

2025

# AFSC Longline Survey Sept. Plan Team



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**



Kevin Siwicke & MESA Staff

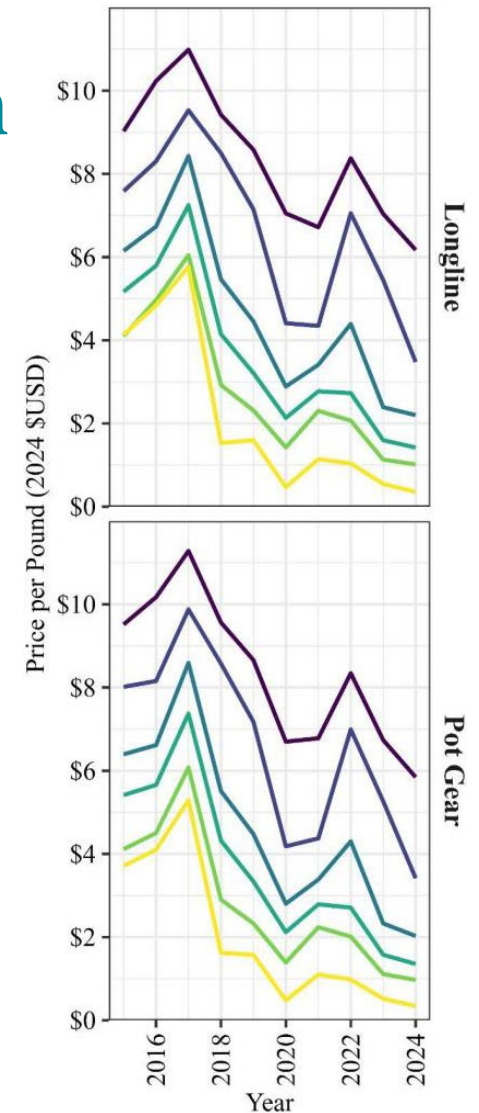
# Longline Survey History

- Annual hook-and-line survey 1979-2023
- Samples Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska continental slope 200 - 1,000m
- Operated on a cost-recovery basis with sale of the catch covering vessel costs
- Before 2020 there were two vessel companies, but only one since

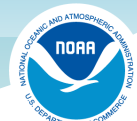


# 2024 Longline Survey Cancellation

- Declining margins and losses in recent years
- Economic value of sablefish declined due to record high abundance and poor markets
- Survey was projected to operate at an economic loss in 2024
- Government contract structure was unable to provide financial guarantee
- In April 2024, the survey was cancelled



Size Cat. ■ <2 ■ 2-3 ■ 3-4 ■ 4-5 ■ 5-7 ■ 7+



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# 2025/26 Longline Survey Contract



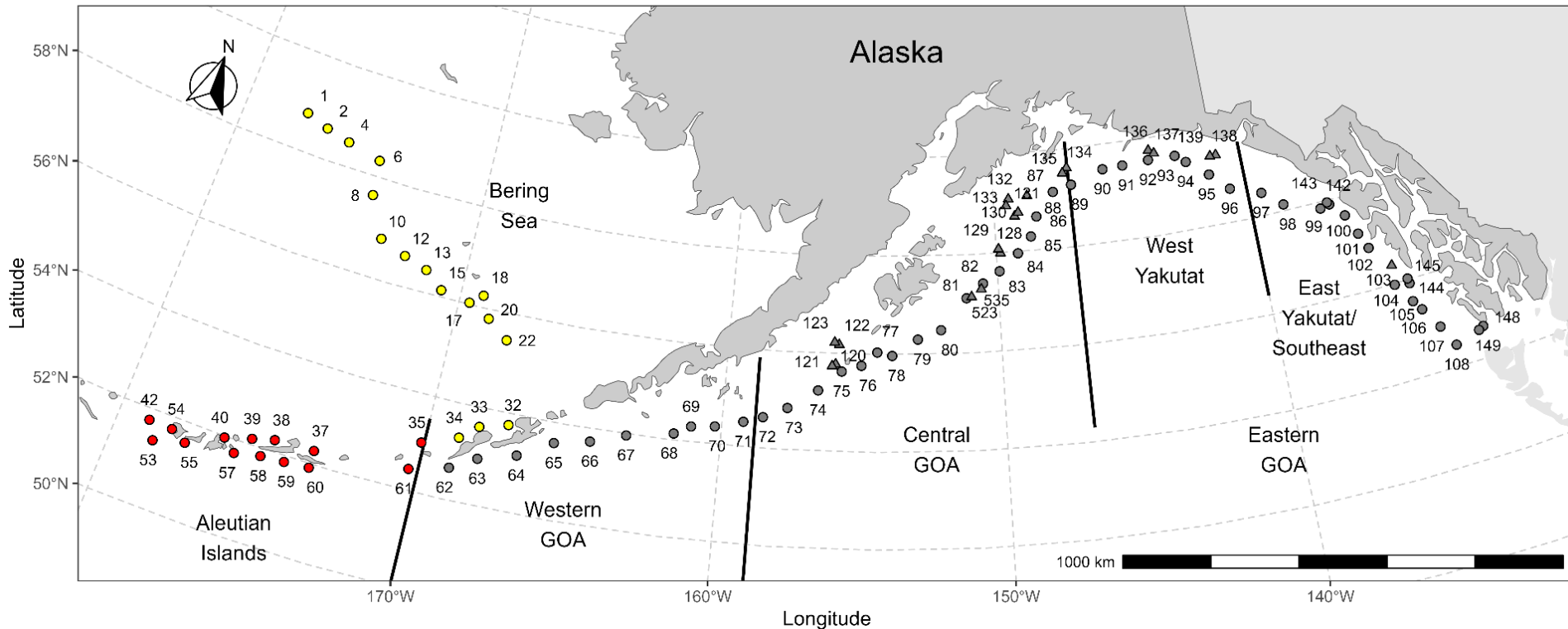
- Restructured to guarantee a daily rate to remove market volatility risk to vessel
- Daily rate is offset by sale of retained catch to reduce net cost to government
- Vessel days reduced and survey design re-structured
  - Previously sampled GOA every year and BS or AI every other year ~90 DAS
  - Now sample GOA in odd years for 50 DAS (2025) and BSAI in even years for 34 DAS (2026)
- Government obligated full contract amount in order to underwrite the contract (delayed start date from 6/1 to 7/15)



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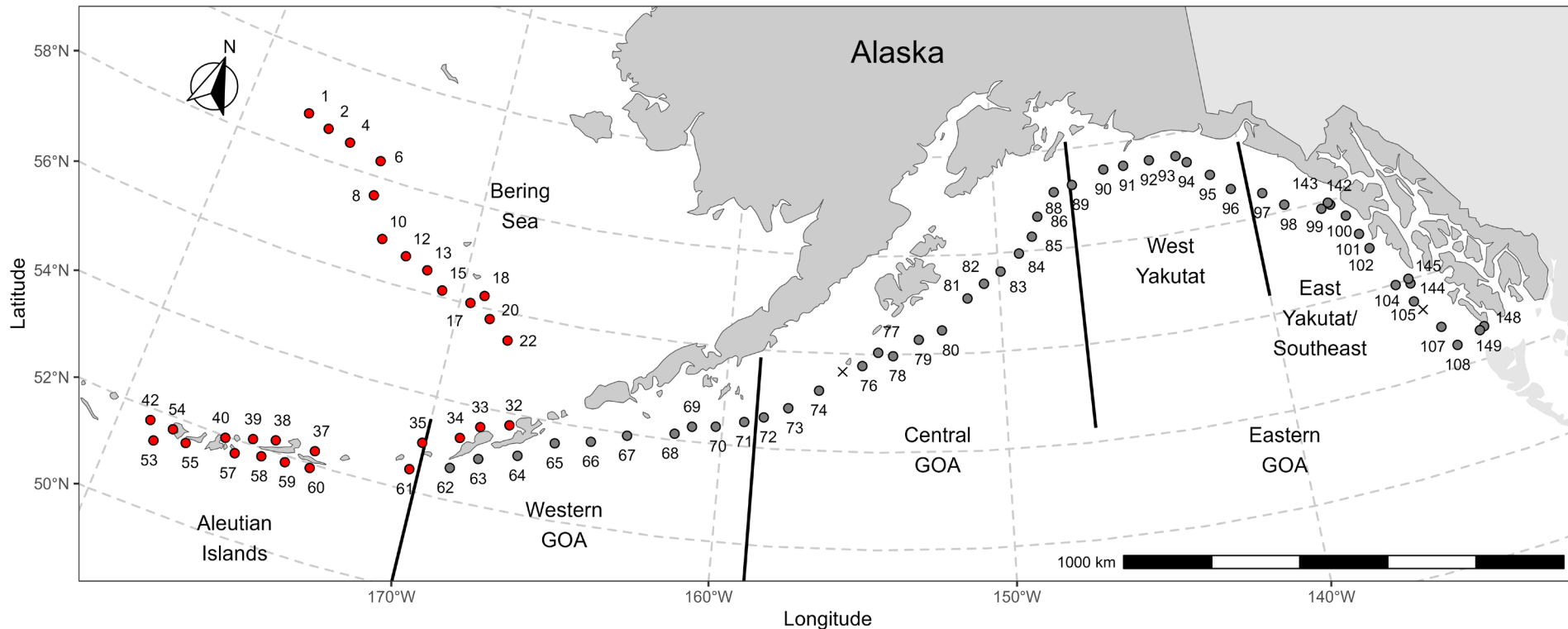


