). An
105 individually coded acoustic transmitter (Vemco V13 - 1X - 069 - 1, 13 x 36 mm in length, 11 g in air)
106 was implanted within the peritoneal cavity through a vertical incision on the left ventral side of the fish
107 and the incision was closed with absorbable, sterile, plain gut surgical sutures (Ethicon 2 - 0 3.5 metric,
108 Somerville, NJ). For visual identification, all fish were also marked with individually numbered internal
109 anchor tags (Floy tags, Seattle, WA). After surgery, fish were held in a 185 L container of seawater on
110 the research vessel until they showed signs of recovery (active fin and gill movements). All tagged gray
111 triggerfish were released in predator protection cages lowered to the sea floor (Piraino & Szedlmayer
112 2014; Williams et al. 2015).

113

114 Data Analysis

115

116 Residence time of an active tagged fish was calculated with a known fate model in the MARK program
117 (<http://www.phidot.org/software/mark/docs/book/>). The MARK program evaluated the proportion of fish
118 that remained on an artificial reef over time based on the maximum likelihood binomial (MLE). This
119 MLE estimated the Kaplan-Meier (K-M) survival function as if all fish had the same tagging start date
120 (Kaplan & Meier 1958; Chambers & Leggett 1989; Edwards 1992; Ohta & Kakuma 2004; Schroepfer &
121 Szedlmayer 2006; Topping & Szedlmayer 2011a). Median residence time was defined as the time period
122 when 50 % of the tagged gray triggerfish were still present over the entire study period, and site fidelity
123 was the percentage of tagged fish remaining at their release site 1 year after release (Schroepfer &
124 Szedlmayer 2006; Topping & Szedlmayer 2011b). Both estimates are based on the residency analyses
125 from conditional probabilities of surviving specified events (e.g. emigration). Fish were removed from
126 the analysis (right censored) if they showed other events not under consideration (e.g. mortality). For
127 example, when estimating residency or site fidelity a fish that emigrated or was caught by a fisher was
128 removed from subsequent estimates in the following months. The residency function was based on
129 weekly time intervals, the number of individuals at risk of undergoing an emigration, the number of
130 individuals that did not undergo an emigration, the number that died and the MLE of remaining on a reef

131 during each interval. Overall annual site fidelity was calculated by converting the total estimate (based on
132 the longest track) to an annual estimate (52 weeks).

133 Kernel density estimates (KDE) of area use were calculated with the R program (R program, Vienna,
134 Austria). Kernel density estimates produce a probability distribution that a tagged gray triggerfish will be
135 located within a certain area during a specified time period (Seaman & Powell 1996; Topping et al. 2005;
136 Piraino & Szedlmayer 2014). The R program was used to calculate the home range areas (95 % KDE =
137 the area that the fish was located 95 % of the time) and the core area (50 % KDE, the area that the fish
138 was located 50 % of the time). Monthly effects on core areas and home range areas were compared with
139 one-way mixed-model repeated-measures analyses of variance (rmANOVA) with SAS (Statistical
140 Analysis System, Cary, NC). In this model, tagged fish were considered a random factor and month was
141 the repeated measure (Littell et al. 1998). Monthly home range areas were also tested for relationships
142 with mean monthly temperatures with Pearson product-moment correlation (Zar 2010). Diel patterns in
143 core areas and home range areas were compared by calculating area use for hourly periods within each
144 month for each fish and analyzed with rmANOVA with tagged fish as the random factor and hour as the
145 repeated measure. When significant differences ($\alpha < 0.05$) were detected, a Tukey-Kramer test was used
146 to identify specific differences. A linear regression model was used to compare fish size and fish area use
147 (Zar 2010). The mean distances that fish maintained from the artificial reef were calculated with the
148 haversine formula (Piraino & Szedlmayer 2014). Time of sunrise and sunset were determined from the
149 US Naval Observatory web site at the present study location
150 (http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/RS_OneYear.php).

151

152 **Results**

153

154 Fish Tagging on VPS Sites

155

156 A total of 17 adult gray triggerfish were tagged and released on different dates from 17 Oct 2012 to 13
157 Oct 2013. Tagged fish were monitored on the two VPS sites from 17 Oct 2012 to 9 Dec 2013 (Table 1).
158 Among the released gray triggerfish, four (23.5 %) were lost within 24 h (tagging effects) and 13 (76.4
159 %) were successfully tracked on the VPS sites for 8 to 399 days (Table 1; Fig.2). Among tracked fish,
160 three were caught by fishers 21 to 156 days after release, one died 22 days after release, three emigrated 8
161 to 175 days after release and six fish were still present and being tracked at the end of this study (9 Dec
162 2013) 116 to 399 days after release (Table 1). Detection of control transmitters at each VPS site verified
163 continuous detections over the entire study period.

164 Gray triggerfish stayed close to the reef (mean \pm SD distance = 35.9 ± 28.4 m, $n = 13$ tagged gray
165 triggerfish) and had high annual site fidelity (64 %) and high residency (> 57 weeks; Fig. 3). Among the
166 fish that emigrated from the VPS detection area, one fish had multiple returns to its release site. Fish T4
167 emigrated from the VPS site (R4) on 4 March 2013 and returned on 15 March 2013, emigrated again on
168 17 March 2013 and returned on 26 March 2013, then emigrated again on 6 May 2013 and did not return.
169 After emigrating from R4, fish T4 was detected on seven different surrounding reef sites (R1, R2, S3,
170 S12, S13, S14, S45) with distances from its release site ranging from 1.7 to 7 km (Fig. 1). This fish
171 stayed on R4 most of the time (total = 162 days, 84%), but was detected for short periods on these
172 surrounding sites (1 – 6 days, total days = 20 days, 10 %) and its position was unknown for 10 days (5
173 %). Although these movement patterns of fish T4 might suggest a predation event, it was still considered
174 a tagged gray triggerfish because after short visits to other reef sites it was again detected for 41 days on
175 its release site and while resident on R4 its movement patterns matched other gray triggerfish patterns.

