

REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION MEETING

The 2012 Annual Meeting of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) was held in Anchorage, AK. January 24-27, 2012. The most significant outcome of the meeting was setting the 2012 harvest levels (Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 1), which involved discussions of how to apportion the total allowable catch (TAC) among the various catch areas. The Area 2A TAC was up from 0.91 million pounds in 2011 to 0.989 million pounds in 2012 (Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 2).

Ms. Gway Kirchner, Council representative to the IPHC, attended the annual meeting, along with numerous other interested parties from Area 2A. Ms. Kirchner has provided a brief summary of the results of the meeting (Agenda Item H.1.b, IPHC Meeting Summary).

Council Task:

1. Discuss information relative to Area 2A halibut fisheries.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 1: IPHC News Release.
2. Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 2: 2012 Area 2A Pacific Halibut Allocations.
3. Agenda Item H.1.b, IPHC Meeting Summary: Summary of International Pacific Halibut Commission Meeting.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Meeting Summary
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- d. Public Comment
- e. Council Discussion

Chuck Tracy
Gway Kirchner

PFMC
02/13/12

INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

News Release



2320 W. COMMODORE WAY, SUITE 300, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, 98199-1287

January 30, 2012

HALIBUT COMMISSION COMPLETES 2012 ANNUAL MEETING

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) completed its Eighty-eighth Annual Meeting in Anchorage, AK, with Dr. James W. Balsiger of Juneau AK presiding as Chair. More than 200 halibut industry stakeholders attended the meeting, with over 50 more participating in web broadcasts of the public sessions.

The Commission is recommending to the governments of Canada and the United States catch limits for 2012 totaling 33,540,000 pounds, an 18.3% decrease from the 2011 catch limit of 41,070,000 pounds.

In addition to setting catch limits for 2012, the Commission dealt with a wide range of catch limit and regulatory issues, and also took important actions regarding bycatch management, scientific assessment review, and the IPHC performance review. Details of the stock assessment, catch limits and seasons, regulatory actions, and other issues are presented in the following sections.

Stock Assessment and Harvest Rates

The Commission staff reported on the 2011 Pacific halibut stock assessment, comprised of a coastwide estimation of biomass from a variant of the assessment model used since 2006, with apportionment to regulatory areas based on the data from the annual Commission standardized stock assessment survey. Coastwide overall commercial fishery weight per unit effort (WPUE) was largely unchanged (+1%) in 2011 from 2010 values, although a significant decline (-18%) continued in Area 3B. Area 2A commercial WPUE also declined significantly, although this area has significantly shorter openings with the tribal fishery and derby-style commercial fishery, leading to a commercial index that is more variable than other areas. In contrast, commercial WPUE increased from 8-15% in Areas 2B, 2C, and 4B. The 2011 IPHC stock assessment survey WPUE values (adjusted for hook competition, survey timing, and averaged as in the apportionment process) increased notably in Area 2C but continued to decrease by about 20% in Areas 3B, 4A, and 4CDE. The coastwide survey WPUE value declined by approximately 5% from 2010 to 2011.

The Commission has expressed concern over continued declining catch rates in several areas and has taken aggressive action to reduce harvests. In addition, the staff has noted a continuing problem of reductions in previous estimates of biomass as additional data are obtained, which has the effect of increasing the realized historical harvest rates on the stock. Commission scientists will be conducting additional research on this matter in 2012. For 2012, the Commission approved a 21.5% harvest rate for use in Areas 2A through 3A and a 16.1% harvest rate for Areas 3B through 4.

Catch Limits and Seasons

The Commission received regulatory proposals for 2012 from the scientific staff, Canadian and United States harvesters and processors, and other fishery agencies. The Commission faced very difficult decisions on the appropriate harvest from the stock and recognized the economic impact of the reduced catch limits recommended by its scientific staff. However, the Commission believes that conservation of the halibut resource is the most important management objective and will serve the best economic interests of the industry over the long term. Accordingly, catch limits adopted for 2012 were lower in all regions of the stock except Areas 2A and 2C.

The Commission is recommending to the governments the following catch limits for 2012:

2012 Catch Limits	
Regulatory Area	Catch Limit (pounds)
Area 2A (California, Oregon, and Washington)	
Non-treaty directed commercial (south of Pt. Chehalis)	173,216
Non-treaty incidental catch in salmon troll fishery	30,568
Non-treaty incidental catch in sablefish fishery (north of Pt. Chehalis)	21,173
Treaty Indian commercial	321,650
Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (year-round)	24,500
Sport – North of Columbia River	214,110
<u>Sport – South of Columbia River</u>	<u>203,783</u>
Area 2A total	989,000
Area 2B (British Columbia) (includes sport catch allocation)	7,038,000
Area 2C (southeastern Alaska)	2,624,000
Area 3A (central Gulf of Alaska)	11,918,000
Area 3B (western Gulf of Alaska)	5,070,000
Area 4A (eastern Aleutians)	1,567,000
Area 4B (western Aleutians)	1,869,000
Area 4C (Pribilof Islands)	1,107,355
Area 4D (northwestern Bering Sea)	1,107,355
Area 4E (Bering Sea flats)	<u>250,290</u>
Area 4 total	5,901,000
Total	33,540,000

Notes Regarding the Catch Limits for Specific Regulatory Areas

Area 2A

The catch sharing plan implemented by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) for Area 2A was adopted by the Commission and is reflected in the catch limits adopted for the Area 2A fisheries. The overall catch limit for Area 2A in 2012 is

sufficient to permit non-treaty incidental harvest of halibut during the limited entry sablefish longline fishery, under the provisions of the PFMC catch sharing plan and the adopted total Area 2A catch limit.

Area 2B

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada (DFO) will allocate the Area 2B catch limit between sport and commercial fisheries.

Area 4

The IPHC sets catch limits for Areas 4A, 4B, and a combined Area 4CDE. The catch limits for Regulatory Areas 4C, 4D, and 4E reflect the catch sharing plan implemented by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC). The catch sharing plan allows Area 4D Community Development Quota (CDQ) harvest to be taken in Area 4E and Area 4C Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) and CDQ to be fished in Area 4D.

Fishing Season Dates

After reviewing staff information and proposals from the harvesting and processing sector, the Commission approved a season of March 17 – November 7, 2012 for the U.S. and Canadian Individual Quota fisheries, and the Treaty tribal fisheries in Area 2A. The Saturday opening date is to facilitate marketing. In order to provide more time for its staff to conduct the stock assessment prior to its Interim Meeting, the Commission selected an earlier closing date than in 2011.

Seasons will commence at noon local time on March 17 and terminate at noon local time on November 7, 2012 for the following fisheries and areas: the Canadian Individual Vessel Quota (IVQ) fishery in Area 2B, and the United States IFQ and CDQ fisheries in Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E. All Area 2A commercial fishing, including the treaty Indian commercial fishery, will take place between March 17 and November 7, 2012.

In Area 2A, seven 10-hour fishing periods for the non-treaty directed commercial fishery are recommended: June 27, July 11, July 25, August 8, August 22, September 5, September 19, 2012. All fishing periods will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 6:00 p.m. local time, and will be further restricted by fishing period limits announced at a later date.

Area 2A fishing dates for an incidental commercial halibut fishery concurrent with the limited entry sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis and the salmon troll fishing seasons will be established under United States domestic regulations by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The remainder of the Area 2A catch sharing plan, including sport fishing seasons and depth restrictions, will be determined under regulations promulgated by NMFS. For further information of the depth restrictions in the commercial directed halibut fishery, and the sport fisheries, call the NMFS hotline (1-800-662-9825).

Regulatory Changes and Issues

The Commission took action on the following four regulatory changes and issues proposed by staff and stakeholders.

Logbooks

The Commission approved the staff recommendations to modify its regulations so as to provide conformity with DFO logbook regulations in Area 2B (requiring latitude/longitude position information and recording of catch by set) and to allow the use of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Fixed Gear logbook as an approved logbook for commercial fishing in Area 2A.

Area 2A Licensing

The Area 2A licensing regulations remained the same as in 2011, with the exception that vessels fishing in the incidental halibut fishery concurrent with the sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis are also required to obtain a commercial license from the Commission. Fishers must choose between a commercial or sport charter license. Commercial fishers must choose between a license for (1) retaining halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll fishery, or (2) fishing in the directed commercial halibut fishery (south of Point Chehalis) and/or retaining halibut caught incidentally in the primary sablefish fishery (north of Point Chehalis). The deadline dates for receiving license applications remain the same: April 30 for the directed commercial fishery/incidental sablefish fishery and April 2 (as March 31 is on Saturday) for the incidental halibut fishery concurrent with the salmon troll fishery. A vessel that has a commercial halibut license cannot be used for halibut sport fishing.

