

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southwest Region and Southwest Fisheries Science Center will briefly report on recent developments relevant to highly migratory species fisheries and issues of interest to the Council.

Council Task:

Discussion.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item D.1.a, Attachment 1: Southwest Region NMFS Report.
2. Agenda Item D.1.b, Attachment 1: NMFS Southwest Science Center Report.

Agenda Order:

- a. Regulatory Activities
- b. Fisheries Science Center Activities
- c. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. Council Discussion

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PFMC
08/27/09

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE SOUTHWEST REGION
HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES REPORT

FISHERY RELATED ACTIONS

MRIP Funding for HMS Shark Project: The HMS Management Team submitted a proposal to the NMFS Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) entitled “Phased Development and Validation of Survey Design Elements for the West Coast Highly Migratory Shark Species Recreational Fishery.” The MRIP Executive Committee approved the proposal and approximately \$66,000 has been earmarked to carry out the project during the fall and winter 2009-2010.

MRIP Funding for Albacore Index of Abundance Project: The HMS Management Team submitted a second proposal to the NMFS Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) entitled “Evaluation of the Potential to use West Coast Recreational For-Hire Sector Data to Produce a Catch Per Unit Effort Index of Abundance For North Pacific Albacore Tuna.” The MRIP Executive Committee approved the proposal and approximately \$33,000 has been earmarked to carry out the project during the fall and winter 2009-2010.

REGULATORY ACTIONS

HMS Permit Fee Rule Effective: The final rule to collect permit fees for obtaining a HMS permit became effective on August 27, 2009, specifies that an application for an HMS permit, including the renewal of an existing permit, must include a fee payable by the vessel owner. The fee amount is \$30 and will be valid for a 2-year period.

INTERNATIONAL MATTERS

Adoption of EPO Tropical Tuna Management Resolution: At the June 2009. IATTC Meeting the *Resolution on a Multiannual Program for the Conservation of Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in 2009-2011*(Resolution C-09-01) was adopted. Key points include:

- Fishing on skipjack, bigeye, and yellowfin tuna in the IATTC Convention Area by all purse seine vessels class sizes 4-6 (greater than 182 metric tons carrying capacity) is restricted during a closure period of 59 days in 2009, 62 days in 2010, and 73 days in 2011. Members have two options for when to implement the respective closure period for each applicable year. For 2009, the United States is proposing to implement the closure period from November 21, 2009, to January 18, 2010, for its purse seine fleet.
- Purse seine vessels of capacity class size 4 (between 182 and 272 metric tons carrying capacity) may make one fishing trip of up to 30 days duration during the specified closure periods, provided that any such vessel carries an observer of the On-Board Observer Program of the AIDCP.

- A closure for purse seine vessels in an area to the west of the Galapagos Islands between September, 29 to October, 29 in each year.
- Beginning 2010, all applicable purse seine vessels must retain on board and land all bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin tuna caught, except fish considered unfit for human consumption for reasons other than size. A single exemption exists on the final set of a trip.
- Country-specific longline catch limits for bigeye tuna were adopted for China, Japan, Korea, and Chinese Taipei for 2009-2011. Other IATTC Parties and cooperating non-Parties are limited to the greater of 500 metric tons or their respective catches of bigeye tuna in 2001. The U.S. limit on bigeye tuna is 500 metric tons in the EPO for 2009-2011. The bigeye tuna catch limits only apply to longline vessels over 24 meters in length.

Entry into Force of the Antigua Convention: On 27 May 2009, Costa Rica was the seventh Party to the 1949 Convention to ratify or accede to the Antigua Convention. The United States, as depositary government for Antigua, has stated that Antigua shall enter into force 15 months after the accession of Costa Rica, i.e., on August 27, 2010, pursuant to Art. XXXI of the Antigua Convention. The six Parties that ratified/acceded to Antigua before Costa Rica were El Salvador, France, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. The European Union, Canada, Belize, Korea have also ratified or acceded, for a total of 11 governments to date. When the Convention enters into force, all IATTC members that do not decide otherwise will remain members of the Commission.

The Memorandum of Understanding for Exchange of Data with the WCPFC: The MOU was approved by the IATTC. The MOU has already been approved by the WCPFC; however, the IATTC agreed upon some minor changes to language, thus the WCPFC will still need to approve of these changes. The confidentiality requirements of both Commissions will be upheld.

North Pacific Albacore Recommendations: It was recommended by the United States that an informal meeting be scheduled during the next annual meeting to address the Secretariat's recommendations in regards to North Pacific albacore and clarifying how to define "current effort". It was agreed that an ad hoc group will convene at the next annual meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) meetings – October 29-30, 2009, at the La Jolla Marriott Hotel.
- IATTC Shark Stock Assessment Workshop – November 2, 2009, at the La Jolla Marriott Hotel.
- IATTC Scientific Workshop on Modeling Population Processes: Natural Mortality, Recruitment, Growth, and Selectivity – November 3-6, 2009, at the La Jolla Marriott.
- WCPFC meetings –
 - Northern Committee Meeting: September 7-10, 2009, in Nagasaki, Japan.

- Technical and Compliance Committee: October 1-6, 2009, in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.
 - Commission meeting: December 7-11, 2009, in Papeete, Tahiti.
- IATTC Meeting in 2010 – It was proposed that the next IATTC meeting be held later in the year for 2010 only given that the Antigua Convention will come into force in August 2010. The proposed dates are September 27 - October 1, 2010 in La Jolla, California or in a locale proposed by a host country.

NMFS REPORT ON THE NORTHERN COMMITTEE,
FIFTH REGULAR SESSION, NAGASAKI, JAPAN

The Fifth Regular Session of the Northern Committee (NC) took place at Nagasaki, Japan, on 7-10 September, 2009. The meeting was attended by members from Canada, Cook Islands, Japan, Republic of Korea, Chinese Taipei, United States of America and Vanuatu. The NC is one of three subsidiary bodies (the Scientific Committee and the Technical and Compliance Committee being the others) that advise the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC or Commission). The NC provides conservation and management measure advice to the Commission primarily on temperate fish stocks (i.e., North Pacific bluefin, North Pacific albacore, and swordfish) as well as on other species. The NC prepares their recommendations on the findings of the International Scientific Committee.

Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF)

The NC adopted an interim management measure for 2010 for bluefin tuna, which was proposed by Japan. This measure will be considered for adoption by the WCPFC at their plenary meeting in December. The interim management objective is to ensure that the current level of fishing mortality rate is not increased in the Convention Area. To achieve this objective, Commission Members, Cooperating Non-members and participating Territories (CCMs) will take measures to ensure that total fishing effort by their vessel fishing for Pacific bluefin in the area north of 20° North shall not be increased from the 2002-2004 level for 2010. However, the measure will not apply to fisheries in the Korean EEZ or artisanal fisheries. In taking such measures, CCMs shall take account of the need to reduce the effort on juvenile (age 0-3) to the 2004-2004 level to recommend to the WCPFC. Other key provisions include requiring CCMs to strength efforts to improve data collecting systems and reporting how each CCM implemented efforts to curtail their fishing effort.

Albacore

The NC adopted a proposed CMM to replace CMM 2005-03 for north Pacific albacore, which was proposed by the United States. Like the bluefin measure, the measure will be presented at the plenary meeting for the full Commission to consider adopting. Revisions to the CMM include all CCMs reporting annually to the WCPFC both catch and fishing effort by gear type. Catches shall be reported in terms of weight. Fishing effort shall be reported in terms of the most relevant measures for a given type, including at a minimum for all gear types, the number of vessel-days fished and shall use the 2002 -2004 period as the measure of current level of effort. The WCPFC Executive Director shall communicate this conservation and management measure to the IATTC and request that the two Commissions engage in consultations with a view to reaching agreement on a consistent set of conservation and management measures for North Pacific albacore, and

specifically, to propose that both Commissions adopt as soon as practicable uniform conservation and management measures that include clear and explicit baseline levels and any reporting or other measures needed to ensure compliance with agreed measures.

