Joint Groundfish Plan Team meeting report

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Diana Stram (BSAI coordinator)

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NOAA FISHERIES
Alaska Fisheries Science Center

Joint Meeting of the Groundfish Plan Teams for the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and Bering Sea Aleutian Islands (BSAI)
MINUTES

November 14-18, 2022
Hybrid Meeting: Seattle, Washington, AFSC

BSAI Groundfish Plan Team Members:

Steve Barbeaux	AFSC REFM (co-chair)	Kirstin Holsman	AFSC REFM
Kalei Shotwell	AFSC REFM (co-chair)	Phil Joy	ADF&G
Cindy Tribuzio	AFSC ABL (vice chair)	Andy Kingham	AFSC FMA
Diana Stram	NPFMC (coordinator)	Beth Matta	AFSC REFM
Caitlin Allen Akselrud	AFSC RACE	Andrew Seitz	UAF
Mary Furuness	NMFS AKRO	Michael Smith	AFSC REFM
Allan Hicks	IPHC	Jane Sullivan	AFSC ABL
Lisa Hillier	WDFW		

GOA Groundfish Plan Team Members:

Jim Ianelli	AFSC REFM (co-chair)	Nat Nichols	ADF&G
Chris Lunsford	AFSC ABL (co-chair)	Cecilia O'Leary	AFSC GAP
Sara Cleaver	NPFMC (coordinator)	Andrew Olson	ADF&G
Kristan Blackhart	NMFS OS&T	Jan Rumble	ADF&G
Obren Davis	NMFS AKRO	Paul Spencer	AFSC REFM
Craig Faunce	AFSC FMA	Marysia Szymkowiak	AFSC REFM
Lisa Hillier	WDFW	Ben Williams	AFSC ABL
Pete Hulson	AFSC ABL	Kresimir Williams	AFSC RACE
Sandra Lowe	AFSC REFM		

