

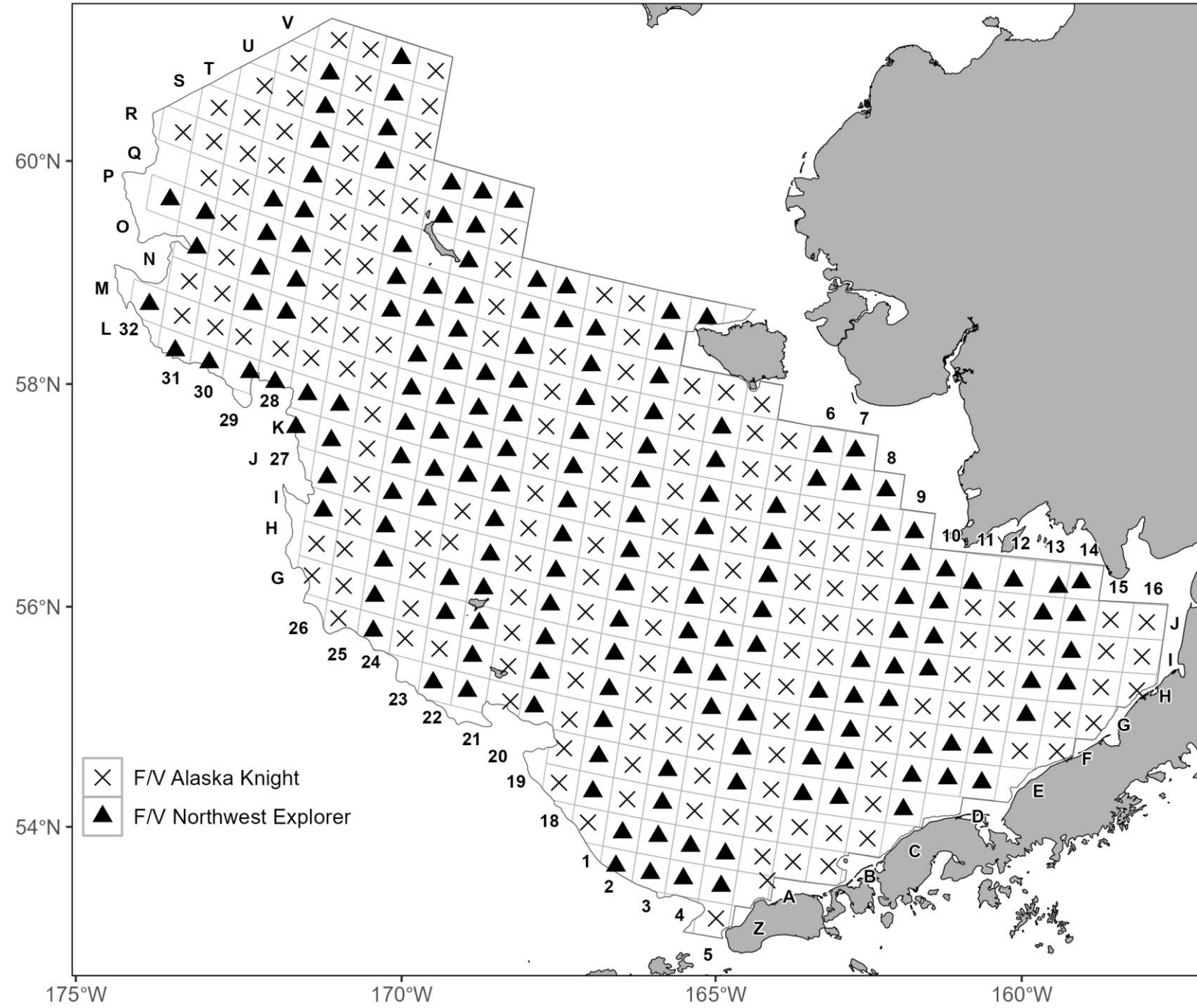
2026 Eastern Bering Sea Crab Survey Results

Leah Zacher, Shannon Hennessey, Jon Richar, and **Emily Ryznar**

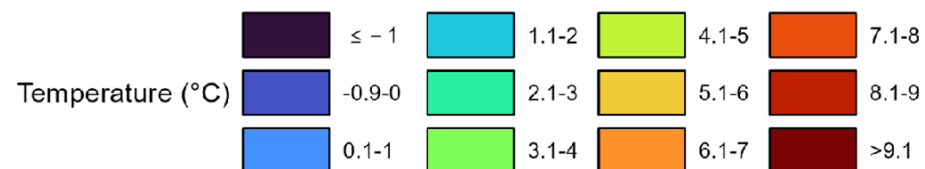
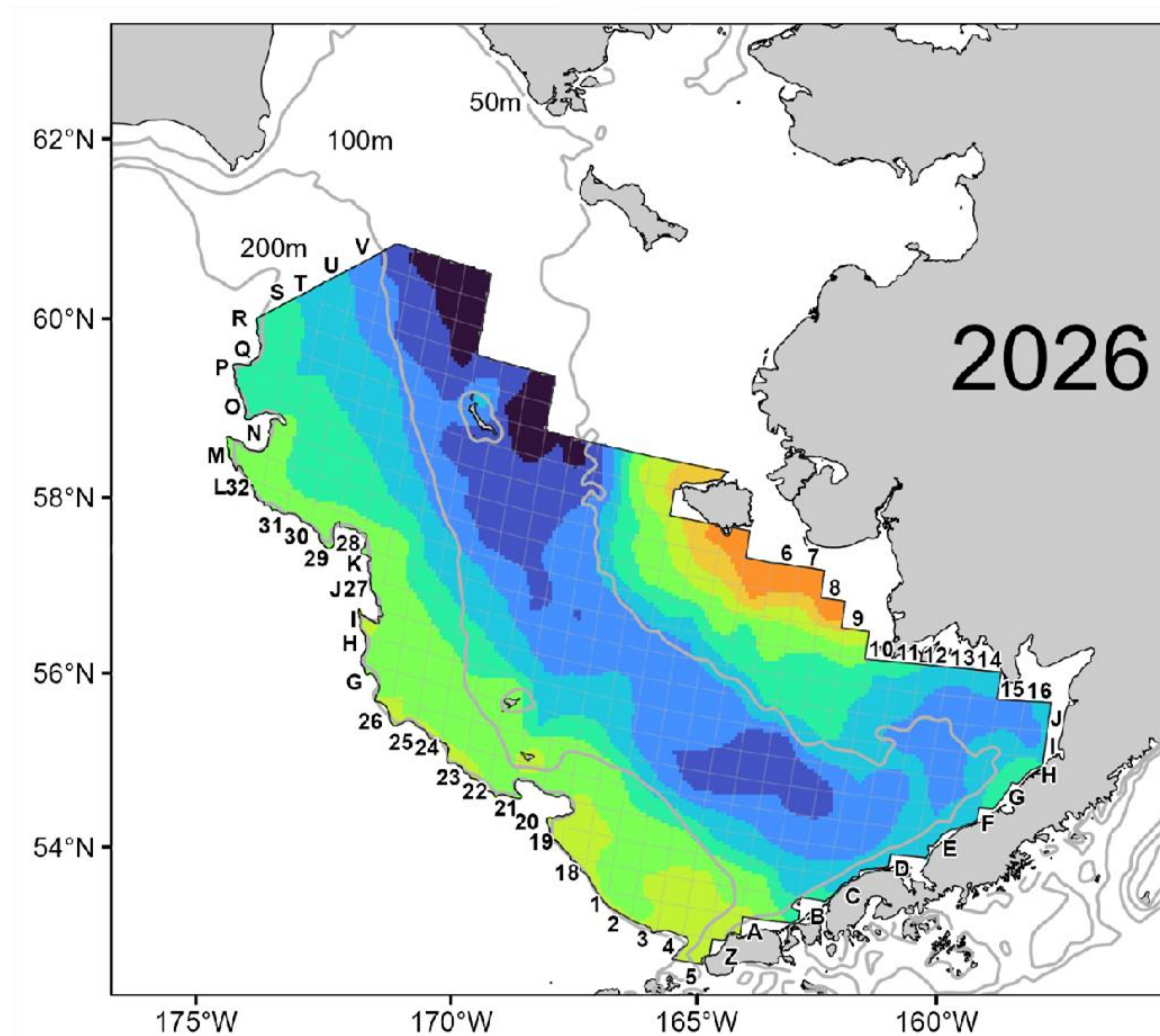
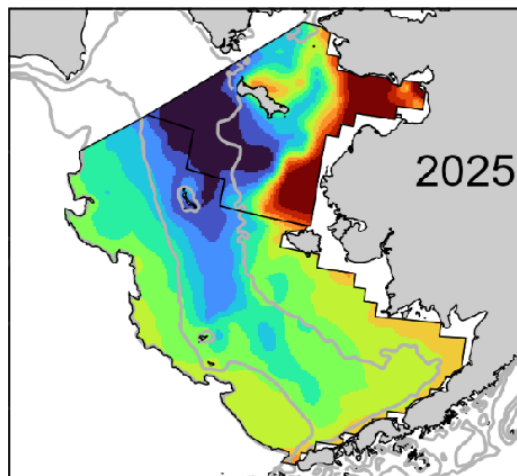
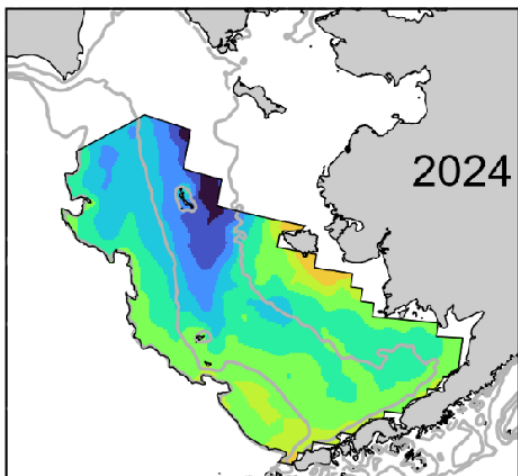
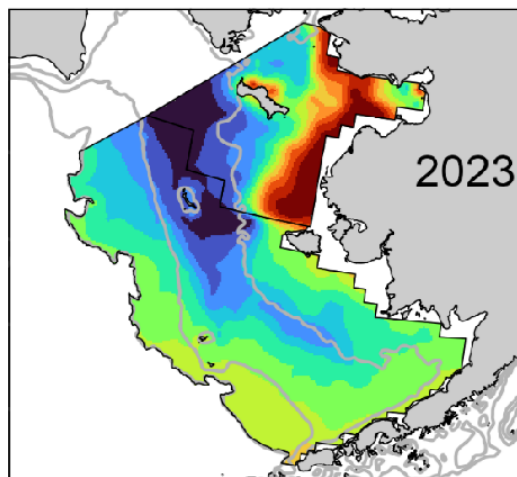
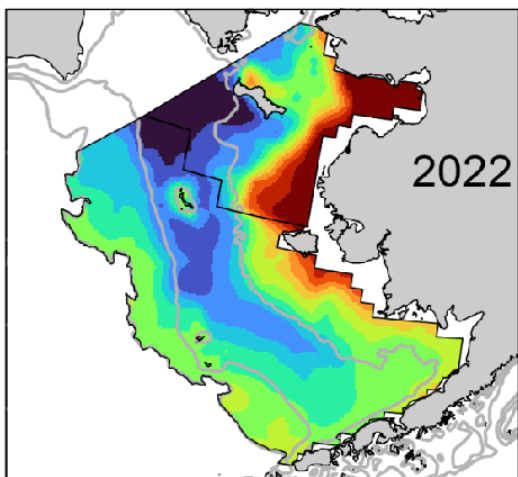
With contributions from everyone in the Shellfish Assessment Program

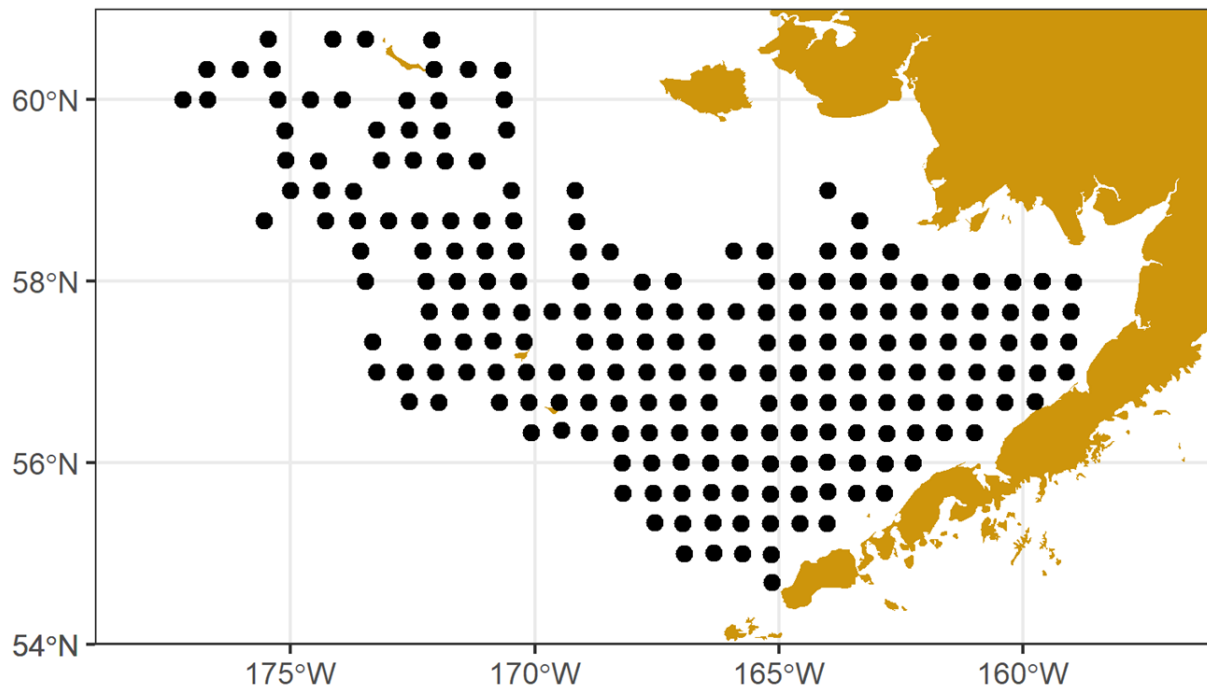


349 stations sampled
from May 31 – August 4

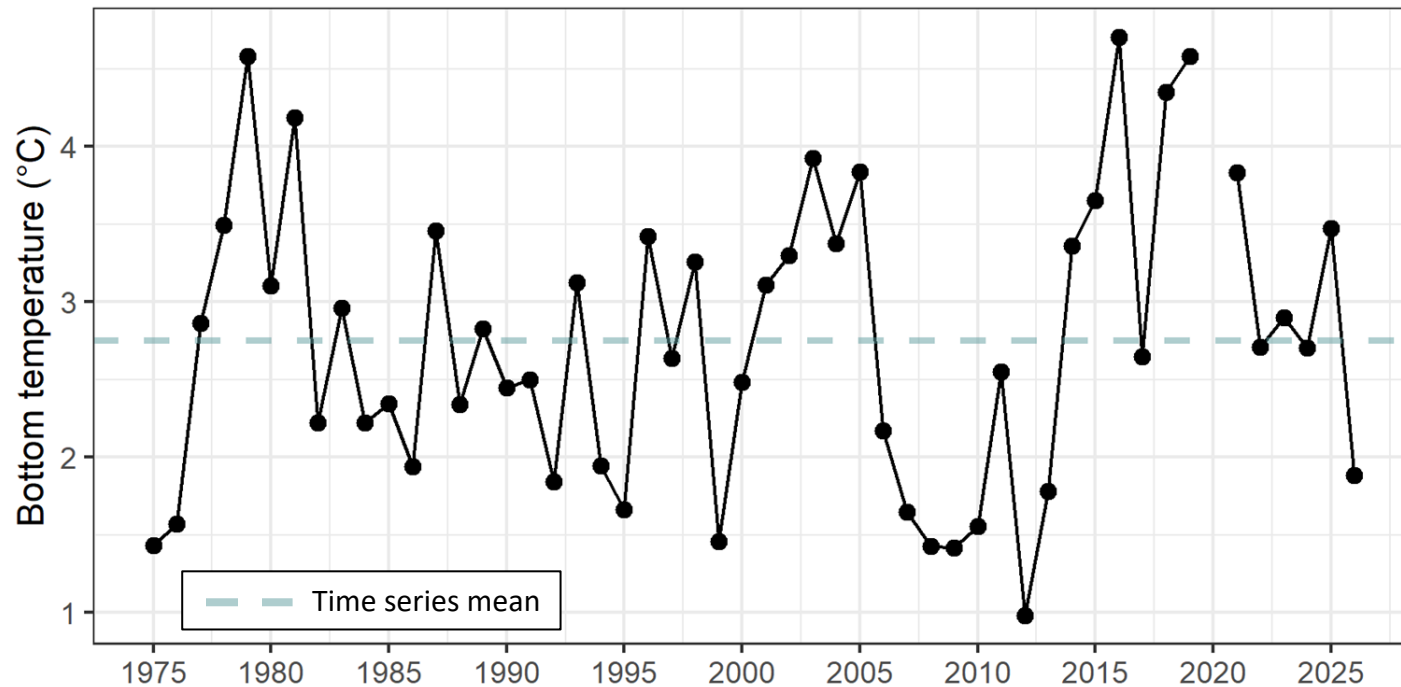


Largest cold pool in the last five years





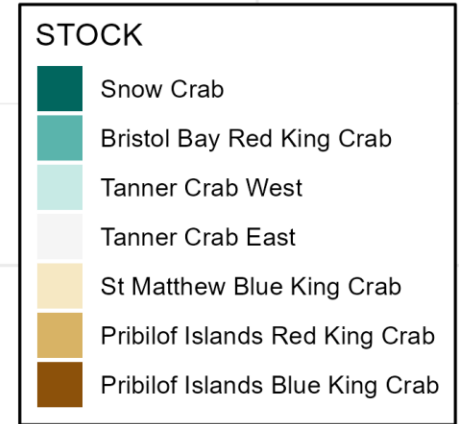
Mean bottom
temperature 0.8°C below
1975-2026 time series
average



(temperatures controlled for
missing values and sampling date)

Total harvestable biomass
increased by 68% in 2026

Total biomass of crab of harvestable size (t)

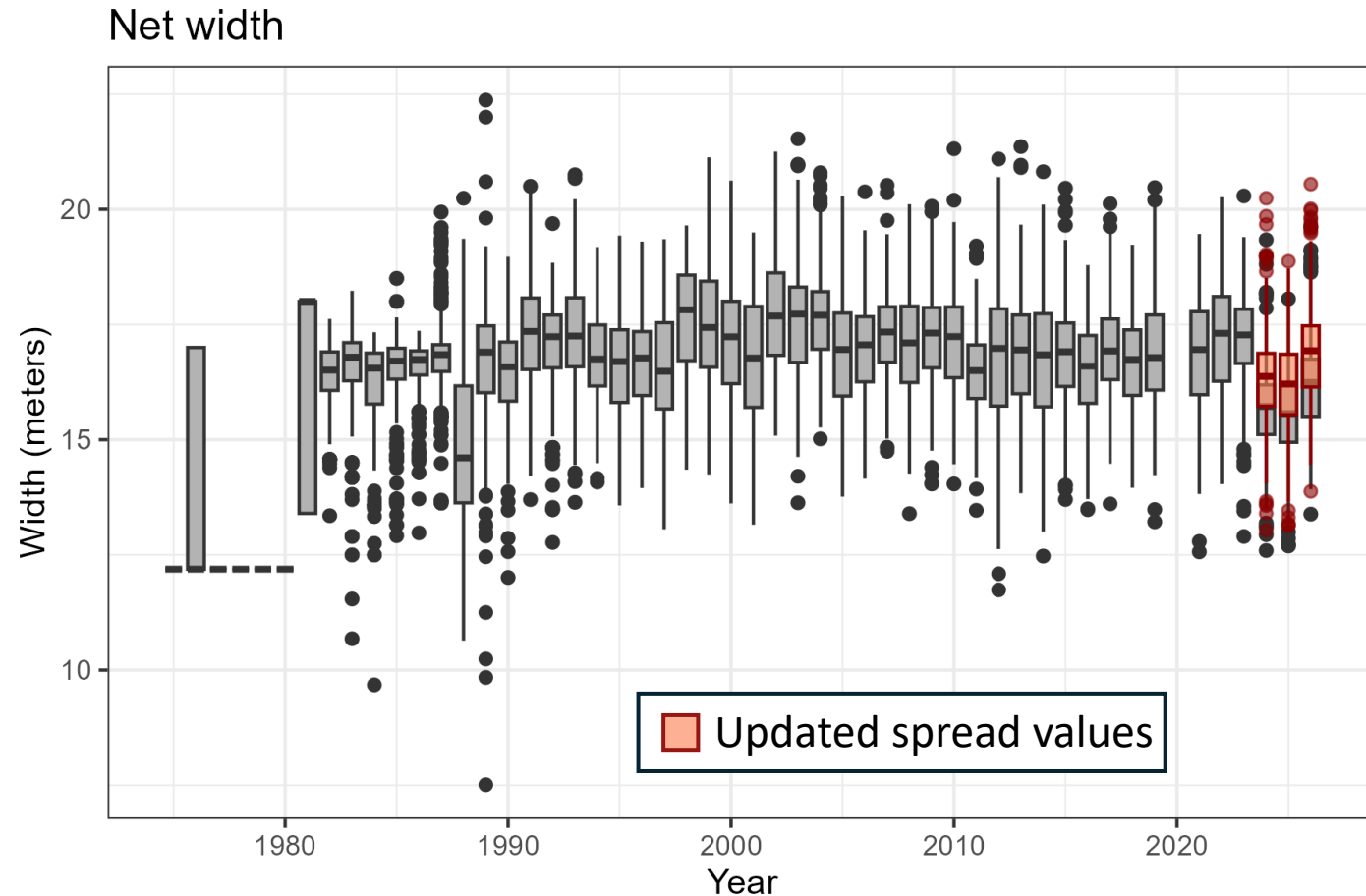


0 100,000 200,000 300,000 400,000

1991 1996 2001 2006 2011 2016 2021 2026

Update to net spread values for 2024-2026

- The Tanner crab CIE review identified lower-than-expected net spread in 2024-2025.
- Measurements from new sensors implemented in 2024 align more closely with legacy measurements (<2013), making the historical correction factor used since 2013 inappropriate.
- Net spread was recently recalculated with the correction factor removed for 2024–2026 EBS and 2025 NBS hauls.
- Revised spread values are about 4% higher, producing mean biomass decreases of:
 - **BBRKC**: 3.95% (± 0.03 SD) ,
 - **Tanner crab**: 3.99% (± 0.07 SD)
 - **Snow crab**: 4.02% (± 0.05 SD)

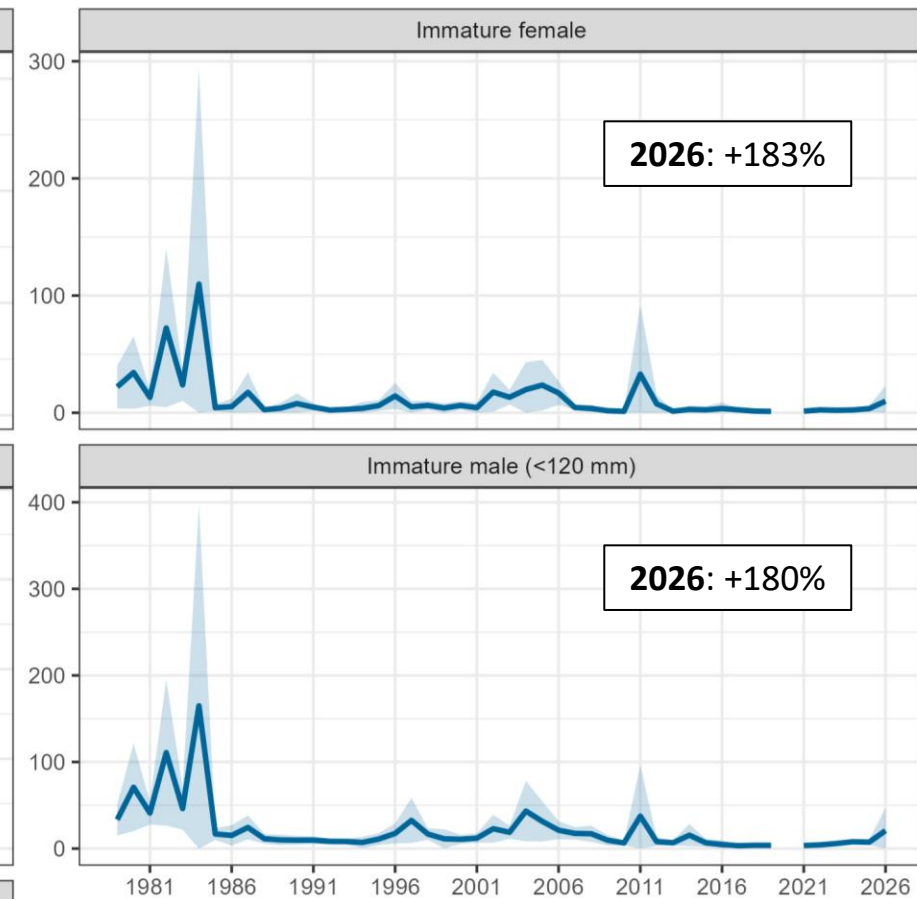
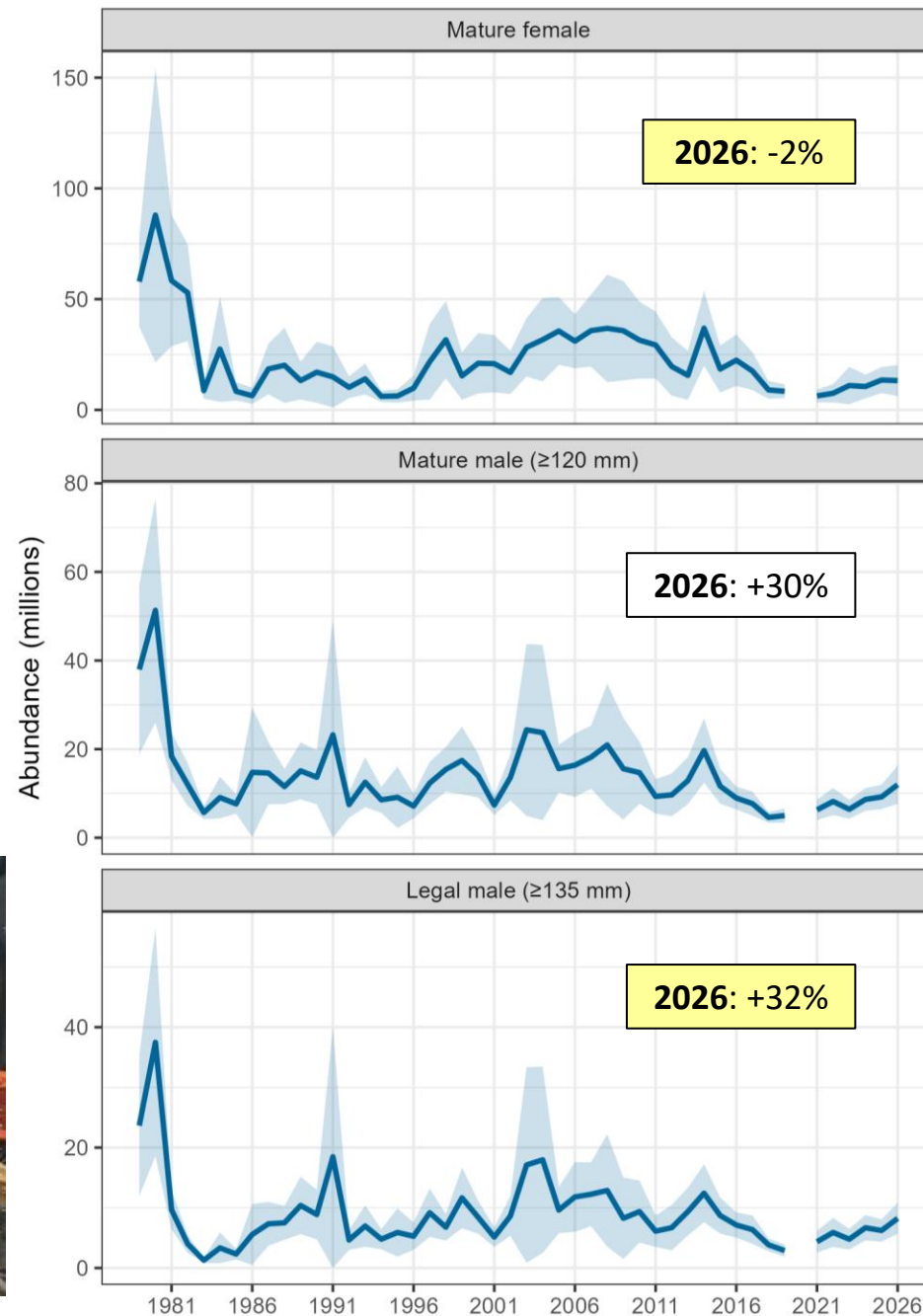


A photograph of a Red King Crab resting on a thick layer of brown, fibrous seaweed. The crab's body is a mottled purple and brown color, with its legs extending outwards. A semi-transparent white banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "Red King Crab" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Red King Crab

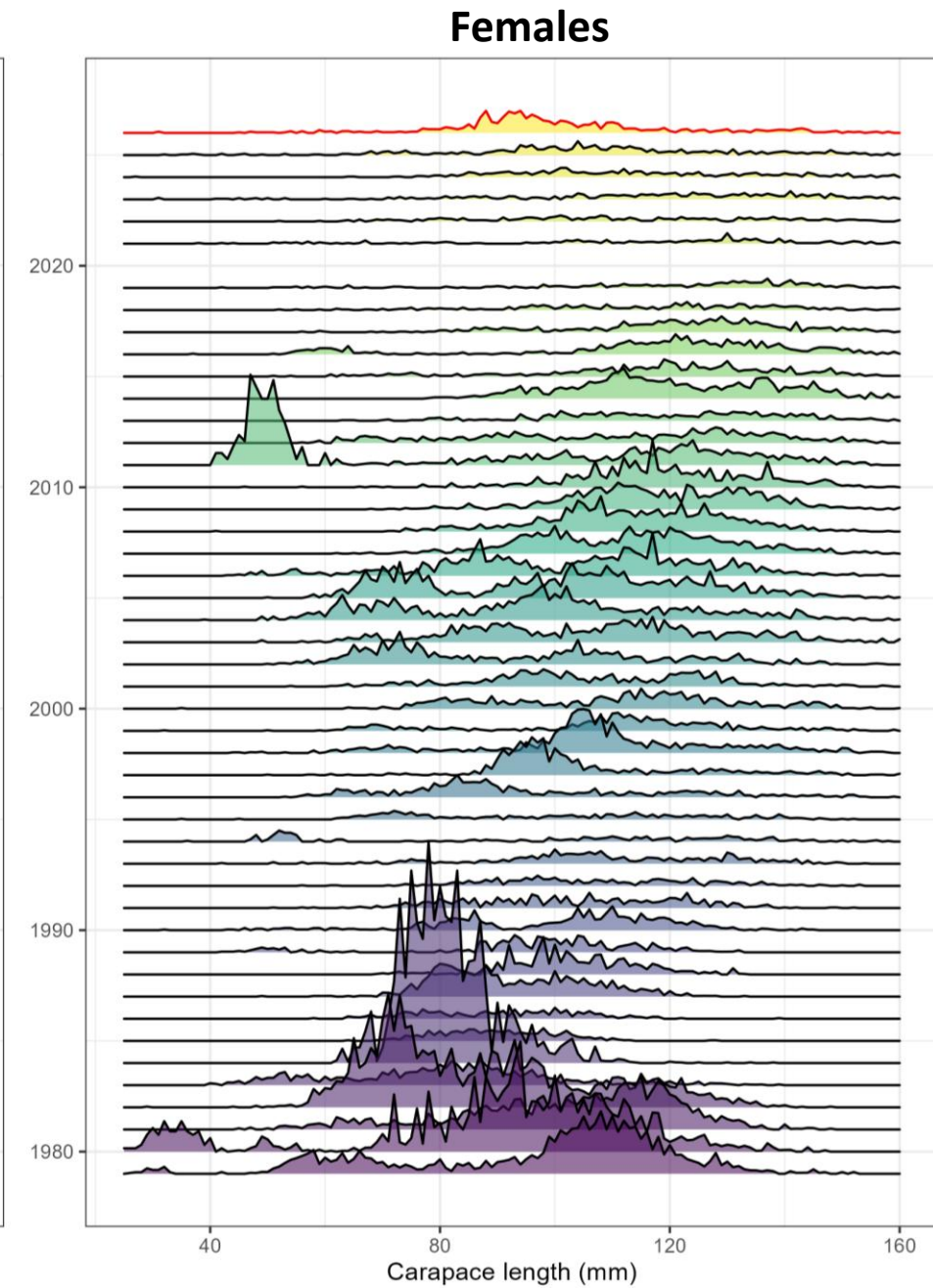
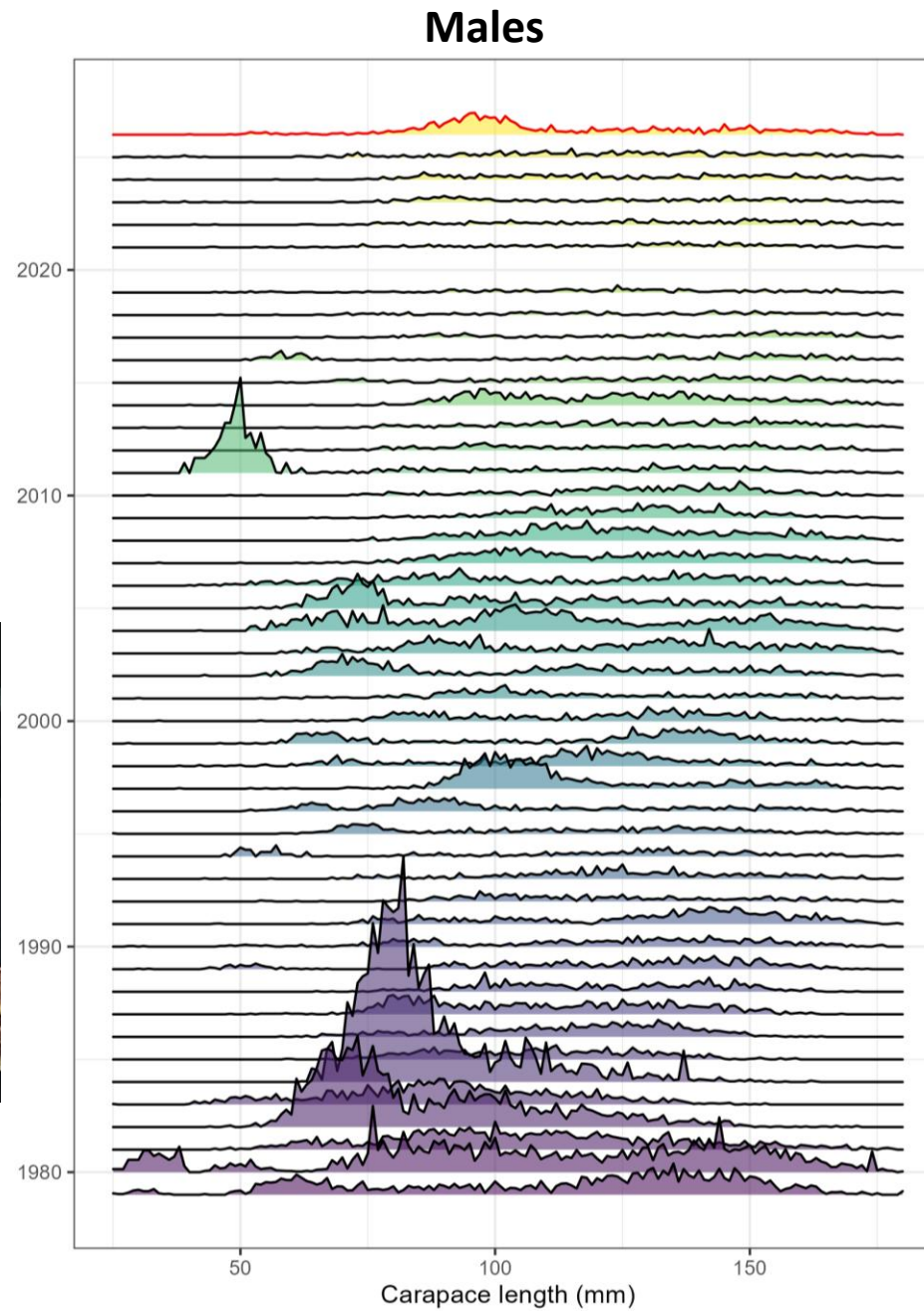
Bristol Bay RKC

