Norton Sound Red King Crab Stock Assessment for the fishing year 2024

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Executive Summary

1. Stock: Red king crab, *Paralithodes camtschaticus*, in Norton Sound, Alaska.

2. Catches: This stock supports three fisheries: summer commercial, winter commercial, and winter subsistence. Of those, the summer commercial fishery accounts for 85% of total harvest. The summer commercial fishery started in 1977. Catch peaked in the late 1970s with retained catch of over 2.9 million pounds. Since 1994, the Norton Sound crab fishery has operated as super-exclusive. During the 2023 fishery season, commercial fisheries harvested, **3,580** crab (**10,013** lb) in winter and **146,087** crab (**413,327** lb) in summer. The winter subsistence fishery caught a total of **702** male crab (1966 lb) and retained 573 (**1604** lb) (permit retured 43%). In total, harvest of **150,240** crab (**424,944** lb) has been reported during the 2023 season. Doubling the winter subsistence harvest, the assessment model (Model 21.0) derived discard mortality was **18,866** lb. The derived total fishing mortality was **0.444** million lb that was below ABC of 0.450 million lb. Overfishing did not occur during the 2023 season.

3. Stock Biomass: Norton Sound red king crab is monitored not in biomass but in abundance. For the assessment model, biomass is calculated by multiplying the average weight of each length class. Abundance of the Norton Sound red king crab stock has been monitored by trawl surveys since 1976 by NMFS (1976-1991), NOAA NBS (2010-2022), and ADF&G (1996-2021). Historical survey abundance of Norton Sound red king crab of carapace length greater than and equal to 64 mm (CL ≥ 64 mm) ranged from 1.41 million to 5.90 million crab. In 2023 abundance of crab estimated from the ADF&G trawl survey was 3.44 million crab with CV 0.325, and that from NOAA NBS survey was 1.74 million crab with CV 0.379 (Table 3).

4. Recruitment: Model-estimated recruitment since the 1980s has averaged ~0.70 million, ranging from 0.20 to 1.60 million.

5. Management performance.

Status and catch specifications (million lb) Shaded values are new estimates or projections based on the current assessment. Other table entries are based on historical assessments and are not updated except for total and retained catch.

Year	MSST	Biomass (MMB)	GHL	Retained Catch	Total Catch	OFL	ABC
2020	2.28	3.67	0.17	Conf.	Conf.	0.29	0.21
2021	2.25	5.05	0.31	0.007	0.007	0.59	0.35
2022	2.08	5.33	0.34	0.34	0.36	0.67	0.40
2023	2.65	5.29	0.392	0.425	0.444	0.643	0.450
2024:21.0	2.2	5.52				0.733	0.513
2024:23.0	2.23	4.92				1.254	0.878

Note
MSST was calculated as $B_{MSY}/2$
GHL: Summer commercial fishery retained only
OFL and ABC 2018-2020 are retained catch only
2019, 2020: Total catch equals retained catch. Discarded catch was estimated only for the summer commercial fishery, but the summer commercial fishery did not occur.

Status and catch specifications (kt)

Year	MSST	Biomass (MMB)	GHL	Retained Catch	Total Catch	OFL	ABC
2020	1.04	1.66	0.08	Conf.	Conf.	0.13	0.09
2021	1.02	2.29	0.14	0.003	0.003	0.20	0.16
2022	0.95	2.42	0.15	0.15	0.16	0.30	0.18
2023	1.20	2.40	0.178	0.192	0.201	0.292	0.204
2024:21.0	1.00	2.50				0.332	0.233
2024:23.0	1.00	2.23				0.569	0.398

Conversion to metric ton: 1 metric ton (t) = 2.2046×1000 lb

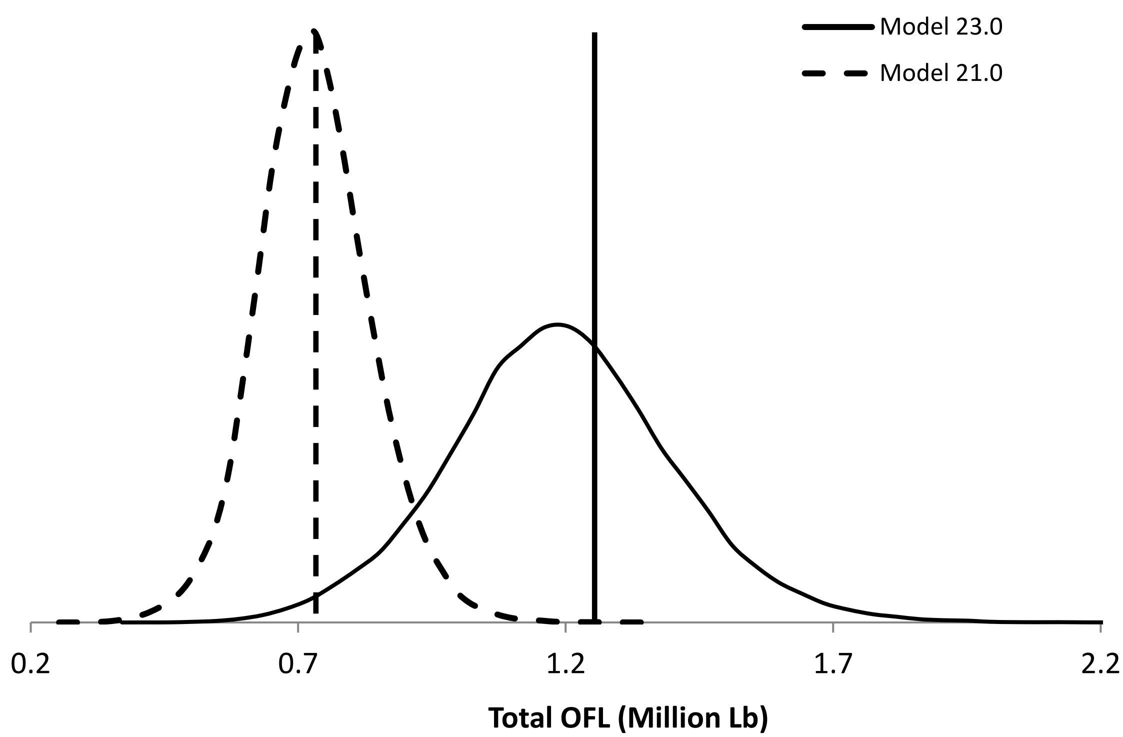
Basis for the OFL (million lb)

Year	Tier	B_{MSY}	Current MMB	B/B_{MSY} (MMB)	F_{OFL}	Years to define B_{MSY}	Natural Mortality
2020	4b	4.56	3.66	0.8	0.14	1980-2020	0.18
2021	4a	4.53	5.05	1.1	0.18	1980-2021	0.18
2022	4a	4.17	5.33	1.3	0.18	1980-2022	0.18
2023	4a	4.37	5.29	1.2	0.18	1980-2023	0.18
2024:21.0	4a	4.45	5.52	1.2	0.18	1980-2024	0.18
2024:23.0	4a	4.45	4.92	1.1	0.41	1980-2024	0.41

Basis for the OFL (kt)

Year	Tier	B_{MSY}	Current MMB	B/B_{MSY} (MMB)	F_{OFL}	Years to define B_{MSY}	Natural Mortality
2020	4b	2.07	1.66	0.8	0.14	1980-2020	0.18
2021	4a	2.05	2.29	1.1	0.18	1980-2021	0.18
2022	4a	1.90	2.42	1.3	0.18	1980-2022	0.18
2023	4a	1.98	2.40	1.2	0.18	1980-2023	0.18
2024:21.0	4a	2.02	2.50	1.2	0.18	1980-2024	0.18
2024:23.0	4a	2.02	2.23	1.1	0.41	1980-2024	0.41

6. Probability Density Function of the OFL and mcmc estimates



7. The basis for the ABC recommendation.

For Tier 4 stocks, the default maximum ABC is based on P*=49%: essentially identical to the OFL. The annual ABC buffer is determined by accounting for uncertainties in assessment and model results.
Criteria for determining the level of ABC buffer are qualitative. The buffer was 10% from 2011 to 2014, increased to 20% in 2015, to 30% in 2020, and to 40% in 2021. In 2023 the CPT recommended to reduce the buffer to 30%

Year	ABC Buffer
2011-2014	10%
2015-2019	20%
2020	30%
2021-2022	40%
2023-2024	30%

The SSC proposed an alternative approach of setting ABC using average long-term fishing mortality *F* (see section G).

8. Summary of the results of any rebuilding analysis

   NA: NSRKC is not overfished.

A. Summary of Major Changes in 2024 assessment model

1. Changes to the management of the fishery**.**

   Winter commercial fishery was catcher and seller permit holder only.

2. Changes to the input data.

   Input data were updated through 2023:

   Winter subsistence harvest (Total, Retained)
   Winter commercial (Retained)
   Summer commercial (Retained, length-shell composition)
   Trawl surveys (Abundance, length-shell compositions)
   ADF&G and NOAA NBS
   Standardized CPUE

3. Changes to the assessment methodology.

   NONE

B. Response to SSC and CPT Comments

Following are SSC, CPT-SSC's requests/review (received in Jan-Feb, Sept-Oct 2023) and author's responses, arranged by topic. Requests are italicized.

I. NSRKC Biology-Ecology

Size at maturity

SSC (Feb 2023): Test the sensitivity of the assessment model to a much lower size at maturity.

An identical request was raised and answered in 2019 and 2022 (see: section E) (SAFE 2019, 2022). The assessment model is insensitive to the size at maturity in setting of F_{OFL} because Tier 4 F_{OFL} determination rule is based on the MMB/BMSY ratio.

Natural Mortality

SSC (Feb 2023): a variant of model 21.0 for next year's assessment with one estimated value of natural mortality for all sizes.

Identical requests have been made and evaluated in 2013, 2015, 2016, and 2017, which showed that 1: the model estimated *M* is more than twice higher than 0.18 and 2: model fit was worse than the default model (NPFMC 2013, 2016, 2017). The author provided and evaluated model 23.0 with updated data (See alternative model).

CPT-SSC (Sept-Oct 2023): explore using existing tagging data to estimate maximum age and use it in the Barefoot Ecologist's natural mortality calculation.

Generally, tag-recapture study provides information about age of the tagged crab after release, but it does not provide information about the age of crab before they are tagged. Thus, tag-recapture study does not inform about the longevity (i.e., maximum age) of the crab. Previous studuu that determined the maximum age of red king crab (Matsuura and Takeshita 1989) is based on rearing red king crab successfully for 13 years and adding approximate age of crab at the time of capture.

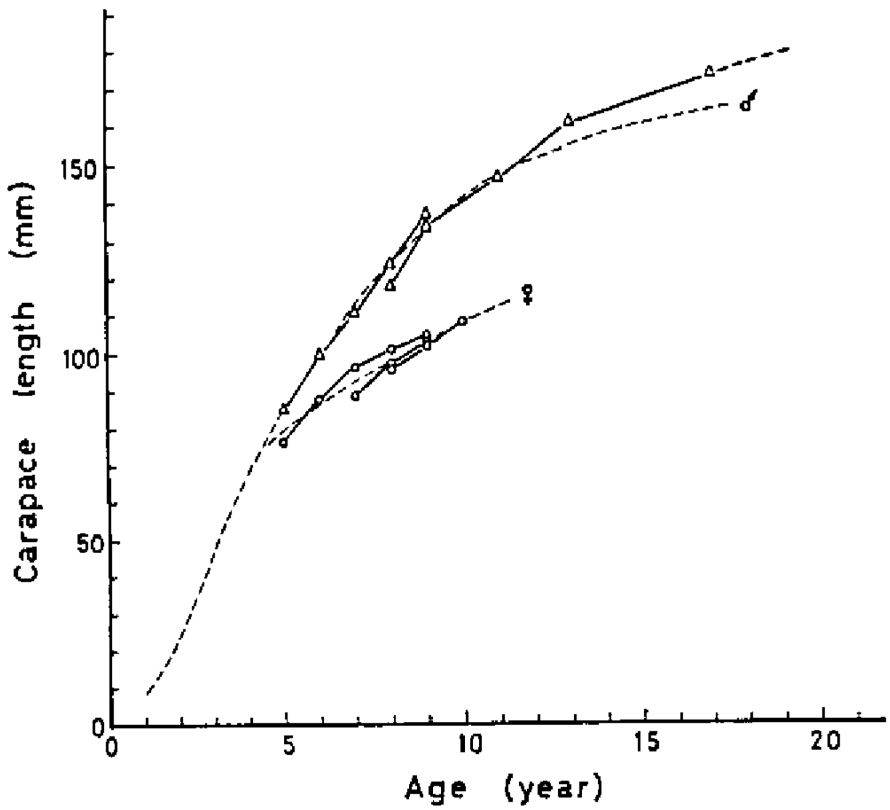


Figure 2. Growth of the laboratory reared Kamchatka red king crabs. Curve for male is calculated using the growth model by Weber and Miyahara (1962). Curve for immature is derived from Kurata (1961). Curve for female is derived from Matsuura et al. (1972). Carapace length and corresponding ages are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Carapace length in mm corresponding to age for adult red king crab in the Kamchatka waters

Age(year)	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Male*1	85.0	98.6	111.6	123.6	133.4	140.8	146.4	150.8	154.3	157.1	159.5
Female*2	79.5	86.6	92.5	97.8	102.8	107.4	111.8	119.3			

*1 Calculated by the growth model of Weber and Miyahara (1962).
*2 Derived from Matsuura et al.(1972).

Figure 2 and Table 4 from Matsuura and Takeshita (1989).

In Norton Sound tagging studies, tagged crabs are not recaptured beyond 6 years of liberty (Tables m-1, m-2). The maximum size of the recaptured crab was 145 mm CL.
Trajectory Based

	Recovered years at liberty						
Released size class	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	7	8	14	25	12	7	2
2	19	63	116	96	39	9	3
3	41	138	118	63	30	10	
4	79	231	90	57	17	3	1
5	238	194	88	36	14	3	1
6	272	152	71	18	5	1	
7	132	61	26	10	1		
8	27	13	1	1			

Table m-1 The number of tagged crabs recaptured by size class and recaptured by years at liberty.

		Recovered years at liberty						
Released size class	Tagged size	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	72.0	72.2	87.3	101.3	113.5	108.1	127.0	121.0
2	78.9	83.0	96.3	107.5	115.8	121.1	121.0	125.7
3	88.7	94.2	105.4	114.9	116.4	124.4	126.4	
4	98.4	99.3	111.9	116.4	119.7	126.2	134.0	135.0
5	108.7	109.5	117.0	119.9	126.7	127.9	129.0	141.0
6	118.2	117.9	124.8	128.4	128.8	137.8	124.0	
7	127.4	127.2	129.2	133.6	137.4	143.0		
8	138.1	137.3	135.1	145.0				

Table m-2. Average size (CL) of crab released by size class and recaptured by years at liberty.

Overlaying the post-release growth trajectories of tagged recaptured crabs similar to Matsuura and Takeshita (1989), one can assume that it may take 10-12 years for a size of 72.0 mm NSRKC to reach 145 mm (Fig m-1).

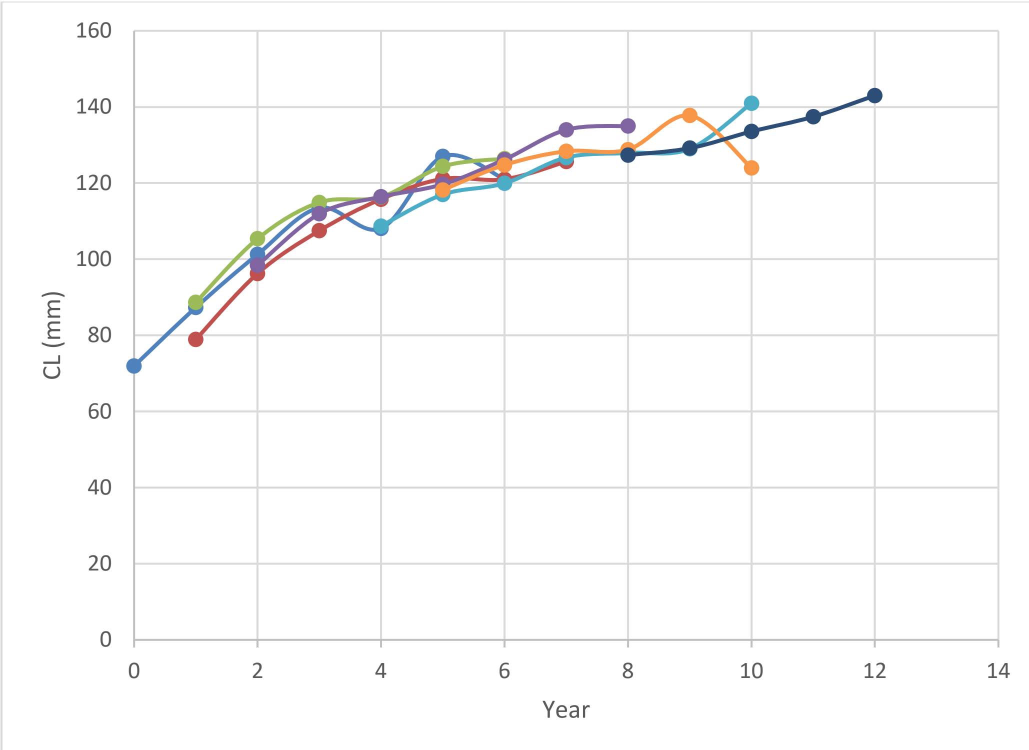


Fig m-1: Tag recovery length data overlay

Then, assuming that a crab 72 mm CL is 5-7 years, the maximum age of NSRKC could be 15-19 years.

Commercial fisheries catch crabs greater than >145 mm CL. The maximum size of NSRKC caught in the commercial fishery (1976-2023) is 170 mm CL, and the largest crab sampled during 1976-2023 period was 173 mm (ADF&G trawl survey 1996). If the molt increment is 9 mm and the molting probability is 30%, it takes 9-10 years on average for a crab of 145mm CL to reach 173mm. Then, the longevity of NSRKC can be 24-29 years or longer.

Simultaneously, the proportion of those large crabs is very small. In the commercial catch and trawl survey, the proportion of NSRKC of > 145mm CL is 0.6% and 0.2% and that of > 165mm CL is 0.01% and 0.05%, respectively. This leads to a question of the definition of the "maximum age".   For instance, the maximum age (t_{max}) used in the current RKC model is based on the 1% rule that the proportion of animals reach the maximum age is 1% (Shepherd and Breen 1992, Clarke et al. 2003, Zheng 2005).   In NSRKC the 99th percentile size is 134mm CL in the trawl survey.   Then, the maximum age would be 13-16 years.

The Author looked at the Barefoot Ecologist's Natural Mortality Estimators (http://barefootecologist.com.au/shiny_m.html) and found the app might not apply to crab species. First, the app is developed for fish species, and it is unknown if the various methods used to estimate M in the app can be applied to crab species. Second, the app requires data such as longevity, age at maturity, Linf, k, t0, Winf, kw, total weight of dry and wet, gonadosomatic index. Very few of these parameters are known for NSRKC.

Using the maximum age of various assumptions (i.e., 13-29 years) *M* could range from 0.19 to 0.41 years.

The app also can estimate *M* based on the age at maturity. NSRKC can be considered functionally mature at 79.4 mm. Assuming its approximate age is 5-8 years, *M* would range from 0.18 to 0.32.

Finally, by inputting an average wet weight of NSRKC (3lb or 1400g), the app generates *M* of 0.37.

As shown above, with arbitrary assumptions about NSRKC life-history, any natural mortality range can be generated from the app. However, in the absence of scientifically solid data about size and age of NSRKC, the validity of *M* is in doubt.

II. NSRKC Assessment Surveys and Data

Trawl Survey

Include maps of all of the survey years, a figure that shows how many stations were used for each year to develop the index of abundance. Include the total number of crab observed by year. Compare the index of abundance currently used to an index of abundance that uses only stations that were consistently sampled over the length of the time series.

The above are provided in Table 3 and Figures 18-19. Time-series of the Norton Sound red king crab trawl survey abundance consists of multiple surveys conducted by NOAA and ADF&G that use different survey designs. Out of 163 stations surveyed from 1976 to 2023 totaling 25 surveys, only 3 stations were surveyed by all trawl surveys (Figure t1). Comparison of the CPUE and the trawl survey abundance was provided (Figure t2).

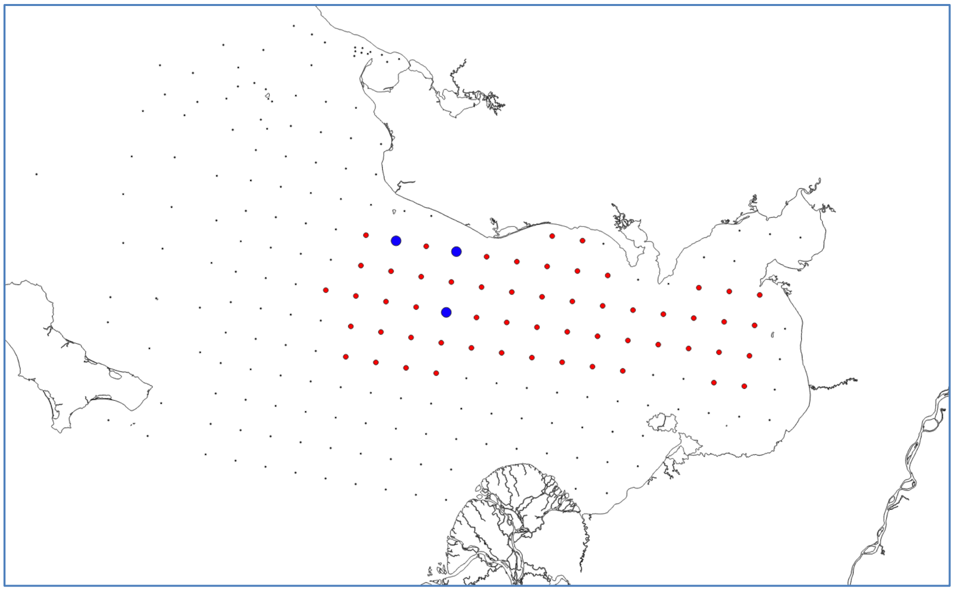


Figure t1: 1976-2023 Norton Sound trawl surveyed stations. Black: surveyed stations, Red: Used for abundance estimate, Blue: Surveyed consistently all years.

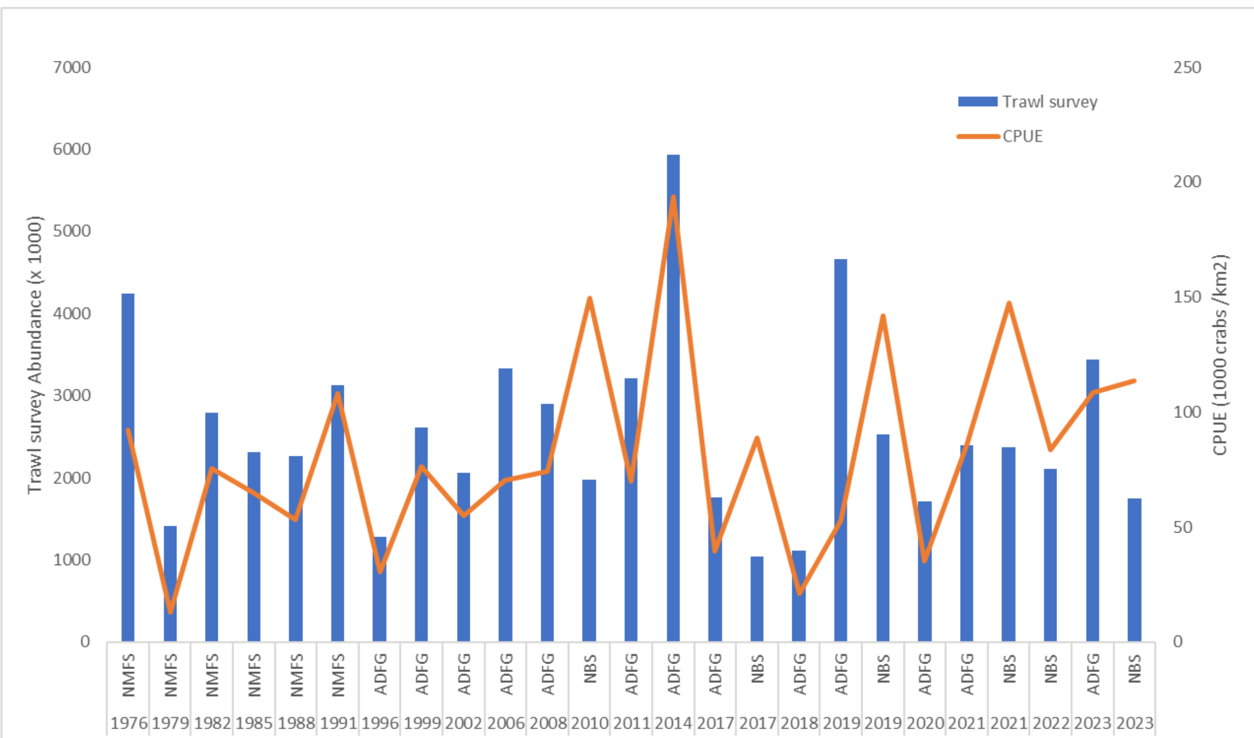


Figure t2: Trawl survey abundance vs. average CPUE of the 3 stations.

Discards

SSC (Feb 2023) A small-scale observer program should be considered for the NSRKC fishery.

Under the North Pacific Observer Program vessels of less than 40 feet are not selected for observer coverage, and in the NSRKC fisheries, all but 2 vessels are under 40 feet length overall. Fisheries biologists and managers of both the ADF&G and the NSEDC indicated that estimates of discard mortality from the previous small-scale programs were inaccurate and untrustworthy, which is due to great sampling bias in the selection of vessels, fishing location, timing, and fishing behavior (NPFMC 2020).

We welcome experts, such as the North Pacific Observer Program, to design and operate a small-scale observer program.

VAST

SSC (Feb 2023) Continue to develop VAST or other model-based survey estimates of abundance.
CPT (Sept 2023) Compare the current index of abundance to one developed using VAST

The author looks forward to Dr. Jon Richar's (NOAA) progress on VAST. The initial comparisons were presented in 2001-SAFE (NPFMC 2021). The VAST estimate tracked very similar to current abundance but in different (higher) scale. This is due to the fact that 1) geographical (expansion) coverage of the VAST is greater than that of trawl survey (Figure v1). Update of the model and data conducted by Dr. Richer (Oct 2023) showed the same results (Figure v2).

Before implementing VAST model for NSRKC, the following issues would need to be resolved:

1. Spatial extent: Should spatial extent be: (1) the ADF&G trawl survey area, (2) the Norton Sound area defined by NOAA (reported here), (3) the Norton Sound management area (Statistical area Q3)?
2. Data to be used: Norton Sound Trawl surveys consist of 10 nm spaced NMFS (1976-1991) and ADF&G (1996-present), and 20 nm spaced NBS (2010-present). The assessment model suggests different survey catchability among the 3 surveys.
3. Model specifications (e.g., error distributions and the number of knots) and robustness of the time-series.

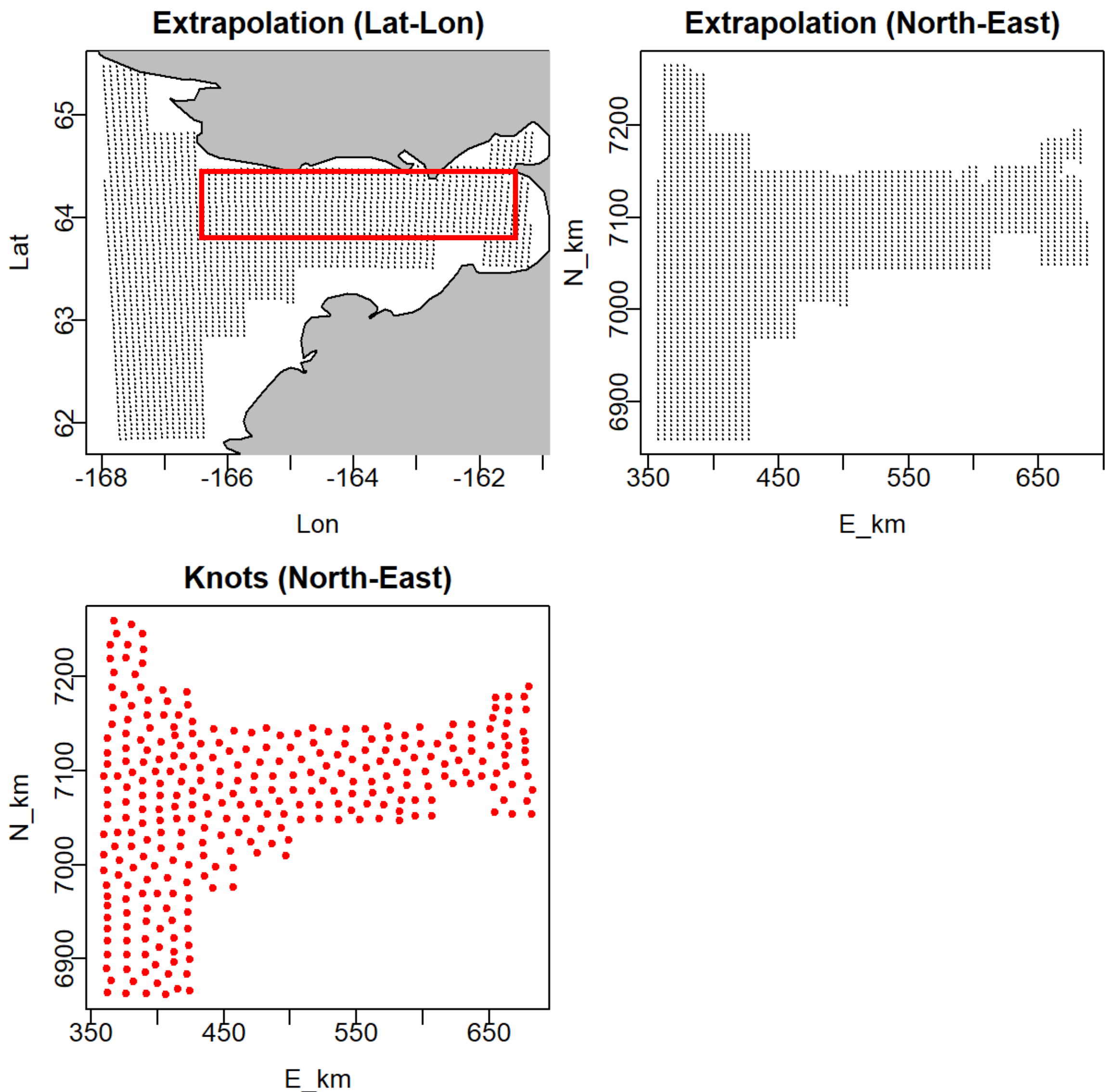


Figure v1: Spatial extent of VAST model (dotted) and approximate ADF&G trawl survey coverage (red rectangle).

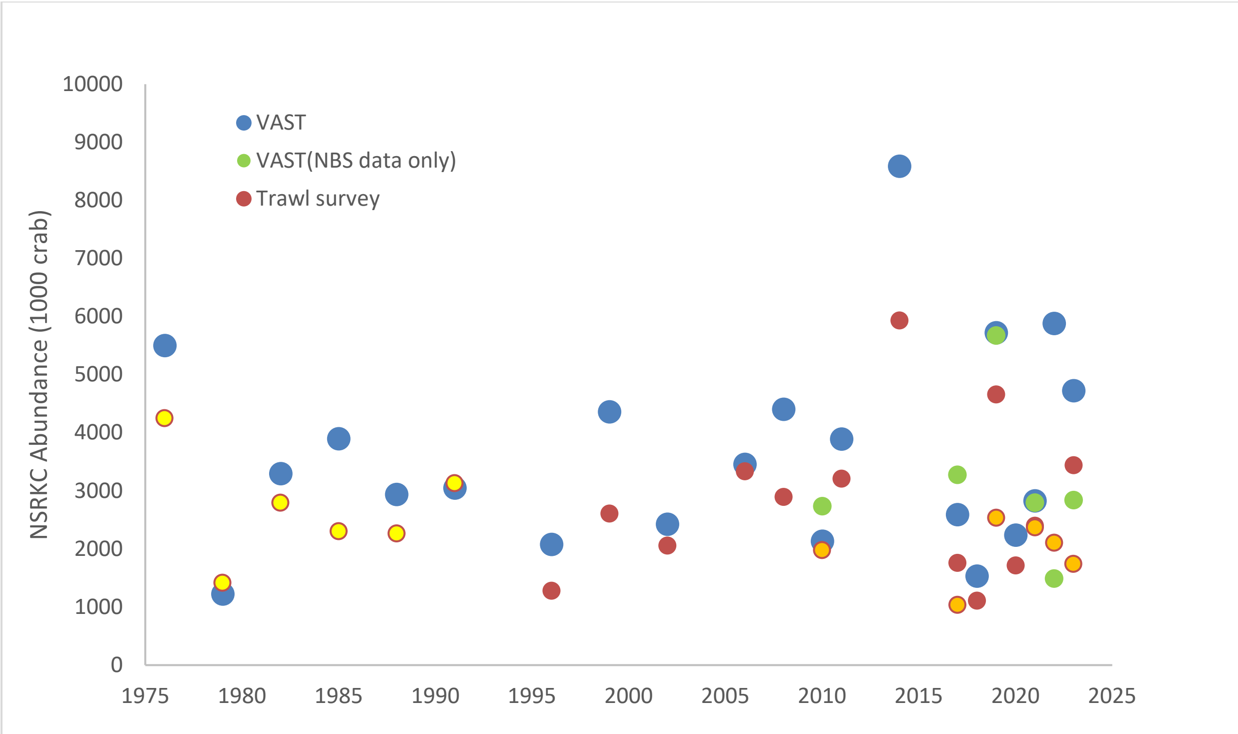


Figure v2: Comparison of trawl vs VAST abundance. VAST estimates were conducted using both ADF&G and NMFS-NOAA survey data (blue), and NOAA NBS survey data only (Green). Trawl survey estimates: Yellow (NMFS), Red (ADF&G), Orange (NOAA-NBS).

GMACS

SSC (Feb 2023) Prioritize transitioning the model to GMACS.

Running the model with the data and control settings specified by the GMACS authors, the MMB estimates from GMACS were about half of the assessment model (Figure gmax.1). The author was instructed not to modify the GMACS model. The author has been in correspondence with the GMACS authors who are investigating how to resolve the issue.