Joint Plan Team Meeting overview and agenda

Overview

- Date: November 14th
- Place: Seattle and online

Agenda

- Sablefish
- Working group
- Economic update

Include spatial management policy reviewed at Sept PT/Oct Council meetings

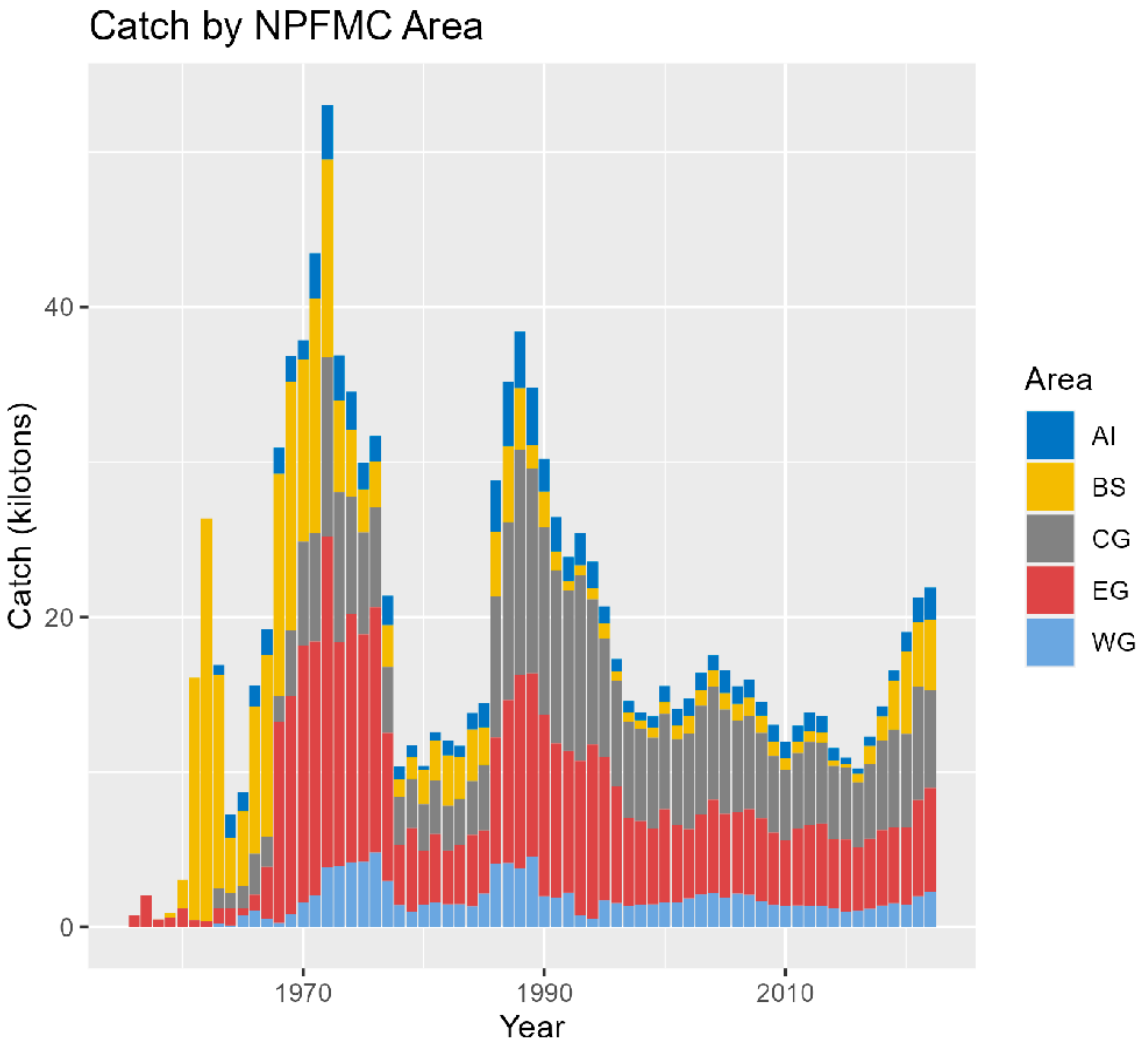
Sablefish assessment

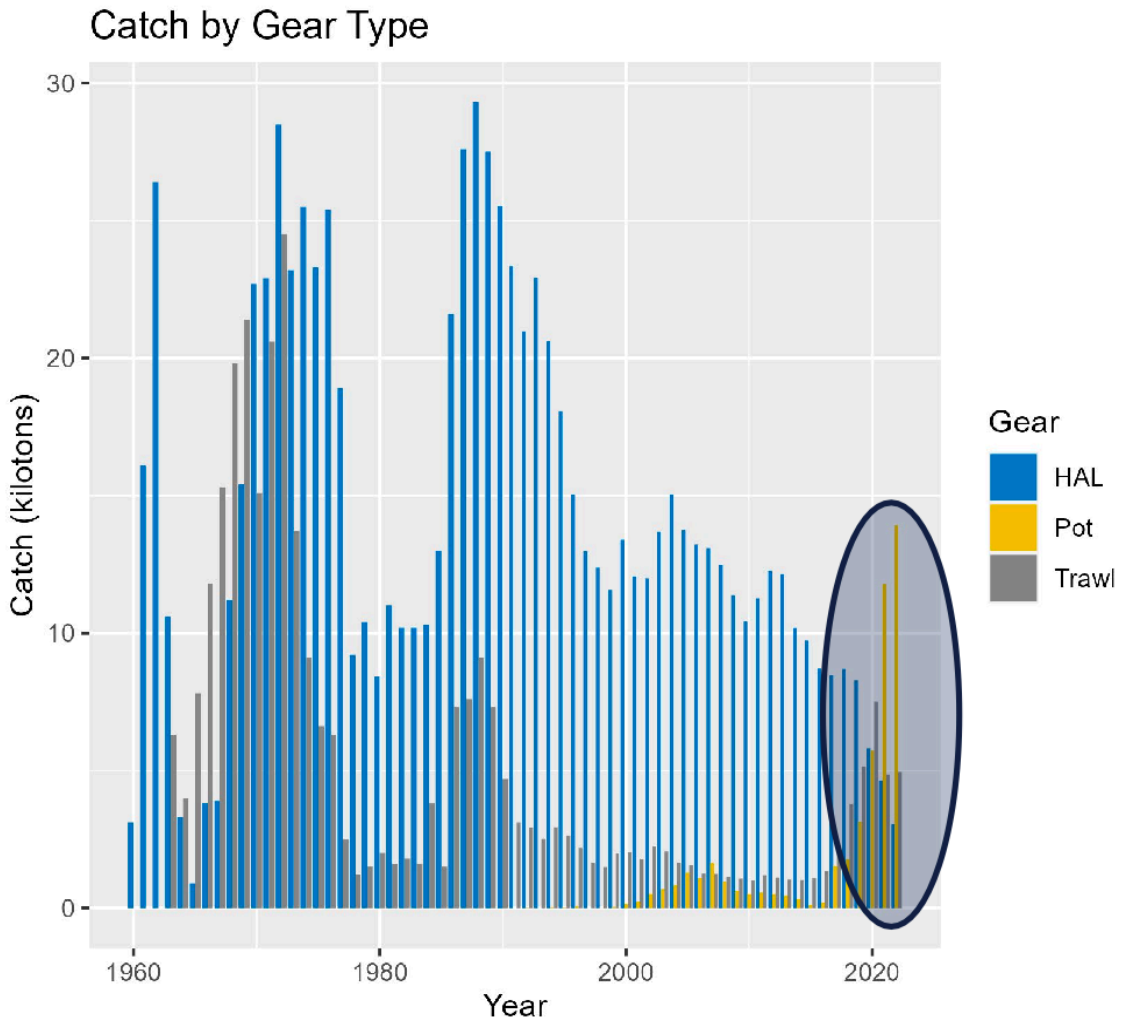
Data

Source	Data	Years
Fixed gear fisheries	Catch	1960 – **2022**
Trawl fisheries	Catch	1960 – **2022**
Japanese longline fishery	Catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE)	1964 – 1981
U.S. fixed gear fishery	CPUE, length	1990 – **2021**
	Age	1999 – **2021**
U.S. trawl fisheries	Length	1990, 1991, 1999, 2005 – **2021**