# 2022/23 Survey Geographic Coverage



- Bering Sea – odd years
- Aleutian Islands – even years
- GOA - annual
- 180 skates per day
- 45 hooks per skate
- Data depth stratified

# 2025/26 Survey Geographic Coverage



- Bering Sea – even years
- Aleutian Islands – even years
- GOA – odd years
- 180 skates per day
- 45 hooks per skate
- Data depth stratified

# Impacts to Assessments

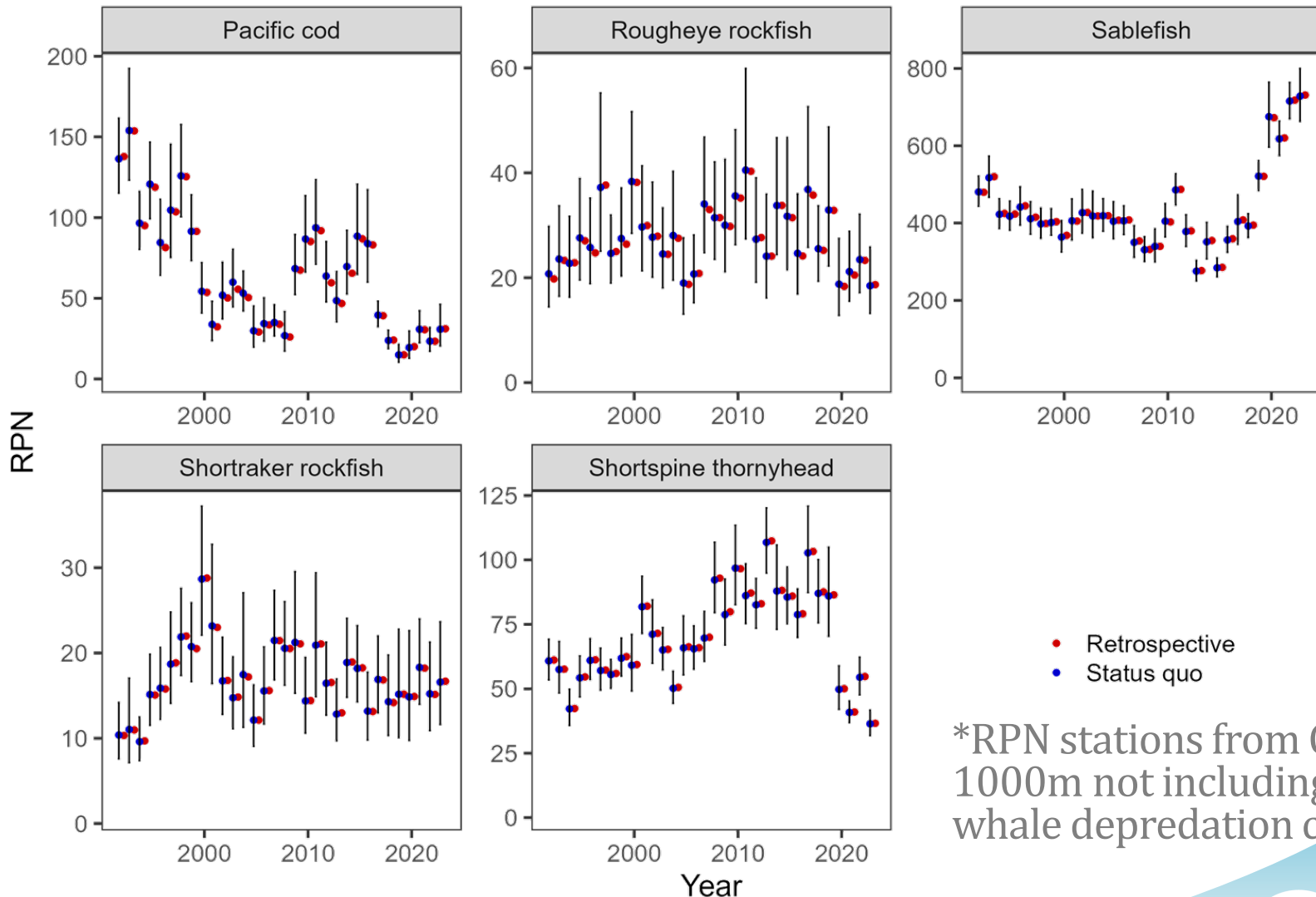
- Loss of 2 GOA RPN stations
  - Stations were chosen based on highest sampling frequency relative to geographic area sizes to minimize overall data loss
  - Stn. 75 in CGOA and 106 in the EGOA
- Sampling GOA and BSAI every other year
  - Most assessments are by FMP so creates a biennial survey similar to trawl surveys
  - Sablefish is AK-wide and has to deal with GOA one year and BSAI a different year



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# Impacts to Assessments

GOA - remove 75 & 106



\*RPN stations from GOA, 150-1000m not including sperm whale depredation correction



# 2025 GOA Survey in Numbers

- 371,700 hooks fished in 46 days
  - 126,299 sablefish caught
- 2,869 sablefish otoliths collected (length/weight/sex)
- Tagged:
  - 3,998 sablefish
  - 197 shortspine thornyhead
- Recaptured 19 tagged sablefish (18-NMFS, 1-Canadian), and 1 SST (NMFS)
- 90 temperature-depth profiles
- Special Projects:
  - 26 eyes from sablefish for stable isotope analysis (Rogers)
  - Age validation and Epigenetics: genetics, otoliths and eyes ( $\Delta 14C$ ) from 30 sablefish and 16 shortraker (Patterson/Portnoy)



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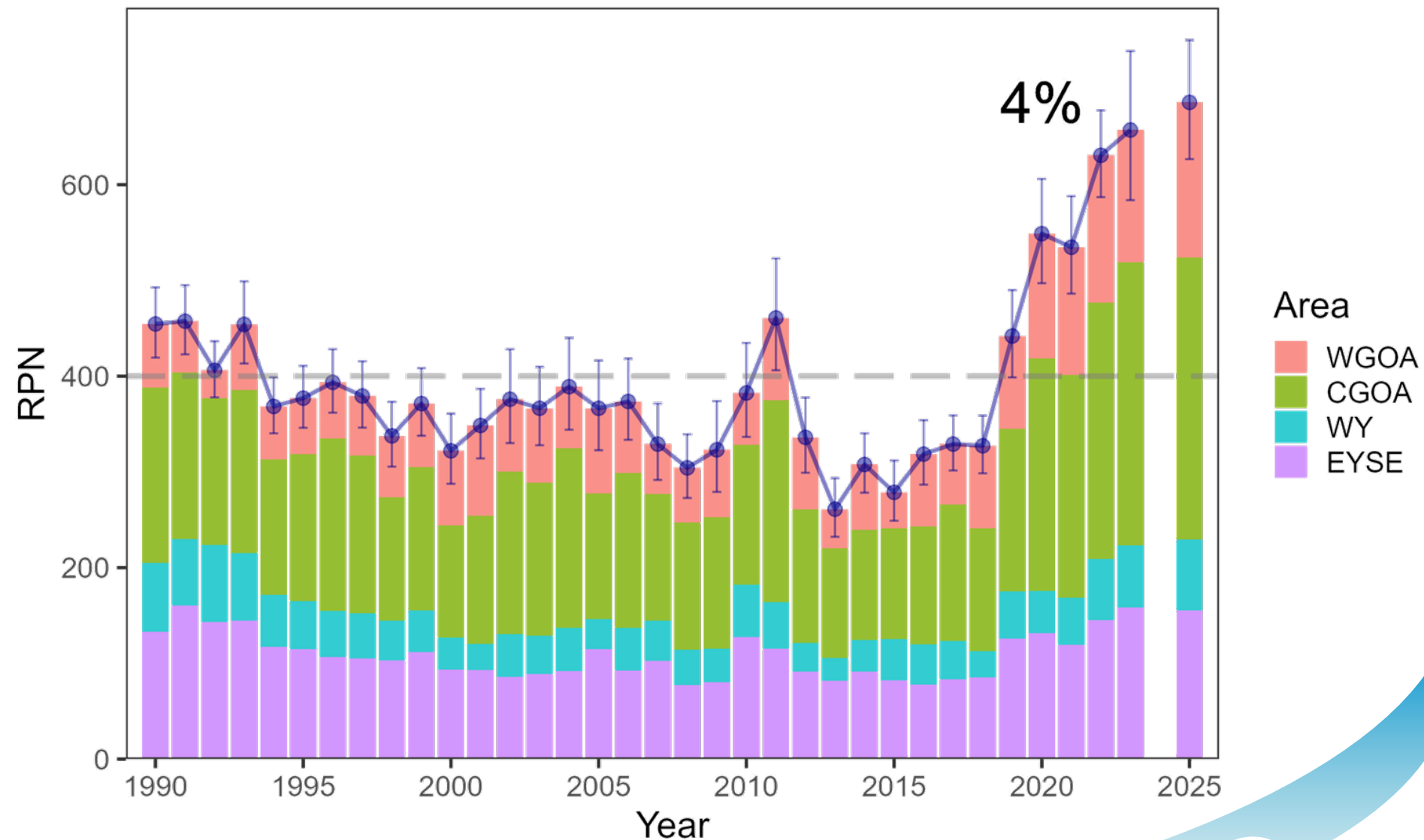
# GOA Species Lengths

