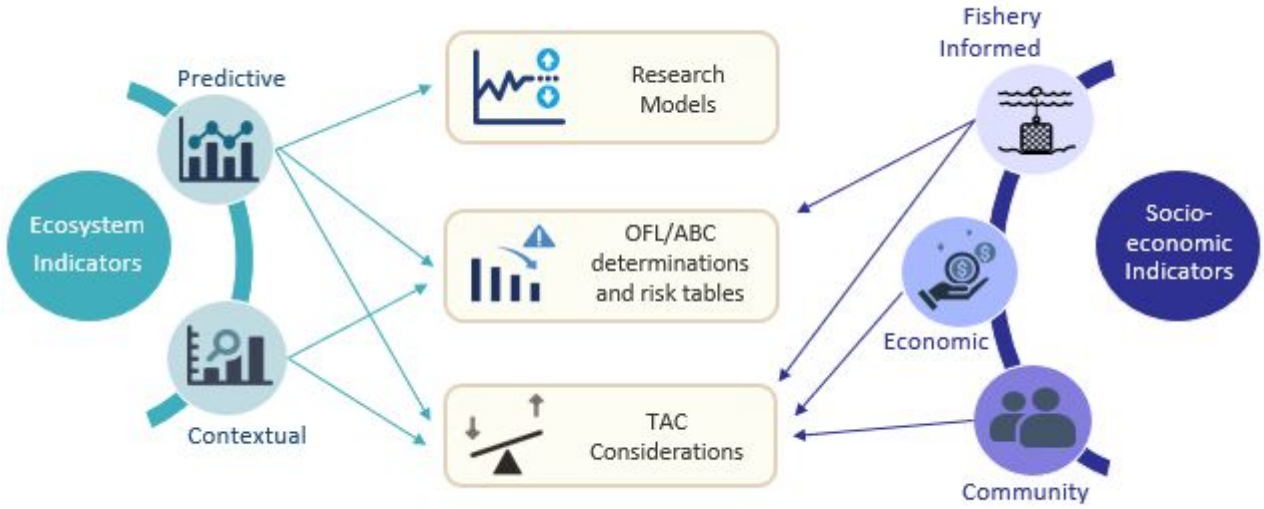
NOAA FISHERIES



Alaska Sablefish

2026 Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profile (ESP) Report Card



Ecosystem Considerations

Predictive

- **Surface temperatures in the southeastern Bering Sea** (SEBS) decreased from average to **below average**, implying potentially slower larval sablefish growth.
- **Catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) for sablefish in nearshore surveys** has declined since the peak in 2020, and **decreased from average to below average**.

