

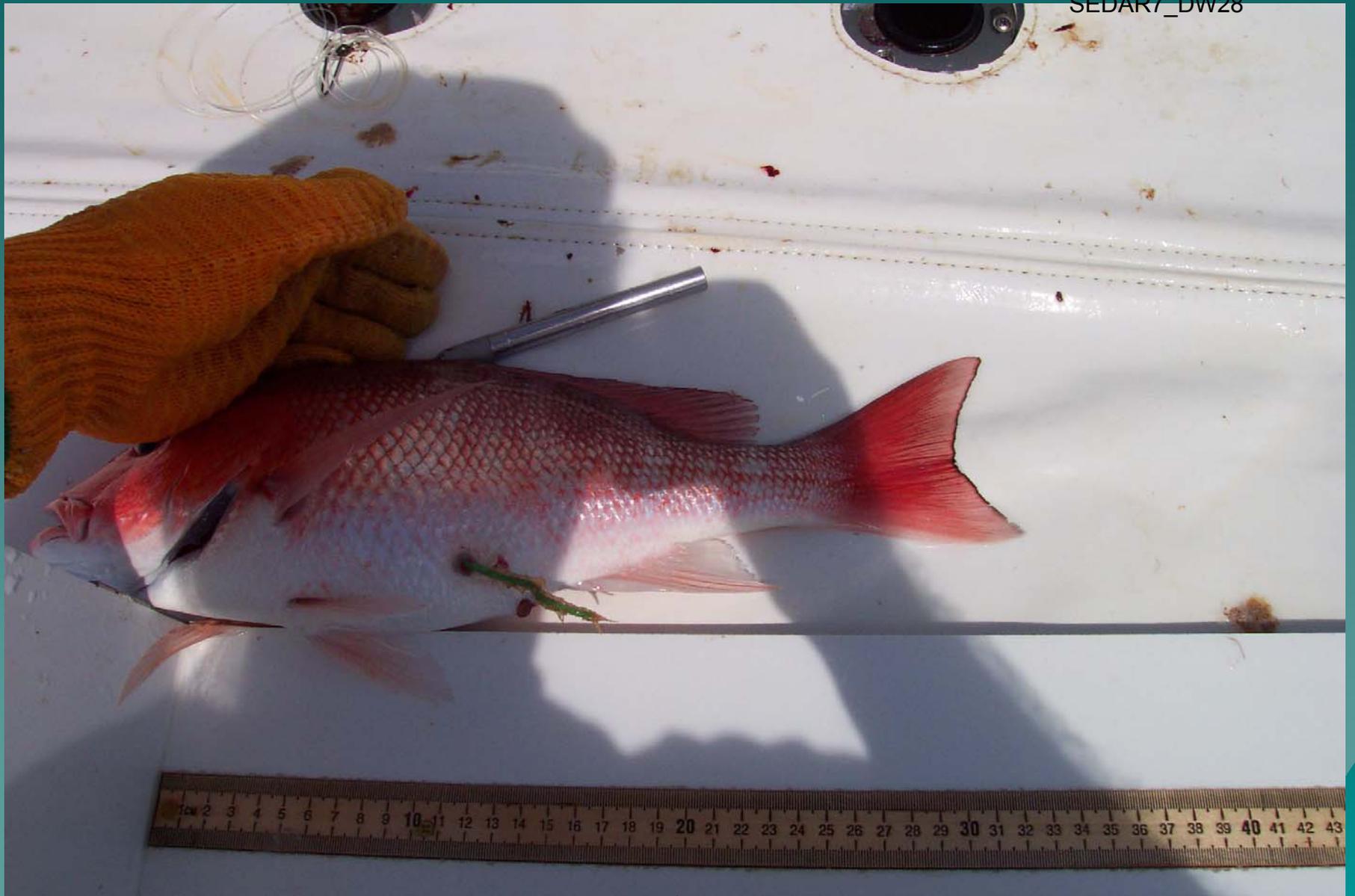
Red Snapper release mortality

Recreational Fishery

Presented at SEDAR7
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- ◆ Based on 6,000 + tagged and released red snapper
- ◆ Tagging program extended for more than a decade
- ◆ Performed from a charter boat
- ◆ Ten average fishermen
- ◆ Mate released fish



Released fish rated 1-4

- ◆ 1: released fish immediately returned to the bottom
- ◆ 2: released fish showed some initial distress, then returned to bottom
- ◆ 3: released fish showed severe distress, sometimes struggling at the surface
- ◆ 4: released fish suffered apparent lethal injury



- ◆ All fish were tagged, and bladder gas released
- ◆ All 2,3, and 4 fish were considered as release mortality
- ◆ However, there were recaptures from all categories



Results

- ◆ At 21 M, release mortality = 9%
- ◆ At 27 M, release mortality = 14%
- ◆ At 32 M, release mortality = 18%
- ◆ Overall release mortality = 14%

Caveats



- ◆ Recent circle hook/j-hook comparisons indicate use of circle hooks could reduce release mortality by 50%.
- ◆ Presence of dolphins has become more of a problem in the last 2 years.
- ◆ Use of video on recent trips demonstrates most released fish resume near normal behavior.
- ◆ Snappers are predators on vermilion snapper



Conclusion

- ◆ 14% release mortality in the recreational fishery is a very conservative estimate
- ◆ Additional reduction could occur with use of circle hooks and care by the mates.