Common name	Lengths collected
sablefish	93,164
shortspine thornyhead	4,347
rougheye rockfish	3,392
Pacific cod	2,652
giant grenadier	1,898
shortraker rockfish	1,738
redbanded rockfish	867
arrowtooth flounder	561
yelloweye rockfish	304
Pacific grenadier	229
spiny dogfish	50
rosethorn rockfish	34
dusky rockfish	25
Greenland turbot	1
Kamchatka flounder	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>109,263</b>

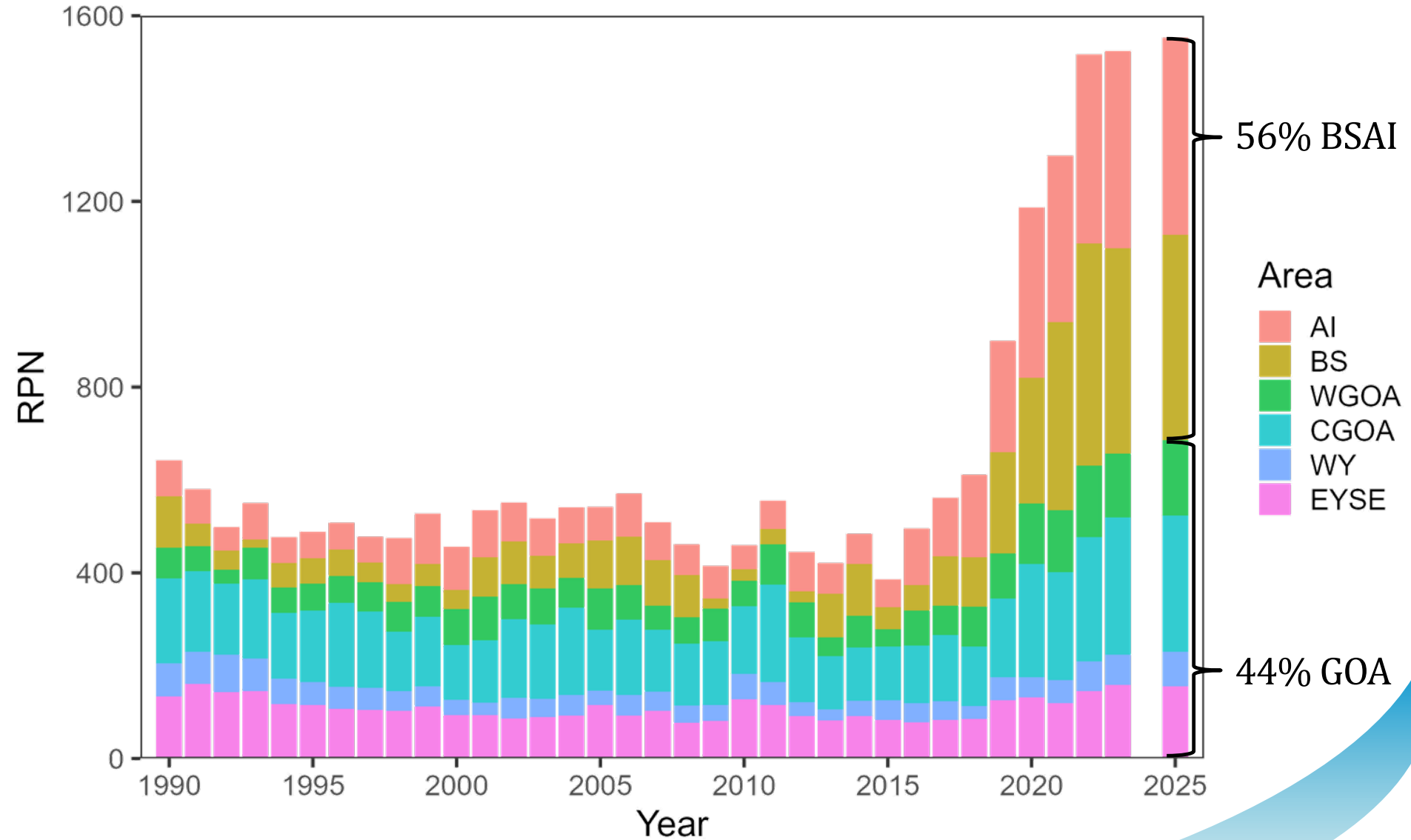


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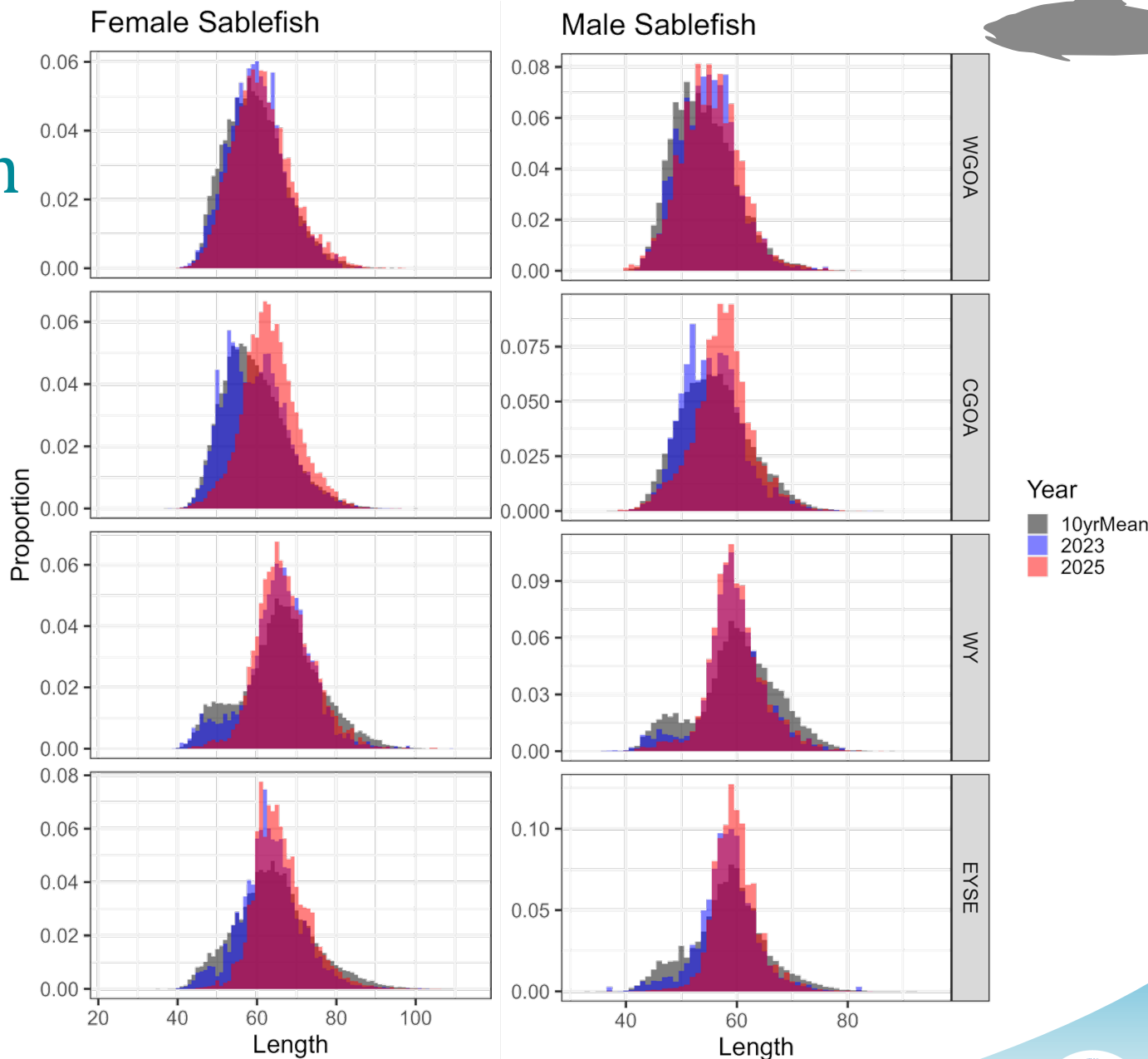
# GOA Sablefish