176 One presumed predation event occurred. The area use pattern of T13 became erratic and quite
177 different from other gray triggerfish in May. The average home range of T13 was 700 m^2 for 9 days (2 –
178 12 May 2013), increased to 5121 m^2 on 13 May 2013 and 4537 m^2 on 14 May 2013, and then was 244 m^2
179 over the next 5 days. The transmitter of T13 was recovered laying on the sea floor 20 m north of the reef
180 on 21 May 2013. These single-day larger areas were most likely too great for a tagged gray triggerfish as
181 all other tagged gray triggerfish showed smaller daily home ranges (range $78\text{-}2535 \text{ m}^2$) during May 2013
182 (Fig. 4).

183 184 Seasonal patterns

185
186 Gray triggerfish home range areas (95 % KDE) were significantly greater in September compared to
187 winter and spring months (January through May; $F_{11,51} = 2.9$, $P = 0.006$; Fig. 4). Home range areas were
188 positively correlated with water temperature ($r = 0.80$, $P = 0.002$; Fig. 4). Core areas showed the same
189 patterns as home range areas by month ($F_{11,51} = 2.7$, $P = 0.008$) and correlation with temperature ($r =$
190 0.95 , $P < 0.001$; Fig. 4). Significant relations were not detected between fish length and home range areas
191 ($R^2 = 0.05$, $P = 0.46$).

192 Home range areas from 0600 to 1700 hours were significantly greater than from 1800 to 2400 and
193 0000 to 0500 hours ($F_{23,850} = 19.0$, $P < 0.001$). Home range also showed a pattern of increasing from
194 0500 to 0700 hours and decreasing from 1700 to 1800 hours (Fig. 5). Temporal patterns of core areas
195 were the same as home range ($F_{23,850} = 23.9$, $P < 0.001$; Fig. 5).

196 The time of day when home range area changed varied among seasons and coincided with the
197 changing times of sunrise and sunset. For all four seasonal comparisons the increase in areas occurred at

198 sunrise, while the decrease in areas occurred at sunset (Fig. 6). These patterns were consistent for each
199 season and matched patterns pooled over all seasons (Fig. 5).

200

201 **Discussion**

202

203 Tagging Effects

204

205 One objective of this study was to estimate the effect of an implanted transmitter on gray triggerfish and
206 determine if telemetry would provide meaningful and reliable information for this species. Although this
207 technique has been successfully used for other species such as red snapper (Piraino & Szedlmayer 2014),
208 these previous methods of tag implantation were questionable with gray triggerfish because this species
209 has a smaller peritoneal cavity and a tough skin that makes surgery difficult. In addition, aggressive
210 behaviors have been documented especially by male gray triggerfish, and tagged fish may be subject to
211 increased attacks by untagged gray triggerfish during recovery (Simmons & Szedlmayer 2012). In the
212 present study, the field releases clearly showed that gray triggerfish could be tagged, would survive and
213 provided long-term fine-scale tracking data. In support, SCUBA divers periodically observed tagged gray
214 triggerfish on the reef sites and reported that the fish appeared healthy with no signs of infection or torn
215 fins, were swimming up in the water column with other untagged gray triggerfish and were not hiding in
216 the reef. Also supporting the present tagging methods were recaptures of tagged gray triggerfish during
217 subsequent tagging trips, with all fish appearing in excellent condition. These visual observations and
218 recaptures confirmed that tagged fish were feeding and competitive with non-tagged fish and that
219 telemetry studies with gray triggerfish can be successful.

220 The emigration rate due to tagging effects (17.6 %) in this study was similar to that reported in red
221 snapper telemetry studies at 17 % (Topping & Szedlmayer 2013) and 14.8 % (Szedlmayer & Schroepfer
222 2005). More recently, Piraino and Szedlmayer (2014) reported a high tagging-effect loss (45.5 %), but
223 they developed a cage release method that significantly increased the survival to 92 % for transmitter-
224 tagged red snapper. In the present study, similar cage release methods were applied that would account
225 for the lower tag-effect loss rate than might be expected without predator protection cages (Piraino &
226 Szedlmayer 2014; Williams et al. 2015).

227 One tagged gray triggerfish (fish T13) died 22 days after tagging and was attributed to a predation
228 event. In support of possible predation events, SCUBA divers commonly observed sandbar shark,
229 *Carcharhinus plumbeus* (Nardo), and bull shark, *Carcharhinus leucas* (Müller & Henle), around the VPS
230 arrays, and direct observations of shark predation on the surface was common during fish tagging. For
231 example, 28 % of tagged red snapper suffered mortality in 2010 and 2011, most likely from shark

232 predation (Piraino & Szedlmayer 2014). Ingram (2001) and Ingram & Patterson (2001) estimated
233 mortality due to external tagging for gray triggerfish was only 1.5 – 2.0 % (); but these estimates were
234 based on the condition of tagged fish released at the surface, and it is likely that additional predation
235 occurred after tagged fish left the surface (Piraino and Szedlmayer (2014).

236 237 Residency and Site Fidelity

238
239 In the present study, gray triggerfish had long-term residency (> 57 weeks), high site fidelity (64 %) and
240 close association with reef structure (mean distance from reef = 35.9 m). Traditional tagging studies on
241 gray triggerfish have also reported high site fidelity with 58.3 % (Ingram & Patterson 2001) and 67 % of
242 tagged gray triggerfish recaptured at their release site (Addis et al. 2007). The time at liberty in previous
243 mark-recapture studies for gray triggerfish (mean = 190 days, Ingram & Patterson 2001; mean = 161
244 days, Addis et al. 2007) was less than residency time of tagged gray triggerfish in the present study.
245 However, these previous estimates were based on recaptures that harvest fish from reef sites and are
246 known underestimates because residency times before tagging and after recapture cannot be estimated. In
247 addition, these past studies could not define home ranges, fine scale habitat area use, or define movements
248 between mark and recapture.

249 Tagged gray triggerfish showed homing behavior as one tagged gray triggerfish (fish T4) left and
250 visited seven reef sites as far away as 7 km and returned to its original tagging site. Other reef fishes,
251 such as red snapper, have also shown homing behavior with individuals emigrating as far as 8 km and
252 returning after as long as 8 months (Topping & Szedlmayer 2011a; Piraino & Szedlmayer 2014).
253 Another reef fish, gag, *Mycteroperca microlepis* (Goode and Bean), displaced from reefs in the northern
254 Gulf of Mexico moved 3 km within 10 days back to their original site of capture (Kiel 2004).