Contextual

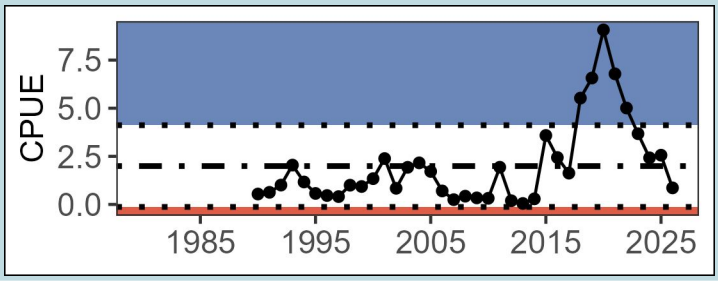
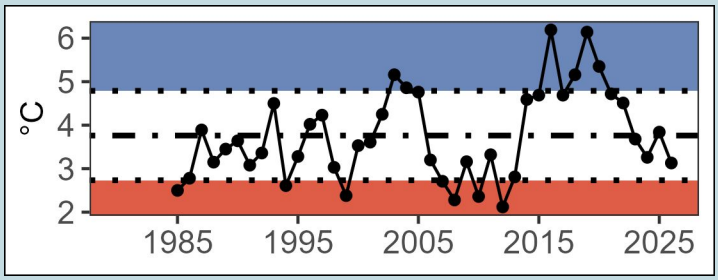
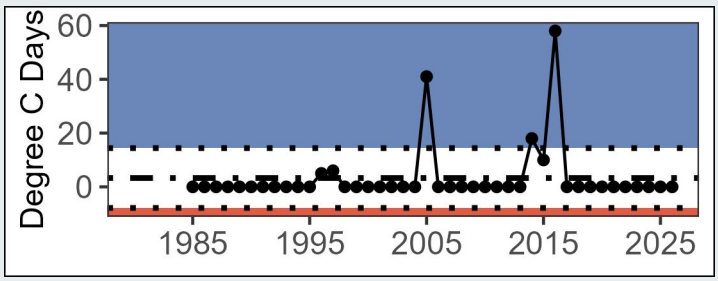
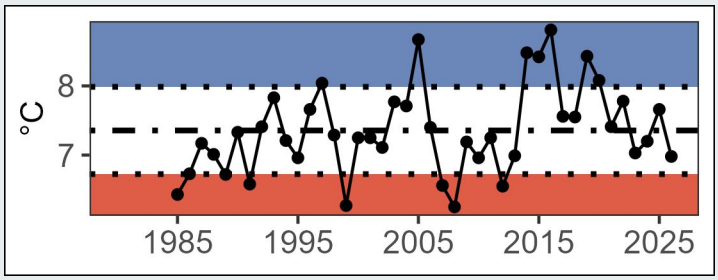
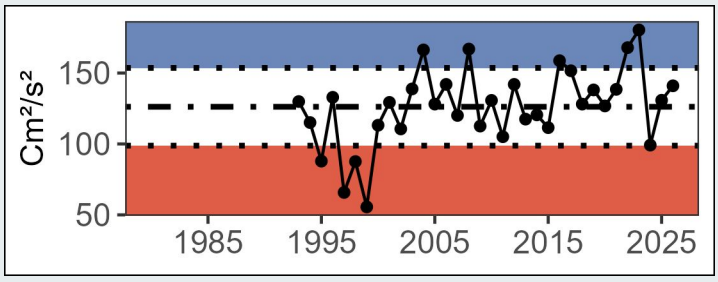
- **Size of age-0 sablefish at Middleton increased to average**, while the early-season EBS **small-sablefish encounter index was below average**, implying moderate to poor survival for the 2026 and 2025 year class, respectively.
- **Surface temperatures in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) returned to below average** in 2026 and continued **no heatwave events** GOA-wide.
- **Above average energy near Aleutian passes** is a proxy for increased retention for sablefish in suitable habitats and increased transport to nursery environments.
- Surface chlorophyll-*a* biomass were high in the GOA & SEBS, spring bloom in the SEBS was early, zooplankton community was average / below average in eastern / western GOA, implying **variable feeding conditions for larvae & age-0**.
- **Condition** of the age-4 females (maturing) and condition of large adult females were **above average and average** in 2025, suggesting adequate prey resources.
- The **spatial overlap** between sablefish migrating to adult slope habitats and the arrowtooth flounder population, as measured by incidental catch, **increased to high levels** suggesting more competition or predation by arrowtooth flounder.

NOAA FISHERIES



Alaska Sablefish ESP Report Card

Ecosystem Indicators

	Indicator	Status	Trend
Predictive	**CPUE Juvenile Sablefish in the GOA-AI**	Near long-term mean	
	Spring Sea Surface Temperature in SEBS	Near long-term mean	
Contextual	**Heatwave in GOA**	Near long-term mean	
	Spring Sea Surface Temperature in GOA	Near long-term mean	
	Eddy Kinetic Energy in Amchitka	Near long-term mean	

Most recent year indicator status indicates good conditions, average conditions, or poor conditions for the stock

