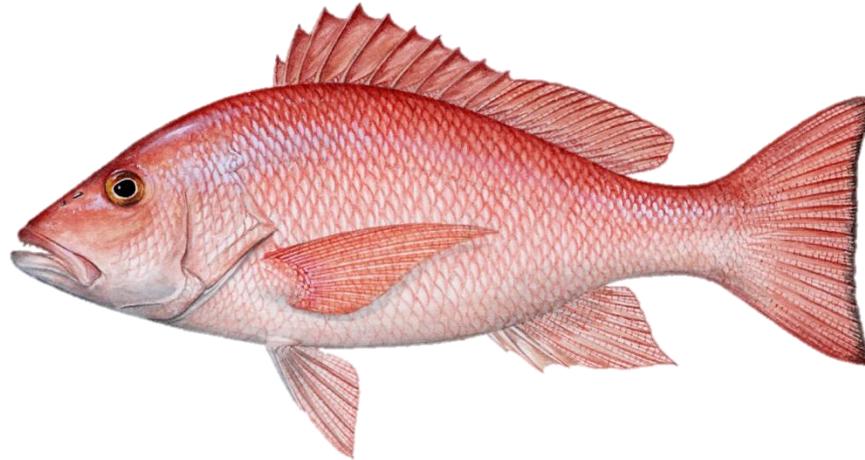


Standing and Reef Fish SSC



SSC May 2018 Summary Report



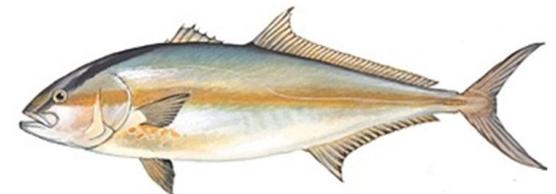
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

June 19, 2018 Meeting

Key West, FL

Other Items Discussed by the SSC

- Reducing Discard Mortality with Descending Devices
- Discussion on Best Scientific Information Available
- SEDAR 64 -- yellowtail snapper benchmark assessment: TOR, schedule, and workgroup appointments
- Draft Reef Fish Amendment 48/Red Drum Amendment 5
- Other Business
 - SEDAR Research Track
 - Red Grouper Indices and Interim Analysis





Evaluation of effects on OFL from reducing discard mortality

**NOAA
FISHERIES**



Nathan Vaughan (CIMAS),
Dan Goethel,
Matt Smith
SEFSC

May 29-31, 2018

SSC request

- Currently red snapper release mortality in the private recreational, head boat, and charter fisheries is estimated to be 11.8% of discards.
- There is a consideration that regulation and/or outreach regarding the use of descender devices and/or venting tools in the recreational red snapper fishery may reduce this release mortality.
- It was desired by the SSC to understand the potential impact of this reduction on OFL's and dead discard numbers.



<http://flseagrant.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter/2012/07/what-are-fish-descending-devices-2/>

Strategy

- Data were not immediately available regarding the absolute reductions in mortality that should be expected from individual sources.
- We therefore explored holistic theoretical reductions in discard mortality from all sources combined.



<http://flseagrant.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter/2012/07/what-are-fish-descending-devices-2/>

Strategy

This holistic exploration considered two scenarios.

1. An 50% reduction in future recreational discard mortality (reduction from 11.8% to 6%)
2. A 100% reduction in future recreational discard mortality so all discarded fish survive (reduction from 11.8% to 0%)



<http://flseagrant.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter/2012/07/what-are-fish-descending-devices-2/>

Strategy

- The reductions in mortality for scenarios 1 and 2 represent potential combined impacts of venting and/or decender device mortality reduction and compliance rates.
- The goal of this analysis was to determine the maximum impacts possible on projected OFL and numbers of dead discards.



<http://flseagrant.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter/2012/07/what-are-fish-descending-devices-2/>

Methods

- A recently developed stock assessment decision support tool was applied to answer this question.
- The decision support tool facilitates rapid forecasting of OFL and catch composition under a variety of changes in fishery dynamics including; discard mortality, retention size, and catch allocation.