255 Several fish (n = 3) emigrated from the VPS sites after staying from 8 to 175 days at their release sites.
256 Spawning may have been a factor. All gray triggerfish that emigrated were tagged before the spawning
257 season (May - August), and two (fish T4 and T9) left the VPS site during the spawning season. Fish T9
258 was the smallest fish tagged in the present study, and its small size may have played a role in leaving due
259 to interactions with larger dominant males (Simmons & Szedlmayer 2012).

260 261 Seasonal patterns

262
263 Home range and core areas of tagged gray triggerfish were reduced during the winter and spring (January
264 through May). This might be expected for this subtropical species as deeper water had a delayed

265 warming compared to surface waters. In turn, areas increased in June and July but were still about half of
266 the maximum reached in September (Fig. 4). Possibly these patterns were a consequence of increased
267 energetic demands associated with increasing temperature (Stehfest et al. 2015) but constrained by
268 spawning activity that tended to keep gray triggerfish near the reef structure. For example, in the northern
269 Gulf of Mexico, gray triggerfish spawn during the summer months with peak spawning occurring during
270 June and July (Wilson et al. 1995; Ingram 2001; Simmons & Szedlmayer 2012). Typically there is one
271 dominant male on an artificial reef that excludes subordinate males from the reef, especially during the
272 spawning season (Simmons & Szedlmayer 2012). Usually these spawning groups are established by June
273 and would tend to cause reduced movements despite increasing temperatures (Simmons & Szedlmayer
274 2012). Similar aggressive behaviors that would tend to reduce movements have been observed in other
275 Balistidae. For example, male redbtail triggerfish, *Xanthichthys mento* (Jordan and Gilbert), chase off
276 other males only during the spawning season (Kawase 2003), female blue triggerfish, *Pseudobalistes*
277 *fuscus* (Bloch & Schneider), are aggressive towards any other triggerfish that come too close during
278 spawning season (Fricke 1980) and female-female aggressive encounters are common during breeding
279 season for red-toothed triggerfish, *Odonus niger* (Rüppell) (Fricke, 1980). Although rare, female gray
280 triggerfish have also been observed chasing off other females interested in the same nest (Simmons &
281 Szedlmayer 2012). Thus, with the end of spawning (after July) and reduction in aggression, gray
282 triggerfish could expand their core and home range areas (August and September).

283 Tagged gray triggerfish showed clear diel movement patterns. Home range and core areas were
284 significantly larger during the day than night. It was clear that these diel differences were tied to sunrise
285 and sunset as patterns shifted with seasonal changes in daylight hours. Other Balistidae showed similar
286 diel patterns. For example, the fine scale triggerfish, *Balistes polylepis* Steindachner, the orangeside
287 triggerfish, *Sufflamen verres* (Gilbert and Starks), and the black triggerfish, *Melichthys niger* (Bloch), rest
288 in small holes during the nocturnal hours (Hobson 1965; Kavanagh & Olney 2006). Gray triggerfish may
289 be showing a similar behavior and rest in the reef at night. Diel patterns are also most likely related to
290 foraging as gray triggerfish have shown foraging away from the reef only during the daytime (Frazer &
291 Lindberg 1994; Vose & Nelson 1994).

292 Predation may also play an important role in the observed diel patterns in gray triggerfish, as indicated
293 by common sightings by SCUBA divers (9 out of 20 dives in 2 days in the present study) of bull shark
294 and sandbar shark on the VPS sites. Both the bull shark and the sandbar shark increase their feeding
295 activity at night (Driggers et al. 2012). Reduced movement and possibly seeking shelter in the reef at
296 night would reduce vulnerability to predation (Werner et al. 1983; Piraino & Szedlmayer 2014).

297

298 Conclusions

299

300 This is the first reported telemetry study on gray triggerfish around artificial reefs in the northern Gulf of
301 Mexico. The present study showed a high success rate (76 %) of implanting transmitters and tracking
302 gray triggerfish and demonstrated that acoustic telemetry can provide a major advance in the ability to
303 estimate gray triggerfish habitat use. Tagged gray triggerfish had high annual site fidelity (64 %) and
304 high residency (> 57 weeks) on the same reef with little time in open habitat while on the VPS site. Fine
305 scale movements of gray triggerfish showed diel patterns, with significantly greater home range and core
306 areas during the day as compared to night periods. These diel patterns are likely linked to foraging
307 behaviors and reducing the risk of nocturnal predation. Gray triggerfish core and home range areas also
308 had seasonal patterns with areas being larger during the late summer and autumn compared to winter and
309 spring. These seasonal differences in core and home range areas were positively correlated with water
310 temperature but may also result from increased intraspecific territoriality during the summer months. In
311 general, this study found that gray triggerfish were highly associated with artificial reefs in the northern
312 Gulf of Mexico.

313 The use of artificial habitat in the northern Gulf of Mexico to manage important fish species is a
314 contentious topic (Cowan et al. 2009; Gallaway et al. 2009). The addition of structured habitat in the
315 form of artificial reefs may boost production by increasing shelter and prey (Brickhill et al. 2005;
316 Gallaway et al. 2009; Shipp & Bortone 2009). However, artificial reefs may simply attract fish and the
317 higher catch rates may be driving fish stocks towards faster depletion (Brickhill et al. 2005; Cowan et al.
318 2009). The high site fidelity of gray triggerfish to the artificial reefs used for this study coupled with little
319 time spent over open habitat while in the VPS array and homing behavior supports the importance of
320 artificial reefs for gray triggerfish in the northern Gulf of Mexico. As such, future attempts to increase
321 this stock should consider habitat enhancement as an additional tool for management of this important
322 species.

323

324

325 **References**

326

327 Addis D.T., Patterson III W.F. & Dance M.A. (2007) Site fidelity of reef fishes tagged at unreported
328 artificial reef sites off NW Florida. *Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute* **60**, 297-304.

329

330 Beaumariage D.S. (1969) Returns from the 1965 Schlitz tagging program including a cumulative analysis
331 of previous results. Florida Department of Natural Resource Technical Series **59**, 1–38.