# Sablefish AK-wide (2023 BSAI)

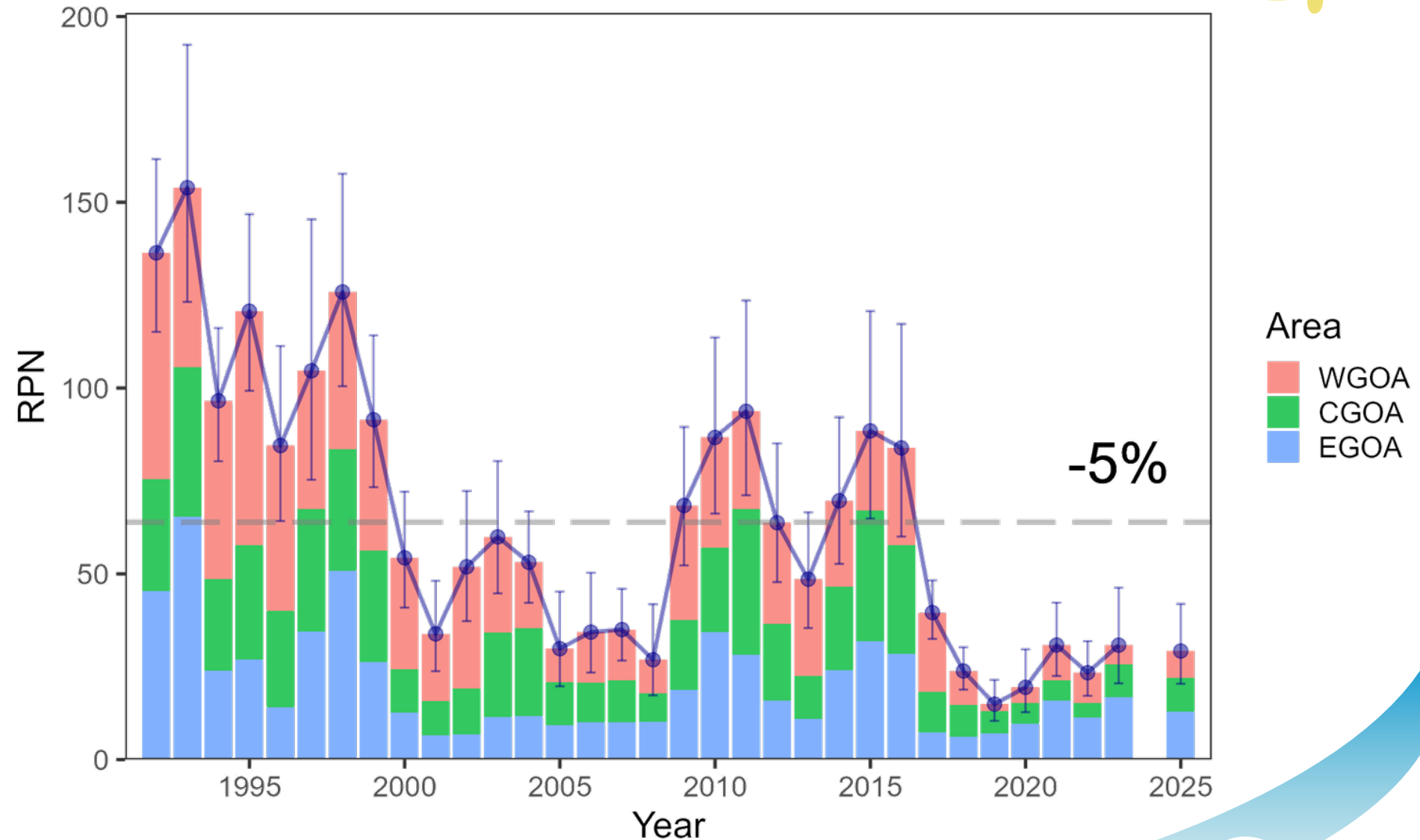


# GOA Sablefish Lengths



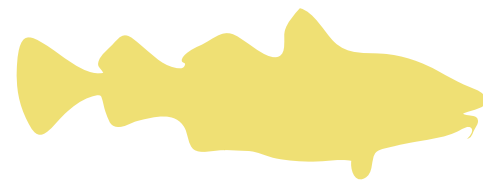
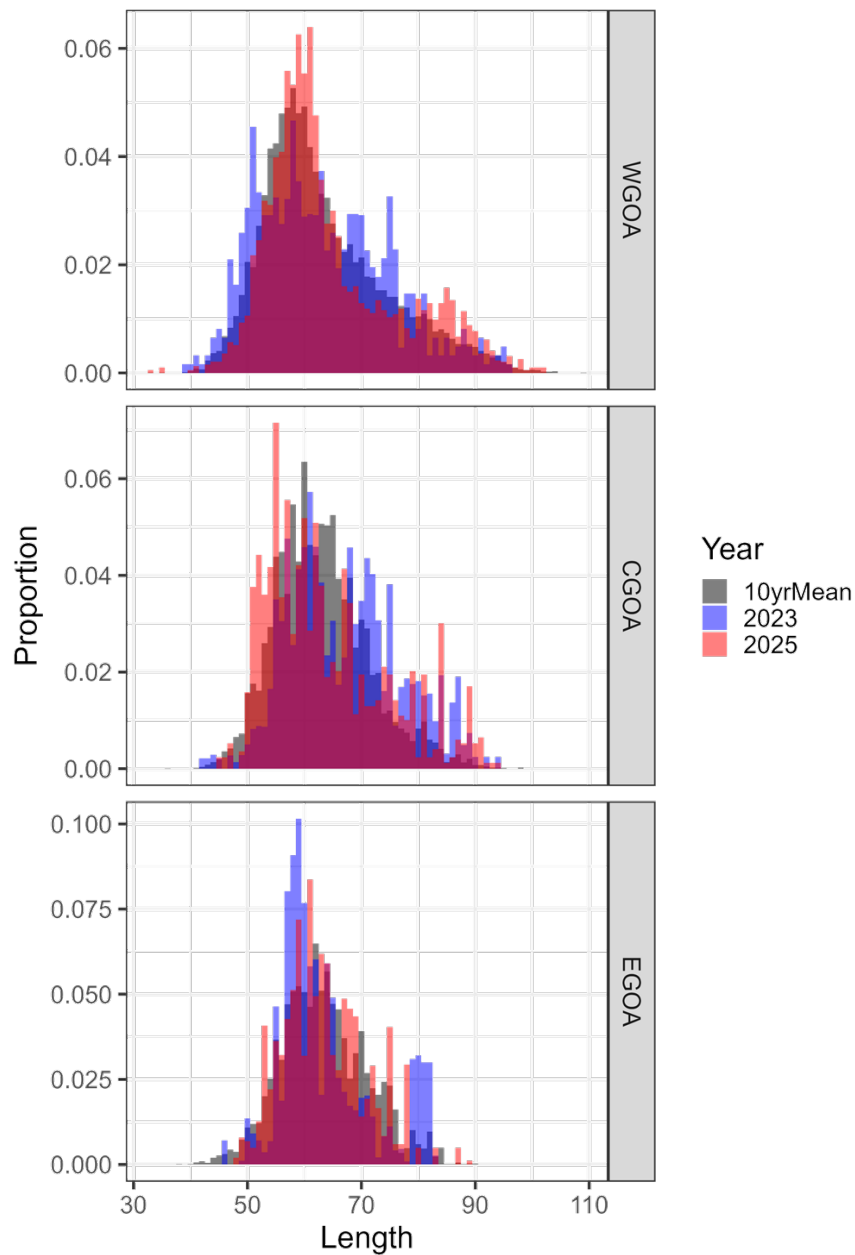
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# GOA P. Cod

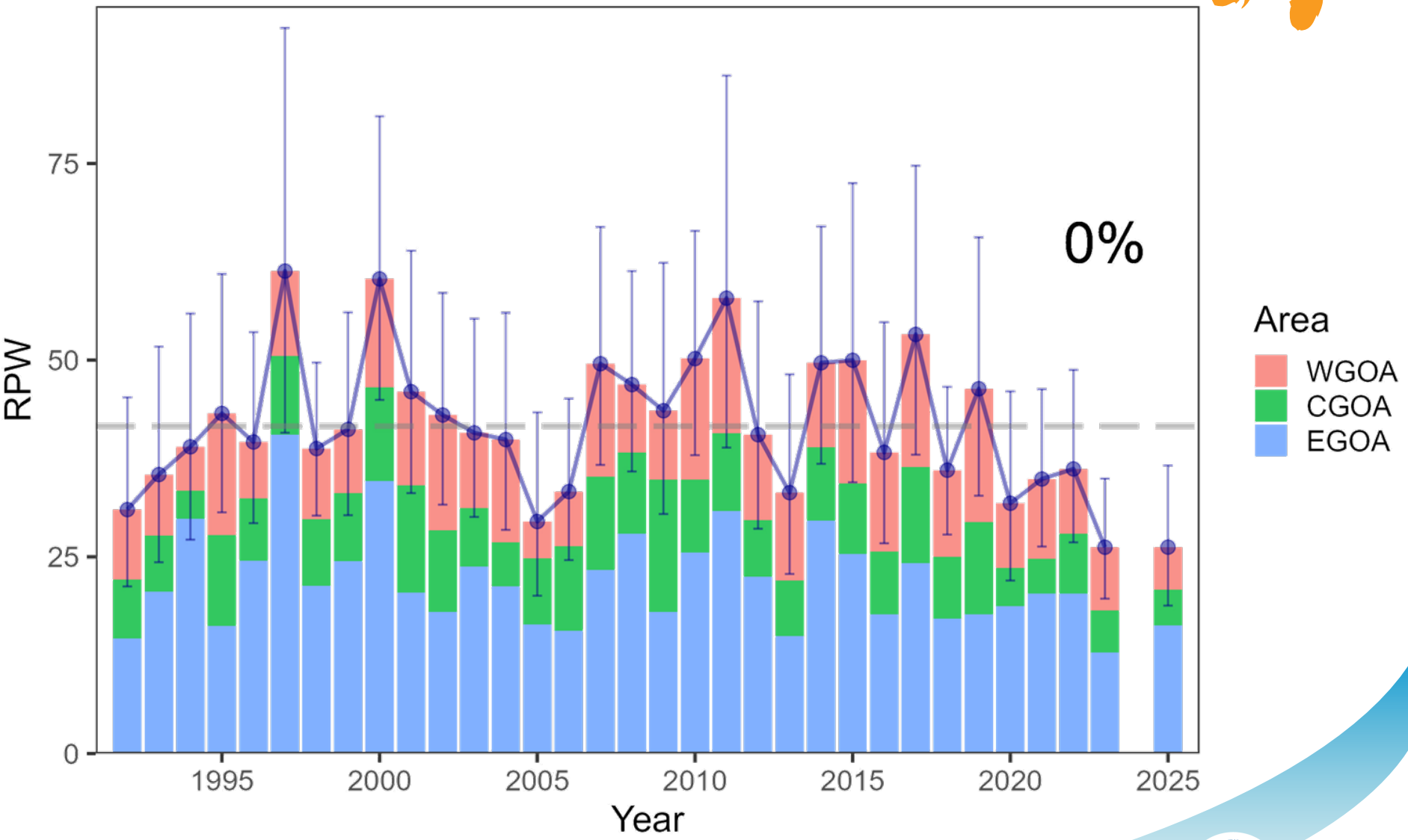
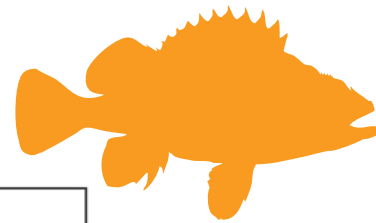