- Increasing trends across most size-sex categories
- Large increases in immature categories, but this was largely caused by one high catch station (65-68% of immature catch)



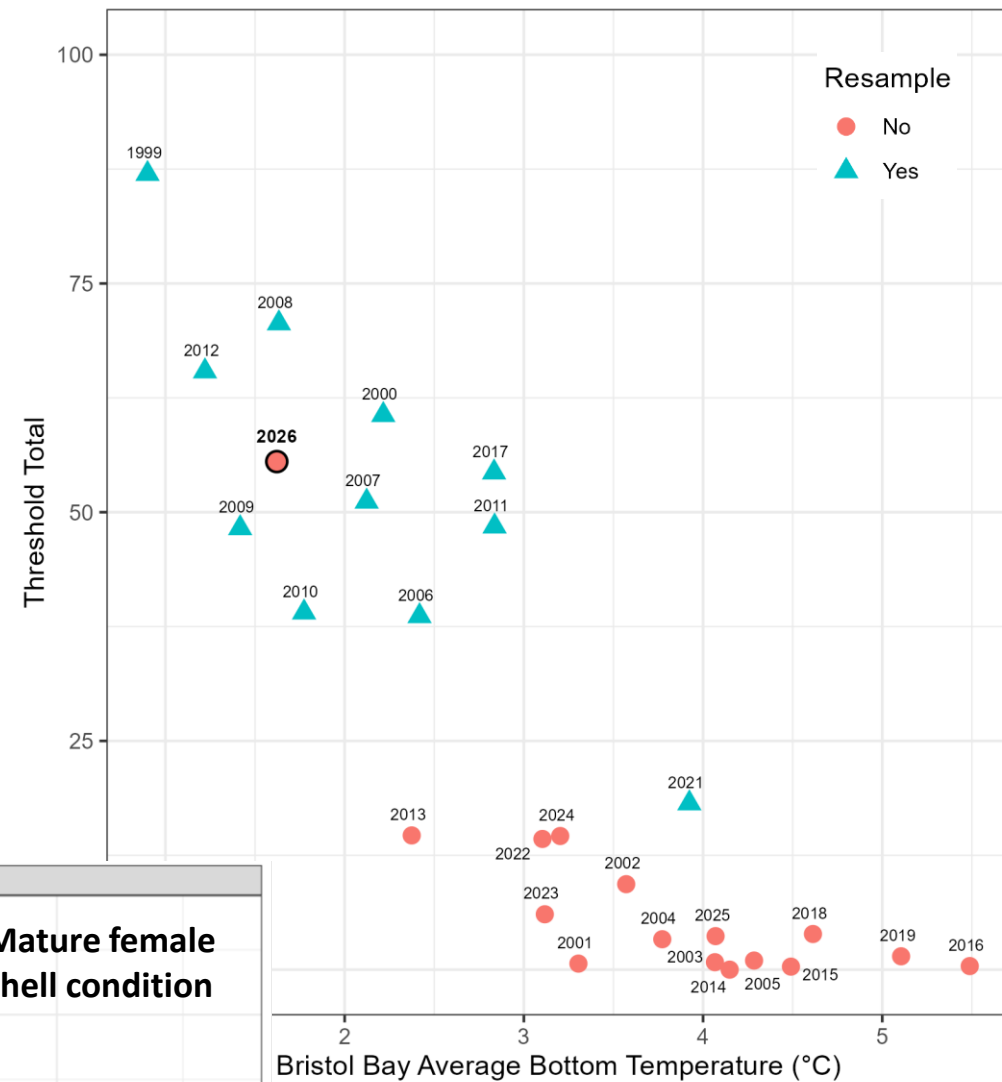
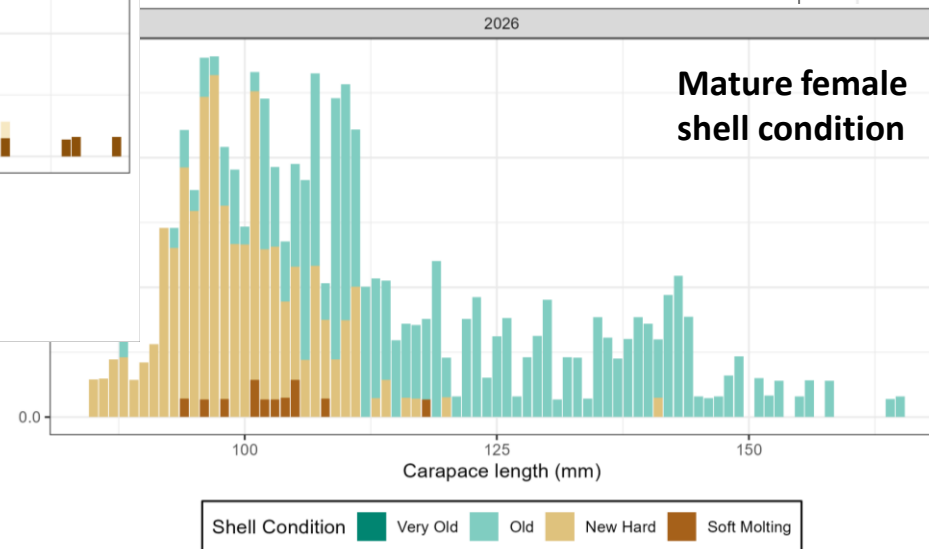
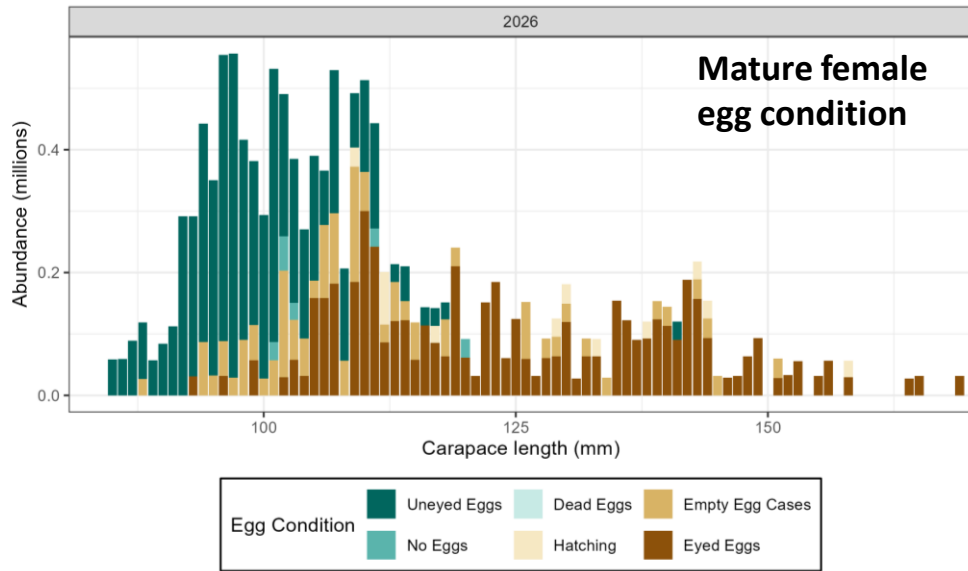
Bristol Bay RKC

- Increased frequency centered around ~100 mm for both sexes



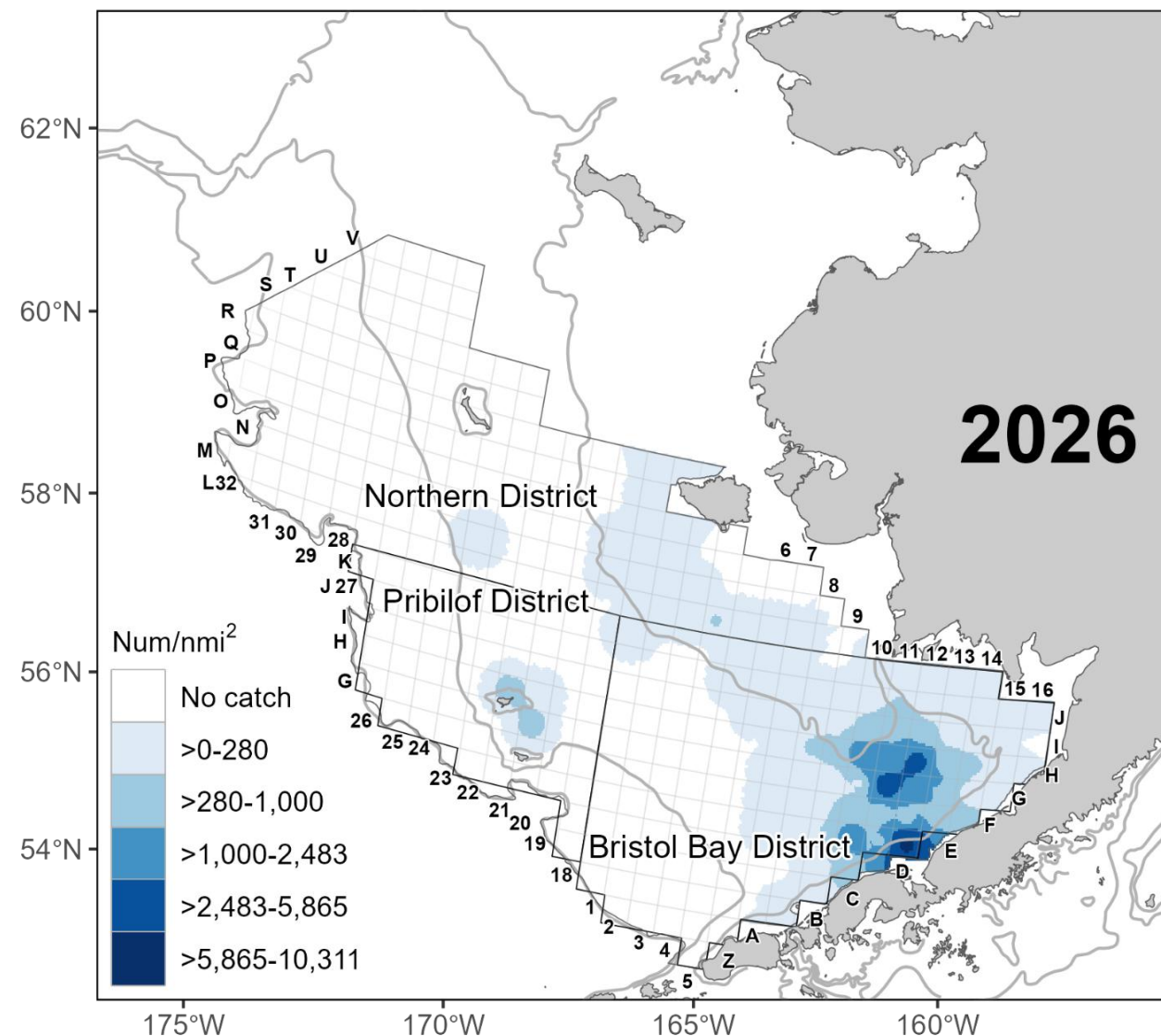
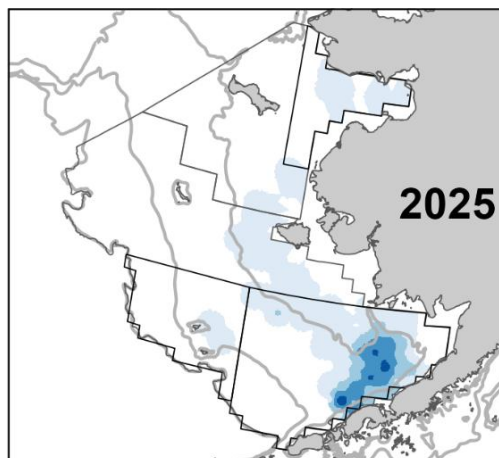
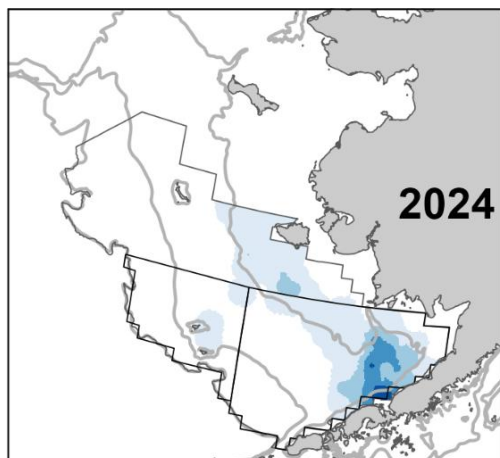
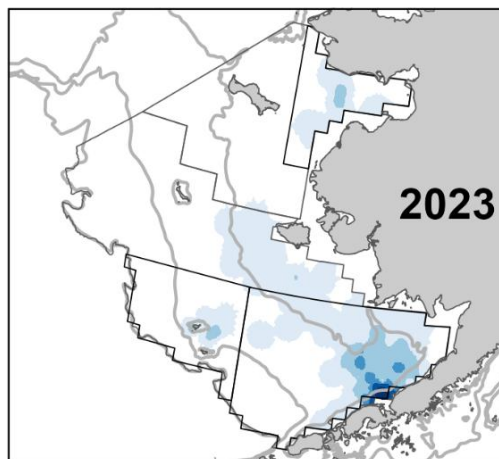
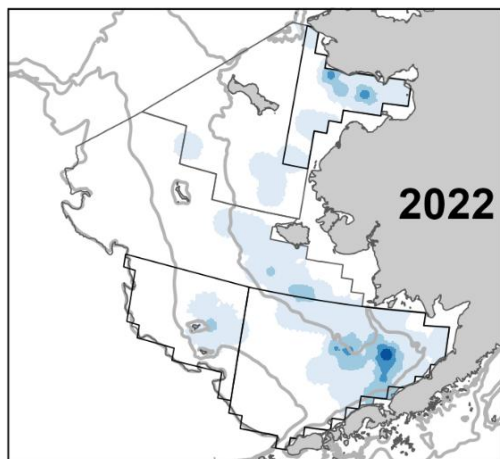
No resampling for Bristol Bay RKC in 2026

- 56% of mature females had not completed the molt/mate cycle, exceeding the 10% threshold to consider resampling
- NMFS/ADF&G biologists and the stock assessment author agreed that resampling Bristol Bay later in the summer would not materially affect survey or assessment results



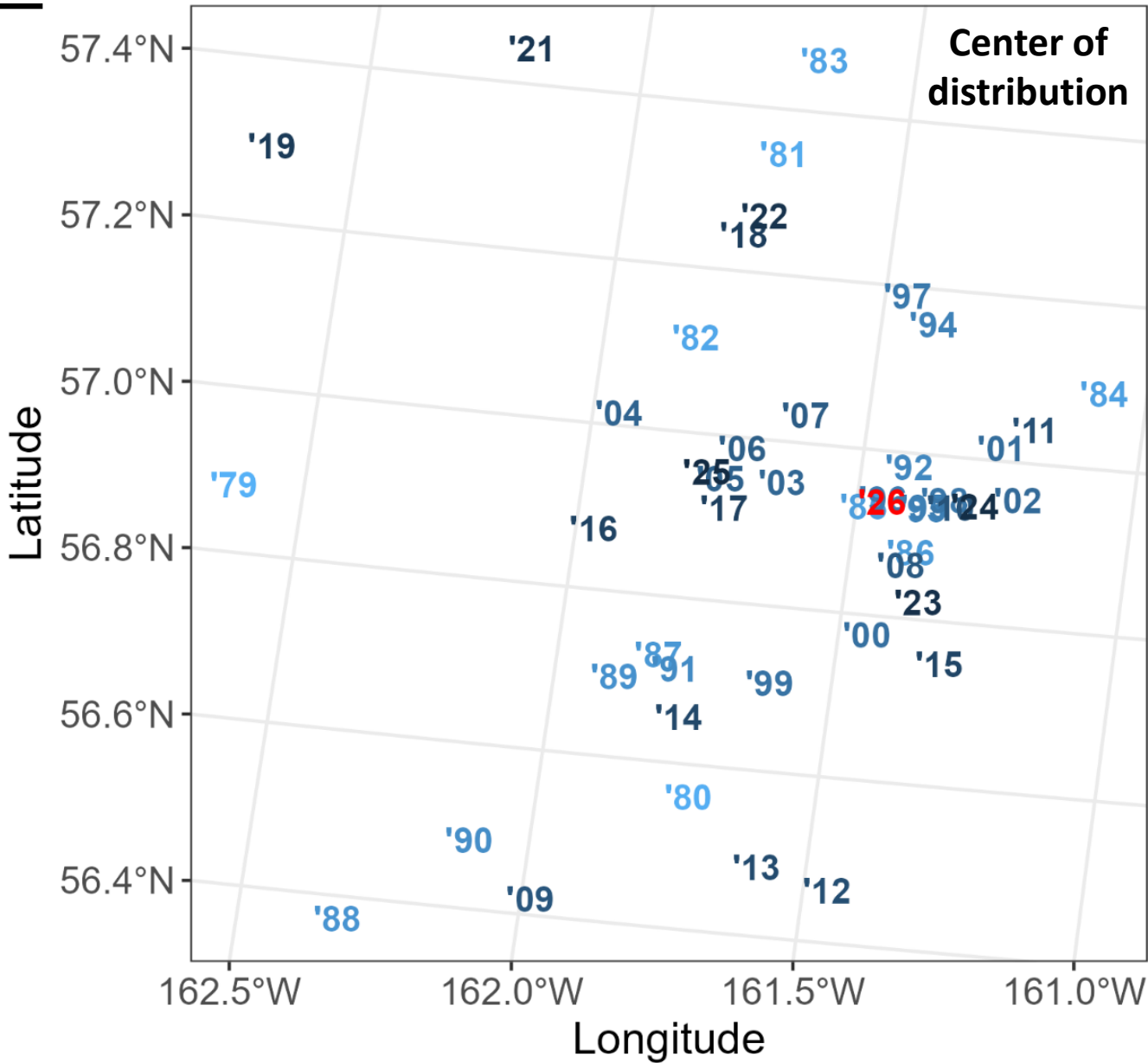
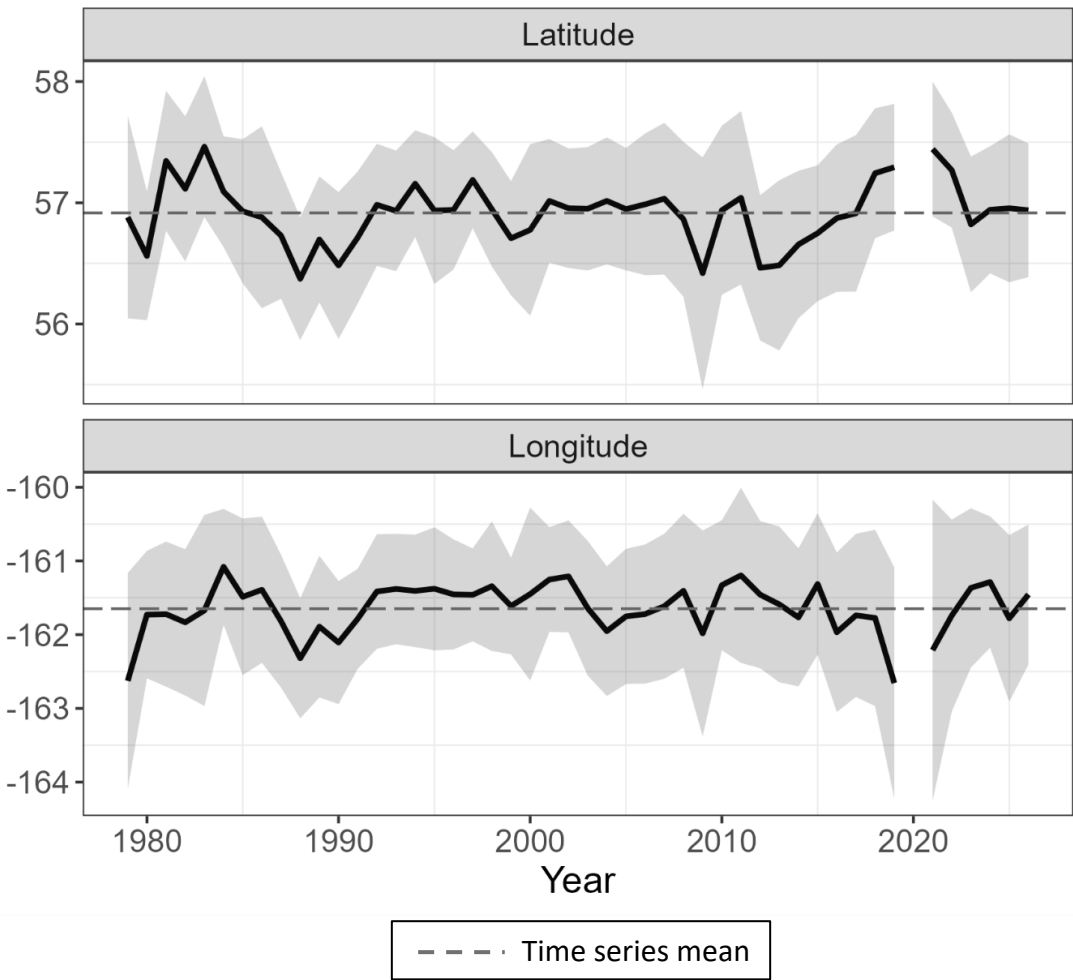
RKC mature females

- Persistent hotspot to the north/northwest of Port Moller



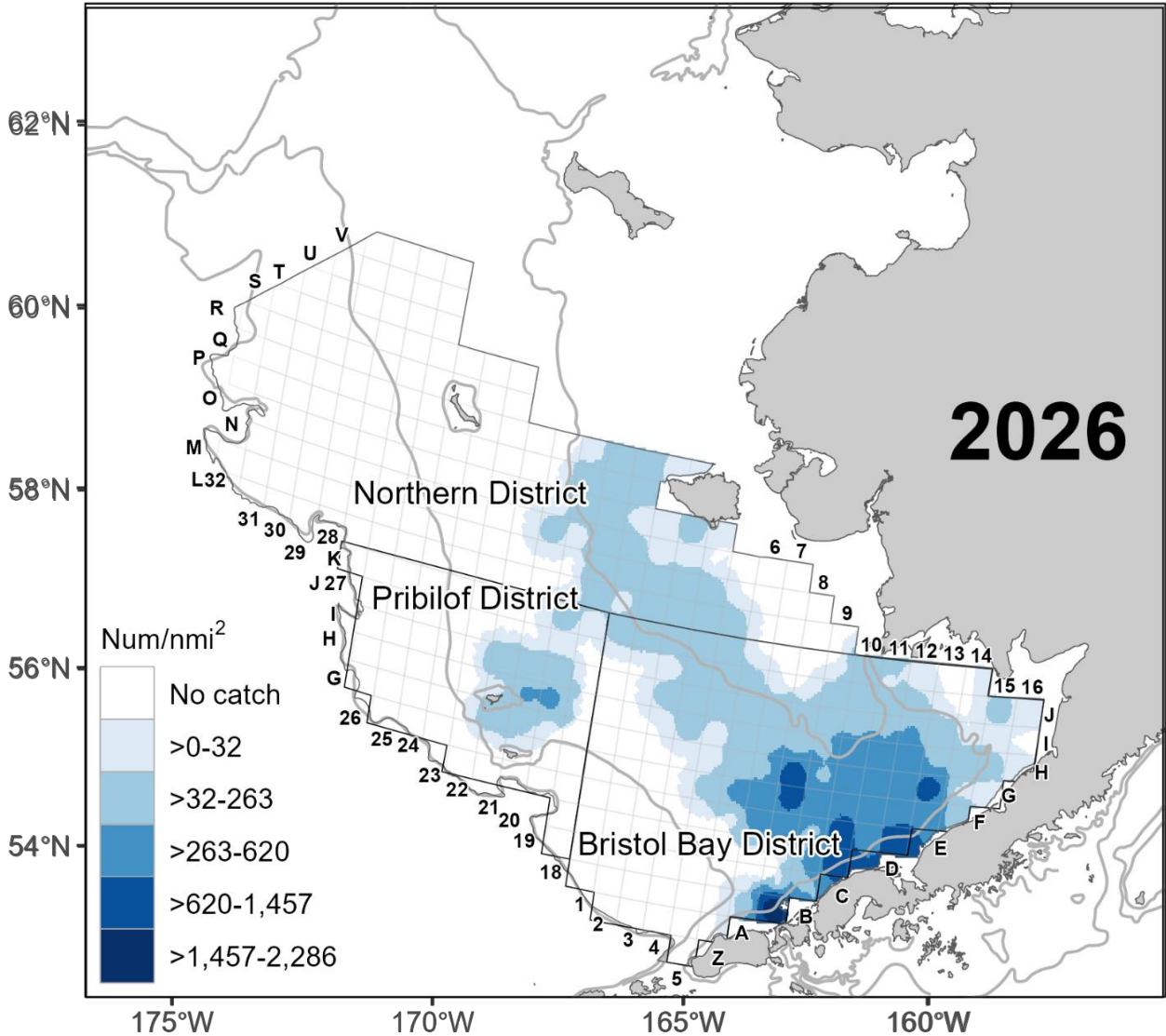
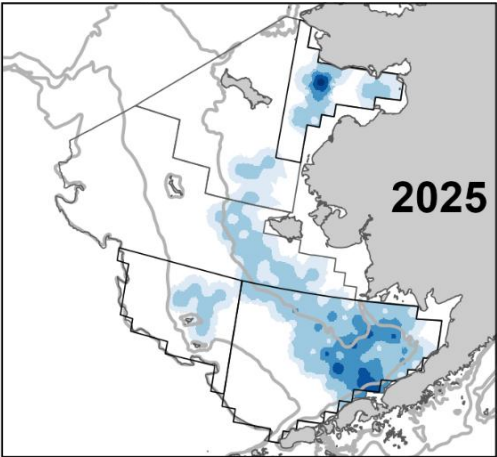
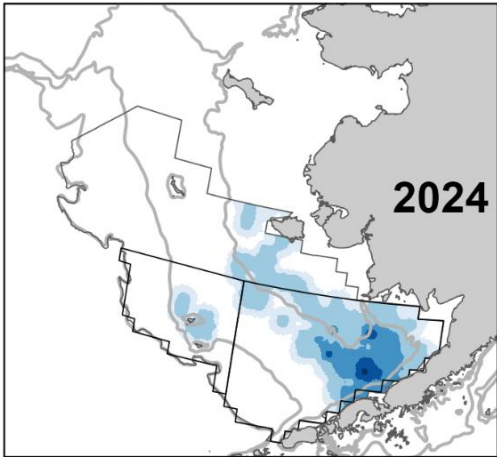
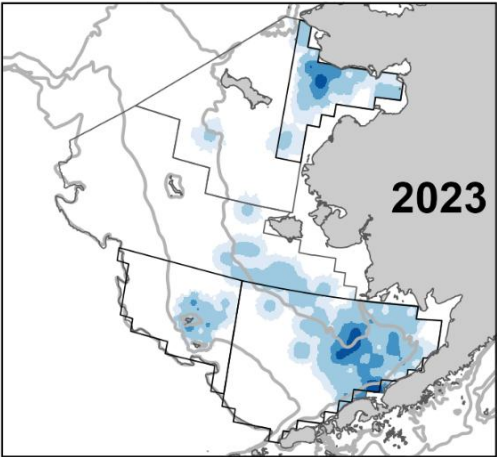
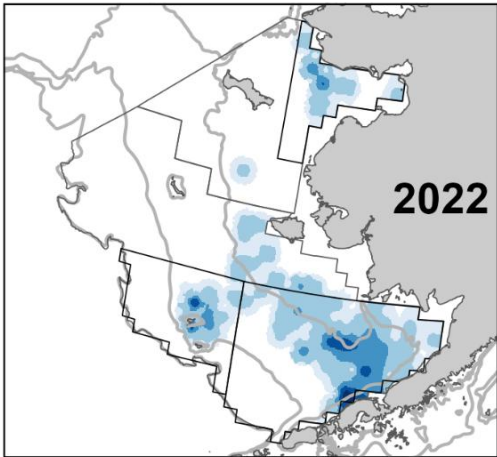
Bristol Bay RKC mature females

- Distribution remains near time series average



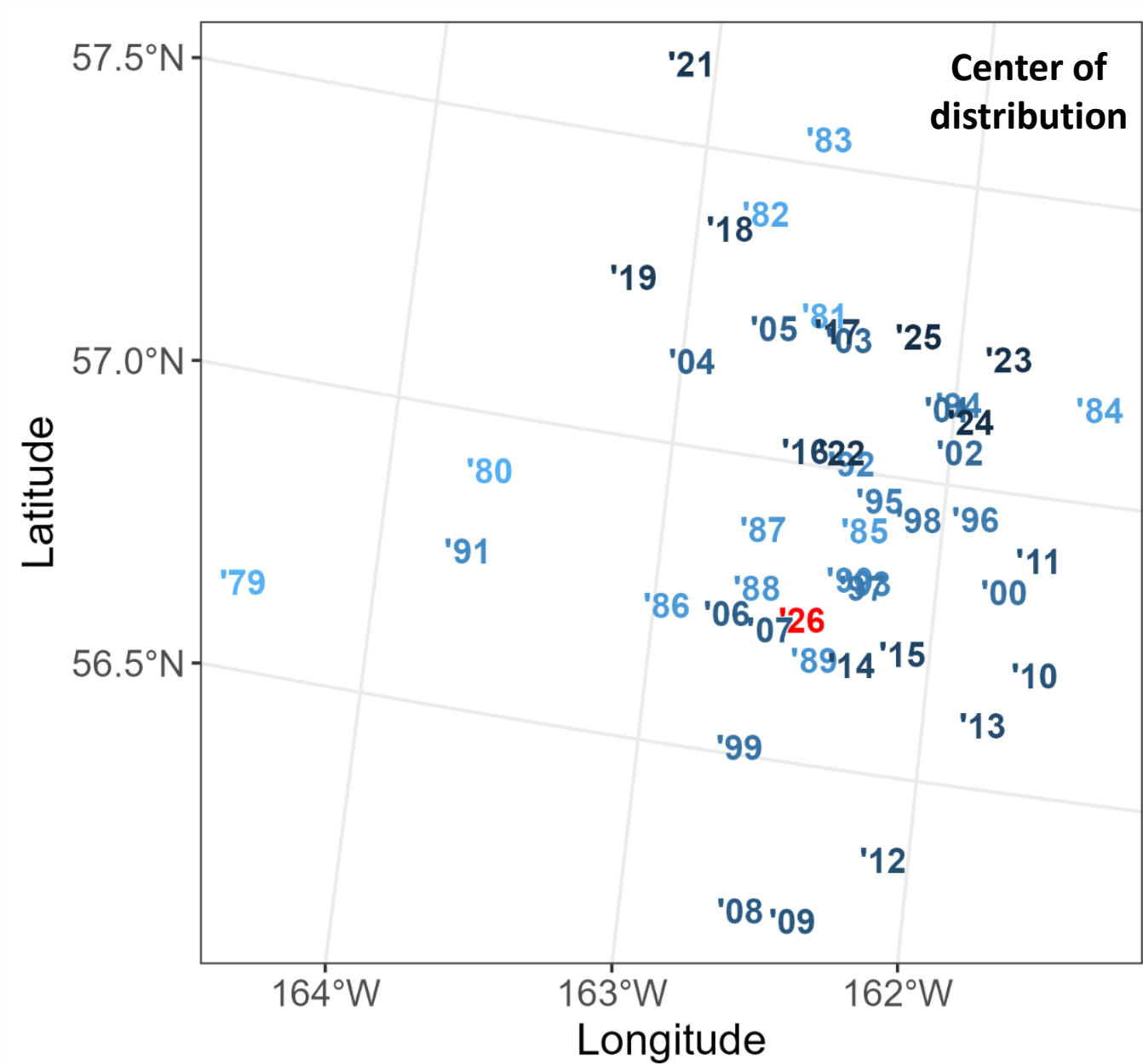
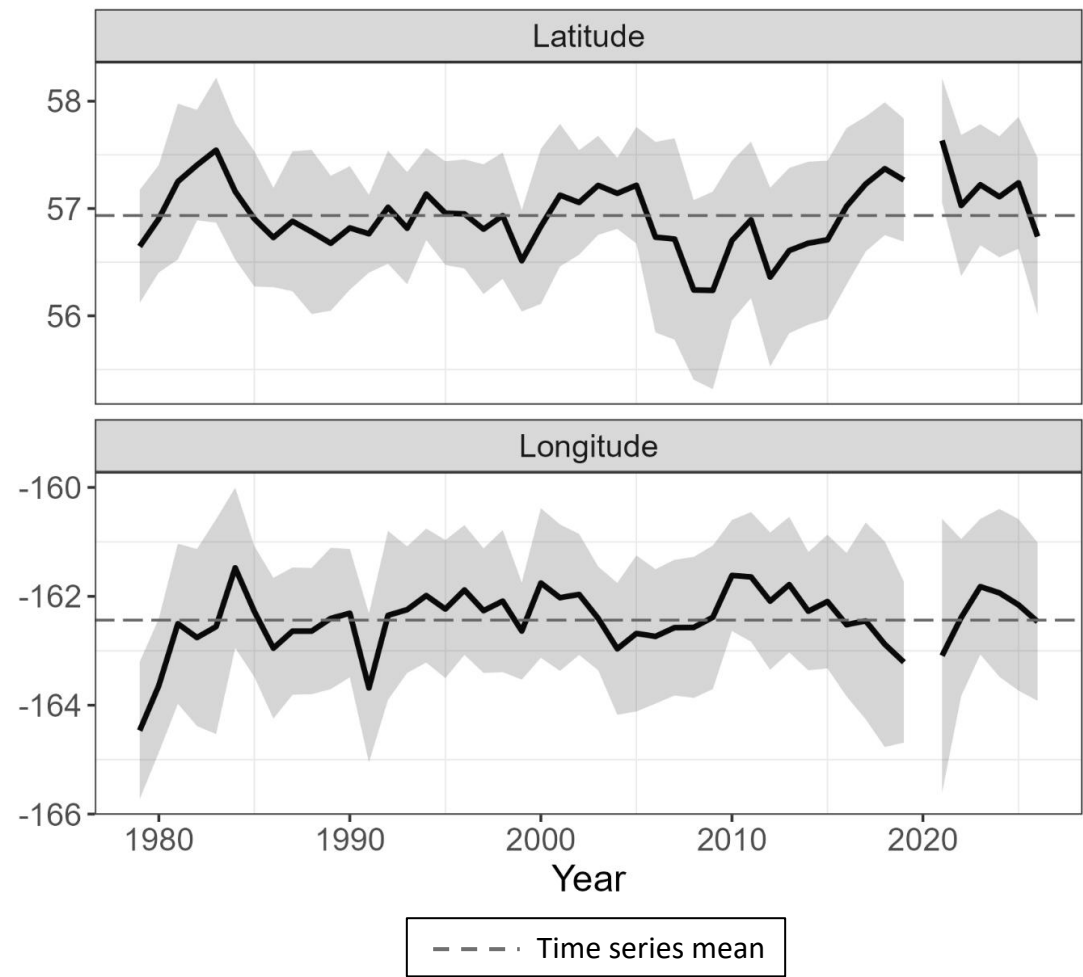
RKC legal males

- Distribution remains focused in southeastern Bristol Bay with northwest extensions into the north district