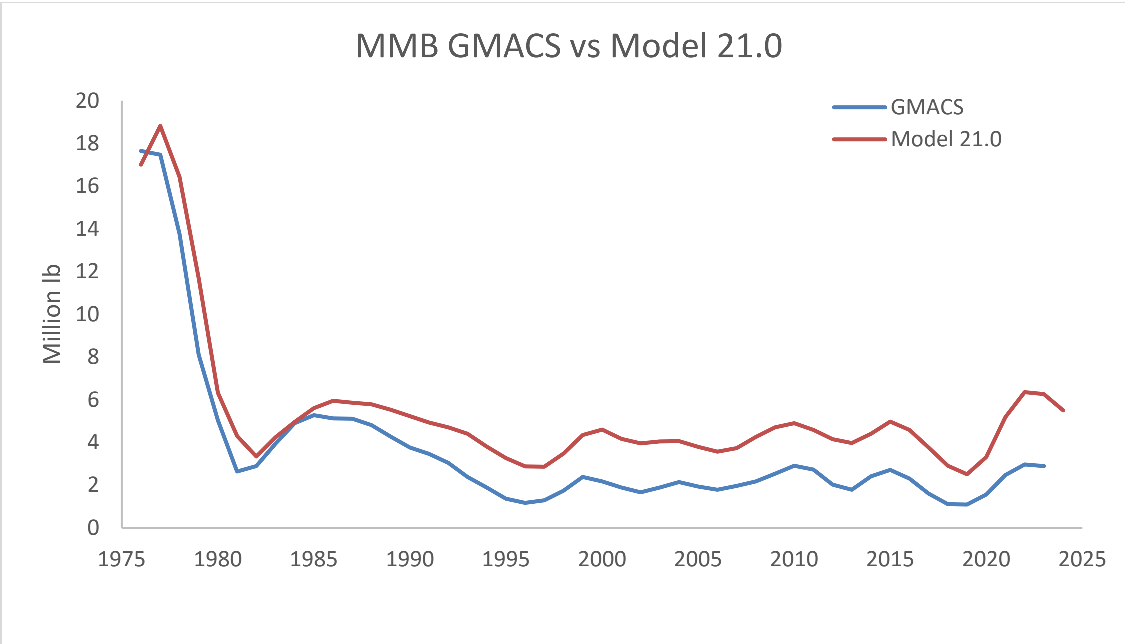


Figure gmax.1 Comparison of MMB estimates between GMAX and the assessment model 21.0.

Standardized CPUE

SSC (Jan 2023) Consider an update to the standardized commercial fishery CPUE model.

Updating the standardized CPUE model is a worthy endeavor, and the author welcomes any technical support for the model improvements. However, it is unlikely that this will result in a better assessment model estimate. The dynamics of the standardized CPUE is very similar to arithmetic CPUE (Appendix B, figure st.cpue.1). The model estimated additional variance is too large to influence the model dynamics and model fit (Figure 7). In fact, whether to include the standardized CPUE data has little impact on the model likelihood and projections (SAFE 2018). The standardized CPUE was originally included as supplemental to the triennial trawl survey, especially during the periods of no trawl survey. Given that the NOAA NBS trawl survey is conducted annually since 2021, the importance of the data for the purpose of the assessment model has been diminishing.

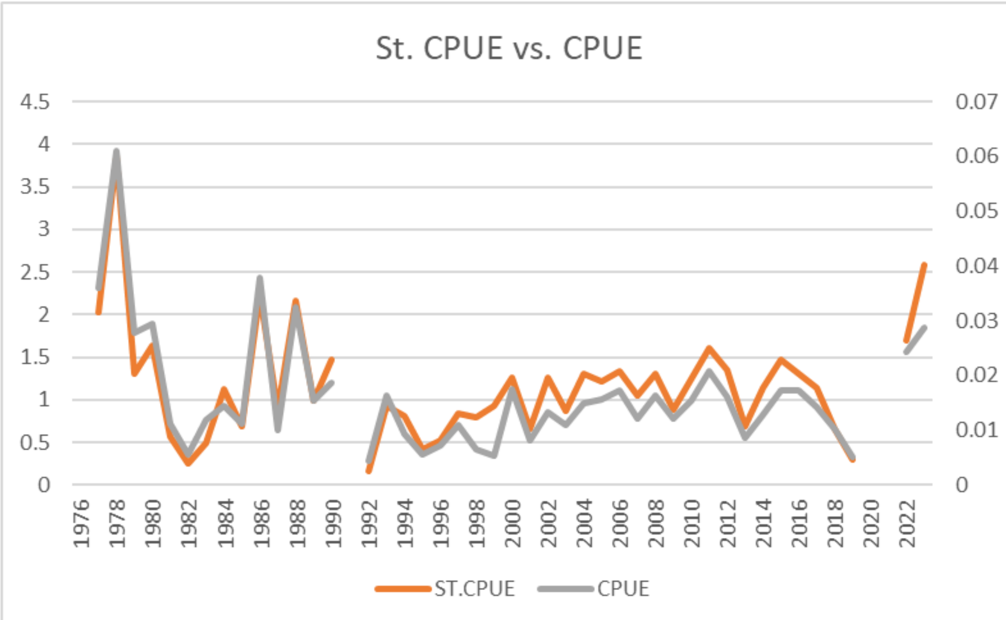


Figure st.cpue.1 Comparison of the standardized CPUE vs. arithmetic CPUE. Note that standardized CPUE was calculated separately for 1977-1993, 1994-2007, and 2008-2023.

III. NSRKC Assessment model

CPT (Sept 2023) SSC (Oct 2023): Eliminate shell condition (new shell vs. old shell) for model simplification (due to difficulties identifying new and old shell).

Molting and resulting shell condition (pre-molt (i.e., old shell) and post-molt (i.e., new shell)) are the most important crustacean life-history processes. Identification of shell condition is an important indicator of the molting status of a crab, from which the probability of molting and post-molt growth increments can be estimated, and the estimates can be inputted into an assessment model (as fixed, prior).

In the NSRKC assessment model, the molting probability and post-growth increments are estimated from the tag-recovery data within the assessment model. The multinomial likelihood is based on 16 (8 length classes x 2 shell conditions) length-by-shell condition classes (i.e., the sum of the 16 classes probabilities is 1.0). This likelihood allows the model to incorporate uncertainties of length distribution and the determination of shell condition, simultaneously. By summing the probabilities by size, this likelihood can be simplified to fit the model solely by size distribution (8 length classes), under which the molting probability and the post-molt growth increments are solely informed by size distribution. This simplification also suggests that observed shell conditions have no biologically meaningful information regarding the molting probability and the post-molt growth increments, or that biologists have no ability to distinguish between new and old shell crab (i.e., biologists assign shell conditions at random).

The author contends that biologists can distinguish shell conditions fairly accurately. First, the observed proportion of old-shell crabs is higher for larger sizes. Moreover, the 2012-2016 tagging study suggests at least 87% accuracy for distinguishing shell conditions, with specificity of 90% for new-shell and 75% for old-shell (Table g). The author finds no reason to slow away shell condition data that biologists have been collecting over the years, just for perceived assumed "*difficulties.*"

Table g: Growth increment and shell condition of tagged crab recovered 1 year of liberty (2012-2016).

		Recovered	
Growth increment	Released	Newshell	Oldshell
<3mm	Newshell	29	73
	Oldshell	14	13
>3mm	Newshell	246	18
	Oldshell	137	10

Assuming that crabs < 3mm increments did not molt (and thus all should be labeled as oldshell) and that > 3mm increments molted (and thus all should be labeled as newshell), accuracy of correct identification is 87%. Specificity is 90% for newshell and 75% for oldshell. Note: some crab may molt with < 3mm post-molt increment.

IV. NSRKC Management

LTK

SSC (Feb 2023): Consider using NSRKC as a case study for the incorporation of local knowledge, traditional knowledge, and subsistence information for Council decision-informing analyses as previously suggested (see February 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 SSC Reports in BSAI Crab, BS FEP Climate Change Task Force, and BS FEP- LKTKS Taskforce sections). It is assumed that this work would be led by AFSC social science personnel (or other similarly qualified researchers) and would involve inputs from the Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence (LKTKS) Task Force and the Climate Change Task Force (CCTF). The SSC would welcome a presentation on recent work done by the AFSC in this area.

The author looks forward to the progress of the AFSC.

Alternative ABC Calculation

SSC (Oct 2023): Given the long period of stock stability for NSRKC, the SSC recommends consideration of an ABC based on the long-term average F.

The ABC buffer is based on a qualitative assessment of model uncertainties, which is currently recommended to be set to 30% for 2024.

Annual fishing mortality (*F*) of NSRKC fishery was calculated for models 21.0 and 23.0 (Appendix A, Table 13). The average *F* calculated during the periods of 1994-2023 when the fishery was shifted to super-exclusive, was 0.102 for model 21.0 and 0.105 for model 23.0. Applying the average *F* to the OFL equation, the total ABC was 0.432 million lb for model 21.0 and 0.382 million lb for model 23.0 (See Section G). This would be equivalent to ABC buffer of 41% for model 21.0 and 70% for model 23.0.

C. Introduction

1. Species:

Red king crab, *Paralithodes camtschaticus*, in Norton Sound, Alaska.

2. General Distribution:

Norton Sound red king crab (NSRKC) is one of the northernmost red king crab populations that can support a commercial fishery (Powell et al. 1983). It is distributed throughout Norton Sound with a westward limit of 167-168° W. longitude, depths less than 30 m, and summer bottom temperatures above 4° C. The Norton Sound red king crab management area consists of two units: Norton Sound Section (Q3) and Kotzebue Section (Q4) (Menard et al. 2011). The Norton Sound Section (Q3) consists of all waters in Registration Area Q north of the latitude of Cape Romanzof, east of the International Dateline, and south of 66°N latitude (Figure 1). The Kotzebue Section (Q4) lies immediately north of the Norton Sound Section and includes Kotzebue Sound. Commercial fisheries have not occurred regularly in the Kotzebue Section. This report deals with the Norton Sound Section of the NSRKC management area.

3. Evidence of stock structure:

Based on variability at 15 SNP loci and in mtDNA sequences (COI, 665 bp), the NSRKC stock belongs to the Okhotsk Sea–Norton Sound–Aleutian Islands evolutionary lineage (SNPs, FCT = 0.054; mtDNA FCT = 0.222) (Grant and Chen 2012). However, this does not indicate that NSRKC is a single stock. The study indicates it was incapable of detecting possible evolutionary stock differences within the NSRKC stock. No studies have investigated possible stock separation within the Norton Sound management area (Figure 1).

4. Life history characteristics relevant to management:

One of the unique life-history traits of NSRKC is that they spend their entire lives in shallow water since Norton Sound is generally less than 30 m in depth (as opposed to Bristol Bay red king crab of 60-130 m depth). Based on the 1976-2021 trawl surveys, NSRKC is found in areas with a mean depth range of 19 ± 6 (SD) m and bottom temperatures of 7.4° ± 2.5 (SD) C during summer. NSRKC is consistently abundant offshore of Nome.

NSRKC migrates between deep (20-30m) offshore and shallow (5-10m) inshore waters within Norton Sound. The timing of the inshore mating migration is unknown but is assumed to be during late fall to winter (Powell et al. 1983). Offshore migration occurs in late May - July (Bell et al. 2016). Some older/larger crab (> 104mm CL) may stay offshore in the winter, as larger crabs are not found nearshore during the spring offshore migration periods (Jenefer Bell, ADF&G, *personal comm*). Molting occurs in fall to winter. Double shelled crabs were often observed in late August commercial catch (Joyce Song ADF&G *personal comm*). Laboratory observation showed that male crab molted in August – November and female crab molted in Jan-March (Leah Zacher and Jennifer Gardner NOAA-AFSC *personal comm*). Functional maturity of NSRKC male crab is as small as 79.4 mm CL (Leah Zacher NOAA-AFSC *personal comm*). Small males could be more successful than large males for mating. Small males could also fertilize the eggs of ~ 4 females, whereas the largest crab (> 123 mm) was able to fertilize the eggs of ~ 2 females.

5. Brief management history:

NSRKC fisheries consist of commercial and subsistence fisheries. The commercial red king crab fisheries occur in summer (June – August) and winter (December – May), and subsistence is open year-round. The majority of NSRKC is harvested during the offshore summer commercial fishery, whereas the winter commercial and subsistence fisheries occur nearshore through ice and take a much smaller harvest.

The distinguishing characteristic of the NSRKC fisheries is that all fisheries, surveys, research, and management are conducted by local residents of Norton Sound. Commercial fisheries are designated as super-exclusive: a vessel registered for the Norton Sound crab fishery may not be used to take king crabs in any other registration areas. The ADF&G and the NSRKC crab research and management biologists are members of Nome community and are acquainted with many local fishermen (commercial and subsistence) and staff of community organizations such as Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC) and Kawerak Inc, exchanging information and research ideas about crab biology and fisheries management.

Summer Commercial Fishery

A large-vessel summer commercial crab fishery started in 1977 in the Norton Sound Section (Table 1) and continued from 1977 through 1990. No summer commercial fishery occurred in 1991 because there were no staff to manage the fishery. In March 1993, the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) limited participation in the fishery to small boats. Then on June 27, 1994, a super-exclusive designation went into effect for the fishery. This designation states that a vessel registered for the Norton Sound crab fishery may not be used to take king crabs in any other registration areas during that registration year. A vessel moratorium was put into place before the 1996 season. This was intended to precede a license limitation program. In 1998, Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups were allocated a portion of the summer harvest; however, no CDQ harvest occurred until the 2000 season. On January 1, 2000, the North Pacific License Limitation Program (LLP) went into effect for the Norton Sound crab fishery. The program dictates that a vessel which exceeds 32 feet in length overall must hold a valid crab license issued under the LLP by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Changes in regulations resulted in the fishery being conducted solely by local residents with vessel sizes of under 40 feet and the fishery occurring eastward of Norton Sound.

In Norton Sound, a legal crab is defined as ≥ 4 3/4-inch carapace width (CW, Menard et al. 2011), which is approximately equivalent to ≥ 104 mm carapace length (CL). In 2005 and 2006, commercial buyers, specifically Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), accepted only legal crab of ≥ 5 inch CW. This preference became permanent in 2008.

Some portions of Norton Sound are closed to commercial fishing for red king crab. Since the beginning of the commercial fisheries in 1977, waters approximately 5-10 miles offshore of southern Seward Peninsula from Port Clarence to St. Michael have been closed to protect nearshore subsistence fisheries and to function as a refuge for crab during the summer commercial crab fishery (Figure 2). The spatial extent of closed waters has varied historically, with the closure line being moved in to provide additional area to achieve harvest goals. In 2020 the BOF closed Norton Sound east of 167 degrees W. longitude for the commercial summer crab fishery. In 2020 and 2021 the NSEDC did not purchase NSRKC resulting in small or no harvest. In 2022, the NSEDC resumed purchasing summer commercial catch.

CDQ Fishery

The Norton Sound and Lower Yukon CDQ groups divide the NSRKC CDQ allocation. Only fishers designated by the Norton Sound and Lower Yukon CDQ groups are allowed to participate in this portion of the king crab fishery. Fishers are required to have a CDQ fishing permit from the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) and register their vessel with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) before beginning fishing. Fishers operate under the authority of each CDQ group. CDQ harvest share is 7.5% of the guideline harvest level (GHL), and can be prosecuted in both summer and winter seasons.

Winter Commercial Fishery

The winter commercial crab fishery uses hand lines and pots through the nearshore ice. On average 10 permit holders harvested 2,500 crab during 1978-2009. From 2007 to 2015 the winter commercial catch increased from 3,000 crab to over 40,000 (Table 2). In 2015 the winter commercial catch reached 20% of the total crab catch. The BOF responded in May 2015 by amending regulations to allocate 8% of the total commercial GHL to the winter commercial fishery, which has been in effect since the 2017 season. The timing of the winter red king crab commercial fishing season has changed over time to address ice stability. It was originally from January 1 to April 30, amended in 1985 to from November 15 to May 15. In 2015 the period was changed to January 15 to April 30 after fisheries opened in Nov 15 in 2014, so that January 15 starting date was into effect in 2016. In 2021 it was further amended to February 1 to April 30. The NSEDC terminated purchasing crab in 2019. Since 2019 all the winter commercial catches are by catcher-seller permit holders.

Year	Opening period
1977-1984	Jan 01 – Apr 30
1985- 2014	Nov 15 – May 15
2015	Nov 15 – Apr 30
2016-2020	Jan 15 – Apr 30
2021 - present	Feb 01 – Apr 30

Subsistence Fishery

The winter subsistence fishery has a long history; however, harvest information is available only since the 1977/78 season. The majority of subsistence crab harvest occurs in winter using hand lines and pots through nearshore ice. The average annual winter subsistence harvest is 5,281 crabs (1977-2021). Subsistence harvesters need to obtain a permit before fishing and record daily effort and catch. There are no size or sex-specific harvest limits; however, the majority of retained catch is males of near legal size.

Summer subsistence crab fishery harvest has been monitored since 2004 with an average harvest of 1,145 crabs (2004-2020). The summer subsistence fishery was not included in the assessment model.

Harvest of both winter commercial and subsistence fisheries is influenced by the availability of stable ice conditions. Small harvests can occur due to poor ice conditions, regardless of crab abundance.

1. Brief description of the annual ADF&G harvest strategy

Since 1997 NSRKC has been managed based on a GHL. From 1999 to 2011 the GHL for the summer commercial fishery was determined using model estimated predicted biomass: (1) 0% harvest rate of legal crab when estimated legal biomass < 1.5 million lb; (2) ≤ 5% of legal male biomass when the estimated legal biomass falls within the range 1.5-2.5 million lb; and (3) ≤ 10% of legal male biomass when estimated legal biomass >2.5 million lb. In 2012 the summer commercial fishery GHL was revised to (1) 0% harvest rate of legal crab when estimated legal biomass < 1.25 million lb; (2) ≤ 7% of legal male biomass when the estimated legal biomass falls within the range 1.25-2.0 million lb; (3) ≤ 13% of legal male biomass when the estimated legal biomass falls within the range 2.0-3.0 million lb; and (3) ≤ 15% of legal male biomass when estimated legal biomass >3.0 million lb.

In 2015 the BOF passed the following regulations regarding the winter commercial fisheries:

1) Revise GHL to include summer and winter commercial fisheries.
2) Set GHL for the winter commercial fishery (GHL_w) at 8% of the total GHL

GHL is determined in early February, not to exceed (e.g., 5-10% less) the retained portion of the total catch ABC.

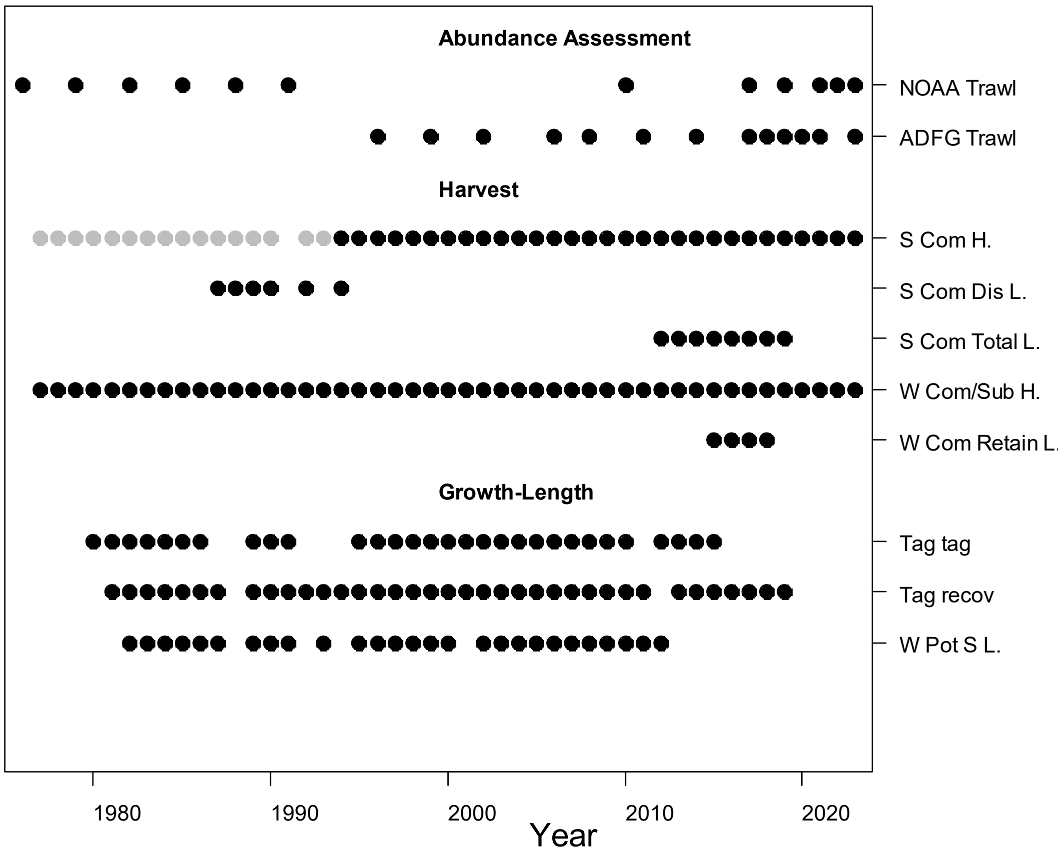
Table: Brief NSRK fishery management history

Year	Notable historical management changes
1976	The abundance survey started
1977	**Large vessel commercial fisheries began. Legal size was set to ≥ 5 inch CW**
1978	**Legal size was changed to ≥ 4.75 inch CW**
1991	Fishery closed due to staff constraints
1993	Fishery is restricted to small boat. The end of large vessel commercial fishery operation.
1994	Super exclusive designation went into effect.
1998	Community Development Quota (CDQ) allocation went into effect
1999	Guideline Harvest Level (GHL) went into effect
2000	North Pacific License Limitation Program (LLP) went into effect.
2002	Change in closed water boundaries (Figure 2)
2006	The Statistical area Q3 section expanded (Figure 1)
2008	Start date of the open access fishery changed from July 1 to after June 15 by emergency order. **Pot configuration requirement: at least 4 escape rings (> 4.5 inch diameter) per pot located within one mesh of the bottom of the pot, or at least ½ of the vertical surface of a square pot or sloping side-wall surface of a conical or pyramid pot with mesh size > 6.5 inches.**
2008	**Market preferred size of ≥ 5 inch CW became a standard commercial retained size.**
2012	The BOF adopted a revised GHL for summer fishery.
2016	Winter GHL for commercial fisheries was established and modified winter fishing season dates were implemented.
2019	The NSEDC stopped purchasing of the winter commercial crab.
2020 2021	The BOF closed summer commercial fishery East of 167 longitude. Summer commercial fisheries opened but the NSEDC did not purchase the summer commercial crab.
2021	Summer commercial fishery Change winter fishery open date to February 1

2. Summary of the history of the $B_{MSY.}$

   NSRKC is a Tier 4 crab stock. Direct estimation of the B_{MSY} is not possible. The B_{MSY} proxy is calculated as the mean model estimated mature male biomass (MMB) from 1980 to the present. The choice of this period was based on a hypothesized shift in stock productivity due to a climatic regime shift indexed by the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) in 1976-77.

D. Data



Time series of available data: Gray dot indicates fisheries by large vessel. NOAA trawl includes NMFS (1976-1991) and NBS (2010-present).

1. Summary of new information:

   Winter subsistence harvest (Total, Retained)
   Winter commercial (Retained)
   Summer commercial (Retained, length-shell composition)
   Trawl surveys (Abundance, length-shell compositions)
   ADF&G and NOAA NBS
   Standardized CPUE

2. Data which should be presented as time series:

   a. Total catch

Winter commercial and subsistence fisheries (Table 2):

The winter commercial fishery retained catch in 2023 was 3,509 crab (10,013 lb). As of Dec 2023 with 43% of permits returned winter subsistence total male crab catch was 703 and retained male crab catch was 573, and total female catch was 59 and the retained female was 0.

Summer commercial fishery (Table 1)

The summer commercial fishery opened on 6/15/2023 and closed on 7/24/2023. A total of 146,087 crabs (413,327 lb) were harvested.

b. Bycatch and Discards

Bycatches in other fisheries

In Norton Sound, the directed Pacific cod pot fishery was issued in 2018 under the CDQ permit. In 2018 and 2019 fishery seasons, a total of 8 and 13 kg (mortality applied) of NSRKC were taken in the groundfish fisheries (CPT 2020). However, all bycatch occurred to the west of 168.0 longitude where NSRKC survey has not been conducted. Norton Sound Fishery Management Area (Q3) extends to St. Lawrence Island and US-Russia border (Figure 1). In the absence of survey abundance extended to those area, it is questionable whether those bycatch mortalities should be included in the NSRKC population.

	Fishery	Data availability
Other crab fisheries	Does not exist	NA
Groundfish pot	Pacific cod	Y
Groundfish trawl	Does not exist	NA
Scallop fishery	Does not exist	NA

Discards (Appendix C)

c. Catch-at-length for fisheries, bycatch, discards, and surveys.

Length-shell data have been collected in

Summer commercial retained (Table 4)
Winter commercial retained (Table 5)
Summer commercial discards (Table 8)
Summer commercial total (Table 9)

d. Survey biomass estimates

Trawl survey (Table 3)

The trawl survey consists of 3 surveys: NMFS triennial survey: 1976-1992, ADF&G survey: 1996-2023, and NOAA NBS survey: 2010, 2017-2023. Since initiation of the survey in 1976, Norton Sound trawl surveys have never had a defined survey coverage grids. Survey coverage changed based on availability of budget, survery schedule, and research interests a the time (Figures 18,19).

NMFS triennial survey:

A Norton Sound trawl survey was initiated by NMFS in 1976 to assess the stock status of crab and groundfish in Norton Sound and Kotzebue Sound. The survey established 10 nautical mile (nm) grid survey stations throughout the entire Norton Sound and 15 nm grids outside the Norton Sound area. The initial Norton Sound survey became the standard stations moving forward. The survey was conducted from mid-late August to September-October, except for 1979, which was in late July/early August. The survey used 83-112 Eastern Otter trawl gear, with a tow distance of 1.3 – 1.7 nm (30 minutes tow). The survey was terminated in 1992.

ADF&G triennial -annual survey:

After the termination of the NMFS trawl survey, ADF&G began trawl surveys in 1996 using the same survey stations, but using smaller boat and smaller survey coverage. The survey started as triennial but it became an annual survey in 2017 and biennial in 2021. The survey usually occurs in late July – mid August, using 400 Eastern Otter trawl gear with a tow distance of 1.0 nm. The survey used to have a re-tow protocol: when the first tow caught more than 5 legal red king crab, the station was re-towed. This protocol was dropped in 2012 in favor of more coverage.

NOAA biennial-annual NBS survey:

NOAA NBS trawl survey started in 2010, and biennially since 2017. The survey occurs in late July-mid August, similar to the ADF&G survey. The survey has 20 nm grid using 83-112 Eastern Otter trawl gear, with tow distance of 1.3 – 2.5 nm (30 min tow).

Abundance estimation method

Methods of estimating red king crab abundance differed among the three surveys and throughout time periods. Abundance estimates have been revised many times.

Abundance and CV of the NMFS 1976-1991 surveys were provided by NOAA (Jon Richer NOAA p*ersonal communication*). The abundance was estimated by averaging catch CPUE (#/nm^2) of all surveyed stations was multiplied by standard Norton Sound Area (7600 nm^2) (i.e., N = 7600*mean CPUE). The ADF&G survey abundance is calculated at each station (i.e., n= CPUE*100 nm^2) and summed across all surveyed stations (i.e., N = sum of 100*CPUEs) (Bell and Hamazaki 2019). Extent of the ADF&G survey coverage differed among years due to survey conditions, and survey abundance has not been standardized. NOAA NBS survey abundance is estimated by the author in similar manner as ADF&G survey with the data limited to the Norton Sound survey area that overlaps the ADF&G survey area (5841 nm^2) (Figure A).

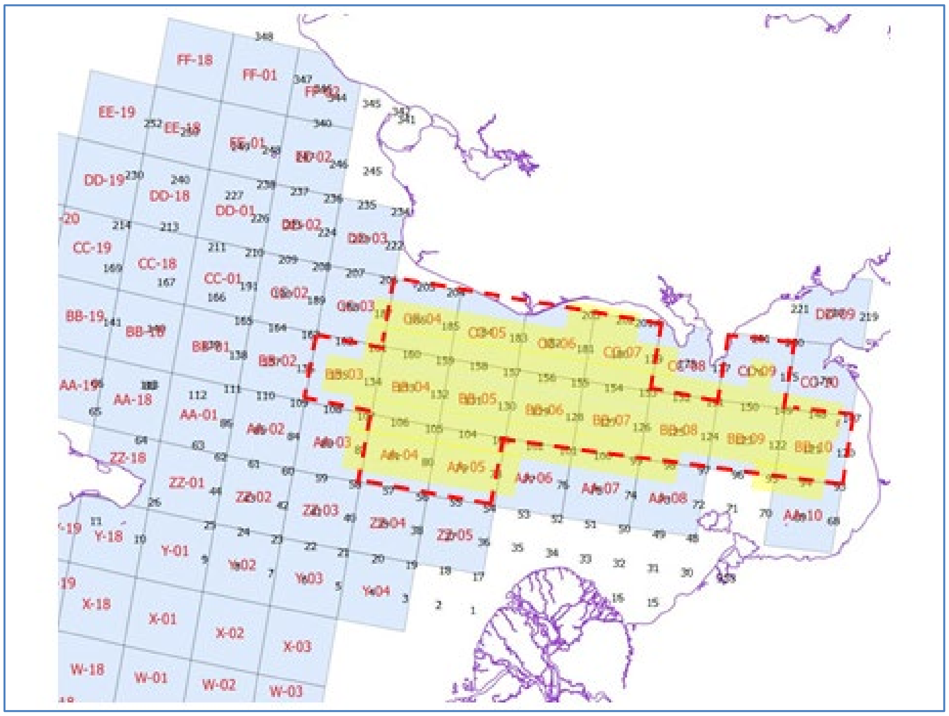


Figure A. ADF&G trawl survey coverage (yellow shade) and NOAA NBS trawl survey coverage where abundance estimates were made (red hashed line),

Survey catchability appears to differ among ADF&G, NMFS, and NOAA NBS trawl surveys. ADF&G trawl survey abundance tends to be higher than NMFS and NOAA NBS trawl survey even though NMFS and NOAA NBS survey coverages are greater than ADF&G. The assessment model assumes (recommendation by CPT-SSC) that survey q of ADF&G trawl survey be 1.0, which resulted in q = 0.7-0.8 for NMFS and 0.7-0.96 for NOAA NBS survey.

Trawl survey catches are highly patchy. The majority of catches occurred at 1 to 4 stations that caught 20% to 80% of crabs caught during the entire survey (Figure B). The most consistently abundant survey stations are near Nome (blue dots) outside of the summer commercial fishery area (red rectangular). Some offshore stations had high catches for a few years (orange dots: 1990s, yellow dots: 2020s) but they did not persist.

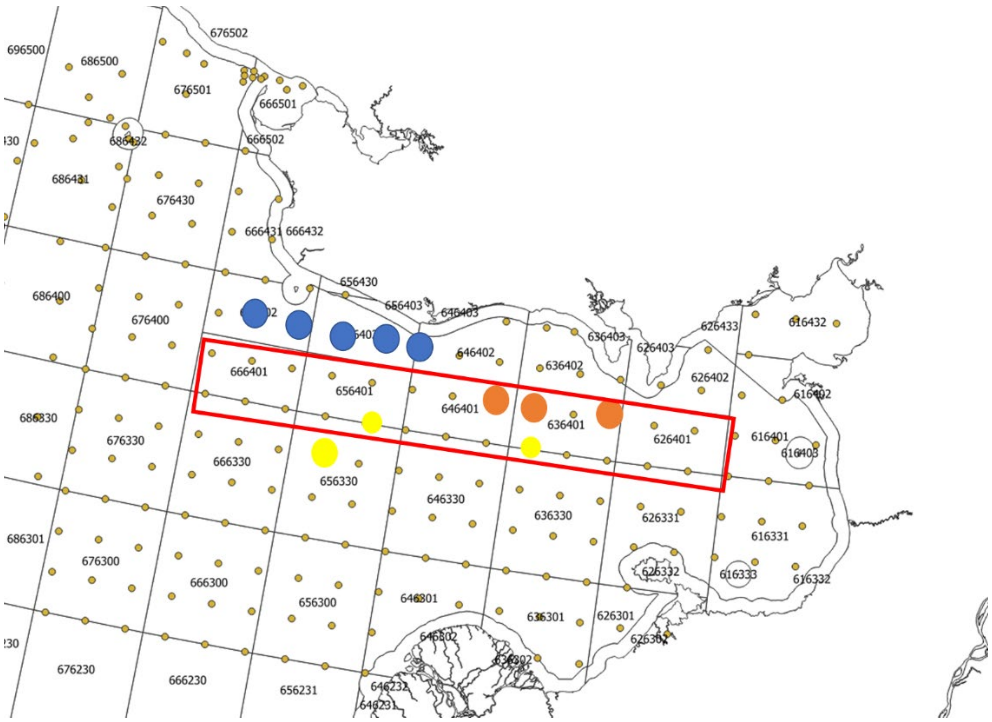


Figure B. Trawl survey stations where majority of catch occurred. Red rectangular indicates where the majority of summer commercial fishery occurs. Blue dots indicate the stations that had high catch consistently since 1976. Orange and yellow dots indicate high crab catch stations that occurred during the 1990s (orange) and 2020s (yellow).

e. Survey catch-at-length

Summer trawl survey (Table 6)
Winter pot survey (Table 7)

f. Catch-per-unite effort time-series

Standardized CPUE (Appendix B, Table 1).

Standardized summer commercial fishery CPUE is included in the NSRKC assessment model as an index of NSRKC abundance that could supplement triennial trawl survey. In 2013, the CPUE standardization model was developed by Gretchen Bishop (ADF&G) (NPFMC 2013). Since then, the same model has been applied with updated data (Appendix B).
Standardized CPUE for the years of 1991, 2020, and 2021 were not calculated because a commercial fishery was closed (1991) or no crab was harvested during the commercial fishery (2020, 2021).