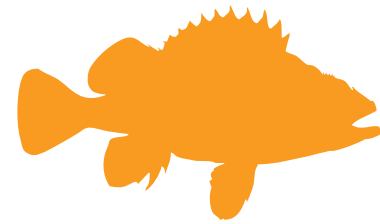
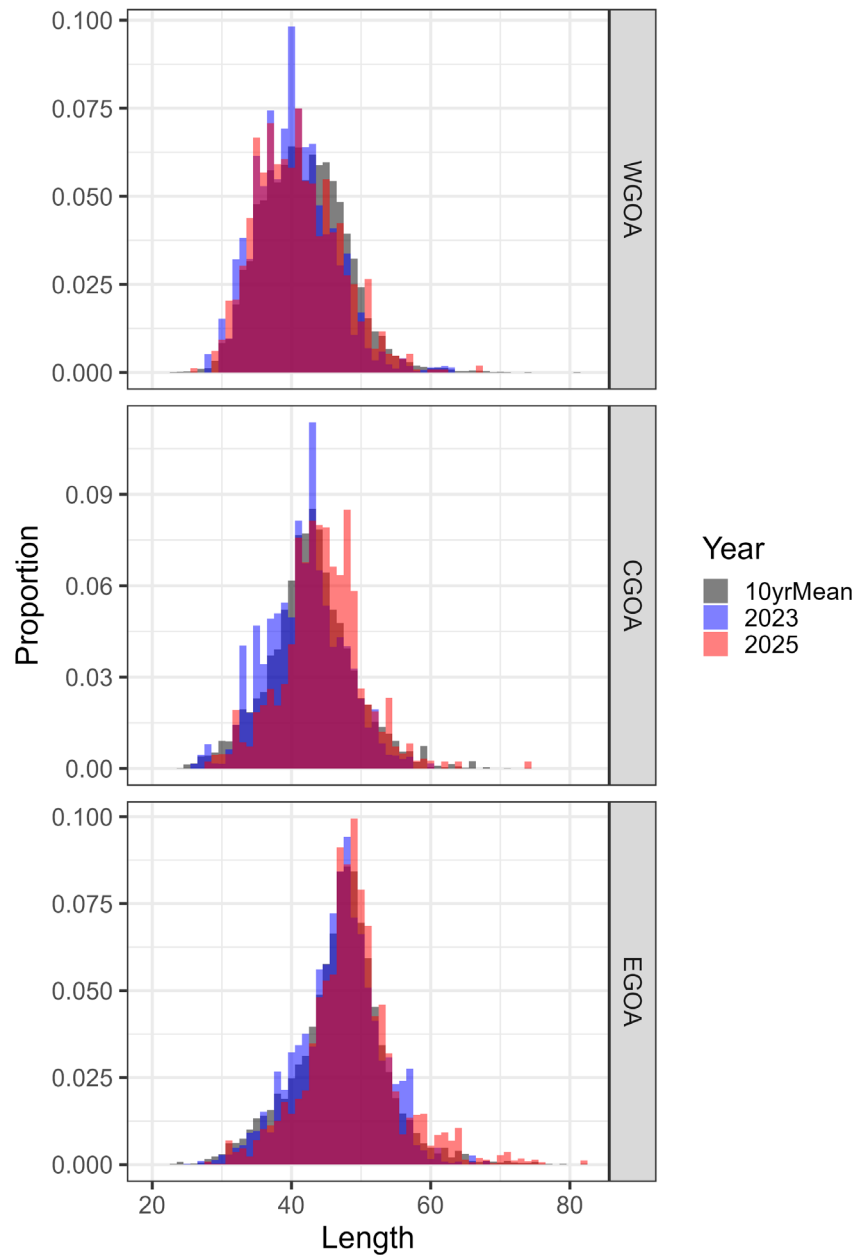
P. cod



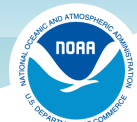
## GOA P. Cod Lengths



REBS

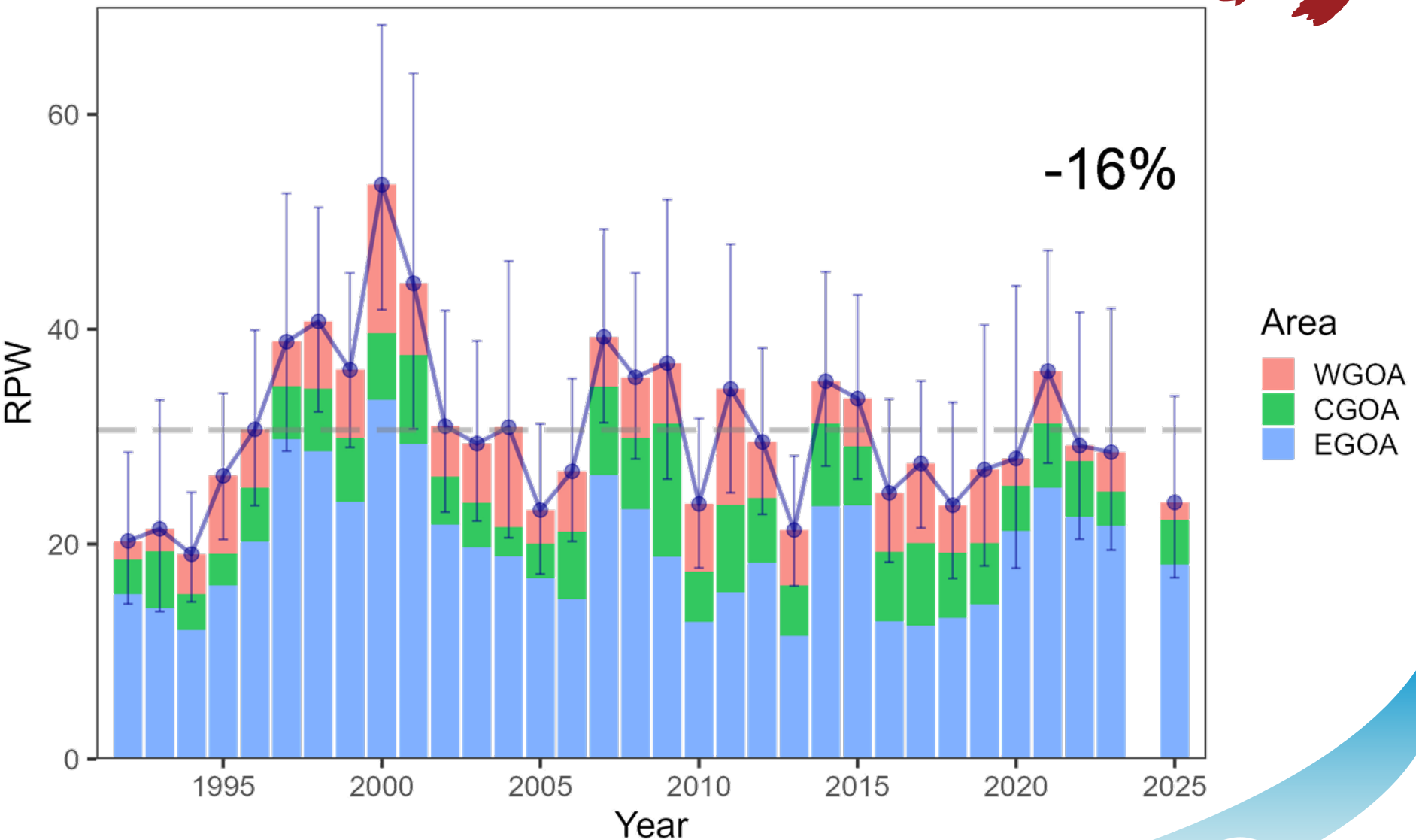
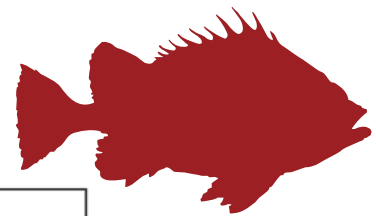