332

333 Brickhill M.J., Lee S.Y. & Connolly R.M. (2005) Fishes associated with artificial reefs: attributing
334 changes to attraction or production using novel approaches. *Journal of Fish Biology* **67**(B), 53-71.
335

336 Chambers R.C., & Leggett W.C. (1989) Event analysis applied to timing in marine fish ontogeny.
337 *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* **46**, 1633–1641.
338

339 Cowan J.H. Jr, Grimes C.B., Patterson III W.F., Walters C.J., Jones A.C., Lindberg W.J., Sheehy D.J.,
340 Pine III W.E., Powers J.E., Campbell M.D., Lindeman K.C., Diamond S.L., Hilborn R., Gibson H.T. &
341 Rose K.A. (2009) Red snapper management in the Gulf of Mexico: science or faith-based? *Reviews in*
342 *Fish Biology and Fisheries* **21**, 187-204.
343

344 Dagorn L., Pincock D., Girard C., Holland K., Taquet M., Sancho G., Itano D. & Aumeeruddy R. (2007)
345 Satellite-linked acoustic receivers to observe behavior of fish in remote areas. *Aquatic Living Resources*
346 **20**(4), 307-312.
347

348 Driggers III W.B., Campbell M.D., Hoffmayer E.R. & Ingram G.W. Jr. (2012) Feeding chronology of six
349 species of carcharhinid sharks in the western North Atlantic Ocean as inferred from longline capture data.
350 *Marine Ecology Progress Series* **465**, 185-192.
351

352 Edwards A.W.F. (1992) *Likelihood* (Expanded Edition). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 296
353 pp.
354

355 Frazer T.K. & Lindberg W.J. (1994) Refuge spacing similarly affects reef-associated species from three
356 phyla. *Bulletin of Marine Science* **55**(2-3), 388-400.
357

358 Fricke H.W. (1980) Mating systems, maternal and biparental care in triggerfish (Balistidae). *Zeitschrift*
359 *für Tierpsychologie* **53**(2), 105-122.
360

361 Gallaway B.J., Szedlmayer S.T. & Gazey W.J. (2009) A life history review for red snapper in the Gulf of
362 Mexico with an evaluation of the importance of offshore petroleum platforms and other artificial reefs.
363 *Reviews in Fisheries Science* **17**(1), 48-67.
364

365 GMFMC (Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. (2012) Reef Fish Amendment 37 to the

366 Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico: Modifications to the
367 Gray Triggerfish Rebuilding Plan including Adjustments to the Annual Catch Limits and Annual
368 Catch Targets for the Commercial and Recreational Sectors. Tampa, FL: Gulf of Mexico Fishery
369 Management Council, 177 pp.

370

371 Hobson E.S. (1965) Diurnal-nocturnal activity of some inshore fishes in the Gulf of California. *Copeia*
372 **1965**, 291-302.

373

374 Ingram G.W. Jr. (2001) Stock structure of gray triggerfish, *Balistes capriscus*, on multiple spatial scales
375 in the Gulf of Mexico. Ph.D. Dissertation, Mobile, AL: University of South Alabama, 229 pp.

376

377 Ingram G.W. Jr. & Patterson W.F. III. (2001) Movement patterns of red snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*),
378 greater amberjack (*Seriola dumerili*), and gray triggerfish (*Balistes capriscus*) in the Gulf of Mexico and
379 the utility of marine reserves as management tools. *Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute* **52**, 686-699.

380

381 Kaplan E.L. & Meier P. (1958) Nonparametric estimation from incomplete observations. *Journal of the*
382 *American Statistical Association* **53**, 457-481

383

384 Kawase H. (2003) Spawning behavior and biparental egg care of the crosshatch triggerfish, *Xanthichthys*
385 *mento* (Balistidae). *Environmental Biology of Fishes* **66**(3), 211-219.

386

387 Kavanagh K.D. & Olney J.E. (2006) Ecological correlates of population density and behavior in the
388 circumtropical black triggerfish *Melichthys niger* (Balistidae). *Environmental Biology of Fishes* **76**(2-4),
389 387-398.

390

391 Kiel B.L. (2004) Homing and spatial use of gag grouper, *Mycteroperca microlepis*. MSc Thesis,
392 Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, 79 pp.

393

394 Littell R.C., Henry P.R. & Ammerman C.B. 1998. Statistical analysis of repeated measures data using
395 SAS procedures. *Journal of Animal Science* **76**, 1216-1231.

396

397 Matthews K.R. (1990) A telemetric study of the home ranges and homing routes of copper and quillback
398 rockfishes on shallow rocky reefs. *Canadian Journal of Zoology* **68**(11), 2243-2250.

399

400 Ohta I. & Kakuma S. (2004) Periodic behavior and residence time of yellowfin and bigeye tuna
401 associated with fish aggregating devices around Okinawa Islands, as identified with automated listening
402 stations. *Marine Biology* **146**, 581–594.

403

404 Piraino M.N. & Szedlmayer S.T. (2014) Fine scale movements and home ranges of red snapper *Lutjanus*
405 *campechanus* around artificial reefs in the northern Gulf of Mexico. *Transactions of the American*
406 *Fisheries Society* **143**(4), 988-998.

407

408 Schroepfer R.L. & Szedlmayer S.T. (2006) Estimates of residence and site fidelity for red snapper
409 *Lutjanus campechanus* on artificial reefs in the northeastern Gulf of Mexico. *Bulletin of Marine Science*
410 **78**, 93–101

411

412 SEDAR (Southeast Data Assessment and Review) (2015) Gulf of Mexico Gray Triggerfish. SEDAR-43
413 Stock Assessment Report. 174 pp.

414

415 Seaman D.E. & Powell R.A. (1996) An evaluation of the accuracy of kernel density estimators for home
416 range analysis. *Ecology* **77**(7), 2075-2085.

417

418 Shipp R.L. & Bortone S.A. (2009) A prospective of the importance of artificial habitat on the
419 management of red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico. *Reviews in Fisheries Science* **17**(1), 41-47.

420

421 Simmons C.M. & Szedlmayer S.T. (2011) Recruitment of age-0 gray triggerfish to benthic
422 structured habitat in the northern Gulf of Mexico. *Transactions of the American Fisheries*
423 *Society* **140**, 14-20.