The standardized CPUE consists of the 3 periods:
1977-1992: Large Scale commercial fishery (CL > 4.75 inches)
1993-2007: Small boat commercial fishery (CL > 4.75 inches)
2008-2023: Small boat commercial fishery with high grading (CL > 5.0 inches)

g. Other times series data

NONE

3. Data which may be aggregated over time

a. Growth-per-molt

Tagging-recovery data (Table 10)

Norton Sound red king crab tagging was initially conducted in 1980 as a part of mark-recapture abundance survey (Brannian 1987). The study was conducted in 1980-1982 and 1985. From 1986 to 2012 crabs were tagged during the winter pot survey. The winter pot surveys tagged more smaller (sublegal) crabs; however, very few were recovered. Tagging resumed from 2012-2015 for a spring migration movement survey. In all the above studies, most of the tagged crabs were recovered by commercial fishermen, but subsistence fishermen also recovered a small number of tags.

b. Weight-at length
Weight-at-length data were summarized as:

Length class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
lb	0.52	0.82	1.20	1.70	2.32	3.00	3.69	4.37

4. Information on any data sources that were available, but were excluded from the assessment

- Trawl survey females data, surface-bottom temperature, salinity
- Tagging-recovery locations (2012-2019)
- Satellite tag migration tracking (NOAA 2016, ADF&G 2020-21)
- Spring offshore migration distance and direction (2012-2015)
- Monthly blood hormone level (indication of molting timing) (2014-2015)
- Functional maturity and mating success of captured crab (2021-22)

Other list of data available but not used for assessment

Data	Years	Data Types	Reason for not used

Summer pot survey	80-82,85	Abundance Length proportion	Uncertainties on how estimates were made.
Summer preseason survey	95	Length proportion	Just one year of data
Summer subsistence fishery	2005-2019	retained catch	Too few catches, ignored.
Winter Pot survey	87, 89-91,93,95-00,02-12	CPUE	CPUE data unreliable.
Preseason Spring pot survey	2011-15	CPUE, Length proportion	Years of data too short
Postseason Fall pot survey	2013-15	CPUE, Length proportion	Years of data too short

E. Analytic Approach

1. History of the modeling approach and issues:

The Norton Sound red king crab stock was assessed using a length-based synthesis model (Zheng et al. 1998). Since adoption of the model, the model had the following model mismatches:

1. Model projects higher abundance-proportions of large size class (> 123mm CL) of crab than observed.

2. Poor model fit to trawl survey abundance.

3. Some model parameters hit boundaries

The issues of 1 and 2 are attributed to natural mortality specification. Natural mortality *M* specification was originally specified to be 0.2 for BSAI red king crab stocks including NSRKC (NPFMC 1998) and was specified to 0.18 with Amendment 24 (NPFMC 2011). In crab stock assessment modeling, natural mortality is assumed to be the same across all individual lengths (i.e., length-independent *M*).

1. Model projects higher abundance-proportions of large size class (> 123mm CL) of crab.

   This issue has been solved by assuming (3-4 times) higher *M* for the large crab (i.e., *M* = 0.18 for length classes ≤ 123 mm, and higher *M* for > 123 mm) (NPFMC 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). However, because this solution deviates from the length-indepenent *M* assumption applied to all the other crab assessment models, several alternative assumptions have been considered in the past.

   a. Large crabs move out of the survey and fishing area

      In modeling, this was dealt with by setting dome-shaped survey and commercial catch selectivity (i.e., lower catchability for large crabs). This modeling configuration resulted in estimating MMB two times higher than the default model, which indicates that true NSRKC abundance is two-times larger than the current trawl survey and commercial crab fishery indicate (NPFMC 2017). The NOAA NBS surveys (2010, 2017, 2019, 2021) did not find high numbers of red king crabs outside Norton Sound. The large crab could also be nearshore where the commercial fishery is closed, and a trawl survey is not conducted due to rocky bottom. However, spring tagging studies showed that most crabs migrated from near shore to offshore (fishing) area (Jenefer Bell, ADF&G personal comm.). There was little evidence that large crabs stay in nearshore waters during summer.

b. Molting and growth of NSRKC are slower. (i.e., model overestimating molting and growth probability: transition matrix)

The model originally estimated the transition outside of the model. In 2014 the model was configured to estimate the transition matrix inside of the assessment model (NPFMC 2014). The transition matrix estimated inside of the model was similar to that estimated outside of the model. When length-specific molting probability was estimated individually, the shape of the probability curve was also similar to the default inverse logistic molting function (NPFMC 2016). A time-varying molting function (random walk) process did not improve model fit. Laboratory studies showed that observed growth after molting was comparable to those from tag-recovery data, though sample size was limited and comparable tank-natural condition factors such as water temperature and food availability, were questionable (Leah Zacher of NOAA AFSC *personal comm*).

c. Higher natural mortality (M) than assumed $M = 0.18$

Profile analyses and estimating M across all length classes resulted in higher M (0.3-0.45) than default M=0.18 (NPFMC 2013, 2016, 2017). However, the model fit is worse than the default model.

d. Higher natural mortality ($M > 0.18$) for small crab and large crab having higher mortality than small crab.

This model configuration had the best fit to data (NPFMC 2016, 2017).

e. Gradual size-dependent natural mortality.

The default assessment model assumes an abrupt M increase at size CL 124mm or greater. An alternative model suggested that M gradually increasing from size as low as 94 mm CL; however, the overall model fit did not greatly improve from the default model (NPFMC 2017). In 2022, CPT requested estimating M for each length class, which also suggested length-dependent natural mortality. However, this resulted in M=0 for immature crabs (size classes 1, 2) (NPFMC 2022).

2. Poor model fit to trawl survey abundance, especially NMFS survey (1976-1992) data

The NSRKC assessment model suggests higher crab abundance than observed during the 1976-1990s period. The model deals with this issue by including survey q ($q < 1$), or the model assumes the NMFS trawl surveys underestimated NSRKC abundance. However, this assumption is arbitrary, which is also affected by other model configurations. For instance, when $M = 0.18$ is assumed for all length classes, the model suggests that survey q for NMFS is greater than 1.0 (NPFMC 2022).

Alternatively, assuming the NMFS survey q to be 1.0 resulted in ADF&G trawl survey q greater than 1.0 (i.e., trawl survey overestimates abundance), even though ADF&G trawl survey area is generally smaller than NMFS and NOAA NBS survey areas.

This model fitting issue was also influenced by input sample sizes for size-shell compositions. Increasing the input sample size resulted in the model estimating lower abundance. Reducing the input sample sizes improved model fit to the trawl survey data but caused lower fit to size-shell composition data (NPFMC 2012, 2013, 2015). Alternative model weighting methods (e.g., Francis 2012) have been tried, but those did not improve model fit.

3. Some model parameters hit boundaries.

There are two model parameters that hits boundaries: Trawl survey selectivity (log_ϕ_{st1}), and the proportion of recruits (r1, r2).

1. Trawl Survey selectivity parameter

Trawl survey selectivity model is a one parameter logistic curve that reaches 1.0 at L_{max} (143.5 mm)

$$S_l = \frac{1}{1 + e^{(\alpha(L_{\max} - L) + \ln(1/0.999 - 1))}}$$

where α = exp(log_ϕ_{st1}), L_{max} = 143.5 mm L (63.5-143.5 mm)

Model estimated trawl survey selectivity is 1.0 across all size classes. This means that $e^{(\alpha(L_{\max} - L) + \ln(1/0.999 - 1))} \approx 0$, $\alpha(L_{max}-L)+\ln(1/0.999-1) = -\infty$, $\alpha \approx 0$, and $log\_\phi_{st1} = -\infty$. Hence, the parameter will hit the boundary.

Alternative option is assuming S_l = 1.0 for all length classes; however, this also removes the model's ability to estimate S_l when all length classes are NOT 1.0.

2. The proportion of recruits

The proportion of recruits is a multinomial formula of n =3

$$p_l = \frac{\exp(r_l)}{1+\sum_{l=1}^{n-1}\exp(r_l)} \quad \text{for } l = 1,..,n-1$$

$$p_n = 1 - \frac{\sum_{l=1}^{n-1}\exp(r_l)}{1+\sum_{l=1}^{n-1}\exp(r_l)}$$

Model estimated recruit proportions for length classes 1, 2, 3 (P_1, P_2, P_3) are 0.592, 0403, and 0.003. $P_3 \approx 0$ makes it extremely difficult for the model to estimate P_1 and P_2., and thus model parameters r1 and r2 (Tables 11, 12). Increasing the upper bound of the r parameters would still make r1 hit the boundary and make estimates of P_1, P_2, P_3 to be closer to $P_1 = 0.60$, $P_2 = 0.40$, and P_3=0. An alternative option is assuming $P_3 = 0$; however, this also removes the model's ability to estimate P_3 when P_3 is far greater than 0.

Historical Model configuration progression:

2011 (NPFMC 2011)
1). M =0.18. : **Implemented**
2). M of the last length class = 0.288.
3). Include summer commercial discards mortality = 0.2. : **Implemented**
4). Weight of fishing effort = 20.
5). The maximum effective sample size for commercial catch and winter surveys = 100.

2012 (NPFMC 2012)
1) M of the last length class = 3.6×M.
2) The maximum effective sample size for commercial catch and winter surveys = 50. **Implemented**
3) Weight of fishing effort = 50.

2013 (NPFMC 2013)
2) Standardize commercial catch CPUE and replace the likelihood of commercial catch efforts with standardized commercial catch CPUE with weight = 1.0. **Implemented**
3) Eliminate summer pot survey data from likelihood. **Implemented**
4) Estimate survey q of 1976-1991 NMFS survey with a maximum of 1.0. **Implemented**
5) The maximum effective sample size for commercial catch and winter surveys = 20. **Implemented**

2014 (NPFMC 2014)
1) Modify the functional form of selectivity and molting probability to improve parameter estimates (2 parameter logistic to 1 parameter logistic). **Implemented**
2) Include additional variance for the standardized CPUE. **Implemented**
3) Include winter pot survey CPUE (was removed from the final model due to lack of fit).
4) Estimate growth transition matrix from tag-recovery data. **Implemented**

2015 (NPFMC 2015)

1) Winter pot survey selectivity is an inverse logistic, estimating selectivity of the smallest length group independently. **Implemented**
2) Reduce weight of tag-recovery: W = 0.5. **Implemented**
3) Model parsimony: one trawl survey selectivity and one commercial pot selectivity. : **Implemented**

2016 (NPFMC 2016)
1) Length range extended from 74 mm – 124 mm above to 64 mm – 134 mm above. **Implemented**
2) Estimate multiplier for the largest (> 123mm) length classes. **Implemented**

2017 (NPFMC 2017)
1) Change molting probability function from 1 to 2 parameter logistic. Assume molting probability not reaching 1 for the smallest length class. **Implemented**

2018 (NPFMC 2017) CPT-SSC suggested no model alternatives

2019 (NPFMC 2019)
1) Fit total catch length composition and estimate retention probability for summer and winter commercial fishery. **Implemented**
2) Include winter commercial retained length data. **Implemented**

2020 (NPFMC 2020) The CPT and SSC suggested no model alternatives

2021 (NPFMC 2021) Include discards data at the request of CPT and SSC
1) Models that bridge from the Model 19.0e to 21.0
2) Model 21.0 with natural mortality estimated by model. **Rejected** for high *M* estimate
3) Estimate size specific natural mortality. **Rejected** for unrealistic *M* estimate

2022 (NPFMC 2022)
1) Examine shell-based retention probability. **Rejecte**d for model parsimony
2) Estimate individual length class *M*. **Rejected** for unrealistic *M* estimates

2023 (NPFMC 2023)
1) Model with single *M estimated.*

2. Model Description

a. Description of overall modeling approach:

The model is a male-only size structured model based on abundance that combines multiple sources of surveys, fishery catches and discards, and mark-recovery data using a maximum likelihood modeling framework to estimate population dynamics under fisheries. The model is an extension of the length-based model developed by Zheng et al. (1998) for NSRKC. A detailed description of the model is in Appendix A.

The model estimates abundances of male crab with CL ≥ 64 mm and with 10 mm length intervals (8 length classes, ≥ 134mm) because few crab measuring less than 64 mm CL were caught during surveys or fisheries.

The model assumes newshell crab as molted and oldshell crab as unmolted.

One critical characteristic of the model is that it does not estimate fishing mortality (F). Observed harvests were considered accurate and thus directly subtracted from the model estimated abundance.

The modeling scheme and data is described in the following figure.

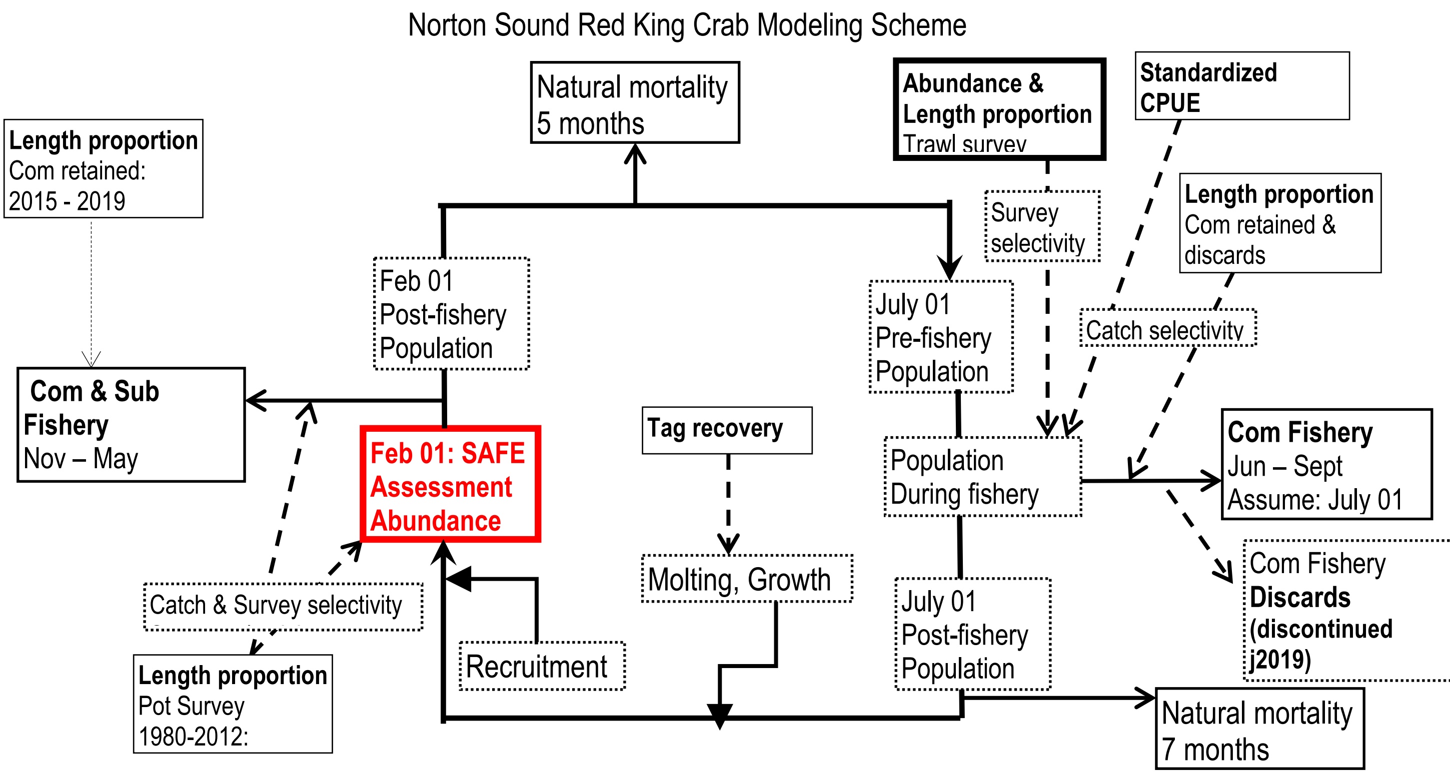


Figure C. Norton Sound red king crab model and data scheme. Bold type indicate data that were fitted to the model. Boxes in dotted line indicate model estimated parameters and quantities. Natural mortality, M was set to 0.18 except for CL greater than 123mm that was estimated in the model.

Timeline of calendar events and crab modeling events:

- Model year starts February 1st to January 31st of the following year.
- Initial Population Date: February 1st, 1976, consisting of only newshell crab.
- Instantaneous fishing mortality: winter (February 1st) and summer (July 1st) fisheries

- Instantaneous molting and recruitment occur on July 1st

Critical model assumptions

NSRKC Crab Biology

1. Instantaneous annual natural mortality (*M*) is 0.18 and increases at the size greater than 123 mm CL. *M* is constant over time.

   See History of the modeling approach and issues section for detailed discussion regarding this assumption

2. Male crab size at maturity is 94mm CL.

Size at maturity of NSRKC is highly uncertain (NPFMC 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021). First, maturity has two categories (biological and functional). Biological maturity indicates that male red king crab can produce viable sperm, whereas functional maturity indicates that male red king crab are large enough to mate. The former can be determined using the presence/absence of spermatophores in the vas deferens, whereas the latter can be inferred by measuring mating pairs *in situ* or in lab experiments. The current NSRKC functional maturity size (>94 mm) was inferred from Bristol Bay red king crab by incorporating the fact that Norton Sound red king crab are smaller. Recent laboratory studies reported that NSRKC male crab as small as 79.4 mm CL can fertilize females (Leah Zacher NOAA Kodiak *personal comm*).

Although determining size at functional maturity is important biologically, there is limited utility of this information for Tier 4 crab stock assessment. In Tier 4 stock assessment, size at maturity is used only for calculation of mature male biomass (MMB) and B_{MSY} (average MMB). Harvest control (F_{OFL}) is based on the ratio of projected MMB and B_{MSY} (projected MMB/B_{MSY}).

Level	Criteria	F_{OFL}
a	$B/B_{MSY^{prox}} > 1$	$F_{OFL} = \gamma M$
b	$\beta < B/B_{MSY^{prox}} \le 1$	$F_{OFL} = \gamma M\,(B/B_{MSY^{prox}} - \alpha)/(1-\alpha)$
c	$B/B_{MSY^{prox}} \le \beta$	$F_{OFL} = bycatch\ mortality\ \&\ directed\ \ fishery\ F = 0$

where B is a mature male biomass (MMB), B_{MSY} proxy is average mature male biomass over a specified time period, $M = 0.18$, $\gamma = 1$, $\alpha = 0.1$, and $\beta = 0.25$.

The MMB/B_{MSY} ratio is affected very little by changes of maturity size unless the ratio is very close to 1.0 (Tier 4a vs Tier 4b borderline). To illustrate this, we present 2022 assessment model results with various minimum size at maturity cutoffs, as follows.

Maturity size	74mm	84mm	94mm (default)	104mm	114mm	124mm	>134mm
B_{MSY} mil. lb	5.21	4.92	4.88	3.76	2.71	1.33	0.39
MMB(2022) mil. lb	5.91	5.61	5.21	4.42	2.86	1.03	0.27
MMB/B_{MSY}	1.13	1.14	1.16	1.18	1.06	0.77	0.70
Tier 4 level	a	a	a	a	a	b	b
F_{OFL}	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.13	0.12

3. Molting occurs right after the summer fishery.

Molt timing of NSRKC was verified by field and laboratory survey. Double shelled crabs are often observed in September (Joyce Soong *ADFG personal comm.*), and crabs sent to Kodiak Lab molted in September-October (Leah Zacher *NOAA personal comm*).

4. Recruitment occurs in fall at the same time as molting.

In NSRKC assessment modeling, recruitment is not a function of mature males, but estimated model parameters entering to the immature length classes 64 mm - 93 mm. In modeling, this adjustment is done at the same time as molting-growth.

5. Molting probability is a descending logistic function of crab size. Molted crab become newshell and unmolted crab become oldshell crab.

Tag recovery data during the 2012-2014 study suggest lower molting probability for larger crabs. The table below shows the number of newshell crab tagged, released, and recaptured at 1 year of liberty. Crabs recaptured newshell is considered as molted and oldshell is considered as unmomolted.

Length Class	Newshell	Oldshell	% molted
1 (64-73mm)	3	0	100
2 (74-83mm)	30	0	100
3 (84-93mm)	64	5	93
4 (94-103mm)	113	9	93
5 (104-113mm)	44	36	56
6 (114-123mm)	22	21	51
7 (124-133mm)	5	10	33
8 (>133mm)	0	4	0

This assumes that shell condition observations are correct, which is difficult to verify objectively. For instance, in tag-recovery data (2012-2016) below, 125 crabs had no growth (+/- 3 mm) in one year of liberty. Of those, 100 crabs were released as newshell and 25 crabs were released as oldshell. If no growth is considered unmolted, all those crabs should be recaptured as oldshell. However, 29% of crabs released as newshell were recaptured as newshell crab and 48% of crabs released as oldshell were recaptured as newshell.

	Recovered	
Released	Newshell	Oldshell
Newshell	29	73
Oldshell	14	13

This could be caused by (1) inaccurate length measurement, (2) inaccurate shell condition assessment, or (3) no growth after molting.

6. Growth increment is a function of length, constant over time. Molted crab does not shrink.

   Tag recovery data showed that growth increment of large crab tend to be smaller than that of small crab (Figure D). The data also showed negative growth increment, at the largest length class.

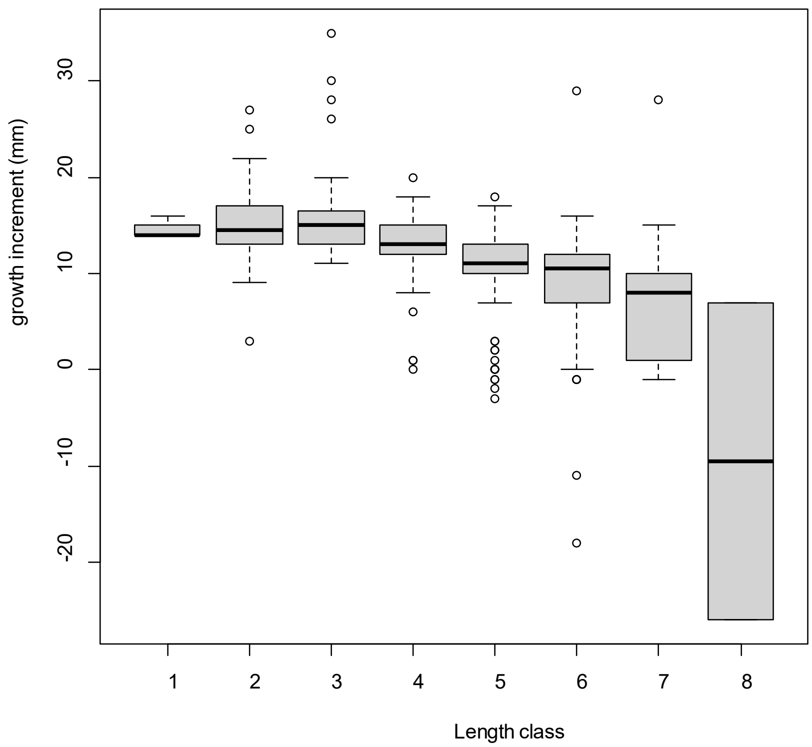


Figure D. Growth increment by tagged length class of molted (newshell recovered) crab with 1 year at liberty.

NSRKC Surveys

1. ADF&G trawl survey (1996-2021) abundance has the same scale as the population (i.e., catchability q = 1.0). Abundances by historical NMFS (1976-1991) and NOAA NBS (2010-present) survey are biased low (i.e., q < 1.0).

   Survey q =1.0 for ADF&G trawl survey and lower survey q for NOAA survey was adopted in 2013 assessment (NPFMC 2013). However, it is possible that ADF&G surveys are overestimates of abundance. Model estimated survey q for ADF&G trawl survey was greater than 1.0 (NPFMC 2013, 2019).

2. Size selectivity is an asymptotic one parameter logistic function of 1.0 at the length class 134 mm CL and the same across years and survey agencies.

$$S_l = \frac{1}{1 + e^{(\alpha(L_{\max} - L) + \ln(1/0.999 - 1))}}$$

This logistic function form was adopted during the crab workshop in 2005 to reduce model parameters and increase parameter estimation stability.

Although the surveys differ among NOAA (1976-1991), ADF&G (1996-2021), and NOAA NBS (2010-present) in terms of survey vessel and trawl net structure, selectivity of all surveys were assumed to be identical. Model fits separating and combining the surveys were examined in 2015; however, selectivity was essentially identical (1.0 across all size classes) (NPFMC 2015). For model parsimony, the SSC recommended using only one selectivity.

3. Winter pot survey selectivity is a dome shaped function: a combination of a reverse logistic function starting from length class 84 mm CL and model estimate for CL < 84 mm length classes. The selectivity is constant over time.

$$S_{w,l} = \frac{1}{1+e^{\alpha(L-\beta)}}$$

This assumption is based on the low proportion of large crab that are caught in the nearshore area where winter surveys occur. This does not necessarily imply that the crab pots are less selective to large crabs. Alternatively, this may imply that fewer large crab migrate into nearshore waters in winter.

NSRKC Fisheries

1. Fisheries occur twice on July 01 and Feb 01 and are instantaneous.

2. Summer commercial fishery size selectivity is an asymptotic one parameter logistic function of length, with the selectivity in length class 134 mm CL set to 1. Selectivity is constant over time.

$$S_l = \frac{1}{1+e^{(\alpha(L_{\max}-L)+\ln(1/0.999-1))}}$$

This logistic function form was adopted during the crab workshop in 2005 to reduce model parameters and parameter estimation stability. Although summer commercial fishery changed greatly between the periods (1977-1992, 1993-present) in terms of fishing vessel composition, and pot configuration, the selectivity of each period is assumed to be identical. Model fits of separating and combining the two periods were examined in 2015 and showed no difference between the two (NPFMC 2015). For model parsimony, the SSC recommended using only one selectivity.

3. Not all legal sized crabs are retained. Retention probability is an asymptotic logistic function.

Legal size of NSRKC is defined as carapace width (CW) greater than 4.75 inches that was conventionally equated as greater than 104 mm CL. Since 1996 ADF&G has started noting legal size crab based on carapace width in trawl, commercial fishery observer, and other miscellaneous surveys to complement the carapace length measurement. Originally, the proportion was based solely from the trawl survey. As more data are collected from commercial observer surveys, recent proportions are based on more observer data.

Proportion of legal (CW>4.75 inch) crab in Trawl survey

size class	64	74	84	94	104	114	124	134
1996	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.93	1.00	1.00	1.00
1999	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.40	0.98	0.98	1.00	1.00
2002	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.28	0.97	1.00	1.00	1.00
2006	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.18	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2008	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.19	0.96	1.00	1.00	1.00
2011	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.24	0.99	1.00	1.00	1.00
2014	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.98	1.00	1.00	1.00
2017	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2018	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.33	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2020	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.22	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Average	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.25**	**0.98**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**

Proportion of legal (CW>4.75 inch) crab in Observer survey

size class	64	74	84	94	104	114	124	134
2012	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.22	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00
2013	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.44	0.98	1.00	1.00	1.00
2014	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.22	0.91	1.00	1.00	1.00
2015	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.38	0.98	1.00	1.00	1.00
2016	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.46	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2017	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.91	1.00	1.00	1.00
2018	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.95	0.99	1.00	1.00
2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.93	1.00	1.00	1.00
Average	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.30**	**0.95**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**

The proportion of legal crab used in the assessment model is an average proportion based on observer survey data. In the assessment model, this proportion is used to estimate the number of retained crab in winter and summer commercial fisheries prior to 2008. It is assumed prior to 2008, all legal sized crab were retained.

Since 2008 commercially retained crab size is CW> 5.0 inches and retention probability is estimated from the observer survey.

The table below shows the proportion of legal vs. retained crab during the 2012-2019 observer survey, in response to request from the public.

Year		64	74	84	94	104	114	124	134
2012	Legal	0	0.01	0.02	0.22	0.9	1	1	1
	Retained	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.05**	**0.46**	**0.63**	**0.64**	**0.85**
2013	Legal	0	0	0	0.44	0.98	1	1	1
	Retained	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.14**	**0.86**	**0.99**	**1**	**1**
2014	Legal	0	0	0	0.22	0.91	1	1	1
	Retained	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.04**	**0.74**	**0.97**	**0.99**	**1**
2015	Legal	0	0	0	0.38	0.98	1	1	1
	Retained	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.11**	**0.74**	**0.91**	**0.94**	**0.89**
2016	Legal	0	0	0	0.46	1	1	1	1
	Retained	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.13**	**0.89**	**0.99**	**1**	**1**
2017	Legal	0	0	0	0.12	0.91	1	1	1
	Retained	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.02**	**0.75**	**0.99**	**1**	**1**
2018	Legal	0	0	0	0.16	0.95	0.99	1	1
	Retained	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.14**	**0.92**	**0.99**	**1**	**0.99**
2019	Legal	0	0	0	0.18	0.93	1	1	1
	Retained	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.15**	**0.93**	**1**	**1**	**1**

The proportion of legal sized crab retained from observer survey 2012-2019

Year	64	74	84	94	104	114	124	134
2012	0	0	0	0.23	0.51	0.63	0.64	0.85
2013	0	0	0	0.31	0.88	0.99	**1**	1
2014	0	0	0	0.19	0.82	0.97	0.99	1
2015	0	0	0	0.28	0.76	0.91	0.94	0.89
2016	0	0	0	0.28	0.89	0.99	1	1
2017	0	0	0	0.14	0.82	0.99	1	1
2018	0	0	0	0.87	0.98	1	1	0.99
2019	0	0	0	0.86	1	1	1	1

The above data justifies using logistic function as selection criteria.

Fishery	Model retention	Data
Summer:1977-2007	Logistic retention prob	Discard, retained size prop
Summer: 2008-2022	Logistic retention prob	Total, retained size prop
Winter: 1977-2007	Mean legal crab proportion	No data
Winter: 2008-2022	Logistic retention prob	Retained size prop
Winter: Subsistence	All crab > 94mm retained	No data (No legal size limit)

3. Winter commercial pot selectivity is the same as the selectivity of the winter pot survey.

   This assumption is based on the survey pot being similar to the one used for subsistence, and that many commercial fishermen are also subsistence harvesters. However, by regulation winter commercial king crab pots can be any dimension (5AAC 34.925(d)) and recent popularity of winter commercial fishery may have deviated this assumption.

4. Winter subsistence fishery retains crab size greater than 94 mm CL.

   This was based on the assumption that subsistence fishermen would keep crab smaller than legal crab size. By regulation, subsistence fishery had no size limit for retention. Size of crab caught by subsistence fishery has never been monitored.

5. Discards handling mortality rate for all fisheries is 20%.

   Discards mortality rate was specified by CPT. No empirical estimates are available.

Model data weighting

Survey data	Input sample size
Summer commercial, winter pot, and summer observer	minimum of 0.1 × actual sample size or 10
Summer trawl and pot survey	minimum of 0.5 × actual sample size or 20
Tag recovery	0.5× actual sample size

Recruitment SD: 0.5.

Discards CV: 0.3

“Implied” effective sample sizes were calculated as

$$n = \sum_l \hat{P}_{y,l}(1-\hat{P}_{y,l}) \Big/ \sum_l (P_{y,l} - \hat{P}_{y,l})^2$$

Where $P_{y,l}$ and $\hat{P}_{y,l}$ are observed and estimated length compositions in year y and length group l, respectively. Estimated implied effective sample sizes vary greatly over time.

Data-weighting for NSRKC model is aimed at achieving a balance between various data sets. The current model data weighting schemes, although arbitrary, were deemed appropriate by the CPT-SSC (NPFMC 2011, 2012, See Section E. 1. *Historical Model configuration progression* section). As illustrated in the figure below, increasing weight of size composition data (input sample size: from minimum) would lower model fit to the trawl survey abundance data.

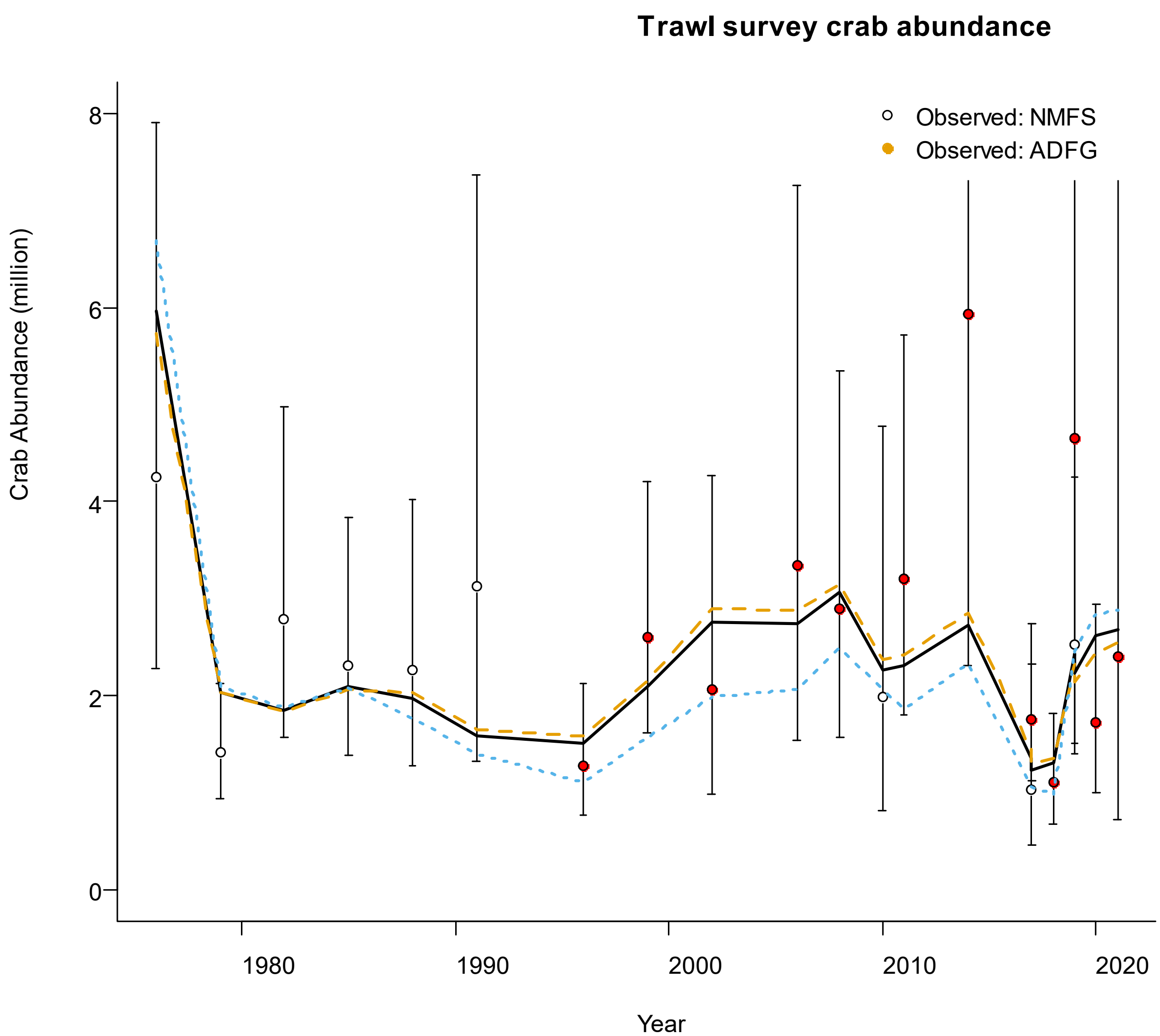


Figure E. Model 21.0 default input sample size (20: trawl, 10: others) (black) vs. increased input sample size (200, 100) (blue dash line), and reduce input size (10, 5) (orange hash line).

Thus far, there is no objective criteria for determining the balance (i.e., how much a model should fit observed trawl abundance data vs. size composition data). The author has tried alternative weighting schemes (NPFMC 2019, 2020, 2021) and found current ones are most appropriate.