# GOA RE/BS Lengths

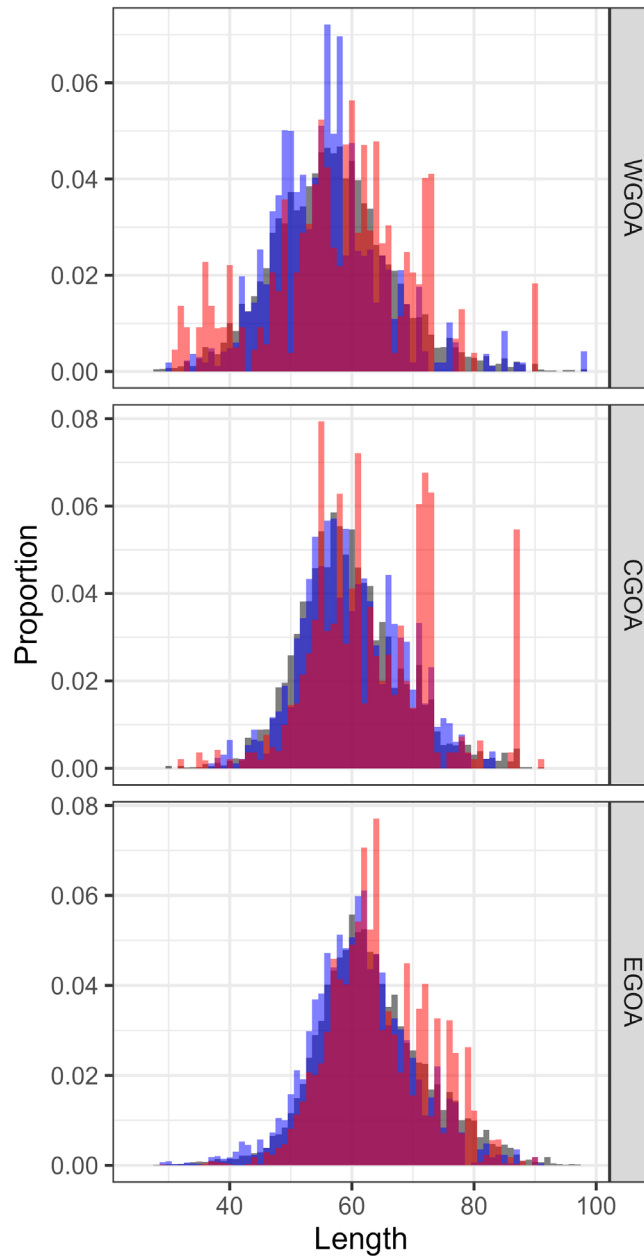


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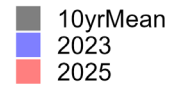
# GOA Shortraker



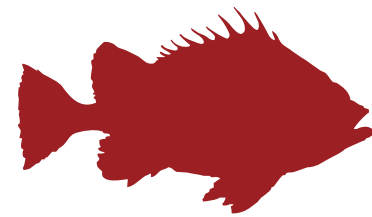
## Shortraker



Year



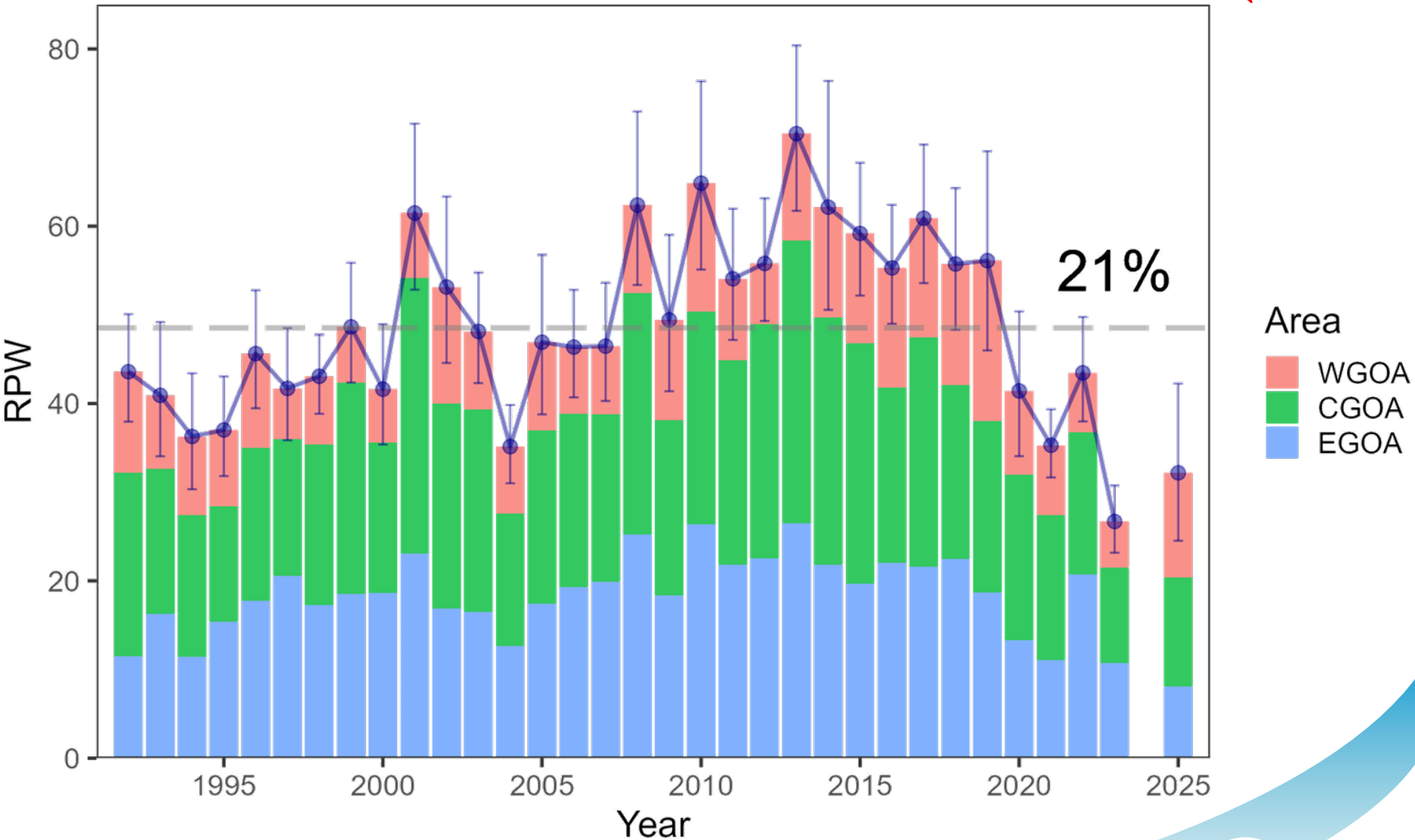
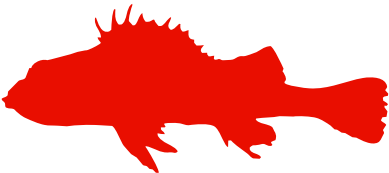
# GOA Shortraker Lengths



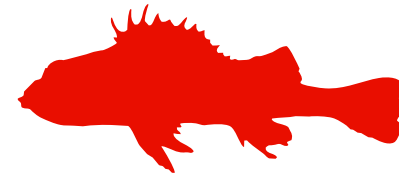
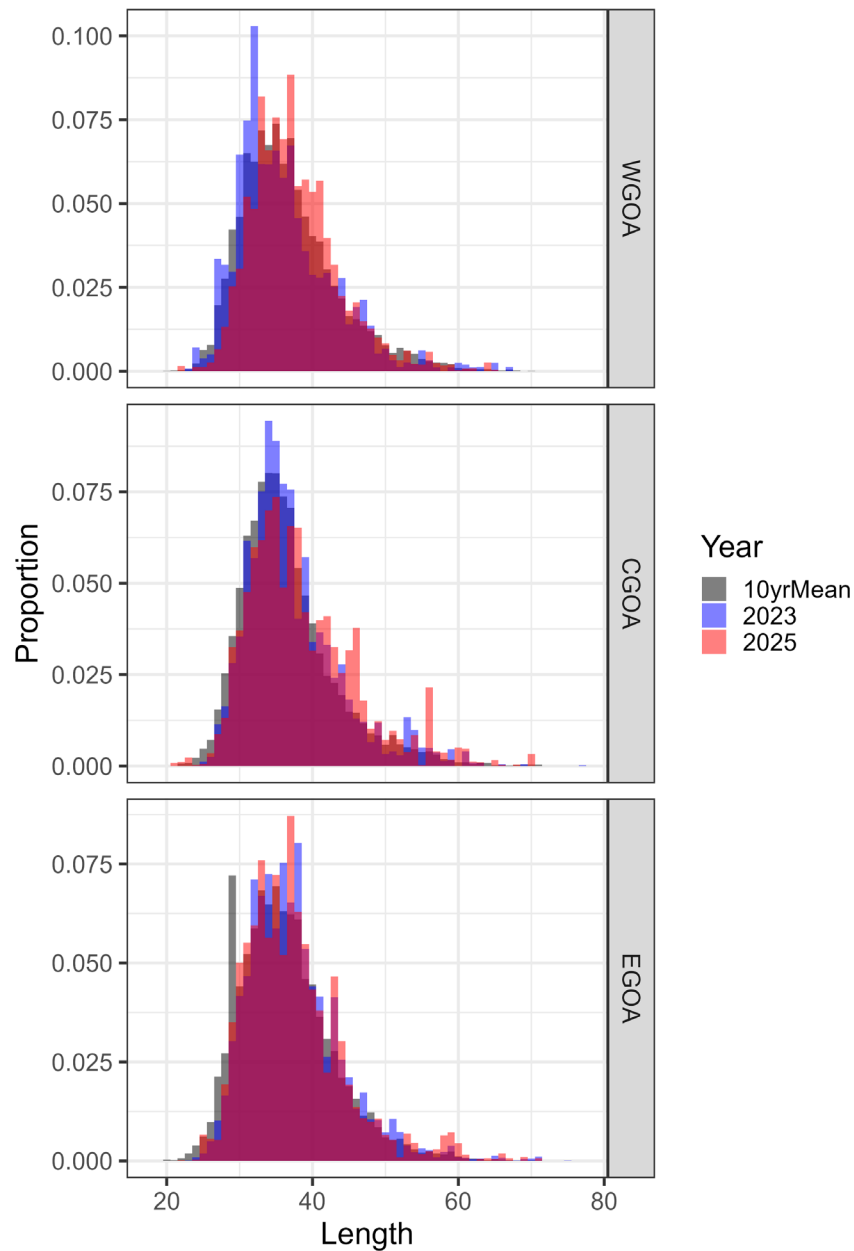
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# GOA Shortspine Thornyhead