424

425 Simmons C.M. & Szedlmayer S.T. (2012) Territoriality, reproductive behavior, and parental care in gray
426 triggerfish, *Balistes capriscus*, from the northern Gulf of Mexico. *Bulletin of Marine Science* **88**(2), 197-
427 209.

428

429 Stehfest K.M., Lyle J.M. & Semmens J.M. (2015) The use of acoustic accelerometer tags to determine
430 seasonal changes in activity and catchability of a recreationally caught marine teleost. *ICES Journal of*
431 *Marine Science* **72**, 2512–2520.

432

433 Szedlmayer S.T. & Schroepfer R.L. (2005) Long-term residence of red snapper on artificial reefs in the
434 northeastern Gulf of Mexico. *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* **134**(2), 315–325.
435

436 Topping D.T. & Szedlmayer S. T. (2011a) Site fidelity, residence time and movements of red snapper
437 *Lutjanus campechanus* estimated with long-term acoustic monitoring. *Marine Ecology Progress Series*
438 **437**, 183-200.
439

440 Topping D.T. & Szedlmayer S.T. (2011b) Home range and movement patterns of red snapper (*Lutjanus*
441 *campechanus*) on artificial reefs. *Fisheries Research* **112**, 77-84.
442

443 Topping D.T. & Szedlmayer S.T. (2013) Use of ultrasonic telemetry to estimate natural and fishing
444 mortality of red snapper. *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* **142**(4), 1090-1100.
445

446 Topping D.T., Lowe C.G. & Caselle J.E. (2005) Home range and habitat utilization of adult California
447 sheephead, *Semicossyphus pulcher* (Labridae), in a temperate no-take marine reserve. *Marine Biology*
448 **147**: 301–311.
449

450 Vale M., Legault C.M. & Ortiz M. (2001) A Stock Assessment for Gray Triggerfish, *Balistes capriscus*, in
451 the Gulf of Mexico. National Marine Fisheries Service, Sustainable Fisheries Division Contribution SFD-
452 00/01-124. 50 pp.
453

454 Vose F.E. & Nelson W.G. (1994) Gray triggerfish (*Balistes capriscus* Gmelin) feeding from artificial and
455 natural substrate in shallow Atlantic waters of Florida. *Bulletin of Marine Science* **55**(2-3), 1316-1323.
456

457 Werner E.E., Gilliam J.F., Hall D.J. & Mittelbach G.G. (1983) An experimental test of the effects of
458 predation risk on habitat use in fish. *Ecology* **64**(6), 1540-1548.
459

460 Williams L.J. & Szedlmayer S.T. (In press) Mortality estimates for red snapper, *Lutjanus campechanus*,
461 based on ultrasonic telemetry in the northern Gulf of Mexico. *North American Journal of Fisheries*
462 *Management*.
463

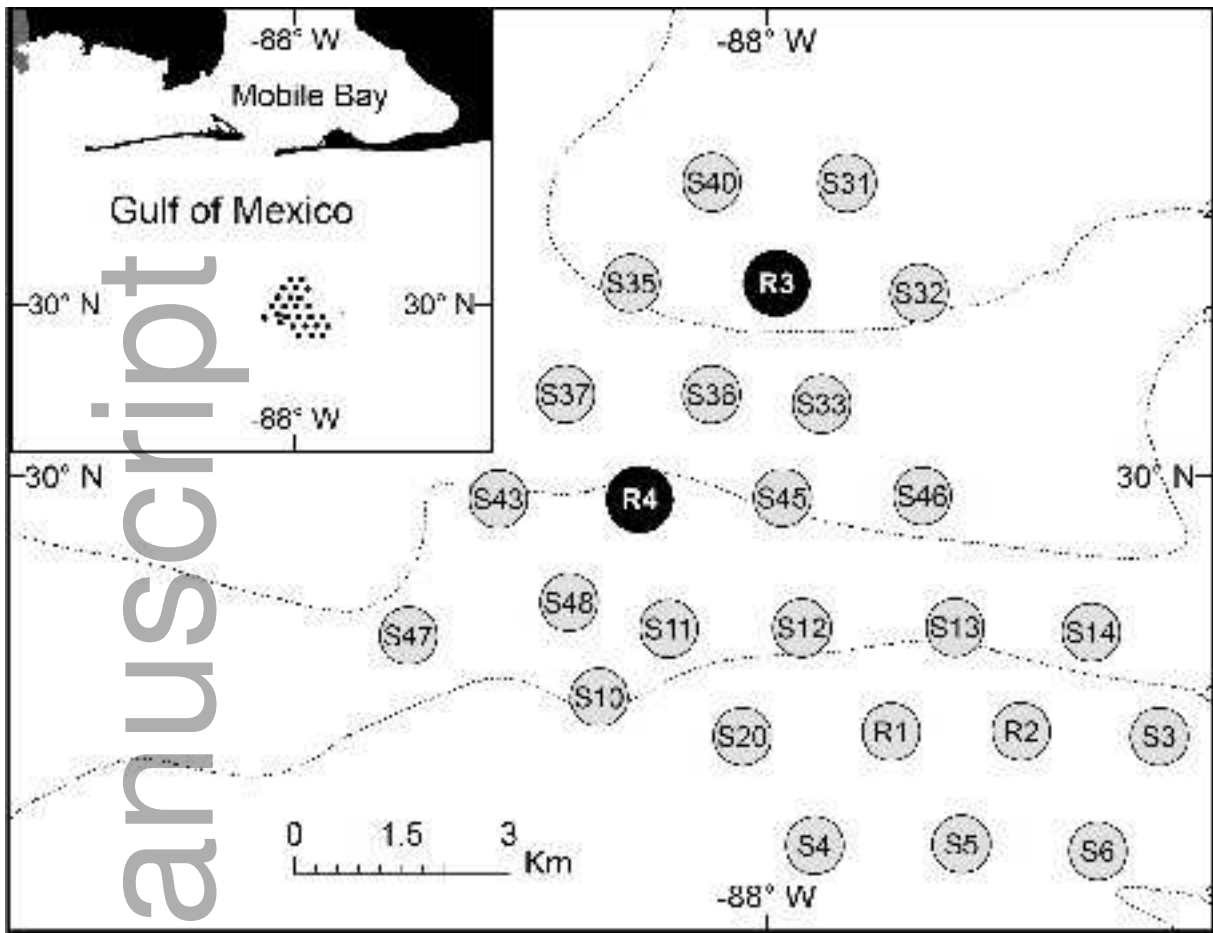
464 Williams L.J., Herbig J.L. & Szedlmayer S.T. (2015) A cage release method to improve fish tagging
465 studies. *Fisheries Research* **172**, 125–129.
466

- 467 Wilson C.A., Nieland D.L. & Stanley A.L. (1995) Age, Growth, and Reproductive Biology of Gray
468 Triggerfish (*Balistes capricus*) from the Northern Gulf of Mexico Commercial Harvest. St. Petersburg,
469 FL: NOAA MARFIN Final Report, 13 pp.
470
471 Zar J.H. (2010) Biostatistical Analysis. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall Inc., 944 pp.