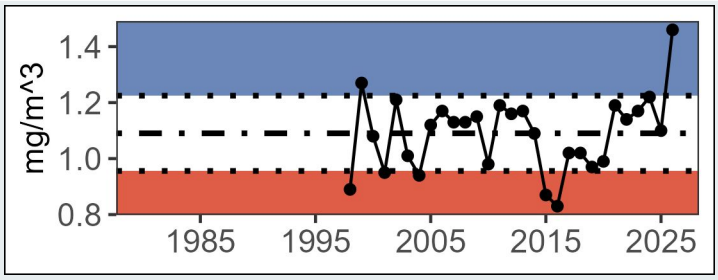
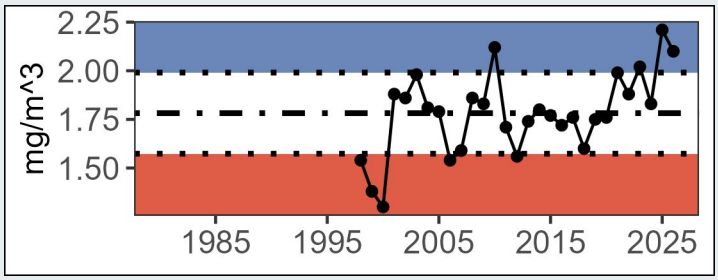
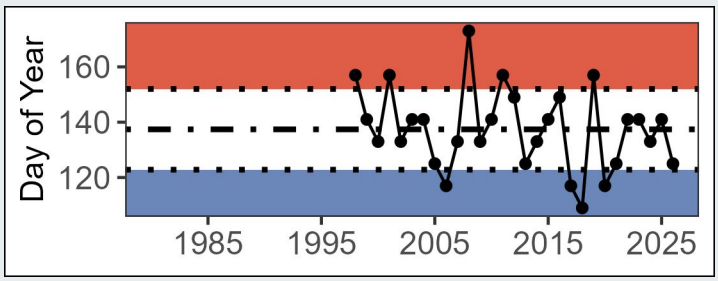
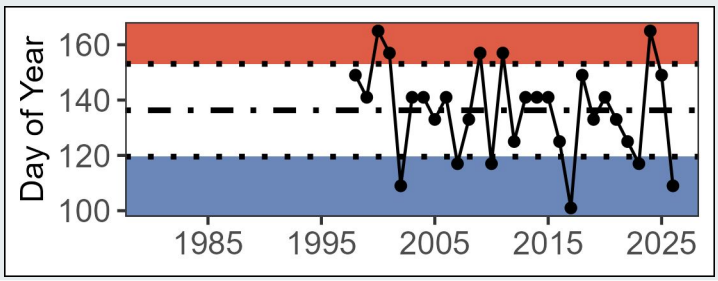
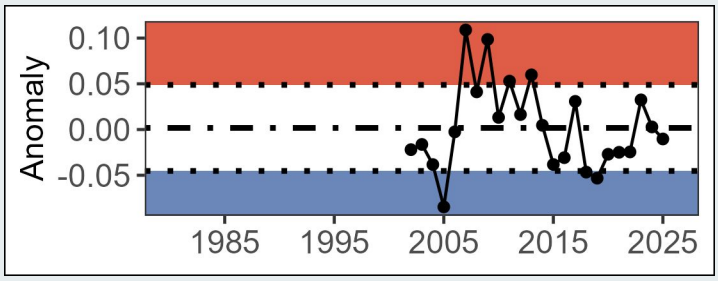
NOAA FISHERIES



Alaska Sablefish ESP Report Card

Ecosystem Indicators

Contextual

Indicator	Status	Trend
Spring Chlorophyll-*a* Biomass in GOA	Above long-term mean	
Spring Chlorophyll-a Biomass in SEBS	Above long-term mean	
Peak Timing of the Spring Bloom in GOA	Near long-term mean	
Peak Timing of the Spring Bloom in SEBS	Below long-term mean	
Copepod Community Size in EGOA	Near long-term mean	