Japan-U.S. cooperative longline survey	RPNs, length	1979 - 1994
	Age	1981, 1983, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1993
Domestic longline survey	RPNs, length	1990 – **2022**
	Age	1996 – **2021**
NMFS GOA trawl survey	Biomass index	1984, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021
	Lengths	1984, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021

Sablefish assessment

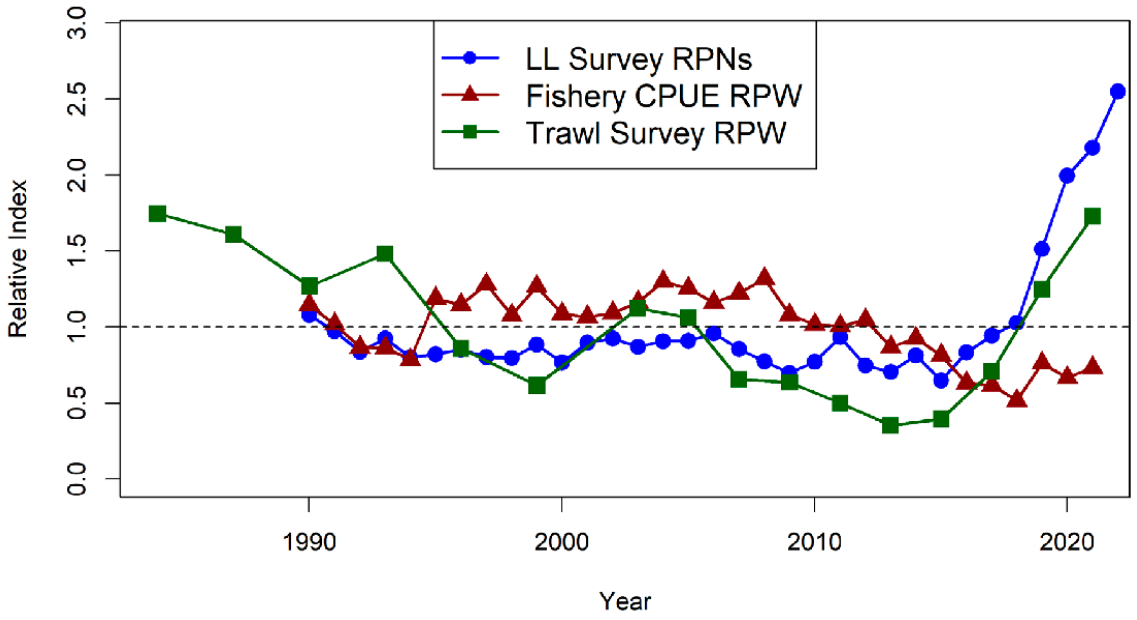
- Catch in pot gear increasing rapidly





Sablefish assessment

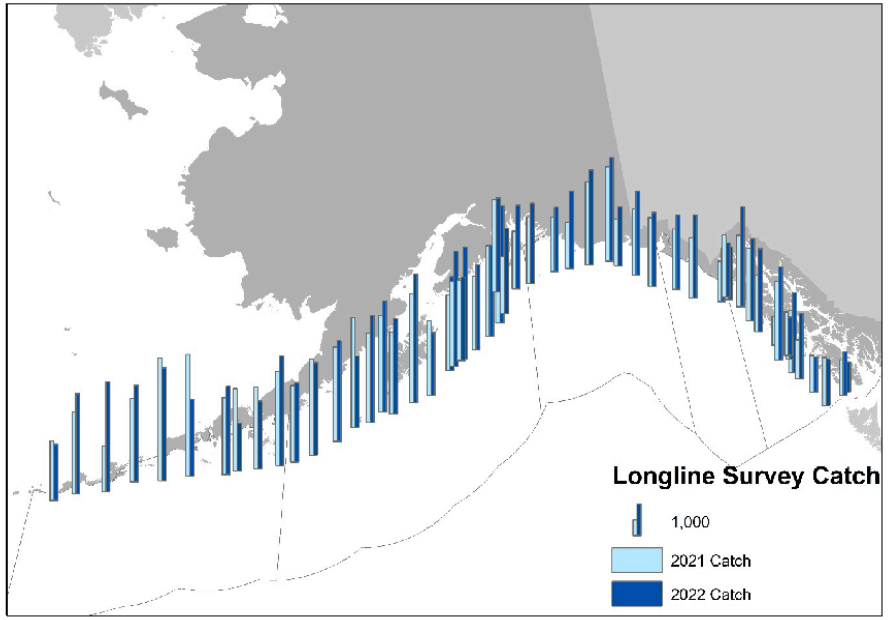
- Longline survey abundance continues increase
- BSAI constitutes > 50% of survey biomass in 2022