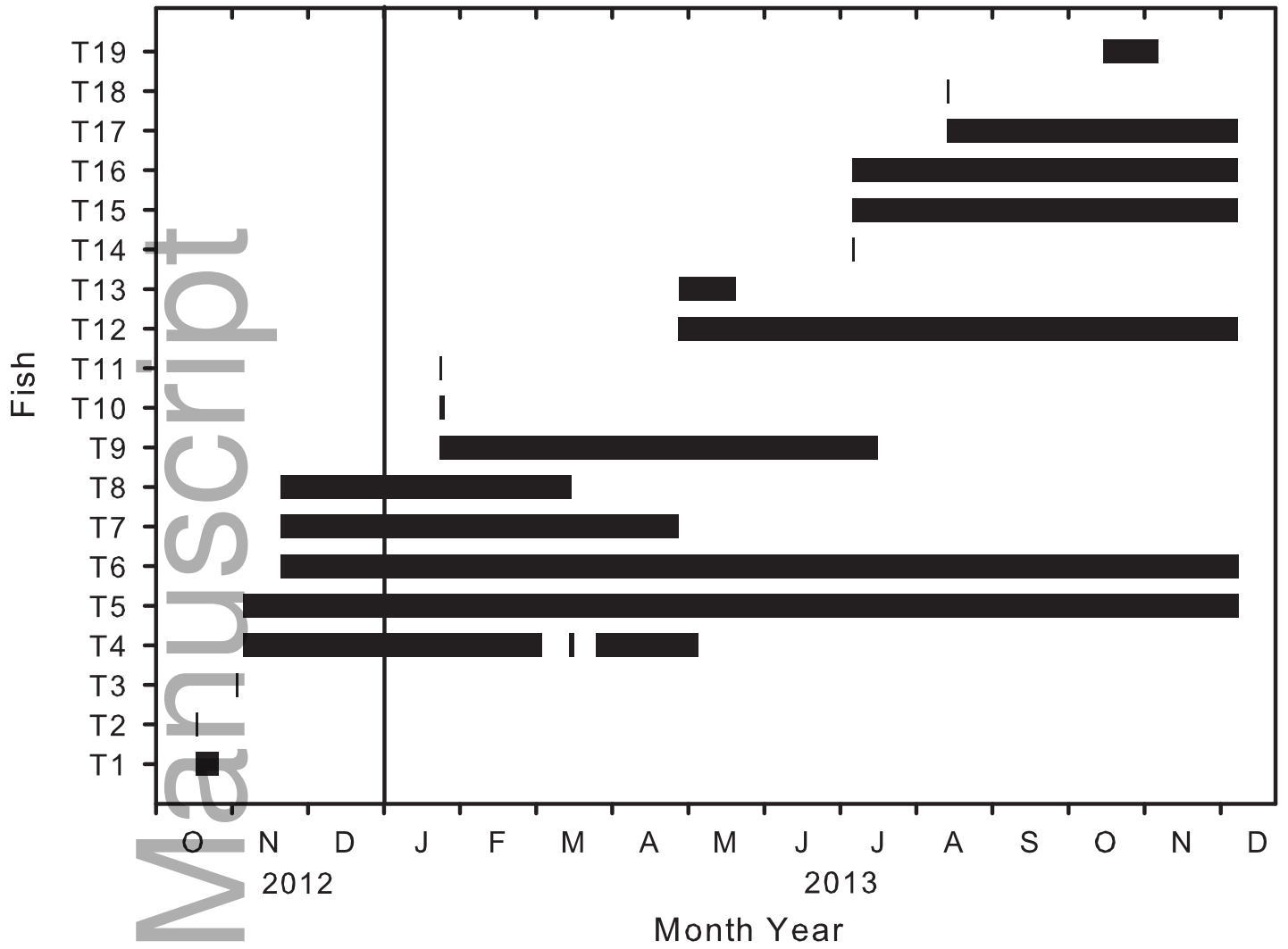
Author Manuscript

Table 1. Summary data for transmitter tagged gray triggerfish, *Balistes capriscus* Gmelin, on artificial reef sites in the northern Gulf of Mexico. Event date is the day of emigration, mortality or loss of a tagged fish. Sites outside the VPS array contain single receivers and are reef sites outside the area of fine scale position detection. Secondary sites are additional reef sites within the position detection area of the VPS array.