Control of Charter Harvest in Area 2C

The Commission received a request from the NPFMC to change the Commission's existing one-fish bag limit with 37-in maximum length for charter fishing in Area 2C, to a one-fish bag limit with a U45/O68 reverse-slot limit length restriction (≤ 45 in or ≥ 68 in, head on). This proposal is intended to keep the removals by the charter fishery within the Council's 0.931 Mlb Guideline Harvest Level for Area 2C. In addition, the entire carcass must be retained on board the vessel until all fillets are offloaded. After consideration of the request and discussion concerning the estimation of release mortality associated with this measure, the Commission adopted the U45/O68 reverse slot limit for charter halibut fishing in Area 2C for 2012.

Recreational Fishery Release Mortality

The Commission discussion of the reverse slot limit for Area 2C highlighted the issue of release mortality for halibut discarded by recreational fisheries coastwide. There are currently no estimates of release mortality during recreational fishing included in halibut management, although such releases by the recreational sector are known to be common, while similar mortality for undersize releases in the commercial fisheries is included. Accordingly, the Commission directed staff to write letters to all agencies involved in management of halibut recreational fisheries requesting implementation of data collection programs and estimation of such mortality for all recreational fisheries.

The Commission received a number of regulatory and catch limit proposals after the deadlines for submission and did not consider these proposals. Participants are reminded that future proposals should be received by Commission deadlines if they are to be considered by the

Commission and its advisory bodies, to clearly distinguish the regulatory or catch limit objective of the proposals, and to submit the proposals under the appropriate category.

The recommended regulations for the 2012 halibut fishery will become official as soon as they are approved by the Canadian and United States governments. The Commission will publish and distribute regulation pamphlets.

Other Actions

Halibut Bycatch Mortality

The Commission expressed its continued concern about the yield and spawning biomass losses to the halibut stock from mortality of halibut in non-directed fisheries. Significant progress in reducing this bycatch mortality has been achieved in Areas 2B, and recently in Area 2A, using individual bycatch quotas for vessels in some fisheries. Reductions have also occurred in Alaska, and new measures aimed at improving bycatch estimation, scheduled to begin in 2013, will help to refine these estimates. The Commission noted the upcoming workshop on bycatch being conducted jointly with the NPFMC and approved a request from its Conference Board to recommend a member from the directed halibut fishery to serve as a panelist on this workshop. In addition, the Commission directed staff to coordinate with state agencies and review estimates of mortality in all state-managed fisheries in Alaska to ensure that they remain appropriate.

The Commission reviewed progress by its Halibut Bycatch Working Group and developed objectives and timelines for work in 2012. In particular, the Working Group will review a staff report on halibut migration, review actions taken by both countries to reduce bycatch mortality, identify further actions that will be effective in reducing bycatch mortality, and identify options to mitigate the effects of such mortality.

Assessment Work Team

The Commission will develop a multi-year plan to review current and planned research activities as well as to plan and prioritise activities in the following areas: peer review of the current assessment model, analysis of the causes for the currently observed retrospective bias in estimates of exploitable biomass, analysis of the ongoing decline in halibut size at age, and development of a Management Strategy Evaluation for the halibut stock. A planning meeting for this initiative, involving the Commission, its staff, scientific advisors, managers, and industry participants will be held before the end of March 2012. The Commission also approved budget resources to support this work.

Performance Review

The independent consultants contracted to conduct a Performance Review of the Commission (<http://www.iphc.int/component/content/article/253.html>) attended all sessions of the Annual Meeting. The consultants' report will be submitted to the Commission by April 30, 2012 and a public presentation of their findings will occur in spring 2012. The Commission will announce any actions arising from this review during its next cycle of meetings.

IPHC Merit Scholarship

The Commission honoured Mr. John Scott of Girdwood, AK as the tenth recipient of the IPhC Merit Scholarship. Mr. Scott regretted being unable to attend the Annual Meeting due to class requirements, and was previously presented with the scholarship of \$2,000 (U.S.). The Commissioners expressed their continued support for the scholarship program and commended the Scholarship Committee for their efforts in assessing the candidates.

2013 Annual Meeting

The next Annual Meeting of the Commission will be held January 22-25, 2013 in Victoria, B.C.

Commission Membership

The Canadian Government Commissioner, Dr. Laura J. Richards, of Nanaimo B.C., was elected Chair for the coming year. The United States Government Commissioner, Dr. James W. Balsiger, of Juneau AK., was elected Vice-Chair. It was noted that Dr. Richards term as Canadian Government Commissioner will expire during 2012 and that the Canadian Government will appoint a replacement who will fill the role of Commission Chair. Other Canadian Commissioners are Gary Robinson (Vancouver, B.C.) and Acting Commissioner Michael Pearson (Ottawa, ON). Mr. Robinson's term will also expire in 2012 and a replacement Commissioner will be named by the Canadian Government. Dr. Richards and Mr. Robinson were thanked for their exceptional service to the Commission. The other United States Commissioners are Ralph Hoard (Seattle, WA) and Phillip Lestenkof (St. Paul, AK). Dr. Bruce M. Leaman is the Executive Director of the Commission.

- END -

Bruce M. Leaman, Executive Director

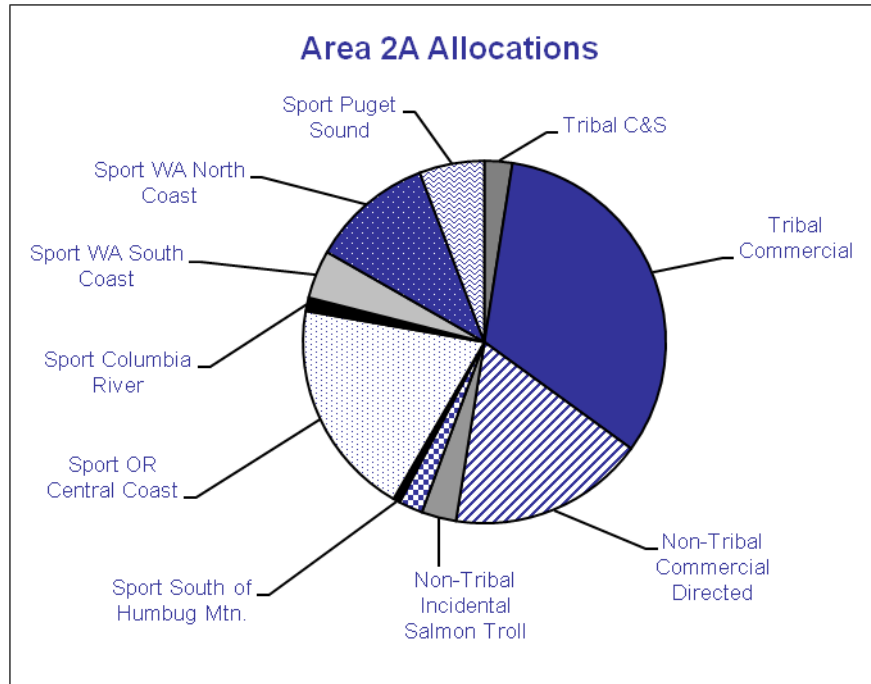
Phone: (206) 634-1838

FAX: (206) 632-2983

Web: www.iphc.int

2012 AREA 2A PACIFIC HALIBUT ALLOCATIONS

Fishery	
Tribal Ceremonial and Subsistence	24,500
Tribal Commercial	321,650
Non-Tribal Commercial Directed	173,216
Non-Tribal Incidental Salmon Troll	30,568
Non-Tribal Incidental Sablefish Longline	21,173
Sport South of Humberg Mountain	6,056
Sport Oregon Central Coast	191,780
Sport Columbia River	11,895
Sport Washington South Coast	42,739
Sport Washington North Coast	108,030
Sport Puget Sound	57,393
Total	989,000



SUMMARY OF INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION MEETING

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) held their annual meeting the week of January 23, 2012, in Anchorage, Alaska. The meeting was attended by Area 2A managers, including representatives from the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), Tribes, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Area 2A commercial harvesters and processors.

Adopted harvest levels for each IPHC management area were consistent with staff recommended levels with the exception of Area 2B, which was higher than initially proposed. This resulted in an Area 2A allowable harvest of 989,000 lbs and a coastwide quota of 33.54 million lbs (Mlbs). This is an eight percent increase for Area 2A over 2011. Incidental retention of Pacific halibut in the fixed gear sablefish fishery north of Pt. Chehalis will be allowed in 2012 due to the increase in quota.