17% Increase

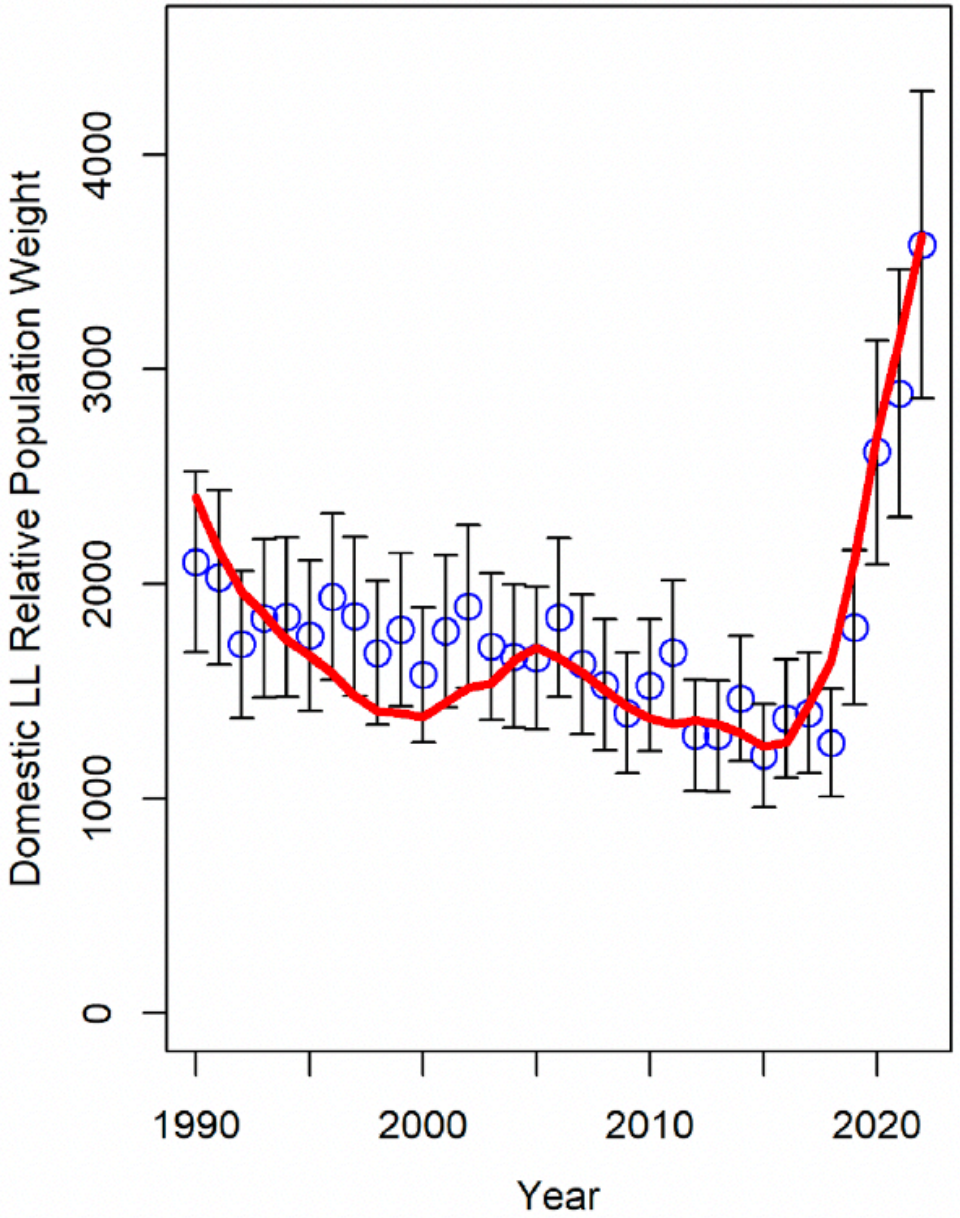
40% Increase (in 2021)