Most recent year indicator status indicates good conditions, average conditions, or poor conditions for the stock

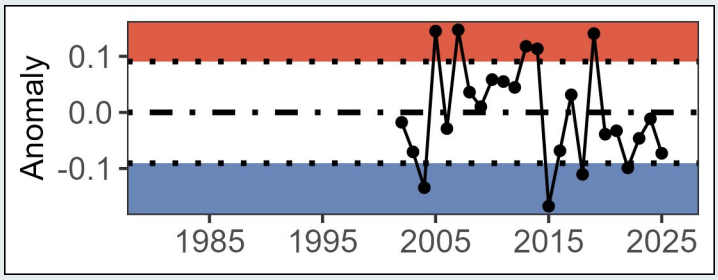
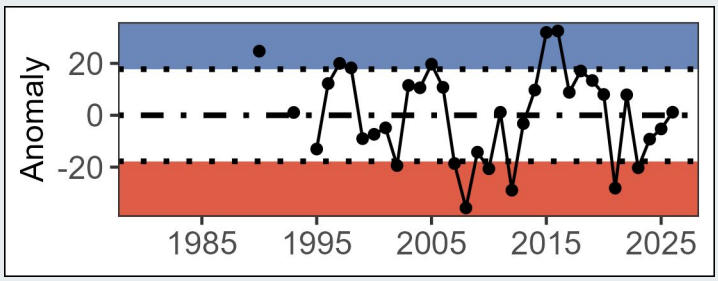
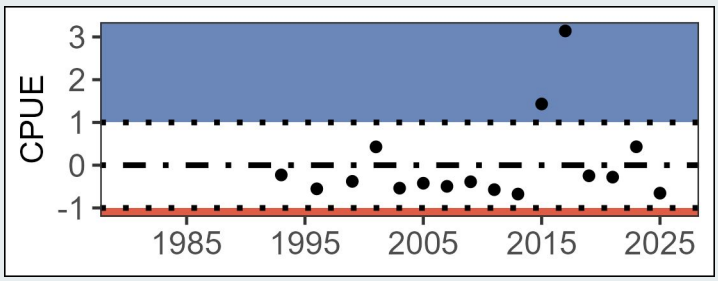
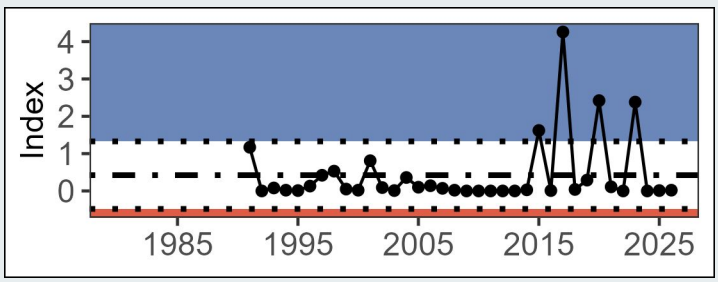
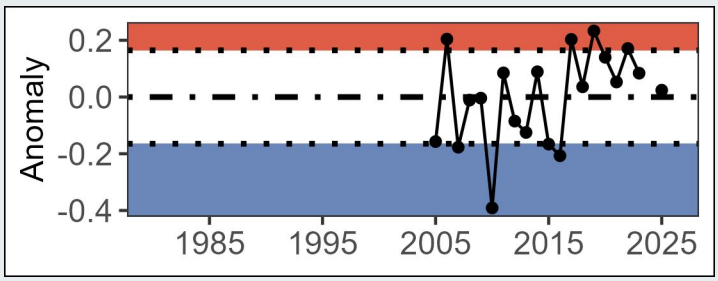
NOAA FISHERIES



Alaska Sablefish ESP Report Card

Ecosystem Indicators

Contextual

Indicator	Status	Trend
Copepod Community Size in WGOA	Near long-term mean	
Size of YOY Sablefish in Middleton	Near long-term mean	
CPUE Juvenile Sablefish in GOA	Near long-term mean	
Small Sablefish Index in Fishery	Near long-term mean	
Summer Temperature at 250 m in GOA	Near long-term mean	