2011 Model

Five models were constructed with two models (“trendless” and “wobbleSQ”) having the best fit. The major difference between the two models was how constraints were placed on the scalar between the survey estimate in numbers of fish and the population, also known as ‘q’. In past assessments (2007-2010), the “trendless” model was selected as the base case model. This model had a constraint placed on ‘q’. For the 2011 assessment, the “wobbleSQ” model had superior fit to the data and was deemed by IPHC staff to be the most appropriate model to use to set harvest levels. This model did not have a constraint placed on ‘q’. The outputs of the two models for estimates of exploitable biomass were 288 Mlbs and 260 Mlbs with the “wobbleSQ” model having the lower output.

IPHC once again applied adjustment factors to account for the timing of the fishery relative to the timing of the survey and the competition of other species for survey baits. These have been important adjustments in the assessment and apportionment and have been beneficial to Area 2A.

During Commission action, IPHC staff were directed to construct a new research planning team that will include a Commissioner from each country. This team will develop a five-year research plan that will include a peer review process for a scientific review of the stock assessment, a management strategy evaluation, and review of the retrospective bias and reduced length at age issues. The plan will be finalized during 2012.

Retrospective Bias

For the last several years, the model has been shown to over predict the biomass of Pacific halibut for a yet to be determined reason. Work will continue to determine the cause of the bias. No action was taken at this meeting to address the concern of overharvesting Pacific halibut; however, meeting participants were put on notice that significant changes may be coming beginning in 2013. One of the remedies being considered is a reduction in harvest rate to align harvest with lower biomass estimates seen retrospectively.

Slow Up, Fast Down vs. Slow Up, Full Down

For the past several years, IPHC has applied a harvest policy whereby management areas with a Constant Exploitable Yield (CEY) reflecting an increase from the previous year are able to realize one-third of that increase (i.e., slow up), and areas with a decline in yield take one-half of the reduction in the first year (i.e., fast down). However, in 2011 IPHC staff determined that the “fast down” portion of the policy was not sufficient to recover portions of the stock, particularly when the decline was considerable, and recommended a “full down” during the first year (i.e., 100% of the decrease, rather than only 50%). As 2A experienced an increase in the CEY from 2010, the “slow up” portion of the policy was applied for 2011 and 2012. Commissioners directed staff to review the applicability of this policy prior to the 2012 interim meeting.

Area 2A Survey Expansion – Pilot Program

During the 2011 stock assessment survey, additional sampling stations were added in Puget Sound and in the coastal waters between 10-20 fathoms and 275-400 fathoms. This was an explorative project to attempt to reduce variability in the Area 2A survey and include areas with high fishery yields. Additionally, 12 stations were added in the routine sampling depth range of 20-275 fathoms that had inadvertently been dropped. The stations in the 10-20 and 275-400 fathom areas did not have an impact on survey variability. The Puget Sound portion of the survey had unique challenges, such as addressing potential impacts to endangered species, shipping and ferry lane conflicts, and adjacent homeowner distress. This pilot program was not included in the survey/research budget for 2012. Area 2A co-managers met with IPHC staff and the NMFS Commissioner to express our interest in continuing to explore additional survey stations in the Puget Sound, as it may be very worthwhile given some adjustments to station location.

Bycatch

Bycatch continued to be a primary topic of discussion at the annual meeting. Concerns were expressed over the level of bycatch occurring in fisheries in the North Pacific. The PFMF, in particular, received kudos for its implementation of the trawl rationalization program and the halibut individual bycatch quotas. It was noted that halibut bycatch in the trawl fishery had decreased substantially during this first year of implementation. The PFMF would benefit from continued engagement in current and future IPHC halibut bycatch discussions.

During Commission action, direction was given to staff to review current observer coverage, review bycatch estimates for state managed fisheries, and define minimum monitoring standards for all fisheries. The first two items as proposed by the Conference Board (advisory board consisting of public and industry representatives) were specific to Alaskan and North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) fisheries, however IPHC staff may consider expanding these reviews to all IPHC areas.

Bycatch Workshop

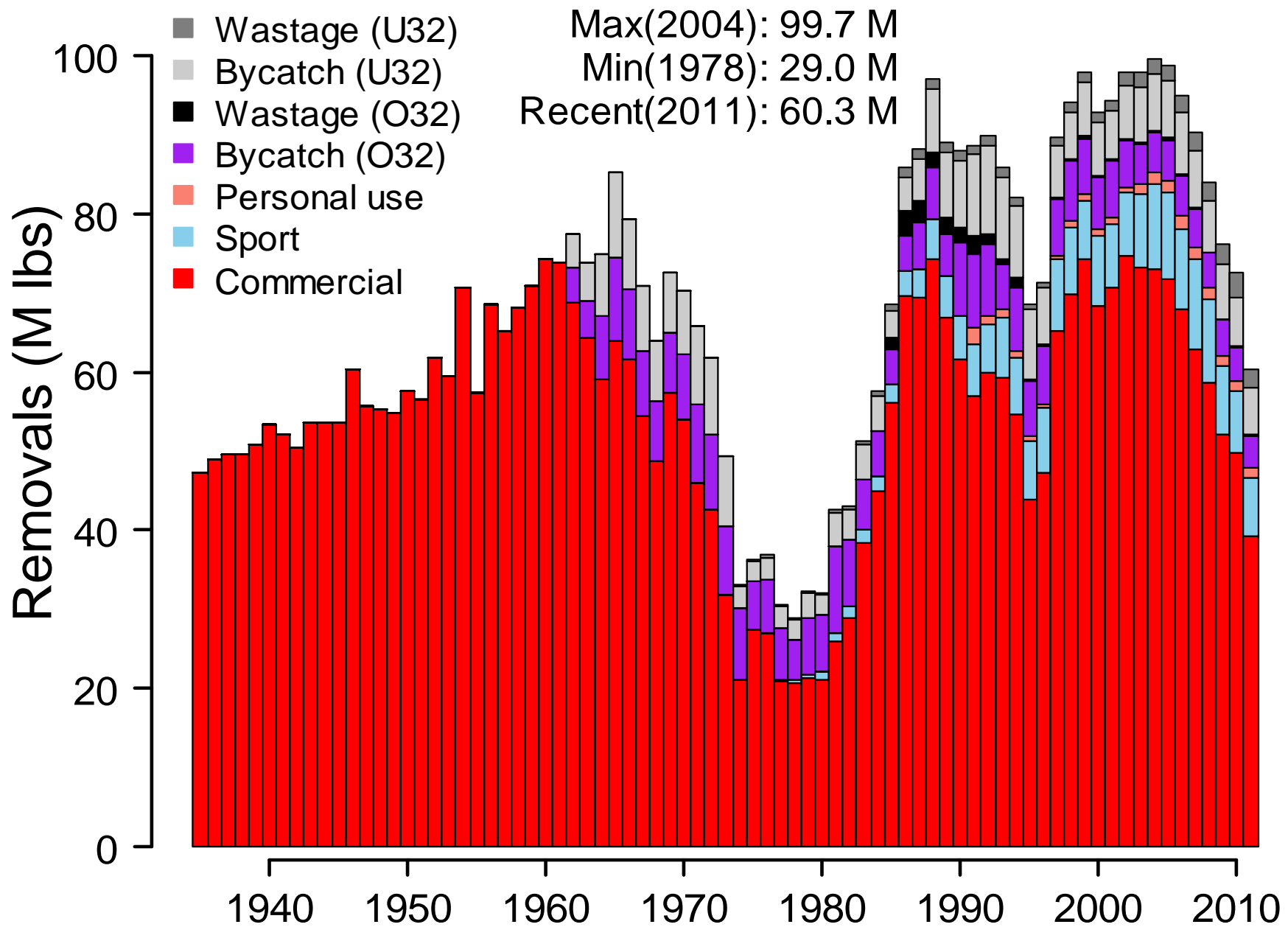
A workshop is being held April 24-25 in Seattle with the goal of addressing specific questions and providing guidance to the NPFMC for use in setting revised bycatch limits for fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska. Additional discussion will include the methodology and accuracy of the estimation of halibut bycatch and general halibut ecology. The workshop will be structured to have a review panel made up of government and industry sponsored scientists and a series of

presenters from scientific and management agencies and industry organizations. The NPFMC has invited a presenter from Area 2A to discuss the implementation of the trawl rationalization program and the halibut individual bycatch quota.