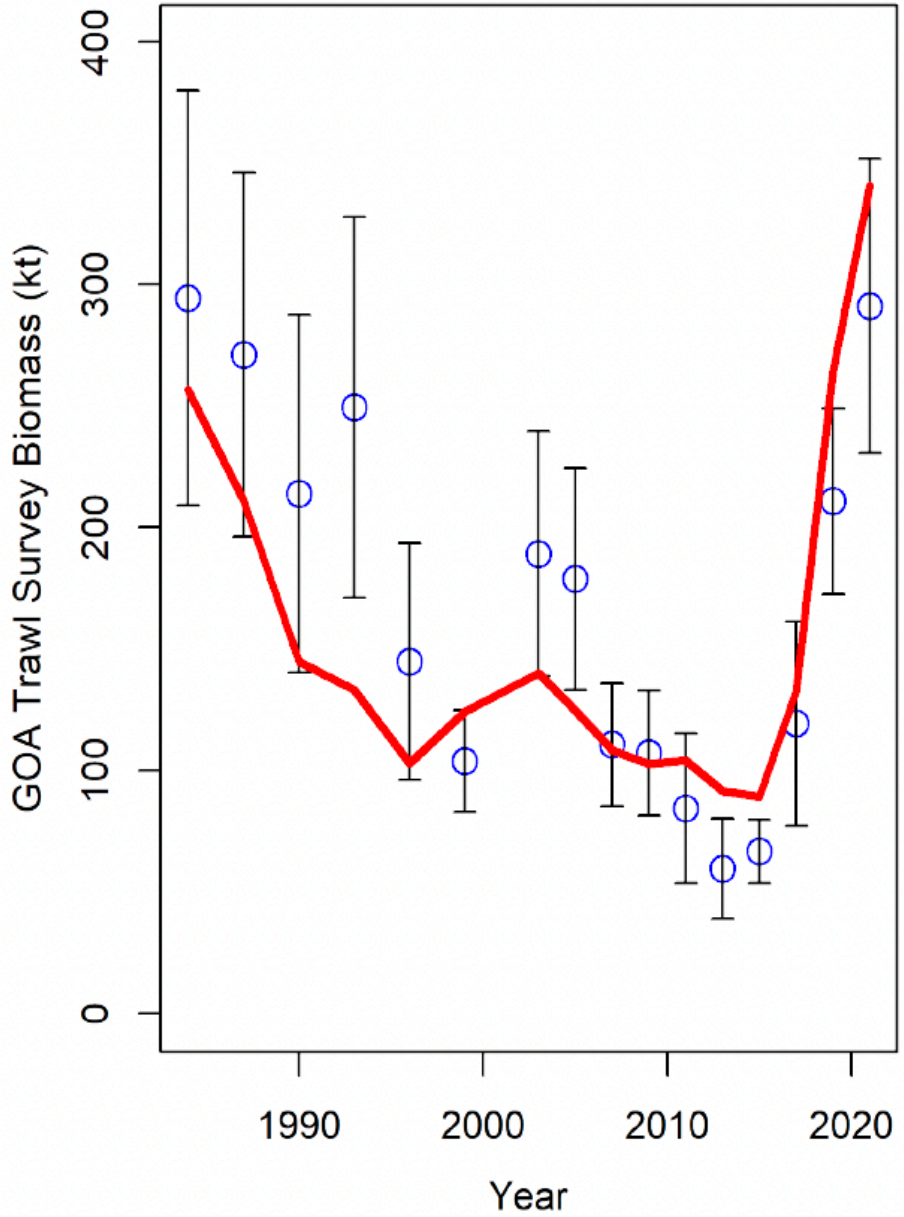
CPUE Increasingly Unreliable due to Increase in Pot Gear



