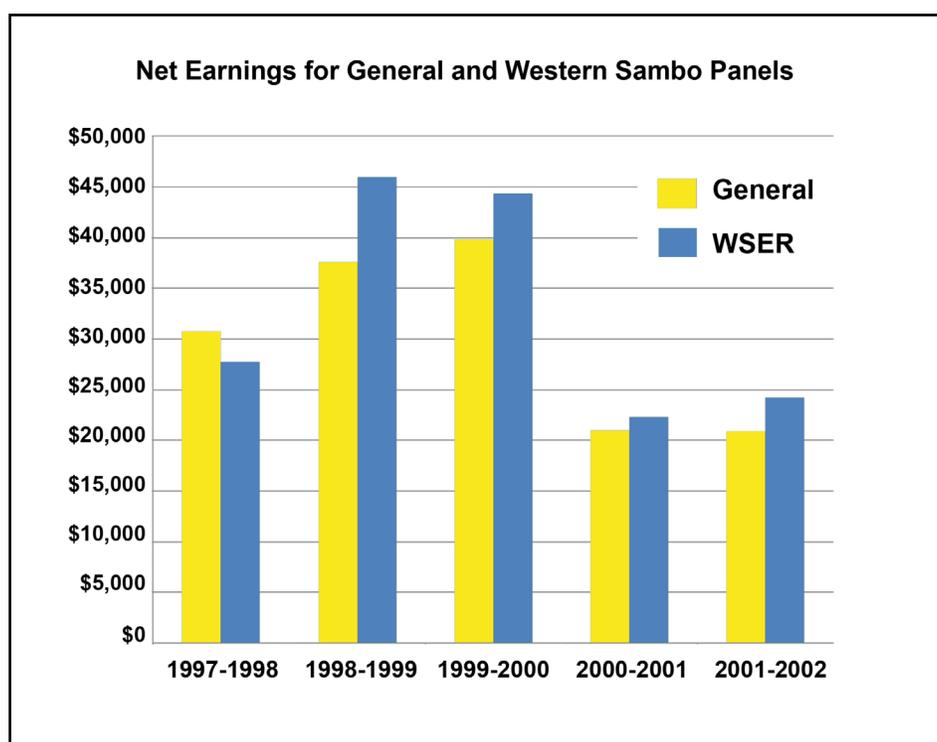


SAMBO FISHERMEN EARNINGS NOT AFFECTED BY RESERVE

Research Project Description: Prior to implementation of Western Sambo Ecological Reserve (WSER) in 1997, NOAA established survey panels to track potential impacts of the reserve on catch and financial performance of commercial fisheries. Holders of Saltwater Products Licenses in four categories formed the panels: general fishermen, Western Sambo fishermen, Tortugas fishermen and marine life collectors. Panelists were surveyed about their fishing practices and finances before and for five years after reserve implementation.

Research Results: Panel results for the first five years since reserve implementation show that WSER fishermen did not suffer short-term losses associated with the no-take reserve. Net earnings for WSER fishermen and general fishermen were relatively similar, except that WSER fishermen had higher net earnings in four of the five years. Study results suggest that factors other than reserve implementation may contribute to fishery harvest and production. For example, vessel and gear loss associated with Hurricane *Georges* in 1998 may have contributed to higher operating costs. The overall reduction in spiny lobster and stone crab commercial fisheries, which began in 1998-1999 and affected fishermen on the WSER, Tortugas and general panels, may have contributed to the decline in net earnings observed beginning in 2000-2001.



Net earnings for general and Western Sambo panels are plotted for 1997 through 2002. Earnings for both panels were relatively similar, except that Western Sambo fishermen earned more in four of the five years.

Figure: NOAA Socio-economic Monitoring Program