Swordfish

The NC reviewed a new swordfish stock assessment conducted by the ISC, which showed that the stock is above B_{MSY} and fishing mortality is below F_{MSY} . Investigation of stock structure concluded that there are two stocks in the North Pacific, one in the west and the other in the southeast. Because the stock is healthy the NC concluded that no conservation need be proposed for NP swordfish at this session. The U.S. suggested that the current status of the stock presents the Committee with an opportunity to establish reference points in a situation where there is apparently not a need to reduce fishing mortality.

Striped marlin

The NC had little to say about the Scientific Committee failing to recommend, again, that striped marlin be designated a northern stock. There was a brief discussion of the progress of the NC's working group (to explore potential ways to reduce incidental catches of striped marlin), which was acknowledged to be nil. The NC agreed that the group should press on and try to produce something in time for the Commission meeting in December. The United States offered to provide a convener for the group (the ISC's Chair of the striped marlin working group) to convene a discussion in the margins of TCC5 and WCPFC6 with the view to preparing a draft interim CMM for striped marlin for WCPFC6's consideration.

Sharks

The NC agreed that, on the condition that the schedule for assessments of albacore and Pacific bluefin would not be delayed that the ISC be tasked with considering assessments for mako and blue shark but with no timetable associated with these assessments. Any such work would be undertaken in collaboration with the Scientific Committee to the WCPFC to avoid duplication.

Work Program for the NC 2010-2013

The NC revised the work program for the NC 2010-2013. Key additions included: request a report from the Secretariat for NC6 on compliance with the data submission obligations for each CCM; requested the Executive Director to write to IATTC in relation to efforts to develop a CMM for Pacific bluefin and north Pacific albacore promoting harmonization of measures, to the extent possible; and agreed to convene a 2-day workshop prior to NC6 on identifying reference points for NC stocks.

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STOCK ASSESSMENTS

ISC9 Meeting: The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC9) met in Kaohsiung, Taiwan from July 15 – 20, 2009. This meeting reviewed stock assessment progress in the past year and developed conservation advice on Pacific bluefin tuna, North Pacific albacore, striped marlin, and swordfish.

- **Pacific bluefin tuna:** ISC noted that current F (2002-2004) is greater than most commonly used biological reference points (BRP) that may serve as potential target reference points. However, ISC failed to adopt a consensus advice on adjustment to F required for conservation of the stock. The next assessment is planned for 2012.
- **Albacore tuna:** Because an assessment for albacore tuna was last conducted in 2006, ISC provided no new conservation advice and maintained its 2007 advice. ISC9 concluded that a full albacore assessment should occur as soon as possible. The next assessment is planned for 2011.
- **Striped marlin:** For striped marlin, no new assessment has been completed and ISC maintained its existing conservation advice, adopted in 2007, that F should be reduced from current (2003) levels.
- **Swordfish:** For swordfish, ISC concluded that the WCPO and EPO stocks in the North Pacific Ocean are healthy and well above the level required to sustain recent catches and provided no conservation advice for these stocks.

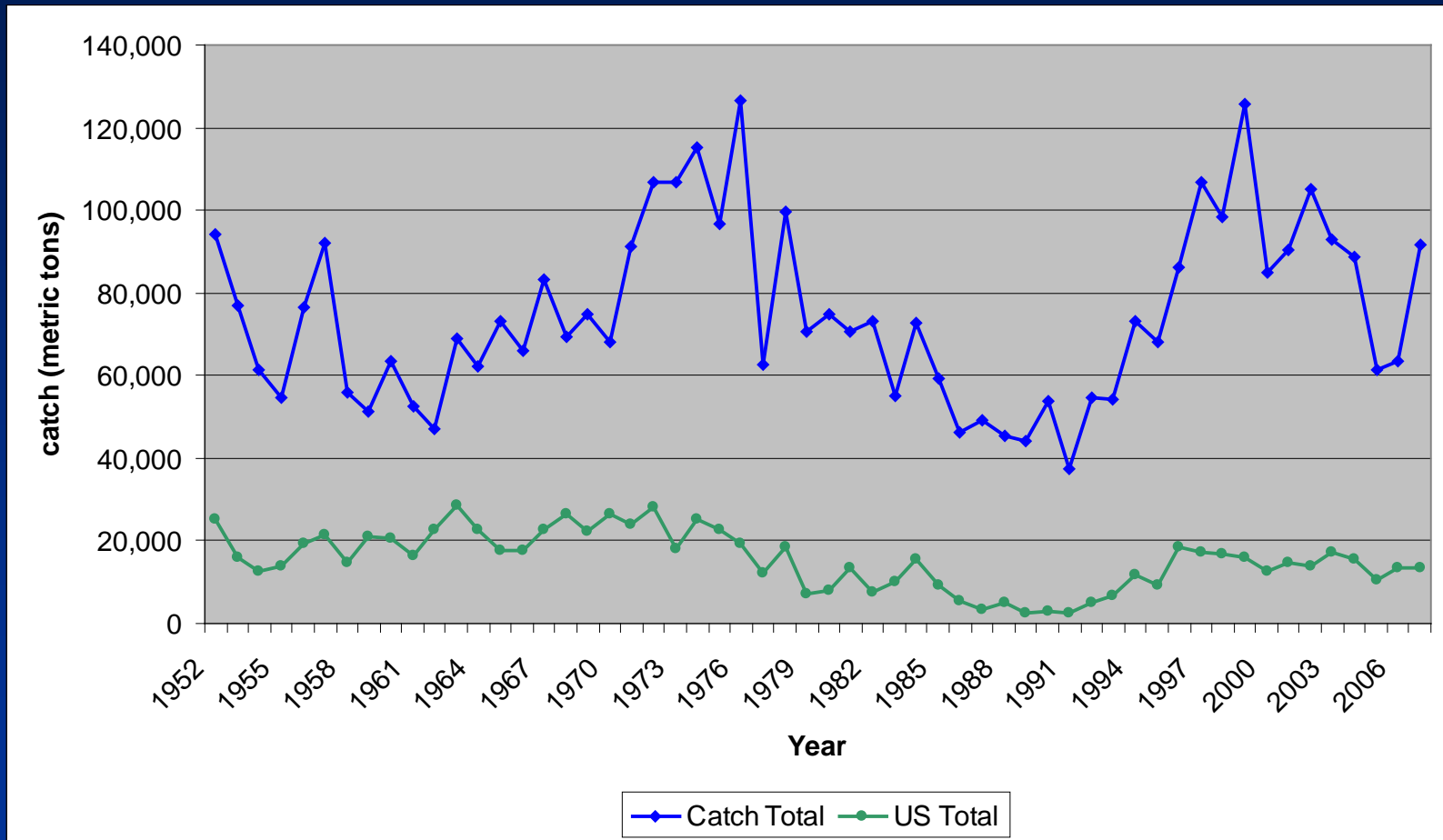
Southwest Fisheries Science Center HMS Report September 14, 2009

**Pacific Fisheries Management Council Meeting
Foster City, CA**

North Pacific Albacore (ALB)