Sablefish assessment

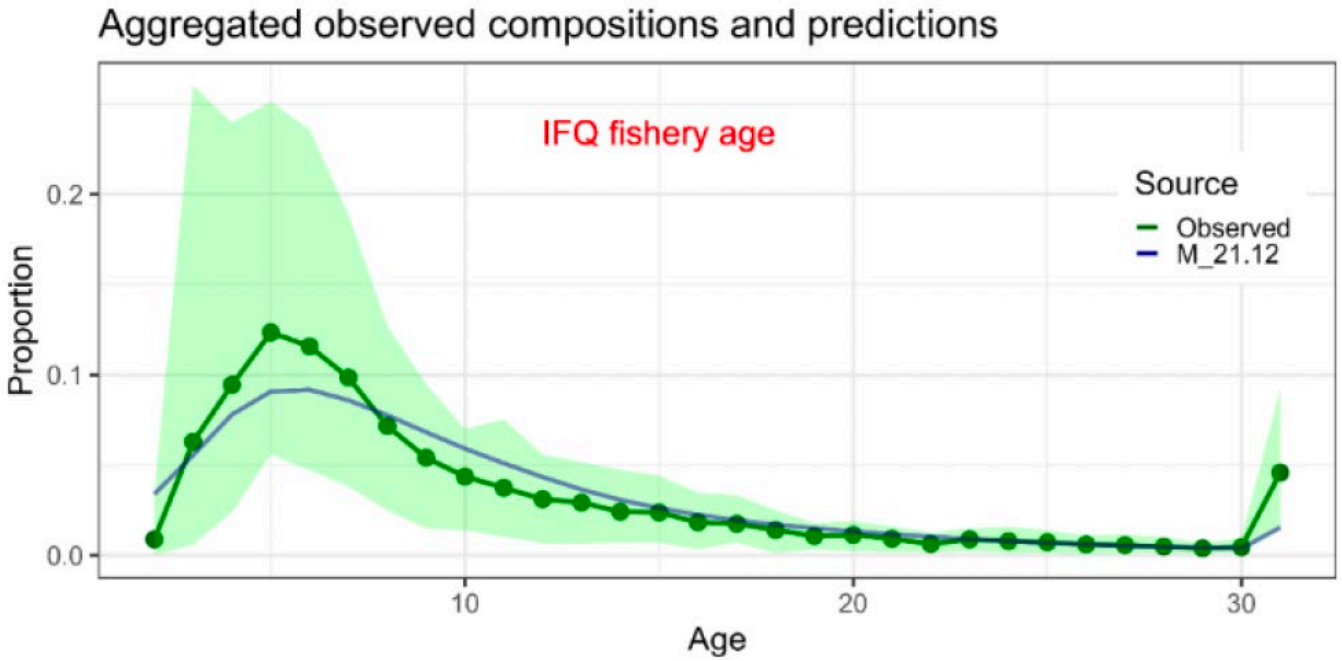
Fits to indices





Sablefish assessment

Fits to composition data



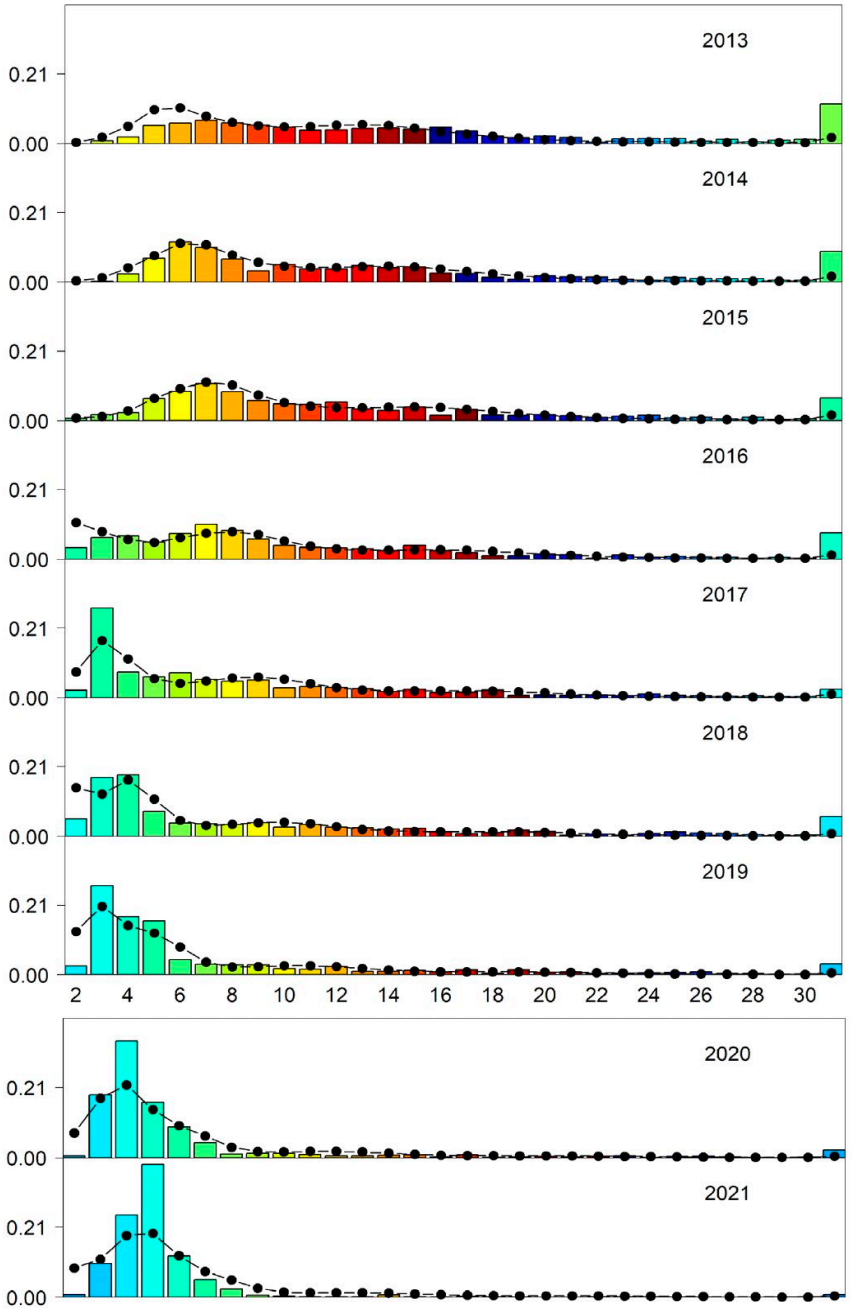


Figure 3.16 (cont.). Domestic fixed gear fishery age compositions. Bars are observed frequencies and lines are predicted frequencies.