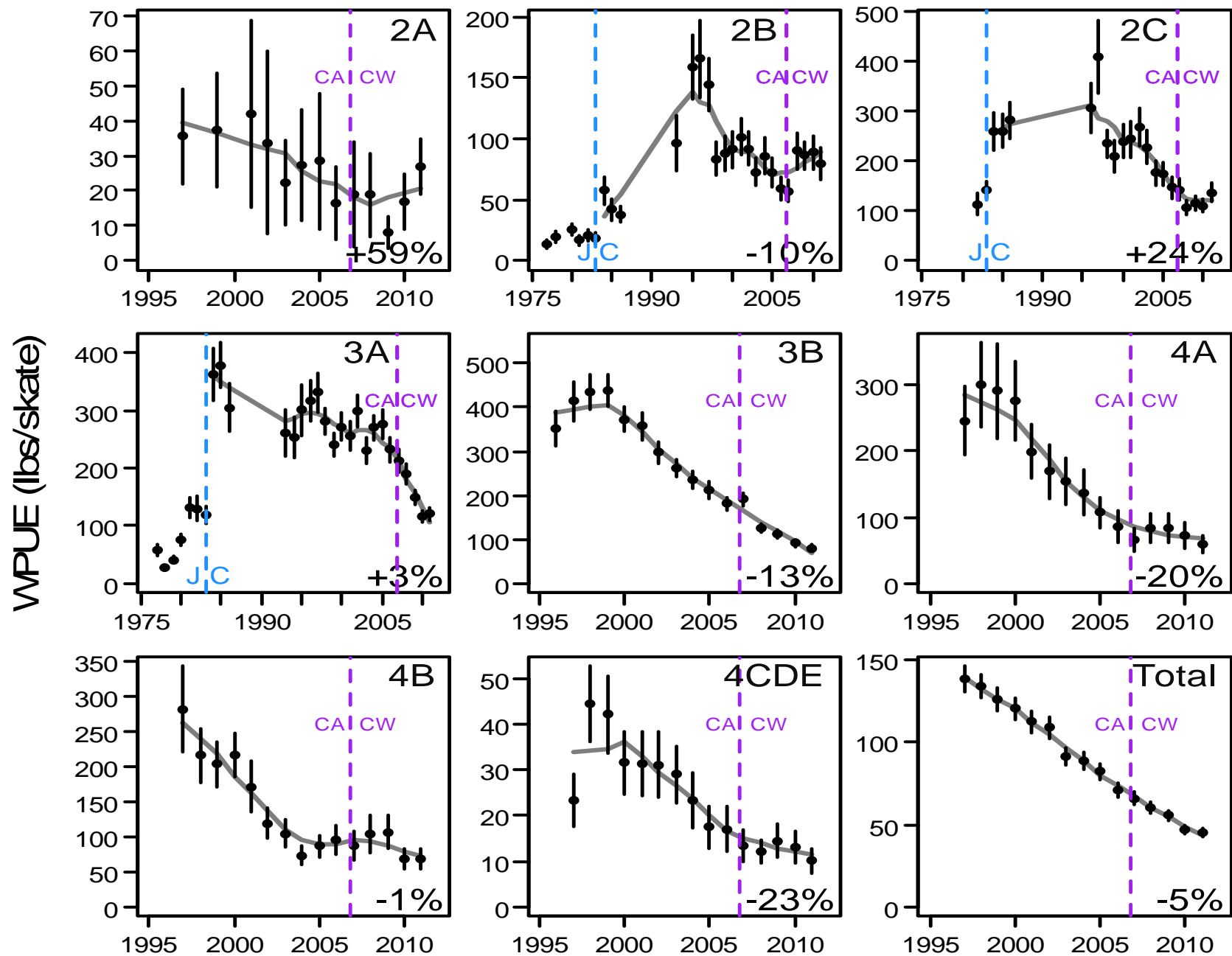
88TH IPHC Annual Meeting

Anchorage, AK
January 24-27, 2012

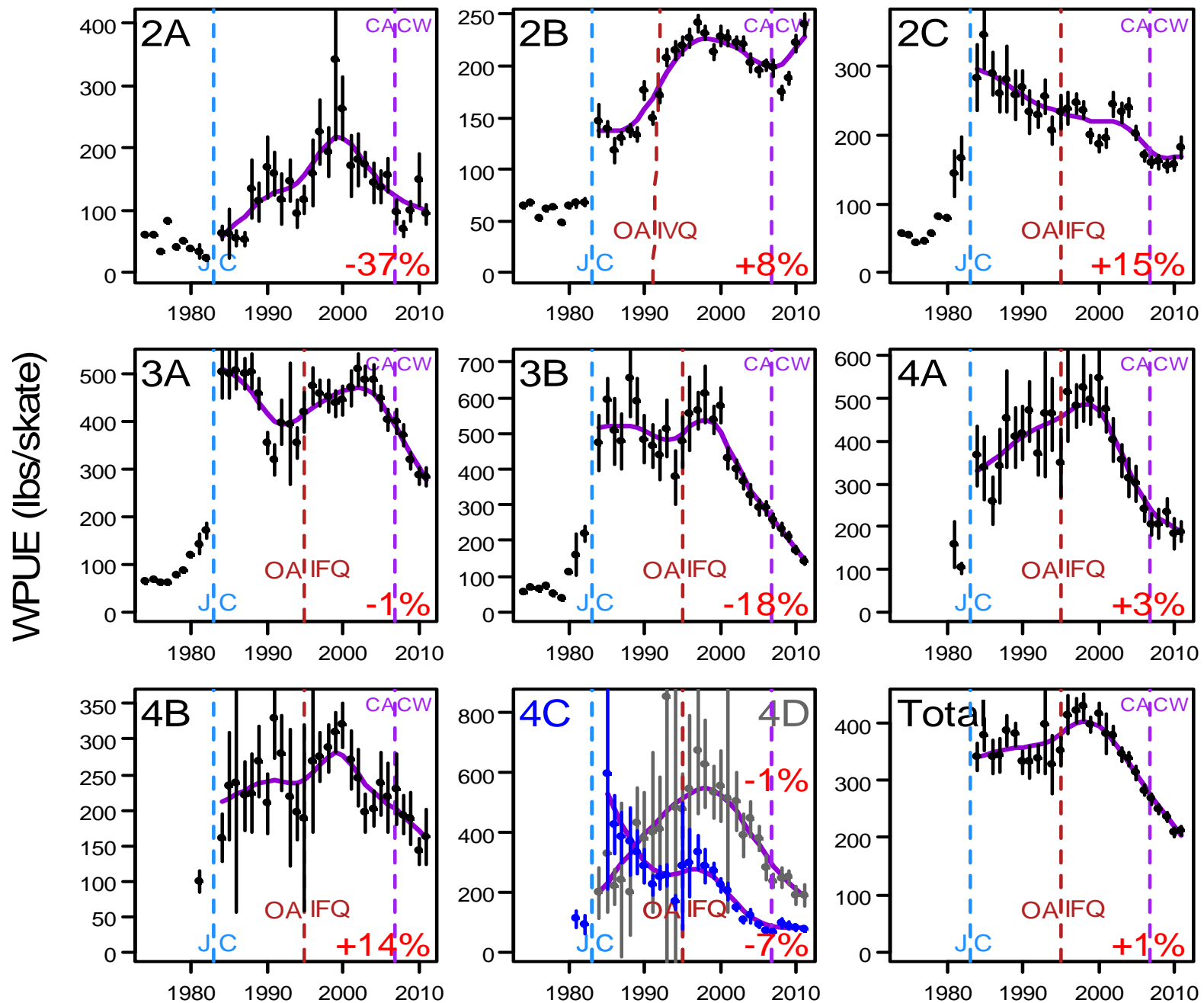
Coastwide removals history



Survey O32 WPUE