- No new stock assessment (last one in 2006).
- Therefore, no change in conservation advice
- The 2006 SSB estimate is the second highest in history
- Keeping $F_{2002-04}$ will reduce SSB
- The $F_{2002-04}$ (0.75) is high relative to most F reference points

ALB Total and US catch, 1952-2007

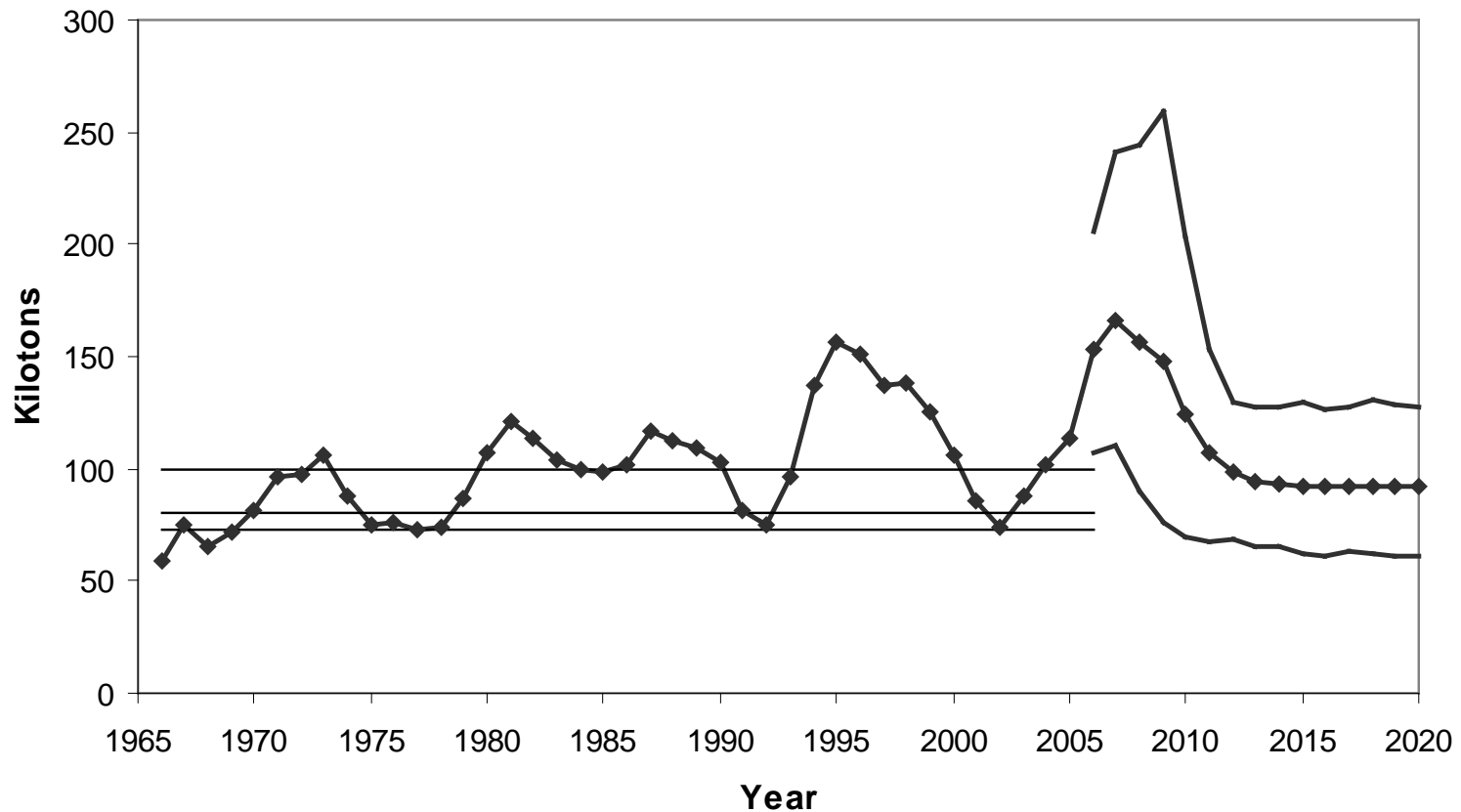


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Estimated Spawning Stock Biomass of North Pacific Albacore

Spawning Stock Biomass with Average Productivity & $F=0.75$
and 90% CI's for Projection Years



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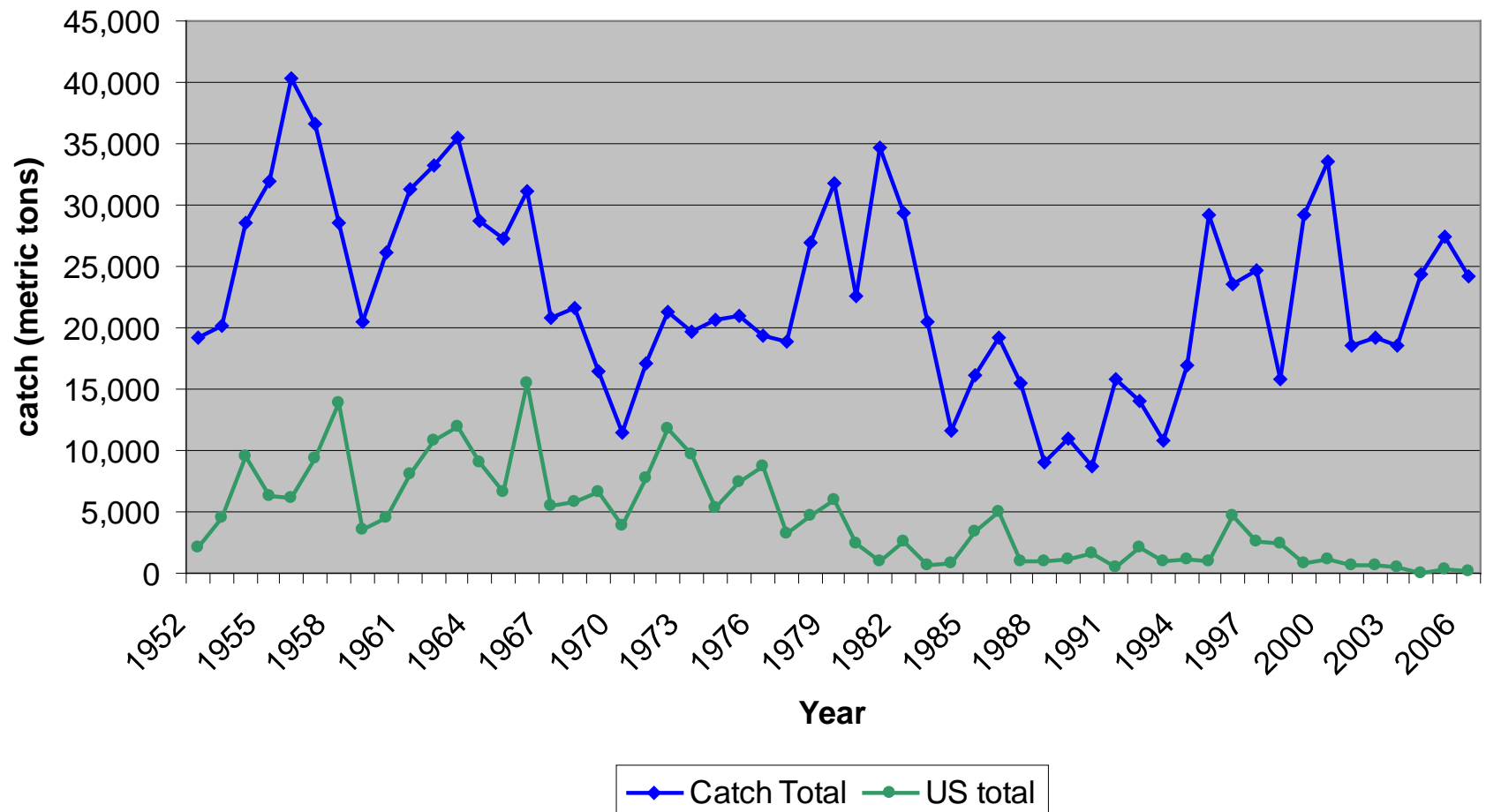
ALB - Advice