SST

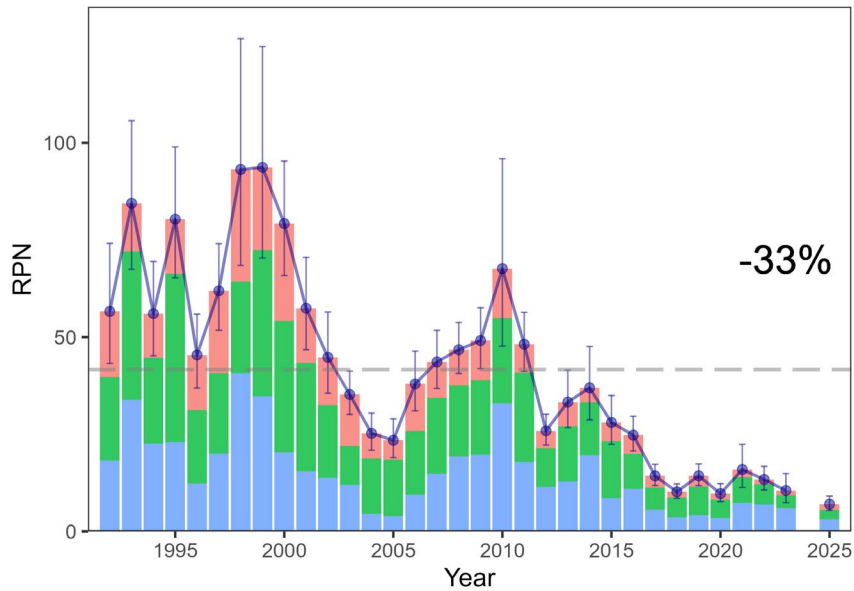


# GOA Shortspine Thornyhead Lengths

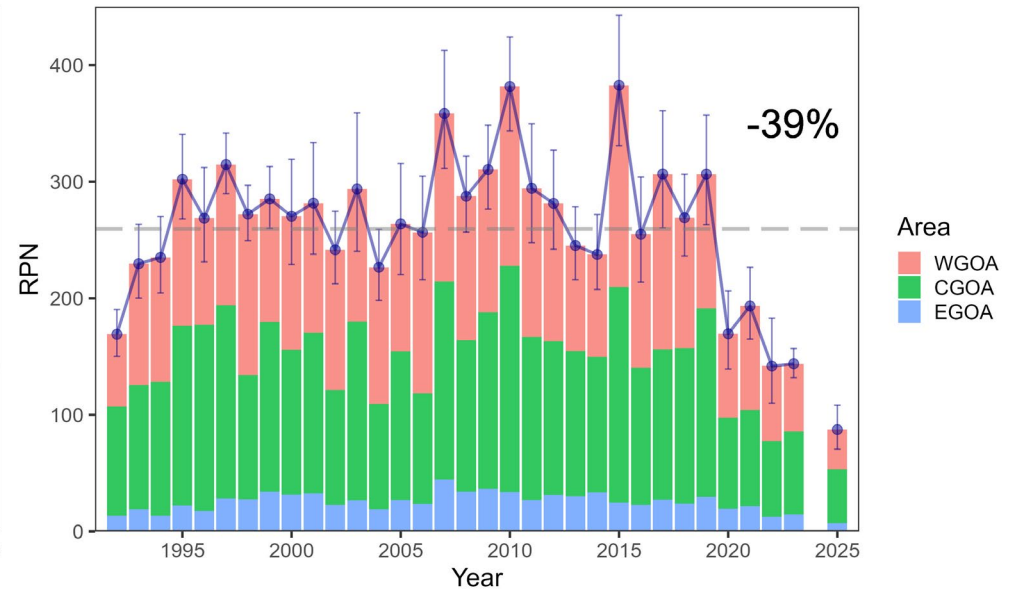


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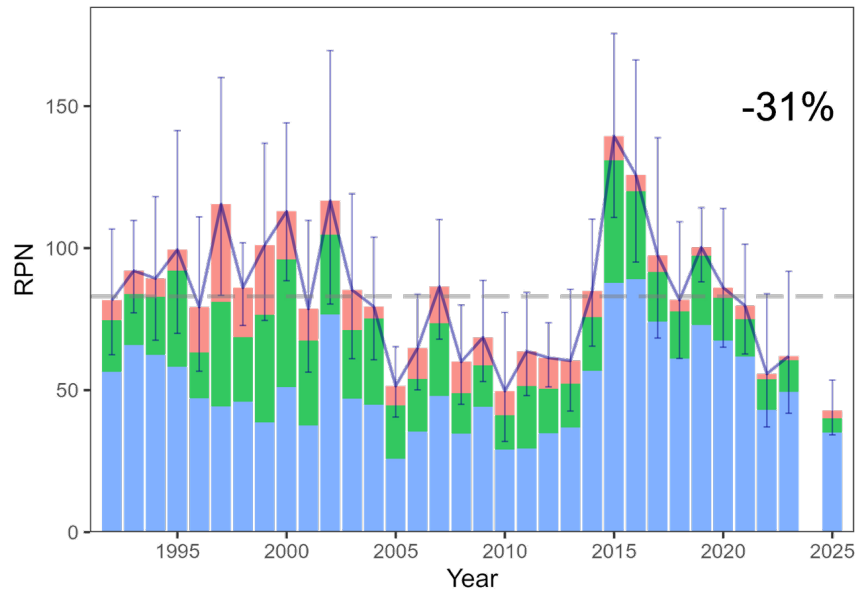
# GOA ATF