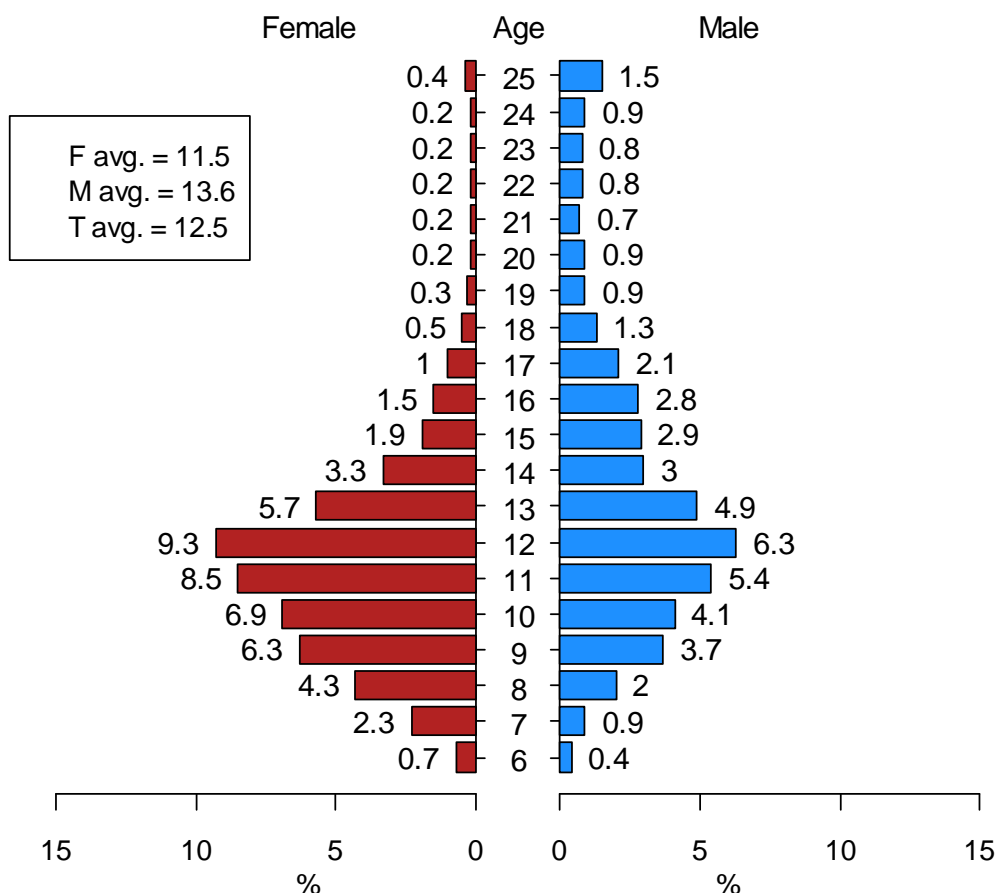


Commercial WPUE

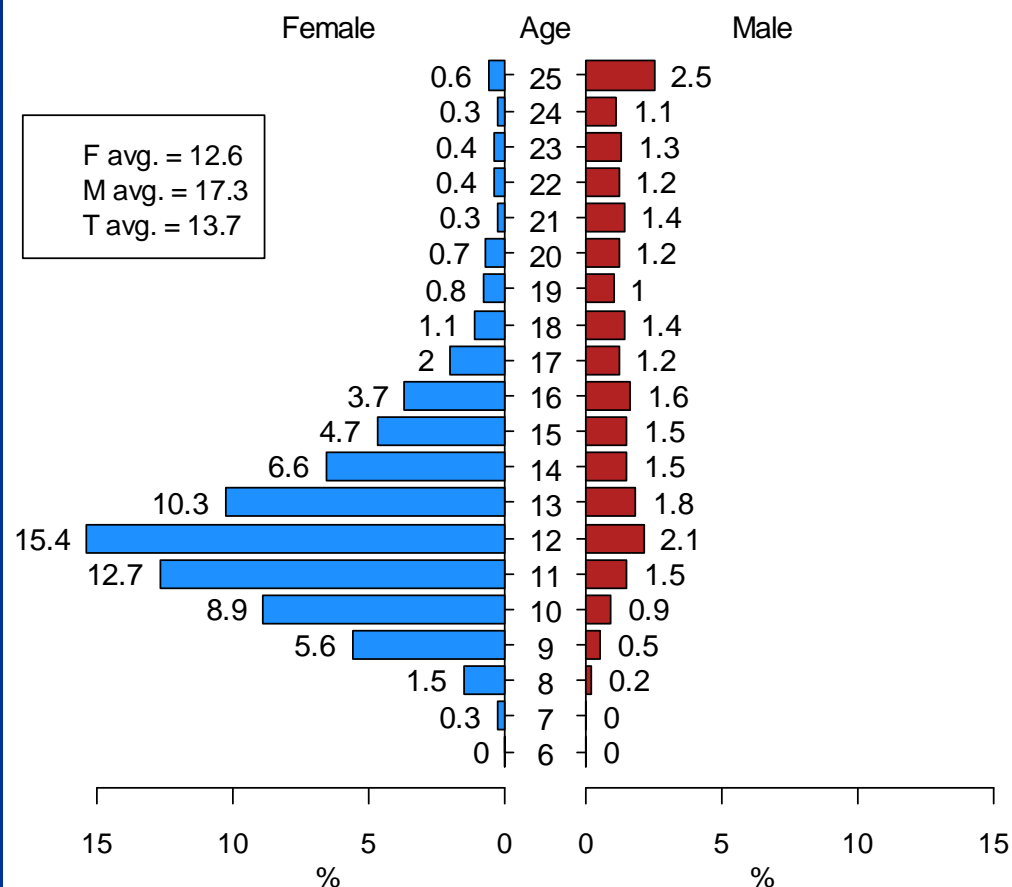


Comparison of survey and commercial catches

2011 Area Total Survey catch age composition

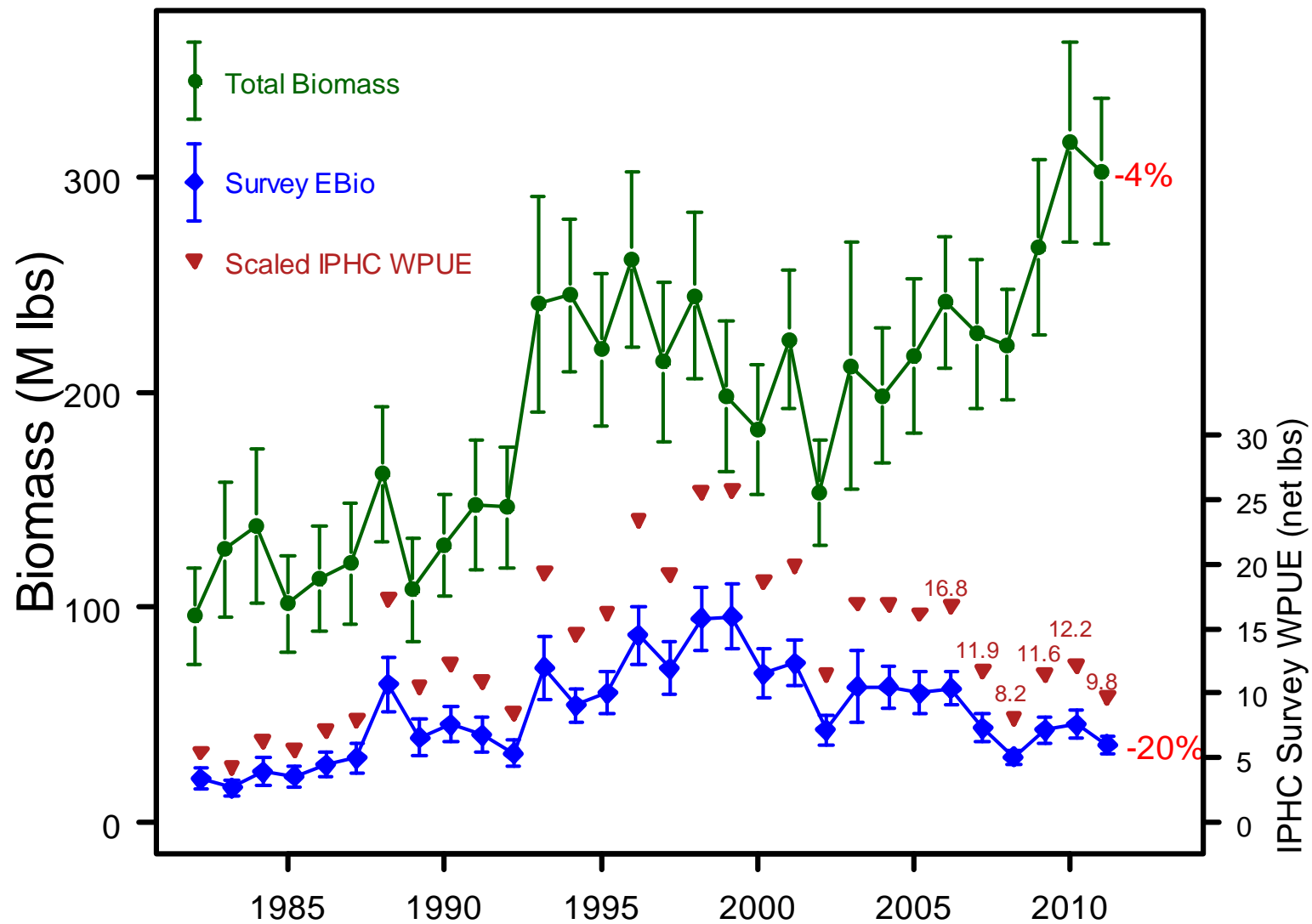


