



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901
Phone: 302-674-2331 | FAX: 302-674-5399 | www.mafmc.org
Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: 28 March 2018
To: Council
From: José Montañez, Staff
Subject: Golden Tilefish Incidental Landings

When the Tilefish FMP was implemented in 2001, the commercial quota was divided into full-time (with two different tiers), part-time, and incidental fishing categories. Each fishing category had an associated fishing permit. The incidental category was developed to accommodate landings from “incidental” vessels (mostly otter trawls and a few gillnet vessels) that would encounter golden tilefish while fishing for other species.

When the IFQ system was implemented in 2009, the different permit categories were eliminated and replaced with a single commercial vessel permit. Commercial vessels are restricted to the incidental possession limit unless fishing under an IFQ allocation. The incidental fishery is allocated 5% of the quota and trip limits are used to achieve the incidental target quota. Current regulations stipulate that incidental landings cannot exceed 500 pounds live weight of golden tilefish per trip.

In past year, industry members have indicated that non-IFQ tilefish vessels are targeting golden tilefish and this does not qualify as incidental landings. They have argued that this goes against the intent of the incidental fishery as presented in the original FMP.

The Council developed Framework 2 (FW2) to the Tilefish FMP to address the issues and concerns raised by industry. FW2 implemented landings ratios/qualifiers for the incidental fishery. More specifically, FW2 requires that vessels fishing under the golden tilefish incidental fishery regulations do not possess golden tilefish at the time of landings in excess of 50%, by weight, of the total of all combined species landed. The effective date of this action is April 12, 2018.

Industry has requested that additional work be done to better understand available tilefish permit information. At this meeting, staff will review background information regarding golden tilefish incidental landings and tilefish permit data to determine next steps.