

From: Robin Frede

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2018 2:57 PM

To: Lou Goodreau <lgoodreau@nefmc.org>; Kevin King <Kevin.M.King@uscg.mil>

Subject: RE: cod discard info

Thank you Lou.

These are calendar years. I would clarify that this was a simple PDT analysis to explore the issue of potential discarding of legal-sized Gulf of Maine cod, following reports on this topic during the April 2018 Council meeting, by first examining whether there is any evidence of this occurring in the observer data. The PDT recognizes of course the assumption that illegal discarding would mainly occur on unobserved trips, but since there is no data for these trips, the PDT first wanted to see whether there is any evidence of this occurring on observed trips.

The PDT determined the length frequency distribution of discarded GOM cod in the observer data, as well as the associated disposition codes recorded for these fish. From this analysis, the PDT did find some evidence of potential non-compliance, particularly noting the two most recent years (2016 and 2017) with a number of discarded cod records that are well over the minimum fish size. And as Lou noted, the PDT looked further into these trips that had records of discarded cod that were over the minimum fish size and could not detect any clear patterns that would suggest this is occurring on specific vessels or involves specific observers. The PDT does note a number of caveats with this analysis, mainly the low sample sizes especially in recent years as observer coverage declined.

Moving forward, the PDT is developing more sophisticated analyses that will attempt to quantify the currently unknown level of discards of legal-sized fish that may be occurring on unobserved trips, based on other developing PDT analyses of discard incentives for the groundfish fishery and of observer bias/observer effect. We expect an update on these analyses towards the end of the year, and a peer review of these analyses is also being planned.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Robin