Changes of assumptions since last assessment:

None

3. Model Selection and Evaluation

a. Description of alternative model configurations.

For the 2024 draft assessment, the following alternative models are presented.

Model 21.0: Default 2021 model.
Model 23.0: Single *M* estimated for all length classes (SSC request Feb 2023)
Model 23.1: Single *M* estimated for all length classes with *M* prior (SSC request Oct 2023)

Model	*M*
21.0	0.18+est (L)
23.0	Est
23.1	Est with *M* prior

In Sep-Oct 2023 CPT-SSC recommended to bring the 21.0 and 23.0 for the final assessment.

4. Results

Same to the results from the 2016 (NPFMC 2016), and the draft presented in Sept 2023. model 23.0 estimated higher *M* that was slightly lower than *M* =0.42 estimated in 2015. Similar also to 2015 model run, the largest difference between the two models (21.0 vs. 23.0) was that model 23.0 had higher likelihood (i.e., less model fit) on size-shell composition. However, this difference is hardly noticeable (Figures 8-12).
The other noticeable difference is the size selectivity of trawl, fisheries, and retention. Model 23.0 showed asymptotic size selectivity, compared to flat selectivity of 1.0 for model 21.0 (Figure 3). Model 23.0 had lower fishery selectivity and retention probability for smaller sized crabs than model 21.0, whereas winter pot selectivity of large crabs was higher for model 23.0.

Those differences are reflections of different interpretations of the population dynamic between the two models. While model 21.0 assumed extremely high mortality of large crabs, model 23.0 assumed high productivity and mortality of recruits that are unobserved in trawl survey or not caught by fisheries. This assumption can be reasonable. Given the same size, the fecundity of NSRKC is 40-70% greater than BBRKC (Otto et al. 1989). On the other hand, Mohn's Rho of the retrospective analysis was 0.024 for Model 21.0 and 0.014 for Model 23.0, which suggests that Model 23.0 is a better model based on retrospective patterns.

Model 23.1

The author also evaluated Model 23.1. In this alternative, an additional likelihood was included as

$$nll_M = \ln\left(M\sqrt{2\pi\sigma_{Mp}}\right) + \frac{\left(\ln(M) - \ln(M_p)\right)^2}{2\sigma_{Mp}^2}$$

where

$$\sigma_{Mp}^2 = \ln(1 + cv_{Mp}^2)$$

M is model estimate natural mortality, M_p and cv_{Mp} are prior mean and cv.

The alternative model results are not presented because the results were similar to models 21.0 and 23.0.

As expected, the estimate of M was highly dependent upon the choice of prior (e.g., mean and cv). When prior was set highly informative, such as mean = 0.18 and cv = 0.04 (BBRKC prior specification 2023), the estimated M was 0.206 (nll 420.3), and when it was set to be less informative such that cv was increased to 0.5, the estimated M was 0.399 (nll 383.9). The above is based on prior mean of 0.18. As the prior mean is increased, the estimated M also increased to closer to M = 0.408 that is an estimate of 23.0 (Figure 23.1a).

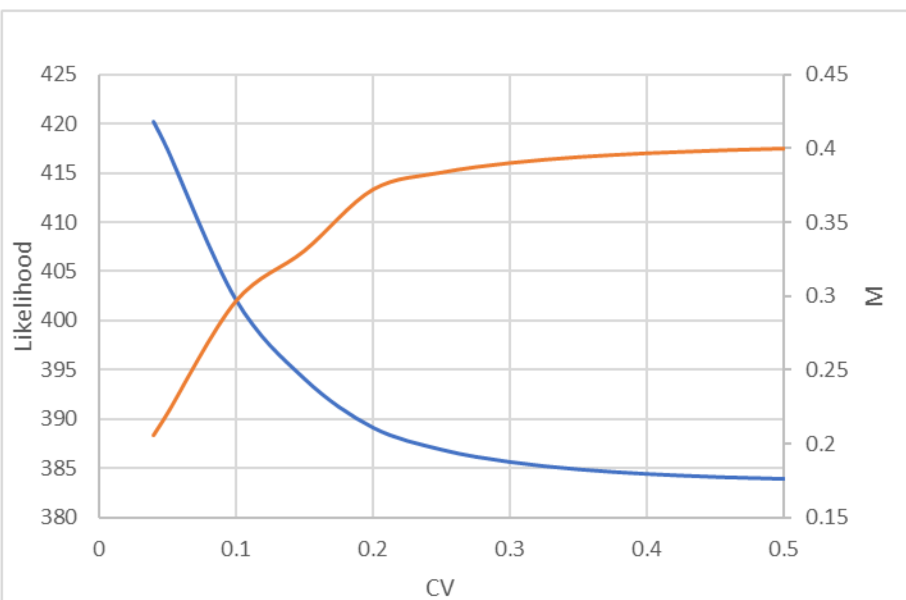


Figure 23.1a : assumed prior cv vs total negative log-likelihood (blue) and M estimate (Orange).

In the absence of data regarding *M* for NSRKC that is derived from empirical studies, the author contends that using a uniform and uninformative prior (i.e. Model 23.0) is the most appropriate.

For the selection of an assessment model for the OFL and ABC specification, the CPT and SSC requested to bring both for consideration (CPT-SSC Sept-Oct 2023), and thus no author recommendation is made.

Evaluation of negative log-likelihood values.

	Final		**Draft**	
Model	**21.0**	**23.0**	**21.0**	**23.0**
Additional Parameters		0		0
AIC change		+14.9		+13.4
Total	368.3	383.2	362.3	375.9
TSA	12.57	13.03	11.0	12.1
DIS	3.67	3.27	3.4	3.2
St.CPUE	-15.14	-14.79	-14.8	-14.8
TLP	142.68	146.15	134.0	142.2
WLP	39.49	39.90	39.6	40.1
CLP	51.02	55.05	49.5	54.4
OBS	24.64	28.17	24.3	28.0
WCLP	2.99	2.39	2.8	2.2
REC	21.20	21.79	19.4	20.7
TAG	85.12	88.26	85.0	87.8
M	0.18 0.613	0.408	0.18 0.615	0.4116
Total OFL	0.73	1.17	0.72	1.21

TSA: Trawl Survey Abundance
St. CPUE: Summer commercial catch standardized CPUE
TLP: Trawl survey length composition:
WLP: Winter pot survey length composition
CLP: Summer commercial retention catch length composition
REC: Recruitment deviation
OBS: Summer commercial catch observer discards and total catch length composition
TAG: Tagging recovery data composition
WCLP: Winter commercial length-shell composition
DIS: Summer commercial discards abundance

F. Calculation of the OFL

1. Specification of the Tier level and stock status.

NSRKC stock is placed in Tier 4. It is not possible to estimate the spawner-recruit relationship, but some abundance and harvest estimates are available to build a computer simulation model that captures the essential population dynamics. Tier 4 stocks are assumed to have reliable estimates of current survey biomass and instantaneous *M*; however, the estimates of *M* for NSRKC stock are uncertain.

At the Tier 4 level the OFL is determined by the F_{MSY} proxy, B_{MSY} proxy, and estimated legal male abundance and biomass:

Level	Criteria	F_{OFL}
A	$B/B_{MSY^{prox}} > 1$	$F_{OFL} = \gamma M$
B	$\beta < B/B_{MSY^{prox}} \le 1$	$F_{OFL} = \gamma M\, (B/B_{MSY^{prox}} - \alpha)/(1-\alpha)$
C	$B/B_{MSY^{prox}} \le \beta$	$F_{OFL} = bycatch\ mortality\ \&\ directed\ \ fishery\ F = 0$

where *B* is a mature male biomass (MMB), B_{MSY} proxy is average mature male biomass over a specified time period, $M = 0.18$, $\gamma = 1$, $\alpha = 0.1$, and $\beta = 0.25$.

For NSRKC, MMB is defined as the biomass of males > 94 mm CL on February 01 (Appendix A)**.** B_{MSY} proxy is

B_{MSY} proxy = average model estimated MMB from 1980-2024.

Estimated B_{MSY} proxy: 4.45 (Model 21.0), 4.45 (Model 23.0) million lb

Predicted mature male biomass in 2024 on February 01

Mature male biomass: 5.52 (Model 21.0), 4.92 (Model 23.0) million lb

Since the projected MMB is above B_{MSY} proxy,

The NSRKC status is Tire 4a

And F_{OFL} for calculation of the OFL is

$F_{OFL} = \gamma \cdot M$ for M is length invariant of 0.18 and $F_{OFL,l} = \gamma \cdot M_l$ for length-dependent *M*

2. Calculation formula of NSRKC OFL.

OFL of NSRKC is total OFL (OFL_T) that is a sum of the retained and unretained OFL (OFL_r, OFL_{nr}).

$$OFL_T = OFL_r + OFL_{ur}$$

where

$$OFL_r = retained\_B \cdot F_{OFL} \text{ and } OFL_{nr} = unretained\_B \cdot F_{OFL} \cdot hm$$

retained_B is a biomass of crab subject to fisheries that is a sum of the products of crab abundance ($N_{w,l}+ O_{w,l}$), fishery selectivity ($S_{s,l}$), retention probability ($S_{r,l}$), and average weight lb (wm_l) by length class (l).

$$retained\_B = \sum_l (N_{w,l,} + O_{w,l,}) S_{s,l} S_{r,l} wm_l$$

uretained_B is a biomass of crab subject to fisheries and is a sum of the products of crab abundance ($N_{w,l}+ O_{w,l}$), fishery selectivity ($S_{s,l}$), 1 minus retention probability ($S_{r,l}$), and average weight lb (wm_l) by length class (l).

$$unretained\_B = \sum_l (N_{w,l,} + O_{w,l,}) S_{s,l} (1 - S_{r,l}) wm_l$$

hm is handling mortality, default 0.2

The NSRKC fishery consists of two distinct fisheries: winter and summer. The two fisheries are discontinuous with 5 months (0.42 year) between the two fisheries during which natural mortality occurs. To estimate the OFL for the two fisheries, the CPT in 2016 recommended the following formula that the sum of winter and summer catch (Hw, Hs) equals total OFL (OFL = Hw+Hs) and that winter catch is a fraction (p) of total OFL: $H_w = p \cdot$OFL, where *p is predetermined fraction of* the winter fishery to total fishery. In NSRKC fishery p = 0.16 is used.

$$H_w = B_w(1 - \exp(-x \cdot F_{OFL})),$$

$$H_s = B_s(1 - \exp((1-x) \cdot F_{OFL})), \text{ and}$$

$$B_s = (B_w - Hw)e^{-0.42 \cdot M}$$

where

B_w is the winter NSRKC biomass, B_s is the summer NSRKC biomass, and x is a fraction parameter, Solving *x* of the above (see Appendix A for derivation), retained and unretained OFL is calculated as:

$$OFL = B_w\left(1-e^{-(F_{OFL}+0,42M)}-(1-e^{-0.42M})\left(\frac{1-p(1-e^{-(F_{OFL}+0.42M)})}{1-p(1-e^{-0.42M})}\right)\right) \qquad (1)$$

and

$$OFL_{nr} = unretained\_B_w \cdot FOFL_a \cdot hm$$
$$where \quad FOFL_a = \left(1-e^{-(F_{OFl}+0.42M)}-(1-e^{-0.42M})\left(\frac{1-p\cdot(1-e^{-(F_{OFL}+0.42M)})}{1-p\cdot(1-e^{-0.42M})}\right)\right) \qquad (2)$$

Because *M* of NSRKC is length-dependent, the proper calculation of NSRKC OFL should account for length-dependent *M* as:

$$OFL_r = \sum_l \left[retained\_B_{w,l} \cdot FOFL_{a,l}\right]$$
$$where \quad FOFL_{a,l} = \left(1-e^{-(F_{OF,l}+0.42M_l)}-(1-e^{-0.42M_l})\left(\frac{1-p\cdot(1-e^{-(F_{OFL,l}+0.42M_l)})}{1-p\cdot(1-e^{-0.42M_l})}\right)\right) \qquad (3)$$

and

$$OFL_{ur} = \sum_l \left[unretained\_B_{w,l} \cdot FOFL_{a,l}\right] \cdot hm$$
$$where \quad FOFL_{a,l} = \left(1-e^{-(F_{OFL,l}+0.42M_l)}-(1-e^{-0.42M_l})\left(\frac{1-p\cdot(1-e^{-(F_{OFL,l}+0.42M_l)})}{1-p\cdot(1-e^{-0.42M_l})}\right)\right) \qquad (4)$$

where M_l is a size specific natural mortality,

Determination of Total catch OFL

Total catch OFL is calculable by adding retained and unretained portion of the OFL (i.e., Total OFL = OFL_r + OFL_{nr}). The standard calculation of OFL for Tier 4 crab is $F_{OFL} = \gamma M = \gamma 0.18$.

3. Determination of NSRKC OFL for the 2024 fishery season.

Projected NSRKC biomass catchable to fishery in 2024

Length independent F_{OFL}.

OFL (million lb)	Total	Retained	Unretained
Model 21.0	0.733	0.709	0.024
Model 23.0	1.254	1.213	0.042

G. Calculation of the ABC

1. Specification of the probability distribution of the OFL.

ABC is calculated as (1-ABC buffer)·OFL

For 2024 fishery season, CPT recommended 30% buffer.
ABC for the 2024 fishery is

ABC (million lb)	Total	Retained	Unretained
Model 21.0	0.513	0.496	0.017
Model 23.0	0.878	0.849	0.029

Alternative ABC based on long-term average *F*

SSC requested to calculate ABC with the OFL calculation formula (equations 3 and 4), replacing F_{OFL} with a long-term average fishing mortality, F_f.

A long-term average F_f calculated for the 1994-2023 period was $F_f = 0.102$ for model 21.0 and $F_f = 0.103$ for model 23.0.

Applying F_f

ABC.alt (million lb)	Total	Retained	Unretained
Model 21.0	0.432	0.418	0.014
Model 23.0	0.371	0.382	0.011

H. Rebuilding Analyses

Not applicable

I. Data Gaps and Research Priorities

The major data gap of NSRKC is an incomplete understanding of NSRKC biology, including natural mortality, distribution, and the fate of oldshell and large crabs that are assumed to be dead at higher rate or moved out of Norton Sound. Additionally, research should focus on females. Very limited information is available about its biology. As for management, incorporation of local and traditional knowledge (LK/TK) and socio-economic impacts of NSRKC fisheries on the region, could bring further insights and guidance.

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J. Ecosystem Considerations

Not included

K. Literature Cited.

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Table 1. Historical summer commercial red king crab fishery harvest and economic performance, Norton Sound Section, eastern Bering Sea. Bold type shows data that are used for the assessment model.

Year	Guideline Harvest Level (lb) [b]	Commercial Harvest (lb) [a, b] Open Access	CDQ	Number Harvest	Total Number (Open Access) Vessels	Permits	Landings	Total Pots Registered	Pulls	ST CPUE CPUE	CV	Season Length Days	Dates	Mid-day from July
1977	[c]	517.787		**195,877**	7	7	13		5,457	**2.03**	**0.32**	60	[c]	**0.049**
1978	3,000.000	2,091.961		**660,829**	8	8	54		10,817	**3.87**	**0.16**	60	6/07-8/15	**0.142**
1979	3,000.000	2,931.672		**970,962**	34	34	76		34,773	**1.30**	**0.23**	16	7/15-7/31	**0.088**
1980	1,000.000	1,186.596		**329,778**	9	9	50		11,199	**1.64**	**0.27**	16	7/15-7/31	**0.066**
1981	2,500.000	1,379.014		**376,313**	36	36	108		33,745	**0.57**	**0.19**	38	7/15-8/22	**0.096**
1982	500.000	228.921		**63,949**	11	11	33		11,230	**0.25**	**0.15**	23	8/09-9/01	**0.151**
1983	300.000	368.032		**132,205**	23	23	26	3,583	11,195	**0.50**	**0.18**	3.8	8/01-8/05	**0.096**
1984	400.000	387.427		**139,759**	8	8	21	1,245	9,706	**1.13**	**0.19**	13.6	8/01-8/15	**0.110**
1985	450.000	427.011		**146,669**	6	6	72	1,116	13,209	**0.69**	**0.17**	21.7	8/01-8/23	**0.118**
1986	420.000	479.463		**162,438**	3	3		578	4,284	**2.24**	**0.47**	13	8/01-8/25	**0.153**
1987	400.000	327.121		**103,338**	9	9		1,430	10,258	**0.88**	**0.33**	11	8/01-8/12	**0.107**
1988	200.000	236.688		**76,148**	2	2		360	2,350	**2.16**	**0.41**	9.9	8/01-8/11	**0.110**
1989	200.000	246.487		**79,116**	10	10		2,555	5,149	**0.99**	**0.29**	3	8/01-8/04	**0.096**
1990	200.000	192.831		**59,132**	4	4		1,388	3,172	**1.47**	**0.47**	4	8/01-8/05	**0.099**
1991	340.000			**0**	No Summer Fishery									
1992	340.000	74.029		**24,902**	27	27		2,635	5,746	**0.17**	**0.22**	2	8/01-8/03	**0.093**
1993	340.000	335.790		**115,913**	14	20	208	560	7,063	**1.02**	**0.09**	52	7/01-8/28	**0.093**
1994	340.000	327.858		**108,824**	34	52	407	1,360	11,729	**0.43**	**0.17**	31	7/01-7/31	**0.044**
1995	340.000	322.676		**105,967**	48	81	665	1,900	18,782	**1.08**	**0.13**	67	7/01-9/05	**0.093**
1996	340.000	224.231		**74,752**	41	50	264	1,640	10,453	**1.01**	**0.09**	57	7/01-9/03	**0.101**
1997	80.000	92.988		**32,606**	13	15	100	520	2,982	**1.14**	**0.09**	44	7/01-8/13	**0.074**
1998	80.000	29.684	0.00	**10,661**	8	11	50	360	1,639	**1.30**	**0.13**	65	7/01-9/03	**0.110**
1999	80.000	23.553	0.00	**8,734**	10	9	53	360	1,630	**0.97**	**0.10**	66	7/01-9/04	**0.104**
2000	336.000	297.654	14.87	**111,728**	15	22	201	560	6,345	**2.08**		91	7/01- 9/29	**0.126**
2001	303.000	288.199	0	**98,321**	30	37	319	1,200	11,918	**0.76**	**0.11**	97	7/01- 9/09	**0.104**
2002	248.000	244.376	15.226	**86,666**	32	49	201	1,120	6,491	**0.76**	**0.26**	77	6/15-9/03	**0.060**
2003	253.000	253.284	13.923	**93,638**	25	43	236	960	8,494	**1.65**	**0.10**	68	6/15-8/24	**0.058**
2004	326.500	314.472	26.274	**120,289**	26	39	227	1,120	8,066	**1.36**	**0.09**	51	6/15-8/08	**0.033**
2005	370.000	370.744	30.06	**138,926**	31	42	255	1,320	8,867	**0.64**	**0.12**	73	6/15-8/27	**0.058**
2006	454.000	419.191	32.557	**150,358**	28	40	249	1,120	8,867	**0.93**	**0.1**	68	6/15-8/22	**0.052**
2007	315.000	289.264	23.611	**110,344**	38	30	251	1,200	9,118	**0.89**	**0.22**	52	6/15-8/17	**0.036**
2008	412.000	364.235	30.9	**143,337**	23	30	248	920	8,721	**1.27**	**0.05**	73	6/23-9/03	**0.079**
2009	375.000	369.462	28.125	**143,485**	22	27	359	920	11,934	**0.87**	**0.04**	98	6/15-9/20	**0.090**
2010	400.000	387.304	30	**149,822**	23	32	286	1,040	9,698	**1.27**	**0.05**	58	6/28-8/24	**0.074**
2011	358.000	373.990	26.851	**141,626**	24	25	173	1,040	6,808	**1.46**	**0.05**	33	6/28-7/30	**0.038**
2012	465.450	441.080	34.91	**161,113**	40	29	312	1,200	10,041	**1.29**	**0.04**	72	6/29-9/08	**0.093**
2013	495.600	373.278	18.585	**130,603**	37	33	460	1,420	15,058	**0.67**	**0.04**	74	7/3-9/14	**0.110**
2014	382.800	360.860	28.148	**129,657**	52	33	309	1,560	10,127	**1.01**	**0.04**	52	6/25-8/15	**0.052**
2015	394.600	371.520	29.595	**144,255**	42	36	251	1,480	8,356	**1.26**	**0.05**	26	6/29-7/24	**0.033**
2016	517.200	416.576	3.583	**138,997**	36	37	220	1,520	8,009	**1.1**	**0.05**	25	6/27-7/21	**0.025**
2017	496.800	411.736	0	**135,322**	36	36	270	1,640	9,401	**0.94**	**0.05**	30	6/26-7/25	**0.027**
2018	319.400	298.396	0	**89,613**	34	34	256	1,400	8,797	**0.54**	**0.05**	35	6/24-7/29	**0.030**
2019	150,600	73.784	1.239	**24,506**	24	26	146	1,096	5,438	**0.26**	**0.06**	62	6/25-9/03	**0.068**
2020	170.000	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0			0	6/25-9/03	**NA**
2021	290.000	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0			0	6/15-9/03	**NA**
2022	341.600	291.553	25.620	**121,323**	27	27	138	NA	5,154	**1.41**	**0.07**	40	6/15-7/24	**0.014**
2023	392.500	383.889	29.438	**146,087**	25	NA	142	NA	4,839	**2.13**	**0.07**	29	6/21-7/19	**0.014**

[a] Deadloss included in total. [b] Thousand pounds. [c] Information not available.

Table 2. Historical winter commercial and subsistence red king crab fisheries, Norton Sound Section, eastern Bering Sea. Bold typed data are used for the assessment model.

		Commercial		Subsistence					
					Permits			Total Crab	
Model Year	Year[a]	# of Fishers	# of Crab Harvested	Winter[b]	Issued	Returned	Fished	Caught[c]	Retained[d]
1978	1978	37	**9,625**	1977/78	290	206	149	**NA**	**12,506**
1979	1979	1[f]	**221**[f]	1978/79	48	43	38	**NA**	**224**
1980	1980	1[f]	**22**[f]	1979/80	22	14	9	**NA**	**213**
1981	1981	0	**0**	1980/81	51	39	23	**NA**	**360**
1982	1982	1[f]	**17**[f]	1981/82	101	76	54	**NA**	**1,288**
1983	1983	5	**549**	1982/83	172	106	85	**NA**	**10,432**
1984	1984	8	**856**	1983/84	222	183	143	**15,923**	**11,220**
1985	1985	9	**1,168**	1984/85	203	166	132	**10,757**	**8,377**
1986	1985/86	5	**2,168**	1985/86	136	133	107	**10,751**	**7,052**
1987	1986/87	7	**1,040**	1986/87	138	134	98	**7,406**	**5,772**
1988	1987/88	10	**425**	1987/88	71	58	40	**3,573**	**2,724**
1989	1988/89	5	**403**	1988/89	139	115	94	**7,945**	**6,126**
1990	1989/90	13	**3,626**	1989/90	136	118	107	**16,635**	**12,152**
1991	1990/91	11	**3,800**	1990/91	119	104	79	**9,295**	**7,366**
1992	1991/92	13	**7,478**	1991/92	158	105	105	**15,051**	**11,736**
1993	1992/93	8	**1,788**	1992/93	88	79	37	**1,193**	**1,097**
1994	1993/94	25	**5,753**	1993/94	118	95	71	**4,894**	**4,113**
1995	1994/95	42	**7,538**	1994/95	166	131	97	**7,777**	**5,426**
1996	1995/96	9	**1,778**	1995/96	84	44	35	**2,936**	**1,679**
1997	1996/97	2[f]	**83**[f]	1996/97	38	22	13	**1,617**	**745**
1998	1997/98	5	**984**	1997/98	94	73	64	**20,327**	**8,622**
1999	1998/99	5	**2,714**	1998/99	95	80	71	**10,651**	**7,533**
2000	1999/00	10	**3,045**	1999/00	98	64	52	**9,816**	**5,723**
2001	2000/01	3	**1,098**	2000/01	50	27	12	**366**	**256**
2002	2001/02	11	**2,591**	2001/02	114	61	45	**5,119**	**2,177**
2003	2002/03	13	**6,853**	2002/03	107	70	61	**9,052**	**4,140**
2004	2003/04	2[f]	**522** [f]	2003/04[g]	96	77	41	**1,775**	**1,181**
2005	2004/05	4	**2,091**	2004/05	170	98	58	**6,484**	**3,973**
2006	2005/06	1[f]	**75**[f]	2005/06	98	97	67	**2,083**	**1,239**
2007	2006/07	8	**3,313**	2006/07	129	127	116	**21,444**	**10,690**
2008	2007/08	9	**5,796**	2007/08	139	137	108	**18,621**	**9,485**
2009	2008/09	7	**4,951**	2008/09	105	105	70	**6,971**	**4,752**
2010	2009/10	10	**4,834**	2009/10	125	123	85	**9,004**	**7,044**
2011	2010/11	5	**3,365**	2010/11	148	148	95	**9,183**	**6,640**
2012	2011/12	35	**9,157**	2011/12	204	204	138	**11,341**	**7,311**
2013	2012/13	26	**22,639**	2012/13	149	148	104	**21,524**	**7,622**
2014	2013/14	21	**14,986**	2013/14	103	103	75	**5,421**	**3,252**
2015	2014/15	44	**41,062**	2014/15	155	153	107	**9,840**	**7,651**
2016	2015/16	25	**29,792**	2015/16	139	97	64	**6,468**	**5,340**
2017	2017	43	**26,008**	2017	163	163	109	**7,185**	**6,039**
2018	2018	28	**9,180**	2018	123	120	82	**5,767**	**4,424**
2019	2019	6	**1,050**	2019	101	101	60	**2,080**	**1,545**
2020	2020	1	**Conf**	2020	79	79	50	**813**	**548**
2021	2021	5	**320**	2021	103	103	76	**4,655**	**2,892**
2022	2022	8	**2,424**	2022	113	63	42	**10,686**	**7,630**
2023	2023	2	**Conf**	2023	47	NA	NA	**702**	**573**

a Prior to 1985 the winter commercial fishery occurred from January 1 - April 30. since March 1985, fishing may occur from November 15 - May 15., since 2017 fishery occurs from February 1 to April 30.

b The winter subsistence fishery occurs during months of two calendar years (as early as December, through May).

c The number of crab actually caught, **including females (2023: permit return rate 43%)**

d The number of crab retained is the number of crab caught and kept, **including females (2023: permit return rate 43%)**

f Confidentiality was waived by the fishers.

h Prior to 2005, permits were only given out of the Nome ADF&G office. Starting with the 2004-5 season, permits were given out in Elim, Golovin, Shaktoolik, and White Mountain

Table 3. Summary of Norton Sound red king crab trawl survey abundance estimates (x 1000) (CL ≥ 64 mm). NMFS and ADF&G trawl survey abundance estimate is based on 10×10 nm² grids, and NBS trawl survey is based on 20×20 nm² grids. Bold typed data are used for the assessment model.

						Abundance ≥64 mm		Female			
Year	Dates	Survey Agency	Survey Method	N Crab	N St		CV	N	% barren	% clutch full	% clutch full 95% CI
1976	9/02 – 9/25	NMFS	Trawl	550	66	**4301.8**	**0.31**	181	2.6	66.7	62.4-71.0
1979	7/26 - 8/05	NMFS	Trawl	93	60	**1457.4**	**0.22**	42	25.0	79.9	64.8-94.8
1980	7/04 - 7/14	ADF&G	Pots			2092.3	N/A				
1981	6/28 - 7/14	ADF&G	Pots			2153.4	N/A				
1982	7/06 - 7/20	ADF&G	Pots			1140.5	N/A				
1982	9/05 - 9/11	NMFS	Trawl	324	51	**3548.9**	**0.25**	269	0	84.3	81.5-87.2
1985	7/01 - 7/14	ADF&G	Pots			2320.4	0.083				
1985	9/16 -10/01	NMFS	Trawl	275	57	**2424.9**	**0.26**	151	0	87.5	NA
1988	8/16 - 8/30	NMFS	Trawl	322	58	**2702.3**	**0.29**	219	1.0	80.7	77.3-84.2
1991	8/22- 8/30	NMFS	Trawl	324	42	**3132.5**	**0.43**	105	0	69.3	57.7-80.8
1996	8/07 - 8/18	ADF&G	Trawl	116	48	**1283.0**	**0.25**	168	30.8	71.9	65.9-77.9
1999	7/28 - 8/07	ADF&G	Trawl	173	49	**2608.0**	**0.24**	81	4.7	80.4	76.0-84.7
2002	7/27 - 8/06	ADF&G	Trawl	138	52	**2056.0**	**0.36**	168	4.7	76.8	73.4-80.2
2006	7/25 - 8/08	ADF&G	Trawl	220	74	**3336.0**	**0.39**	194	3.6	67.3	63.2-71.5
2008	7/24 - 8/11	ADF&G	Trawl	191	60	**2894.2**	**0.31**	116	3.3	56.1	48.5-61.7
2010	7/27 - 8/09	NBS	Trawl	66	22	**1980.1**	**0.44**	28	0	70.2	63.8-78.5
2011	7/18 - 8/15	ADF&G	Trawl	210	62	**3209.3**	**0.29**	135	9.8	67.2	61.7-72.6
2014	7/18 - 7/30	ADF&G	Trawl	391	45	**5934.6**	**0.47**	60	0	60.4	54.3-66.6
2017	7/28 - 8/08	ADF&G	Trawl	116	57	**1762.1**	**0.22**	43	21.4	71.6	60.0-82.7
2017	8/18 - 8/29	NBS	Trawl	32	23	**1035.8**	**0.40**	58	0	80.0	72.5-87.5
2018	7/22 - 7/29	ADF&G	Trawl	73	54	**1108.9**	**0.25**	424	15.8	76.3	59.7-83.5
2019	7/17-7/29	ADF&G	Trawl	307	50	**4660.8**	**0.60**	386	47.8	50.6	43.1-56.4
2019	8/04-8/07	NBS	Trawl	80	23	**2532.4**	**0.26**	94	17.6	47.9	36.8-58.9
2020	7/31-8/14	ADF&G	Trawl	113	58	**1716.5**	**0.27**	186	4.5	66.2	61.6-70.8
2021	7/19-8/03	ADF&G	Trawl	158	39	**2400.0**	**0.60**	90	3.4	59.8	54.9-64.6
2021	7/29-8/07	NBS	Trawl	76	23	**2370.0**	**0.43**	139	2.6	61.1	58.8-63.4
2022	8/03-8/12	NBS	Trawl	69	22	**2103.0**	**0.37**	3877	3.5	66.5	64.2-68.7
2023	7/21-7/30	ADF&G	Trawl	233	48	**3441.7**	**0.33**	47	0	80.0	74.1-85.8
2023	7/29-8/11	NBS	Trawl	55	23	**1744.0**	**0.38**	38	0	62.9	56.2-69.6

Abundance of NMFS survey was estimated by NMFS, by multiplying the mean CPUE (# NRKC/nm²) across all hauls (including re-tows) to a standard survey area (7600nm²). Abundance of ADF&G and NBS survey was estimated by ADF&G by multiplying CPUE (# NRKC/nm²) of each station to the grid represented by the station and summing across all surveyed stations (ADF&G: 4700 – 5200 nm². NBS 5841 nm²).
N crab: the number of male crab ≥ 64 mm CL, N st: the number of stations used for abundance estimate
%barren is calculated by dividing the number of mature females with no eggs by total number of mature females.
Mean and 95% CI of % clutch full is calculated among non-barren mature females. Clutch fullness of each non-barren female was assigned by fullness index that was converted to percentage in the table below.

NMFS and NBS Code	NMFS and NBS Fullness	Assigned %	ADF&G code	ADF&G Fullness	Assigned %
1	barren	0	1	barren	
2	0-1/8	6.25	2	0 (post-release)	
3	1/8-1/4	18.75	3	1-29%	15
4	1/4 – 1/2	27.5	4	30-59%	45
5	1/2 – 3/4	62.5	5	60-89%	75
6	3/4 – 1	87.5	6	90-100%	95
7	>1	100			

Table 4. Summer commercial retained catch length-shell compositions.