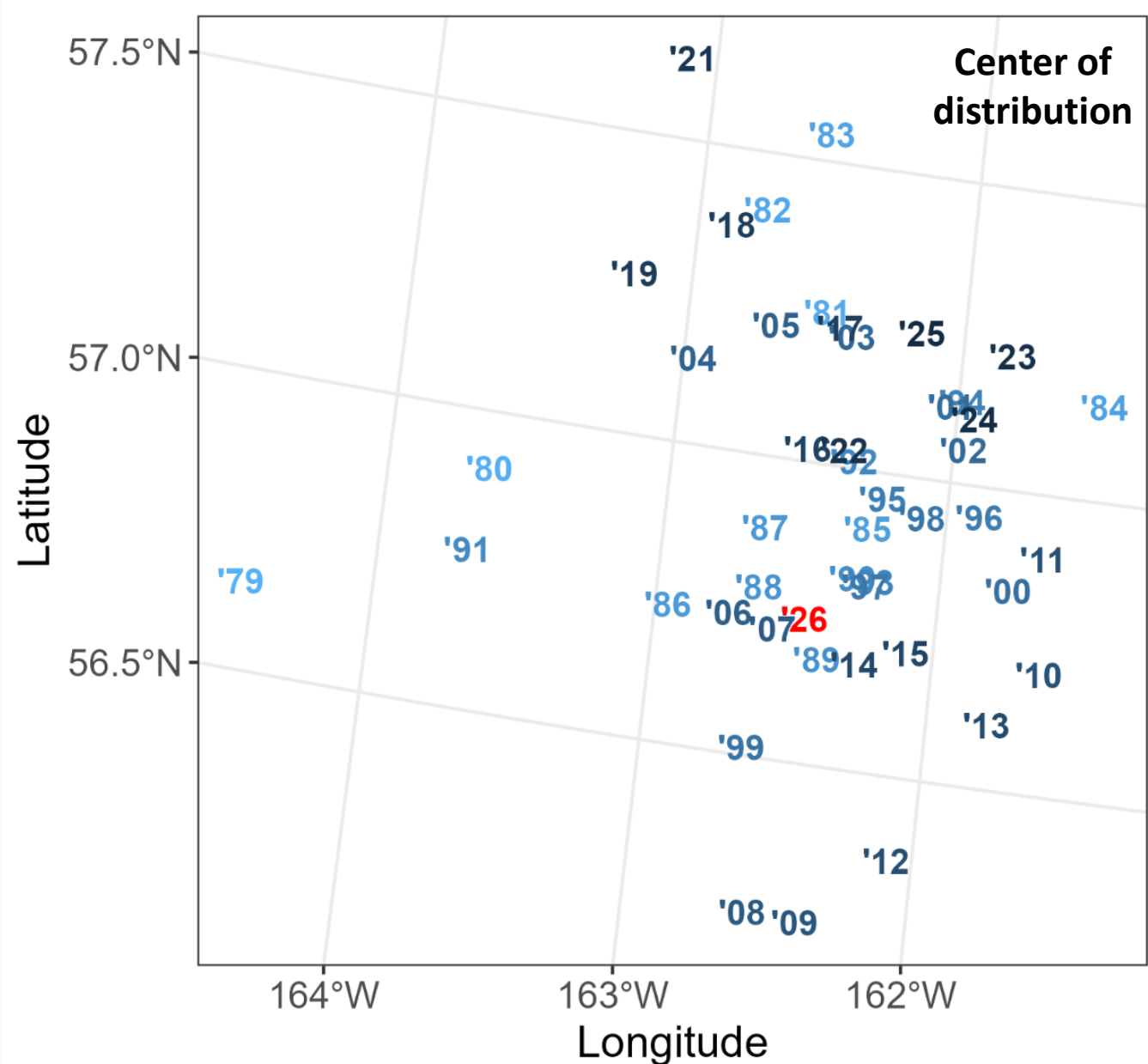
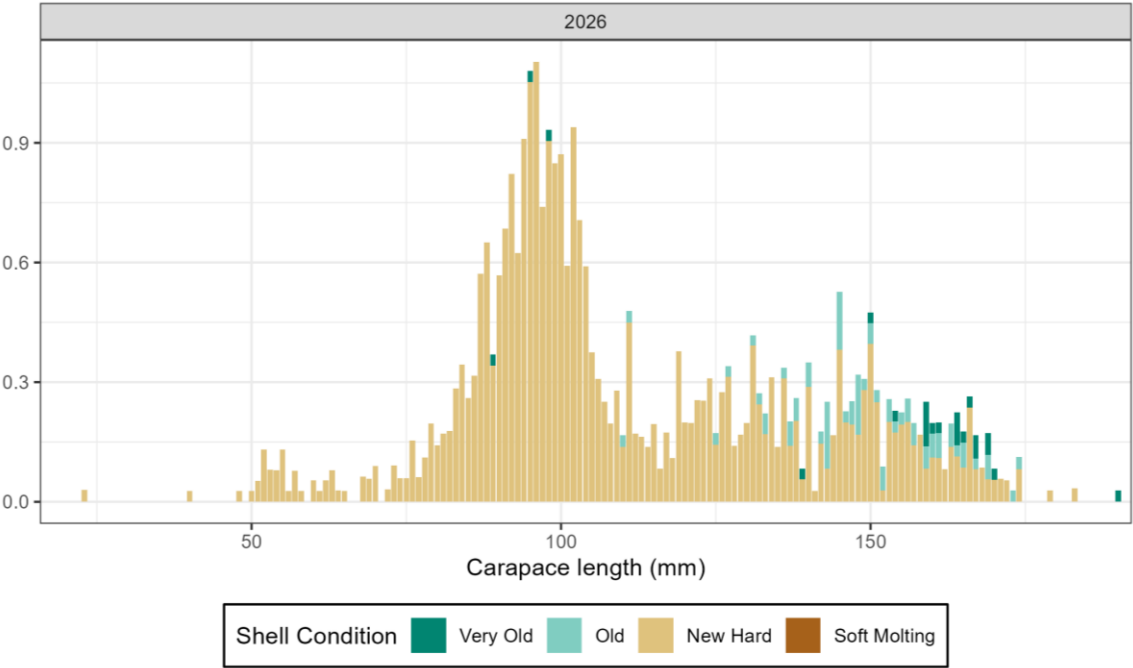
Bristol Bay RKC legal males

- Distribution remains near time series average

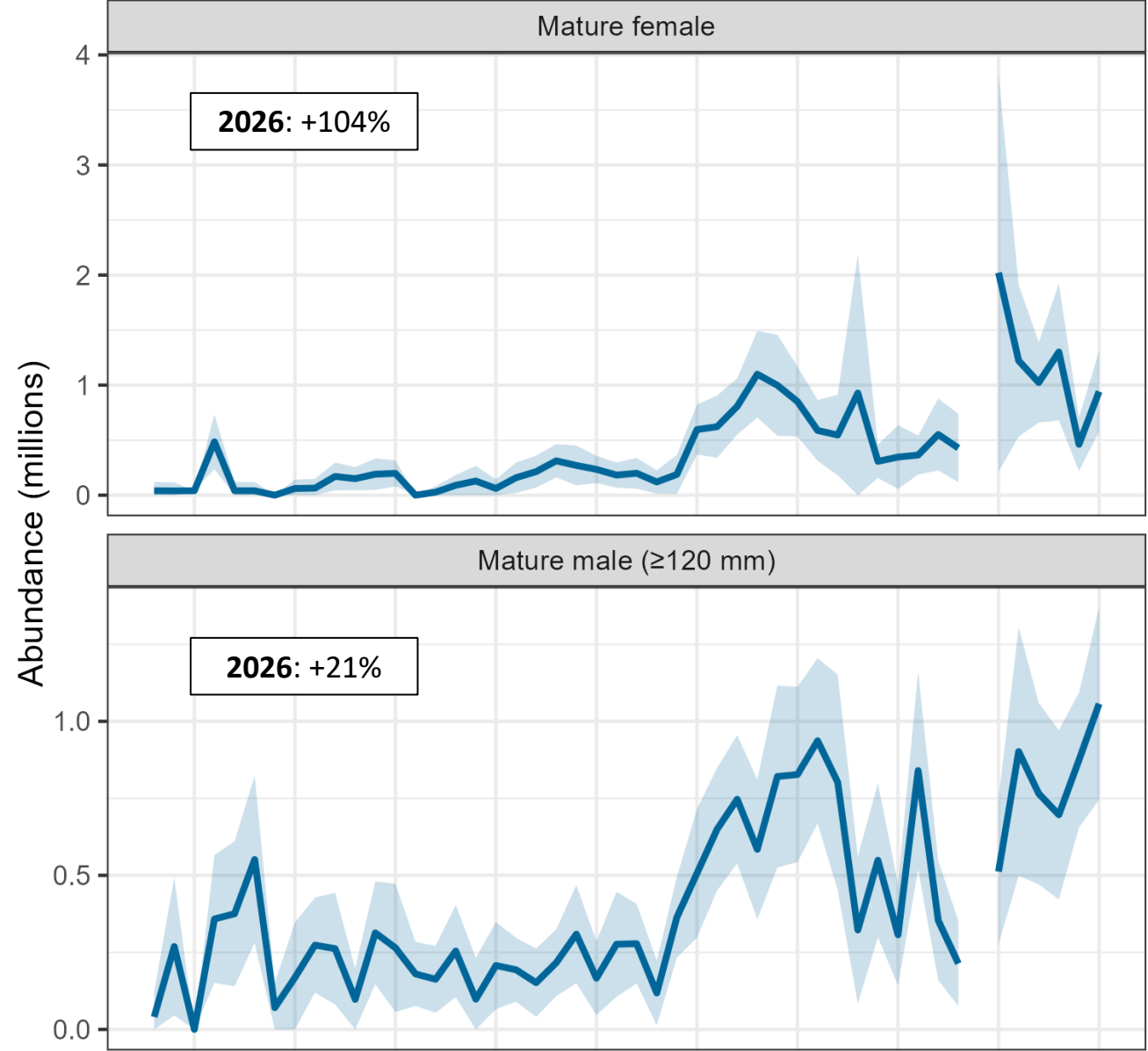


Bristol Bay RKC legal males

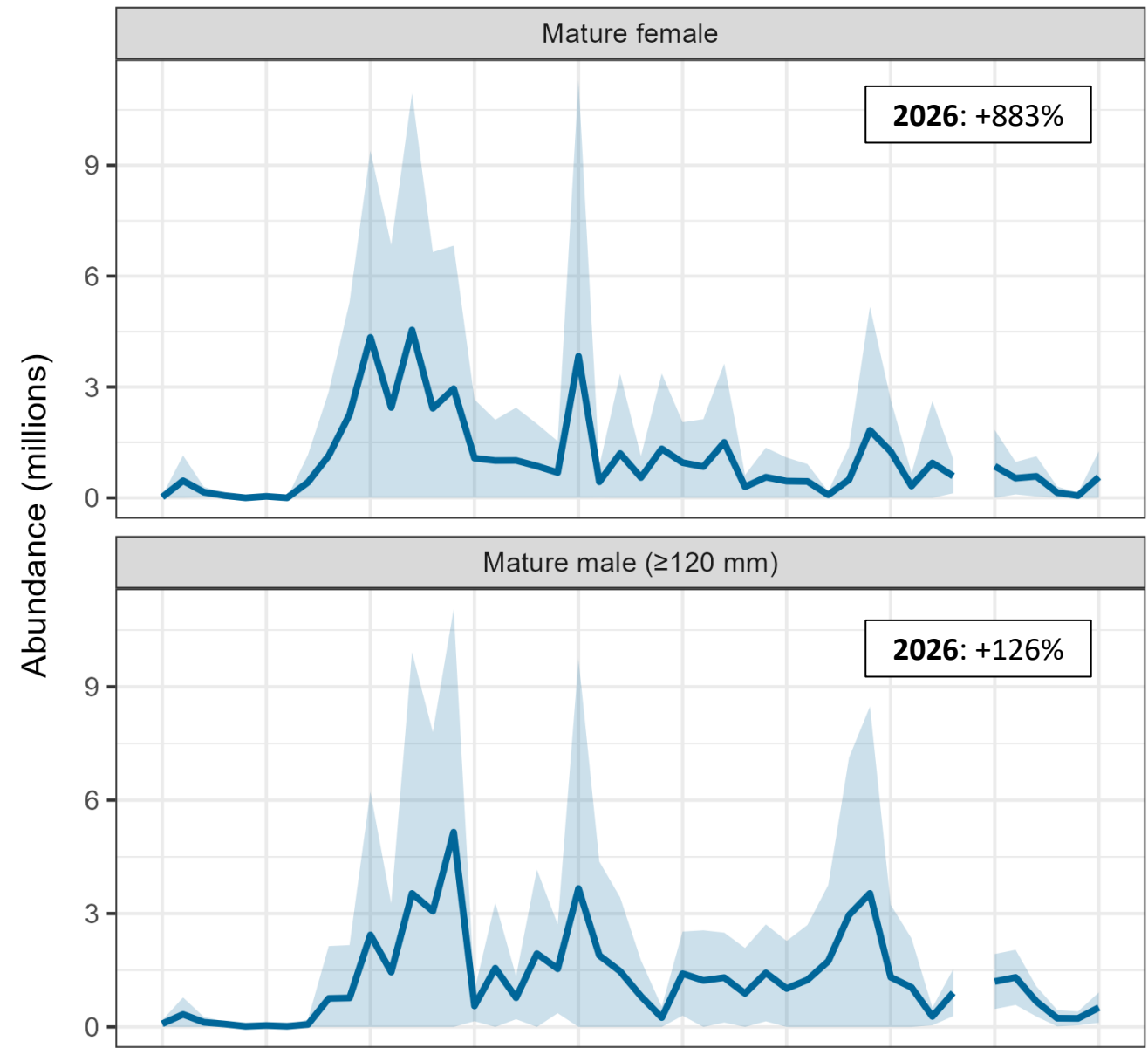
- 73% of legal Bristol Bay RKC were newshell in 2026



Northern district RKC

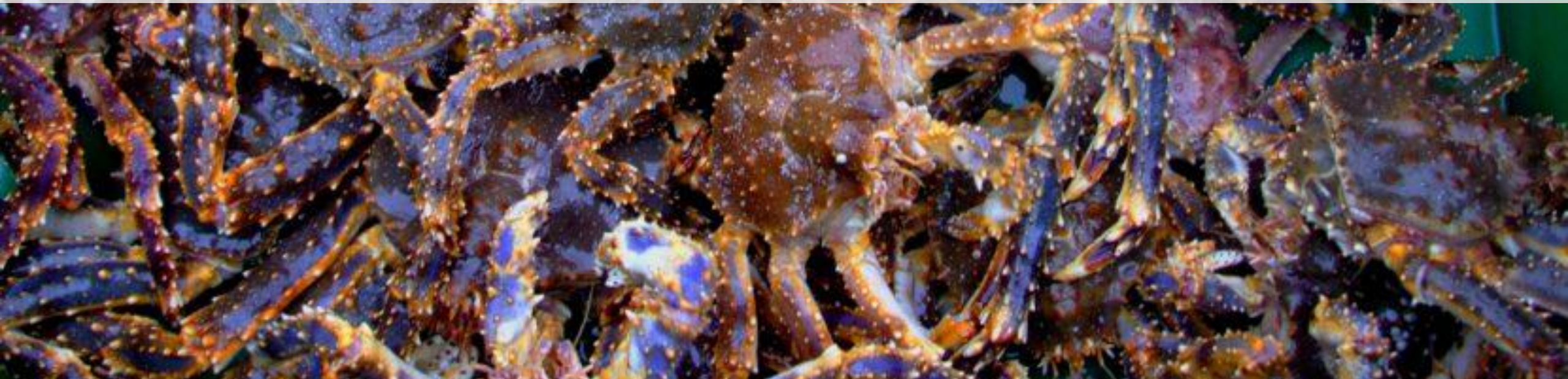


Pribilof Islands RKC



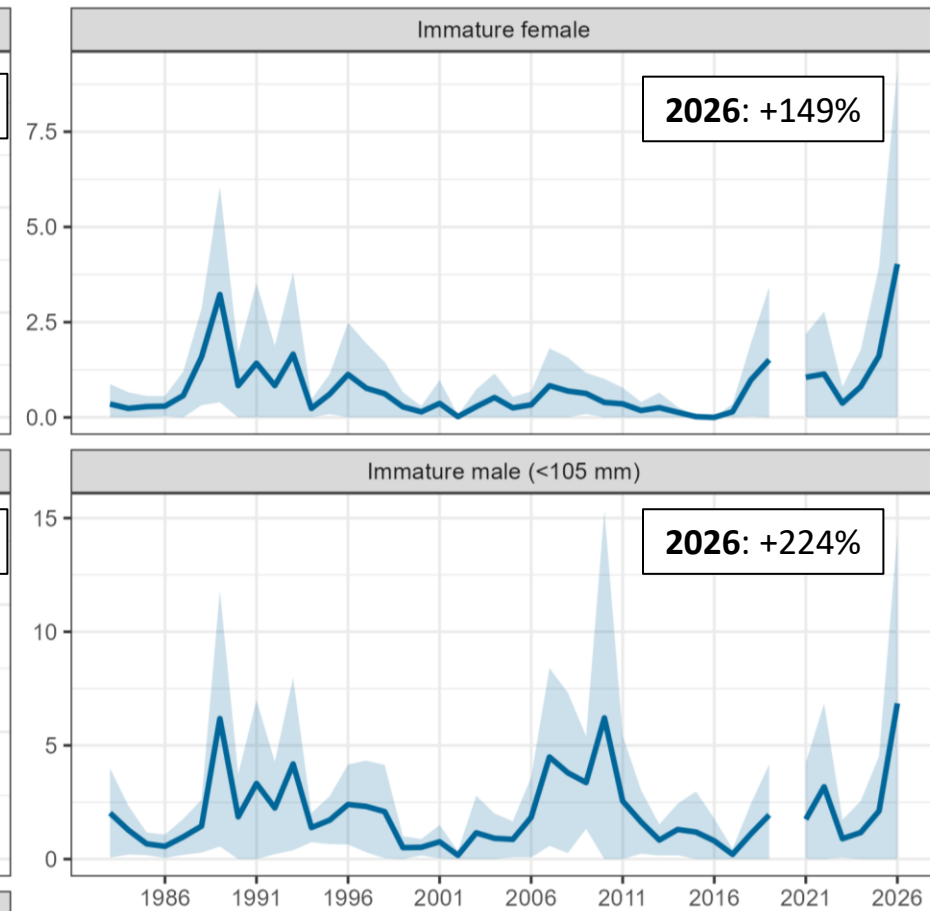
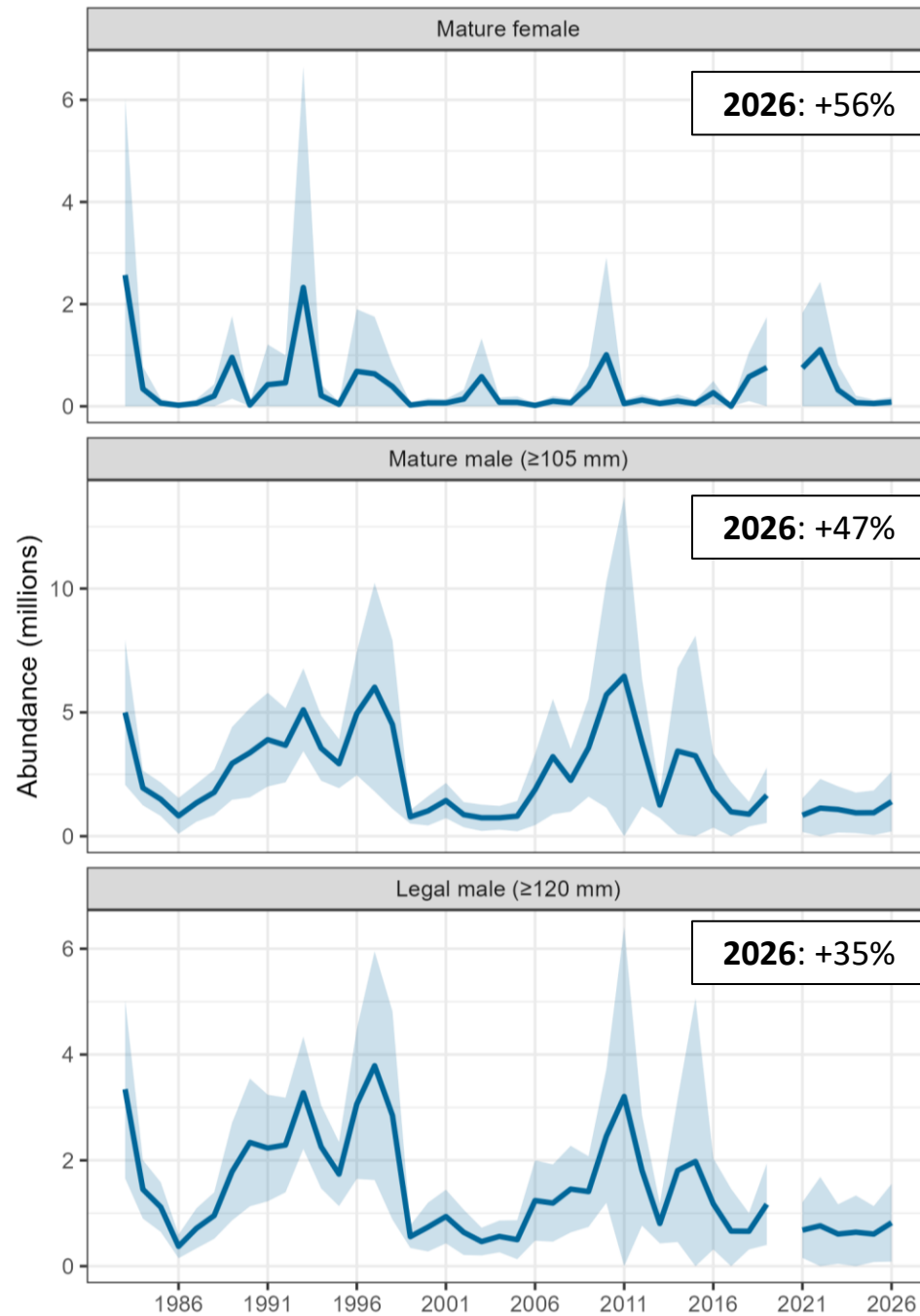


Blue King Crab



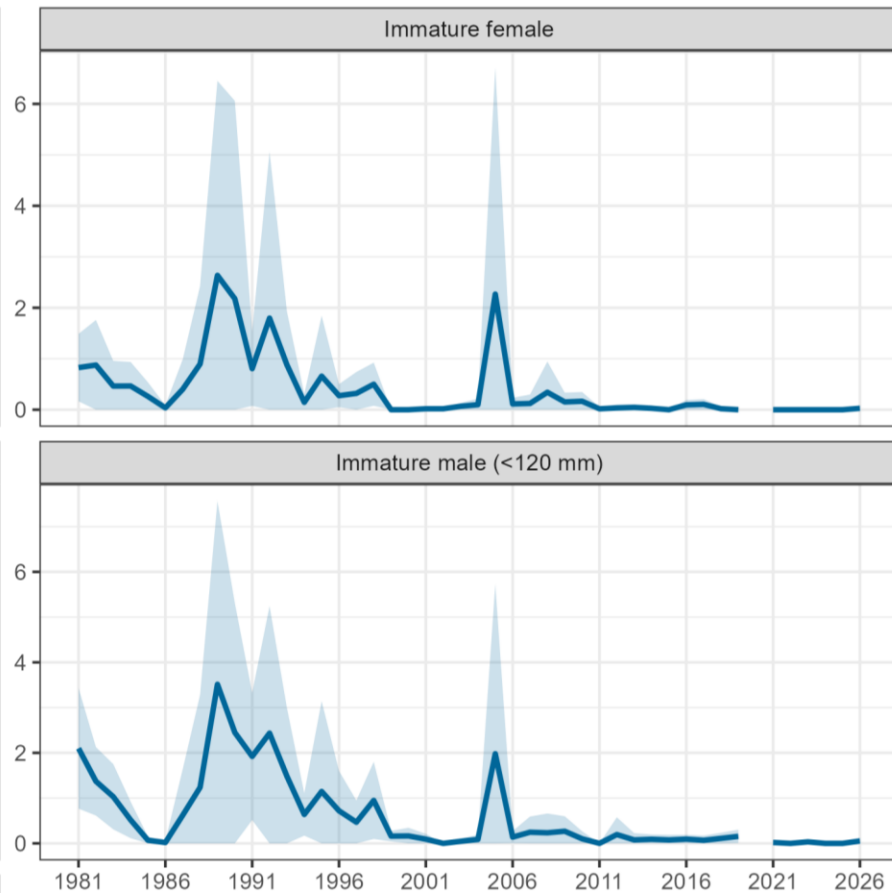
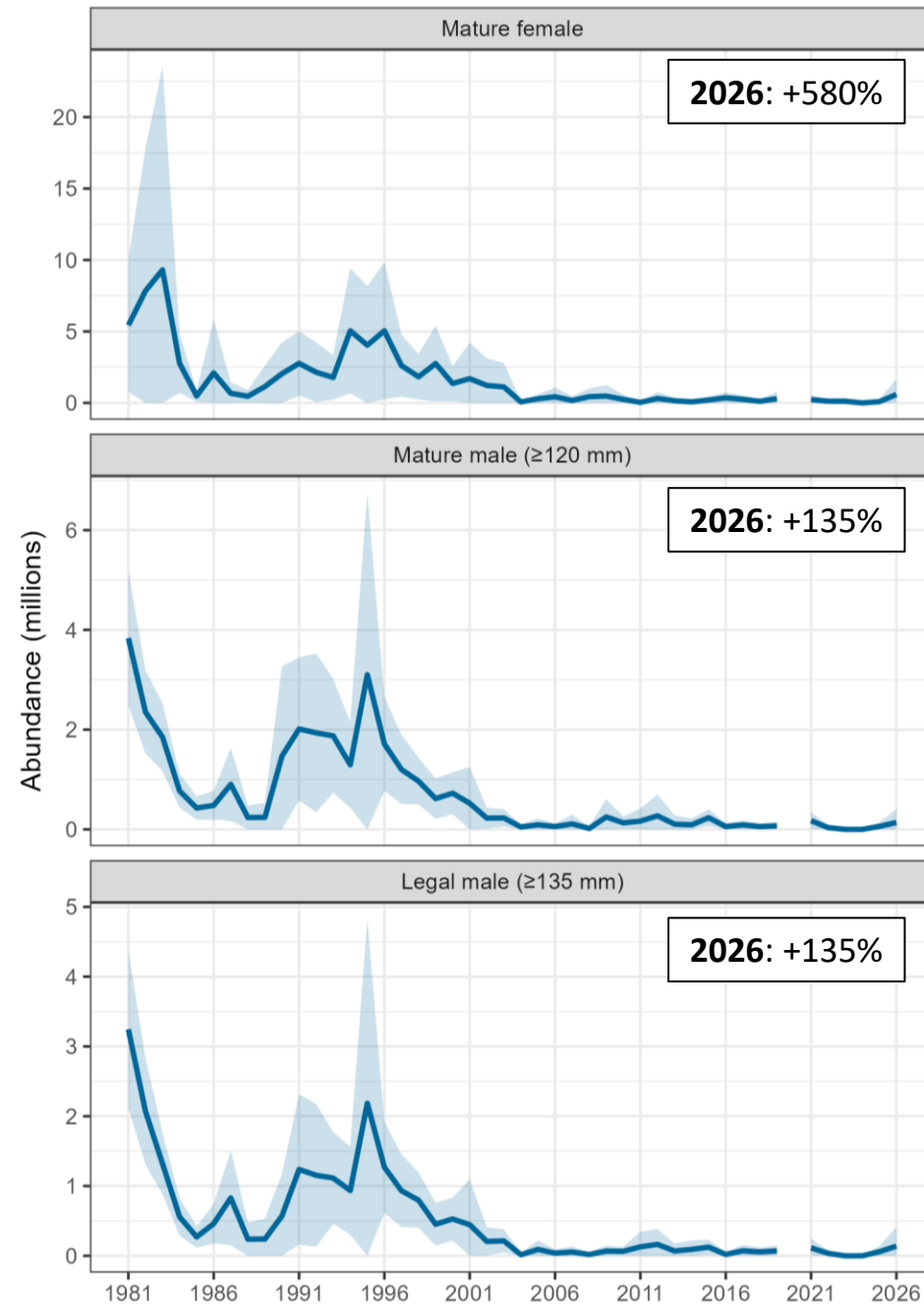
St. Matthew Island BKC

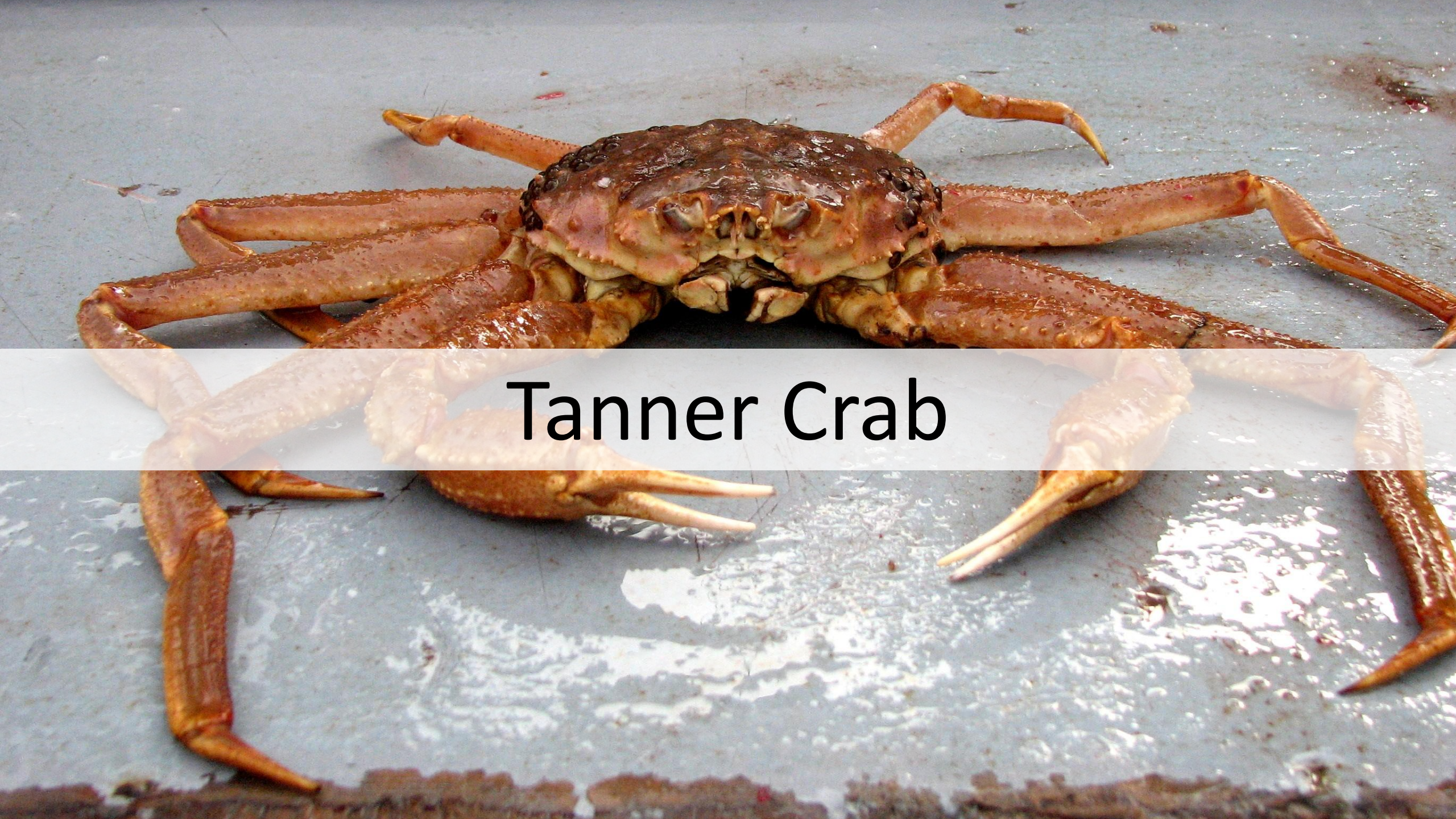
- Stable low abundance of mature/legal males
- Continued increases in immature crab with the highest values in the time series



Pribilof Islands BKC

- Catches were the highest observed in recent years across categories, but this was largely caused by one high catch station east of St. Paul

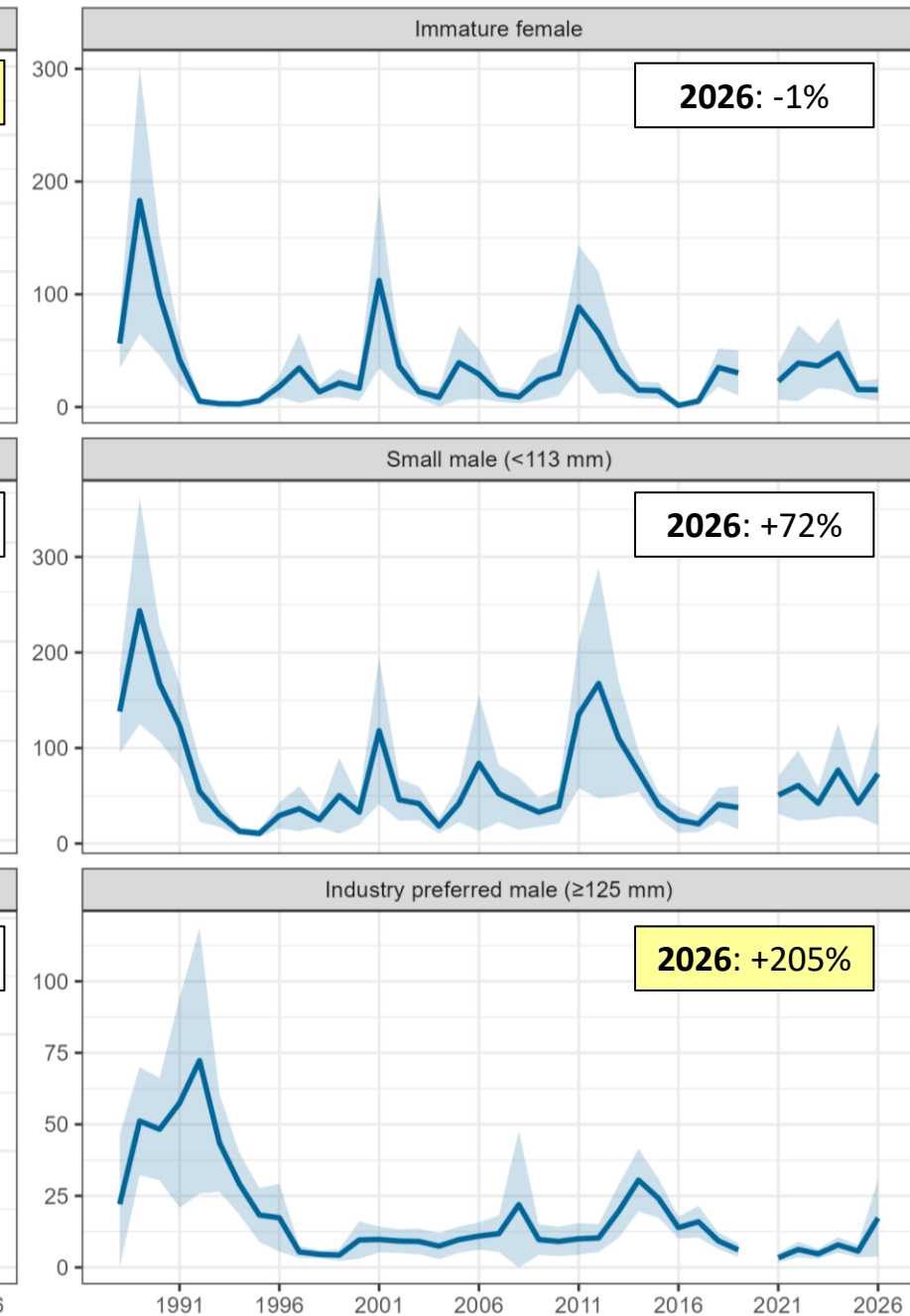
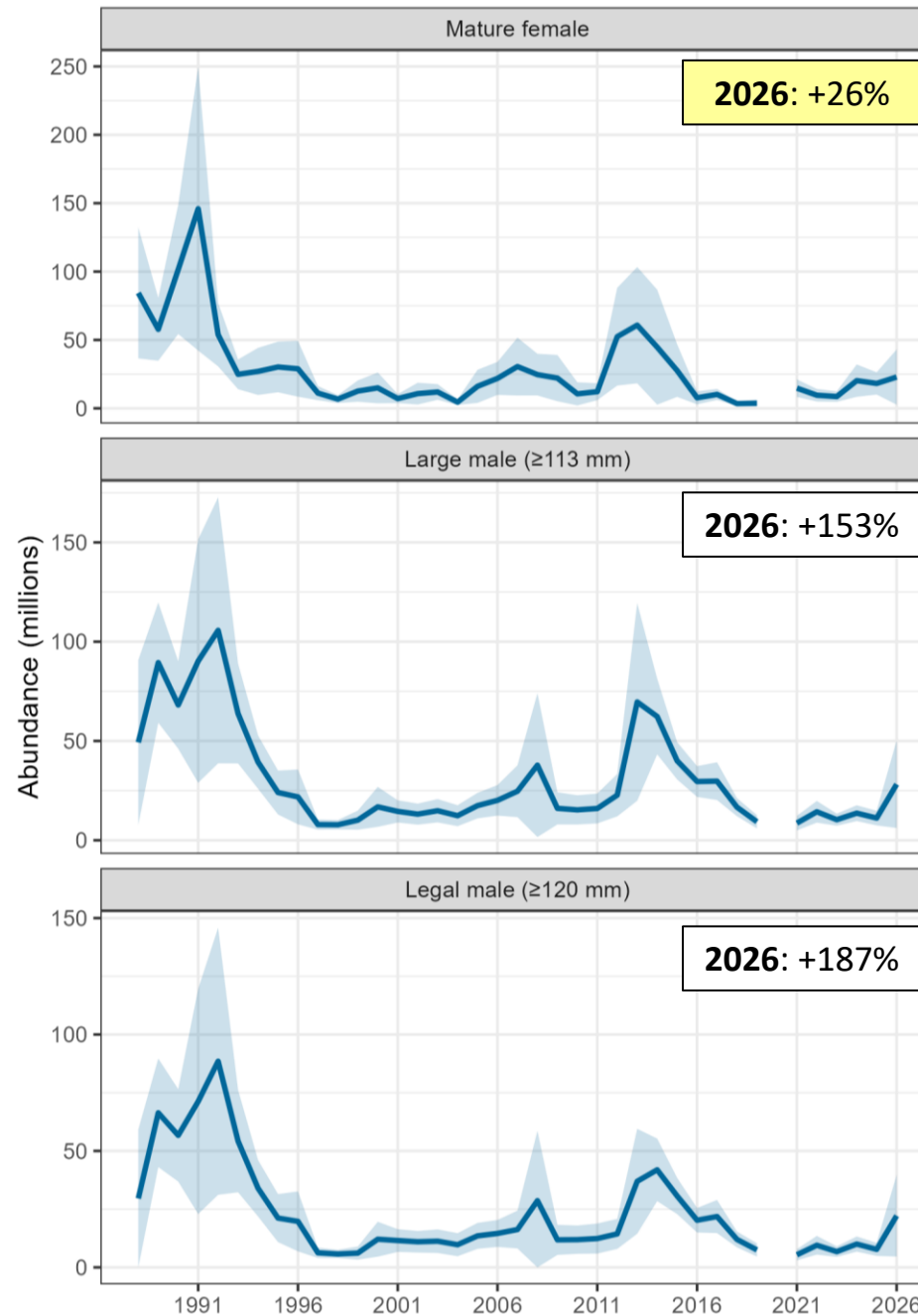