Most recent year indicator status indicates good conditions, average conditions, or poor conditions for the stock

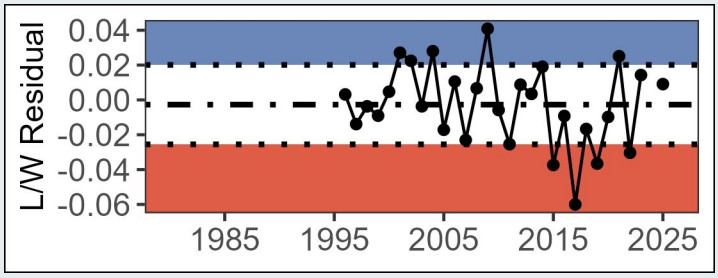
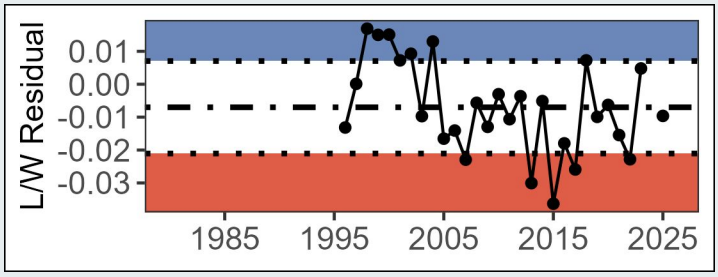
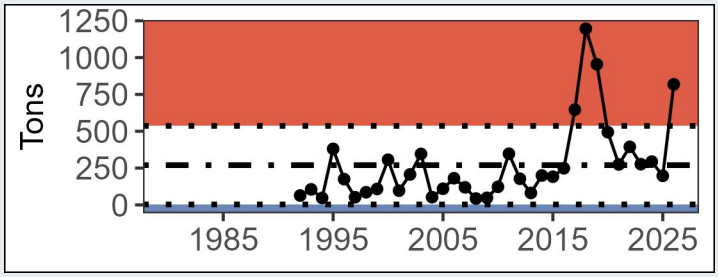
NOAA FISHERIES



Alaska Sablefish ESP Report Card

Ecosystem Indicators

Contextual

Indicator	Status	Trend
Condition Age-4 Female Sablefish in GOA Survey	Near long-term mean	
Condition Adult Female Sablefish in GOA Survey	Near long-term mean	
Incidental Catch Sablefish in Arrowtooth Fishery	Above long-term mean	

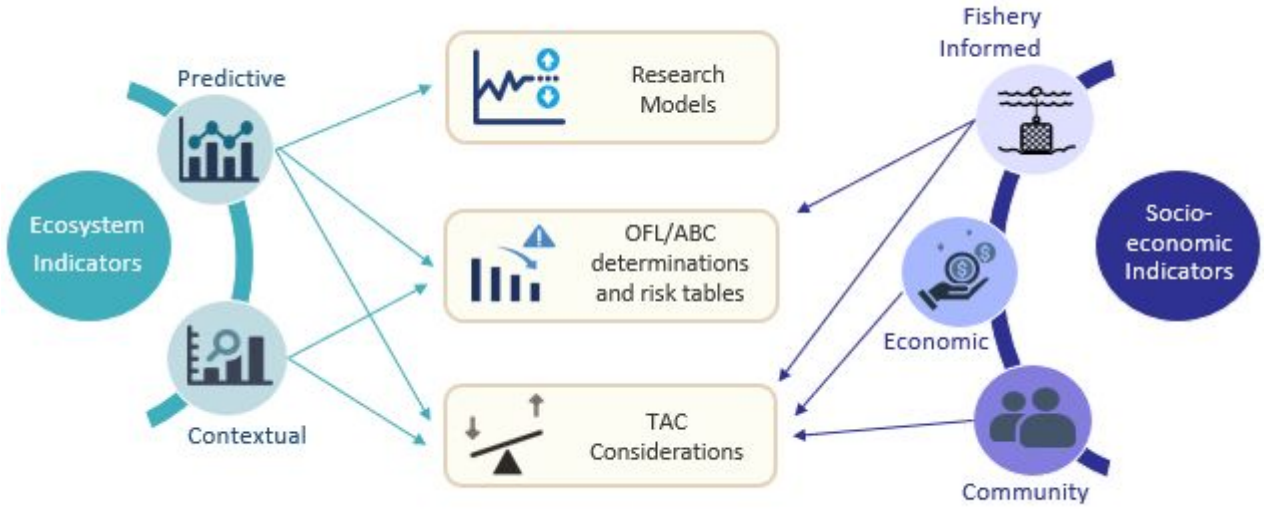
Most recent year indicator status indicates good conditions, average conditions, or poor conditions for the stock

