

Sex Ratio of Summer Flounder Discards in the Recreational Fishery

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Abstract

Studies have shown that legal-sized summer flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*) caught in the recreational fishery are 95% female. However, no information is available on the size and sex ratio of the discarded fish. To address this data gap, discarded fish were collected on board recreational fishing boats from Point Judith, RI to Cape May, NJ. All discarded fish caught were measured, and a subset based on water depth at the fishing locations and fish length were taken back to the lab for dissection. Results show a difference in sex ratio at length, with males observed more frequently at smaller lengths. Sex ratio also varies by depth with males being more common in deeper water, and females more common in shallower water. Further studies will look at latitudinal trends, seasonal trends, and other potential factors (diet, age, migration) that may influence sex ratio.