Tanner Crab

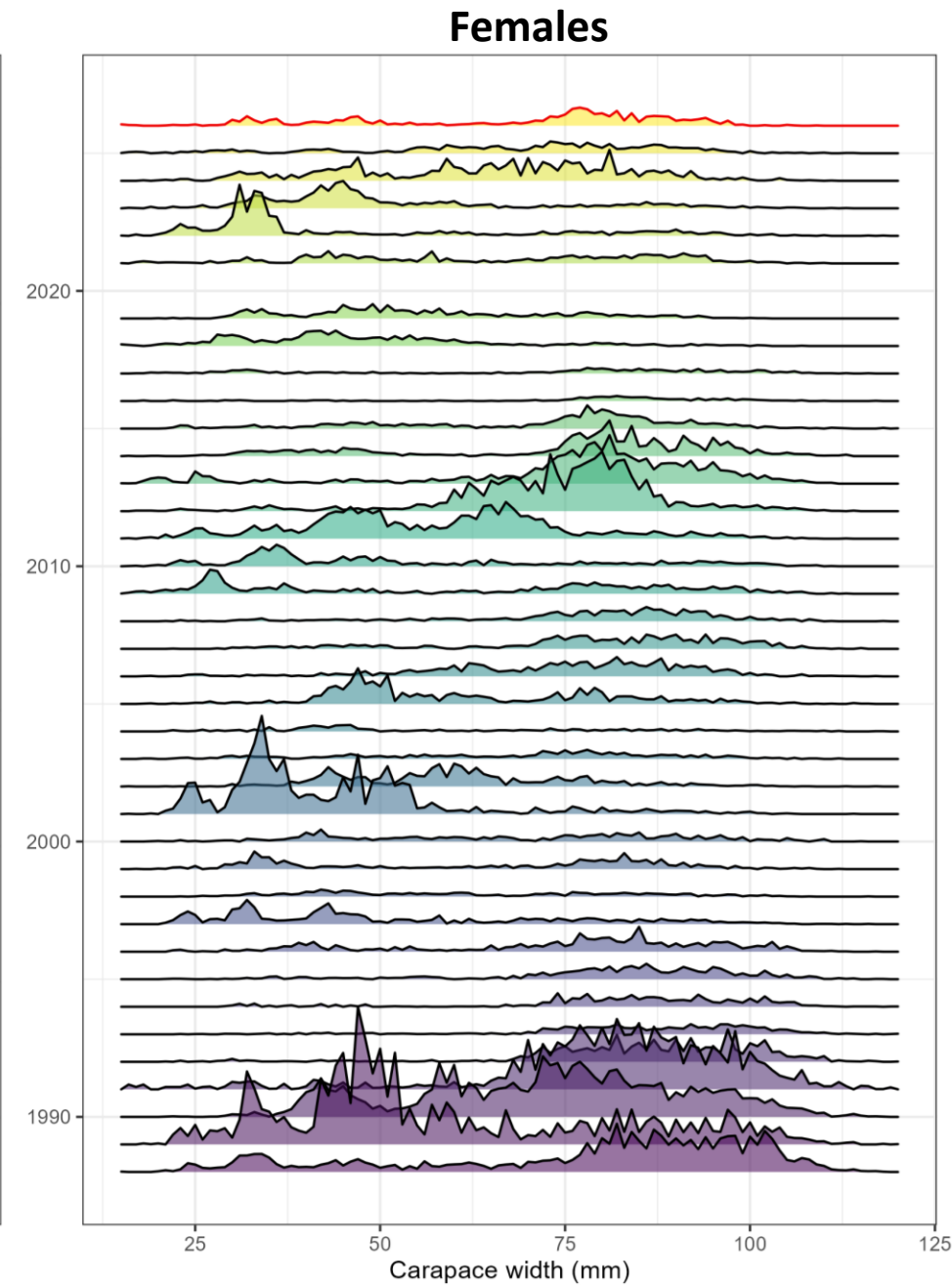
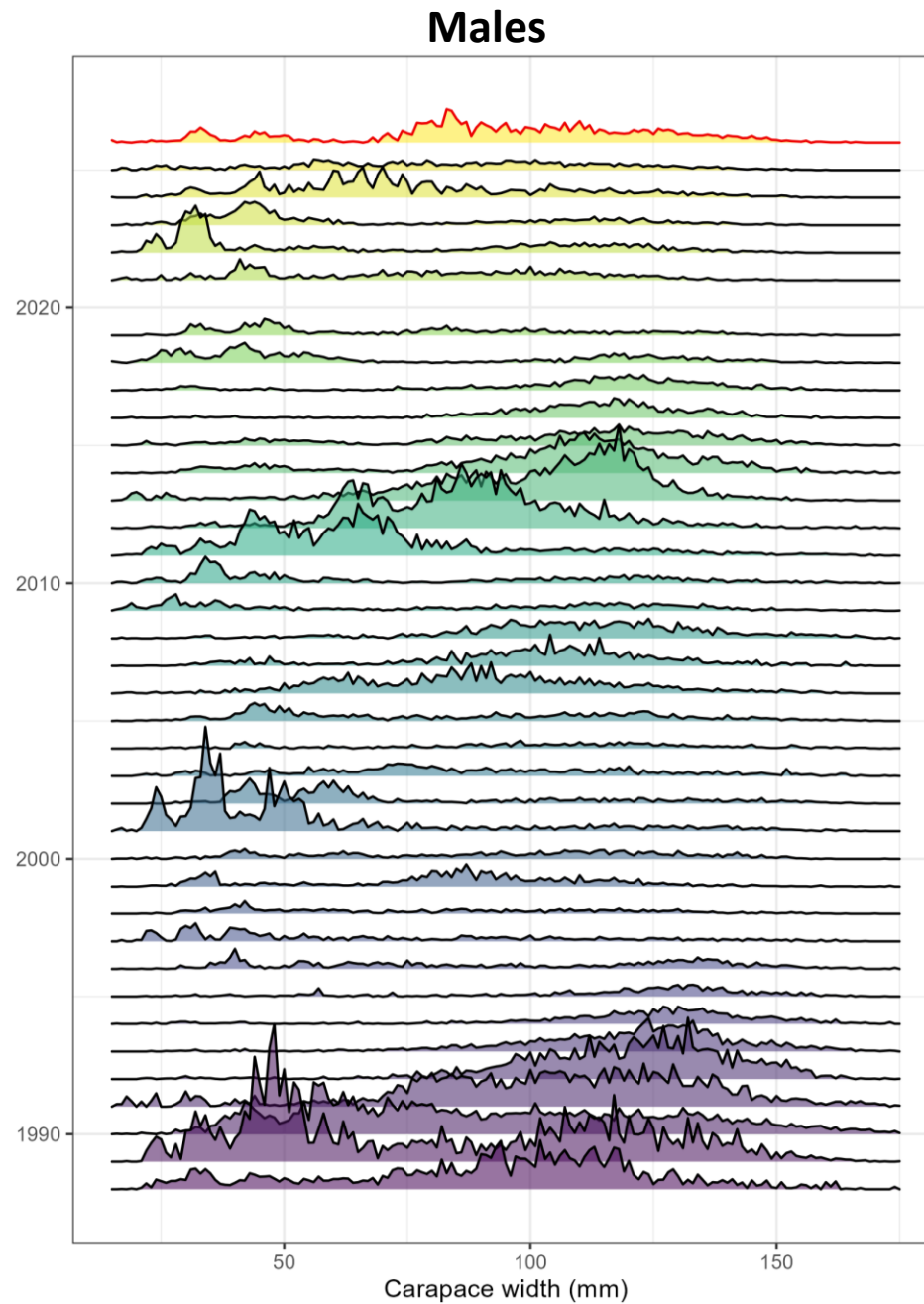
Tanner crab east of 166°W

- Increases in large males, with largest increases occurring for legal and industry preferred sizes
- Smaller increases for mature females and small males



Tanner crab east of 166°W

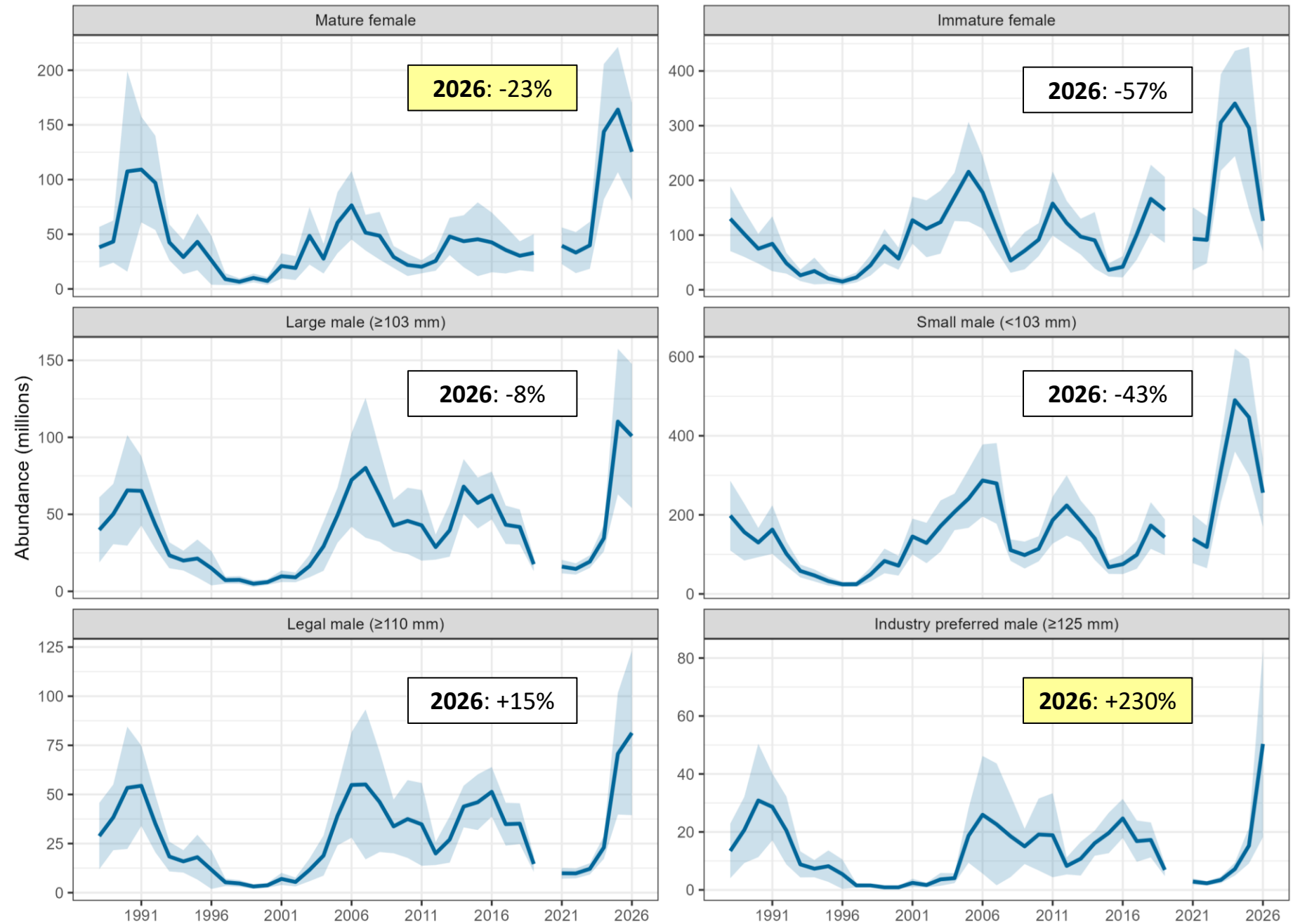
- Increased frequency in larger size classes relative to last year
- Some smaller size classes (<50 mm) appearing in 2026



Tanner crab

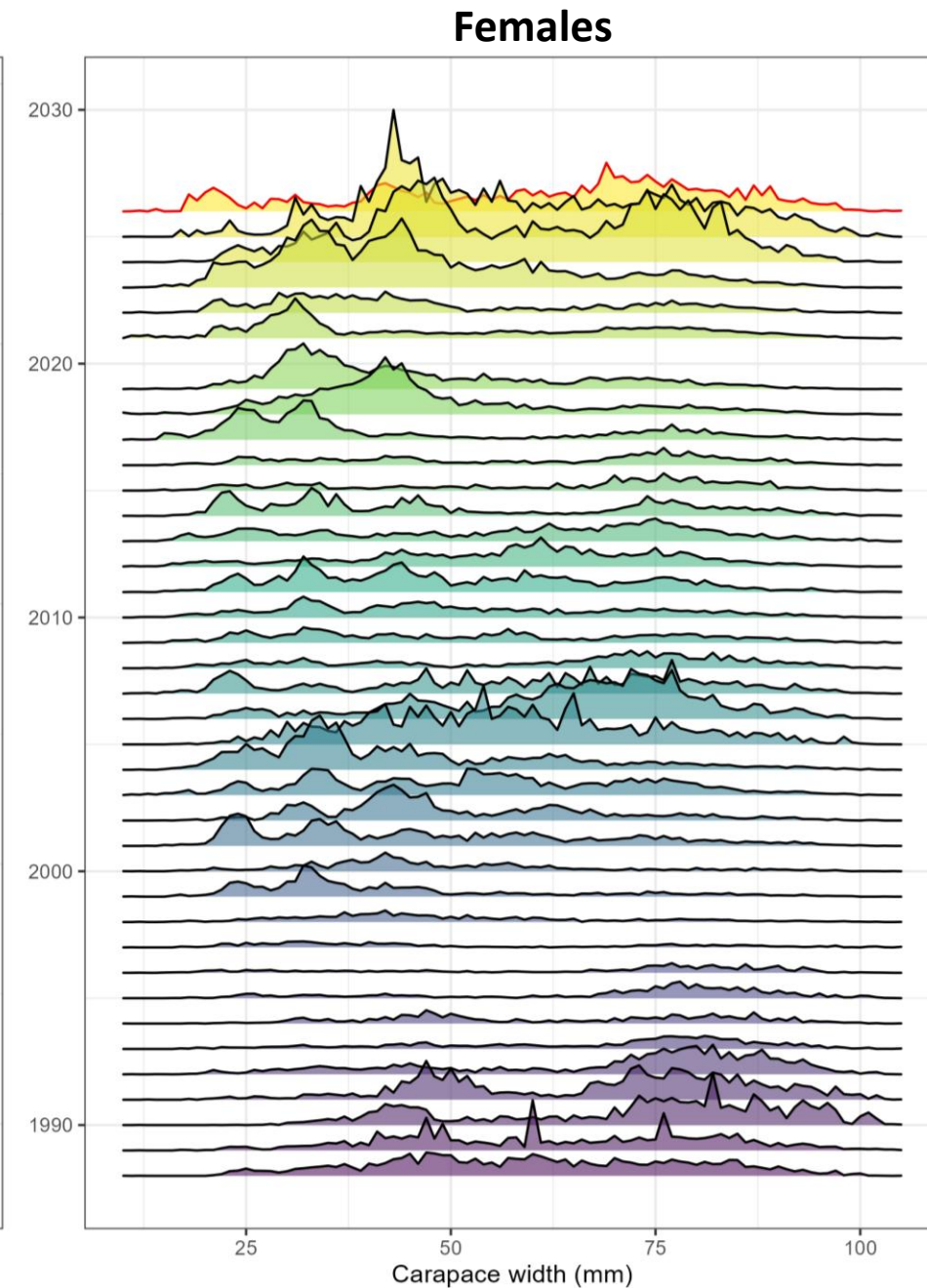
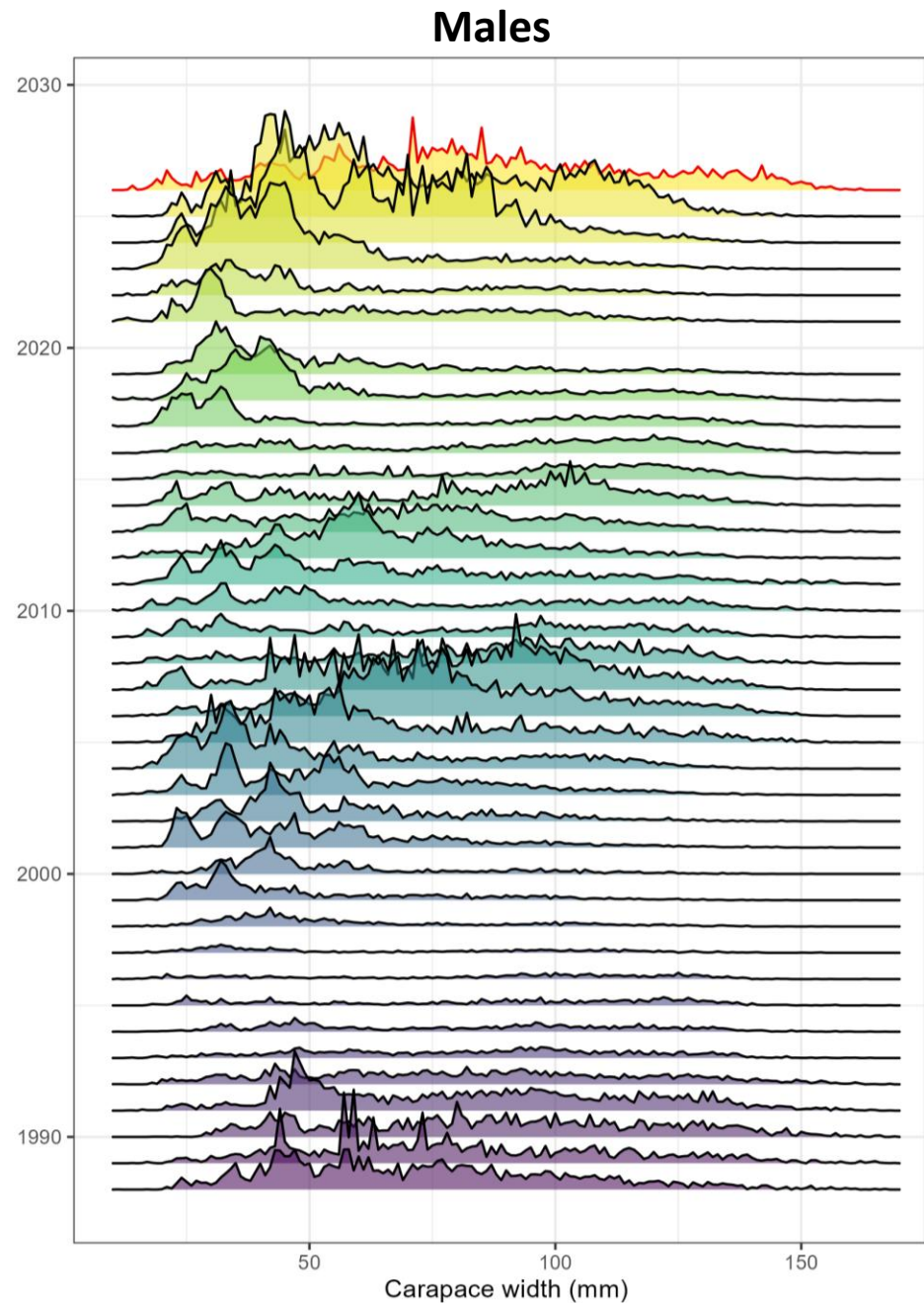
west of 166°W

- Record number of legal and industry preferred males
- Sustained high abundance of mature females
- Large declines in juveniles after record highs



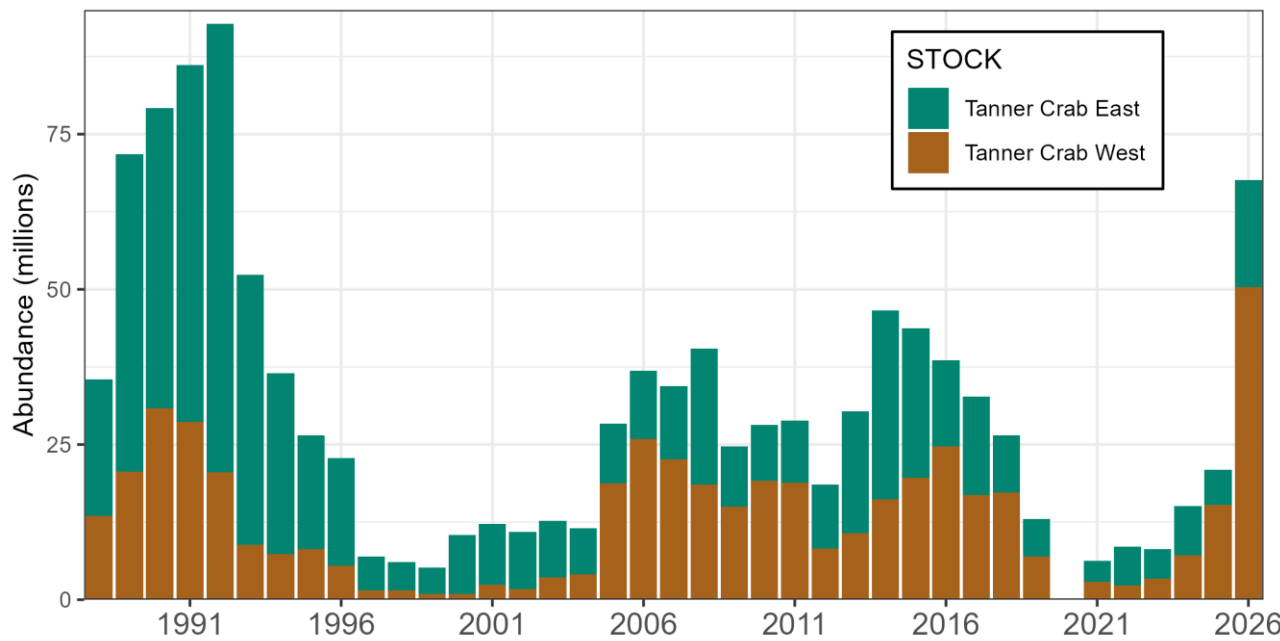
Tanner crab west of 166°W

- Record high frequency of males at large size classes and high frequency at small size classes
- Fewer small crab (~30-50 mm CW)

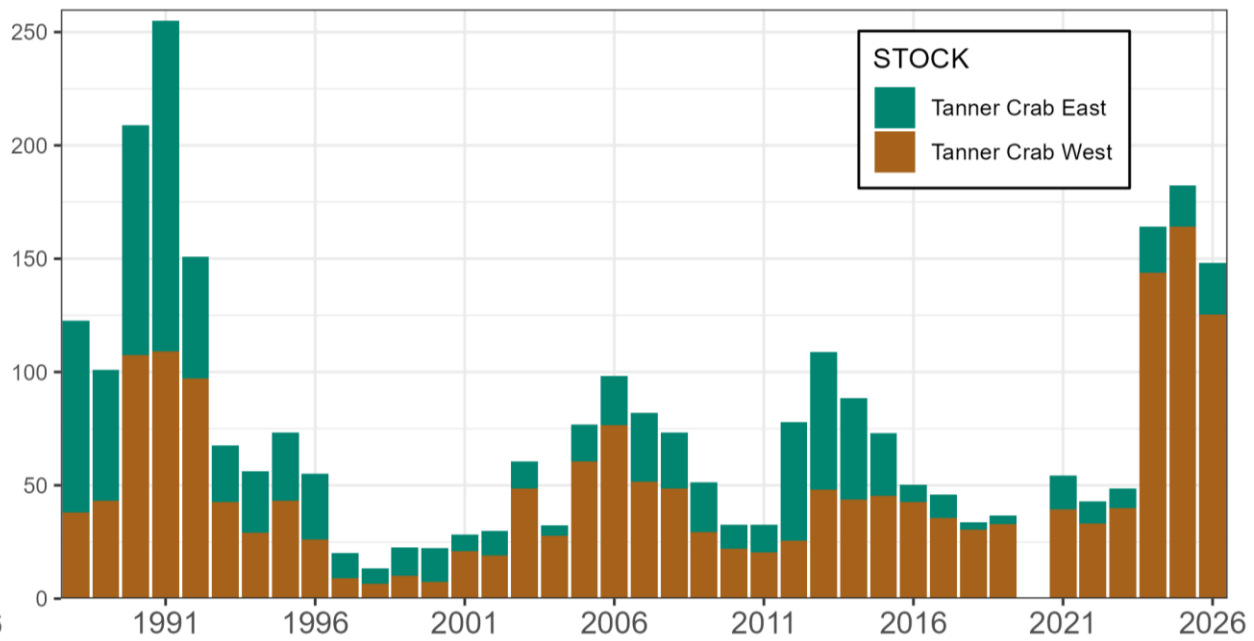


Tanner crab

Industry preferred males



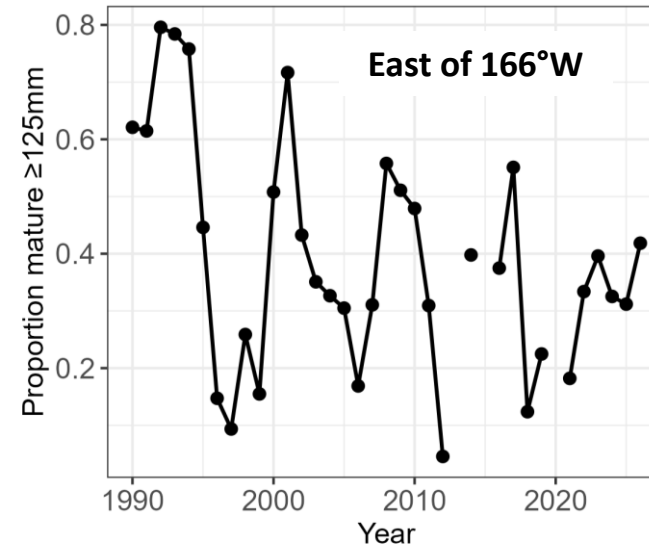
Mature females



Tanner crab newshell males

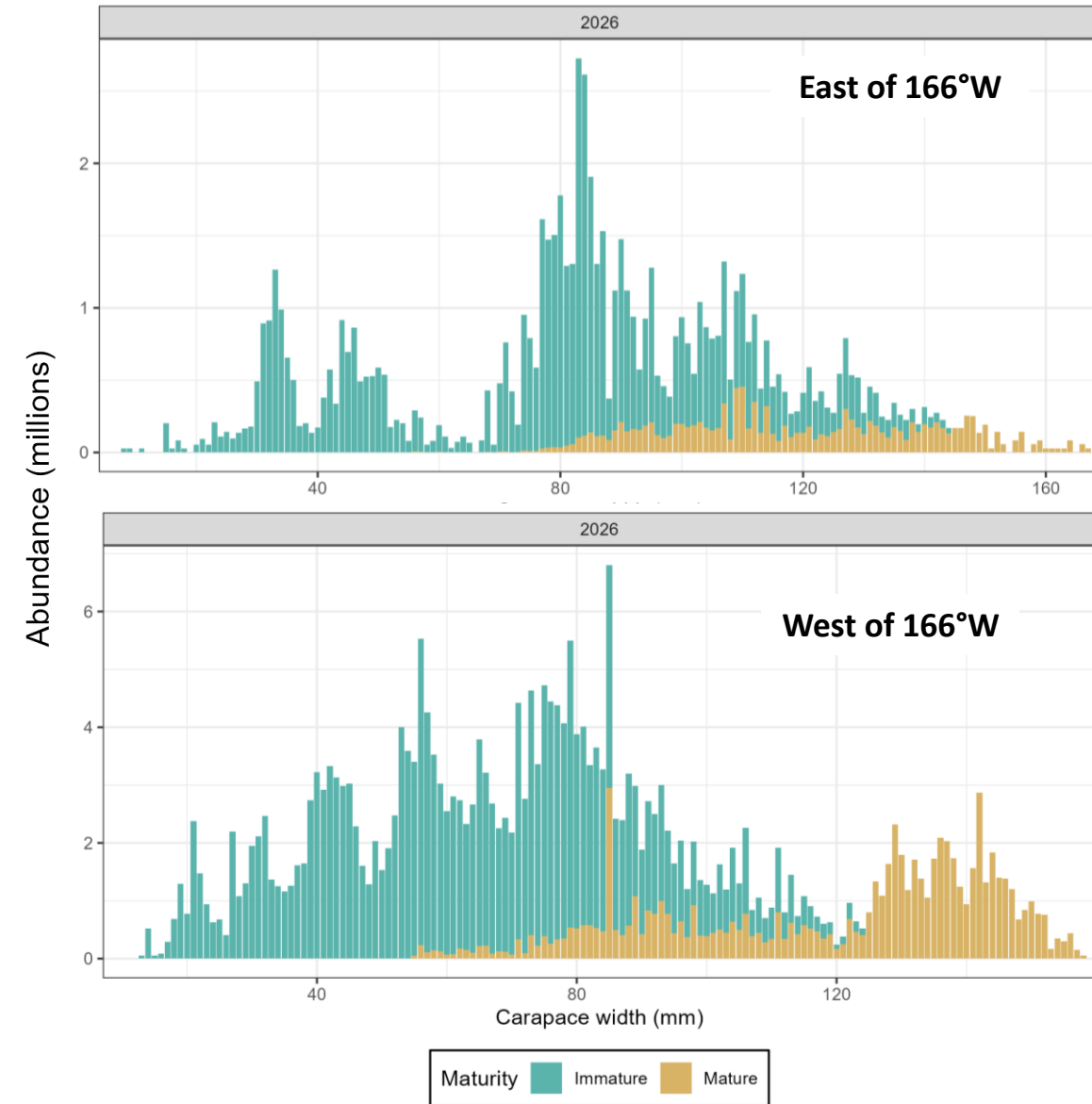
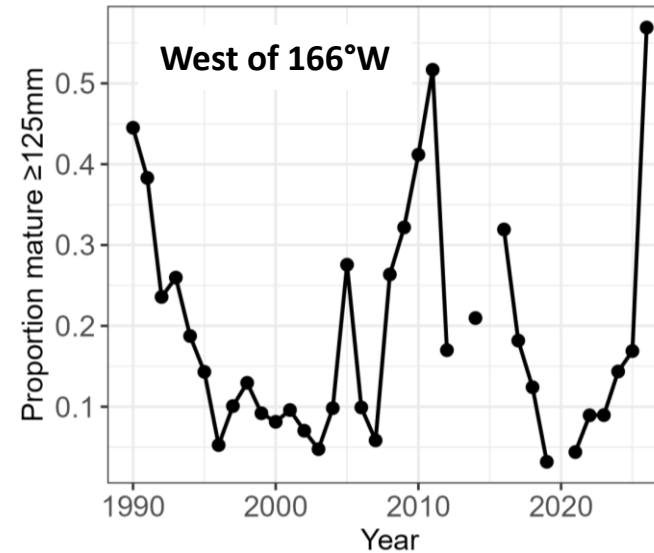
East of 166°W

- 42% that matured were of industry preferred size



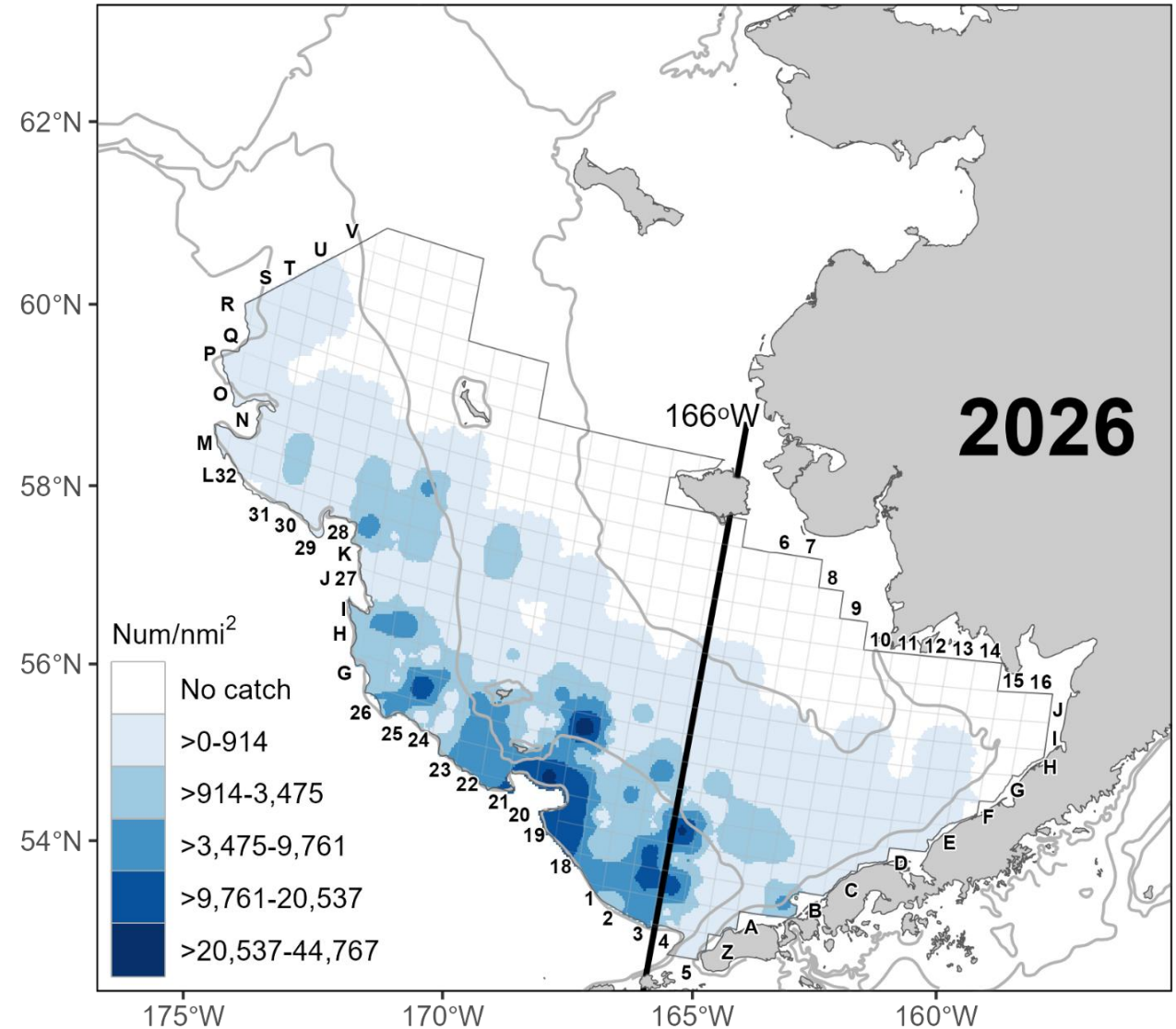
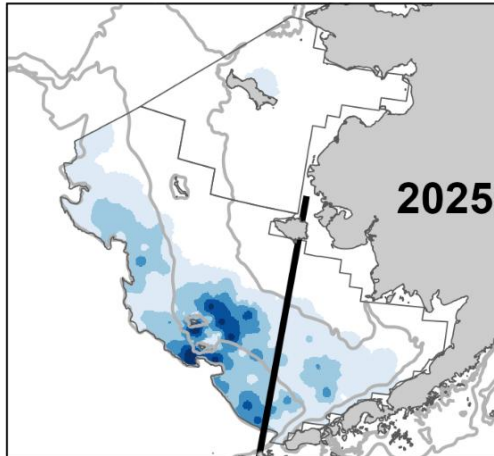
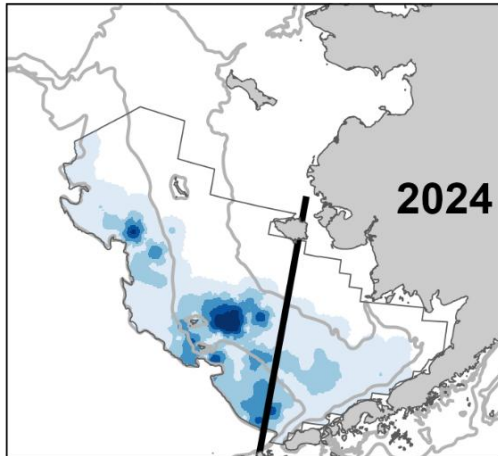
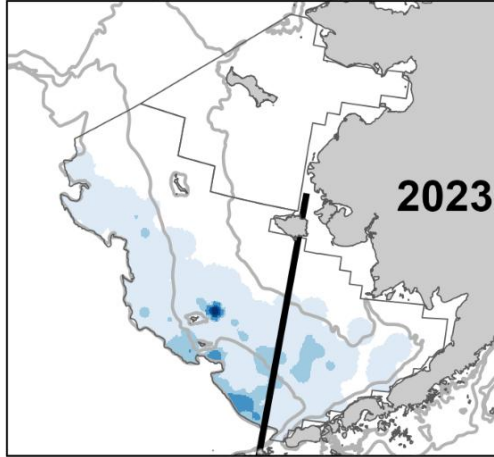
West of 166°W