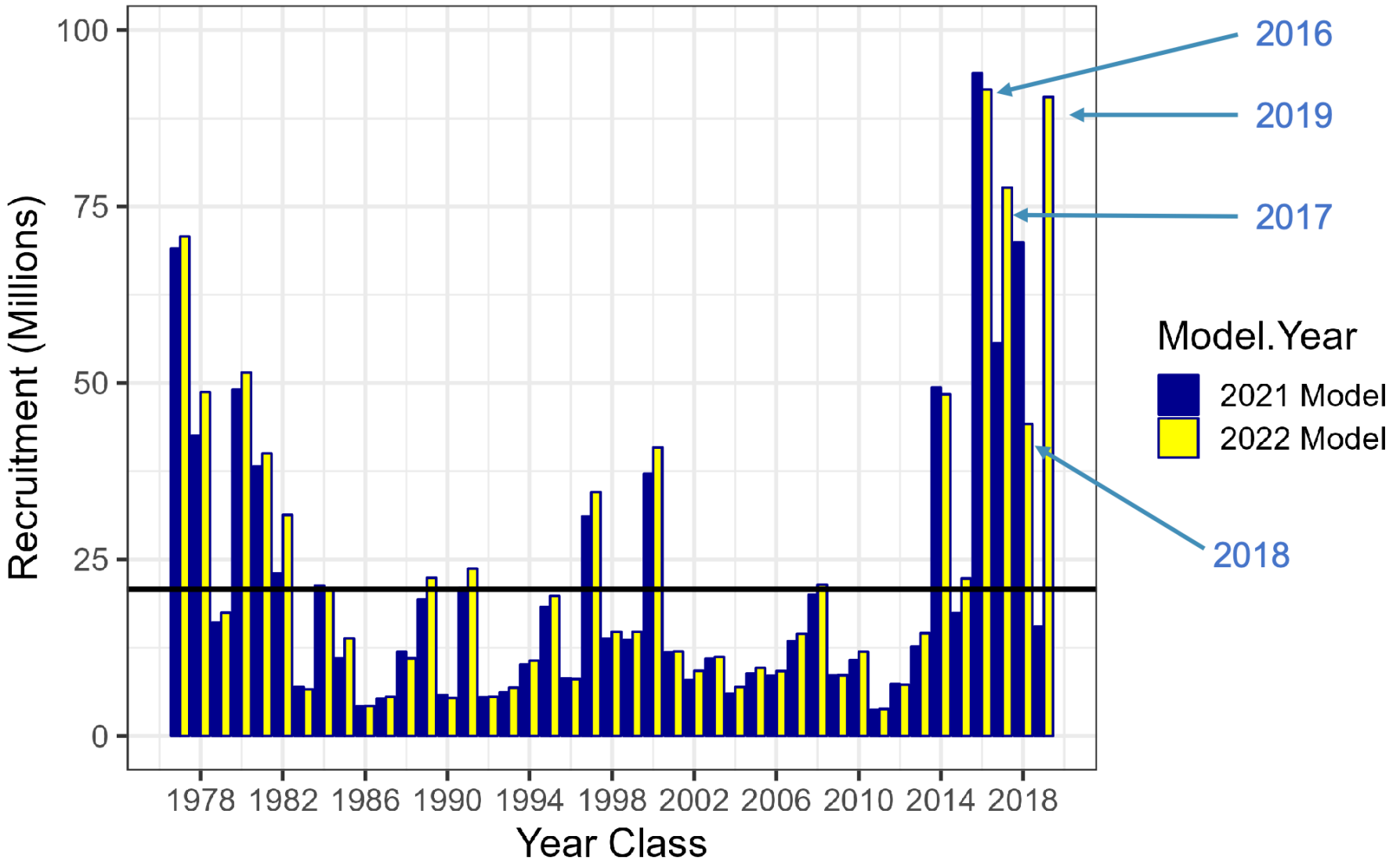
Sablefish assessment

Recruitment

2016 largest on record?