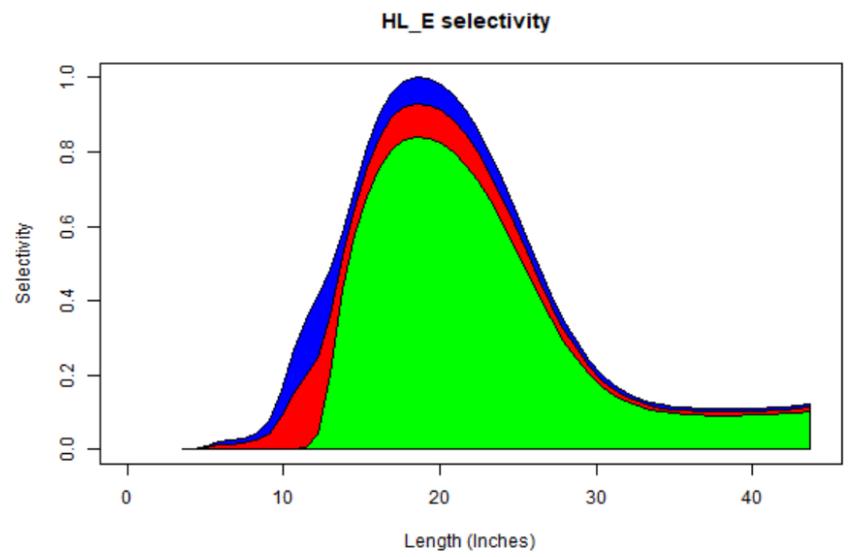
<http://flseagrant.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter/2012/07/what-are-fish-descending-devices-2/>

Methods

- Decision support tool was funded under a catch-shares grant

 **NOAA FISHERIES**
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

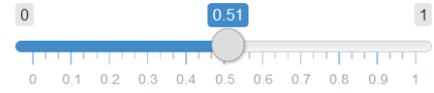
Select Assessment Management Action Update Allocation



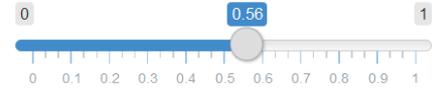
Implement Minimum Size Limit

No Yes

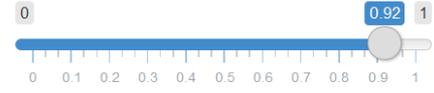
Allocation



Discard Mortality



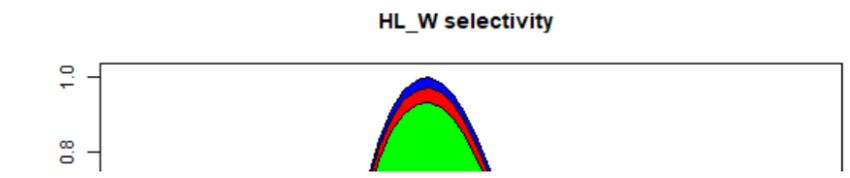
Max Retention



Management Starting Year

2017

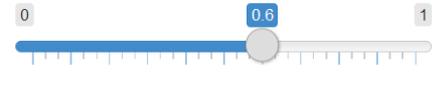
Recent Catch in Pounds



Implement Minimum Size Limit

No Yes

Discard Mortality



Recent Catch in Pounds

Results

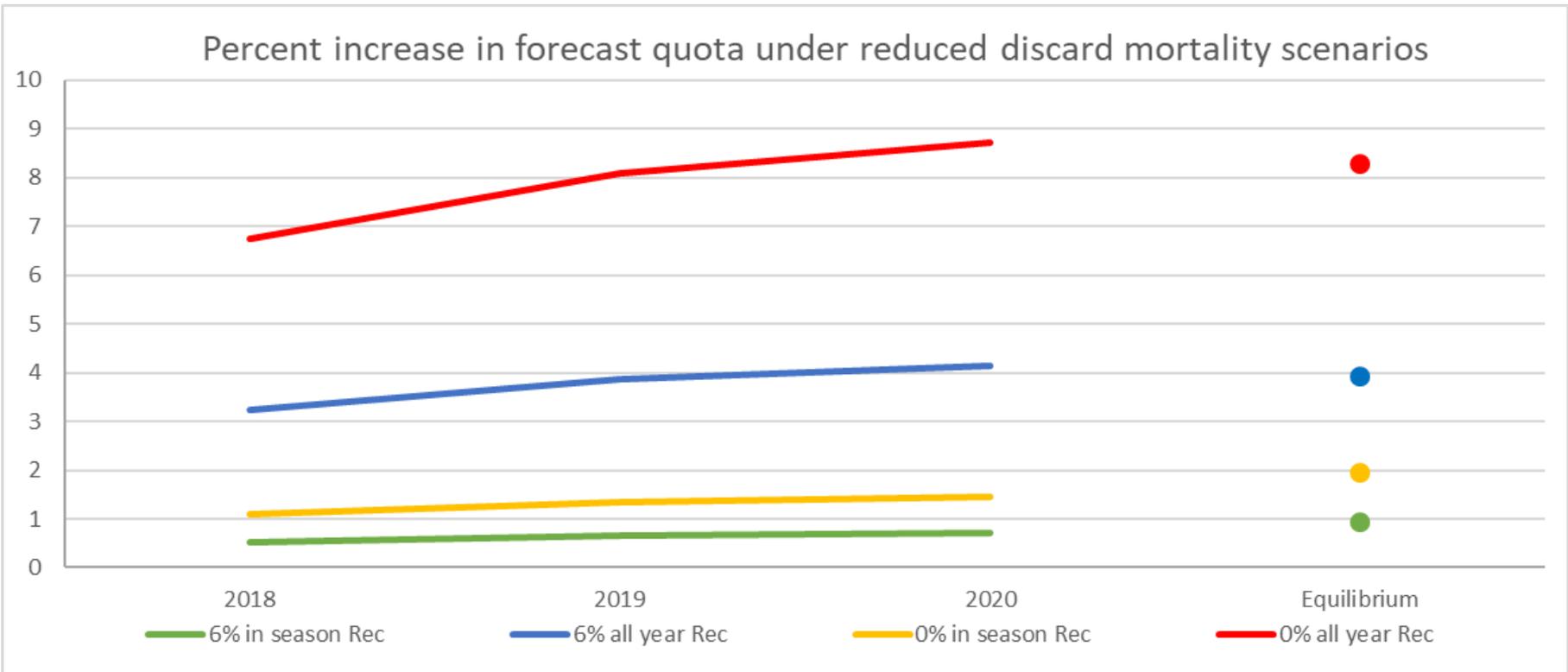
- Potential gains in OFL through reduction in discard mortality rate were modest.
- 75% of the potential gains were realized through mortality reduction during the closed season.
- Further research into the attainable levels of discard mortality reduction will enable refinement of the potential range changes presented here.