		New Shell								Old Shell							
Year	Sample	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-133	134+	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-133	134+
1977	1549	0	0	0	0.00	0.42	0.34	0.08	0.05	0	0	0	0.00	0.06	0.04	0.01	0.00
1978	389	0	0	0	0.01	0.19	0.47	0.26	0.04	0	0	0	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00
1979	1660	0	0	0	0.03	0.23	0.38	0.26	0.07	0	0	0	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.01
1980	1068	0	0	0	0.00	0.10	0.31	0.37	0.18	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.01
1981	1784	0	0	0	0.00	0.07	0.15	0.28	0.23	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.12	0.09
1982	1093	0	0	0	0.04	0.19	0.16	0.22	0.29	0	0	0	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.03
1983	802	0	0	0	0.04	0.41	0.36	0.06	0.03	0	0	0	0.00	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.02
1984	963	0	0	0	0.10	0.42	0.28	0.06	0.01	0	0	0	0.01	0.07	0.05	0.01	0.00
1985	2691	0	0	0.00	0.06	0.31	0.37	0.15	0.02	0	0	0	0.00	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.00
1986	1138	0	0	0	0.03	0.36	0.39	0.12	0.02	0	0	0	0.00	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.00
1987	1985	0	0	0	0.02	0.18	0.29	0.27	0.11	0	0	0	0.00	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.01
1988	1522	0	0.00	0	0.02	0.20	0.30	0.18	0.04	0	0	0	0.01	0.06	0.10	0.07	0.02
1989	2595	0	0	0	0.01	0.16	0.32	0.17	0.05	0	0	0	0.00	0.06	0.12	0.09	0.02
1990	1289	0	0	0	0.01	0.14	0.35	0.26	0.07	0	0	0	0.00	0.04	0.07	0.05	0.01
1991																	
1992	2566	0	0	0	0.02	0.20	0.27	0.14	0.09	0	0	0	0.00	0.08	0.13	0.06	0.02
1993	17804	0	0	0	0.01	0.23	0.39	0.23	0.03	0	0	0	0.00	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.01
1994	404	0	0	0	0.02	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.02	0	0	0	0.02	0.19	0.25	0.20	0.05
1995	1167	0	0	0	0.04	0.26	0.29	0.15	0.05	0	0	0	0.01	0.05	0.07	0.06	0.01
1996	787	0	0	0	0.03	0.22	0.24	0.09	0.05	0	0	0	0.01	0.12	0.14	0.08	0.02
1997	1198	0	0	0	0.03	0.37	0.34	0.10	0.03	0	0	0	0.00	0.06	0.04	0.03	0.01
1998	1055	0	0	0	0.03	0.23	0.24	0.08	0.03	0	0	0	0.02	0.11	0.14	0.08	0.03
1999	562	0	0	0	0.06	0.29	0.24	0.18	0.09	0	0	0	0.00	0.02	0.05	0.04	0.00
2000	17213	0	0	0	0.02	0.30	0.39	0.11	0.02	0	0	0	0.00	0.05	0.07	0.04	0.01
2001	20030	0	0	0	0.02	0.22	0.37	0.21	0.07	0	0	0	0.00	0.02	0.05	0.02	0.01
2002	5219	0	0	0	0.04	0.23	0.28	0.25	0.07	0	0	0	0.00	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.01
2003	5226	0	0	0	0.02	0.37	0.32	0.12	0.03	0	0	0	0.00	0.02	0.05	0.05	0.01
2004	9606	0	0	0	0.01	0.38	0.39	0.11	0.03	0	0	0	0.00	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.01
2005	5360	0	0	0	0.00	0.25	0.47	0.16	0.02	0	0	0	0.00	0.02	0.05	0.02	0.01
2006	6707	0	0	0	0.00	0.18	0.35	0.17	0.02	0	0	0	0.00	0.05	0.14	0.07	0.01
2007	6125	0	0	0	0.01	0.36	0.34	0.14	0.03	0	0	0	0.00	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.01
2008	5766	0	0	0	0.00	0.35	0.35	0.06	0.01	0	0	0	0.00	0.09	0.09	0.04	0.01
2009	6026	0	0	0	0.01	0.34	0.33	0.11	0.02	0	0	0	0.00	0.08	0.08	0.02	0.01
2010	5902	0	0	0	0.01	0.39	0.36	0.10	0.01	0	0	0	0.00	0.05	0.05	0.02	0.00
2011	2552	0	0	0	0.00	0.32	0.40	0.12	0.02	0	0	0	0.00	0.06	0.06	0.02	0.00
2012	5056	0	0	0	0.00	0.24	0.46	0.18	0.02	0	0	0	0.00	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.00
2013	6072	0	0	0	0.00	0.24	0.37	0.24	0.06	0	0	0	0.00	0.01	0.04	0.02	0.00
2014	4682	0	0	0	0.01	0.28	0.24	0.18	0.07	0	0	0	0.00	0.04	0.09	0.07	0.02
2015	4173	0	0	0	0.01	0.48	0.28	0.10	0.03	0	0	0	0.00	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.01
2016	1543	0	0	0	0.00	0.25	0.47	0.16	0.03	0	0	0	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.01
2017	3412	0	0	0	0.00	0.18	0.39	0.21	0.03	0	0	0	0.01	0.03	0.12	0.05	0.01
2018	2609	0	0	0	0.00	0.11	0.32	0.32	0.08	0	0	0	0	0.01	0.08	0.08	0.02
2019	1136	0	0	0	0.01	0.32	0.23	0.13	0.03	0	0	0	0	0.02	0.10	0.14	0.03
2020																	
2021																	
2022	2981	0	0	0	0.02	0.46	0.30	0.03	0.00	0	0	0	0.00	0.12	0.05	0.01	0.00
2023	2458	0	0	0	0.00	0.26	0.42	0.13	0.01	0	0	0	0.00	0.07	0.09	0.01	0.02

Table 5. Winter commercial catch length-shell compositions.

		New Shell								Old Shell							
Year	Sample	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-133	134+	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-133	134+
2015	576	0	0	0	0.07	0.50	024	0.06	0.01	0	0	0	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.01
2016	1016	0	0	0	0.03	0.45	0.31	0.03	0.00	0	0	0	0.01	0.09	0.04	0.02	0.01
2017	540	0	0	0	0.00	0.20	0.30	0.13	0.02	0	0	0	0.00	0.08	0.19	0.06	0.02
2018	401	0	0	0	0.00	0.11	0.25	0.27	0.05	0	0	0	0	0.04	0.16	0.10	0.02

Table 6. Summer Trawl Survey length-shell compositions.

			New Shell								Old Shell							
Year	Survey	Sample	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-133	134+	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-133	134+
1976	NMFS	1326	0.01	0.02	0.10	0.19	0.34	0.18	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.01	0.01
1979	NMFS	220	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.04	0.14	0.40	0.19	0.03
1982	NMFS	327	0.22	0.07	0.16	0.23	0.17	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.03
1985	NMFS	350	0.11	0.11	0.19	0.17	0.16	0.06	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.05	0.08	0.05	0.01
1988	NMFS	366	0.16	0.19	0.12	0.13	0.11	0.06	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.07	0.05	0.03
1991	NMFS	340	0.18	0.08	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.06	0.02	0.08	0.16	0.14	0.09	0.02
1996	ADF&G	269	0.29	0.21	0.13	0.09	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.03
1999	ADF&G	283	0.03	0.01	0.10	0.29	0.26	0.13	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.05	0.04	0.02	0.00
2002	ADF&G	244	0.09	0.12	0.14	0.11	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.07	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.05	0.02
2006	ADF&G	373	0.18	0.26	0.21	0.11	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.01	0.00
2008	ADF&G	275	0.12	0.15	0.21	0.11	0.10	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.04	0.06	0.08	0.01	0.04	0.00
2010	NOAA	69	0.01	0.04	0.06	0.17	0.06	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.09	0.20	0.19	0.07	0.03	0.01
2011	ADF&G	315	0.13	0.11	0.09	0.11	0.18	0.14	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.09	0.04	0.03	0.00
2014	ADF&G	387	0.08	0.15	0.24	0.18	0.09	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.10	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.00
2017	ADF&G	116	0.14	0.12	0.05	0.09	0.10	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.07	0.18	0.04	0.00
2017	NOAA	58	0.09	0.10	0.14	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.19	0.05	0.03
2018	ADF&G	73	0.37	0.10	0.11	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.01	0	0.07	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.10	0.03
2019	ADF&G	307	0.55	0.30	0.03	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.01
2019	NOAA	135	0.36	0.30	0.08	0.04	0.01	0	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.01
2020	ADF&G	111	0.13	0.22	0.30	0.06	0.05	0.01	0	0	0.03	0.08	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.02	0	0.01
2021	ADF&G	158	0.06	0.17	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.04	0.01	0.01	0	0	0.01	0	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01
2021	NOAA	82	0.05	0.16	0.21	0.16	0.10	0.02	0	0	0.01	0.05	0.11	0.06	0.06	0.01	0	0
2022	NOAA	378	0.16	0.17	0.11	0.10	0.07	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.07	0.08	0.087	0.05	0.02	0.01
2023	ADF&G	240	0	0.00	0.03	0.09	0.20	0.21	0.07	0.00	0	0	0.01	0.03	0.17	0.16	0.03	0
2023	NOAA	77	0.01	0.04	0.06	0.08	0.16	0.10	0.05	0.01	0	0	0.01	0.08	0.18	0.17	0.04	0

Table 7. Winter pot survey length-shell compositions.

			New Shell								Old Shell							
Year	CPUE	Sample	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-133	134+	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-133	134+
1981/82	NA	719	0.00	0.10	0.23	0.21	0.07	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.11	0.11	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.00
1982/83	24.2	2583	0.03	0.08	0.28	0.28	0.21	0.07	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01
1983/84	24.0	1677	0.01	0.16	0.26	0.23	0.15	0.06	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.01	0.01
1984/85	24.5	789	0.02	0.09	0.25	0.35	0.16	0.06	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.00
1985/86	19.2	594	0.04	0.12	0.17	0.24	0.19	0.08	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.06	0.04	0.01	0.00
1986/87	5.8	144	0.00	0.06	0.15	0.19	0.07	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.04	0.30	0.11	0.03	0.00
1987/88																		
1988/89	13.0	500	0.02	0.13	0.15	0.13	0.19	0.17	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.08	0.03	0.00
1989/90	21.0	2076	0.00	0.05	0.21	0.26	0.18	0.12	0.06	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.06	0.02	0.00
1990/91	22.9	1283	0.00	0.01	0.09	0.29	0.27	0.10	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.12	0.07	0.02
1992/93	5.5	181	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.06	0.13	0.12	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.19	0.27	0.10	0.05
1993/94																		
1994/95	6.2	858	0.01	0.06	0.08	0.10	0.26	0.23	0.07	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.07	0.06	0.02
1995/96	9.9	1580	0.06	0.14	0.20	0.19	0.11	0.07	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.06	0.07	0.03	0.01
1996/97	2.9	398	0.07	0.21	0.22	0.11	0.15	0.11	0.05	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.01
1997/98	10.9	881	0.00	0.14	0.41	0.27	0.05	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.01
1998/99	10.7	1307	0.00	0.02	0.12	0.36	0.36	0.08	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.00
1999/00	6.2	575	0.02	0.09	0.10	0.16	0.33	0.18	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.00
2000/01	3.1	44																
2001/02	13.0	828	0.05	0.29	0.26	0.17	0.06	0.06	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00
2002/03	9.6	824	0.02	0.10	0.22	0.28	0.18	0.06	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.01
2003/04	3.7	296	0.00	0.02	0.16	0.26	0.32	0.14	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01
2004/05	4.4	405	0.00	0.07	0.14	0.18	0.22	0.19	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.06	0.01	0.00
2005/06	6.0	512	0.00	0.14	0.23	0.21	0.16	0.05	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.07	0.03	0.01
2006/07	7.3	159	0.07	0.14	0.19	0.35	0.13	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.00
2007/08	25.0	3552	0.01	0.14	0.25	0.17	0.14	0.07	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.04	0.07	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.00
2008/09	21.9	525	0.00	0.07	0.13	0.35	0.20	0.08	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.10	0.00	0.00
2009/10	25.3	578	0.01	0.05	0.13	0.21	0.24	0.11	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.06	0.10	0.05	0.01	0.00
2010/11	22.1	596	0.02	0.08	0.13	0.20	0.17	0.13	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.11	0.05	0.01	0.00
2011/12	29.4	675	0.03	0.11	0.23	0.19	0.12	0.13	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.00

Table 8. Summer commercial 1987-1994 observer discards length-shell compositions.

		New Shell								Old Shell							
Year	Sample	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-133	134+	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-133	134+
1987	1146	0.06	0.19	0.32	0.33	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1988	722	0.01	0.04	0.15	0.48	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.10	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00
1989	1000	0.07	0.19	0.24	0.22	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.03	0.07	0.11	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00
1990	507	0.08	0.23	0.27	0.27	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
1992	580	0.11	0.17	0.30	0.29	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
1994	850	0.07	0.06	0.11	0.15	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.07	0.15	0.24	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table 9. Summer commercial observer total catch length-shell compositions.

		New Shell								Old Shell							
Year	Sample	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-133	134+	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-133	134+
2012	3055	0.10	0.05	0.08	0.15	0.15	0.17	0.06	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.08	0.09	0.03	0.00
2013	4762	0.19	0.16	0.09	0.10	0.16	0.16	0.09	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.00
2014	3506	0.02	0.05	0.13	0.22	0.22	0.12	0.08	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.01
2015	1671	0.01	0.04	0.09	0.23	0.37	0.14	0.05	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.00
2016	2114	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.12	0.29	0.36	0.08	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.00
2017	2748	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.19	0.33	0.18	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.07	0.03	0.01
2018	1628	0.03	0.06	0.12	0.11	0.09	0.17	0.18	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.15	0.07	0.08	0.02
2019	236	0.13	0.06	0.06	0.13	0.08	0.05	0.01	0.01	0	0	0.00	0.04	0.11	0.14	0.14	0.05

Table 10. The observed proportion of tagged crab by each size class released and recovered after 1 -3 year of liberty 1980-2019 periods.

Year at liberty 1

	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-33	> 134	n
64-73	0	0.2	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	5
74-83		0	0.44	0.47	0.09	0	0	0	47
84-93			0	0.32	0.62	0.05	0.01	0	146
94-103				0.03	0.62	0.34	0.01	0.00	317
104-113					0.31	0.59	0.09	0	241
114-123						0.42	0.47	0.11	210
124-133							0.69	0.31	81
>134								1	26

Year at liberty 2

	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-33	> 134	n
64-73	0	0	0.09	0.55	0.36	0	0	0	11
74-83		0	0	0.11	0.85	0.04	0	0	113
84-93			0	0.04	0.32	0.61	0.03	0	114
94-103				0.02	0.36	0.41	0.20	0	94
104-113					0.06	0.71	0.22	0	108
114-123						0.17	0.72	0.11	65
124-133							0.36	0.64	25
>134								1	8

Year at liberty 3

	64-73	74-83	84-93	94-103	104-113	114-123	124-33	> 134	n
64-73	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	22
74-83	0	0	0	0	0.26	0.66	0.082	0	73
84-93	0	0	0	0.04	0.26	0.53	0.17	0	53
94-103	0	0	0	0	0.06	0.67	0.27	0	52
104-113	0	0	0	0	0	0.26	0.62	0.12	34
114-123	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.79	0.21	14
124-133	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.9	10
>134	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

Table 11. Summary of bounds and model estimated parameters for a length-based population model of Norton Sound red king crab. Parameters with "log_" indicate log scaled parameters

Parameter	Parameter description	Lower	Upper
log_q_1	Commercial fishery catchability (1977-93)	-20.5	20
log_q2	Commercial fishery catchability (1994-2007)	-20.5	20
log_q3	Commercial fishery catchability (2008-2019)	-20.5	20
log_N_{76}	Initial abundance	2.0	15.0
R_0	Mean Recruit	2.0	12.0
$log\_\sigma_R^2$	Recruit standard deviation	-40.0	40.0
a_{1-7}	Intimal length proportion	0	10.0
$r_{1,2}$	Proportion of length class 1 for recruit	0	5.0
log_α	Inverse logistic molting parameter	-5.0	-1.0
log_β	Inverse logistic molting parameter	1.0	5.5
log_ϕ_{st1}	Logistic trawl selectivity parameter	-5.0	1.0
log_ϕ_{wa}	Inverse logistic winter pot selectivity parameter	-5.0	1.0
log_ϕ_{wb}	Inverse logistic winter pot selectivity parameter	0.0	6.0
$Sw_{1,2}$	Winter pot selectivity of length class 1,2	0.1	1.0
log_ϕ_l	Logistic commercial catch selectivity parameter	-5.0	1.0
$log\_\phi ra$	Logistic summer commercial retention selectivity Newshell (1976-2007, 2008-2022)	-5.0	1.0
$log\_\phi rb$	Logistic summer commercial retention selectivity Newshell (1976-2007, 2008-2022)	0.0	6.0
$log\_\phi wra$	Logistic winter commercial retention selectivity p	-5.0	1.0
$log\_\phi wrb$	Logistic winter commercial retention selectivity	0.0	6.0
w^2_t	Additional variance for standard CPUE	0.0	6.0
m1-8	Natural mortality multipliers	0	5.0
q.1	Survey q for NMFS trawl 1976-91	0.1	1.0
q.2	Survey q for NMFS NBS trawl 2010,17,19	0.1	1.0
σ	Growth transition sigma	0.0	30.0
β_1	Growth transition mean	0.0	20.0
β_2	Growth transition increment	0.0	20.0

*: Parameter was unestimable because model estimated trawl survey selectivity was 1.0 across all size classes.

	21.0		23.0	
Name	Estimate	std.dev	Estimate	std.dev
log_q_1	-7.301	0.194	-7.162	0.191
log_q_2	-6.717	0.165	-6.576	0.169
log_q_3	-6.862	0.150	-6.757	0.156
log_N_{76}	9.119	0.136	9.440	0.156
R_0	6.441	0.079	7.072	0.149
a_1	-0.091	0.300	-0.222	0.293
a_2	-0.760	0.360	-0.847	0.356
a_3	1.021	4.451	2.637	4.512
a_4	1.753	4.181	2.917	4.322
a_5	3.495	3.922	4.378	4.083
a_6	3.980	3.900	4.682	4.062
a_7	4.242	3.891	4.827	4.053
r1	5.000	0.002	5.000	0.002
r2	4.645	0.161	4.510	0.165
log_a	-2.737	0.087	-2.753	0.093
log_b	4.829	0.015	4.812	0.015
log_ϕ_{st1}	-5.000	0.038	-2.385	0.076
log_ϕ_{wa}	-2.402	0.425	-1.866	0.425
log_ϕ_{wb}	4.772	0.069	4.859	0.028
Sw1	0.061	0.034	0.046	0.022
Sw2	0.422	0.147	0.375	0.089
Sw3	0.733	0.238	0.734	0.142
log_ϕ_l	-2.052	0.043	-1.940	0.041
log_ϕra1	-0.854	0.143	-0.884	0.143
log_ϕrb1	4.641	0.008	4.647	0.009
log_ϕra2	-0.507	0.266	-0.500	0.261
log_ϕrb2	4.654	0.013	4.655	0.013
log_ϕwra	-0.951	0.558	-0.926	0.584
log_ϕwrb	4.654	0.038	4.652	0.039
w^2_t	0.143	0.039	0.144	0.040
q.1	0.726	0.129	0.726	0.126
q.2	0.777	0.141	0.772	0.140
σ	3.778	0.208	3.773	0.203
β_1	11.838	0.692	12.782	0.723
β_2	7.811	0.170	7.570	0.176
M			0.408	0.027
m1				
m2				
m3				
m4				
m5				
m6				
m7				
m8	3.405	0.260		

Table 12. Annual abundance estimates of legal crab (million crab) and mature male biomass (Feb 01) (MMB, million lb) for Norton Sound red king crab estimated by a length-based analysis.

MMB

Year	Model 21.0	St.dev	Model 23.0	St.dev
1976	17.01	3.33	20.44	3.87
1977	18.82	2.72	20.37	2.77
1978	16.44	2.11	16.38	1.90
1979	11.68	1.54	11.12	1.28
1980	6.32	1.07	5.89	0.90
1981	4.30	0.78	4.20	0.72
1982	3.35	0.73	3.52	0.75
1983	4.24	0.81	4.52	0.86
1984	4.96	0.91	5.18	0.95
1985	5.61	1.00	5.71	1.03
1986	5.95	1.07	5.83	1.05
1987	5.86	1.06	5.54	1.00
1988	5.78	1.02	5.39	0.95
1989	5.53	0.95	5.13	0.88
1990	5.23	0.87	4.91	0.82
1991	4.93	0.80	4.69	0.76
1992	4.71	0.70	4.54	0.68
1993	4.41	0.62	4.29	0.61
1994	3.81	0.54	3.72	0.54
1995	3.26	0.47	3.22	0.47
1996	2.88	0.43	2.87	0.44
1997	2.87	0.42	2.90	0.44
1998	3.47	0.47	3.66	0.52
1999	4.36	0.58	4.53	0.64
2000	4.60	0.59	4.53	0.60
2001	4.16	0.56	3.95	0.53
2002	3.96	0.54	3.83	0.52
2003	4.05	0.54	4.04	0.55
2004	4.06	0.54	4.08	0.56
2005	3.80	0.52	3.76	0.52
2006	3.57	0.48	3.59	0.49
2007	3.74	0.50	3.91	0.54
2008	4.26	0.53	4.54	0.60
2009	4.71	0.58	5.00	0.64
2010	4.91	0.59	5.10	0.64
2011	4.59	0.56	4.60	0.58
2012	4.15	0.51	4.13	0.52
2013	3.97	0.49	4.08	0.52
2014	4.40	0.52	4.78	0.58
2015	4.98	0.54	5.39	0.62
2016	4.58	0.50	4.72	0.53
2017	3.76	0.43	3.67	0.43
2018	2.92	0.36	2.79	0.35
2019	2.51	0.32	2.46	0.32
2020	3.31	0.39	3.69	0.46
2021	5.19	0.61	5.77	0.72
2022	6.35	0.74	6.53	0.80
2023	6.26	0.78	5.95	0.78
2024	5.52	0.75	4.92	0.71

Table 13. Summary of observed catch (million lb) for Norton Sound red king crab.

Year	Summer Com	Winter Com	Winter Sub	Discards Winter Sub	Total	*F* Model 21.0	*F* Model 23.0
1977	0.52	0.000	0.000	0	0.520	0.034	0.035
1978	2.09	0.024	0.025	0.008	2.147	0.166	0.173
1979	2.93	0.001	0.000	0	2.931	0.361	0.396
1980	1.19	0.000	0.000	0	1.190	0.239	0.266
1981	1.38	0.000	0.001	0	1.381	0.450	0.495
1982	0.23	0.000	0.003	0.001	0.234	0.076	0.081
1983	0.37	0.001	0.021	0.006	0.398	0.111	0.116
1984	0.39	0.002	0.022	0.005	0.419	0.095	0.100
1985	0.43	0.003	0.017	0.002	0.452	0.094	0.101
1986	0.48	0.005	0.014	0.004	0.503	0.099	0.110
1987	0.33	0.003	0.012	0.002	0.347	0.071	0.081
1988	0.24	0.001	0.005	0.001	0.247	0.050	0.057
1989	0.25	0.000	0.012	0.002	0.264	0.058	0.065
1990	0.19	0.010	0.024	0.004	0.228	0.056	0.059
1991	0	0.010	0.015	0.002	0.027	0.011	0.007
1992	0.07	0.021	0.023	0.003	0.117	0.039	0.035
1993	0.33	0.005	0.002	0	0.337	0.101	0.110
1994	0.32	0.017	0.008	0.001	0.346	0.120	0.126
1995	0.32	0.022	0.011	0.002	0.355	0.139	0.144
1996	0.22	0.005	0.003	0.001	0.229	0.096	0.103
1997	0.09	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.092	0.037	0.040
1998	0.03	0.002	0.017	0.012	0.061	0.019	0.017
1999	0.02	0.007	0.015	0.003	0.045	0.016	0.013
2000	0.3	0.008	0.011	0.004	0.323	0.093	0.100
2001	0.28	0.003	0.001	0	0.284	0.087	0.099
2002	0.25	0.007	0.004	0.003	0.264	0.085	0.094
2003	0.26	0.017	0.008	0.005	0.290	0.092	0.097
2004	0.34	0.001	0.002	0.001	0.344	0.105	0.114
2005	0.4	0.006	0.008	0.003	0.417	0.140	0.152
2006	0.45	0.000	0.002	0.001	0.453	0.156	0.173
2007	0.31	0.008	0.021	0.011	0.350	0.116	0.119
2008	0.39	0.015	0.019	0.009	0.433	0.127	0.129
2009	0.4	0.012	0.010	0.002	0.424	0.113	0.116
2010	0.42	0.012	0.014	0.002	0.448	0.115	0.118
2011	0.4	0.009	0.013	0.003	0.425	0.118	0.124
2012	0.47	0.025	0.015	0.004	0.514	0.161	0.169
2013	0.35	0.061	0.015	0.014	0.440	0.158	0.156
2014	0.39	0.035	0.007	0.002	0.434	0.127	0.125
2015	0.40	0.099	0.019	0.005	0.523	0.148	0.133
2016	0.42	0.080	0.011	0.001	0.512	0.154	0.146
2017	0.41	0.078	0.012	0.001	0.501	0.191	0.188
2018	0.30	0.029	0.008	0.001	0.338	0.152	0.158
2019	0.08	0.032	0.003	0.001	0.116	0.036	0.038
2020	0	Conf.	0.001	0.000	Conf	0.001	0.000
2021	0	0.0	0.004	0.002	0.006	0.002	0.001
2022	0.32	0.070	0.006	0.003	0.400	0.068	0.071
2023	0.41	0.01	TBD	TBD	TBD	0.085	0.096

Table 14: Jittering :

Replicate	Model 21.0	Model 23.0
1	368.01	383.78
2	369.18	381.64
3	368.51	527.67
4	14148.56	381.19
5	368.55	12720.72
6	368.64	381.12
7	368.56	384.24
8	368.23	381.83
9	368.34	379.51
10	368.16	6455.31
11	368.09	384.49
12	368.27	382.27
13	369.01	14671.32
14	368.40	18214.89
15	368.59	17625.02
16	368.41	377.32
17	367.86	28073.70
18	367.92	8380.38
19	367.91	386.10
20	368.02	396.46
21	368.11	15214.17
22	368.11	386.58
23	368.40	380.74
24	367.65	17763.72
25	367.50	386.10
26	367.97	380.70
27	368.50	14900.01
28	368.04	379.44
29	368.77	376.87
30	367.72	385.38
31	367.71	16004.37
32	368.79	18414.90
33	368.27	6820.06
34	368.28	385.87
35	367.71	388.68
36	10715.40	383.40
37	367.89	384.70
38	368.15	13190.56
39	367.73	376.06
40	368.28	377.02
41	367.88	386.11
42	368.42	382.63
43	368.25	381.51
44	368.24	383.04
45	368.48	383.63
46	368.84	394.09
47	368.49	13106.69
48	408.93	379.97
49	368.86	382.14
50	368.62	381.49
51	367.41	383.47
52	367.63	379.18
53	368.50	458.72
54	368.67	9880.66
55	368.26	383.43
56	368.00	387.43
57	368.17	379.41
58	368.70	17050.58
59	368.34	385.32
60	368.41	415.07
61	368.39	385.89
62	367.54	381.83
63	367.68	387.37
64	368.13	17603.08
65	368.70	386.38
66	368.41	420.02
67	367.92	421.93
68	368.08	18165.31
69	368.27	383.26
70	367.41	397.42
71	368.58	384.93
72	368.14	380.36
73	367.84	385.02
74	367.89	17414.60
75	368.83	6911.36
76	367.83	384.79
77	368.47	380.59
78	367.47	7640.16
79	368.37	22581.09
80	368.65	21865.56
81	368.25	382.23
82	368.49	390.38
83	367.46	22749.59
84	367.63	13411.40
85	368.65	23439.41
86	368.29	386.52
87	367.83	385.46
88	368.54	378.19
89	368.55	384.73
90	368.72	14165.30
91	368.39	380.79
92	368.39	11106.40
93	368.68	382.83
94	368.02	4703.05
95	367.64	560.25
96	368.21	382.54
97	368.21	378.71
98	368.21	382.11
99	368.31	392.91
100	367.87	385.96

Figure 1. King crab fishing districts and sections of Statistical Area Q.

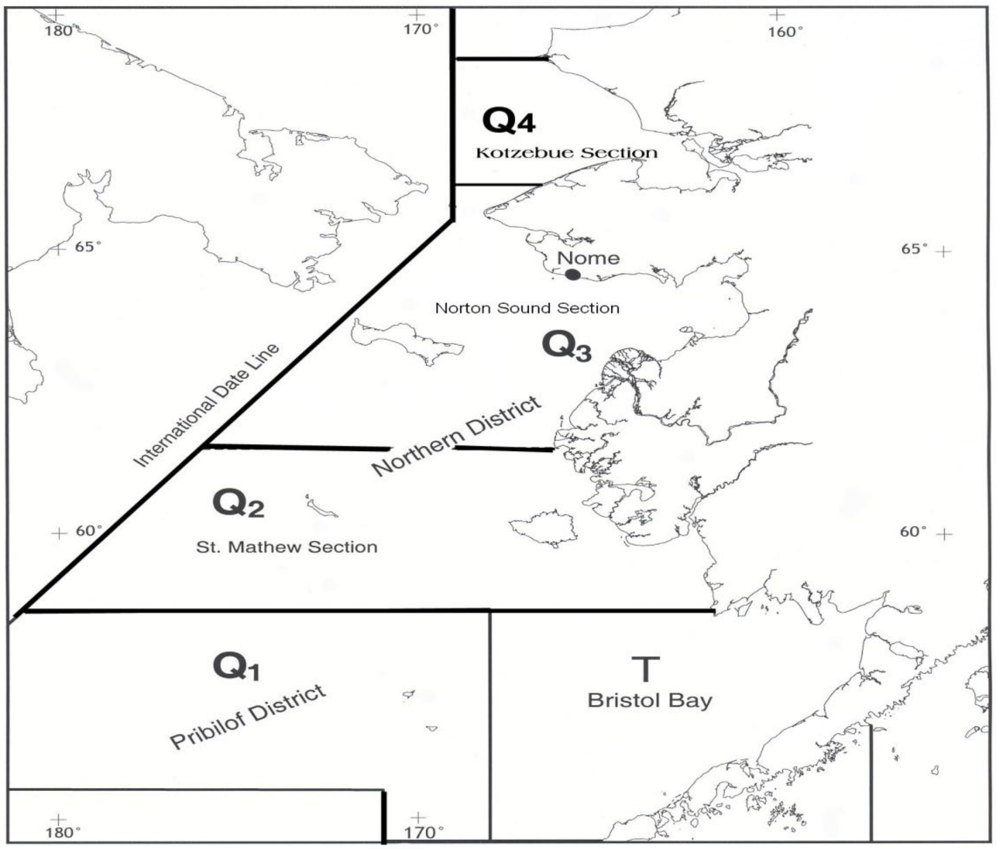


Figure 2. Closed water regulations in effect for the Norton Sound commercial crab fishery. Line around the coastline delineates the 3-mil state waters zone.

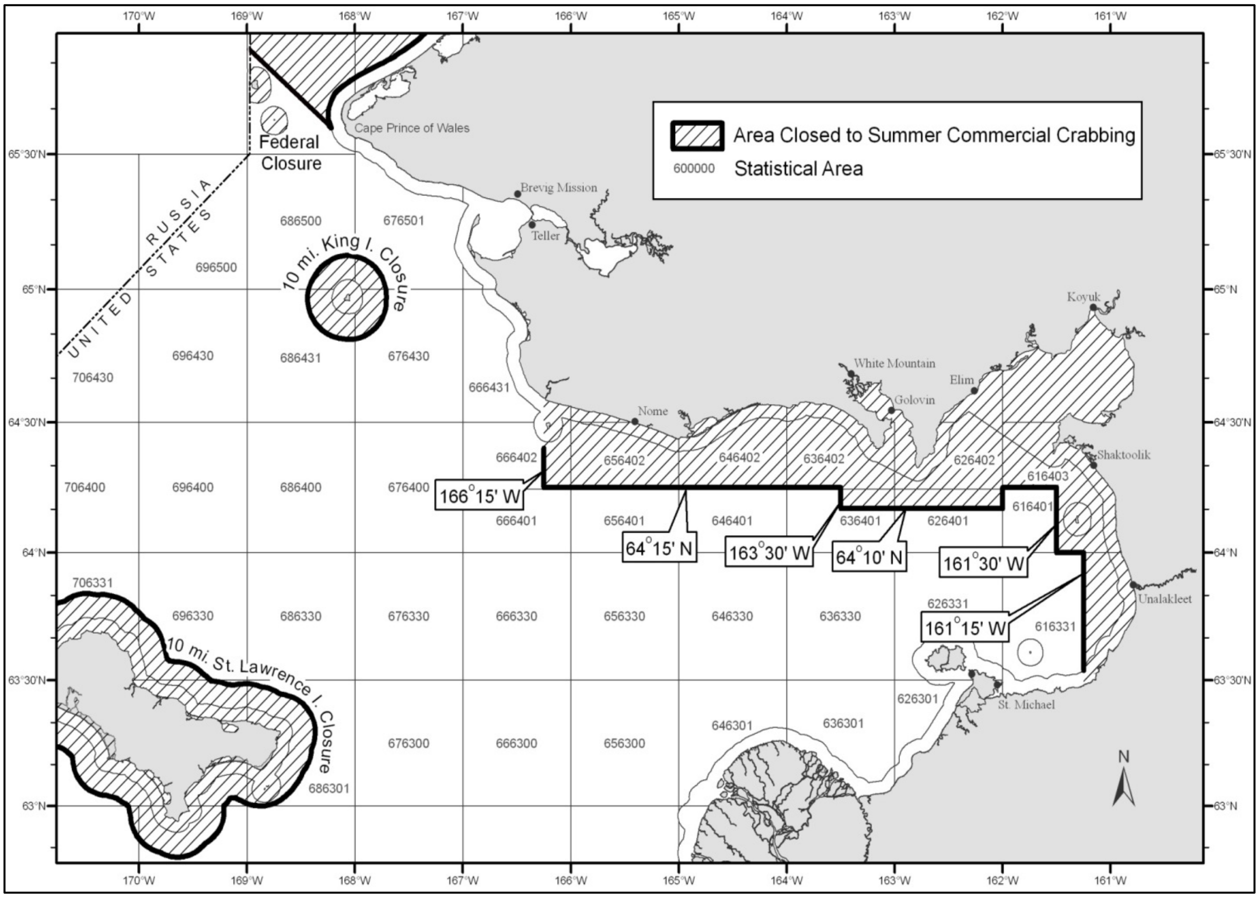


Figure 3. Model estimated natural mortality, annual molting probability, selectivity for trawl survey, winter pot survey, and summer commercial fishery, and retention probability for winter commercial and summer commercia. X-axis is carapace length (mm).

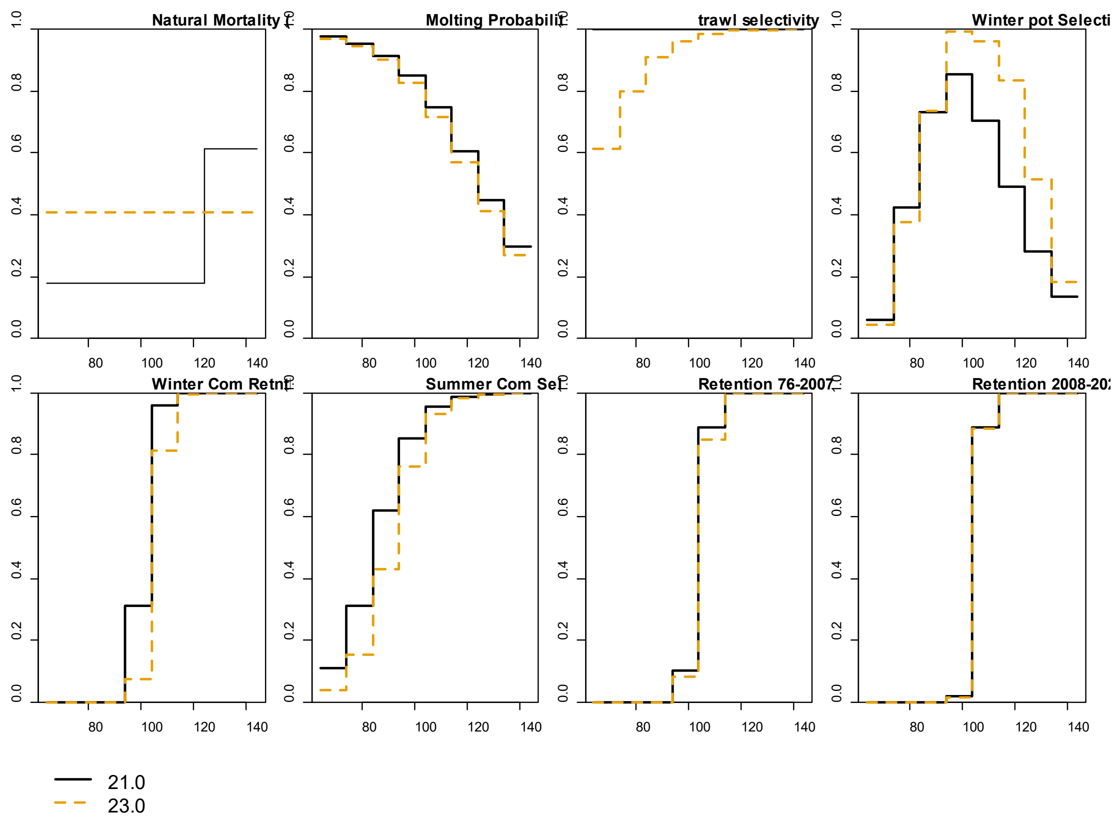


Figure 4. Model estimated transition probability for each size classes.