- West of 166°W, 57% that matured were of industry preferred size, the highest in the time series



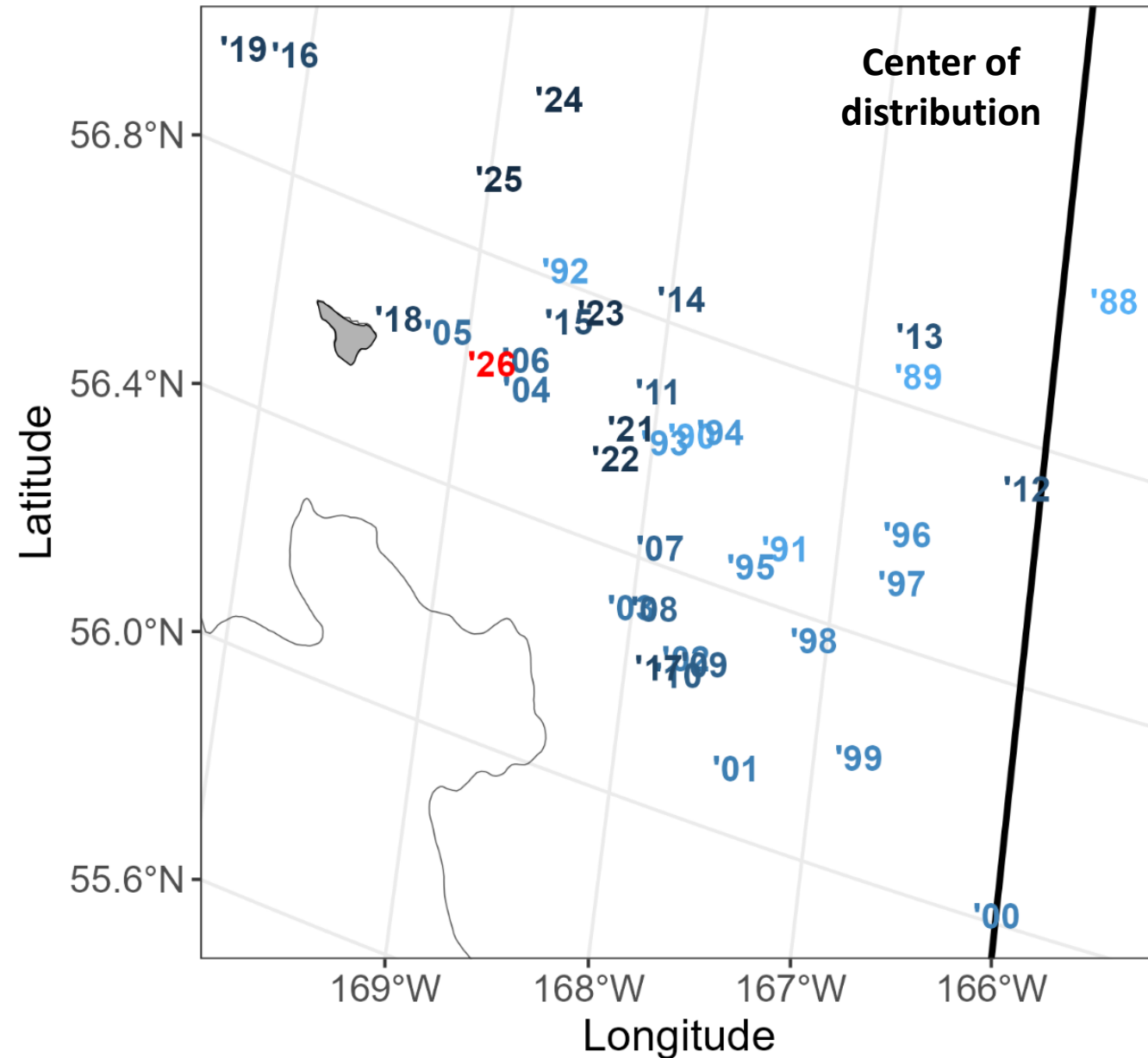
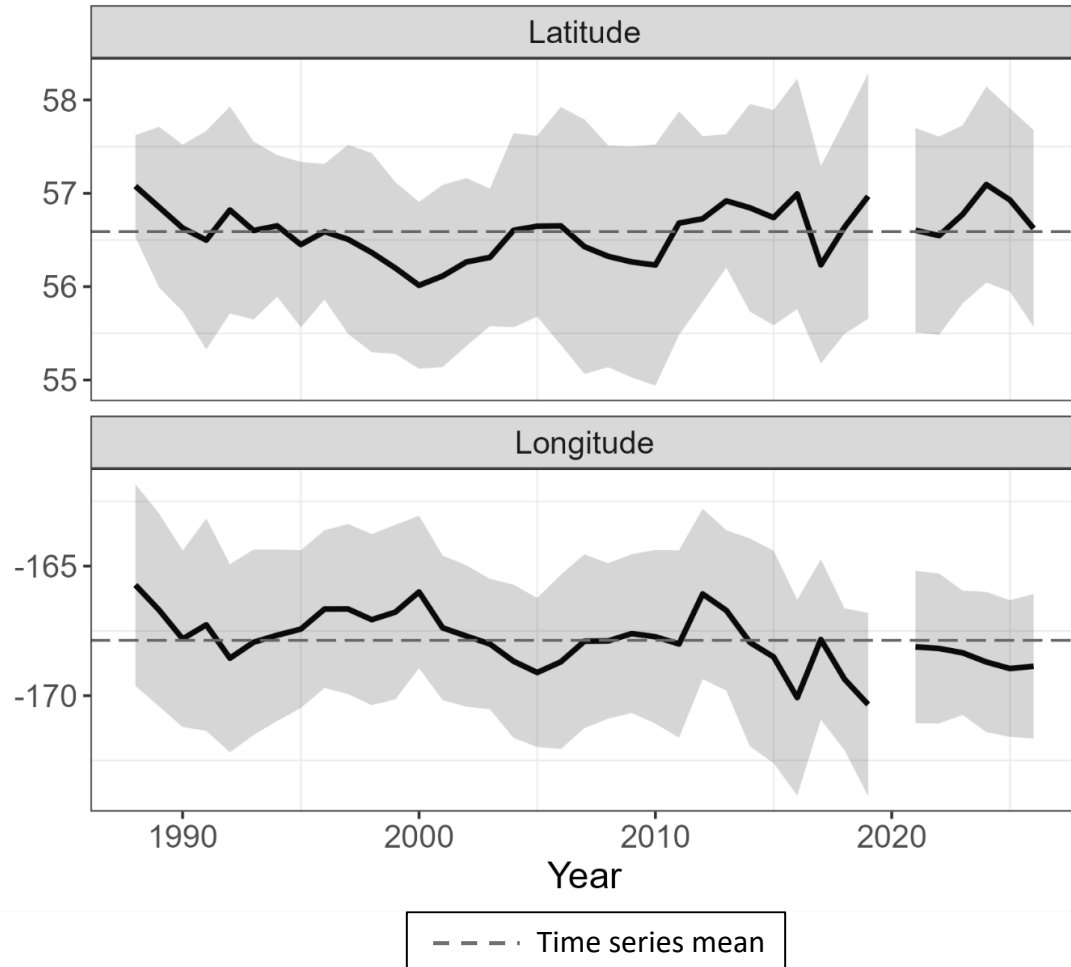
Tanner crab mature females

- Distribution hotspots remain to the east-southeast of the Pribilof Islands



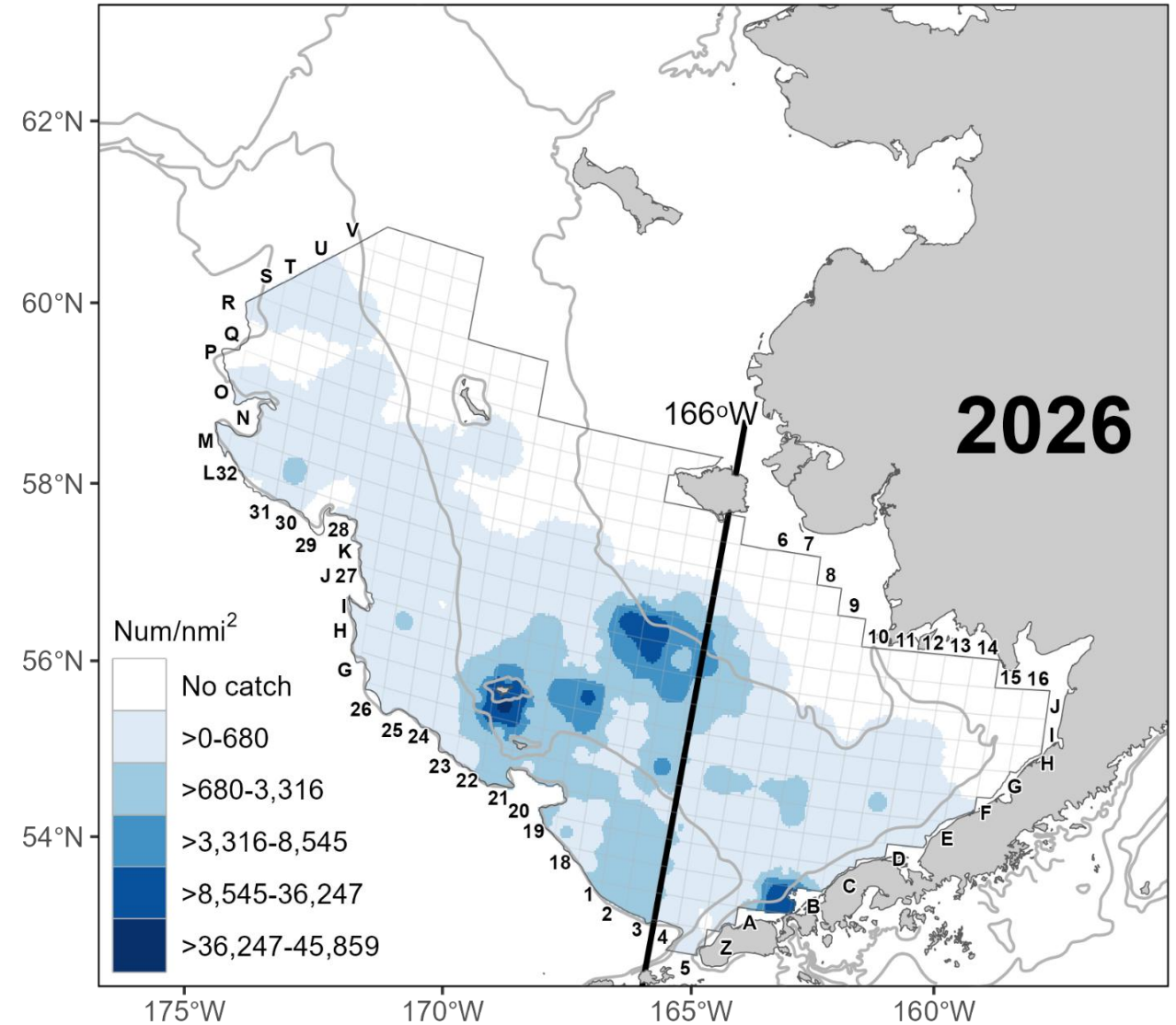
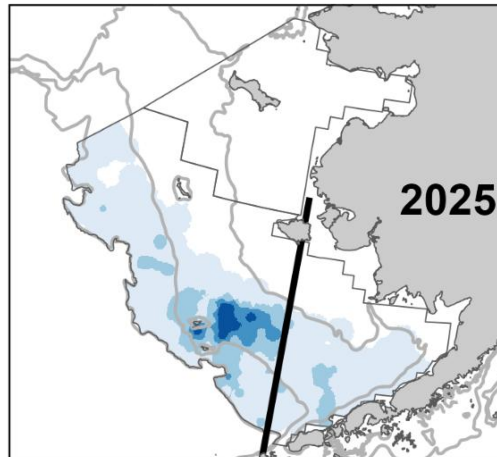
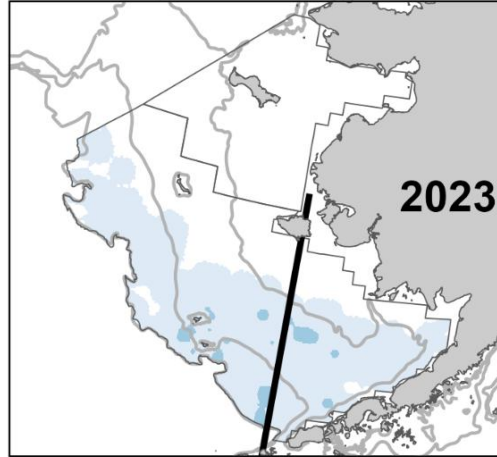
Tanner crab mature females

- Distribution remains near time series average



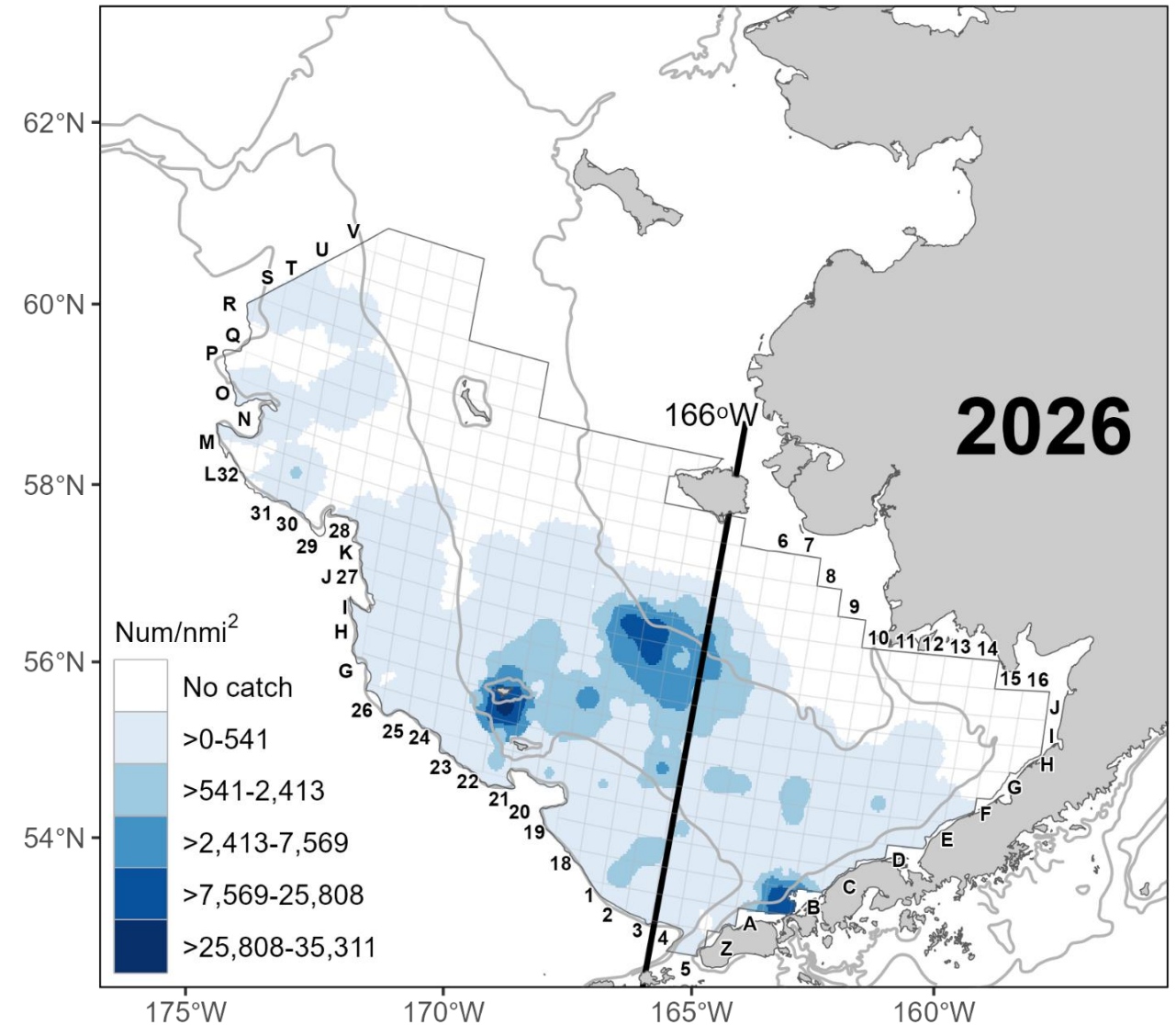
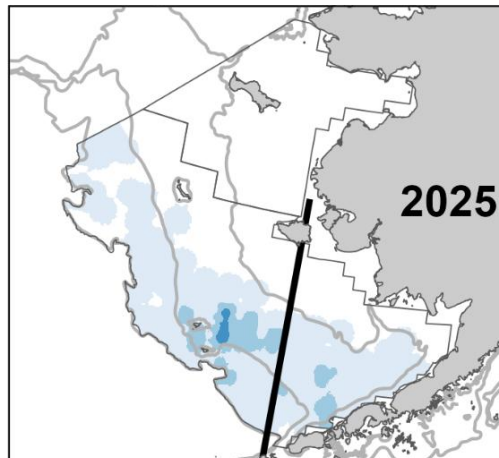
Tanner crab legal males

- Distribution remains focused around and to the northeast of the Pribilof Islands
- Developing hotspot northeast of Unimak



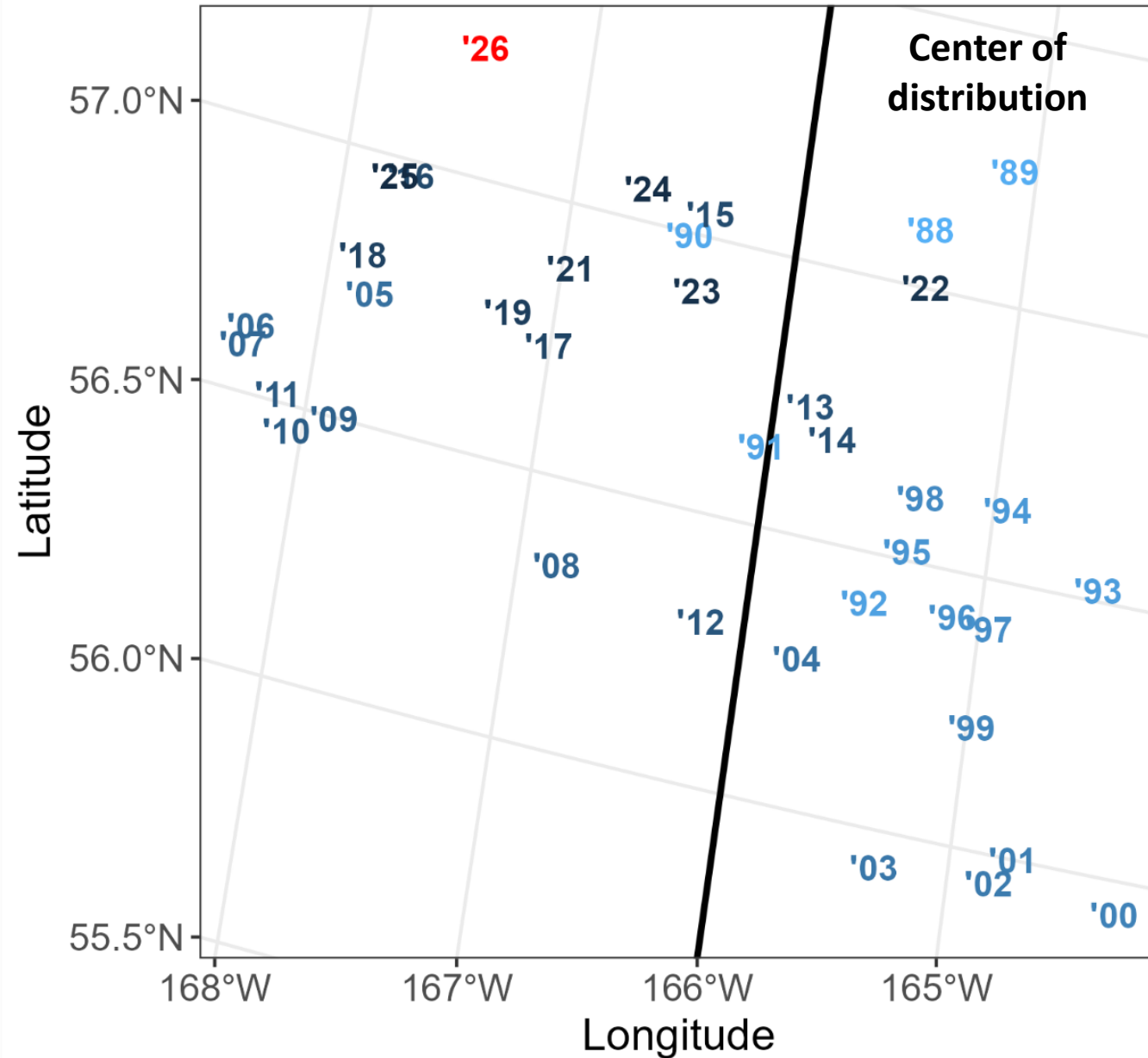
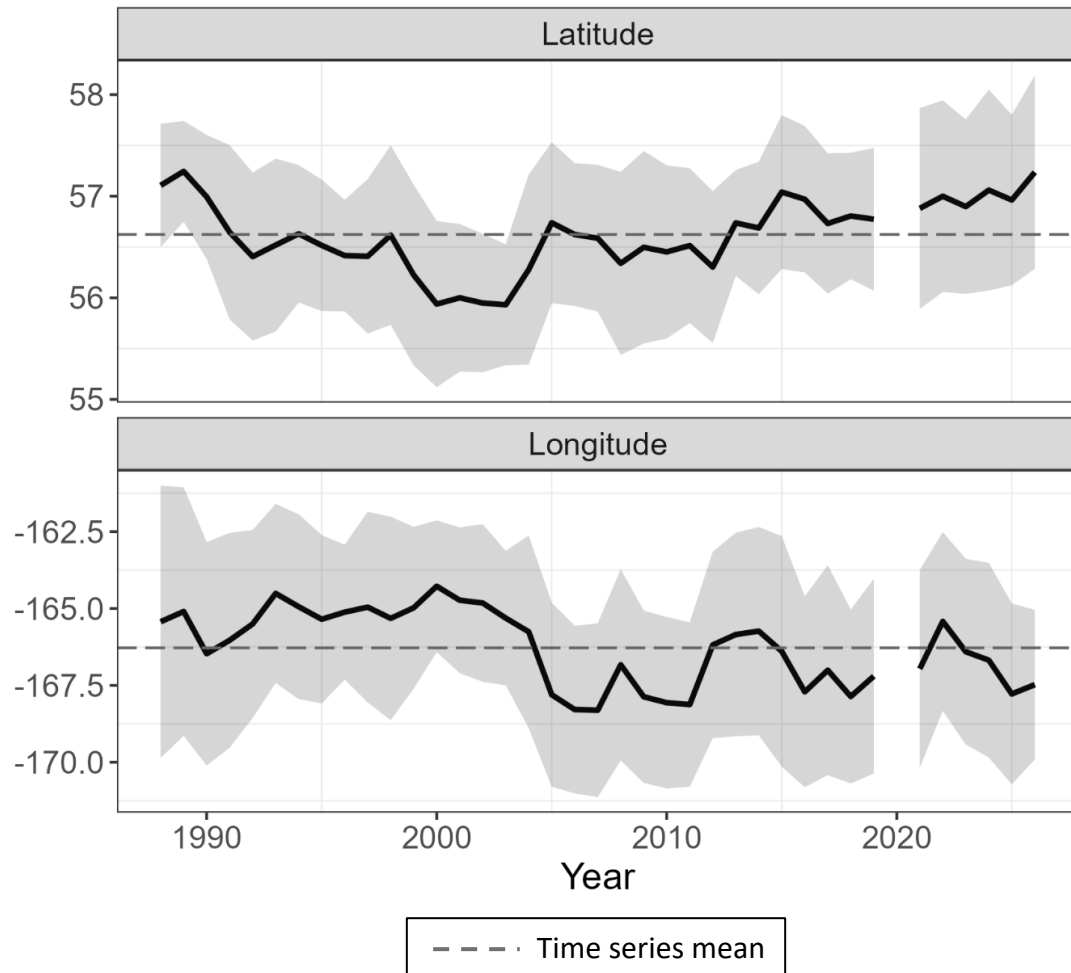
Tanner crab industry preferred males

- Strengthening density around and to the northeast of the Pribilof Islands
- Developing hotspot northeast of Unimak



Tanner crab industry preferred males

- Distribution continues to move northward
- Northernmost center of distribution in 2026 since 1989 (both ~57.2°N)

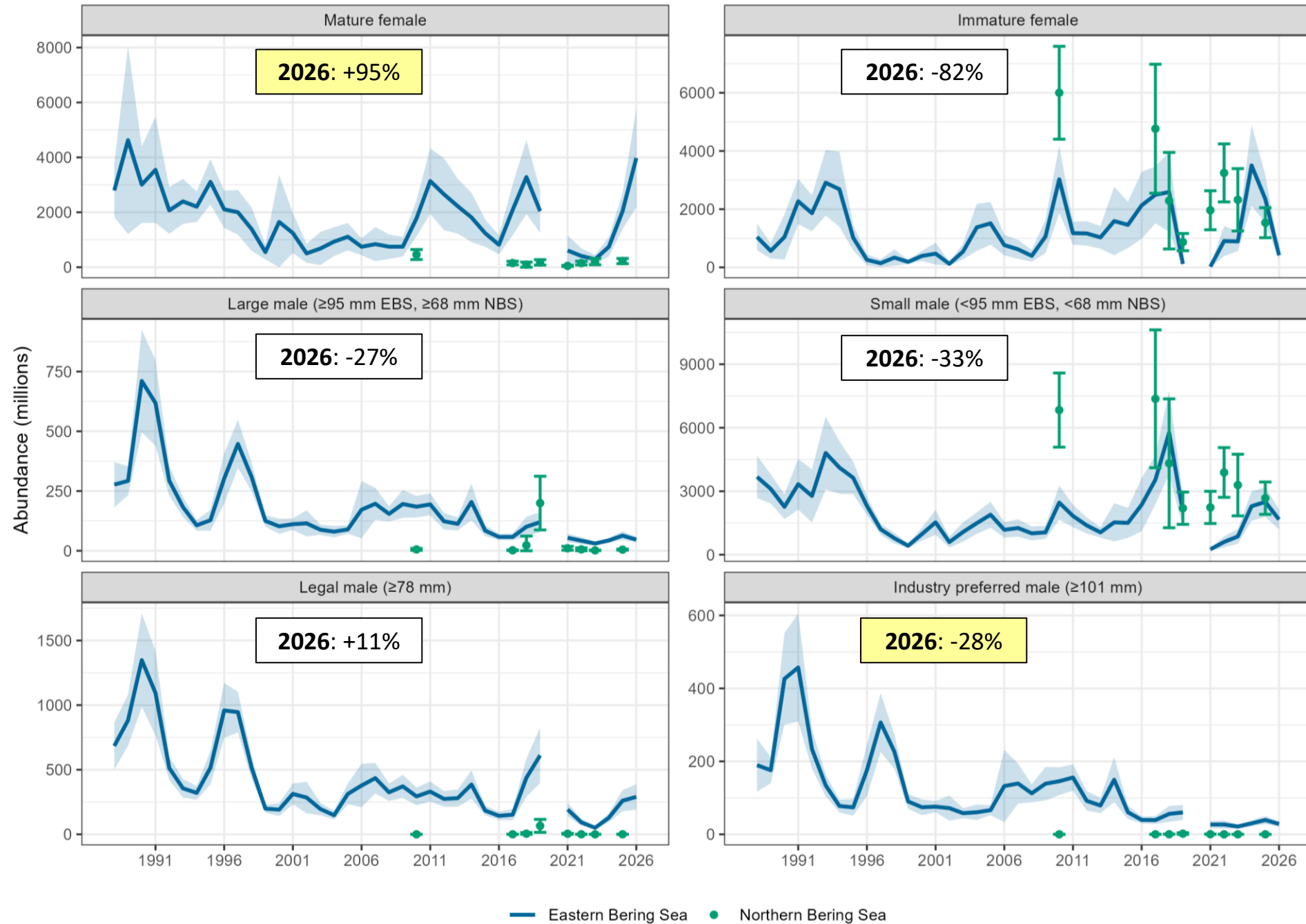


A photograph of a Snow Crab on a sandy beach at night. The crab is illuminated by a spotlight, showing its brown and white mottled pattern. Its long, spiny legs are spread out on the sand. In the background, another crab is visible in the dark. A semi-transparent white banner is overlaid across the middle of the image.

Snow Crab

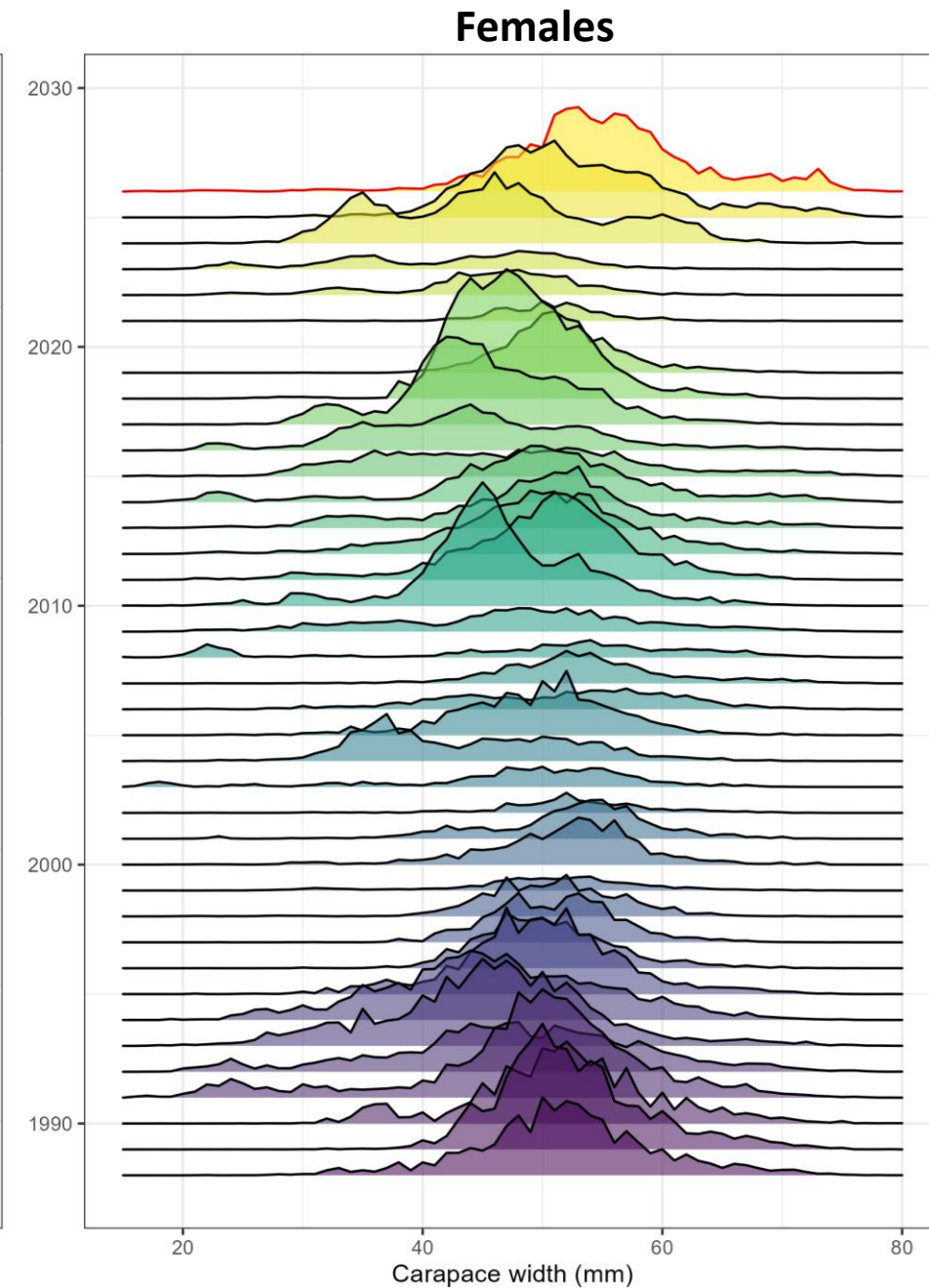
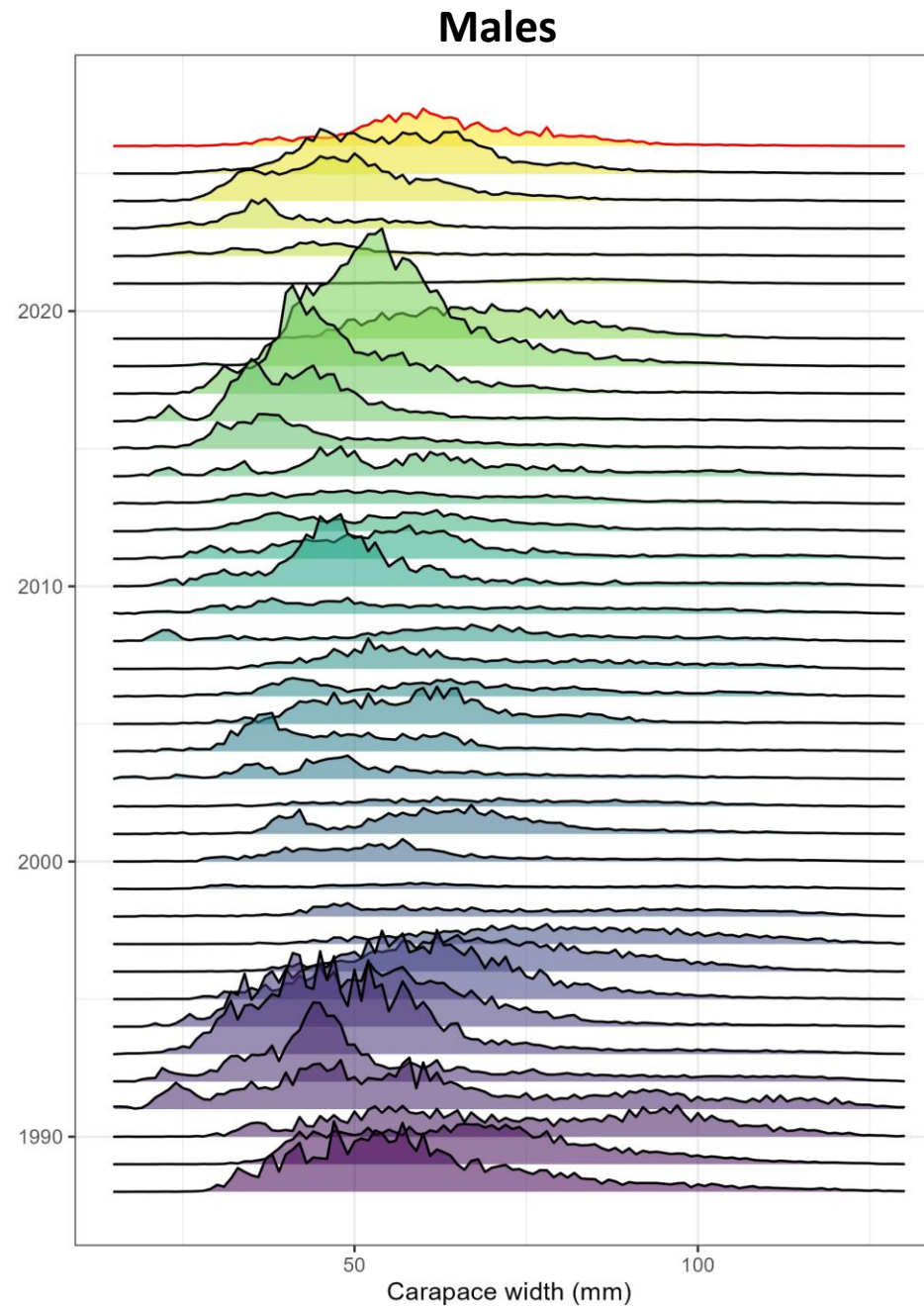
Snow crab

