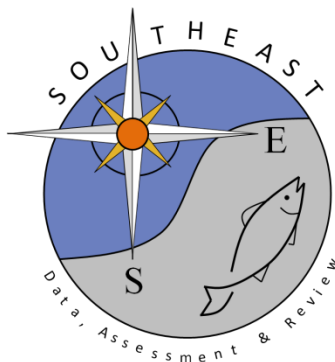


Discard length compositions for Gulf of America King Mackerel
(*Scomberomorus cavalla*) from the recreational fishery in the western
Gulf of America

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Introduction

From surveys that estimate recreational landings (e.g. MRIP, SRHS) detailed information on harvested catch, including species composition, number, and size are collected during dockside intercepts. However, for discarded catch only self-reported information about species composition and abundance is available. No information about the size composition of the discards is available from these surveys. At-sea observer sampling is conducted to provide detailed information on the size and release condition (e.g. live, dead) of discarded fish. In Florida, at-sea sampling by FWC, for the headboat and charter boat modes has occurred since 2005 and 2009, respectively, however there have been breaks in coverage (Table 1 in SEDAR 100-DW-11). From 2005-2007, FWC also included Alabama in their at-sea coverage of headboats. ADNR conducted at-sea observer sampling on headboats from 2017-2019. In 2022, the Return 'Em Right program began in Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi. Return 'Em Right is an ongoing program where at-sea observers sample both headboat and charter trips.

Discard Length Compositions

King Mackerel are rarely encountered during at-sea sampling and sample sizes are very limited (Table 1). All lengths from discarded fish are from Florida, only retained fish were measured in AL. For discard length compositions, the recommended minimum sample size per strata is 30 fish from 10 trips. For King Mackerel, most samples are from the Gen Rec (GR) fleet (all from the charter mode) and only one year has sufficient samples to produce an annual composition (Table 1). Since sample sizes are low, samples were pooled across years and a single discard length composition was produced for the GR fleet (Figure 1). For the headboat fleet (HB), samples sizes are insufficient to produce discard length compositions annually or pooled across all years (Table 1).

References

Corbett, E. 2025. A Summary of Gulf Gray Triggerfish Discard Length Data Collected from At-Sea Observers in For-Hire Fishery Surveys in Florida 2005-2024. SEDAR 100-DW-11. SEDAR, North Charleston, SC. 23 pp.

Tables

Table 1. Number of fish (nfish) and trips (ntrip) where discarded King Mackerel were sampled for length from the Gen Rec (GR) and Headboat (HB) fleets. All samples are from Florida and all samples from the GR fleet were sampled from the charter mode.

FYear	Gen Rec		Headboat	
	nfish	ntrip	nfish	ntrip
2004	0	0	3	1
2005	0	0	1	1
2006	0	0	1	1
2009	1	1	1	1
2010	2	1	0	0
2011	2	1	0	0
2012	6	1	1	1
2013	1	1	0	0
2014	2	2	0	0
2015	8	5	0	0
2016	81	16	0	0
2017	18	11	0	0
2018	4	3	0	0
2019	4	3	0	0
2021	1	1	0	0
2023	11	6	2	2

Figures

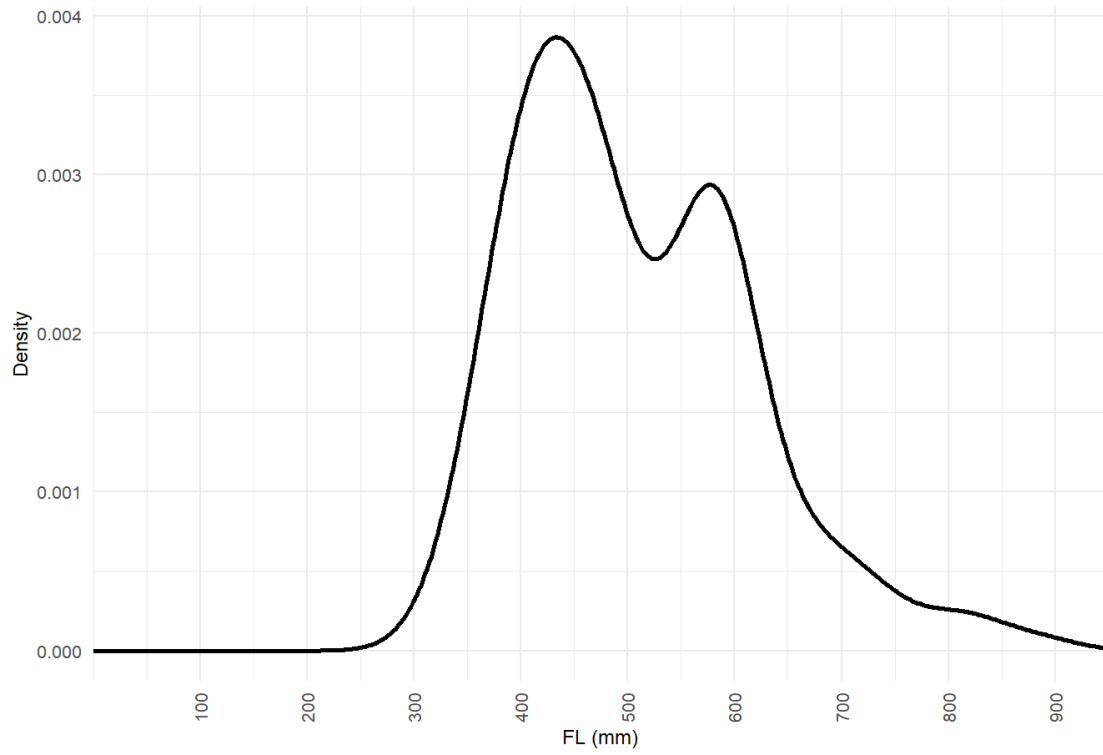


Figure 1. Nominal discard length composition for Gulf King Mackerel sampled from the Gen Rec fleet from fishing years 2004-2023.