- F should not be increased from the 2002-2004 level
- With the projection of a reduced SSB by the mid 2010s, F will likely exceed the interim BRP

Pacific Bluefin Tuna (PBF)

- **Stock assessment performed in 2008:**
- 2002-04 catch -- around 24,000 t
- Catch – increasingly on juveniles; and majority by weight has been on juveniles (0-3 year olds)
- Current (2002-04) overall F -- exceeds commonly used BRPs

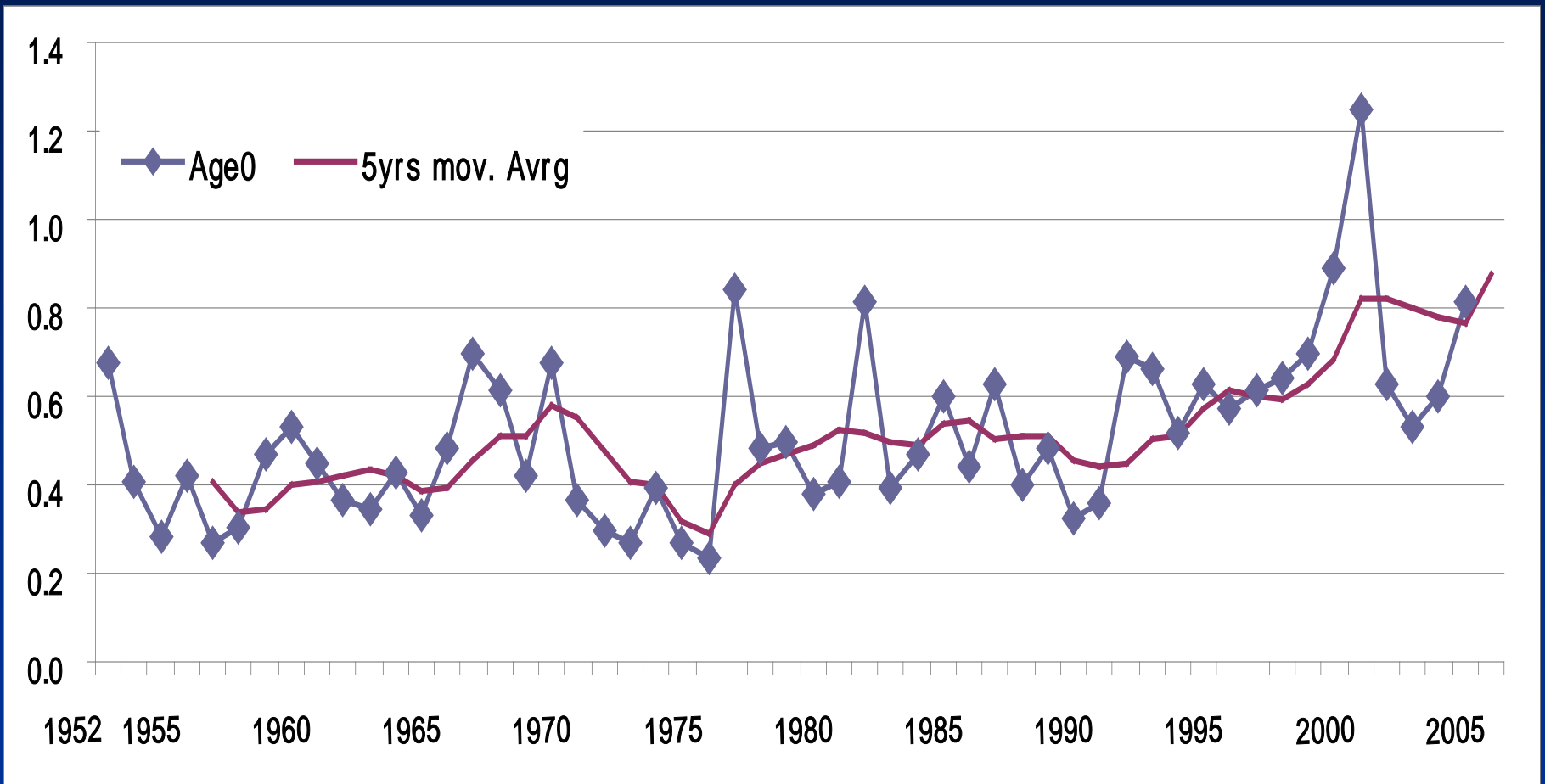
PBF catch 1952-2006



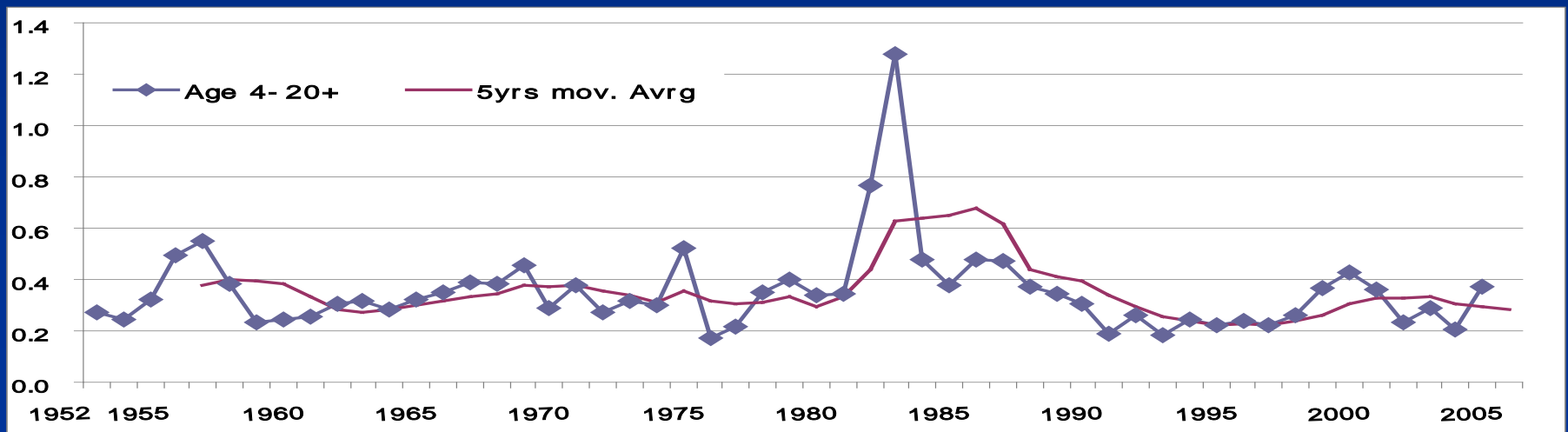
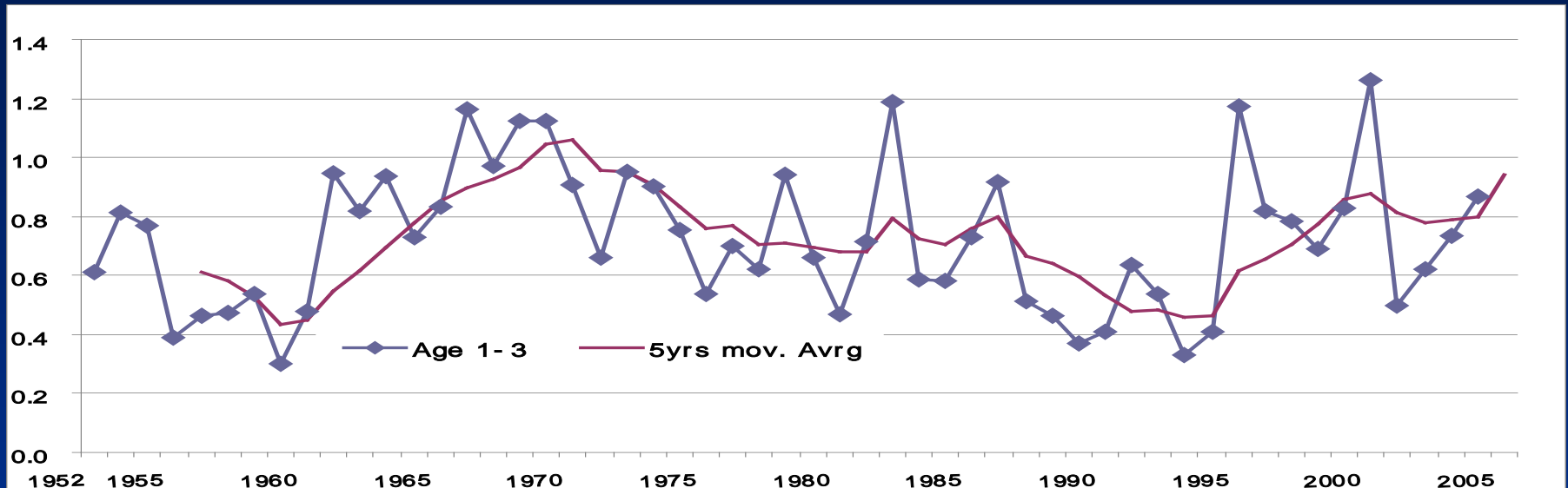
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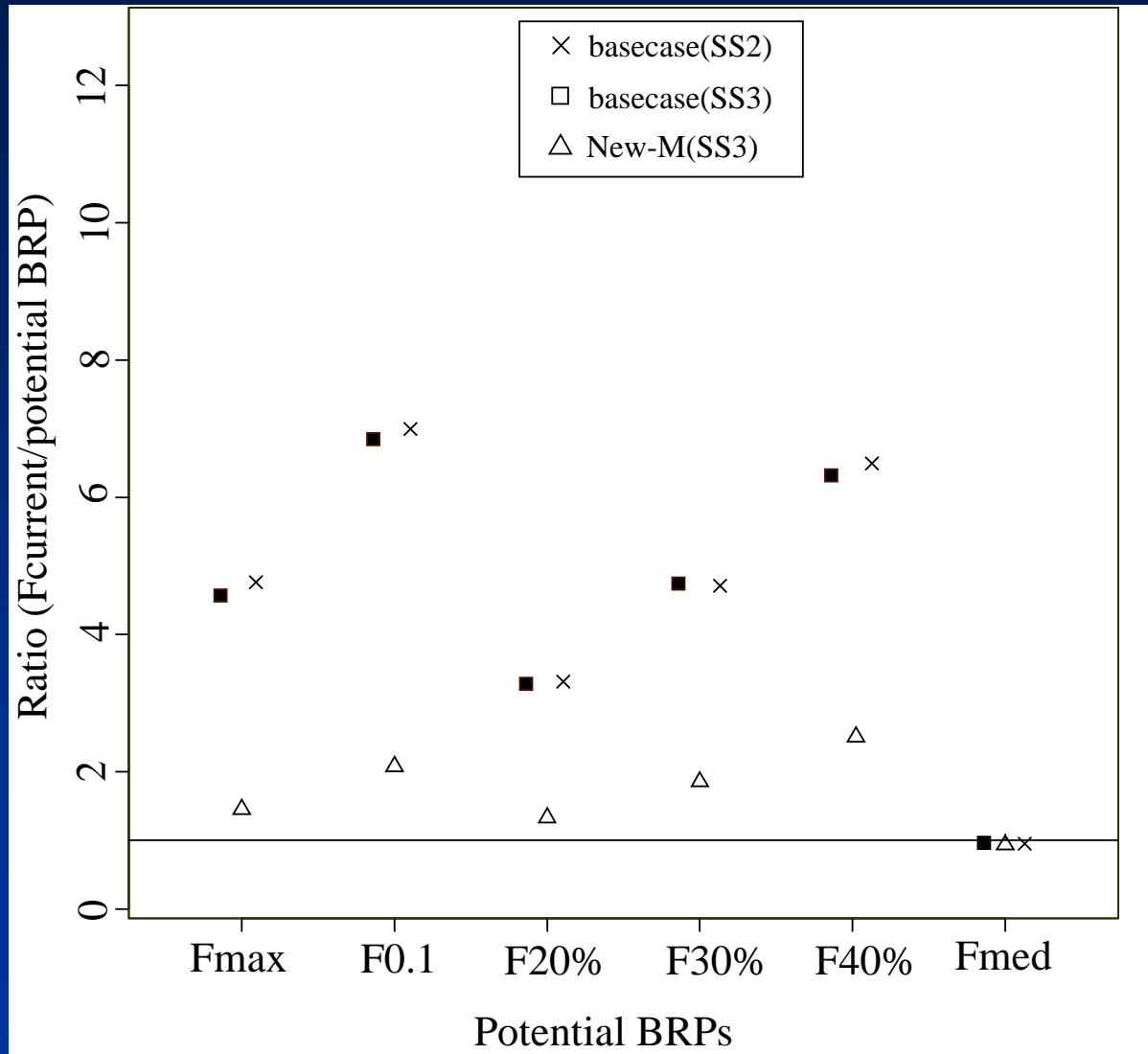
Fishing Mortality Rate (F) for PBF, Age 0



Fishing Mortality Rate (F) for PBF, Ages 1-3 and Ages 4-20+



PBF -potential reference points



PBF – ISC conservation advice

1. If F remains at the 2002-04 level and environmental conditions remain favourable, the recruitment should be sufficient to maintain current yield well into the future.
2. A reduction in F in combination with favourable environmental conditions, should lead to greater SPR.
3. Increases in F above the 2002-04 level, and/or unfavourable changes in environmental conditions, may result in recruitment levels which are insufficient to sustain the productivity of the stock.