- Mature females at highest abundance since 1989
- Large decline in immature females
- Industry preferred abundance still near time series low



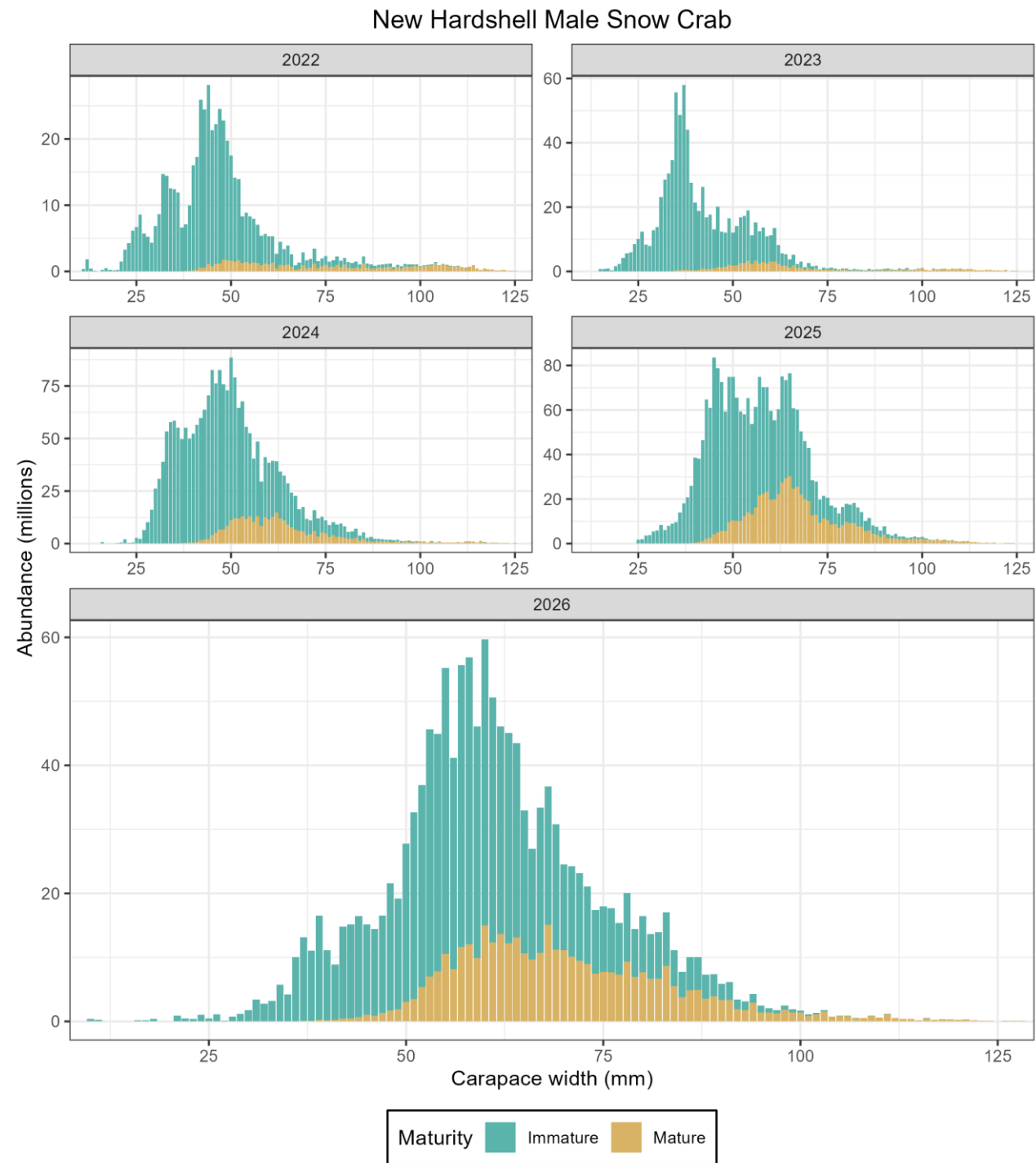
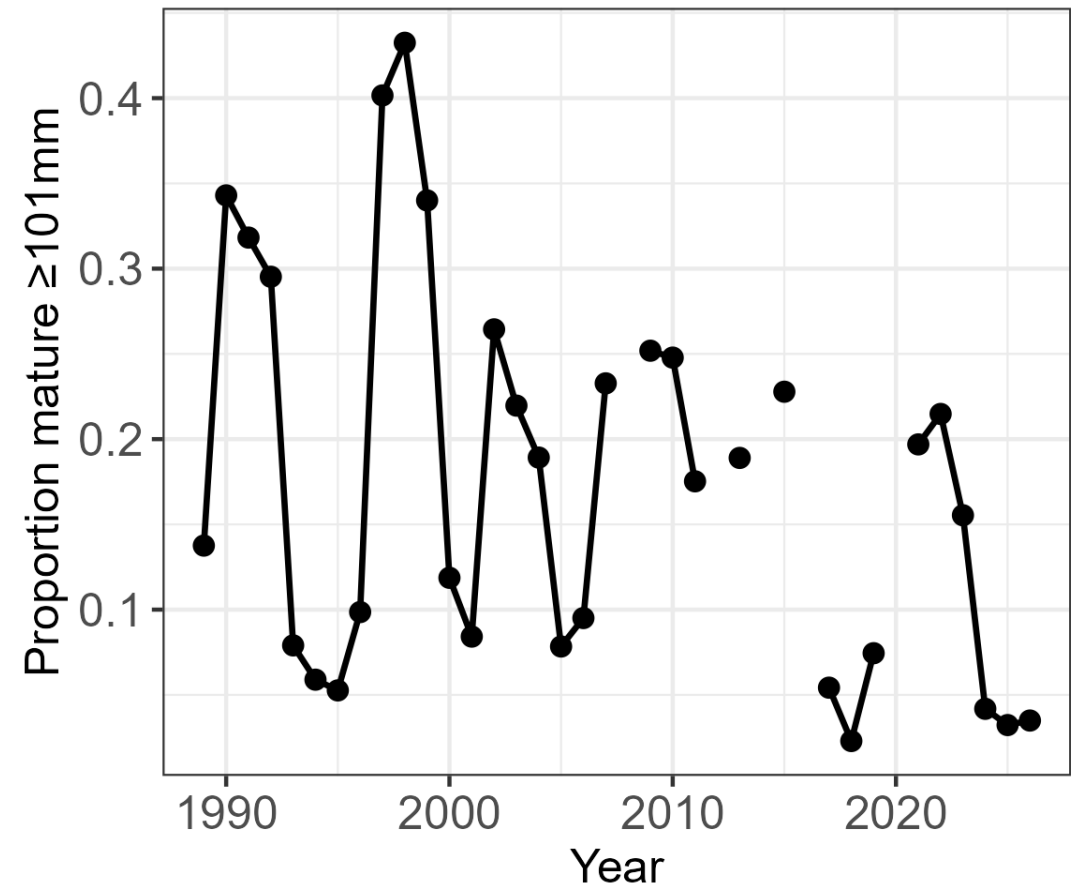
Snow crab

- Very high frequency of mature females
- More females at larger sizes than in 2025
- Low recruitment in 2025 & 2026
- Males are not reaching the same large sizes seen in 1980s/1990s



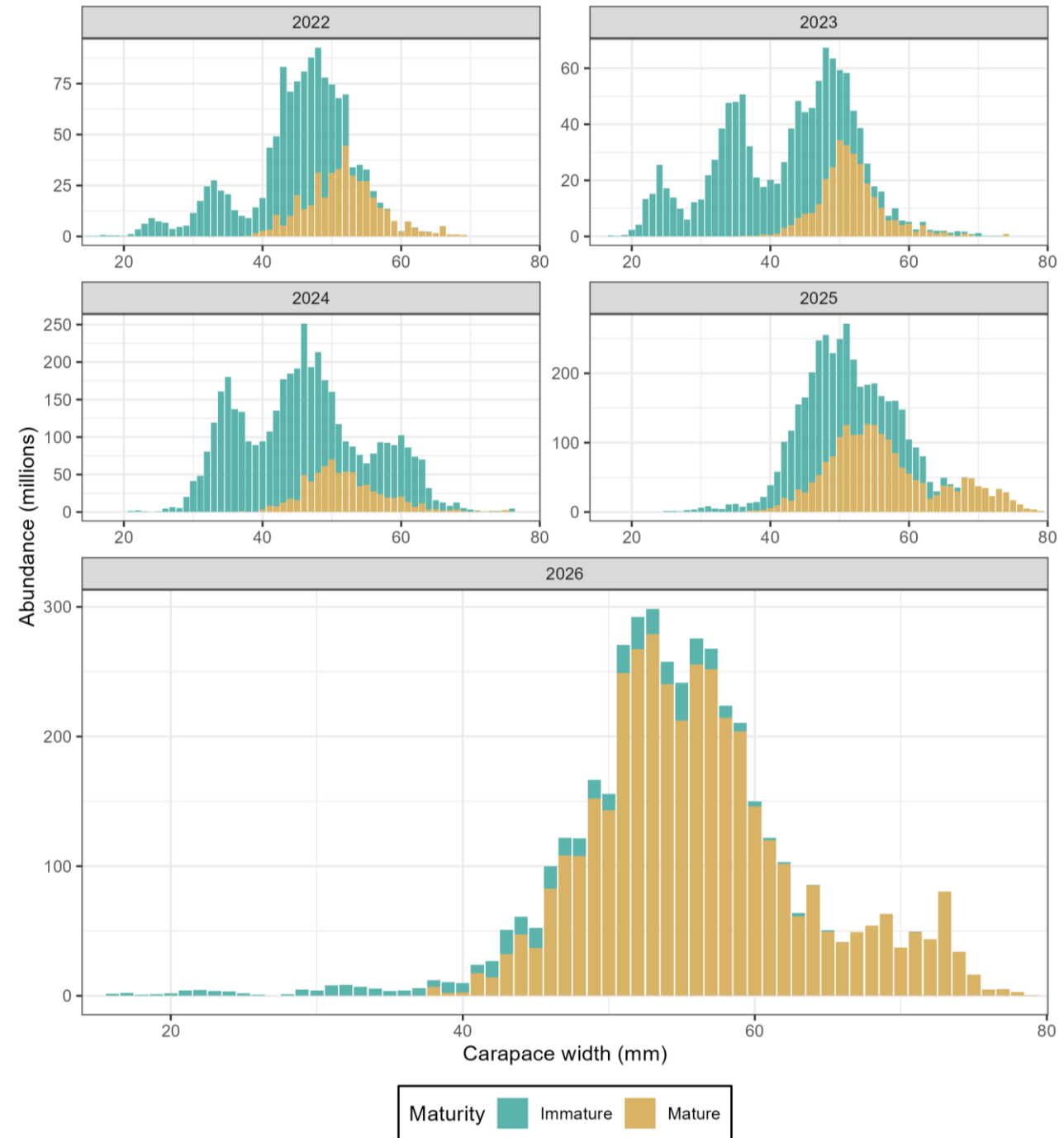
Snow crab males

- In 2026, 96.5% of males that matured were smaller than industry preferred size



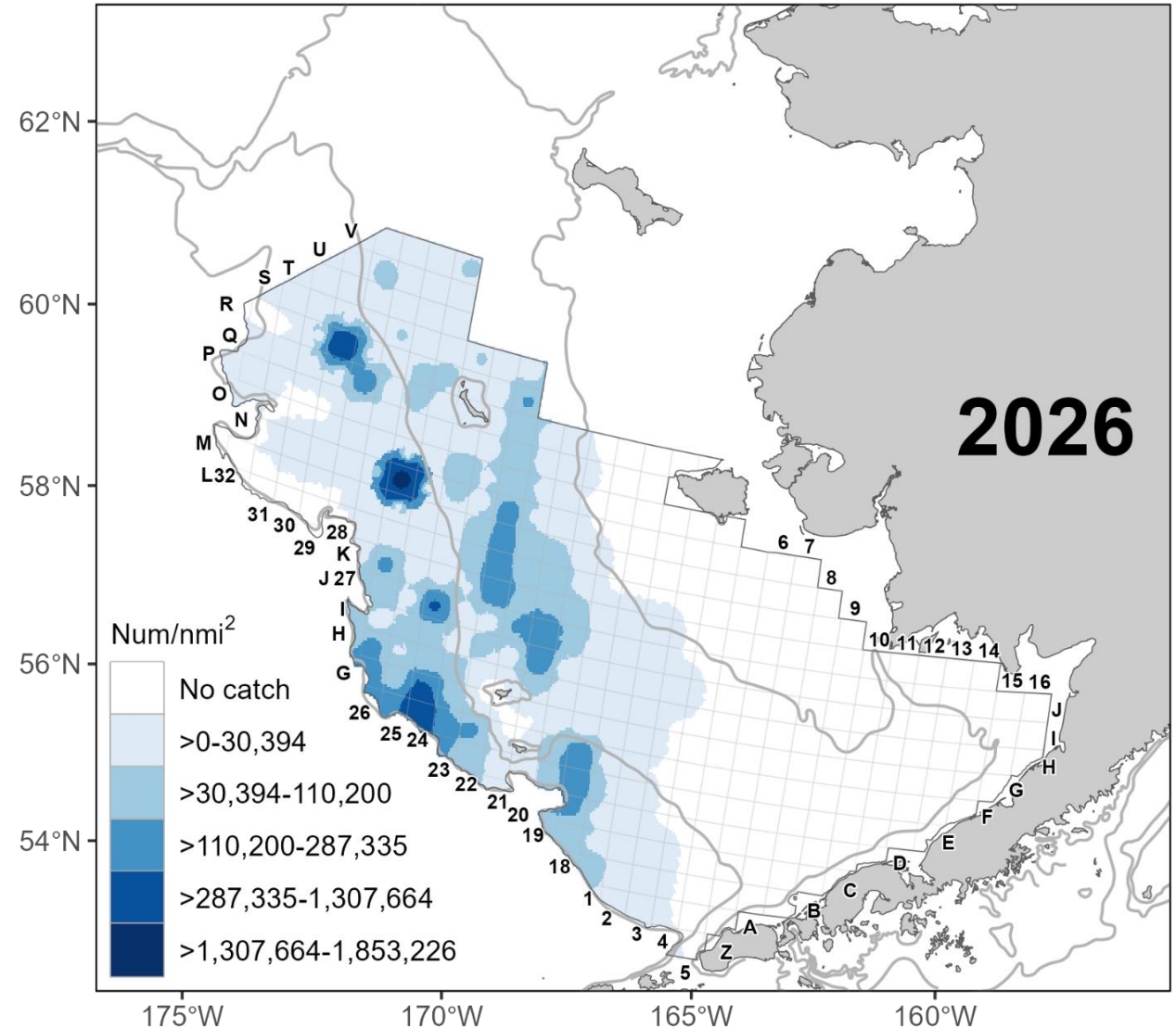
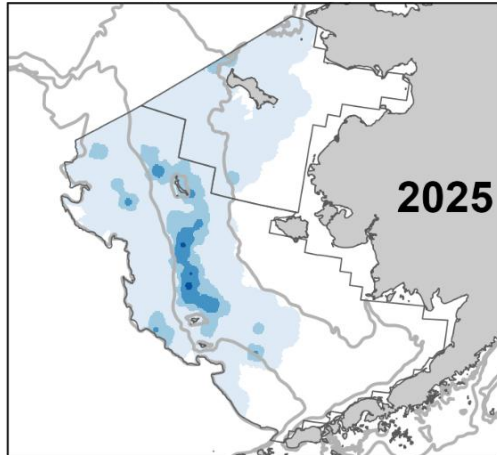
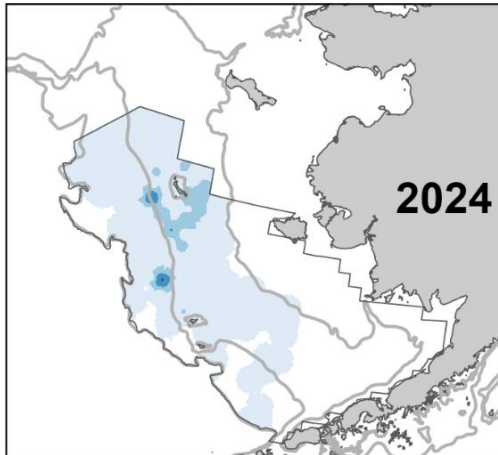
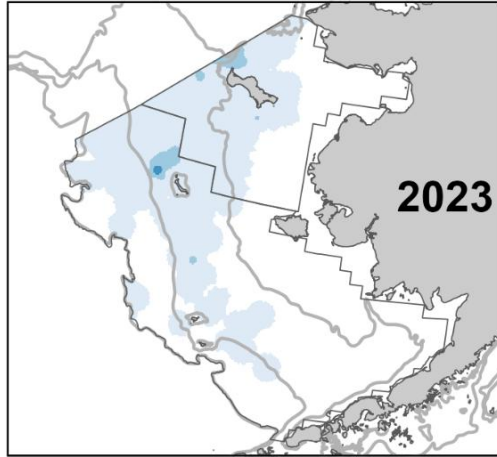
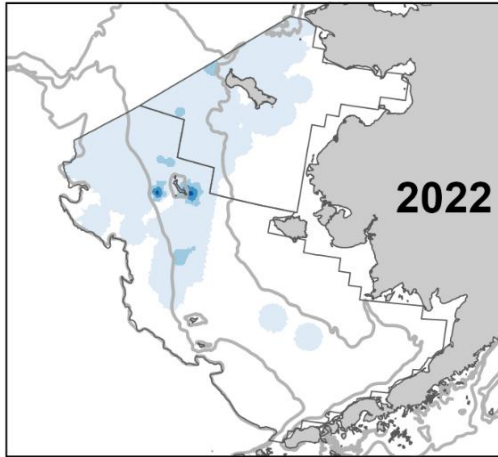
Snow crab females

- Very high numbers of mature females in 2026 preceded by record numbers of immature crab in 2024
- 2026 immature female abundance is very low
- Large females seen in 2024-2025 still present in 2026, but at lower relative abundance



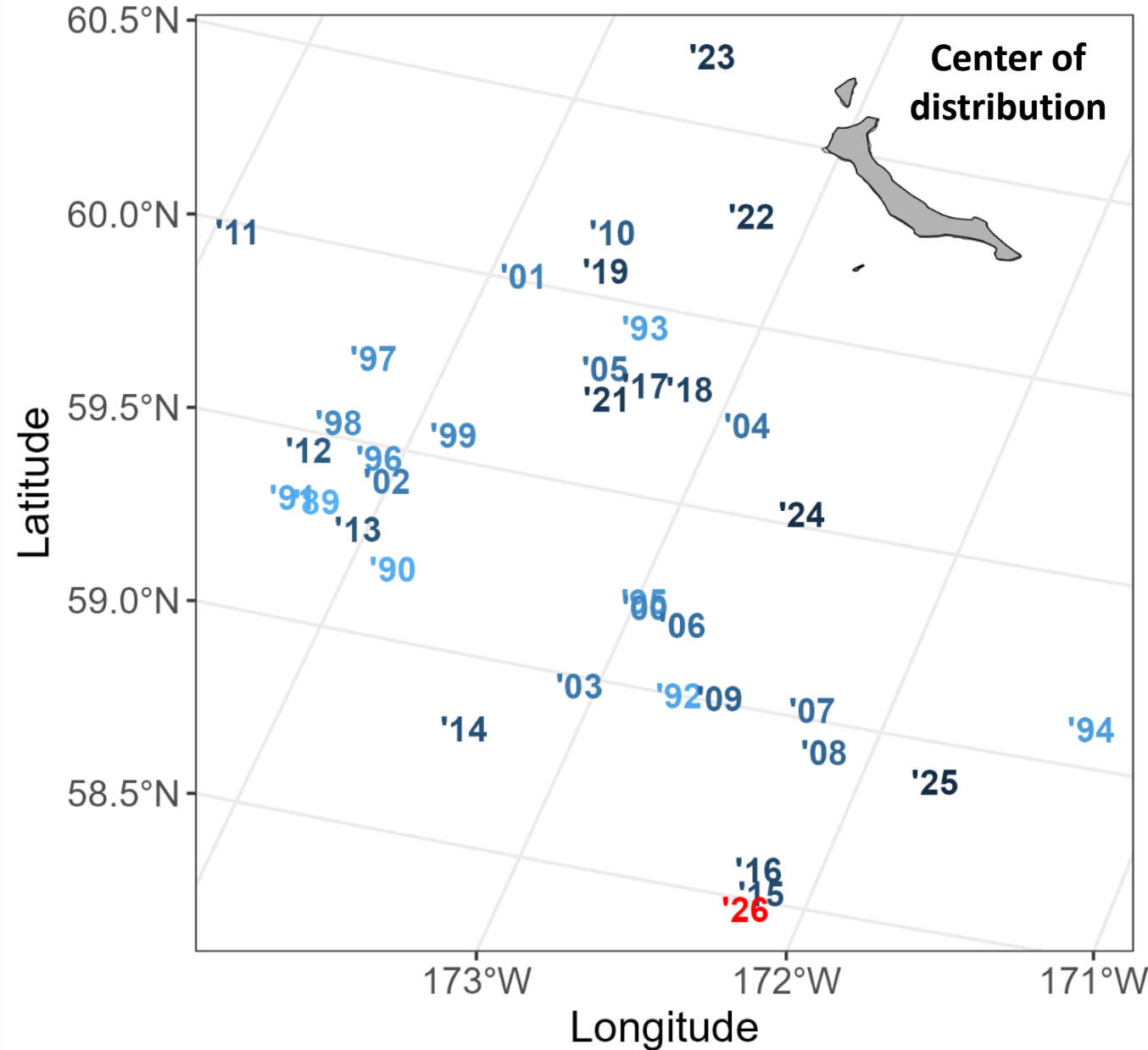
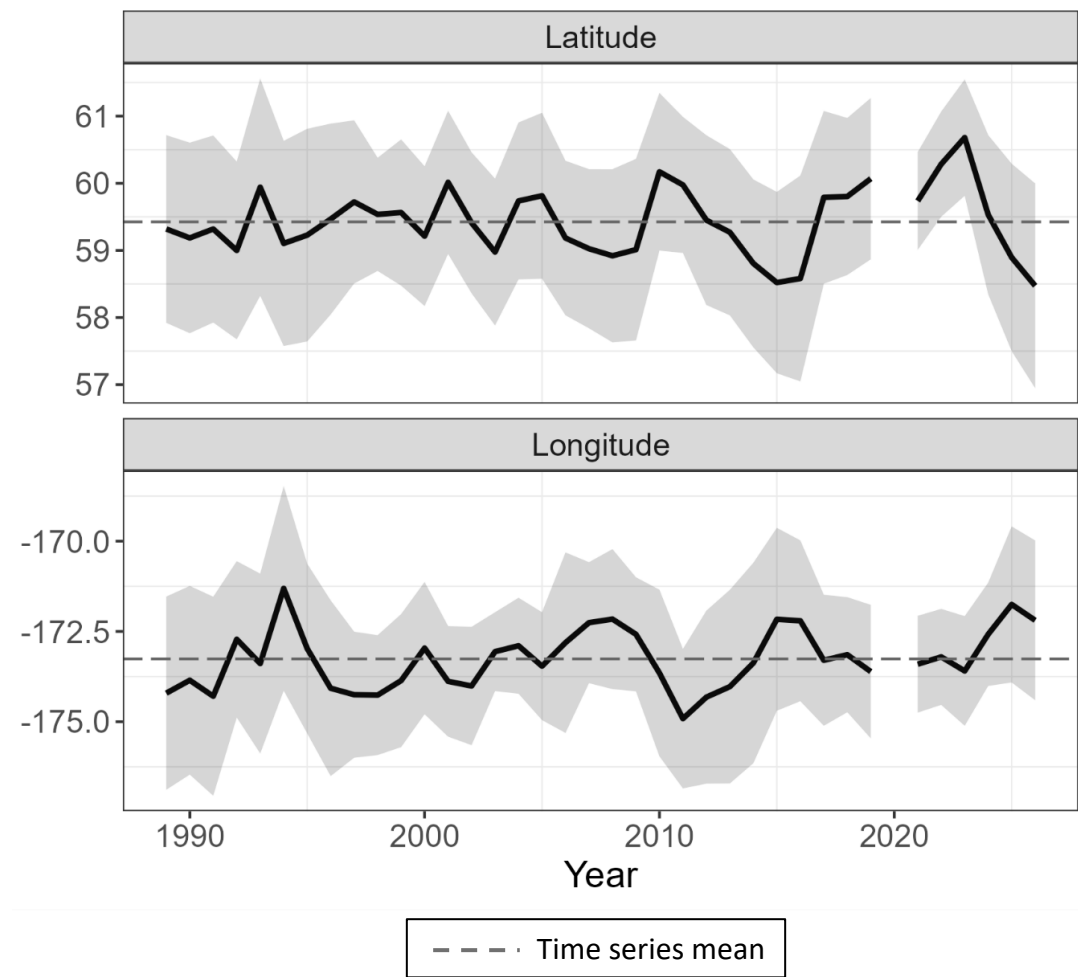
Snow crab mature females

- Multiple areas of increased density in 2026



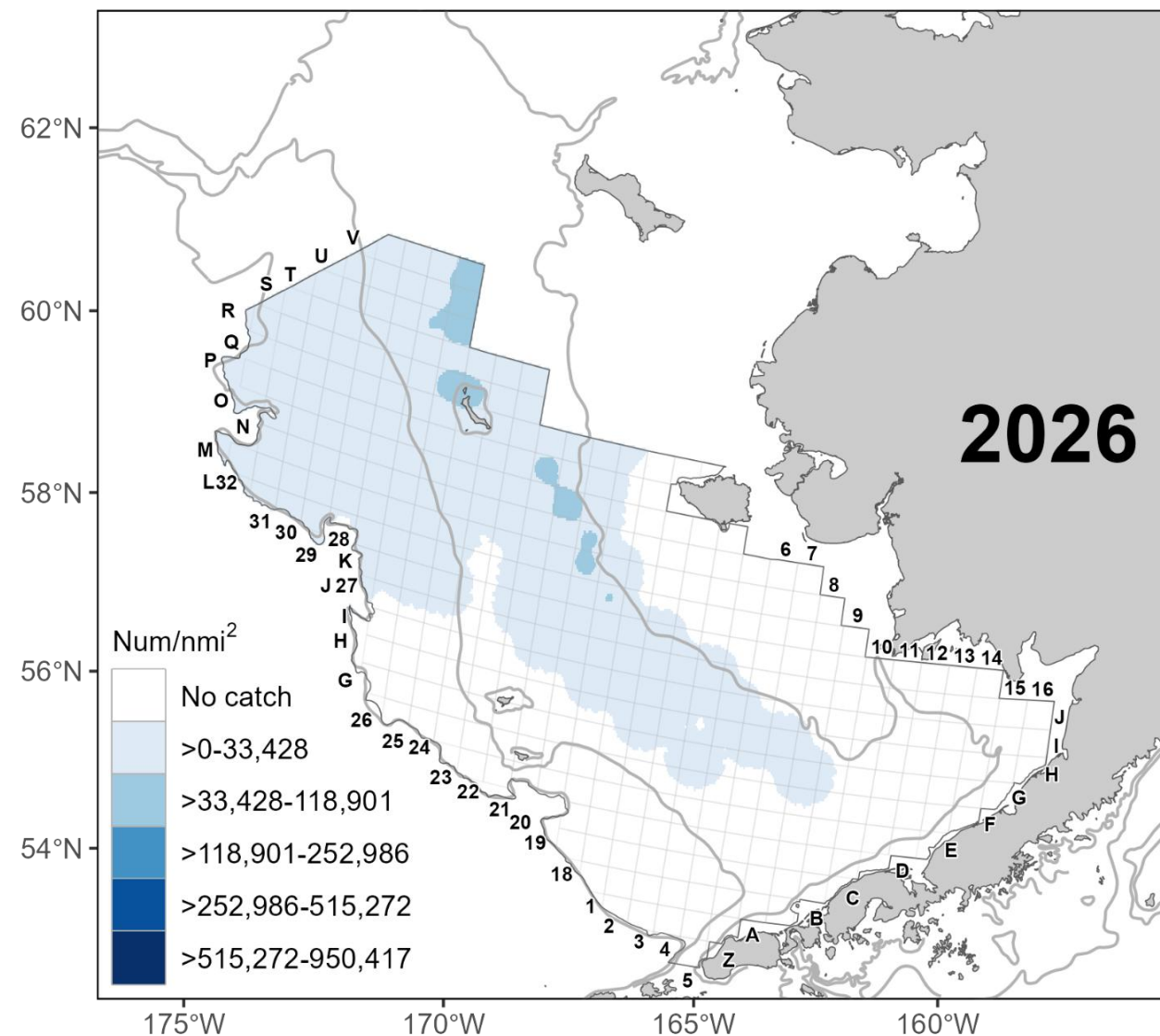
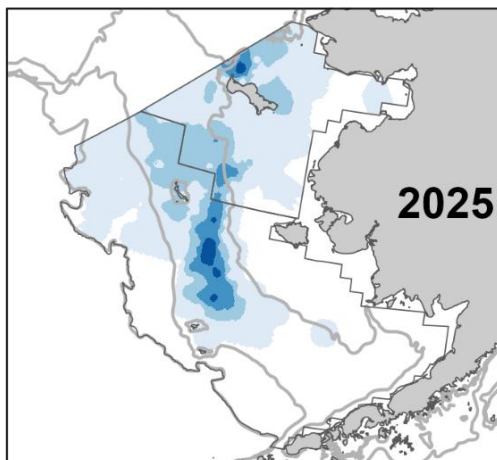
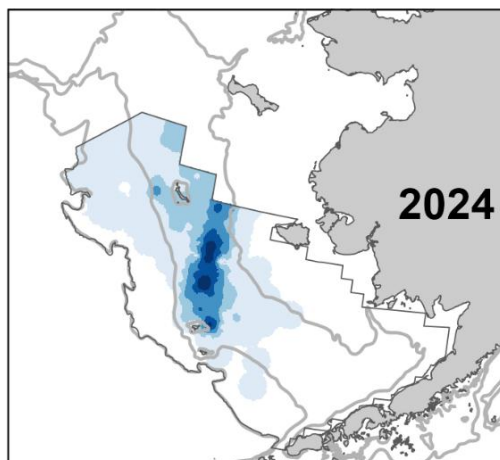
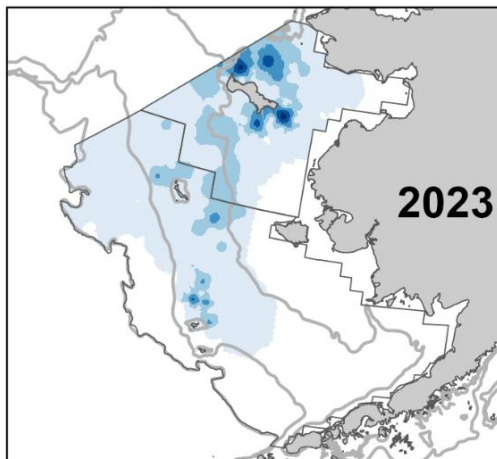
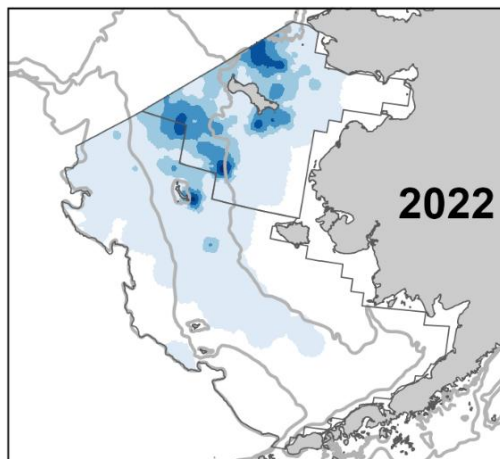
Snow crab mature females

- Distribution continues to move south



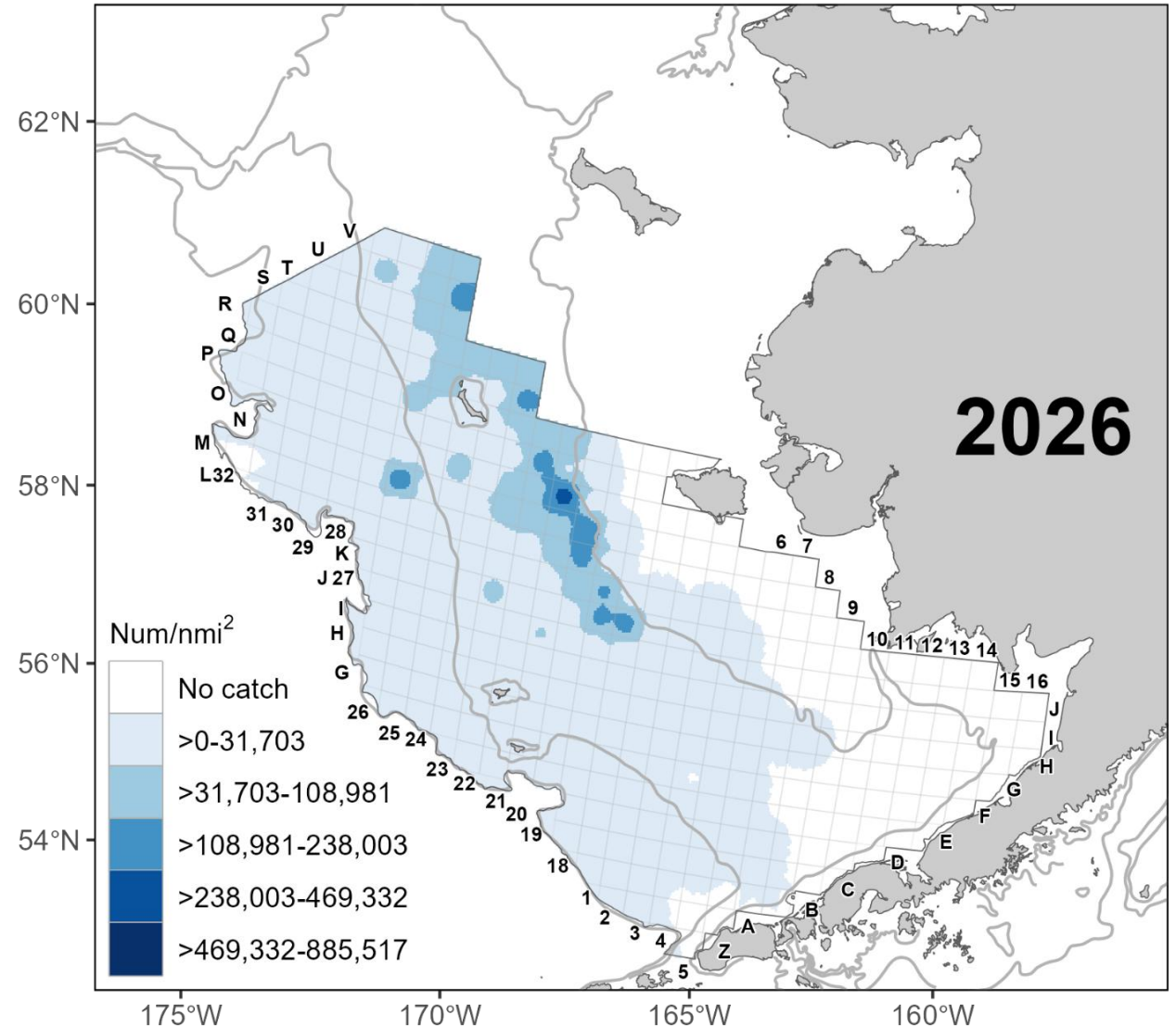
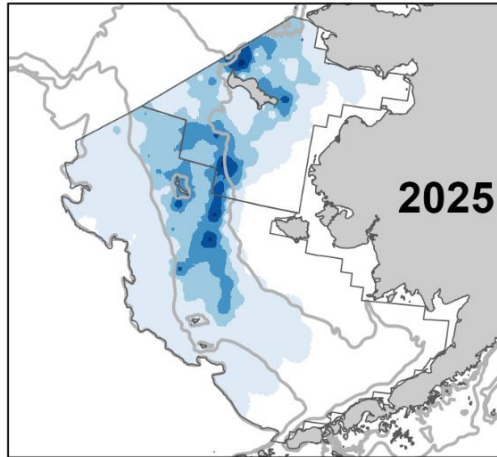
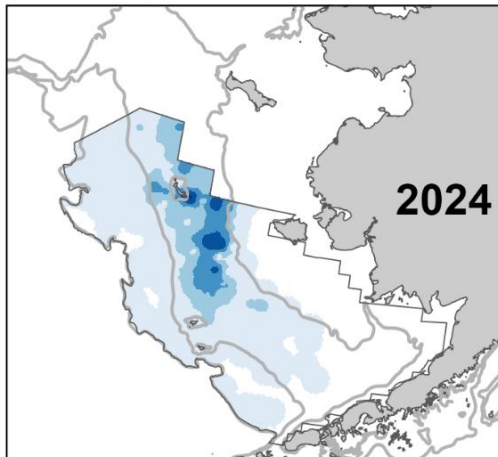
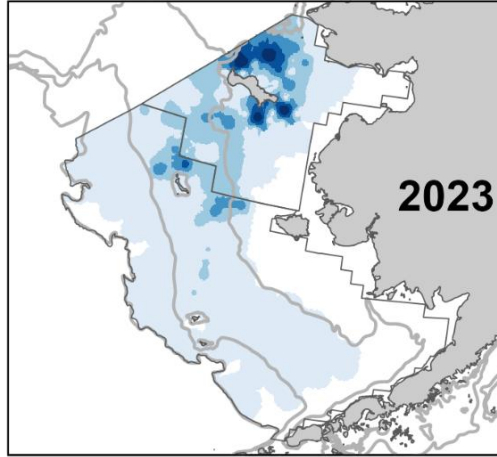
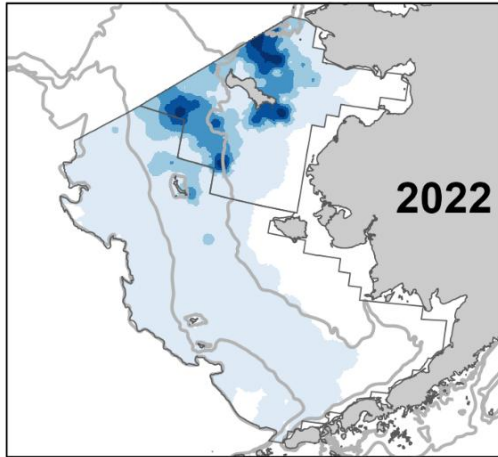
Snow crab immature females