2011 Area Total Comm. catch age composition

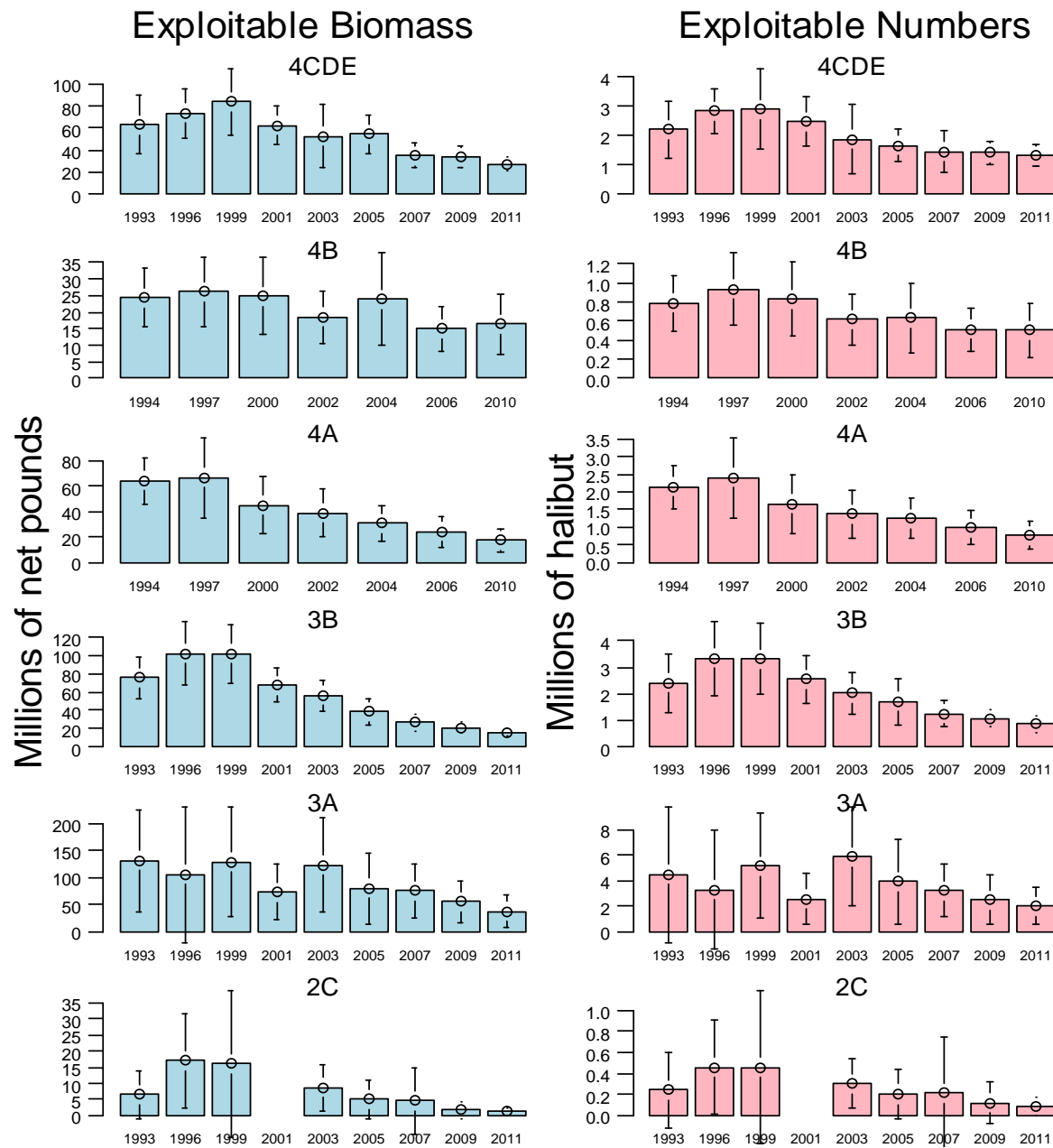


NMFS trawl swept-area estimates

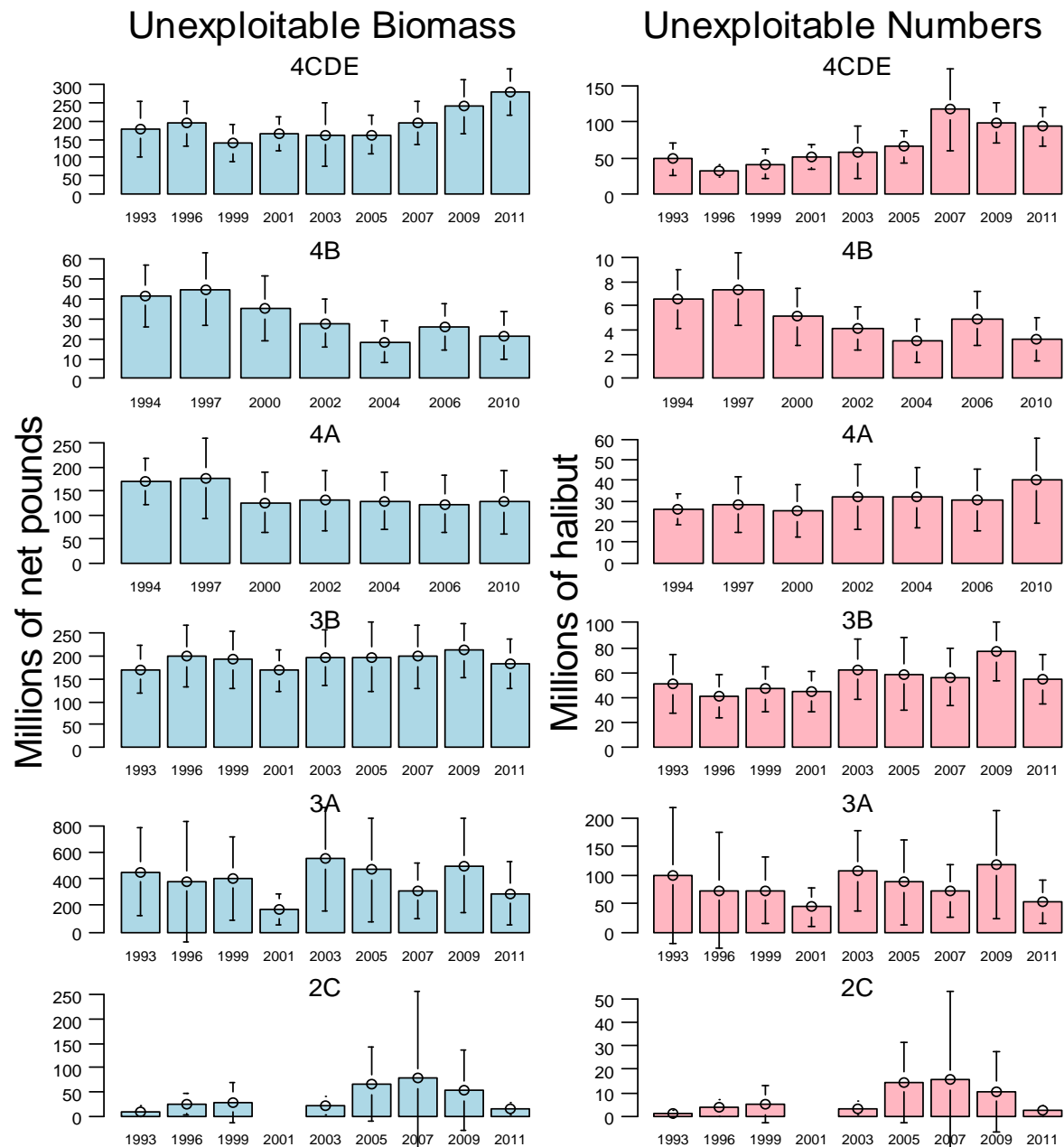
Eastern Bering Sea