PBF – ISC conservation advice

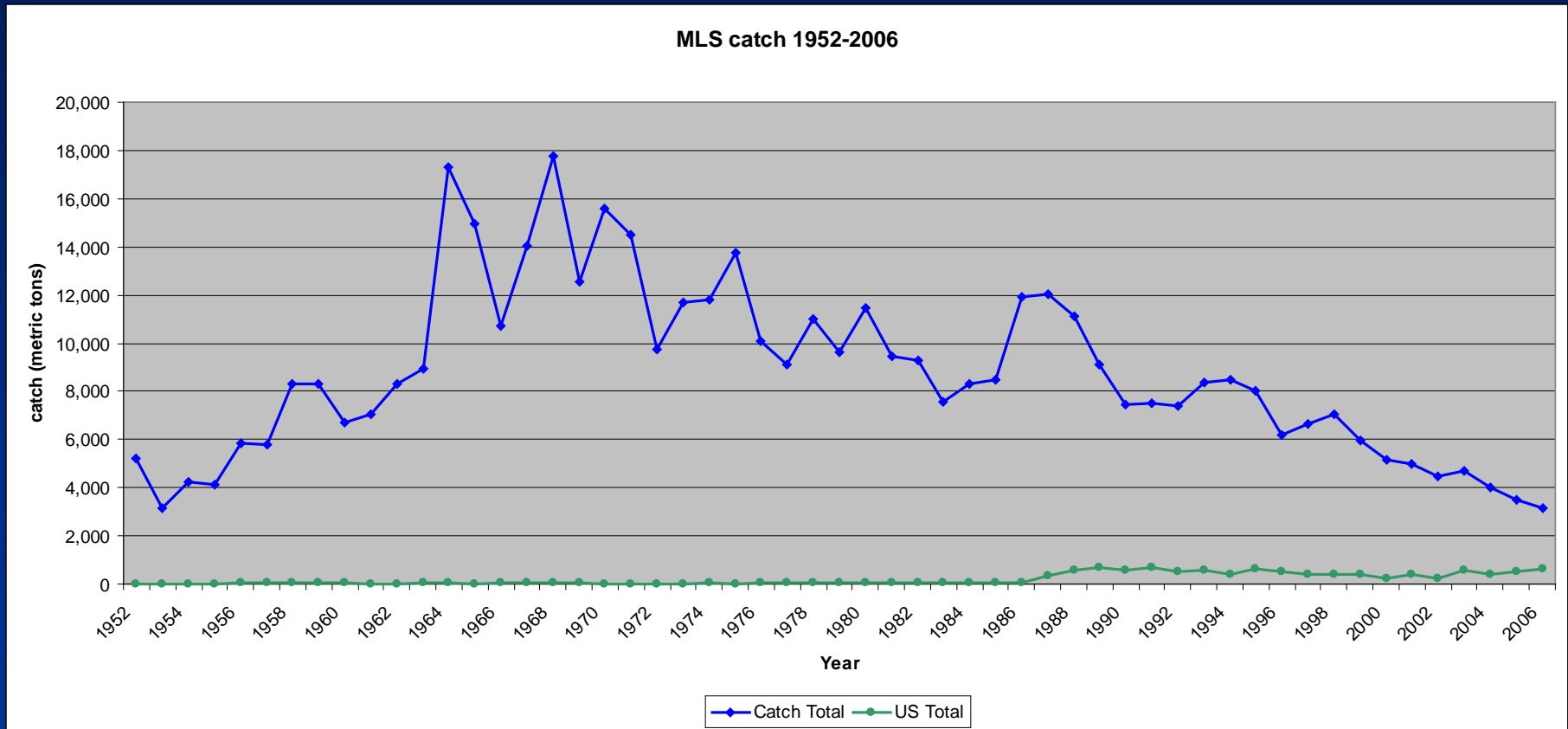
Viewpoint 2:

- 4. Given the conclusions of the July 2009 PBFWG, the 2002-04 level of F relative to potential biological reference points, and increasing trend of juvenile F , it is important that the current level of F is decreased below the 2002-2004 levels on juvenile age classes.*

North Pacific Striped Marlin (MLS)

- No new stock assessment (next SA in 2011)
- 2007 results indicated that SSB_{2005} at a historically low level
- F_{2003} high and exceeds typically used BRPs
- Conservation advice from ISC7 maintained, i.e., F_{2003} should be reduced