- Diminished density hotspot north of the Pribilof Islands



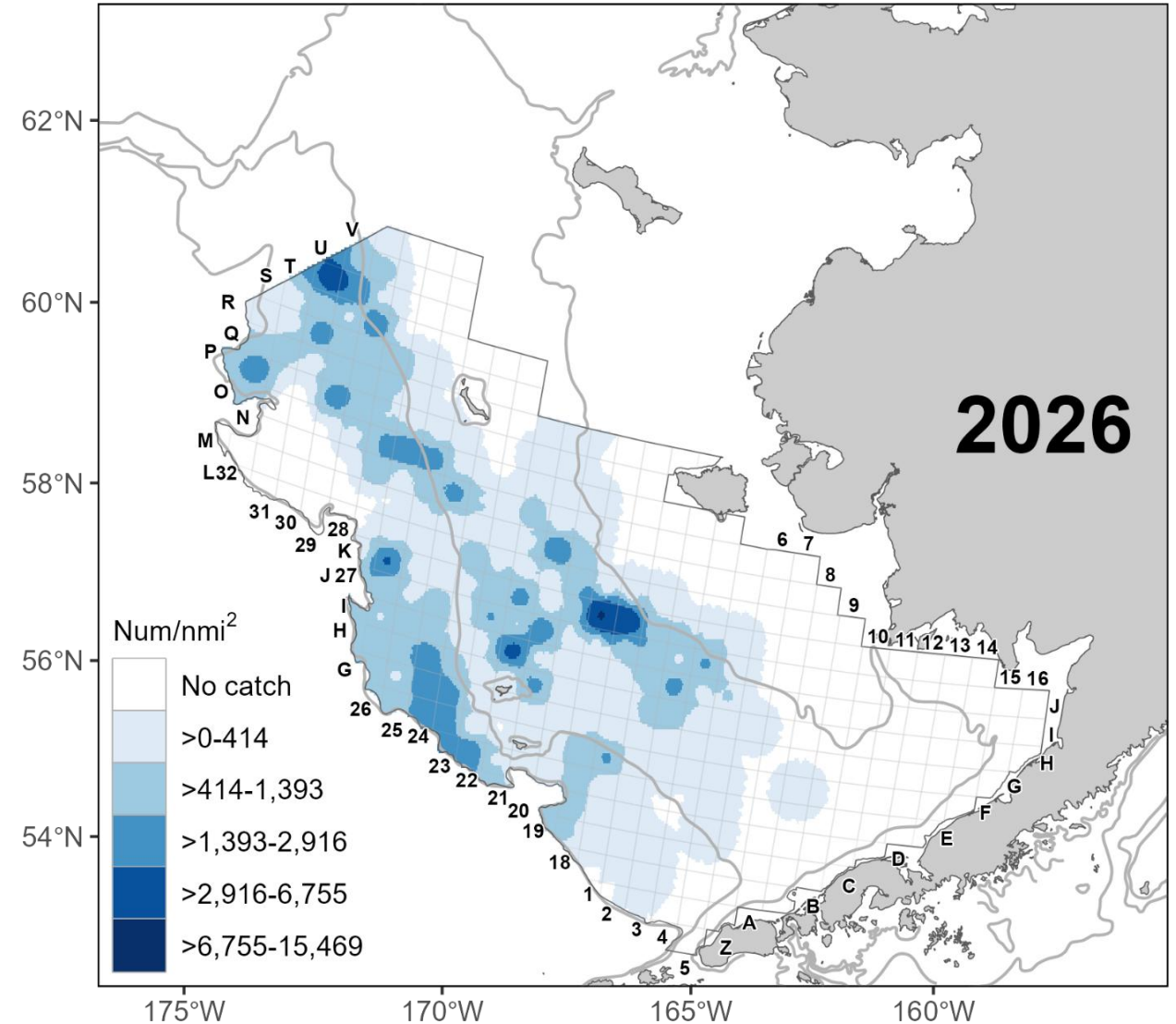
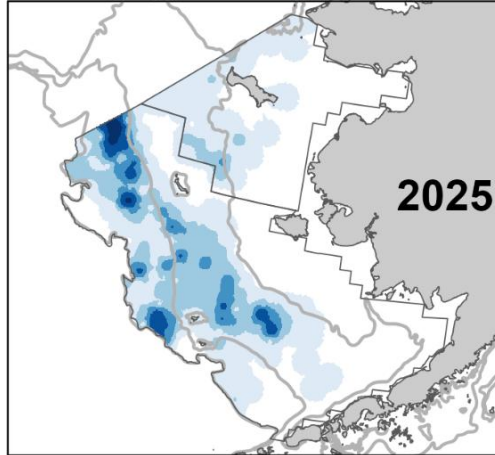
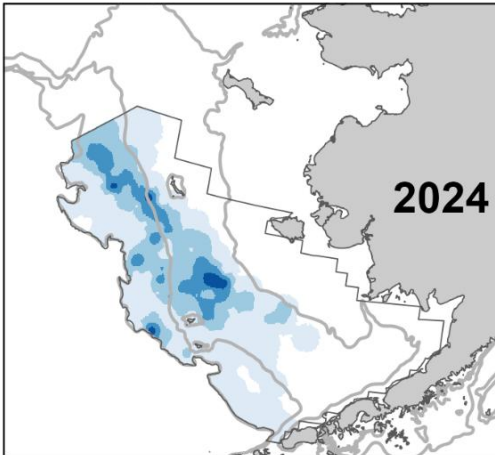
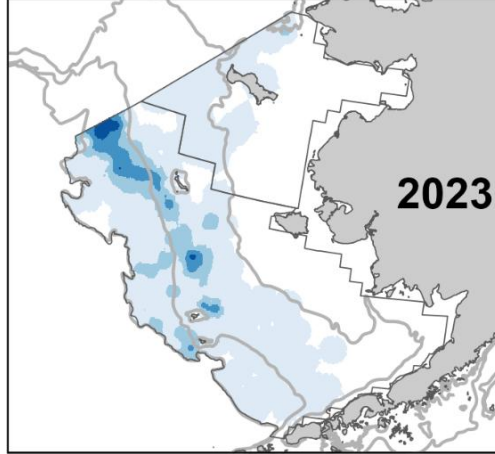
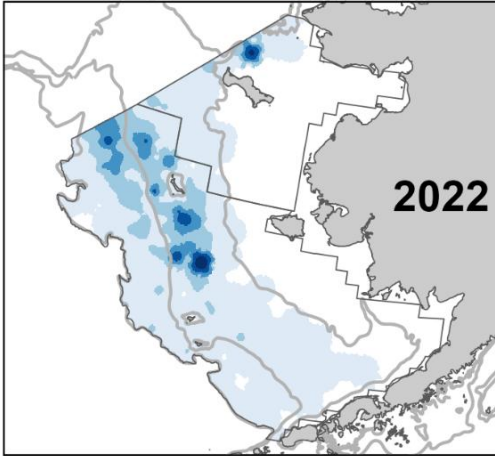
Snow crab small males (<95 mm)

- Density declines east of St. Matthew and north of Pribilof Islands



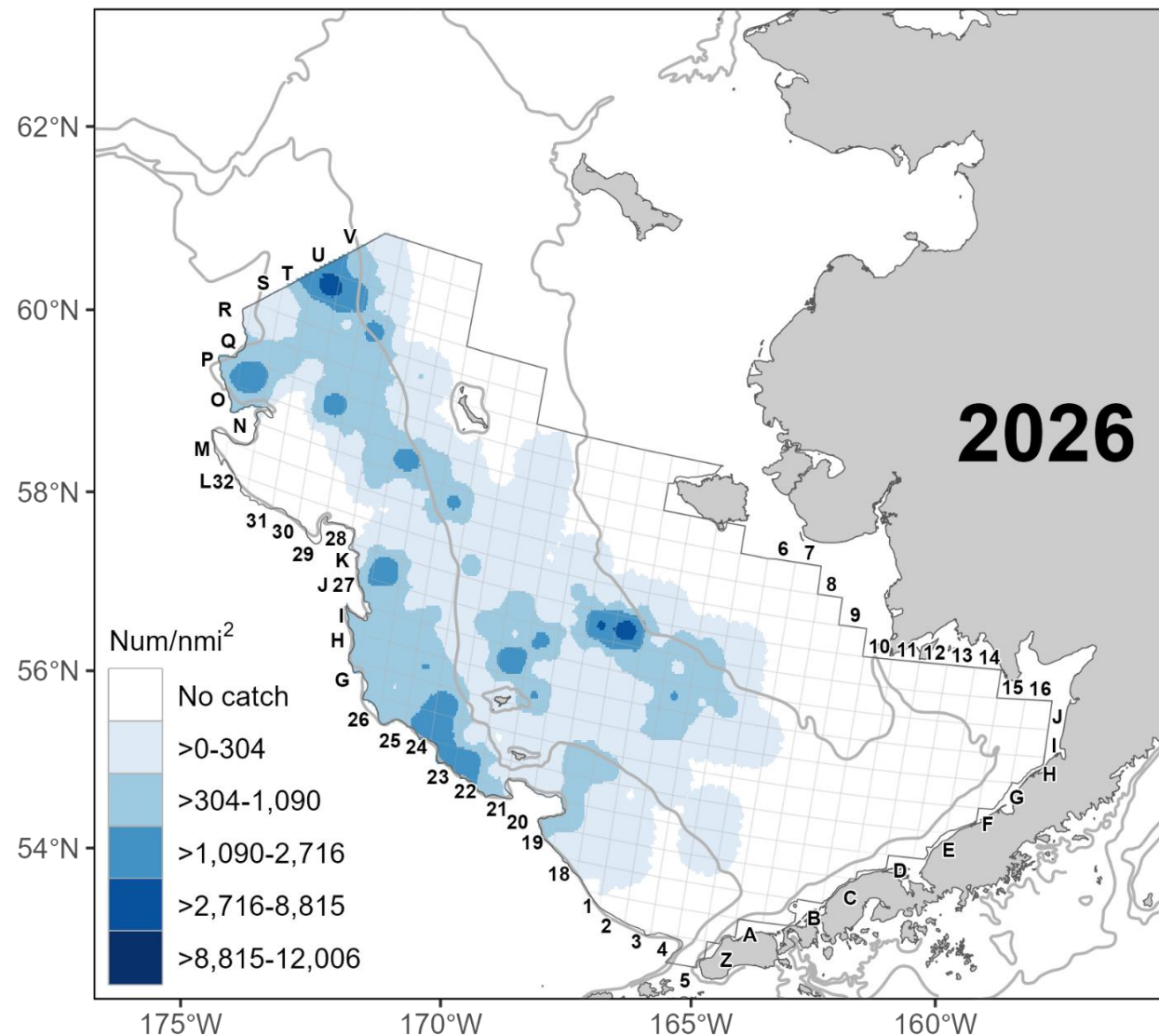
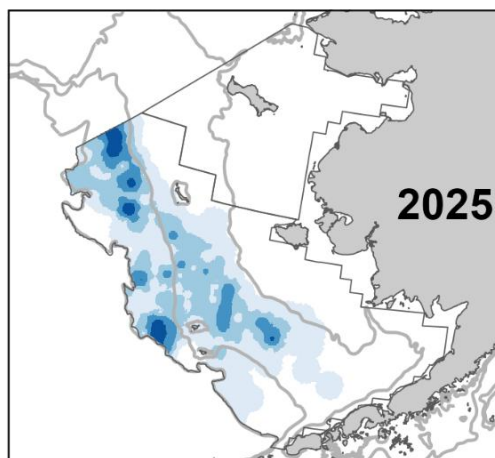
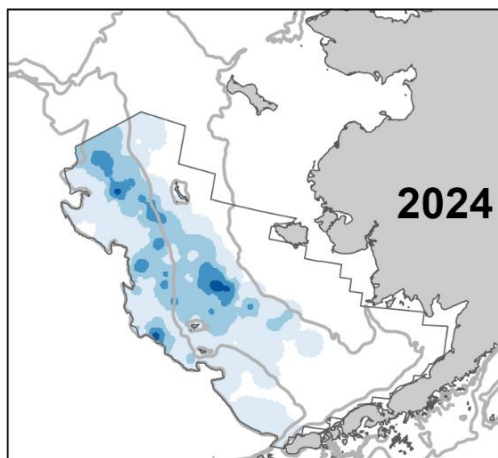
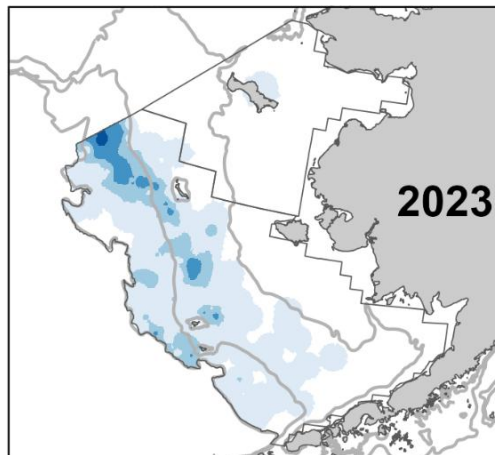
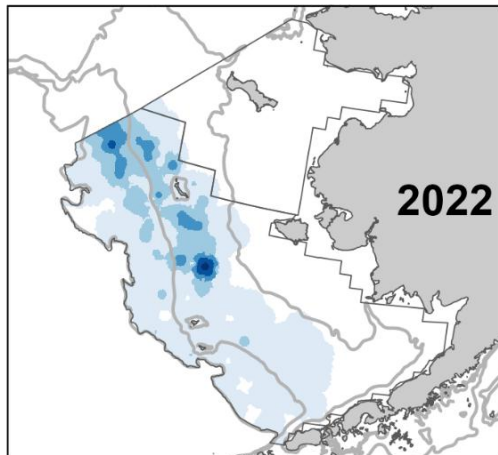
Snow crab large males (≥ 95 mm)

- Distribution continues to be widely distributed across the shelf with density declines in 2026



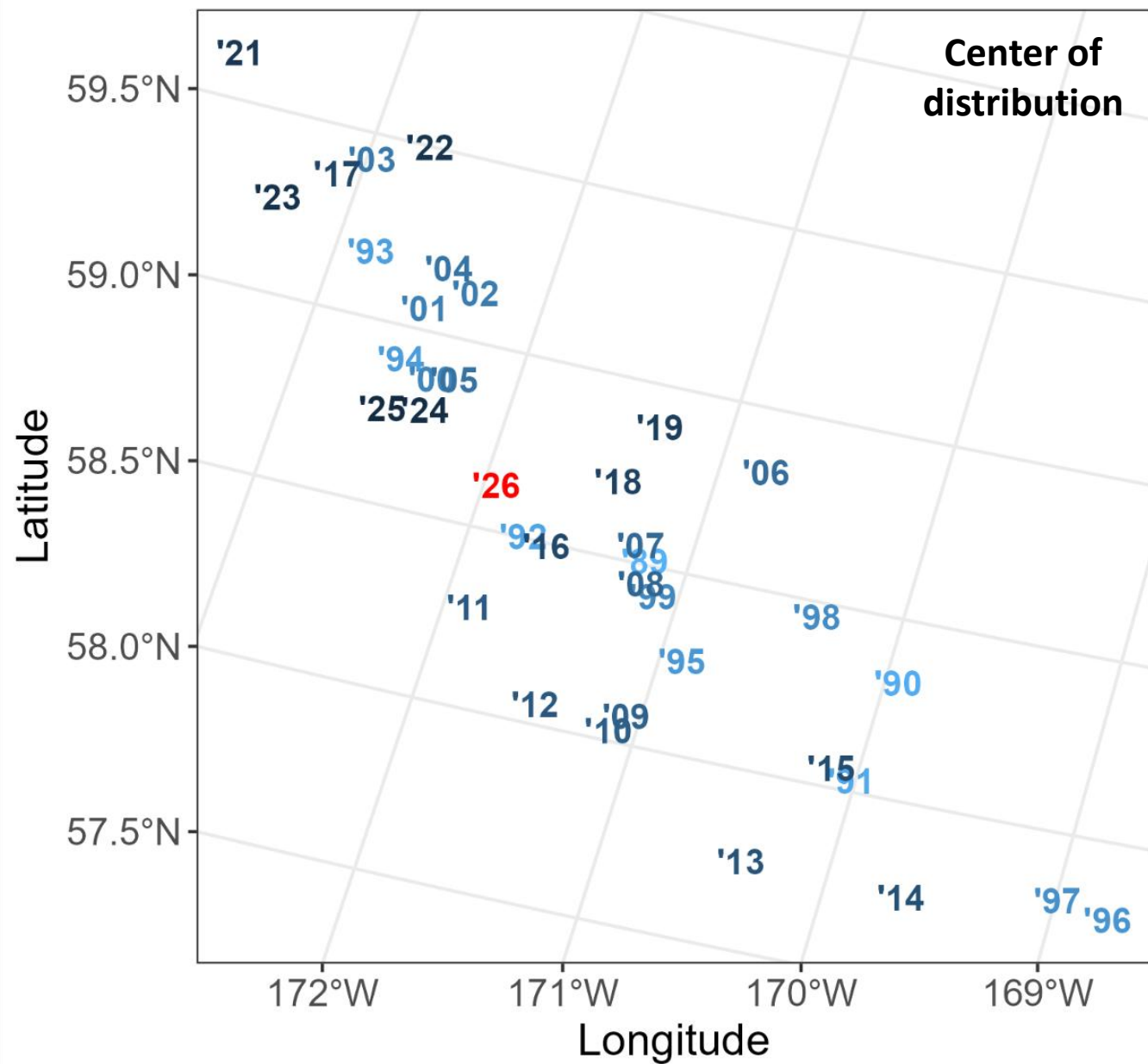
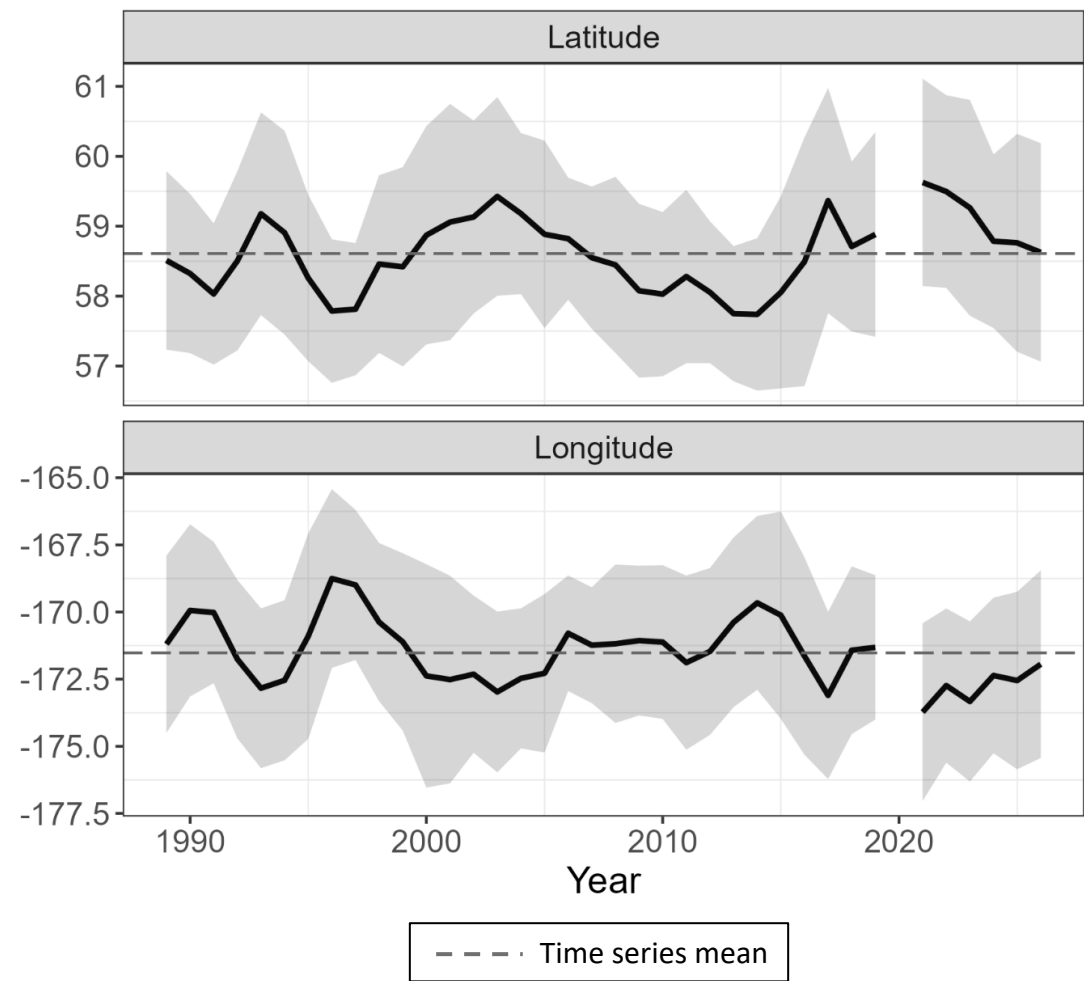
Snow crab industry preferred males

- Distribution continues to be widely distributed across the shelf with density declines in 2026



Snow crab industry preferred males

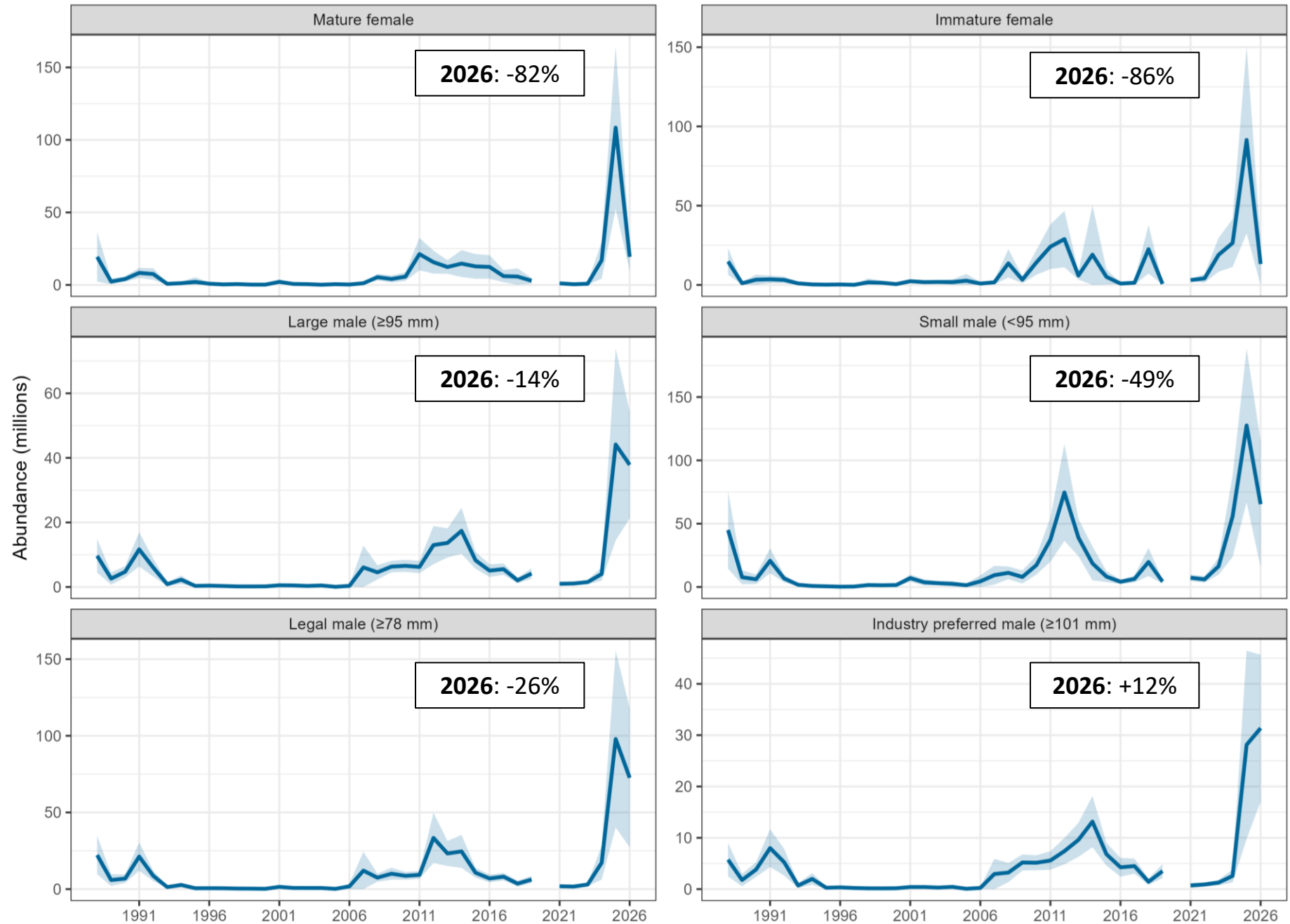
- Distribution near time series average



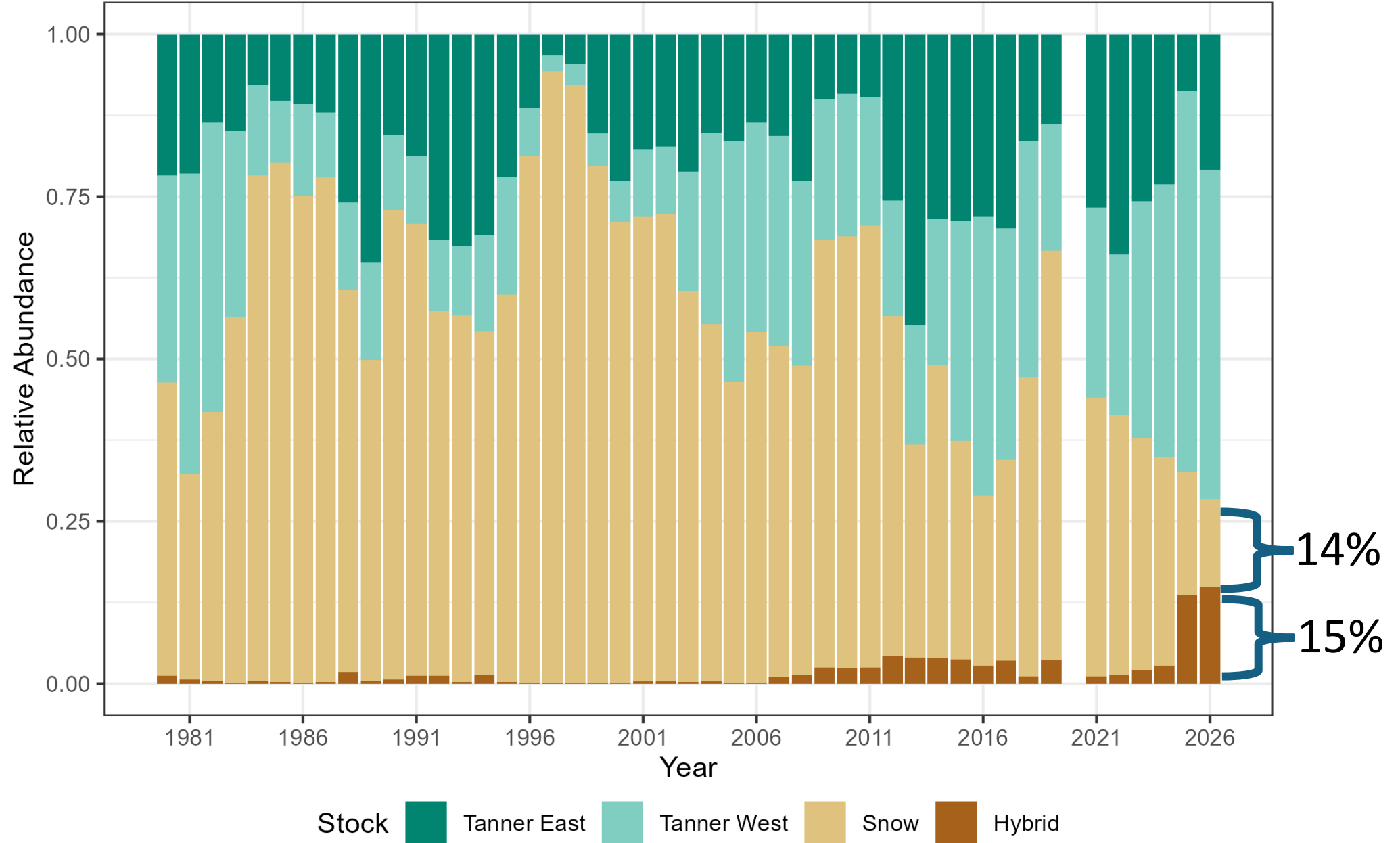
Chionoecetes Hybrid Crab

Hybrid crab

- Declines across all categories except industry preferred males
- Large males still at time series highs

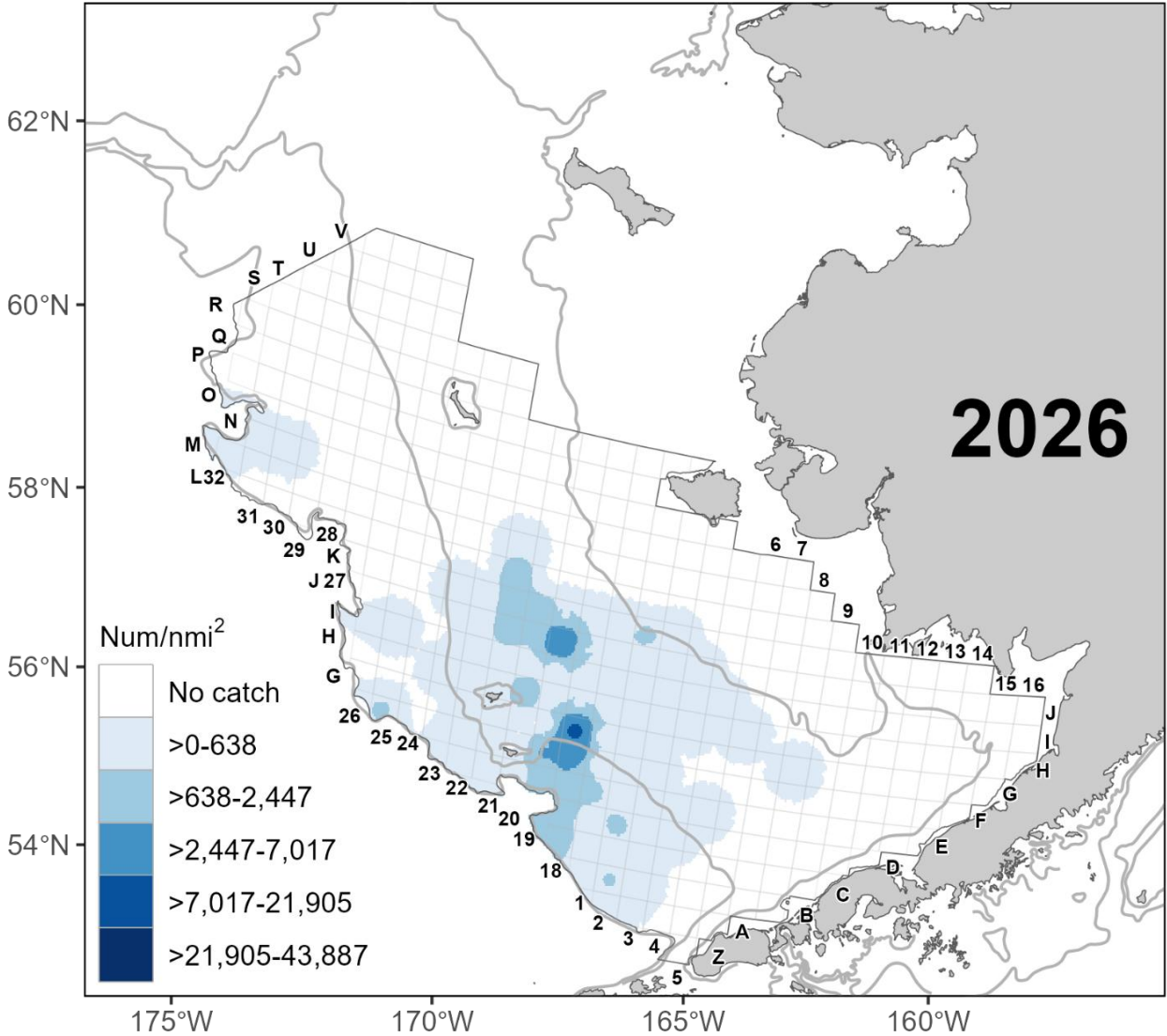
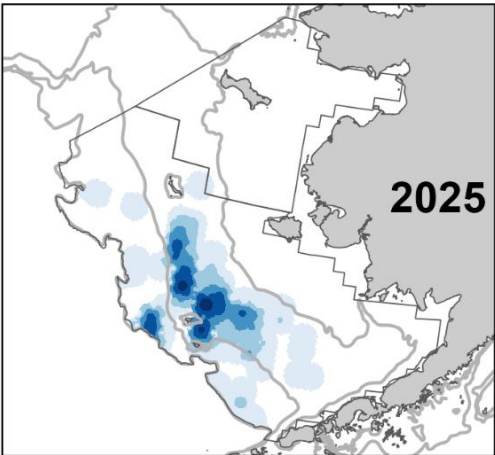
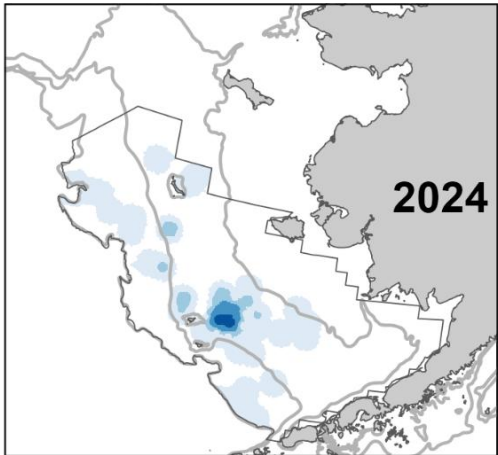
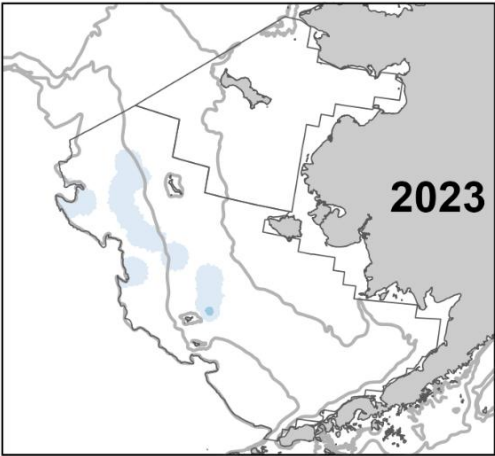
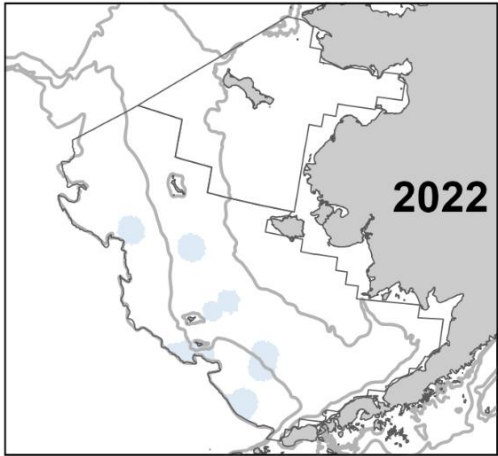


