



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: 21 February 2018
To: Chris Moore, Executive Director
From: José Montañez, Staff
Subject: Golden Tilefish Specifications Review for 2019 Fishing Year

As part of the 2018-2020 multi-year specification process for golden tilefish, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Tilefish Monitoring Committee (MC), and Council will review the most recent information to determine whether modifications to the current 2019 specifications are warranted.

The NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center provided a data update for golden tilefish to support this review, which includes data on commercial landings, catch-per-unit-effort, market category, and size composition through 2017. From 2012 to 2015, commercial landings ranged from 1.4 to 1.9 million pounds. Landings declined in 2016 to 1.1 million pounds which appears to be the result of a combination of lower catch rates and some vessel inactivity. However, in 2017 landings increased to 1.5 million pounds. CPUE in 2017 increased when compared to 2016. The increase in CPUE appears to be consistent with the strong year class that was estimated last year in the 2017 model update. Commercial size distribution provides further evidence for the 2013 strong year class which is tracking the length mode into the kitten and small market categories. Historic patterns of year class effects on CPUE continue to be evident. The catch distribution of fish landed is wide and is comprised of all market categories. Large fish remain an important component of the catch. In addition, there has been an increase in the small/kittens and medium market categories.

Based on a review of this information, staff recommend no change to the 2019 fishing year specifications. In 2019, the SSC, MC, and Council will review the 2019 data update for golden tilefish, the Advisory Panel Information Document, the 2019 Fishery Performance Report, and other relevant information to support the specifications review for 2020 fishing year.