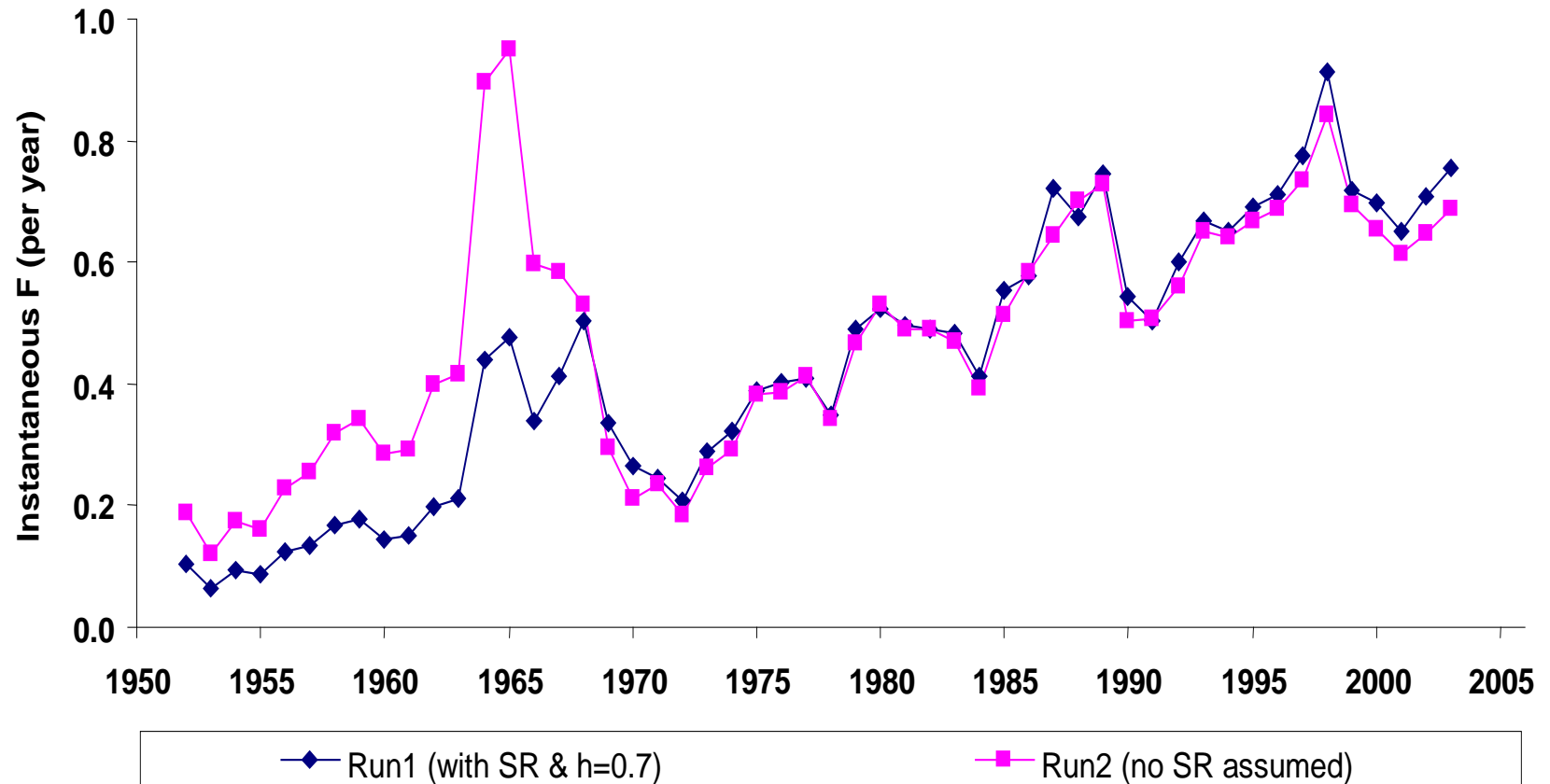
MLS catch in metric tons, 1952-2006



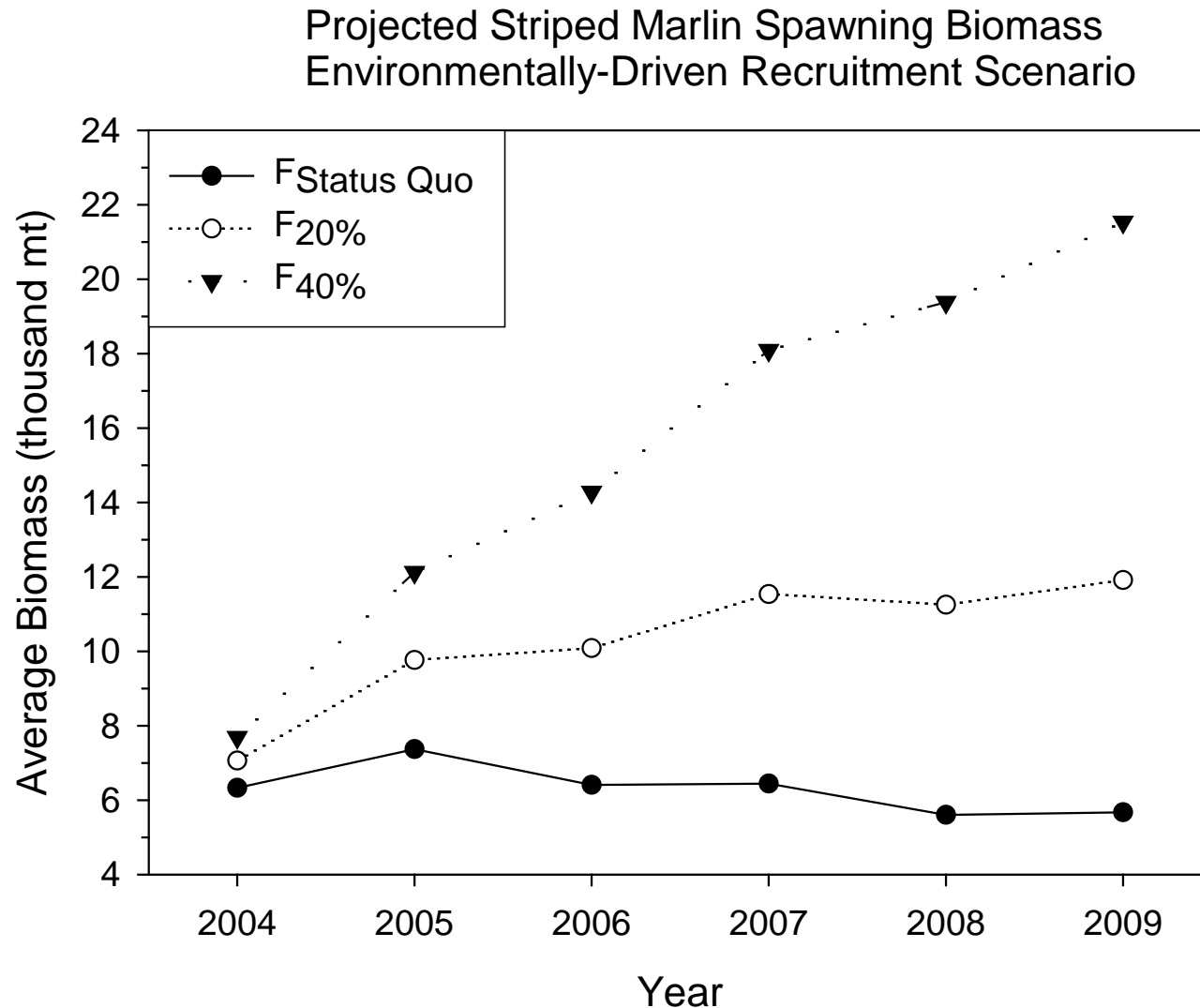
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Fishing Mortality Rate (F) for Striped Marlin Spawners (Ages 5+)



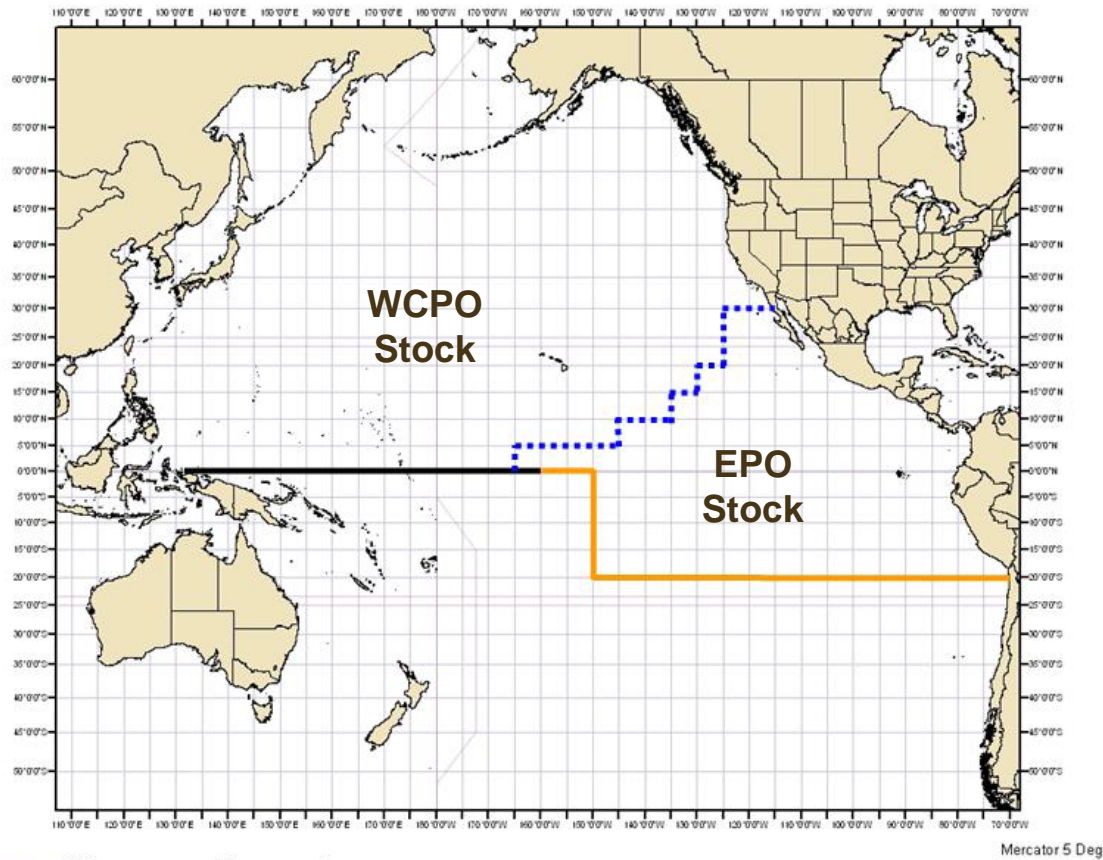
MLS -- Projected trends in average spawning biomass



