

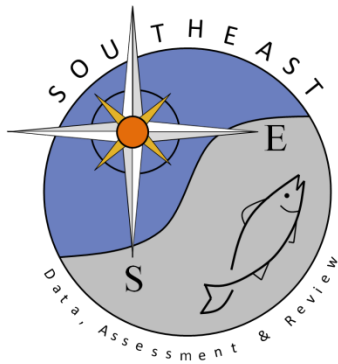
Georgia Red Snapper Headboat Discard Lengths, 2010-2013

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Georgia Red Snapper Headboat Discard Lengths, 2010-2013

Capt. Steve Amick
Amick's Deep Sea Fishing
Savannah, GA

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Captain Steve Amick has operated charter vessels and headboats of varying passenger numbers out of Savannah, Georgia since 1979. He recorded his catch records in personal logbooks at the end of every fishing day, including number of released fish. Number and disposition of released fish were not data elements in the Southeast Regional Headboat Survey (SRHS) until 2004. Through a cooperative effort with personnel at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Captain Amick provided his daily catch records (by month and year, starting in 1983) using a hard copy datasheet template (Amick and Knowlton 2010). These data were used as a proxy to estimate the headboat Red Snapper discards for the SRHS for years prior to 2004 in SEDAR24. In preparation for the SEDAR41 Red Snapper Data Workshop, Capt. Amick provided the five additional years of data (2010-2014) (Amick and Knowlton 2014). His data was not used for discard rate in SEDAR 41 due to the reduced time series and limited geographical range and instead a SRHS dockside sample method was chosen. Lengths of most discarded Red Snapper were recorded from 2010 to 2013 and are presented again for consideration to use in SEDAR 73. Number of fish discarded per trip from 1983 to 2013 by category (<20 inches alive or dead) are also available.

Important notes regarding fishing methods and depth

Captain Amick's fishing habits changed due to the harvest moratorium for Red Snapper in 2011 and additional harvest/season restrictions on Black Sea Bass, Vermilion Snapper and grouper species. The following components all changed: number of hooks per angler (reduced), and altered bait and rigging; reduced vessel fishing range/average depth fished; increased number of anglers/vessel trip; customer fishing experience sharply decreased (Amick and Knowlton 2014). For this reason, released lengths from 2010 to 2011 are likely only representative of years during and after the fishery closure. It would not be appropriate to use these lengths to characterize the fishery prior to 2010.

Average depth fished was reduced but did not change dramatically after the harvest moratorium. Until 2010, Captain Amick typically fished depths of 90-120 feet off Savannah, GA. From 2010 to 2013, depth fished ranged from 75 to 120 feet with an average depth of 100 feet.

Use and Justification

The only discard length data that was used in SEDAR 41 was the recreational headboat-at-sea observer data. Capt. Amick's data was not documented as a considered discard length source in SEDAR 41. The

discard length data was not specifically highlighted in the working paper SEDAR41-DW01 so it is possible it was simply overlooked as an additional source of discard length data.

This data was submitted for consideration as a supplement to discard length data for the headboat sector in the recreational fishery. Sample size for length composition in SEDAR 41 for the headboat sector was from 517 trips from 2005 to 2014. This illustrates a possible data gap for information needed to characterize the discards. After removing duplicate measurements from when an observer was on board, Capt. Amick had over 1,300 lengths recorded from over 200 trips from 2010 to 2013 (Table 1). This data could be used to supplement the headboat discard lengths or perhaps even as a proxy for charter vessels that fished using similar methods and at comparable depth.

Table 1. Number of lengths recorded by year from 2010 to 2013. Lengths were recorded as pinched total length in inches.

Year	# Lengths	# Trips
2010	440	70
2011	447	67
2012	211	41
2013	213	50
Total	1311	228

References:

Amick, S. and K. Knowlton. 2010. Georgia Headboat Red Snapper Catch & Effort Data, 1983-2009. SEDAR24-DW-07. SEDAR, North Charleston, SC. 6 pp.

Amick, S. and K. Knowlton. 2014. Georgia Headboat Red Snapper Catch & Effort Data, 1983- 2013. SEDAR41-DW01. SEDAR, North Charleston, SC. 6 pp.