NOAA FISHERIES



Alaska Sablefish

2026 Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profile (ESP) Report Card



Socioeconomic Considerations

Fishery Informed

- **Incidental catch** in non-sablefish targeted fisheries in 2026 increased but was still **below average in the GOA** and decreased to **average in the BSAI**.
- The **condition of adult female sablefish** in GOA fisheries declined slightly in 2026 but **remained above average**, though sample sizes were smaller compared to previous years.

Economic

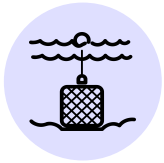
- Retained catch decreased in 2025 but remains high and greater than pre-2022 levels. The proportion of sablefish greater than 5 to 7 lbs and 7 lbs increased while the proportion of sablefish size categories less than 5 lbs decreased.
- Real ex-vessel prices of sablefish increased in 2025 but remained low at 58% less than the 2016 to 2020 average. Size-specific prices increased in 2025 and 2026 for most size categories (exception is >7 pound).
- Year-over-year increases in TAC have outpaced increases in total catch, causing statewide TAC utilization to be low through 2025. As of October 2026, TAC utilization is within the historical average for each subregion, excluding the Bering Sea (BS) and Aleutian Islands (AI) subregion where it is below historical average.
- Increases in the average price per-pound, coupled with stable levels of retained catch, caused ex-vessel revenues of sablefish to increase but still remain low.
- The regional quotient based on vessel registration increased in some areas and declined in others from 2024. Sitka, Seward, and Kodiak remain top participating communities when regional quotient is based on landings port.

NOAA FISHERIES

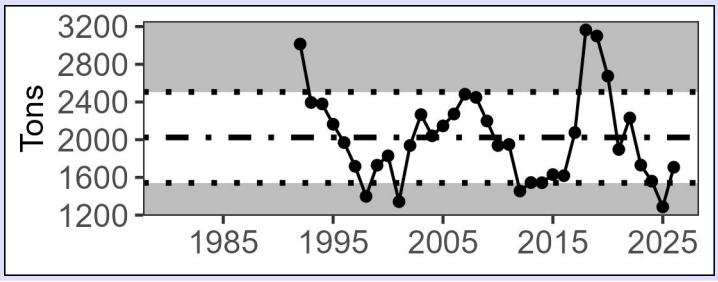
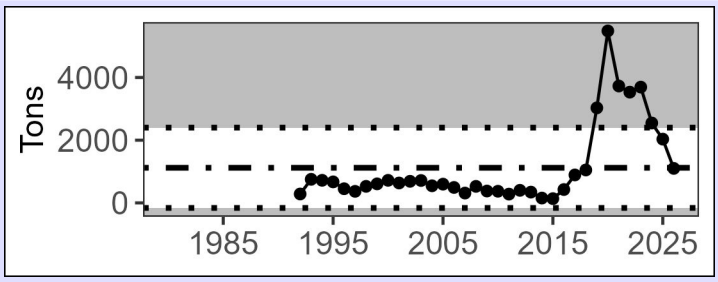
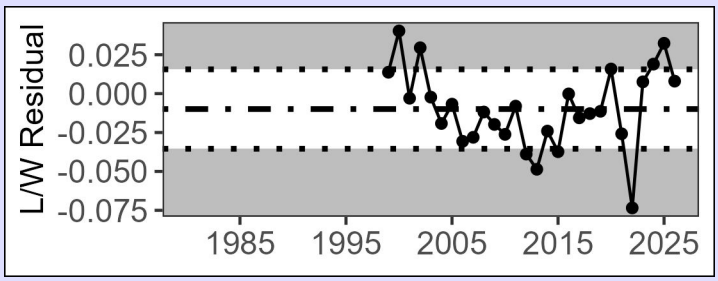