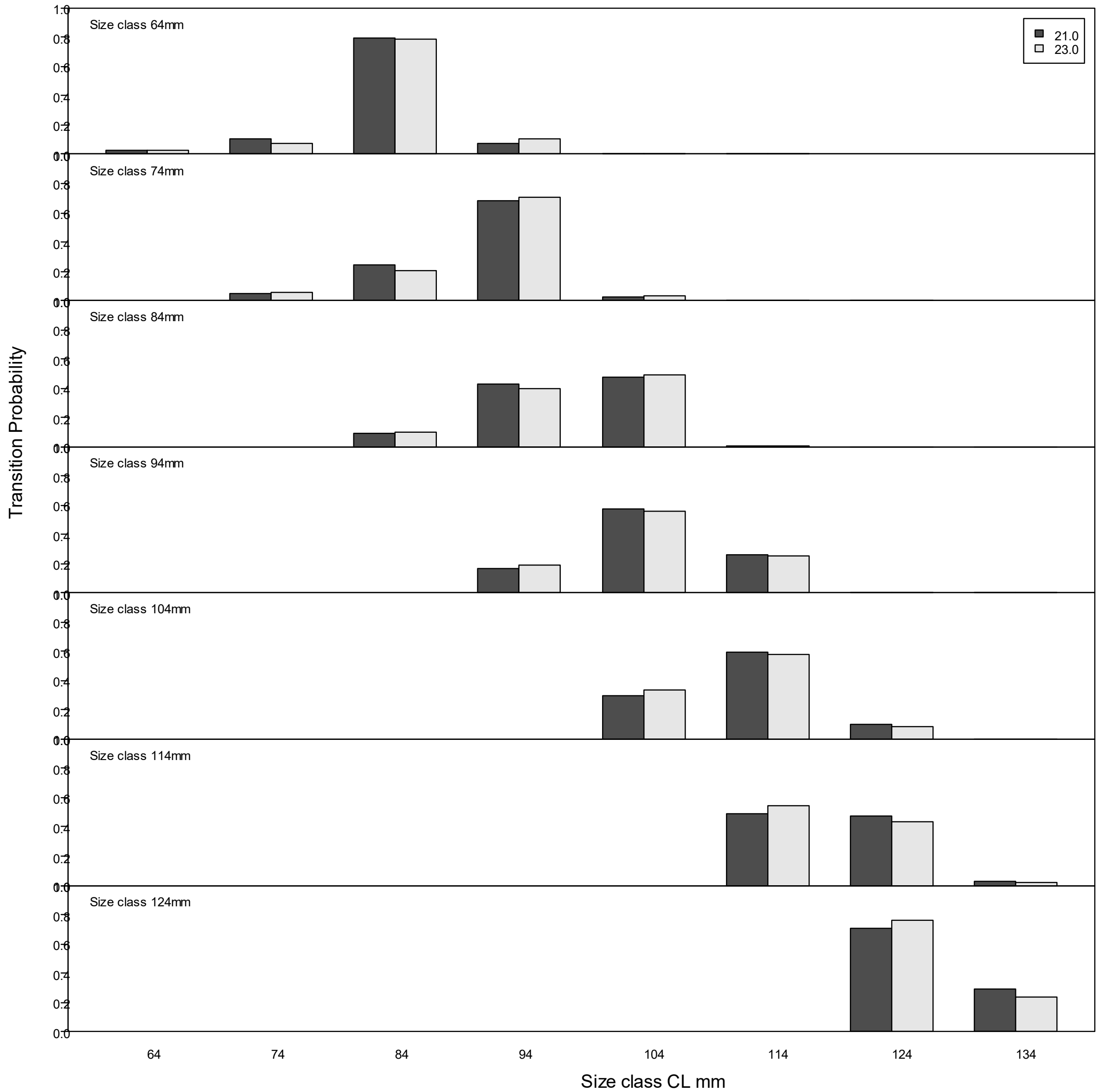


Figure 5. Model estimated abundances of total, legal (CL>104 mm) and recruit (CL 64-94 mm) males during1976-2022.

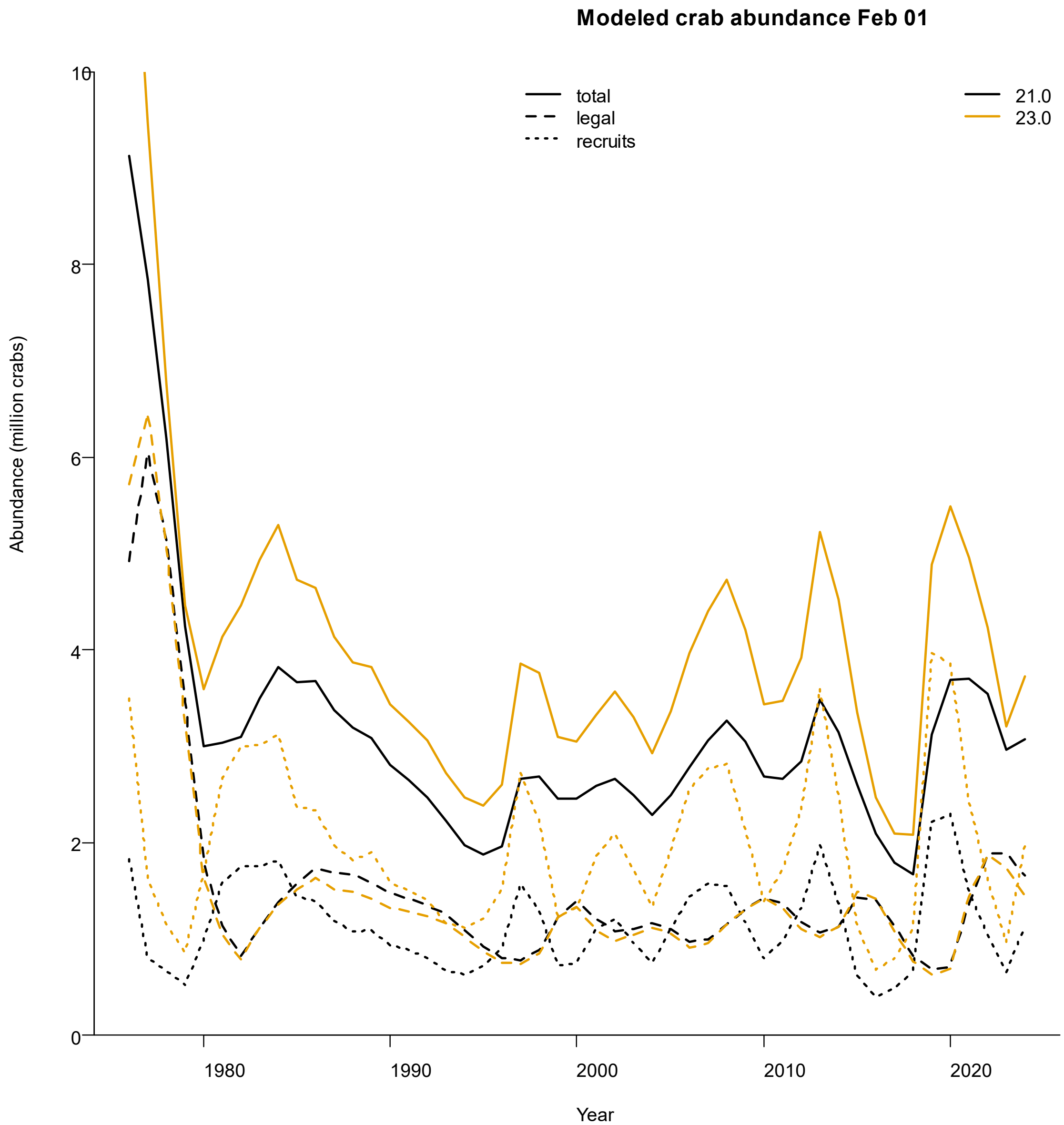


Figure 6. Estimated mean and 95% CI range of MMB 1976-2024. Horizontal line Bmsy (Average MMB of 1980-2024).

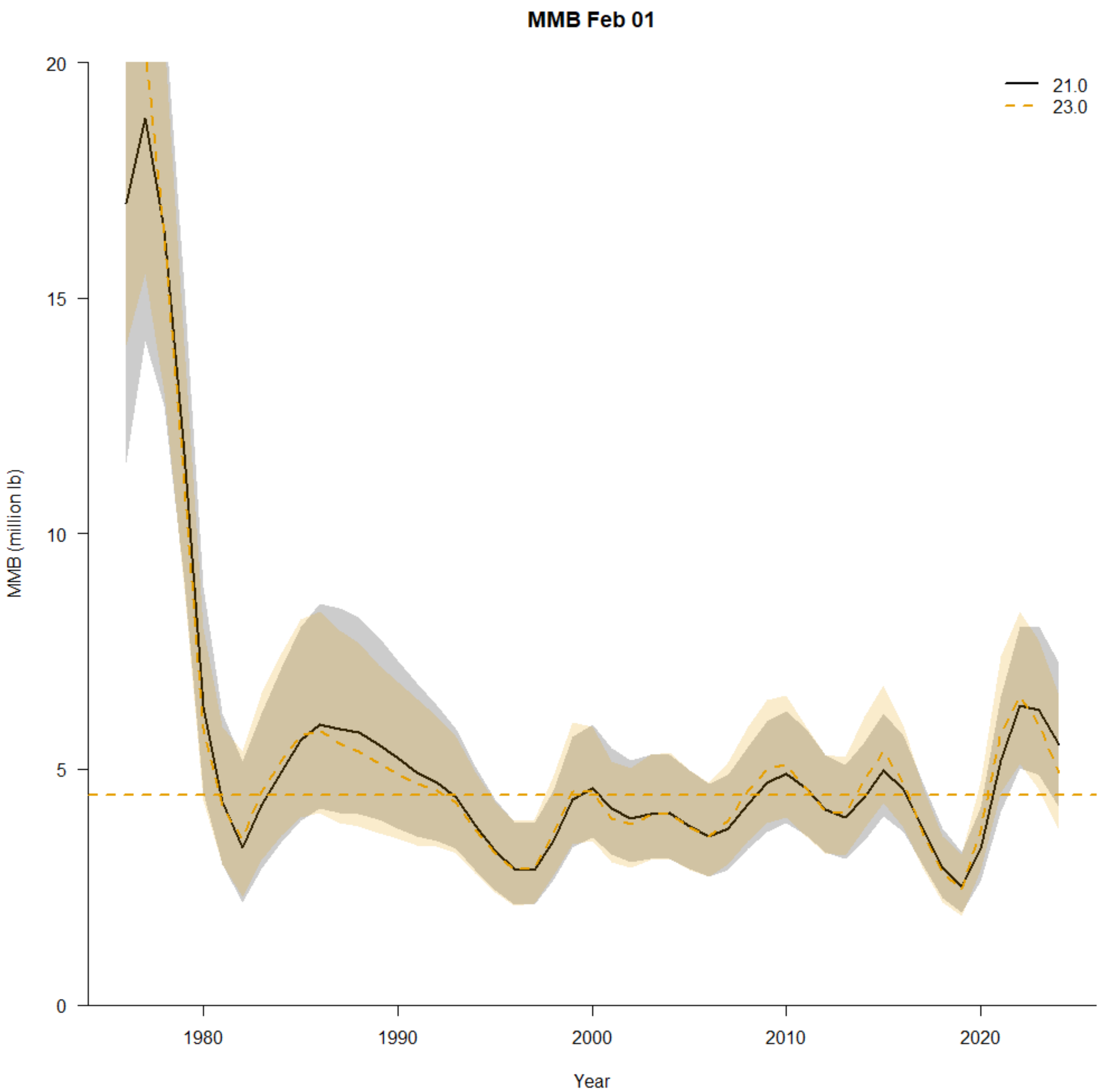


Figure 7. Observed (open circle) (White: NMFS, Red: ADF&G) and model trawl survey male abundances with 95% lognormal Confidence Intervals (crab ≥ 64 mm CL).

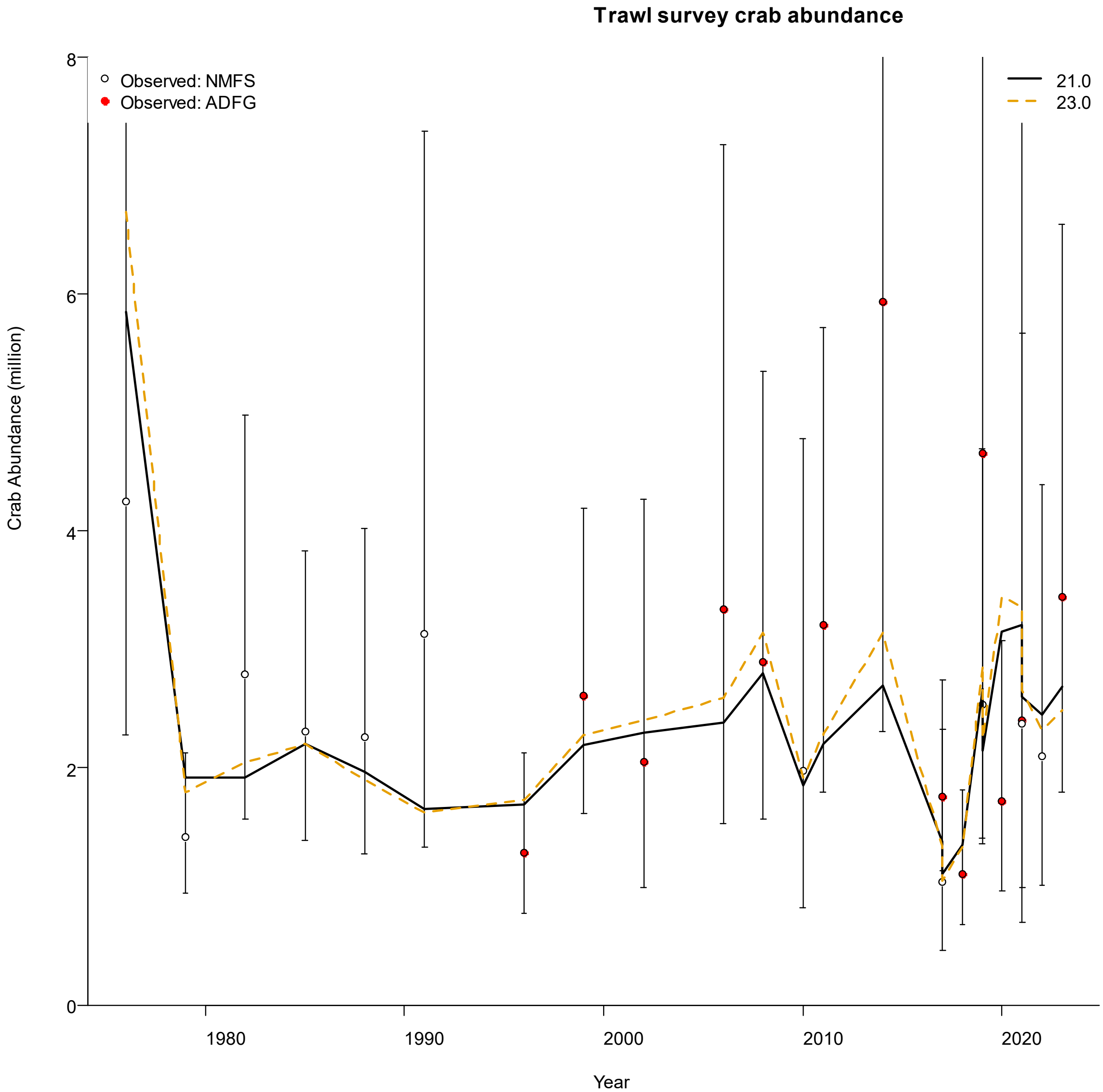


Figure 7. Observed (open circle) with 95% lognormal confidence intervals with additional variance (red), and model estimated standardized CPUE.

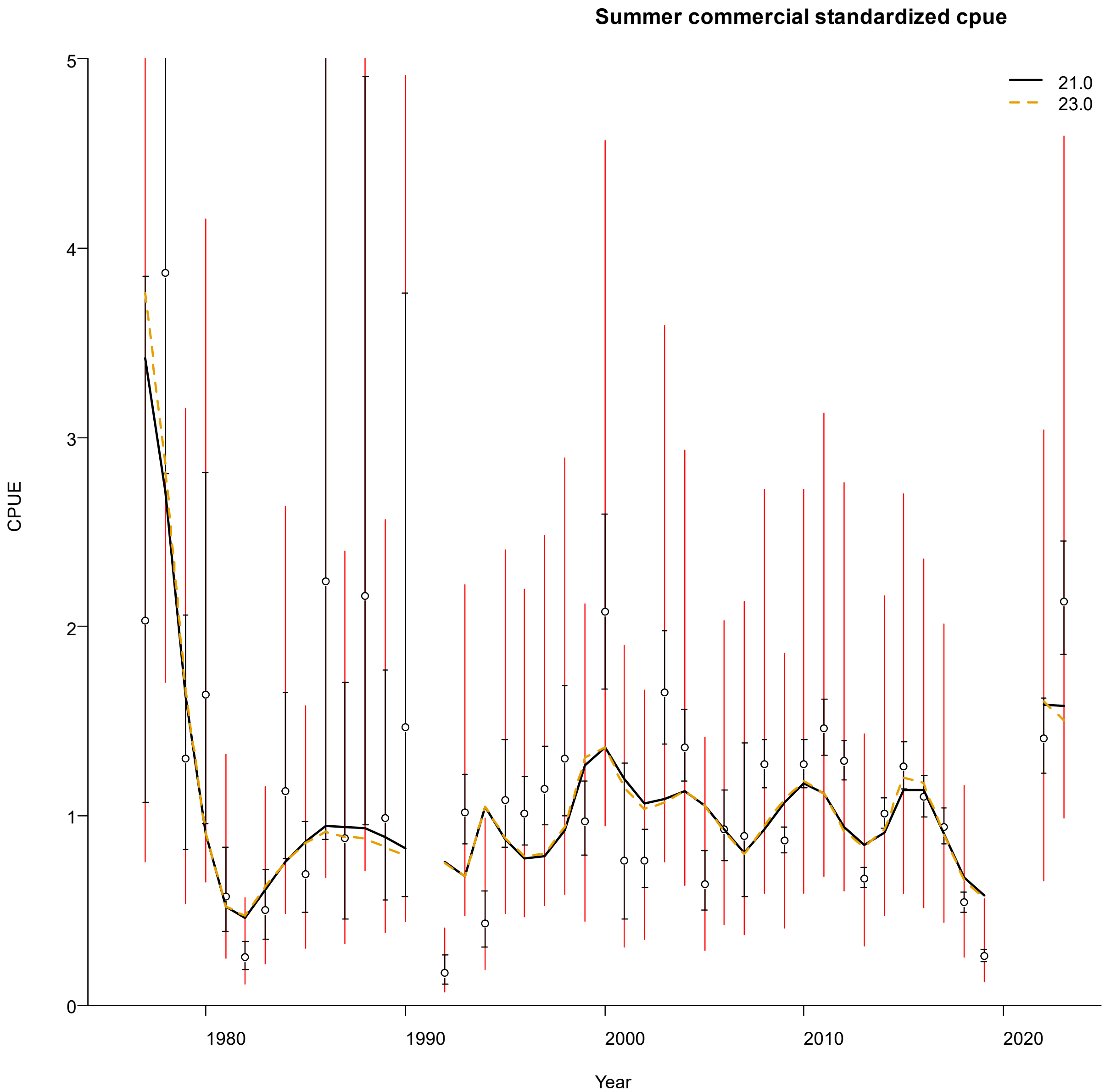


Figure 8. Predicted (line) vs. observed (bar New Shell: blue, Old Shell: green) length class proportions for the summer commercial harvest 1977-2023.

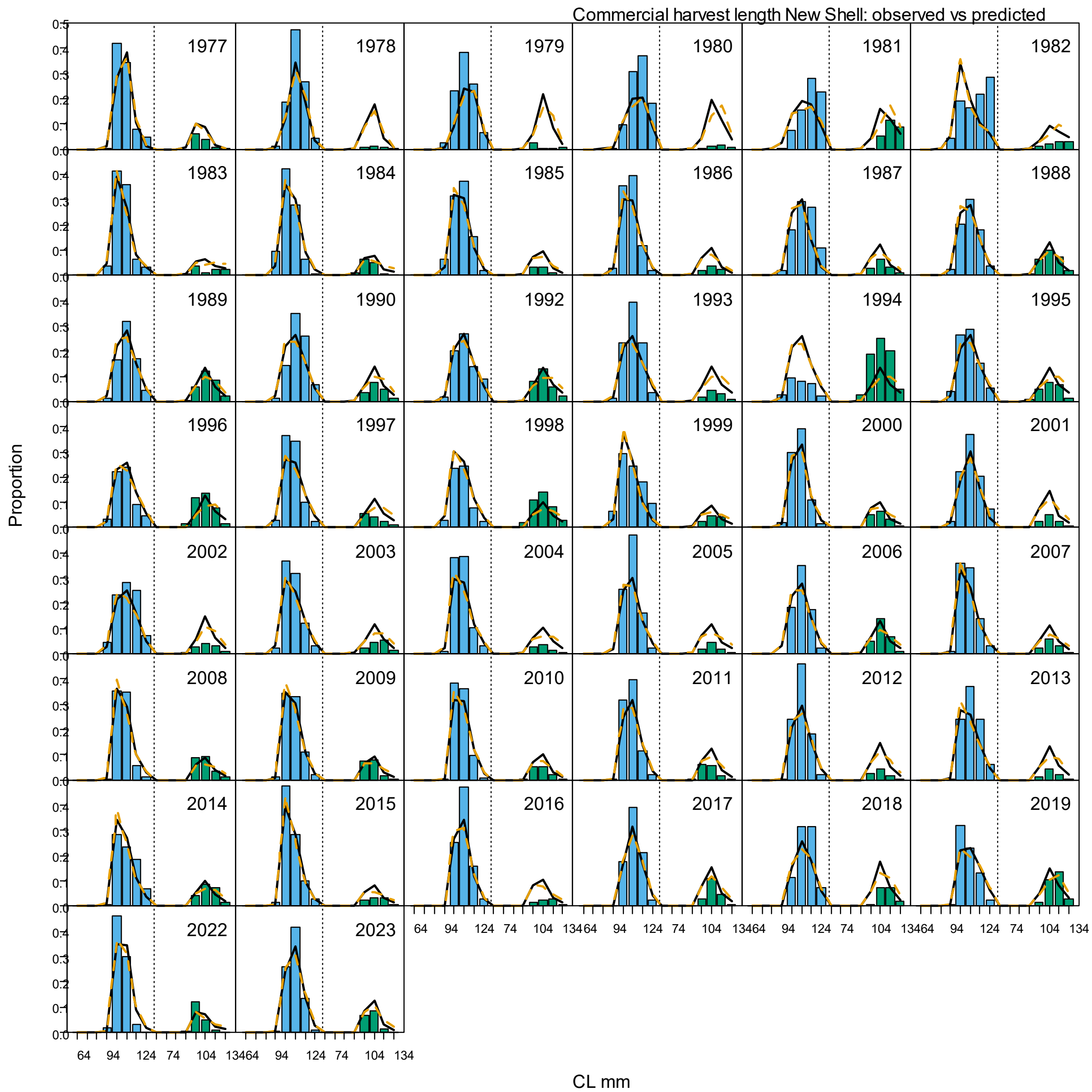


Figure 9. Predicted (line) vs. observed (bar New Shell: blue, Old Shell: green) length class proportions for trawl survey 1976-2023.

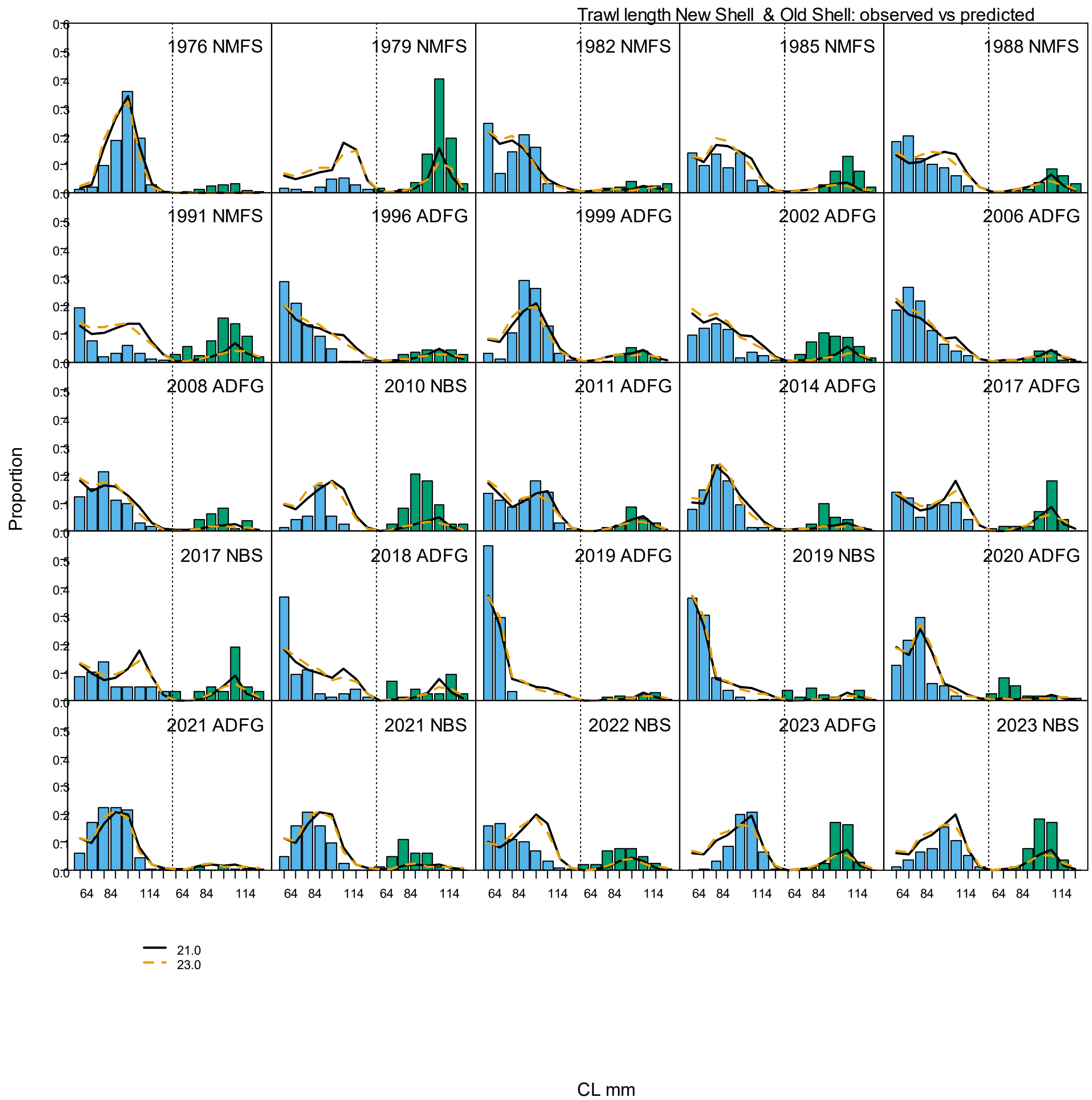


Figure 10. Predicted (line) vs. observed (bar New Shell: blue, Old Shell: green) length class proportions for winter pot survey 1982-2012.

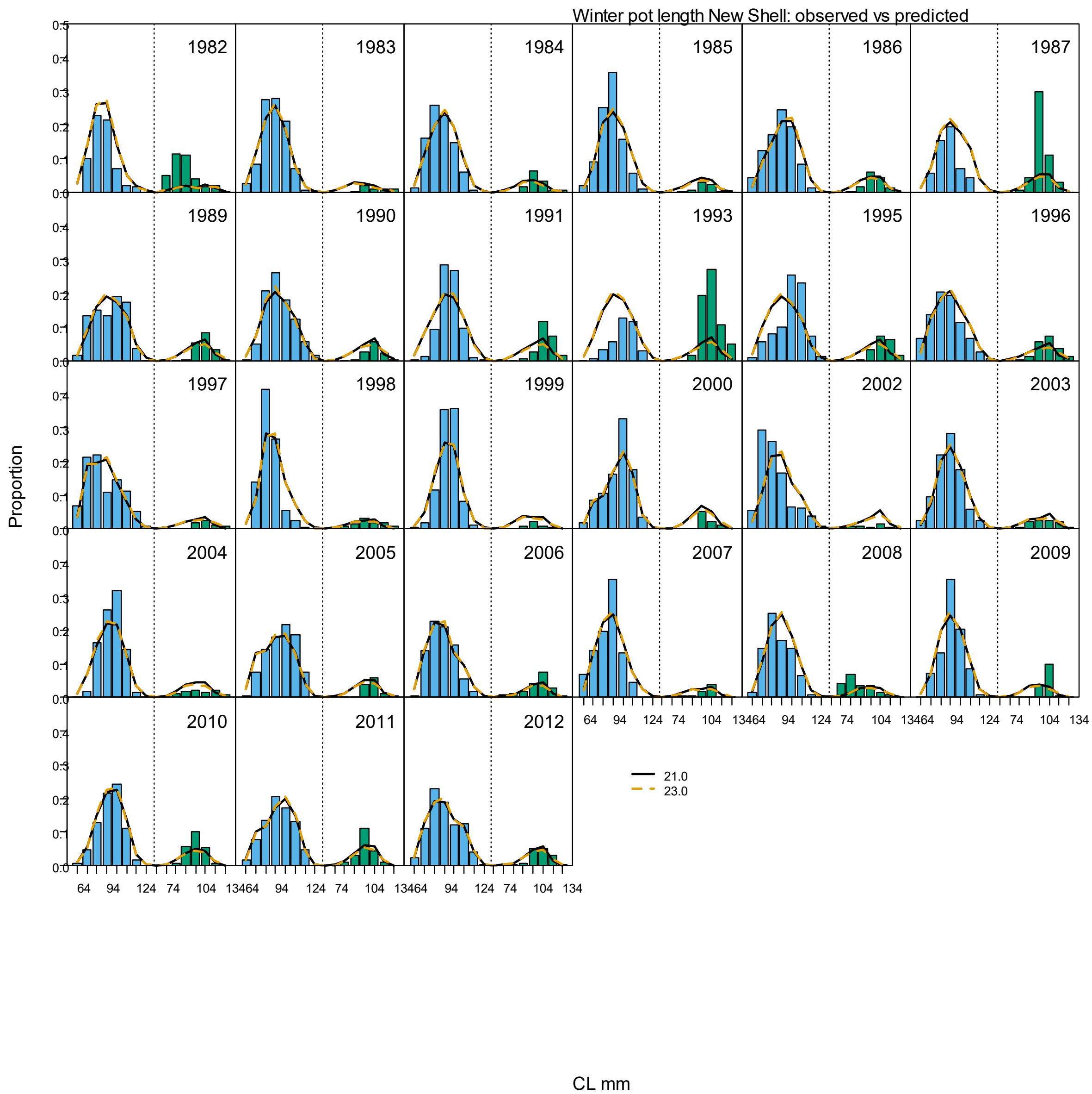


Figure 11. Predicted (line) vs. observed (bar New Shell: left blue, Old Shell: right green) length class proportions for summer commercial total and discards (1987-1994, 2012-2019) and winter commercial retained fishery 2015-2018

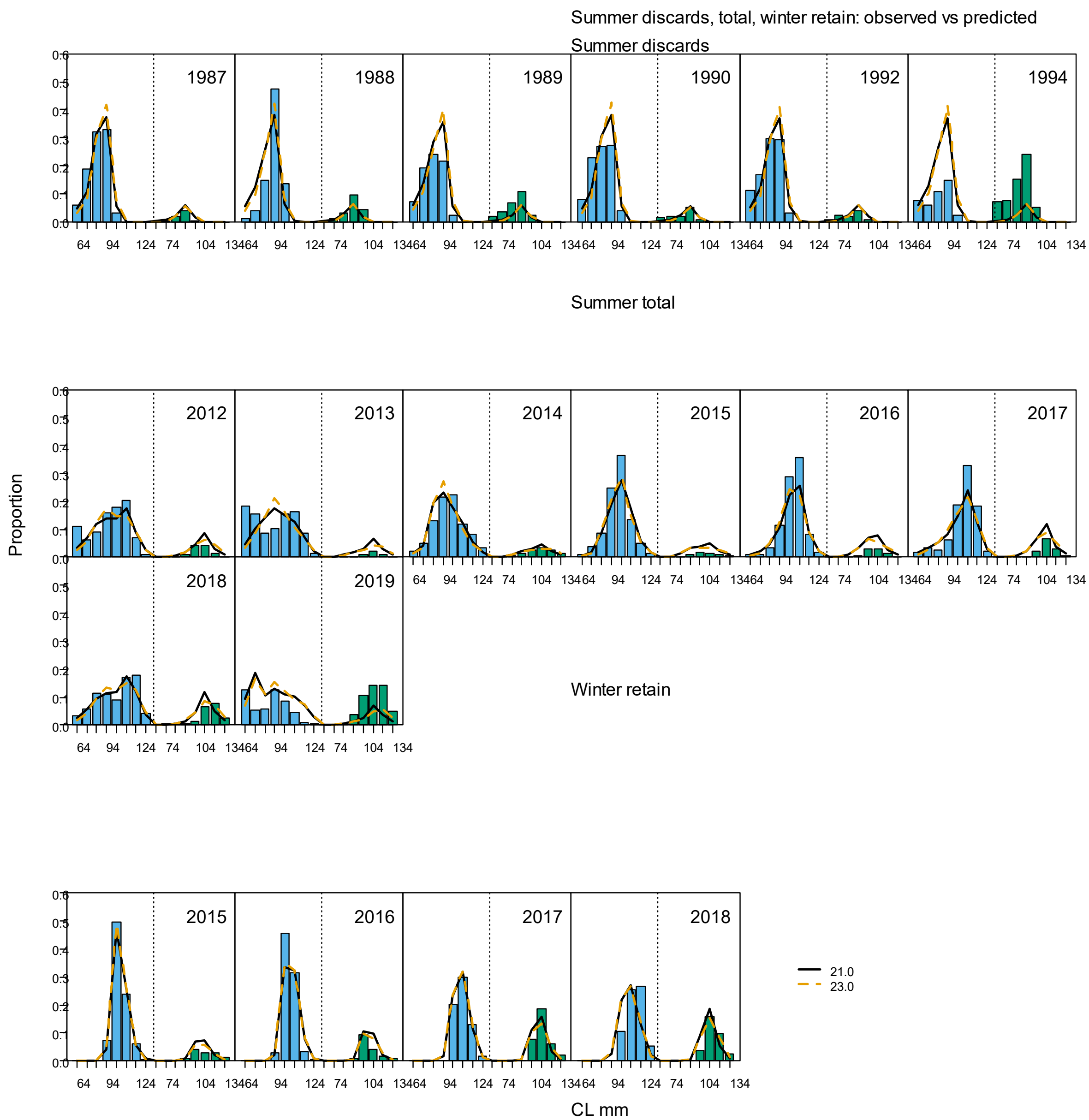


Figure 12. Predicted (line) vs. observed (bar) length class proportions for tag recovery data.