NMFS swept-area estimates of EBio

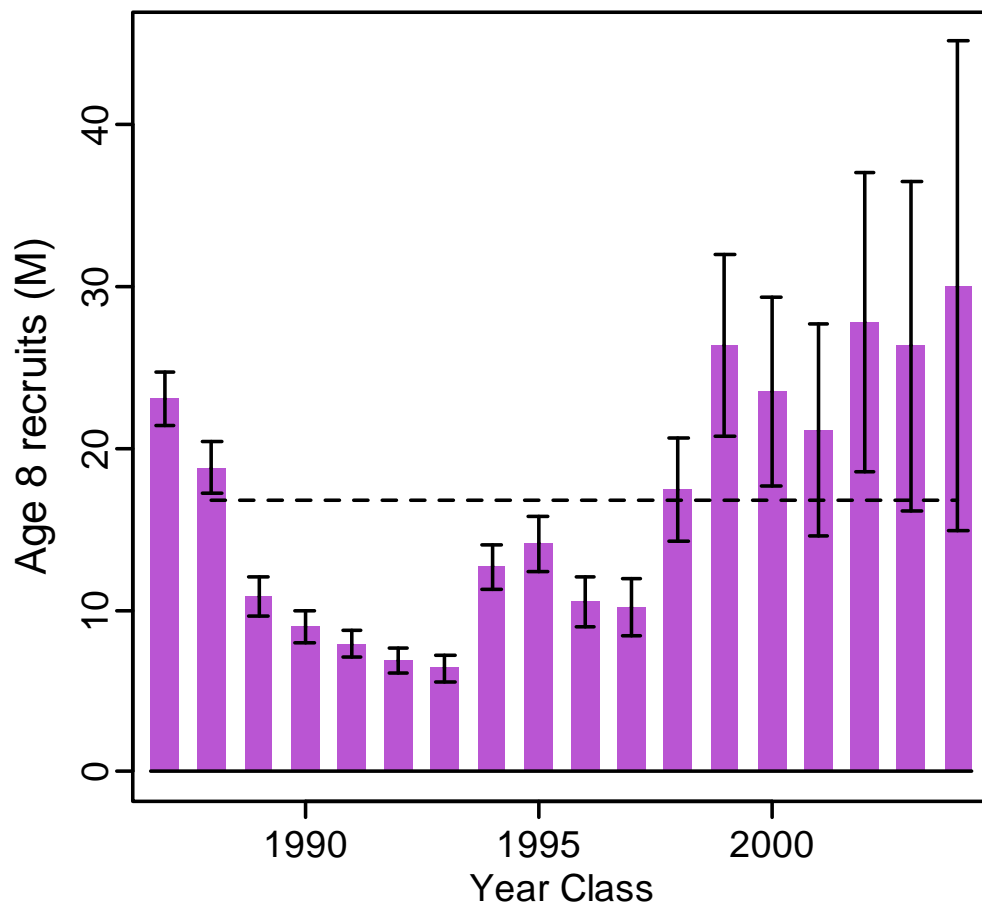


NMFS swept-area estimates of Unexploited Biomass

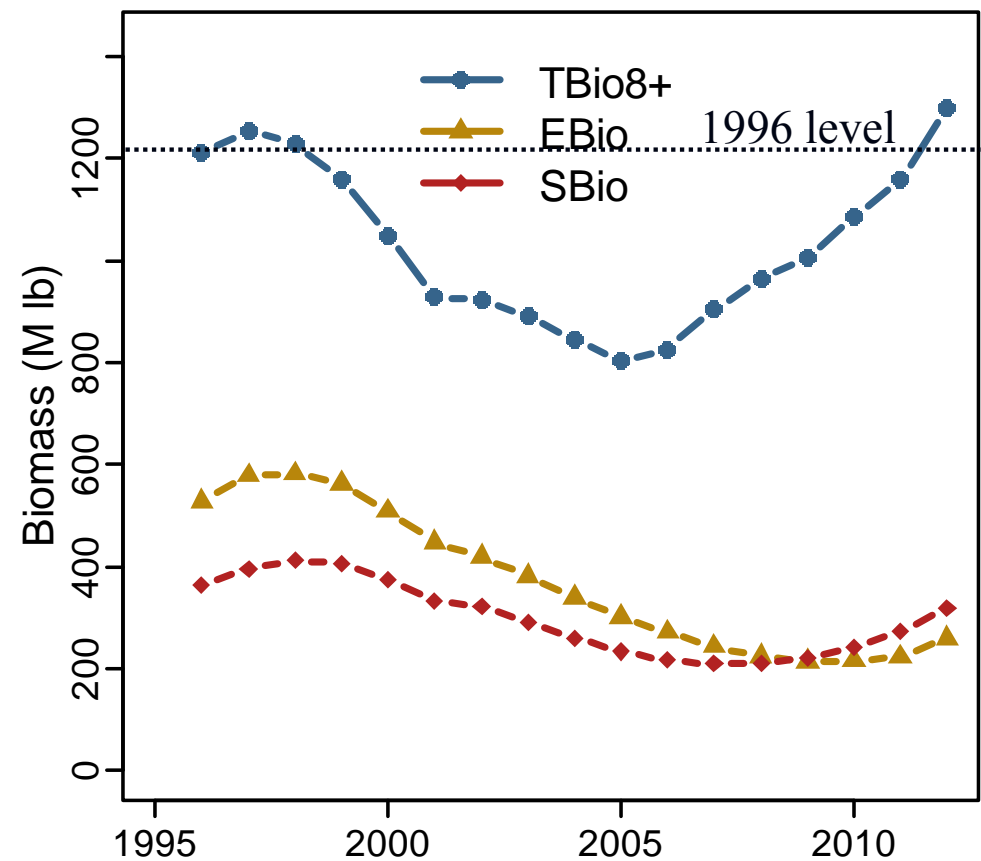


Model output from WobbleSQ