Alaska Sablefish ESP Report Card

Socioeconomic Indicators



Fishery Informed

Indicator	2025 Status	Trend
Incidental Catch Sablefish in GOA Fishery	Near long-term mean	
Incidental Catch Sablefish in BSAI Fishery	Near long-term mean	
Condition Adult Female Sablefish in GOA Fishery	Near long-term mean	

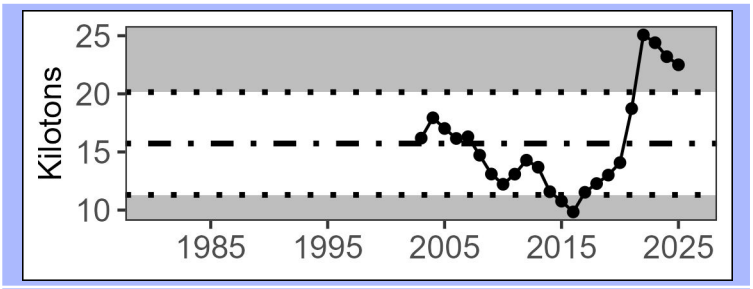
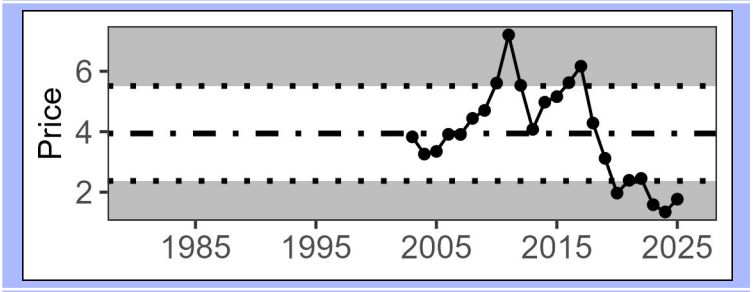
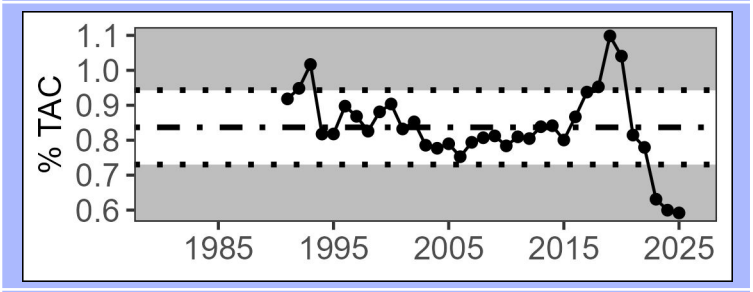
NOAA FISHERIES



Alaska Sablefish ESP Report Card

Socioeconomic Indicators

Economic

Indicator	2025 Status	Trend
Sablefish Retained Catch in Alaska Fishery	Above long-term mean	
Sablefish Ex-Vessel Price	Below long-term mean	
Sablefish TAC Utilization in Alaska Fishery	Below long-term mean	
Sablefish Real Ex-Vessel Value	Below long-term mean	