Effectiveness of fully documented fisheries to estimate discards in a participatory research scheme - DTU Orbit (09/12/2018)

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A key challenge for fisheries science and management is the access to reliable and verifiable catch data. In science, the challenge is to collect reliable, precise and traceable data to provide sound advice. In management, the challenge is that catch documentation is necessary to enforce regulations. Currently, catch inspection at sea, self-reporting through e-log and on-board observers are the primary methods to document catches at sea. However, at-sea control and on-board observers are costly and have limited coverage, while self-reporting is susceptible to fraud and provides limited coverage. New cost-effective methods are currently emerging involving Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) and on-board cameras. Previous studies have tested REM with promising results. However, evaluation of the potential biases of REM is needed before full benefits can be obtained. We deployed REM with on-board cameras on 14 fishing vessels and were able to inspect 56% of 1523 hauls made in the 6 month trial period, using an estimated 582 man-hours of video audit. The results showed an overall good agreement between the fishers self-reported discards and the video inspectors discard estimates. However, there was large variation in precision between individual vessels and species. Additionally, trial setup and process errors were shown to have a large effect on the precision of the video inspectors discard estimates. Nevertheless, despite challenges, REM was evaluated to have the potential to streamline monitoring and scientific documentation in a medium-size fishing fleet.