<http://flseagrant.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter/2012/07/what-are-fish-descending-devices-2/>

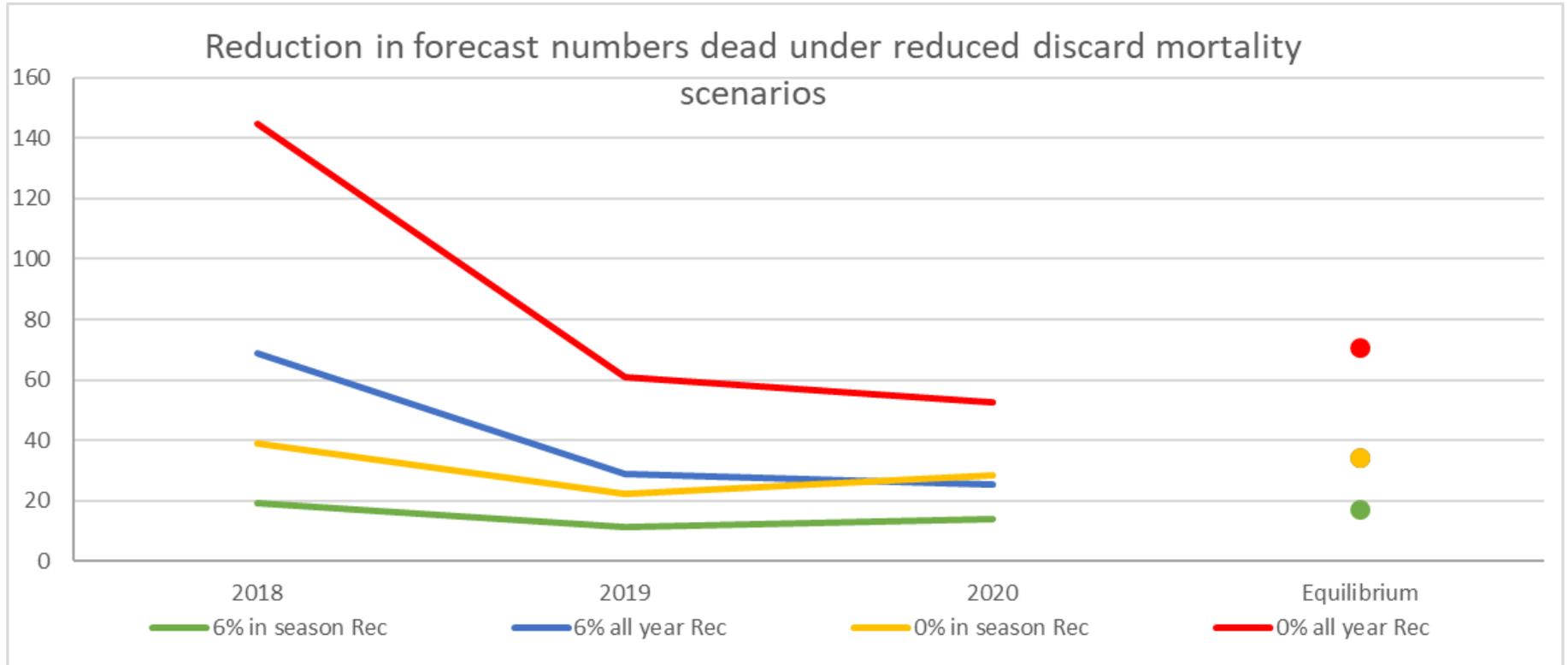
Results

- Potential exists for a moderate increase in yields



Results

- Reduction in numbers dead also possible



Summary

- Maximum possible increase in OFL if all recreational discard mortality was avoided is ~8%.
- Maximum possible reduction in numbers dead if all recreational discard mortality was avoided is ~70,000.
- A maximum possible reduction discard mortality rate is likely only 50% which results in a ~4% increase in OFL and ~35,000 less dead fish.