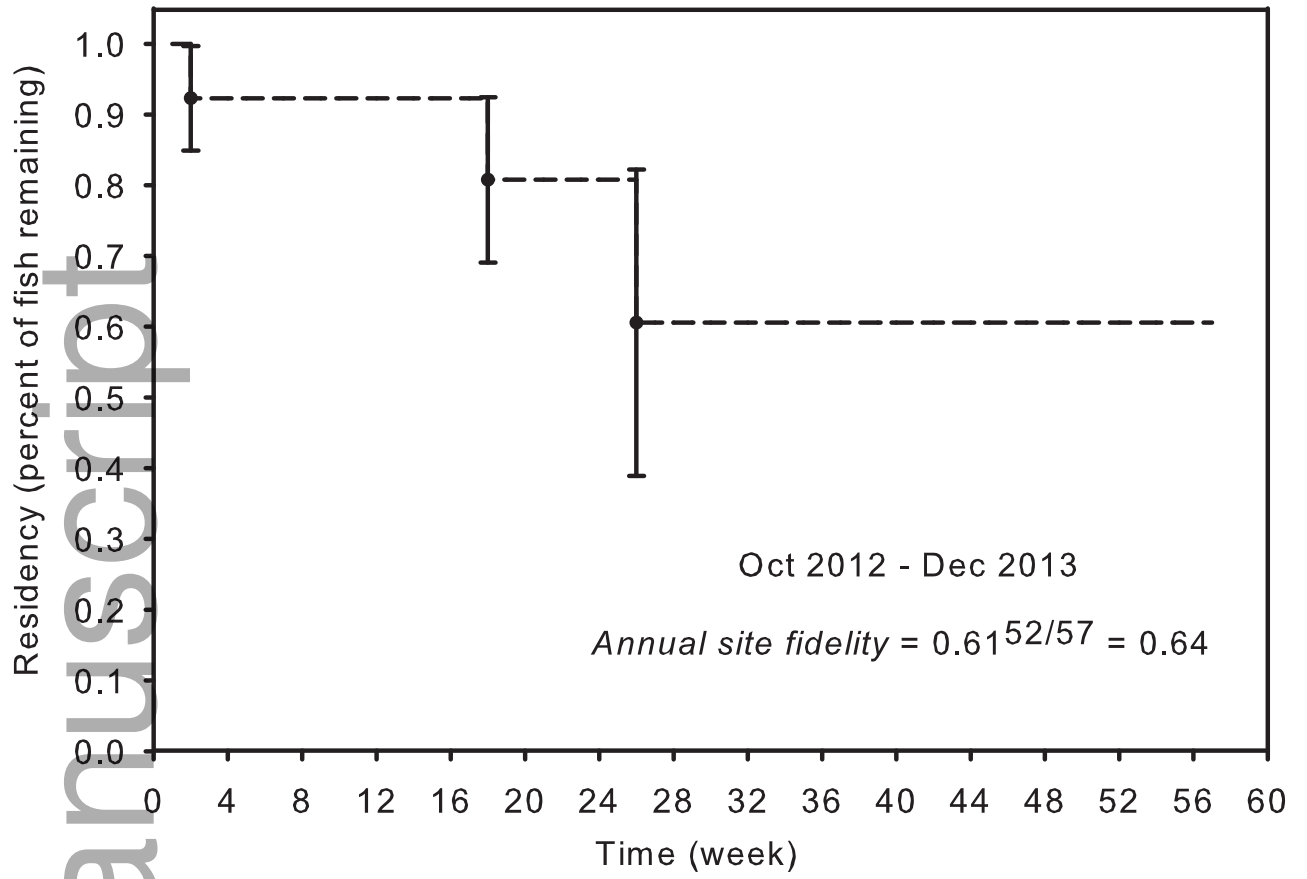
Date tagged	Tagging site	Fish	Weight (kg)	SL (mm)	Days tracked	Event date	Status	Sites outside VPS array where detected	Secondary sites within the VPS array
17 Oct 12	R4	T1	1.4	318	8	25 Oct 12	Emigration	1	No
2 Nov 12	R4	T3	1.0	279	0	2 Nov 12	Lost		
5 Nov 12	R4	T4	1.4	329	119	4 Mar 13	Emigration	7	Yes
5 Nov 12	R4	T5	1.0	294	399	9 Dec 13	Active	1	Yes
20 Nov 12	R3	T6	0.9	272	384	9 Dec 13	Active	1	Yes
20 Nov 12	R3	T7	1.0	291	159	28 Apr 13	Caught	1	Yes
20 Nov 12	R3	T8	0.7	279	116	16 Mar 13	Caught	1	Yes
23 Jan 13	R4	T9	0.5	250	175	17 Jul 13	Emigration	1	Yes
23 Jan 13	R4	T10	0.7	274	1	24 Jan 13	Lost	2	
23 Jan 13	R4	T11	0.4	232	0	23 Jan 13	Stationary	1	No
29 Apr 13	R4	T12	0.8	289	224	9 Dec 13	Active	1	Yes
29 Apr 13	R4	T13	2.5	382	22	21 May 13	Predation	1	No
8 Jul 13	R3	T15	1.0	284	154	9 Dec 13	Active	1	Yes
8 Jul 13	R3	T16	0.7	257	154	9 Dec 13	Active	1	Yes
15 Aug 13	R3	T17	0.5	266	116	9 Dec 13	Active	1	Yes
15 Aug 13	R3	T18	0.6	284	0	15 Aug 13	Lost		
17 Oct 13	R4	T19	0.6	251	21	7 Nov 13	Caught	1	Yes



