

Estimated Landings and Discards of Red Grouper in the South Atlantic and Black Grouper in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Headboat Fishery, 2004-2008.

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In 2004 the Headboat Survey added a discard category to the logbook form for the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. This category is described on the form as the number of fish by species released alive and number released dead. Port agents instructed each captain on criteria for determining the condition of discarded fish. A fish is considered “released alive” if it is able to swim away on its own. If the fish floats off or is obviously dead or unable to swim, it is considered “released dead”. This self-reported data is currently unvalidated within the Headboat Survey. Continued comparisons to the MRFSS At-Sea Observer program will be beneficial. Previous comparisons indicated that discards on logbooks may be under reported. Current release estimates were generated using SAS programming for 2004-2008 (Table 1, 2 and 3).

Table 1. Estimated landings and discards of red grouper in the South Atlantic headboat fishery 2004-2008.

Year	Area	Est tot #	Est wt (kg)	Est rel_dead	Est_harvest	Est rel_alive
2004	NC	937	3651.4	8	945	261
2004	SC	145	409.6	1	146	168
2004	GA\NEFL	292	842.0	1	293	355
2004	SEFL	1013	2878.1	0	1013	317
2004	FL Keys	8369	25865.9	3	8372	7965
2005	NC	1726	7994.8	22	1748	710
2005	SC	222	790.5	0	222	211
2005	GA\NEFL	632	1557.2	1	633	708
2005	SEFL	1906	4969.1	0	1906	1050
2005	FL Keys	6984	18913.4	206	7190	7056
2006	NC	1426	5126.3	12	1438	859
2006	SC	442	1523.2	0	442	146
2006	GA\NEFL	299	873.5	0	299	350
2006	SEFL	499	1238.9	0	499	836
2006	FL Keys	2575	6317.7	30	2605	2809
2007	NC	2117	9710.7	32	2149	650
2007	SC	756	3383.3	0	756	79
2007	GA\NEFL	243	1067.9	0	243	225
2007	SEFL	114	457.5	0	114	16
2007	FL Keys	1929	5180.4	41	1970	3170
2008	NC	984	4357.4	6	990	150
2008	SC	215	954.0	0	215	16
2008	GA\NEFL	83	310.9	2	85	149
2008	SEFL	279	1030.7	49	328	1092
2008	FL Keys	882	2775.7	33	915	5337

Table 2. Estimated landings and discards of black grouper in the South Atlantic headboat fishery 2004-2008.

Year	Area	Est tot #	Est wt (kg)	Est rel_dead	Est_harvest	Est rel_alive
2004	NWFL	10	85.6	0	10	1
2004	SEFL	37	316.6	0	37	0
2004	FL Keys	1053	6103.0	0	1053	513
2005	NWFL	2	13.5	0	2	0
2005	SEFL	115	780.4	0	115	0
2005	FL Keys	1649	9598.8	24	1673	1074
2006	NWFL	0	0.0	0	0	1
2006	SEFL	56	401.5	0	56	0
2006	FL Keys	986	7069.6	7	993	586
2007	NWFL	1	5.8	0	1	0
2007	SEFL	323	2171.0	0	323	3
2007	FL Keys	875	5473.0	12	887	736
2008	NWFL	1	5.4	0	1	2
2008	SEFL	14	76.3	0	14	67
2008	FL Keys	246	1353.8	14	260	750

Table 3. Estimated landings and discards of black grouper in the Gulf of Mexico headboat fishery 2004-2008.

Year	Area	Est tot #	Est wt (kg)	Est rel_dead	Est_harvest	Est rel_alive
2004	SWFL	473	1436.5	0	473	181
2004	NWFL	16	164.4	0	16	3
2004	TX	24	246.7	0	24	0
2005	SWFL	140	325.8	3	143	96
2005	NWFL	13	35.3	0	13	0
2005	TX	81	918.5	0	81	0
2006	SWFL	16	114.7	0	16	2
2006	NWFL	4	28.7	0	4	0
2006	TX	68	487.5	0	68	0
2007	SWFL	59	325.9	0	59	25
2007	LA	1	4.4	0	1	0
2007	TX	23	106.4	0	23	1
2008	SWFL	36	161.7	0	36	234
2008	NWFL	4	17.5	0	4	54
2008	LA	5	22.1	0	5	0
2008	TX	33	145.8	0	33	0

Observations by the author suggest that self-reported landings are most reliable for larger species, such as, amberjack, grouper, dolphin and king mackerel. Larger fishes generally draw more attention from clientele on a headboat, and often require the assistance of the mate. Smaller species, such as, tomtate, bank sea bass and grunts are often unremarkable, may be unhooked by the angler, and released without assistance or fanfare.