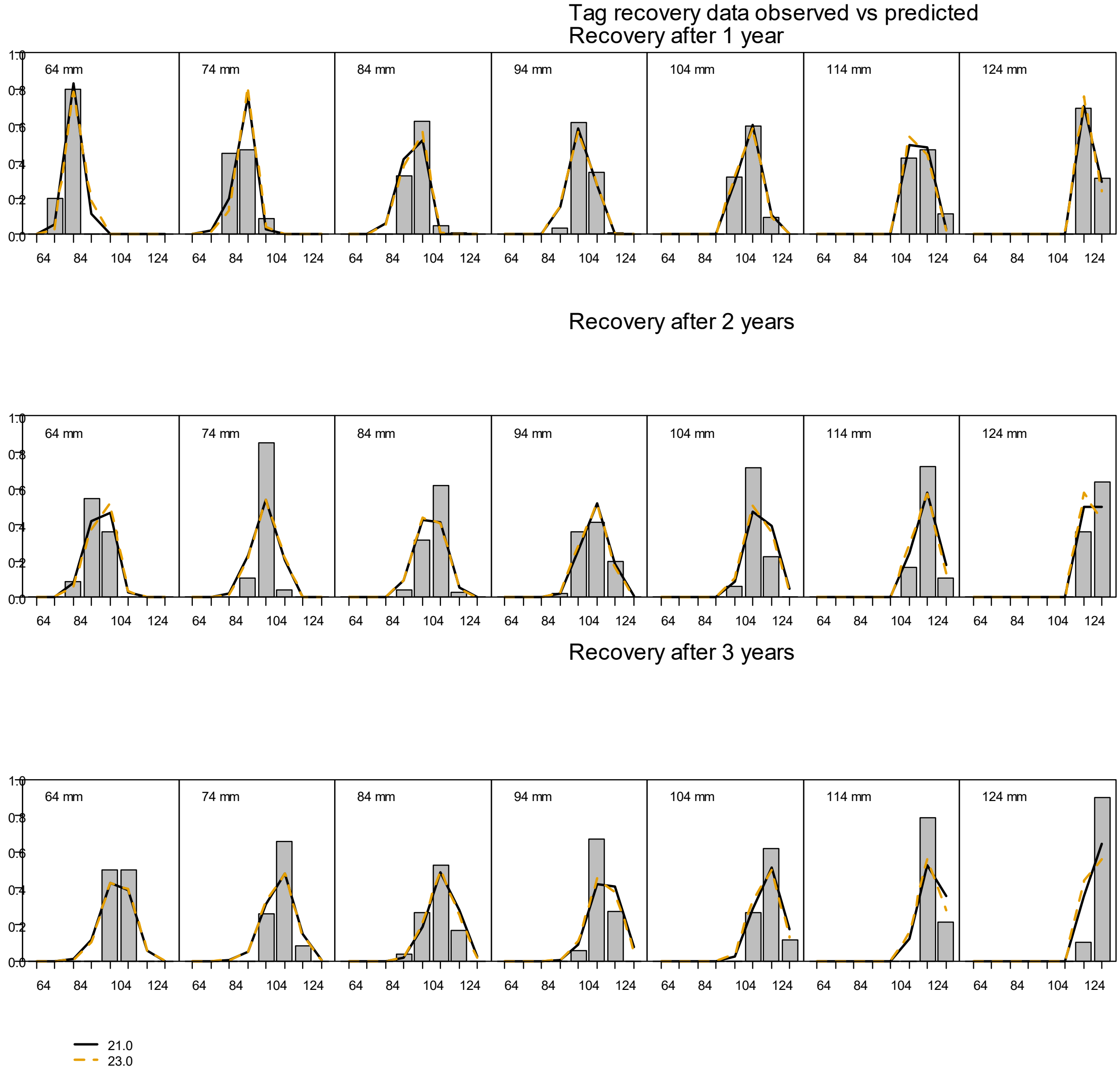
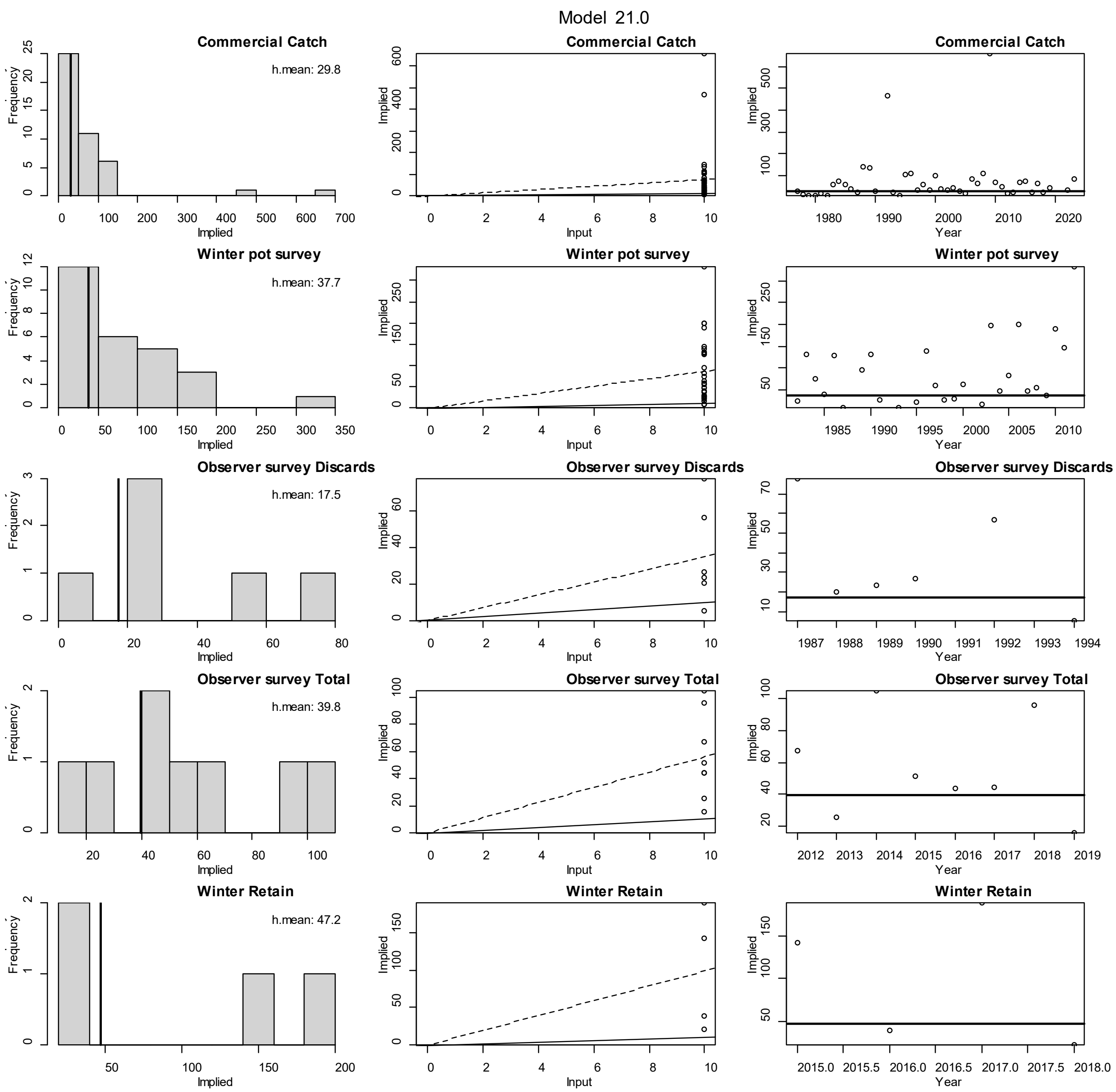


Figure 13. Input vs. model implied effective sample size. Figures in the first column show implied effective sample size (x-axis) vs. frequency (y-axis). Vertical solid line is the harmonic mean of implied sample size. Figures in the second column show input sample sizes (x-axis) vs. implied effective sample sizes (y-axis). Dashed line indicates the linear regression slope, and solid line is 1:1 line. Figures in the third column show years (x-axis) vs. implied effective sample sizes (y-axis). Horizontal solid line is the harmonic mean of implied sample size.



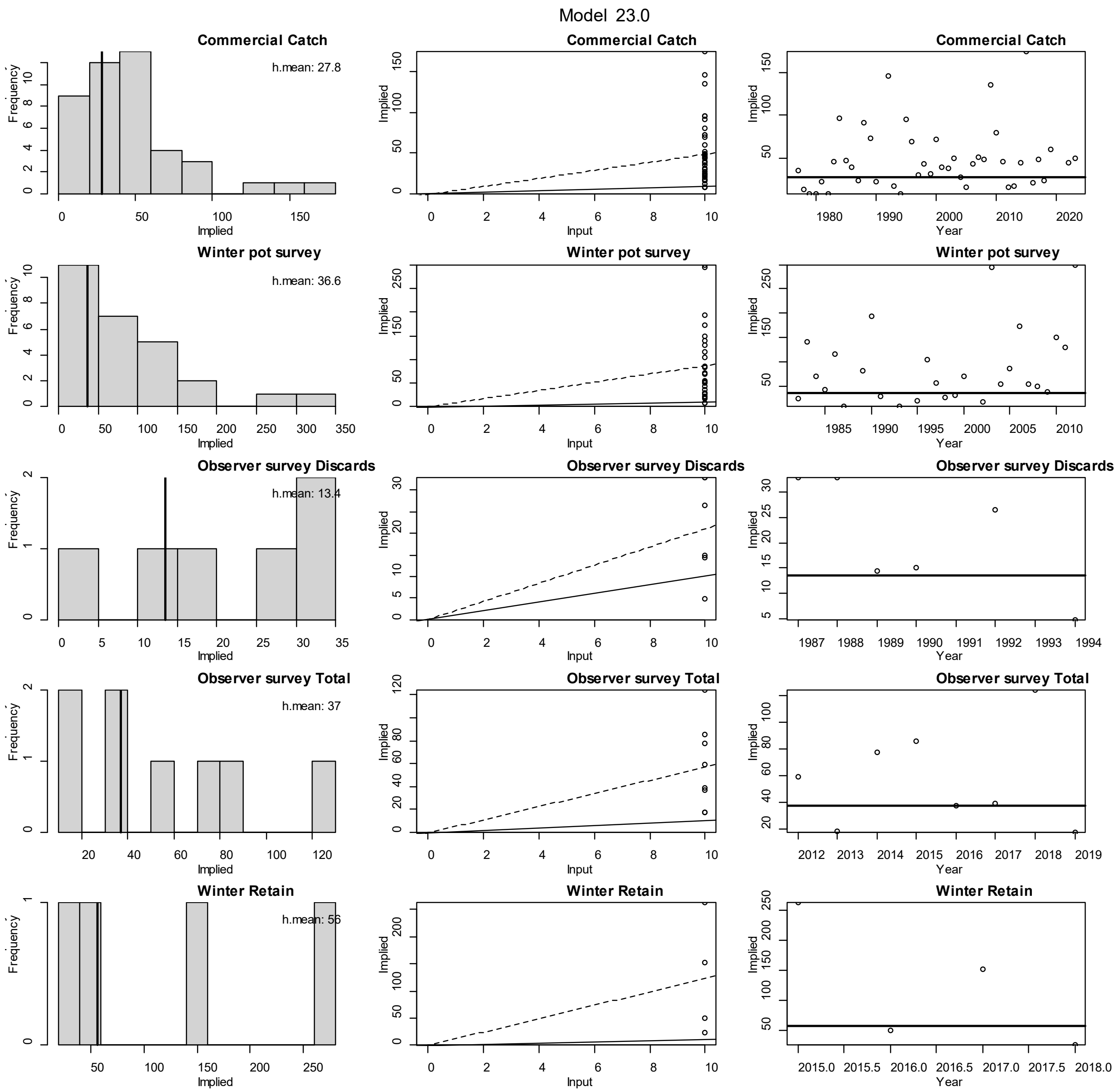
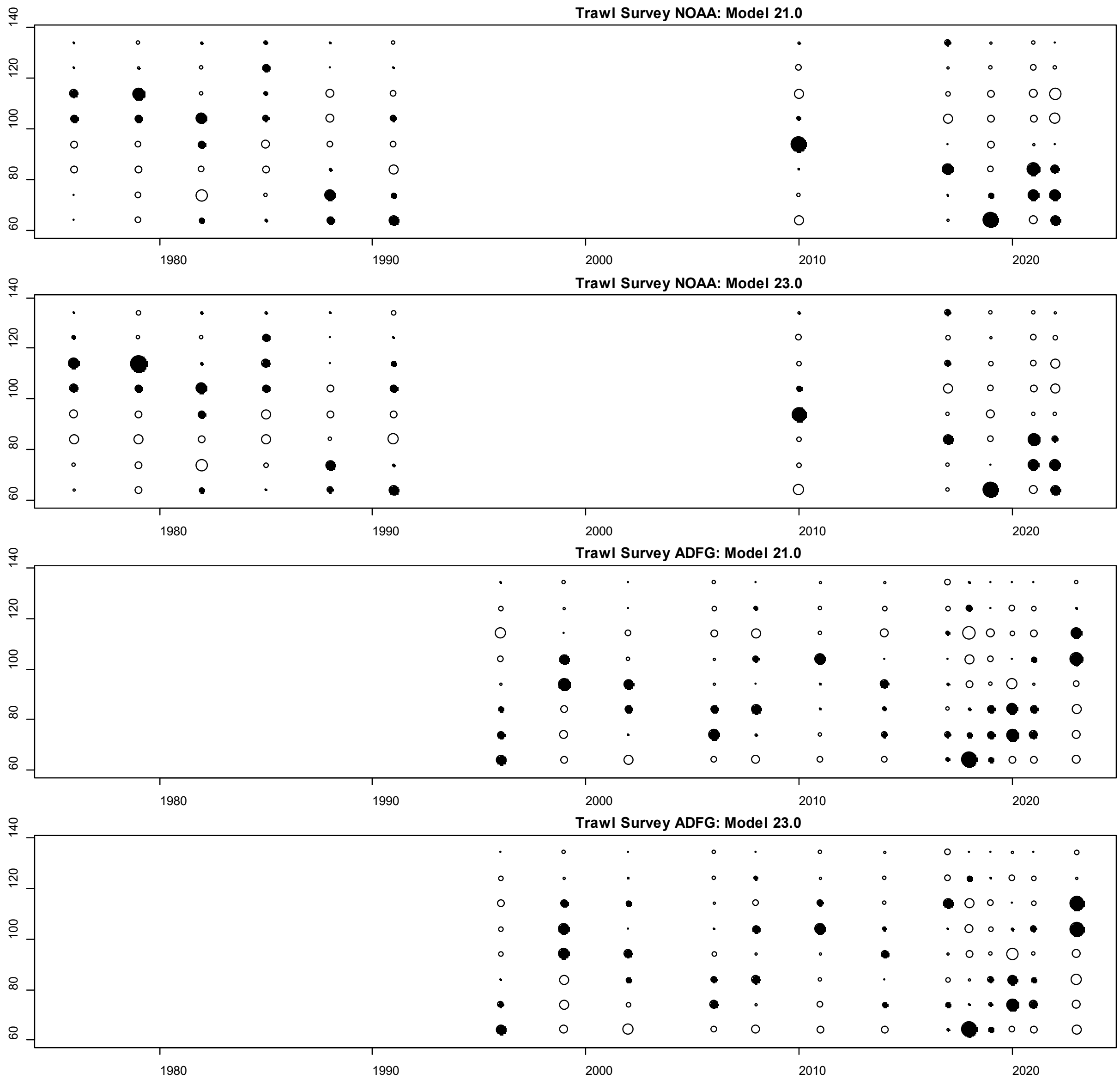
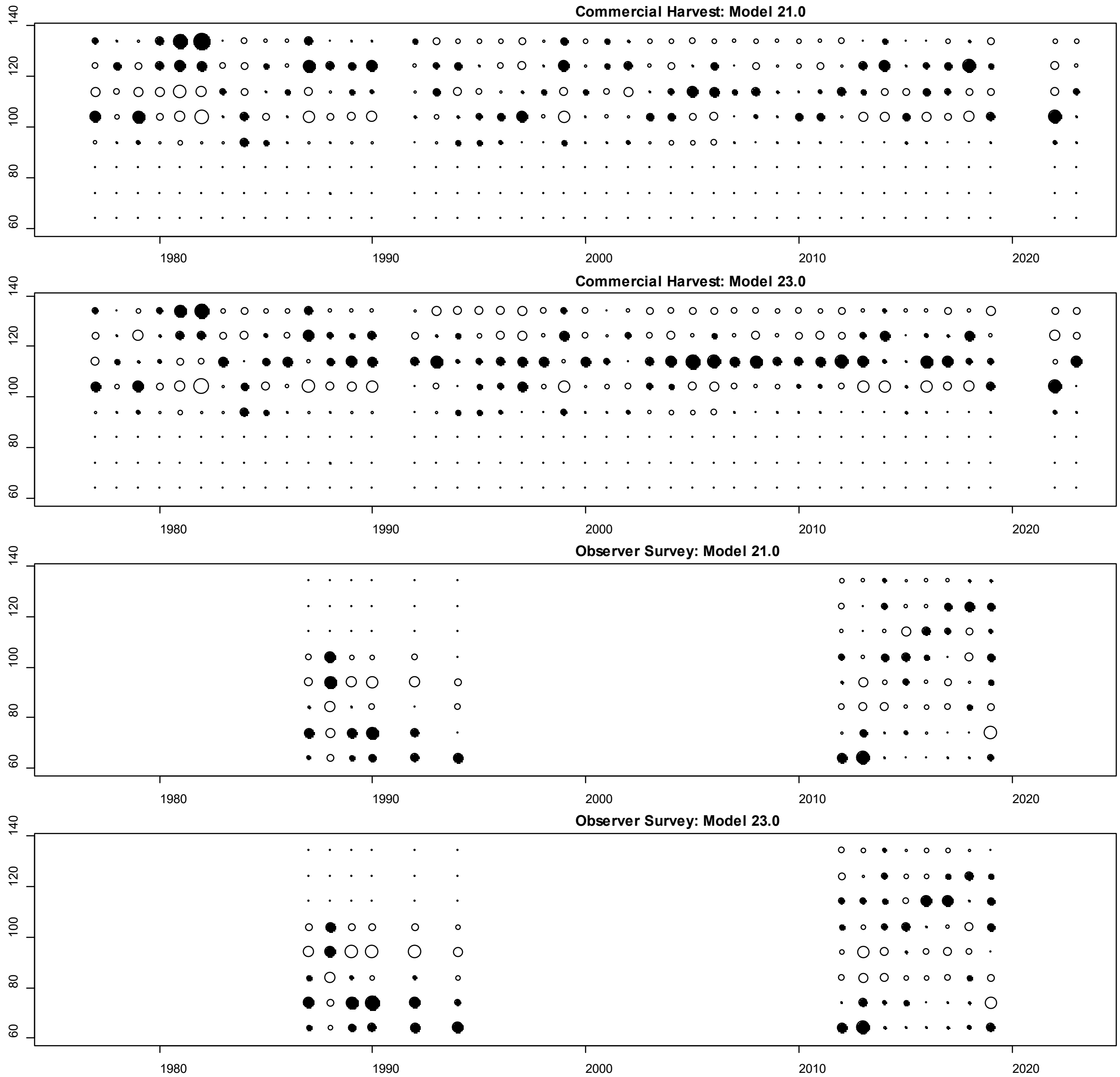

Model 23.0
Commercial Catch
h.mean: 27.8
Winter pot survey
h.mean: 36.6
Observer survey Discards
h.mean: 13.4
Observer survey Total
h.mean: 37
Winter Retain
h.mean: 56
Frequency
Implied
Input
Year

Figure 14. Bubble plots of predicted and observed length proportions.
Black circles indicate model underestimates compared to observed, and white circles indicate model overestimates compared to observed. Size of circle indicates degree of deviance (larger circle = larger deviance). In ideal model fit case, distribution of sizes and colors of circles should be random (i.e., no systematic model misfits).




Commercial Harvest: Model 21.0
Commercial Harvest: Model 23.0
Observer Survey: Model 21.0
Observer Survey: Model 23.0
60
80
100
120
140
1980
1990
2000
2010
2020

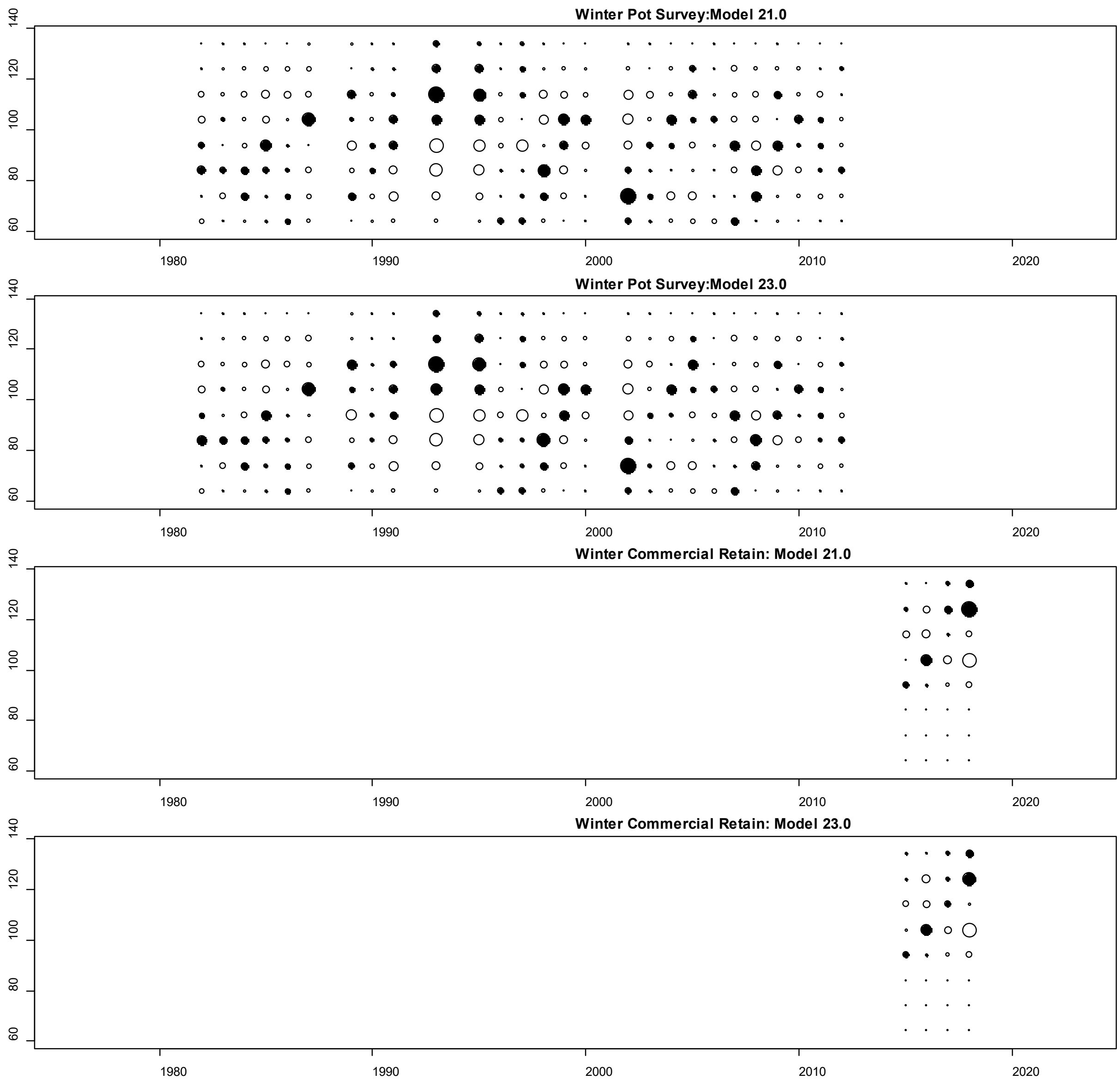
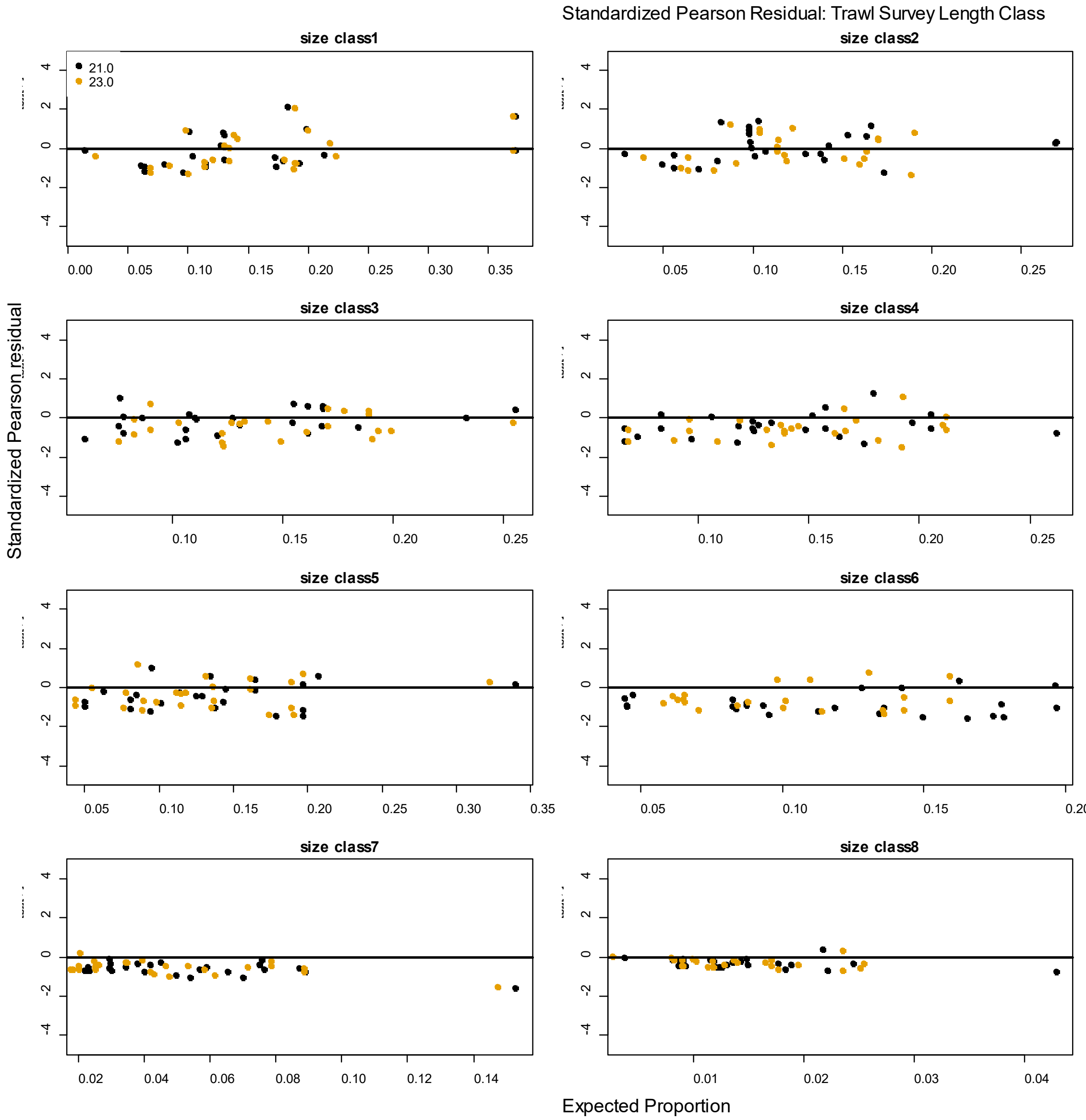
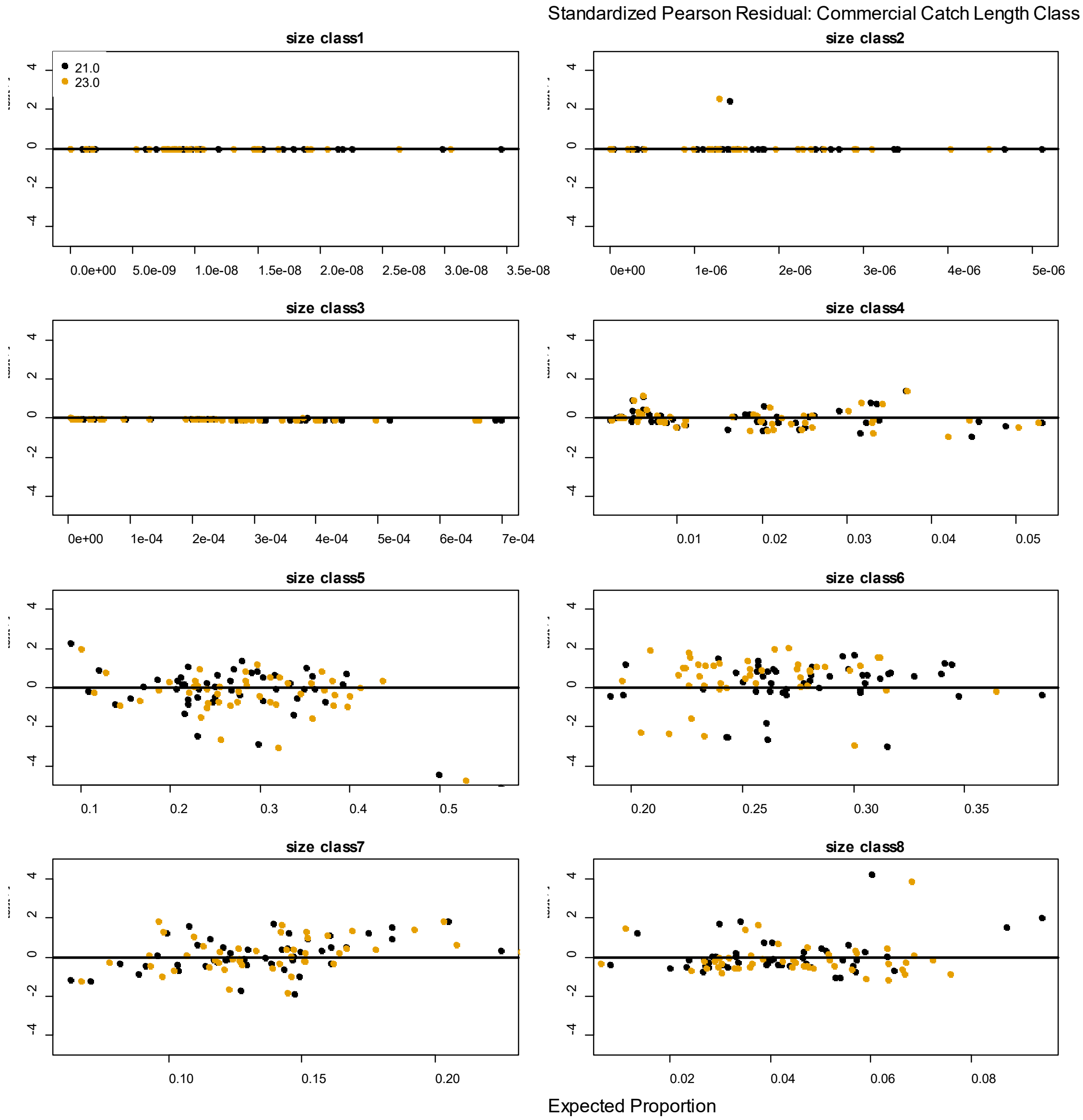

Winter Pot Survey:Model 21.0
Winter Pot Survey:Model 23.0
Winter Commercial Retain: Model 21.0
Winter Commercial Retain: Model 23.0
60
80
100
120
140
1980
1990
2000
2010
2020

Figure 15. Standardized Pearson residual plots for trawl survey, summer commercial retained catch, winter pot survey, and observer for length size classes 1-8.