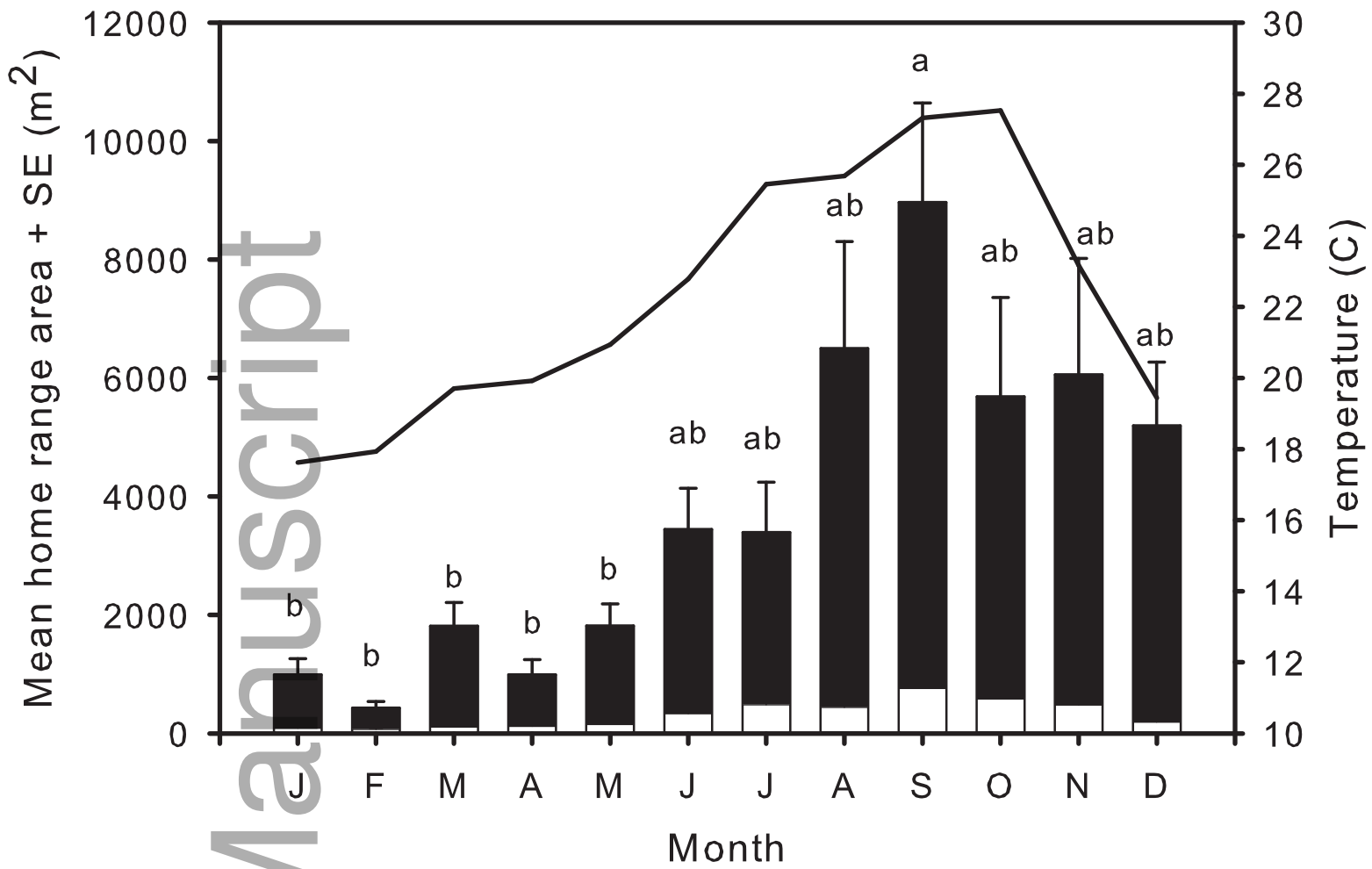
fme_12190_f1.jpg



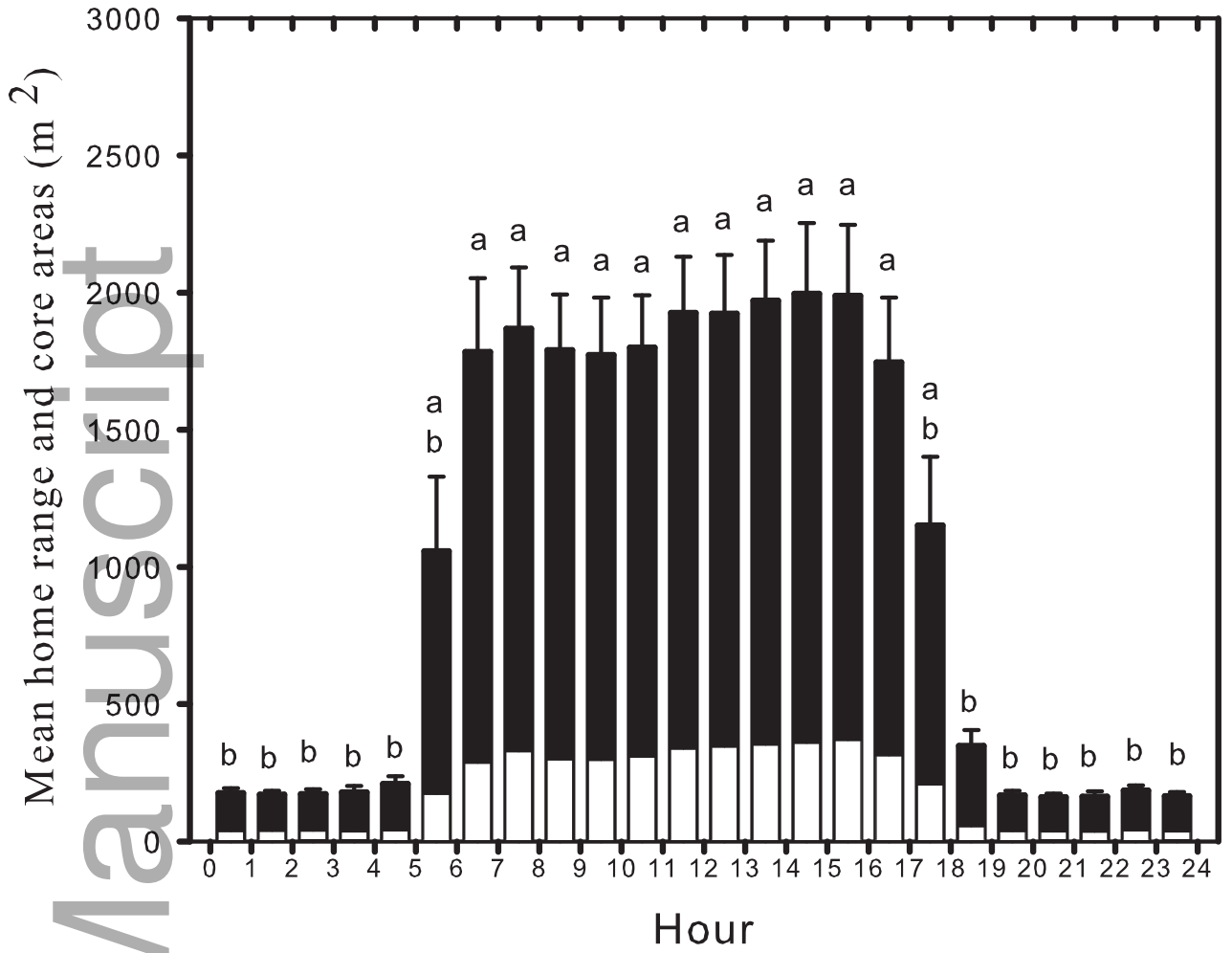
fme_12190_f2.eps



fme_12190_f3.eps



fme_12190_f4.eps



fme_12190_f5.eps

