DEVELOPMENT OF A QUALITY INDEX METHOD (QIM) SENSORY SCHEME OF ICE-STORAGE COBIA *Rachycentron canadum*

Fabíola H. S. Fogaça, Samanta E. O. de Carvalho, Marcondes A. Gonzaga Junior. Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation – Embrapa, P.O. Box 341, 64200-970 Parnaíba, Piauí, Brazil

Freshness makes a major contribution to the seafood quality, which is a very perishable product. The principal method to evaluate the seafood freshness is sensory evaluation. The Quality Index Method (QIM) is a scoring system for freshness and quality estimation of ice-storage fish, based on well-defined characteristic of appearance, odour and texture attributes changing through storage time. A score from 0 to 2 or 3 demerit points is given for each quality parameter. Thus, the scores are summarized to given an overall sensory score, the Quality Index. The aim of this study was to develop a QIM scheme for ice-storage cobia, using sensory and physical analysis and bacterial count of specific spoilage organisms (SSO). The cobia was caught, slaughtered by thermal shock in boxes containing ice and water (1:1), and kept in ice (0-1°C). Samples stored for 0 to 30 days were analyzed with QIM. Five persons observed and registered the changes occurring in the fishes from the day 0 until spoiled. After the development of the scheme, the total sum of points was 30, describing 13 sensory attributes for appearance of skin, eyes, abdomen, gills and texture. In conclusion, a shelf-life of 15 days was defined for raw cobia stored in ice. The volatile nitrogen compounds measurement and microbiological data of SSO determined a shelf-life of 20 days for the same samples.

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