<http://flseagrant.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter/2012/07/what-are-fish-descending-devices-2/>

Other Items Discussed by the SSC

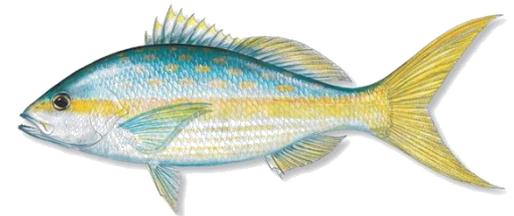
- **Discussion on Best Scientific Information Available**

- Review of the National Standard 2 guidelines as revised in 2013 (BSIA, peer review process, and role of the SSC)
- Review of draft: *“Framework for Determining that Stock Status Determinations and Harvest Specifications are based on the Best Scientific Information Available (BSIA)”*
 - A peer review (by the SSC) of data should evaluate whether the BSIA supports the following four points which are used to inform Council decisions:
 1. Stock status relative to the overfishing status determination criteria (SDC) specified in the FMP;
 2. Stock status relative to the overfished SDC specified in the FMP;
 3. Implementation of established harvest control rules;
 4. Any proposed revisions to SDCs, harvest control rules, or other management actions.



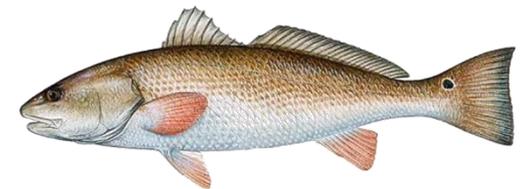
Other Items Discussed by the SSC

- **SEDAR 64 -- yellowtail snapper benchmark assessment: TOR, schedule, and workgroup appointments**
 - The SSC reviewed the schedule and terms of reference for SEDAR 64, which will be a benchmark assessment of the southeastern US stock of yellowtail snapper
 - To be conducted by FWC, and the workshops will all be based in St. Petersburg, Florida
 - Both the terms of reference and the schedule were approved as presented
 - Since the SSC is scheduled to be repopulated in the near future, the SSC chose to defer selecting participants for the respective SEDAR 64 workshops until the next SSC meeting in July.



Other Items Discussed by the SSC

- **Draft Reef Fish Amendment 48/Red Drum Amendment 5**
 - The Committee began to review the actions and alternatives in Reef Fish Amendment 48/Red Drum Amendment 5 but didn't go far
 - SSC members had concern with a static MSY proxy set independently by the Council
 - The SSC suggested alternative options:
 - 1) Have the FMP state that the MSY proxy for each stock is the proxy recommended by the SSC (rather than explicitly define specific MSY proxies in the FMP; or
 - 2) Have the FMP list a range of values for the MSY proxy so a value can be selected after an assessment is completed

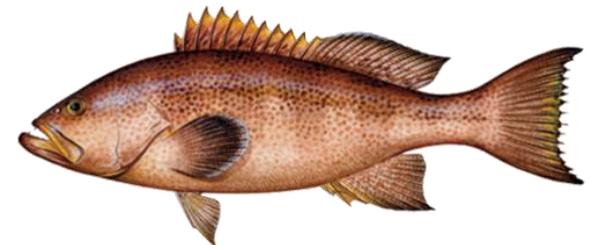


Other Items Discussed by the SSC

- **Other Business**

1. SEDAR Research Track:

- Dr. Julie Neer provided an update on SEDAR activities toward preparing for a SEDAR research track assessment for scamp
- A planning committee is being formed with representatives from Council staff, Science Center, SEDAR Coordinator, and one member of the SSC.
- This planning team will draft the TOR, schedule, and what type of members (i.e., expertise) are needed.
- Ryan Rindone will serve as the Council staff representative.
- Jeff Isely volunteered to be the SSC representative.



Other Items Discussed by the SSC

- **Other Business**

2. Red Grouper Indices and Interim Analysis:

- Dr. Simmons noted that in January 2018 the SSC reviewed updated indices of abundance for red grouper. These indices showed a decline, but the SSC indicated that, without more information, they had no basis to recommend a change in the ABC
- The SEFSC is not able to provide an Interim Analysis by the August meeting
- The SSC discussed other options for addressing this management need