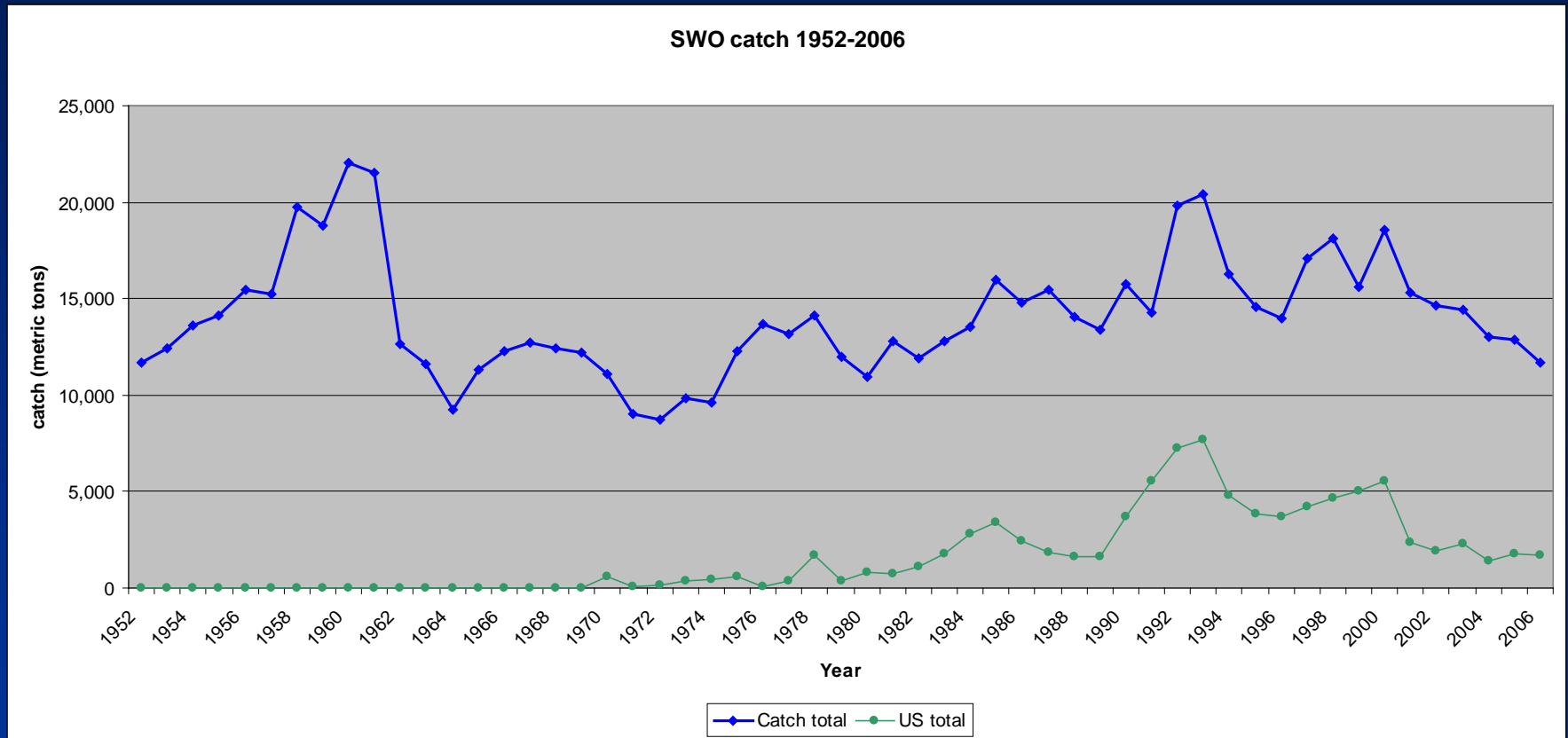
Swordfish (SWO)

- ISC conducted an assessment in 2009 using both a single- and a 2-stock scenario.

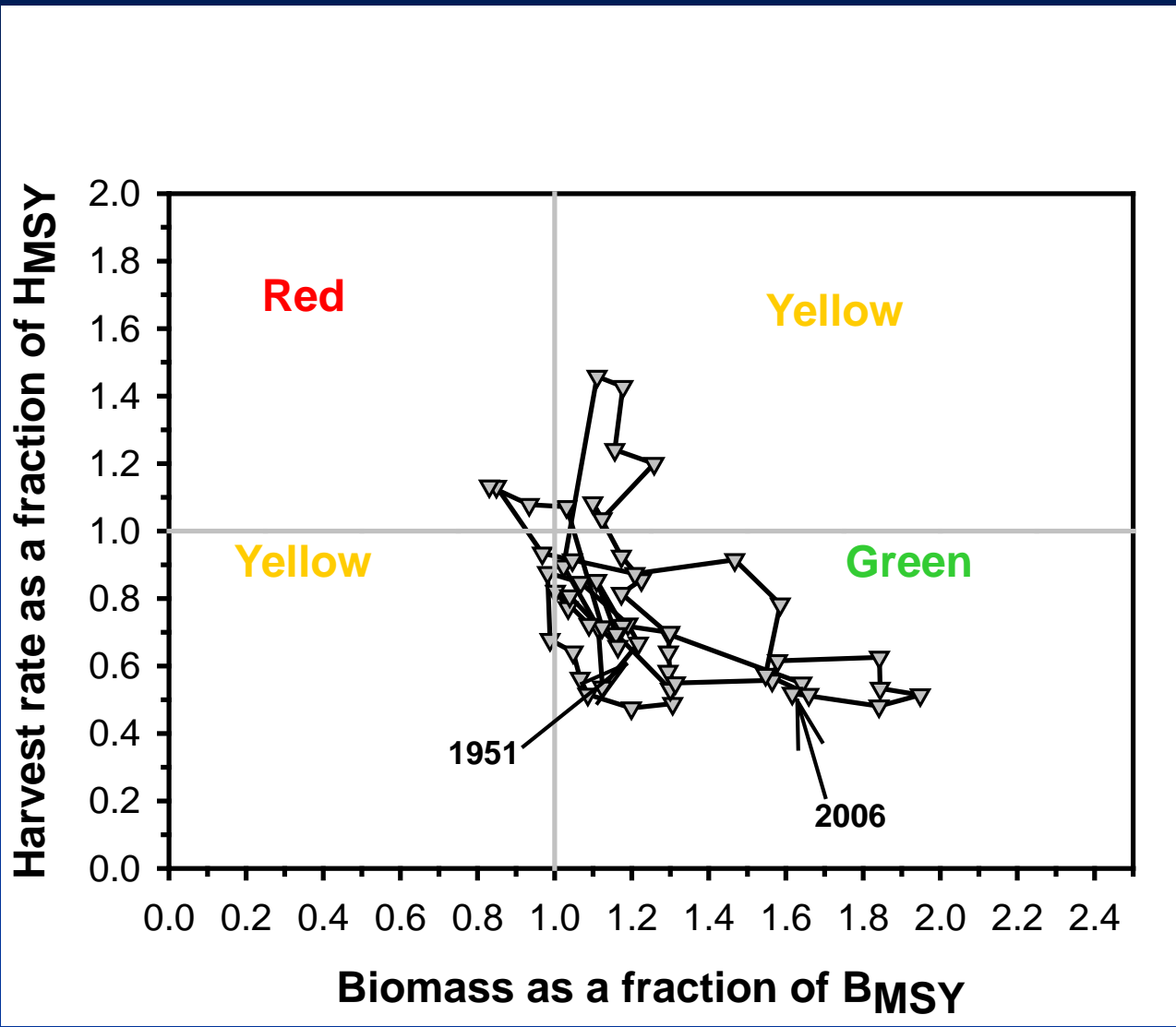
Swordfish – Areas for 2-stock scenario



SWO catch in metric tons, 1952-2006



SWO – Kobe plot for WCPO, 1951-2006



SWO – ISC conservation advice

- ISC concluded that the WCPO and EPO stocks in the North Pacific Ocean are healthy and well above the level required to sustain recent catches and provided no conservation advice for these stocks.

Other

- Sharks
- Blue marlin
- Habitat
- More info and documents:
<http://isc.ac.affrc.go.jp/>

Questions?