

SEDAR 61 Assessment Workshop Webinar I
Gulf of Mexico Red Grouper
November 29, 2018 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM
Summary Report

Data inputs approved at the Data Workshop were reviewed. Some issues with the data remain, particularly with the recreational catch and effort data.

MRIP Survey Data Updates

The Fishing Effort Survey (FES) is replacing the Coastal Household Telephone Survey. The FES is a mail-based survey covering the shore and private recreational fishing modes. Survey response rate and response accuracy are both improved under FES, which is getting more thorough responses. The for-hire survey remains the same.

The second change is the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS), which changed survey times from ending in the early afternoon to running 24 hours a day. Further, the site selection protocols for selecting sampling locations has been improved, as has overall survey coverage.

Old recreational catch and effort data will need to be convertible between the old and new survey “currencies” to be relevant to the present management environment. These new methods represent the best scientific information available, and have been extensively peer-reviewed.

Recreational Data Inputs

Generally speaking, recalibrated total recreational effort for red grouper has more than doubled from the old survey estimates. Landings, discards, indices of abundance, and recreational age and length composition were reviewed.

Recalibrated recreational landings data from the historical time series (SEDAR 42-DW16) show a three-fold increase in the landings in the early years, with generally higher landings estimated throughout the rest of the time series. Headboat and charter landings are generally unchanged. ***The Panel agreed that the use of the updated historical landings was appropriate for use in the model.***

Discard data for the charter and private modes of recreational fishing were approximately three times as high as the historical data used in SEDAR 42. Headboat discards use several different surveys based on the portion of the time series; discard estimates updated for recent data are somewhat higher than forecasted in SEDAR 42. Total recreational discards are approximately three times as high as the historical data used in SEDAR 42.

The recreational index of abundance combines the charter and private angling modes. The West Florida shelf is included, less Monroe County, counting trip data collected between noon and 6 pm in state and federal waters. The Stephens and MacCall approach was used to identify trips which selected red grouper as the primary or secondary target species. The time series was from 1986-2017, and was parsed by time of day, season, regulatory access, region, area, fishing mode,

hours fished, and the number of anglers. The catch per unit effort (CPUE) data was similar to that from SEDAR 42, with CPUE declining in recent years.

Additional length data from recreational catches have been made available for SEDAR 61. Missing data have been imputed where they were previously missing. Sample weights are also now included using a post-stratified sampling weight, which includes adjustments for where only a subset of angler-harvested fish are measured. The continuity approach will use only observed lengths, without weight considered. The observed difference between the SEDAR 42 continuity and the SEDAR 61 parameterization is minimal. Most differences are attributable to low sample sizes in early survey years. ***The Panel recommends using both the observed and imputed length data, and the sample weighting, for SEDAR 61.***

Other recreational data sources include the Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS), the Trip Interview Program Survey, and the Gulf Fishery Information Survey. These surveys use only observed length data. Consideration of how to combine or compare these data sets will be necessary.

Discard information from the for-hire fleets (charter and headboat) show that headboats appear to be discarding smaller red grouper than charter vessels. Generally speaking though, across the time series since SEDAR 42, shows relatively consistent sizes in discards for the recreational fleets. Because headboat landings account for only a small fraction of recreational landings, there doesn't appear to be a good reason to separate the headboat fleet out from the charter and private angling modes. This would yield a single, combined recreational index of abundance along with combined age and length composition data. The analysts recommend using the MRIP length data for the charter and private angling modes, weighted by landings, as most of the data for those modes come from the MRIP survey. The majority of the headboat length data come from the SRHS. Conversely, the data exist to complete length composition data and an index for the charter and private mode combined, and separate length composition data and an index for the headboat fleet. A tradeoff is a potential sacrifice in fit for the headboat data, which will be sparser than the other recreational data. ***The Panel recommends more investigation into the recreational length composition data and index development for the next webinar.***

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| The next Assessment Webinar will be the week of January 7 th , 2019 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM |
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Participants:

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