

Science, Service, Stewardship



Southeast Fisheries Science Center SAFMC Update – September 2011

**NOAA Fisheries 2011 National Bycatch Report
SEFSC Overview on Bycatch and
Status of Bycatch Data Collection Activities**

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As stated in the *Magnuson-Stevens Act*, the NOAA Fisheries National Bycatch goal is:

“To implement conservation and management measures for living marine resources that will minimize, to the extent practicable, bycatch and the mortality of bycatch that cannot be avoided”

(Sustainable Fishing Act, 1996).

National Report Summary

- This report is being published as a NOAA Fisheries Service technical memo.
- It is **not** requested by or required by Congress.
- It was prepared by the NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology at the recommendation of the agency's chief scientist to establish a baseline for bycatch for the agency as it moves forward on the implementation of the MSA.

National Report Summary

- The report is an important step in NOAA Fisheries National Bycatch Strategy and constitutes a comprehensive baseline for evaluating improvements to and informing strategic investments by NOAA Fisheries in bycatch assessment and mitigation.

National Report Summary

- The report provides the first-ever national compilation by NOAA Fisheries of bycatch estimates for U.S. commercial fisheries.
- Includes hundreds of species-level bycatch estimates for fish, marine mammals, seabirds, sea turtles, and seabirds, as well as 84 fishery-level estimates (everything we know about bycatch in one document) using a baseline of 2005 data.

National Report Summary

- A national bycatch ratio of 17% was calculated for fish bycatch using the 2005 data contained in the report.
- This number is lower than the 22% previously reported by Oceana (2005) FAO (2004).

National Report Summary

- A new system for evaluating bycatch data and estimation quality, the Tier System, was developed for the report. This system will be used to track the results of investments in data collection and estimation over time.
- Results of the first Tier System analysis indicate high quality bycatch data and estimation methods are present in nearly 50% of the nation's federal commercial fisheries.

National Report Summary

- The report provides a plan for improvements to bycatch data collection and bycatch estimation in all NOAA Fisheries Regions.

SE Regional Summary

- This first edition of the National Bycatch Report focused on federal fisheries and fisheries with federal data collection programs. NOAA Fisheries recognizes and is concerned about bycatch in other fisheries.
- In future editions of this report, NOAA Fisheries will work with its partners to include estimates for state fisheries where data are available.
- Bycatch estimates for U.S. fishermen participating in international fisheries, as well as the inclusion of bycatch estimates for stocks with high recreational bycatch mortality will also be considered.

SE Regional Summary

- The National Bycatch Report was initiated in 2006 by NOAA Fisheries to establish a baseline nationwide and to develop an objective framework for evaluating bycatch data quality and estimates.
- The Agency began by using the most recent year of complete data, i.e., 2005.
- The agency recognizes that we have more recent bycatch estimates for many fisheries, and that changes to fisheries management practices have occurred while the report was being prepared, potentially affecting bycatch levels included in this report.

SE Regional Summary

- NOAA Fisheries is committed to providing updated bycatch estimates in a timely manner.
- NOAA Fisheries plans to provide yearly web-based updates of bycatch estimates and progress made to implement report recommendations, with a larger baseline National Bycatch Report produced at five year intervals.
- The next online update of bycatch is being planned, and will use 2008 and 2009 data.

SE Regional Summary

- Current Observer Programs
 - HMS Pelagic Longline
 - Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Trawl
 - South Atlantic Shrimp Trawl
 - Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish
 - SE Shark Bottom Longline
 - SE Shark Drift Gillnet

Status of SE Atlantic Bycatch Data Collection Activities

Bycatch data collection for both the Recreational and Commercial Fishery Sectors involves two components:

- **Recreational Fishery Sector**
 1. **Fishery Effort and**
 2. **Bycatch Rate**
- **Commercial Fishery Sector**
 1. **Fishery Effort and**
 2. **Bycatch Rate**

Status of SE Atlantic Bycatch Data Collection

Recreational Fisheries:

- The NOAA NMFS Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) surveys non-headboat recreational fisheries in the SE from NC through LA and provides catch and effort estimates.
- Bycatch information is reported by individual anglers. There are no observer programs of non-headboat rec. fisheries.
- The Southeast Headboat Survey (SEHBS) collects effort and self-reported bycatch information for NC to TX.
- Additionally there is an MRIP program for at-sea headboat sampling which covers vessels from ME to FL (east coast).
- The SEHBS data are maintained at the Beaufort Laboratory and the MRIP data are maintained by that program.

Status of SE Atlantic Bycatch Data Collection

Recreational Fisheries:

- In recent South Atlantic stock assessments for vermilion snapper (SEDAR 17), red snapper (SEDAR 24) and black sea bass (SEDAR 25), headboat at-sea observers data were used to validate self-reported logbook data from the SE Region Headboat Survey.
- At-sea observer data was selected by SEDAR in favor of self-reported data from logbooks due to significant underreporting for vermilion snapper and black seabass.
- In addition, at-sea observer surveys provide more detailed data on the size and condition of released fish, which is not recorded in logbook reports.

Status of SE Atlantic Bycatch Data Collection

Commercial Fisheries:

S. Atlantic Shrimp Fishery Effort:

- Tabulated by trip from trip ticket reports (dealer landings reports); complicated by need to separate inshore effort (generally bays; not covered by observer program) and offshore effort (covered by observer program).

S. Atlantic Finfish Fishery Effort:

- SEFSC maintains two programs which document fishing effort: coastal logbook program and pelagic logbook program.
- Both covers federally permitted coastal fisheries directed at fish in the SE and the pelagic longline and swordfish fisheries.

Status of SE Atlantic Bycatch Data Collection

Commercial Fisheries:

S. Atlantic Bycatch Rates:

Coast-Wide Programs

- SEFSC maintains a self-reported discard log book program (20% sample) covering commercial fisheries (permitted) in both the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic. For the Gulf, SEFSC is switching to using observer information for estimating total bycatch. For S. Atl. SEFSC continues to rely on self-reported discard logbook data for estimating bycatch.
- The Miami Pelagic Observer Program collects information on bycatch rates in fisheries (particularly pelagic longline fishery) targeted at tunas and swordfish throughout the Atlantic Ocean (including Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean).

Status of SE Atlantic Bycatch Data Collection

Commercial Fisheries:

S. Atlantic Bycatch Rates:

- The Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation (GSAFF) conducts a small observer program covering the S. Atlantic vertical line fishery. There is no coverage of the S. Atlantic deepwater longline fishery or the wreckfish fishery.
- The GSAFF survey information is not used to estimate discards because of small sample size; although the biological information from that survey is incorporated in assessments.
- The SEFSC Panama City shark gillnet observer program collects bycatch rate from the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico gillnet fisheries.

SE Regional Summary

- Improvement Plan of Action