Tanner, snow, and hybrid males ≥ 101 mm



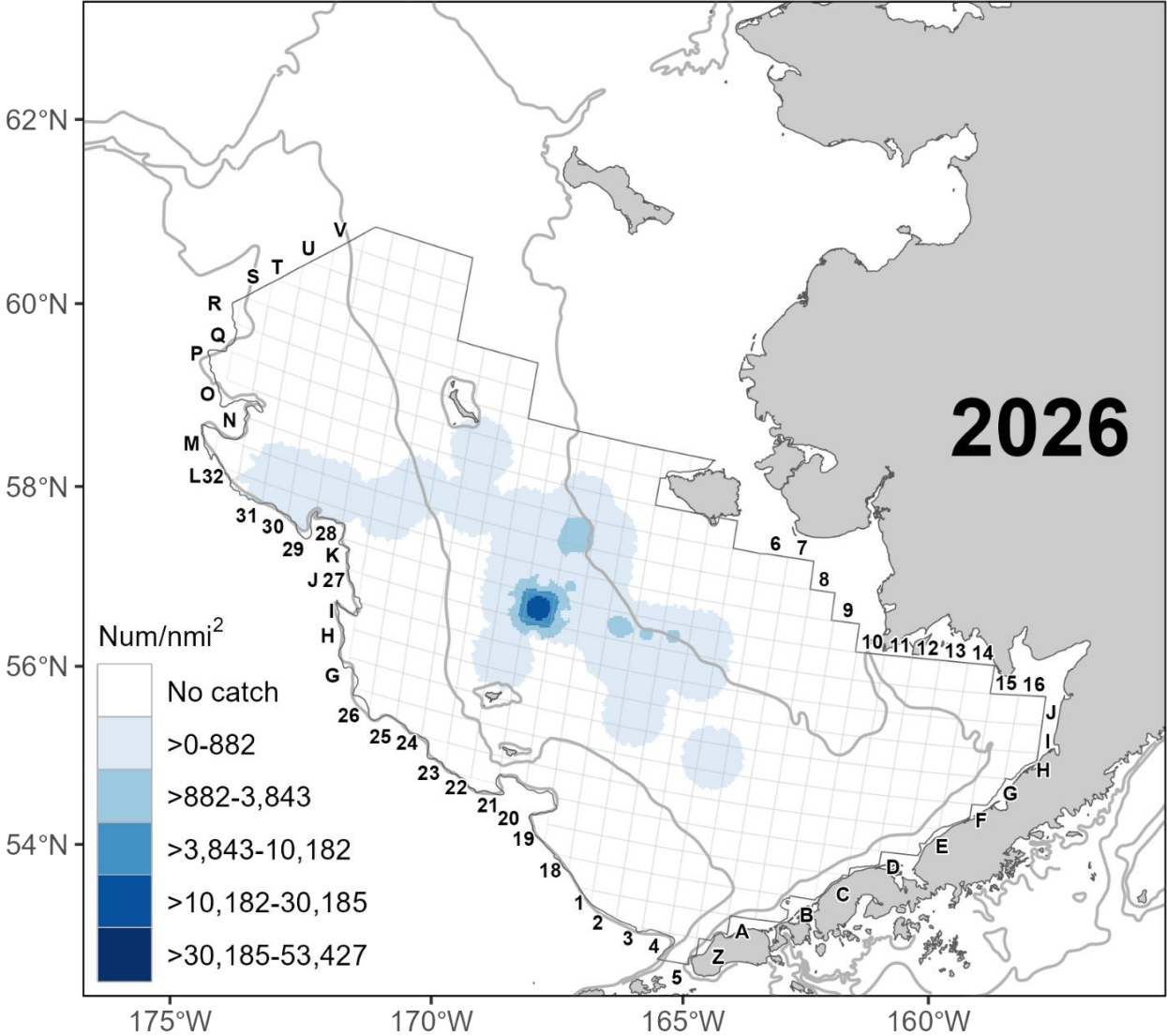
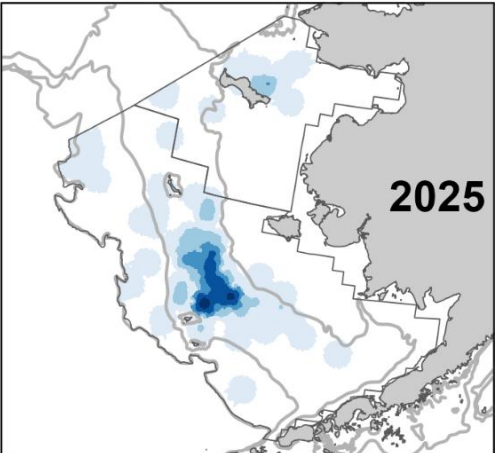
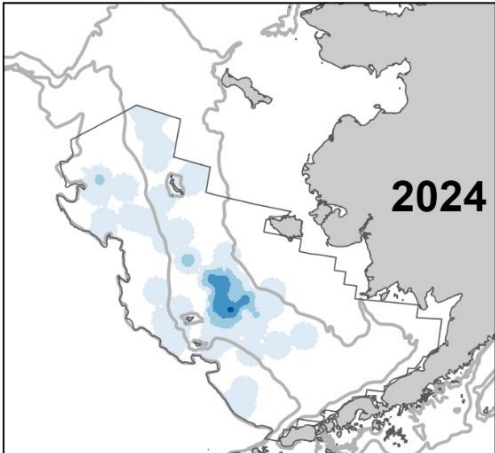
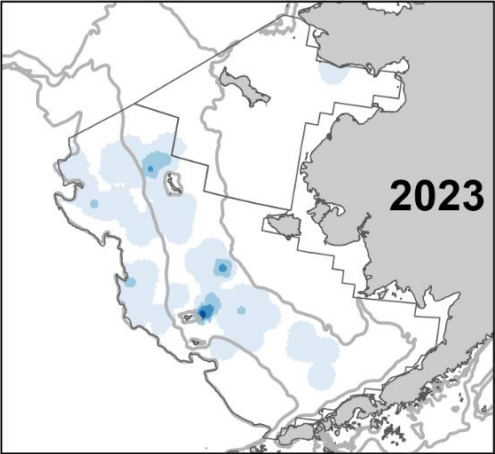
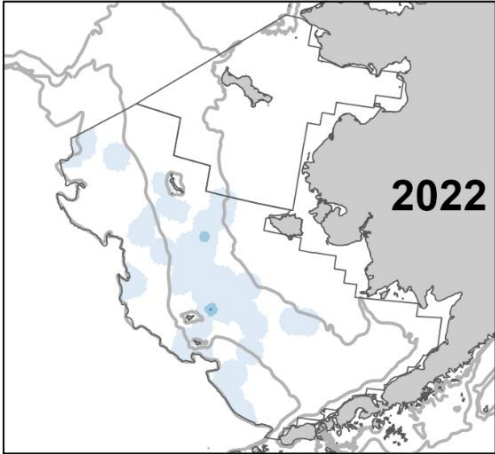
Hybrid crab mature females

- Widespread decreases in density



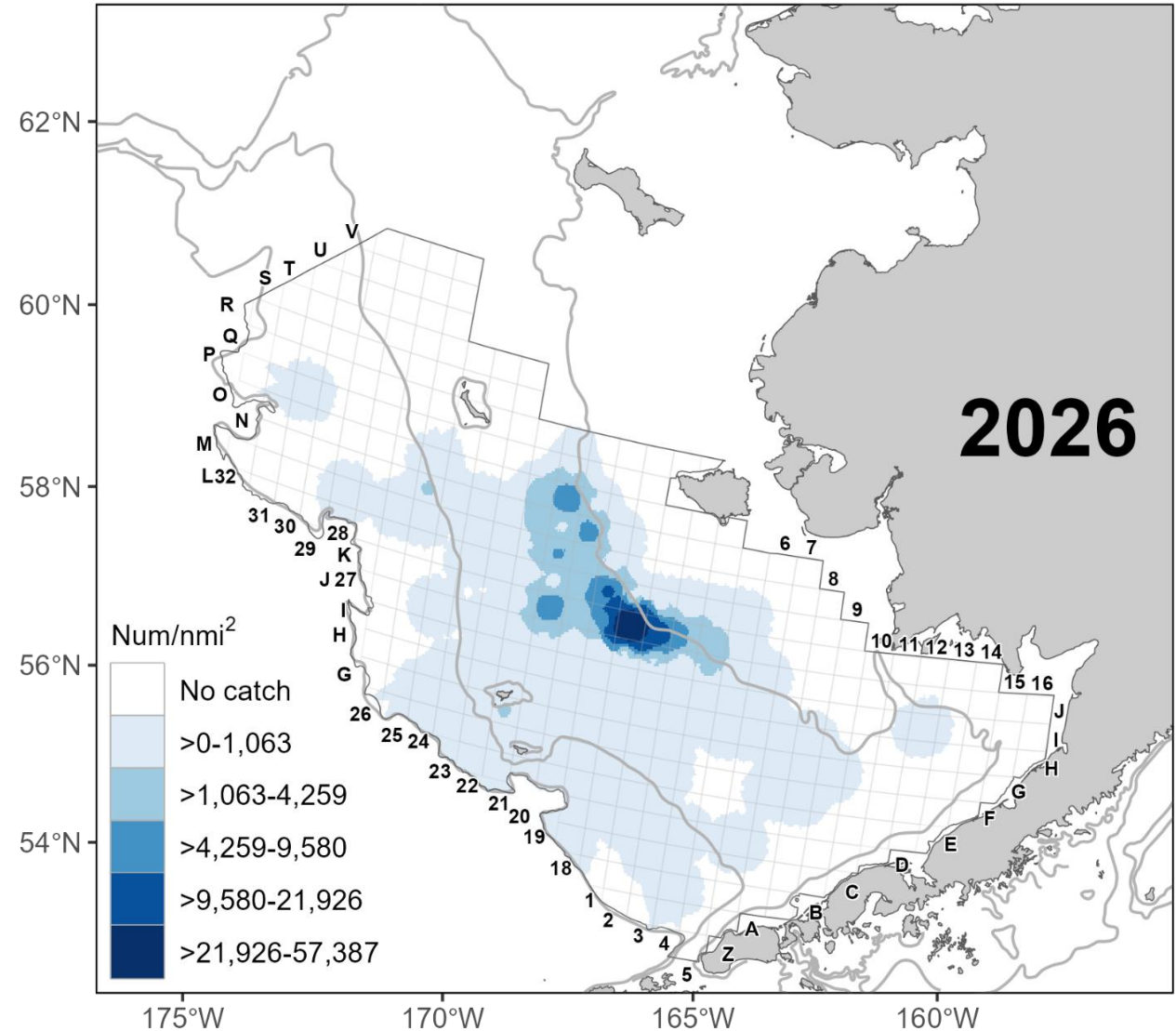
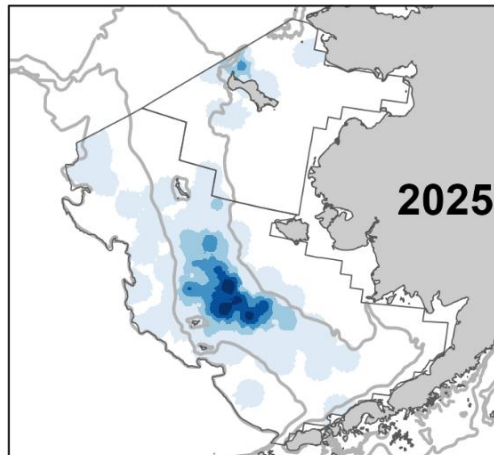
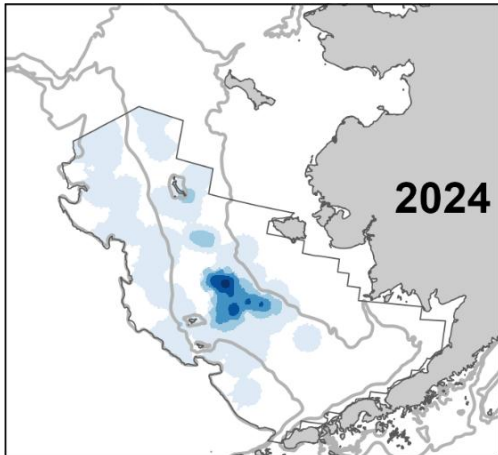
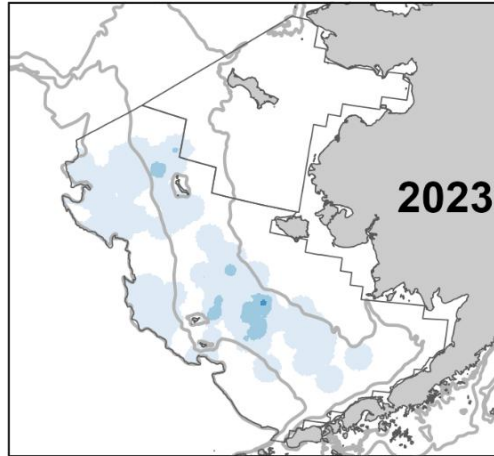
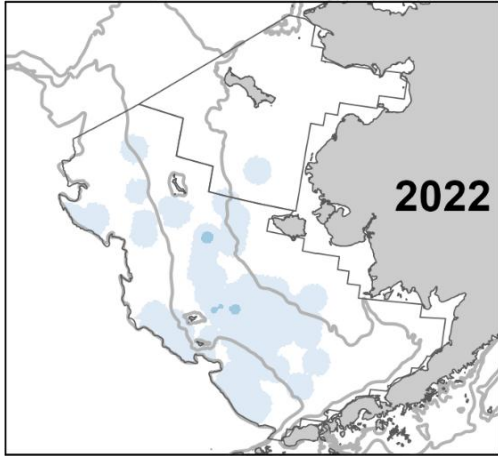
Hybrid crab immature females

- Widespread decreases in density



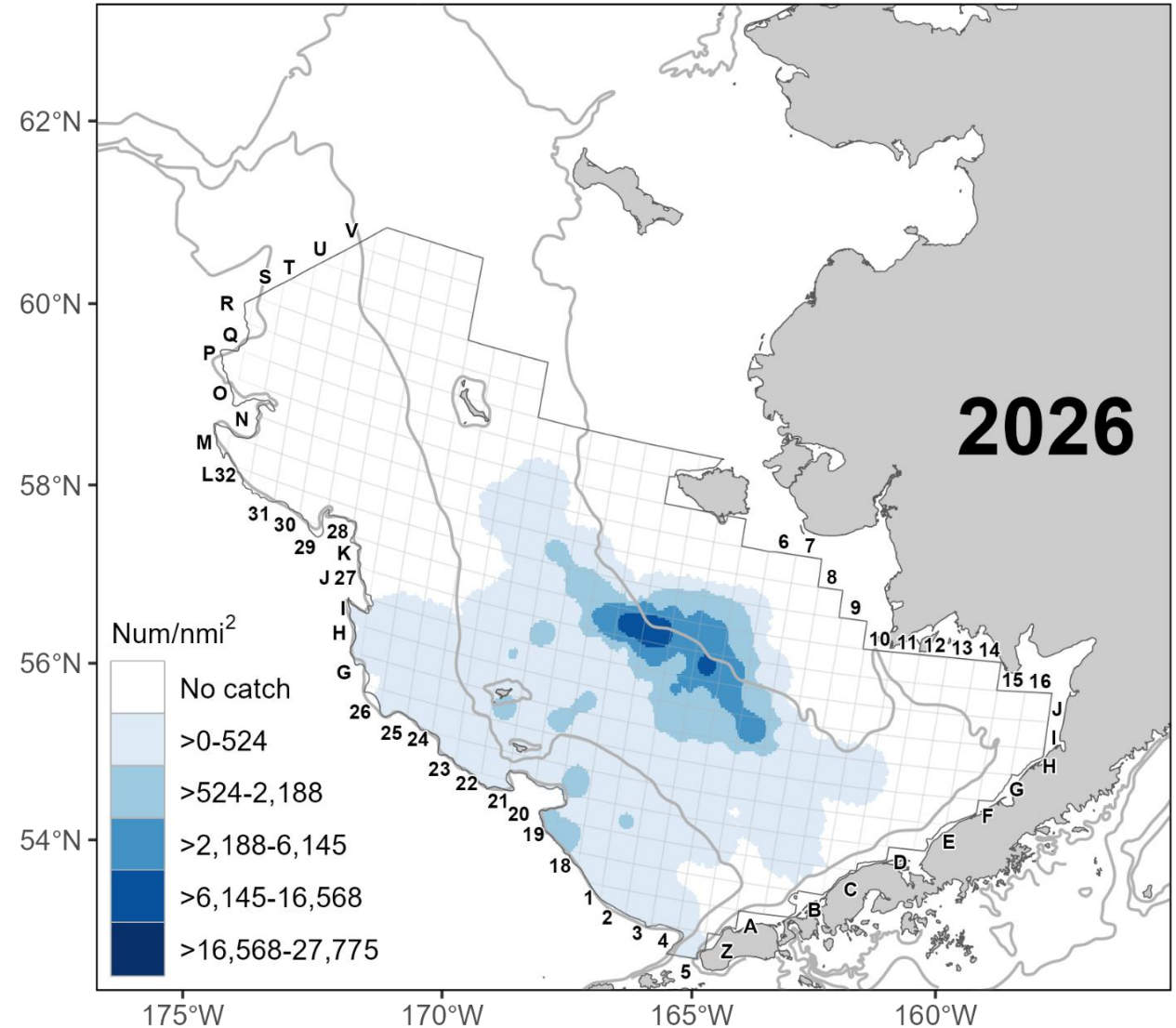
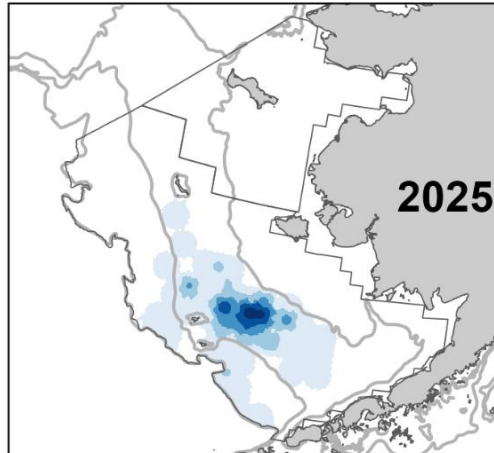
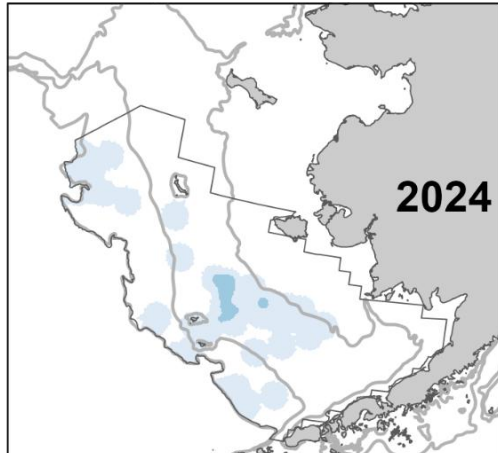
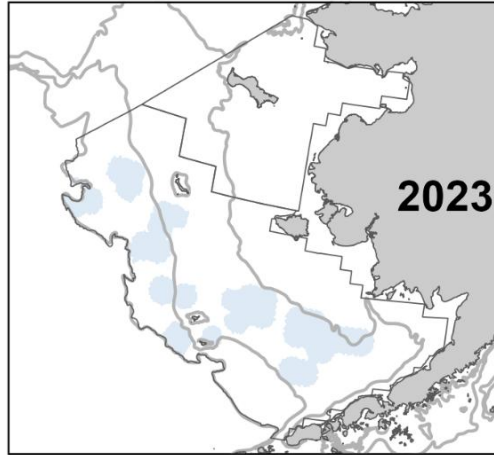
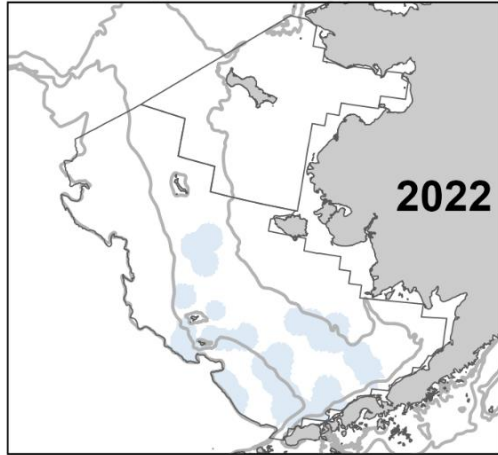
Hybrid crab small males (<95 mm)

- Northeast distribution shifts



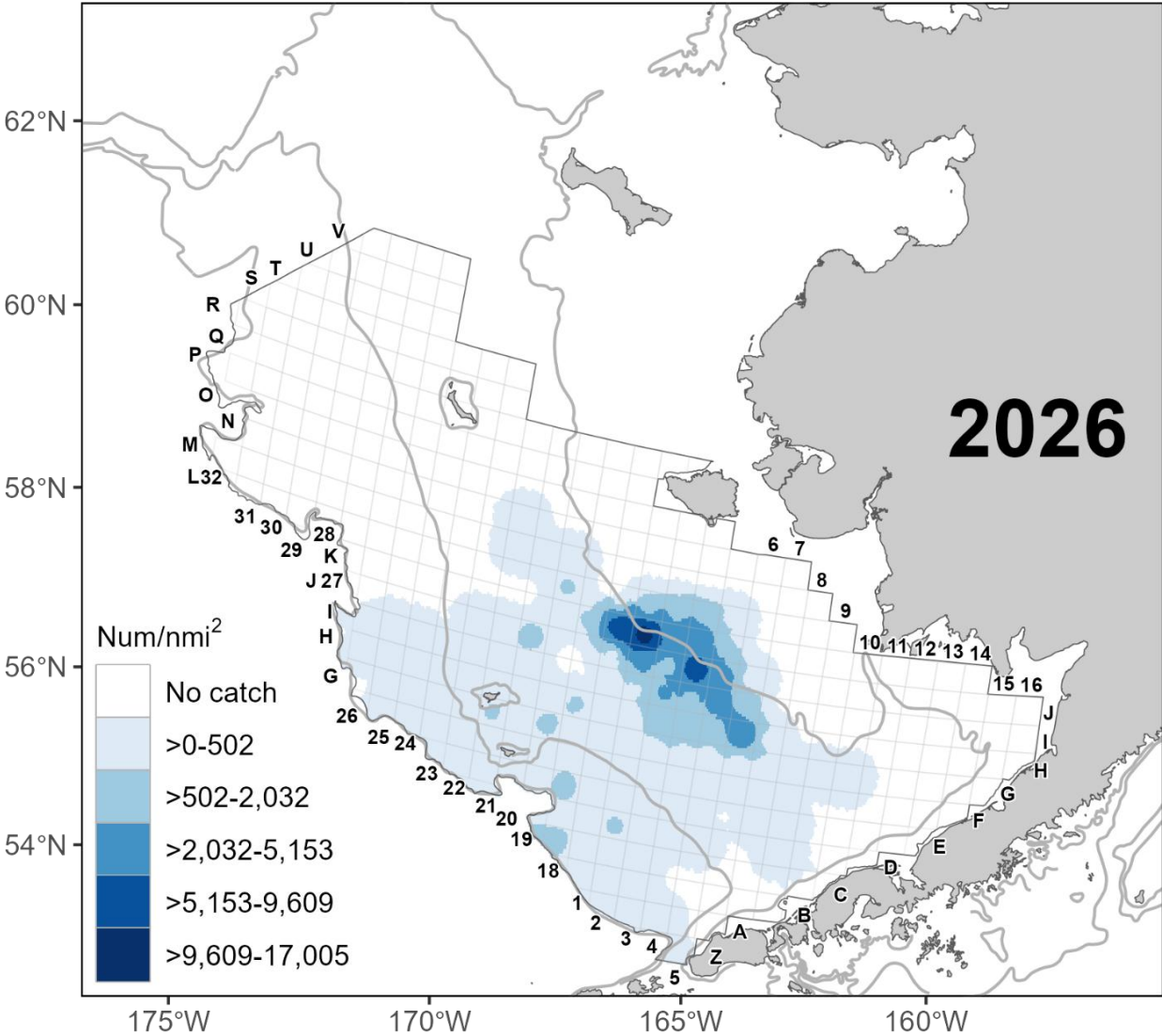
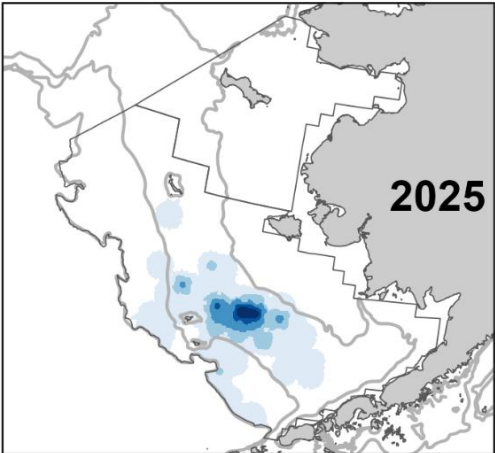
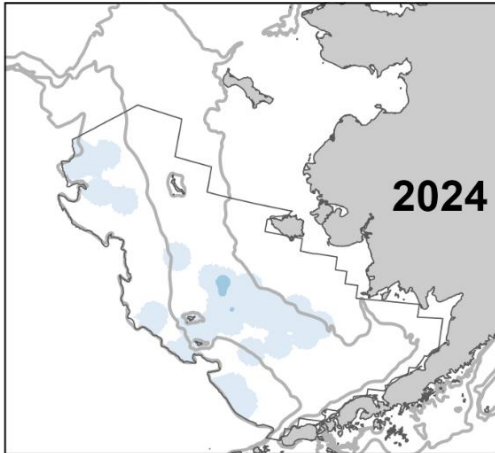
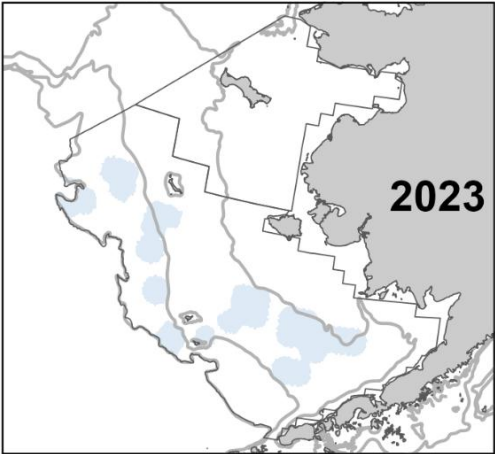
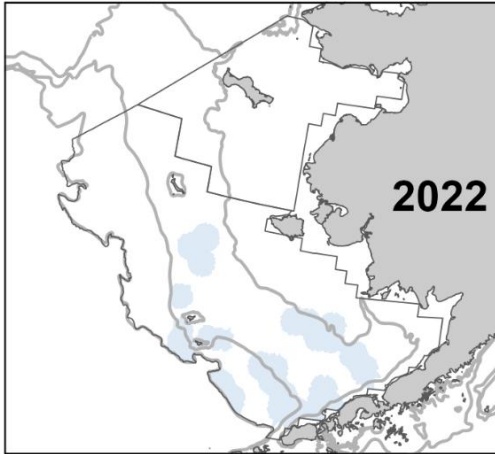
Hybrid crab large males (≥ 95 mm)

- Northeast distribution shifts



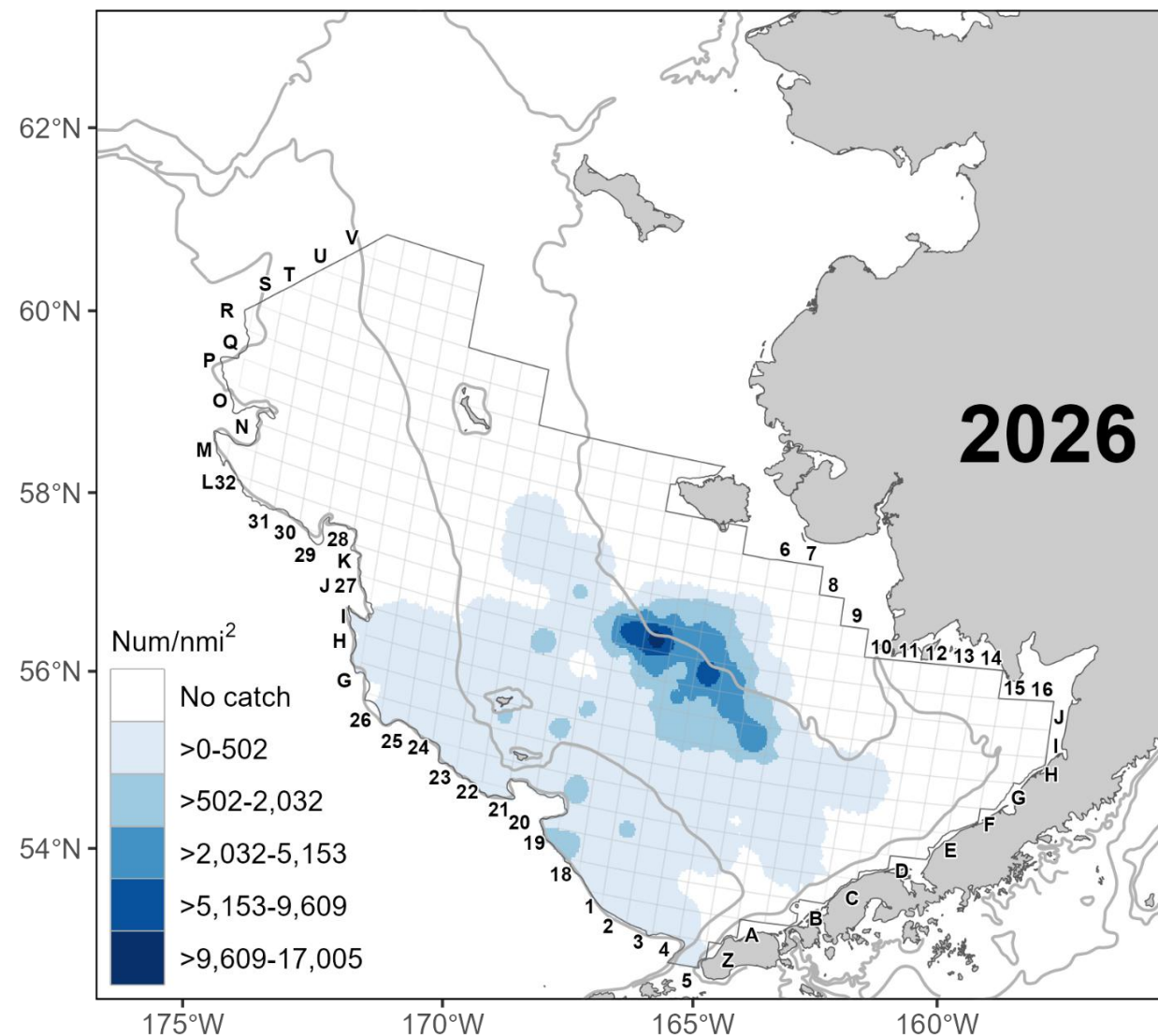
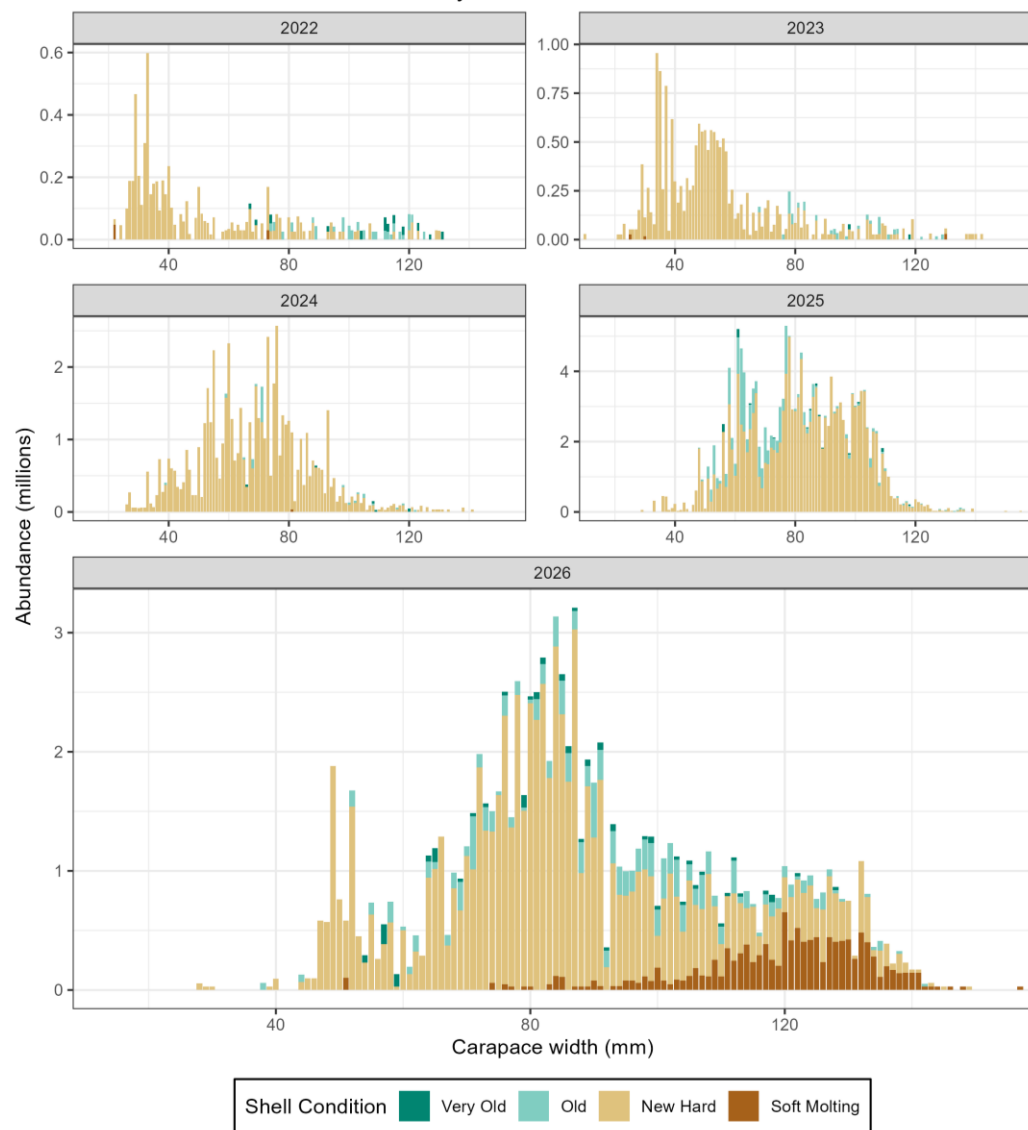
Hybrid crab industry preferred (≥ 101 mm)

- Northeast distribution shifts



Hybrid crab industry preferred (≥ 101 mm)

- Many males are Tanner crab sizes in 2026



Questions?

emily.ryznar@noaa.gov