2017 & 2019 big too…

(but 2019 highly uncertain)



Sablefish assessment

Summary:

- SSB increasing
- 2023 ABC = 40,502 t (*3rd highest catch*, if full ABC taken)

Apportionment:

- Incremental based on 5-year average survey biomass proportions
- Year 3 (75%) of the SSC 4-year stair step

Sablefish assessment- Summary Table

Quantity/Status	As estimated or specified *last* year for (model 21.12): 2022*	2023*	As estimated or recommended *this* year for (model 21.12): 2023*	2024*
M (natural mortality rate, estimated)	0.100	0.100	0.105	0.105
Tier	3a	3a	3a	3a
Projected total (age 2+) biomass (t)	574,599	582,536	678,562	675,058
Projected female spawning biomass (t)	128,789	153,820	159,788	186,126
$B_{100\%}$	295,351	295,351	305,595	305,595
$B_{40\%}$	118,140	118,140	122,238	122,238
$B_{35\%}$	103,373	103,373	106,958	106,958
F_{OFL}	0.094	0.094	0.096	0.096
$maxF_{ABC}$	0.080	0.080	0.081	0.081
F_{ABC}	0.080	0.080	0.081	0.081
OFL (t)	40,839	42,948	47,857	49,040
OFL_w (t)**	**40,432**	**42,520**	**47,390**	**48,561**
max ABC (t)	34,863	36,670	40,861	41,876
ABC (t)	34,863	36,670	40,861	41,876
ABC_w (t)**	**34,521**	**36,318**	**40,502**	**41,539**
Status	As determined *last* year for: 2020	2021	As determined *this* year for: 2021	2022
Overfishing	No	n/a	No	n/a
Overfished	n/a	No	n/a	No
Approaching overfished	n/a	No	n/a	No

Sablefish

The Teams

- Agreed with author recommendations with apportionment strategy from SSC
- Noted a concern about the declining proportion of the population residing in the age plus group over time in the fishery age composition
- **Recommended an evaluation of trends in abundance of the plus age group from the longline survey and fixed gear fishery (plus group in absolute abundance instead of proportions)**
- Noted a potential issue of CPUE fishery composition data scaled to catch rather relative abundance
  - Given CPUE study, this might be considered

Sablefish

Author recommended 2023 ABC (with whale depredation adjustments and assuming a 75% stair step).

Area	AI	BS	WG	CG	WY*	EY*	Total
2022 ABC	6,486	5,305	3,821	10,008	3,179	6,064	34,863
2023 ABC	8,892	8,450	4,533	9,972	2,970	6,044	40,861
2019 - 2021 avg. depredation	6	21	51	52	63	147	340
Ratio 2023:2022 ABC	1.37	1.59	1.19	1.00	0.93	1.00	1.17
Deduct 3 year adjusted average	-8	-33	-60	-51	-60	-147	-359
****2023 ABC_w**	8,884	8,417	4,473	9,921	2,910	5,897	40,502
Change from 2022 ABC_w	37%	60%	20%	0%	-15%	4%	17%

*Before 95:5 hook and line : trawl split between WY and EY/SE shown below.

**ABC_w is the author recommended ABC that accounts for whale depredation.

Working group discussions

The Teams requested the SSC recommend the AFSC (and ADF&G, where appropriate) to consider two proposals for working groups:

1) a WG focused on data-limited/Tier 6 methods, and

2) A working group that addresses current policies affecting harvest control rules and develop new approaches for accounting for changes in ecosystems related to climate change, including the exploration of environmental data to help inform recruitment.

The Teams noted there are projects already funded that may be of benefit to both of these working group objectives and encourage researchers to work together on these issues.

Risk tables

Joint Teams discussed risk table issues:

Application varies across assessments

Rationales were reviewed and judged as reasonable

Economic SAFE chapter

SSC Review in Feb 2023

- Teams received a presentation, noted accessibility of data and information
- Intro-sections of BSAI and GOA SAFEs contain summary of relevant changes in conditions

2014: Spatial Management Policy adopted by Council

1. As soon as preliminary scientific information indicates that further stock structure separation or other spatial management measures may be considered, the stock assessment authors, plan teams (groundfish, crab, scallop), and SSC should advise the Council of their findings and any associated conservation concerns.
2. With input from the agency, the public, and its advisory bodies, the Council (and NMFS) should identify the economic, social, and management implications and potential options for management response to these findings and identify the suite of tools that could be used to achieve conservation and management goals. In the case of crab and scallop management, ADF&G needs to be part of this process.
3. To the extent practicable, further refinement of stock structure or other spatial conservation concerns and potential management responses should be discussed through the process described in recommendations 1 and 2 above.
4. Based on the best information available provided through this process, the SSC should continue to recommend OFLs and ABCs that prevent overfishing of stocks.

Council motion to amend policy (October 2022)

- If the application of the spatial management policy did not result in the Council adopting management changes, the authors and the Plan Teams should continue to monitor and the SSC should advise the Council if there are associated conservation concerns and any changes in the scale of concern, if identified, during the next full assessment cycle.