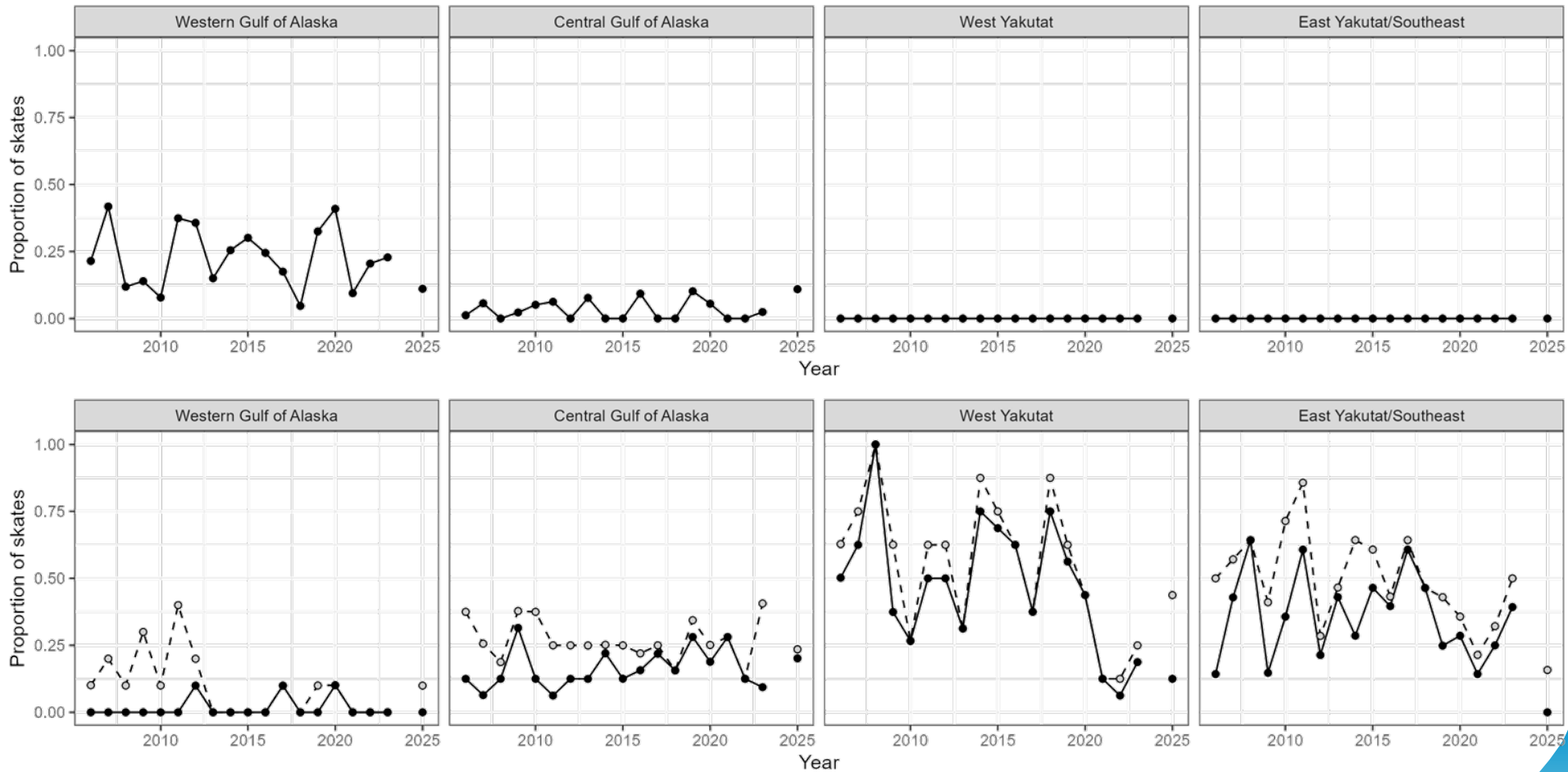
# Giant Grenadier



# Pacific halibut



# Top: Killer Whale Depredation

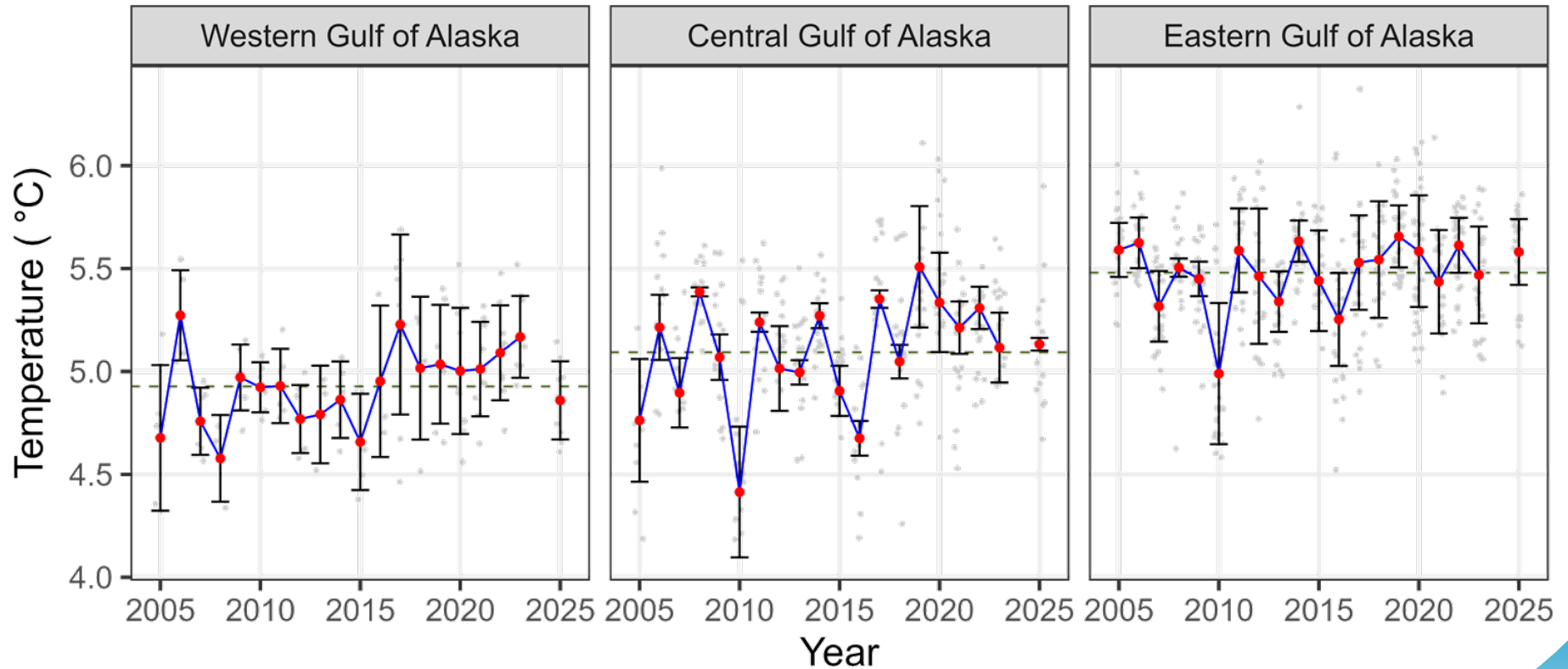


## Bottom: Sperm Whale Presence (open) and Depredation (closed)



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# Subsurface Temperature (Area-weighted index ~250 m)



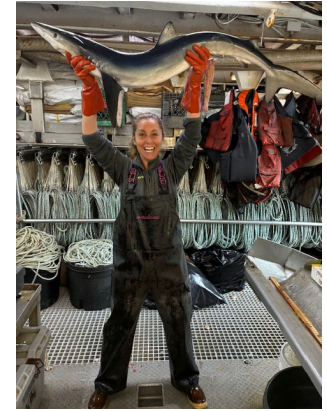
\*2025 timing changed, and shallow-gullies no longer sampled



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# Thank You!



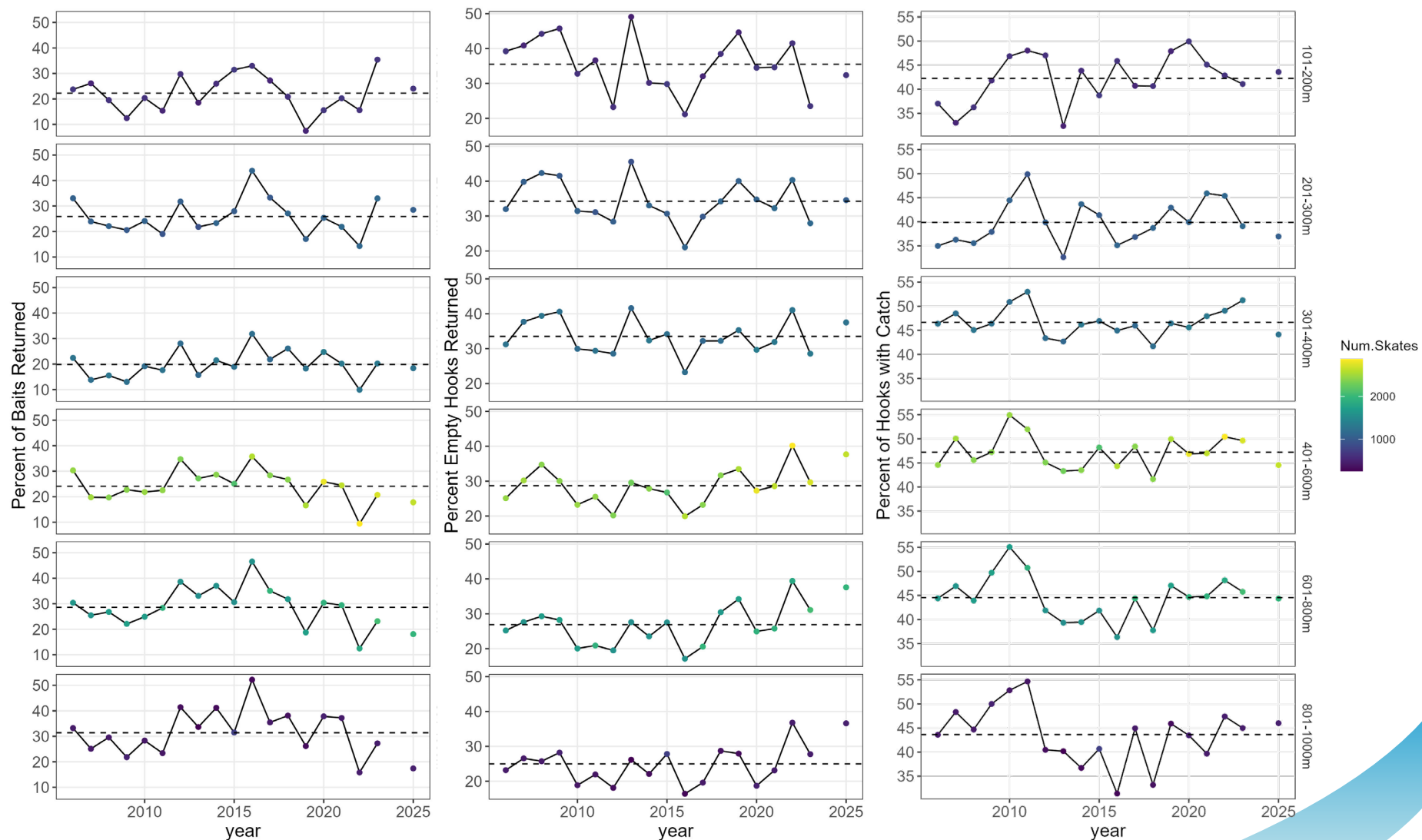
- Contract Biologists: James Millsaps and Fen Renner
- Field staff: Pete Hulson, Katy Echave, Brenna Hsieh, Kristin Omori, and Ben Williams
- Survey/Contract Logistics: Pat Malecha
- FV Alaskan Leader captains, crew, and staff
- RACE Division/Net Loft assistance

## Questions?



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# EXTRA SLIDE: Hooks (Bait vs. Empty vs. Catch)



\*RPN stations from GOA only