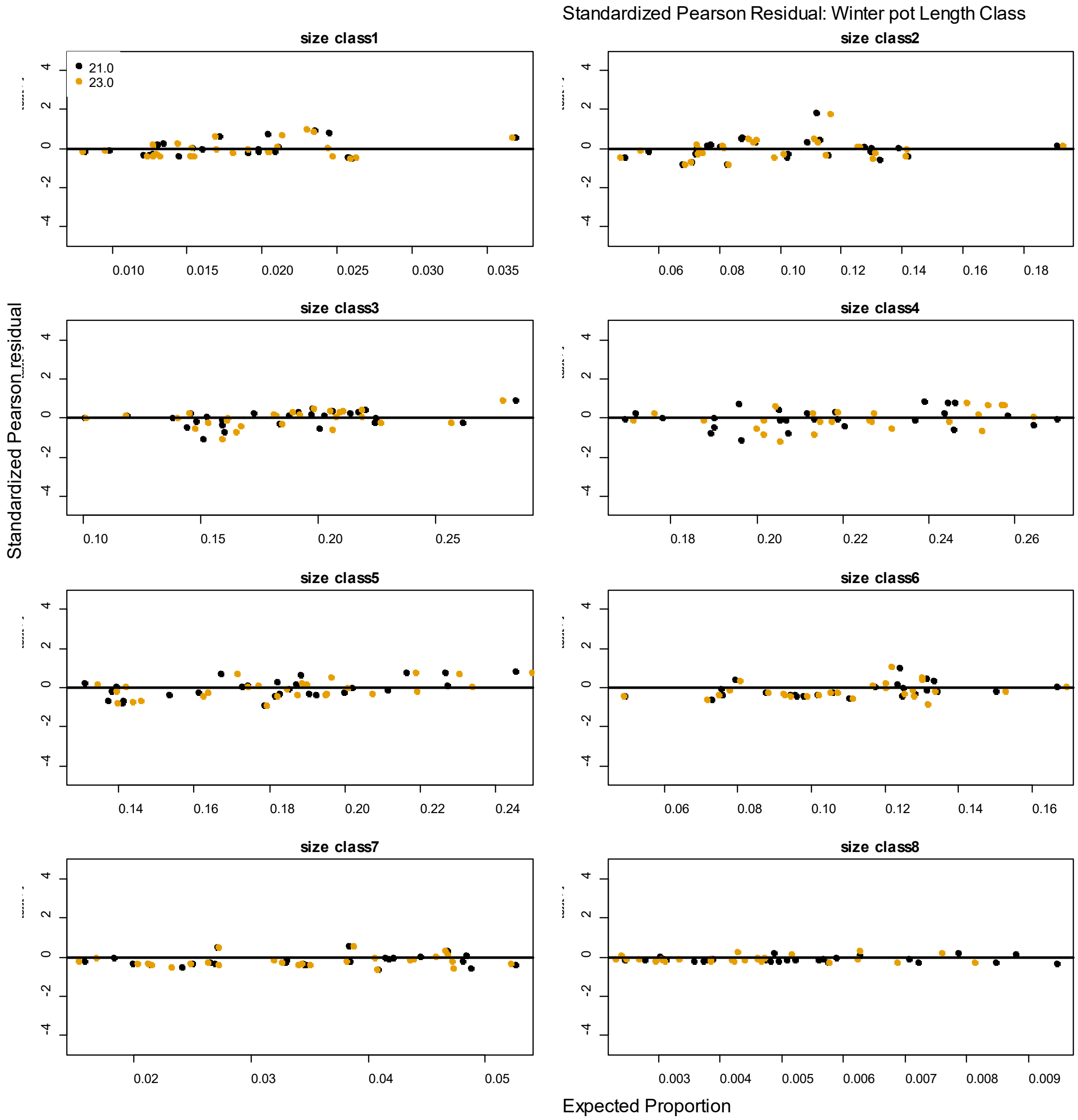
Trawl Survey



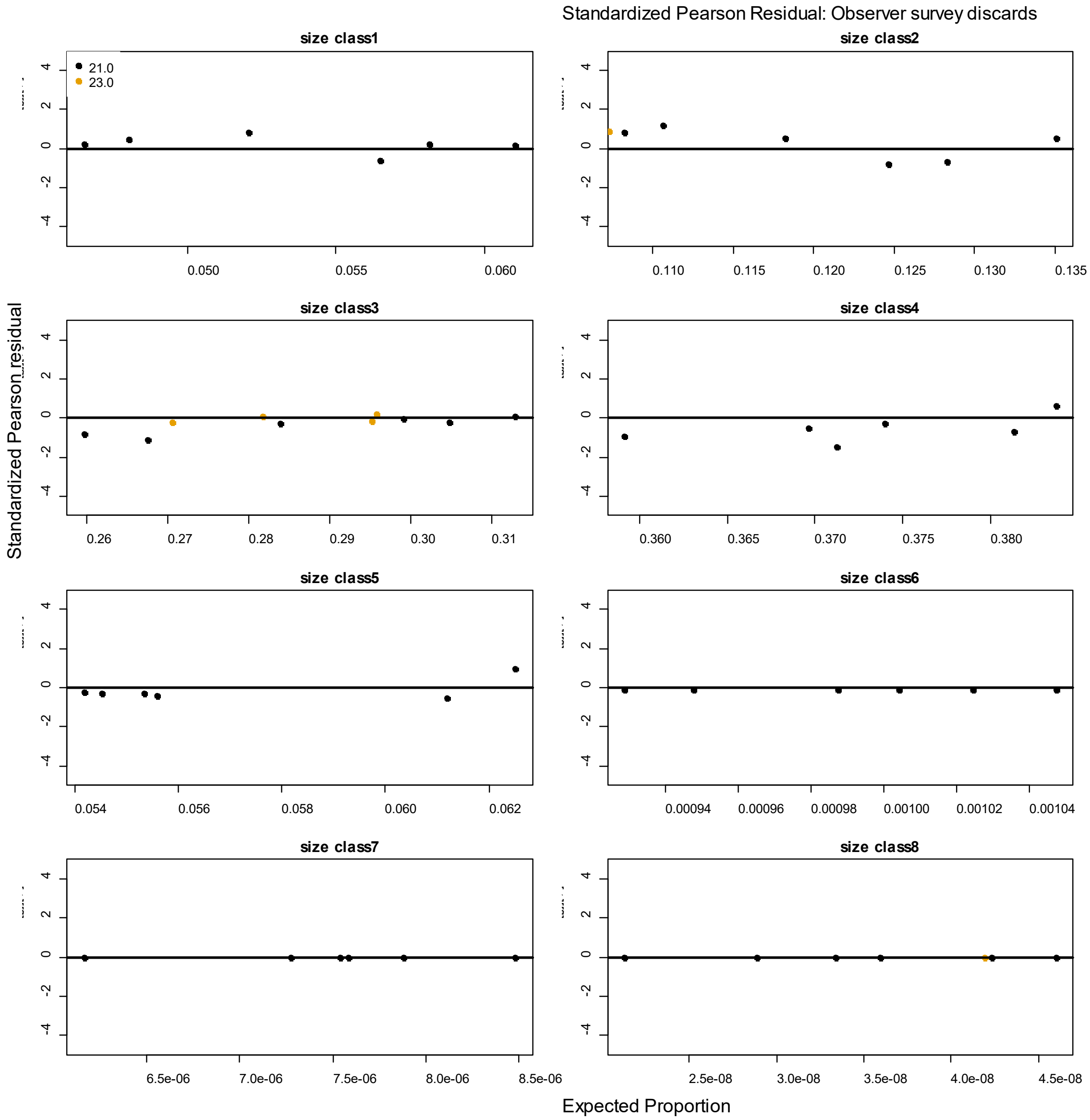
Summer Commercial retained



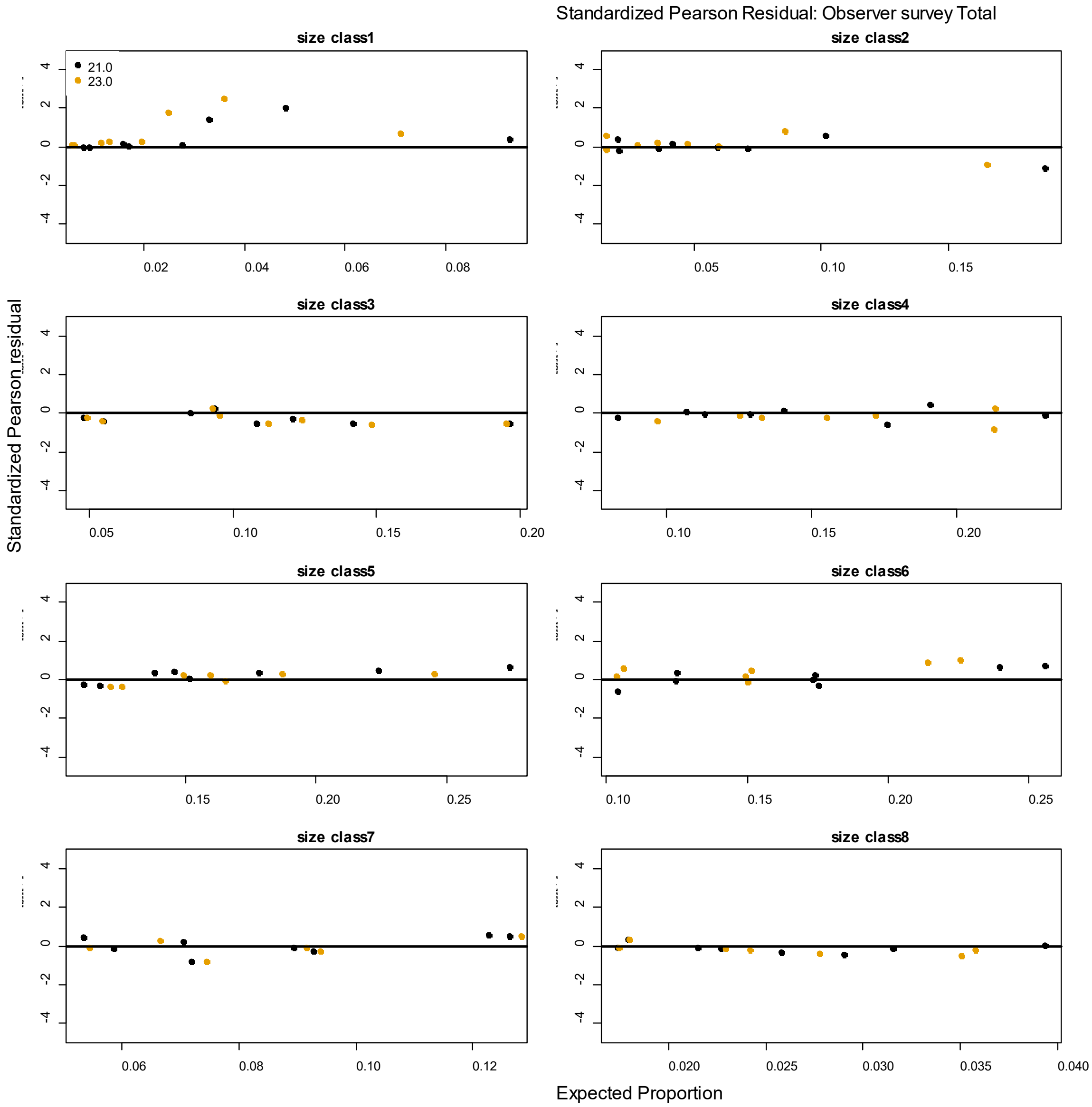
Winter Pot


Standardized Pearson Residual: Winter pot Length Class
size class1
size class2
size class3
size class4
size class5
size class6
size class7
size class8
21.0
23.0
Standardized Pearson residual
Expected Proportion

Summer Commercial Discards



Summer Commercial Total



Winter Commercial retained

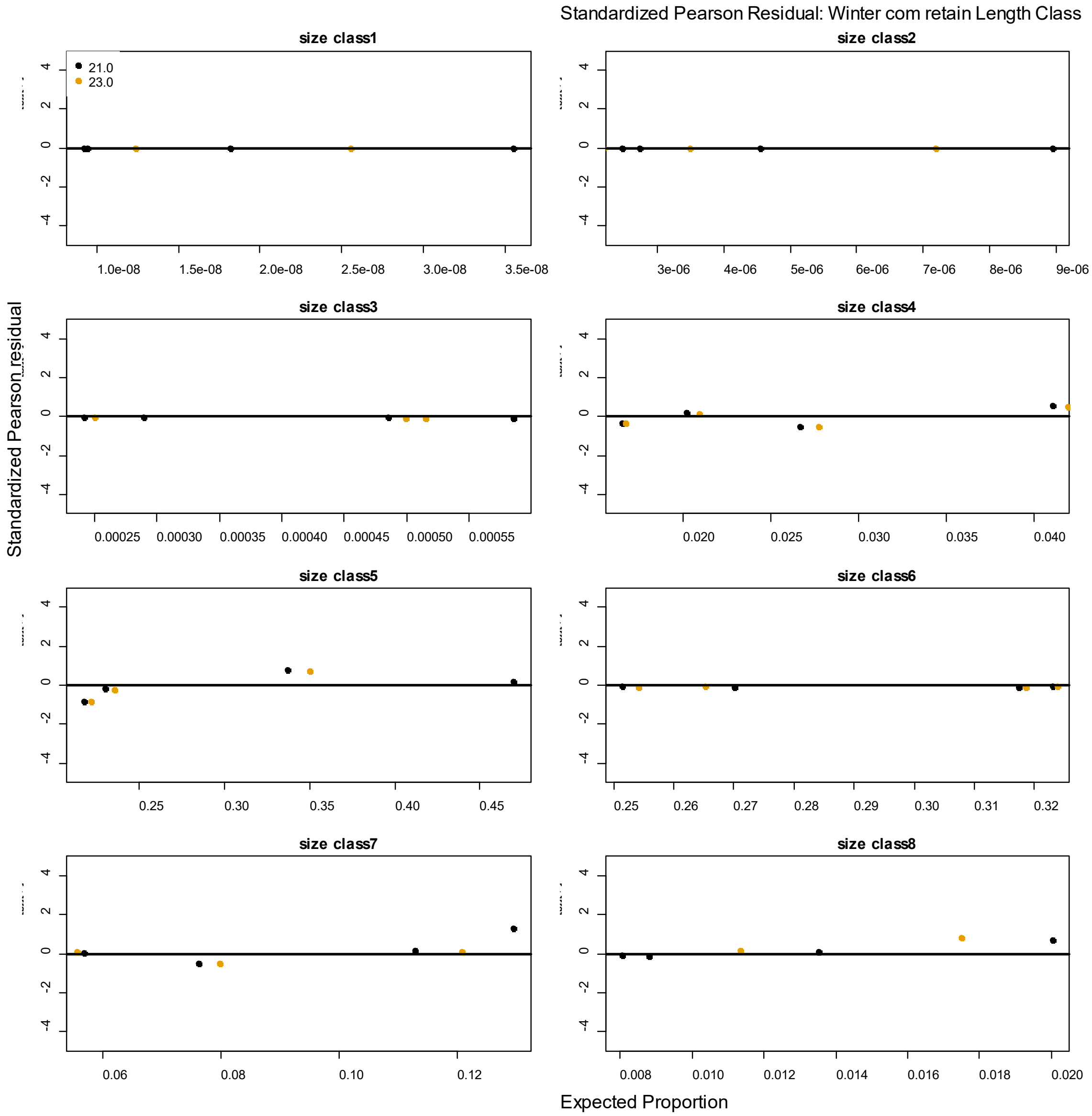
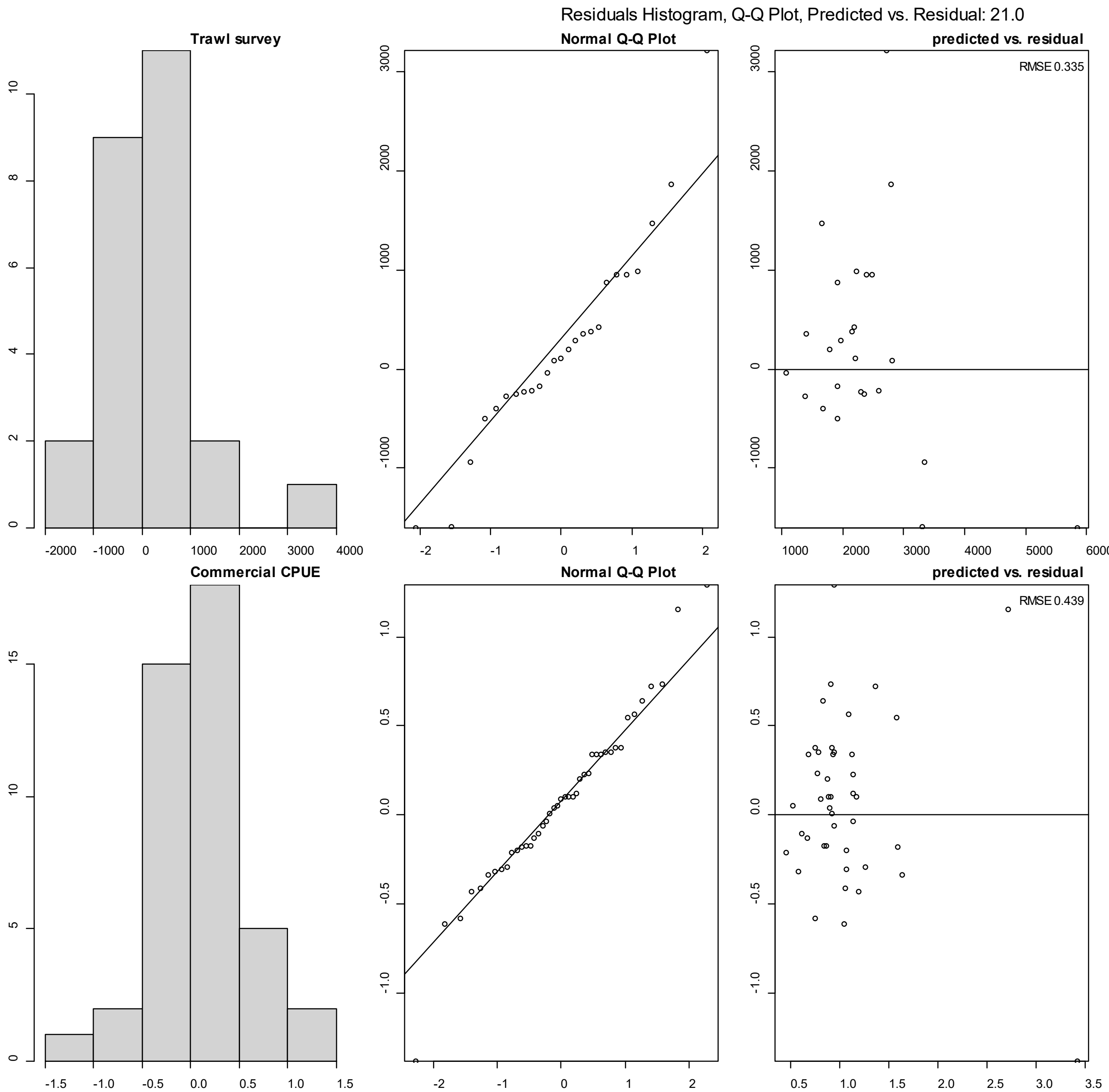


Figure 16. QQ Plot of Trawl survey and Commercial CPUE (Model 21.0, 23.0)



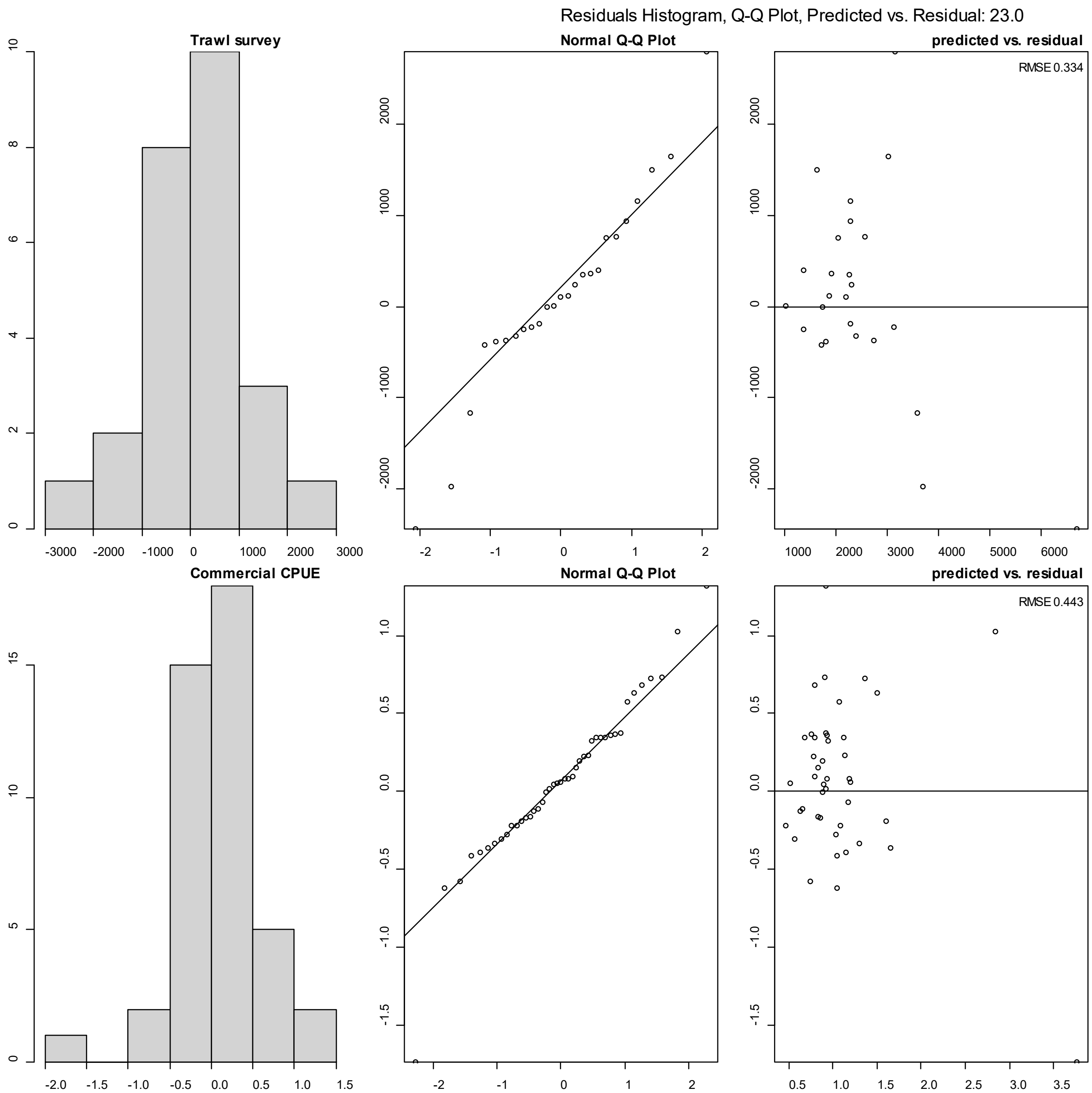
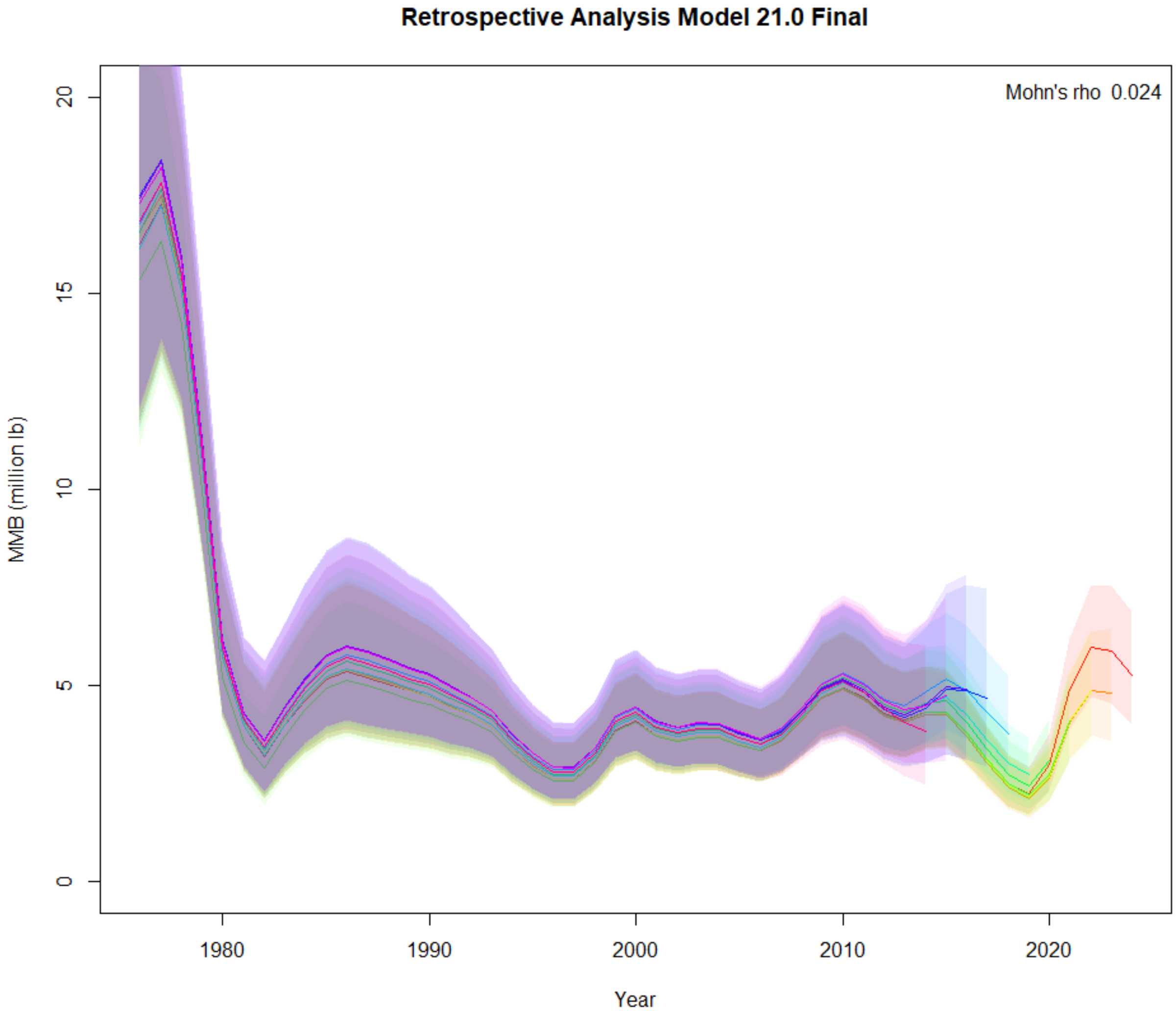

Residuals Histogram, Q-Q Plot, Predicted vs. Residual: 23.0
Trawl survey
Normal Q-Q Plot
predicted vs. residual
RMSE 0.334
Commercial CPUE
Normal Q-Q Plot
predicted vs. residual
RMSE 0.443

Figure 17. Retrospective Analyses of Norton Sound Red King Crab MMB from 2012 to 2024.



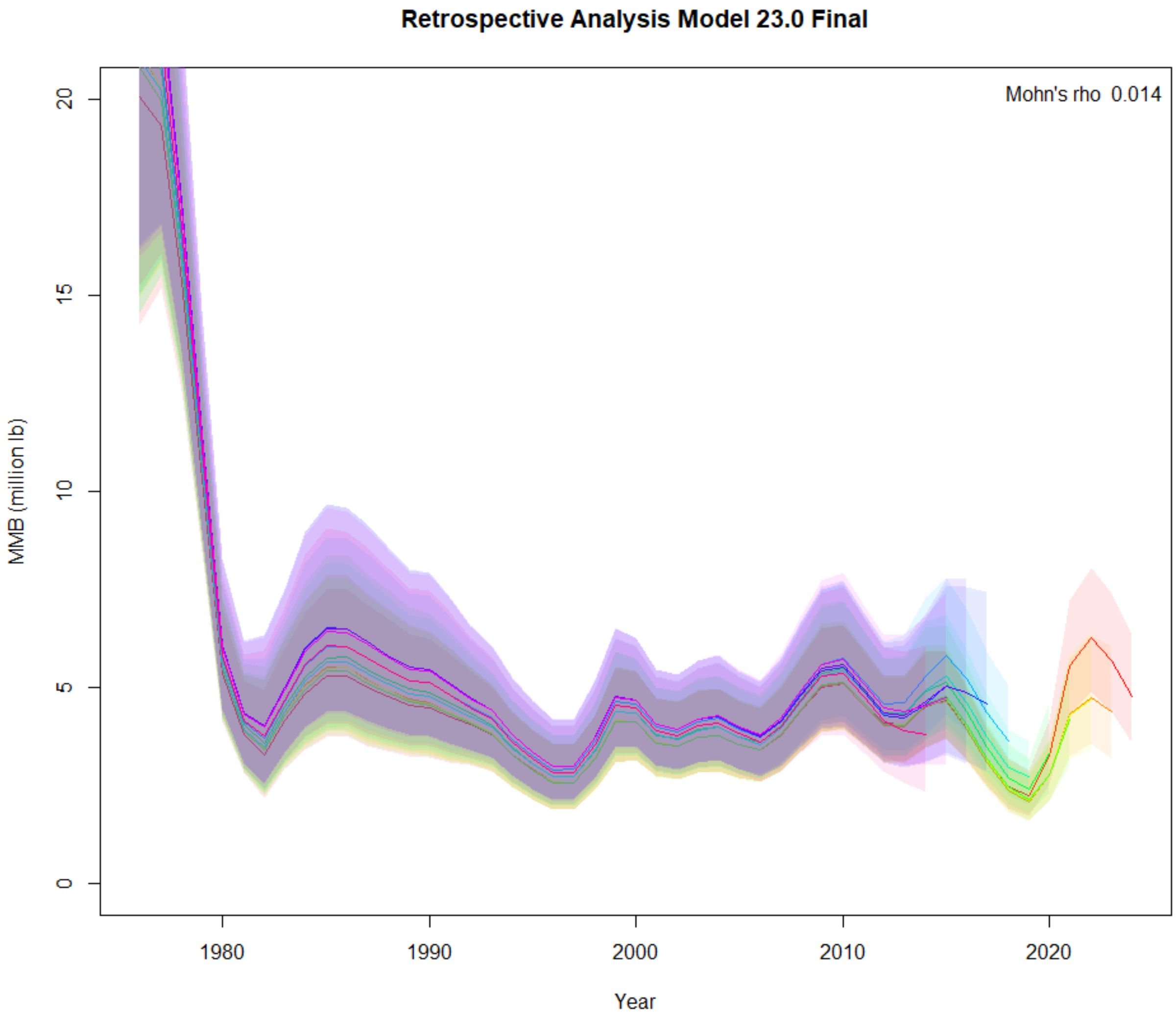
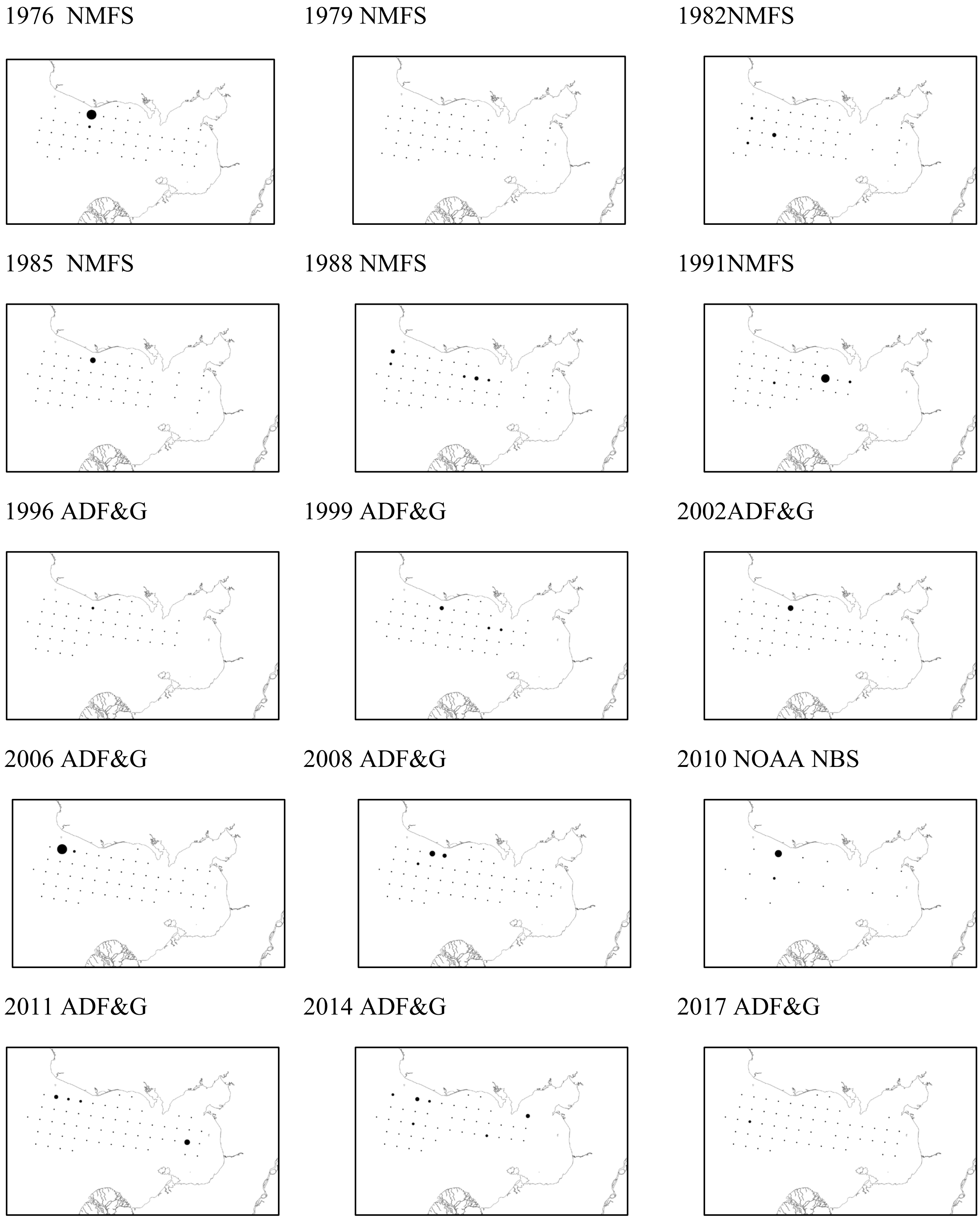

Retrospective Analysis Model 23.0 Final
Mohn's rho 0.014
MMB (million lb)
0
5
10
15
20
1980
1990
2000
2010
2020
Year

Figure 18: Norton Sound trawl survey stations limited to the ADF&G trawl survey area. Dot size indicates cpue (crab/km^2).

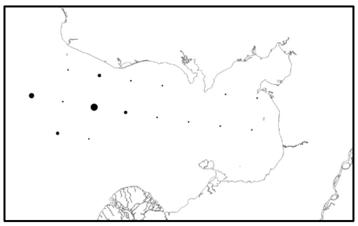


2017 NOAA NBS

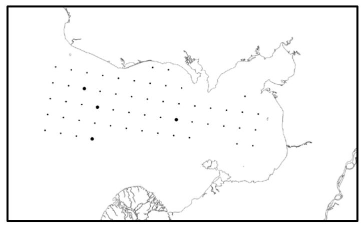
2018 ADF&G

2019 ADF&G

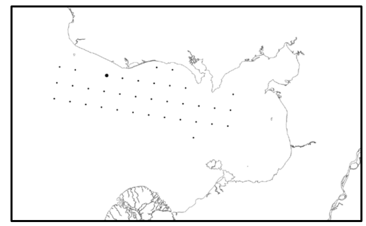
2019 NOAA NBS



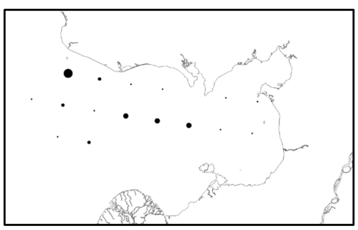
2020 ADF&G



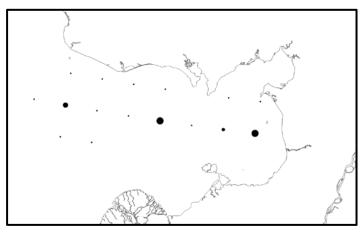
2021 ADF&G



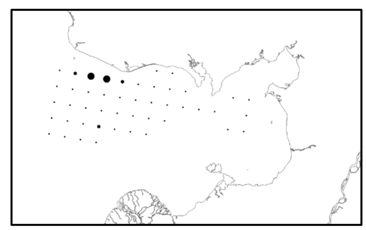
2021 NOAA NBS



2021 NOAA NBS



2023 ADF&G



2023 NOAA NBS

Figure 19. Entire trawled survey stations by frequency. Bar size indicates trawl frequency.

1976-2023 NMFS-ADF&G 1976-1991 NMFS 1996-2023 ADF&G