

Sex Ratios of Summer Flounder Discards in the Recreational Fishery

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Previous research has shown that summer flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*) recreational landings are composed of 95% females, in contrast to the commercial fishery which maintains a more even ratio of male to female landings. The sexually dimorphic nature of the species is potentially underrepresented in current recreational fishery management plans and, unlike in the commercial fishery, sufficient data proxies (i.e. trawl surveys) are not available to estimate the sex ratio of discarded (<46 cm) fish. To address this gap in available data, discard-sized fish were measured throughout the 2016 summer flounder recreational fishing season aboard party boats. A subset, based on length and fishing depth, of those discarded fish were brought back to the laboratory for dissection and further analysis. Results indicated a clear relationship between sex ratio and fish length, with males more frequently observed at shorter lengths, giving way to a predominantly female sex ratio as length increased. In addition to length, latitudinal and seasonal trends were also found to have a significant effect on sex ratios in discard-sized fish in the summer flounder recreational fishery.