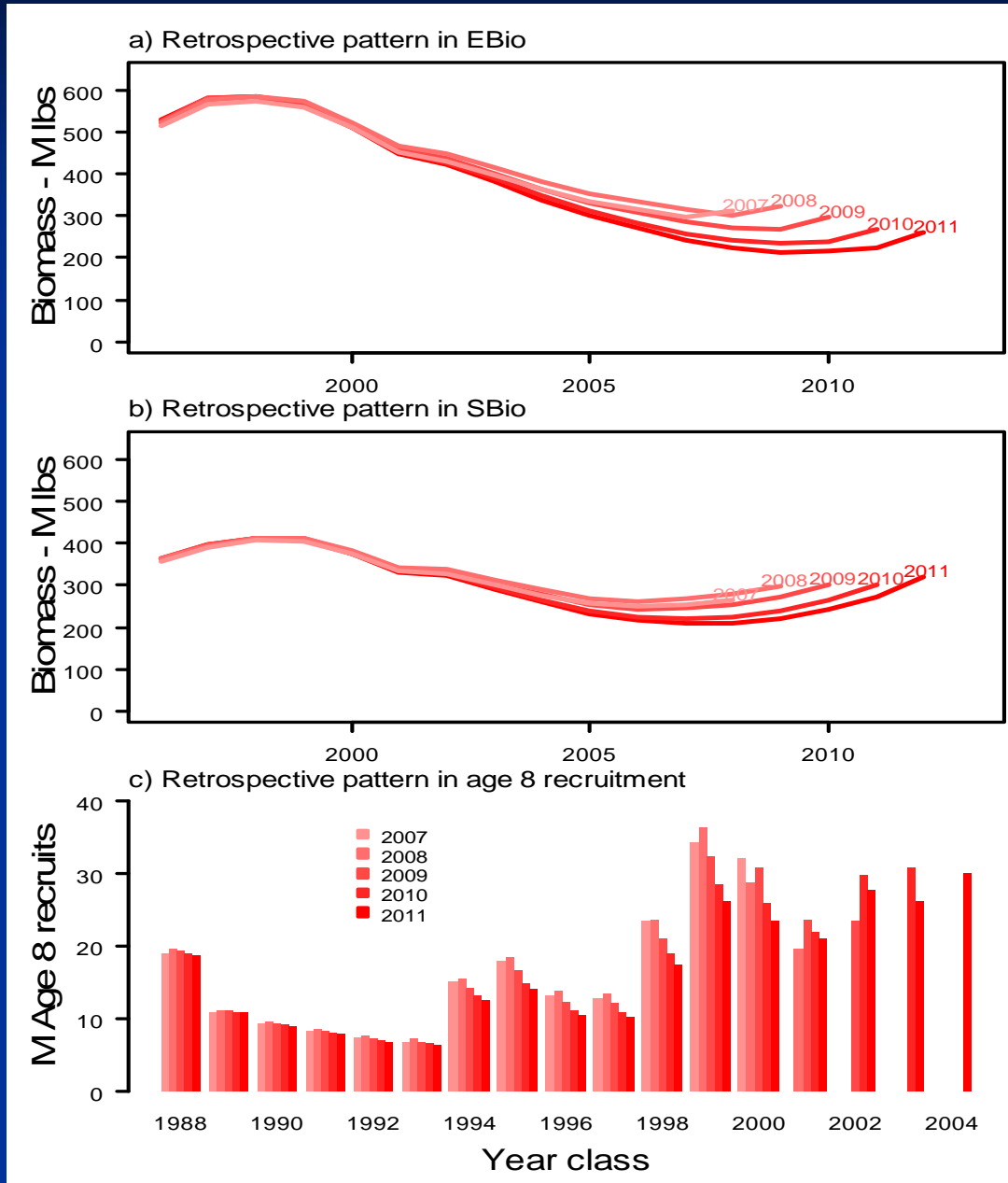
Age 8 Recruitment



Biomass trends

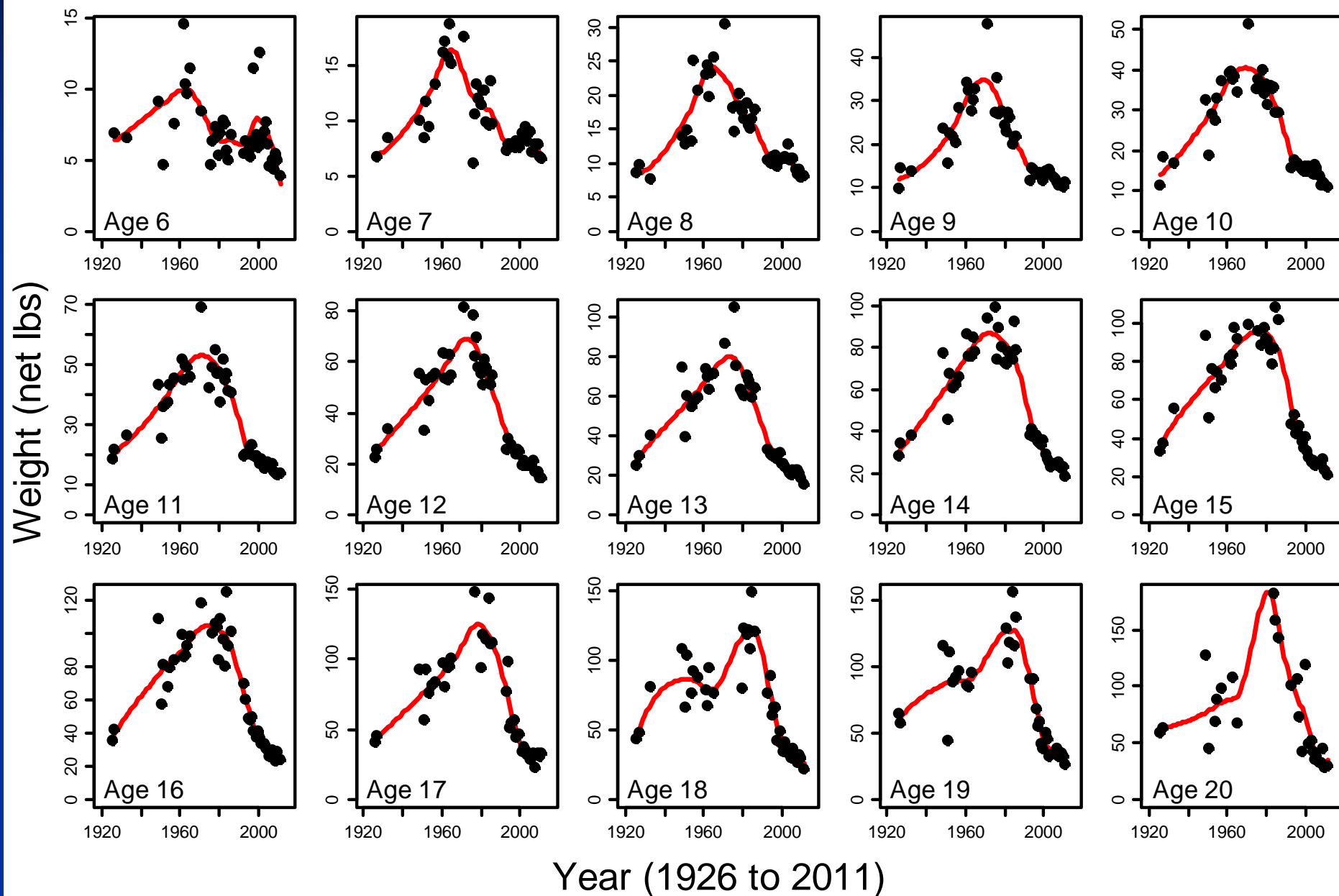


Retrospective behavior

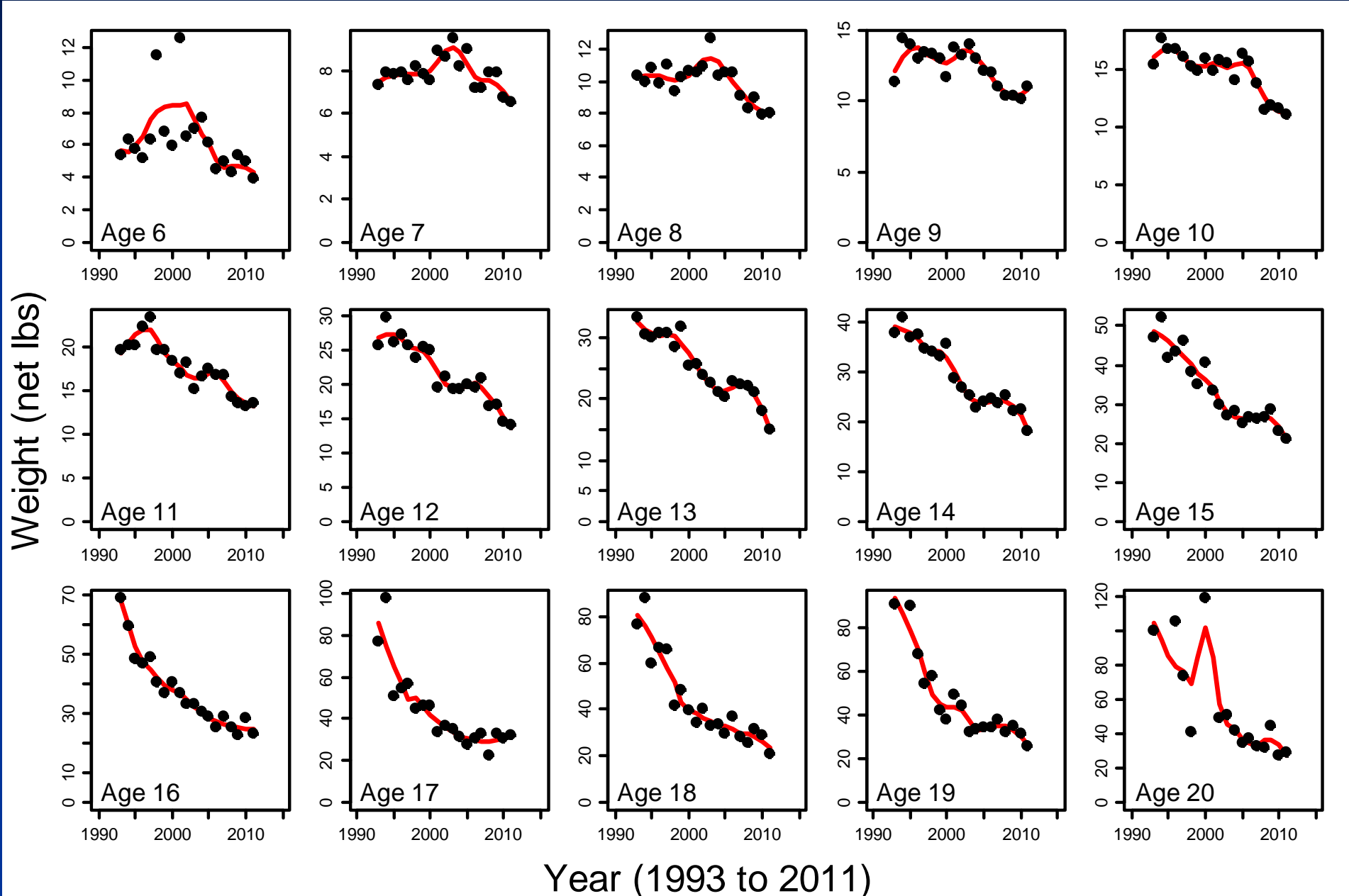


WobbleSQ variant

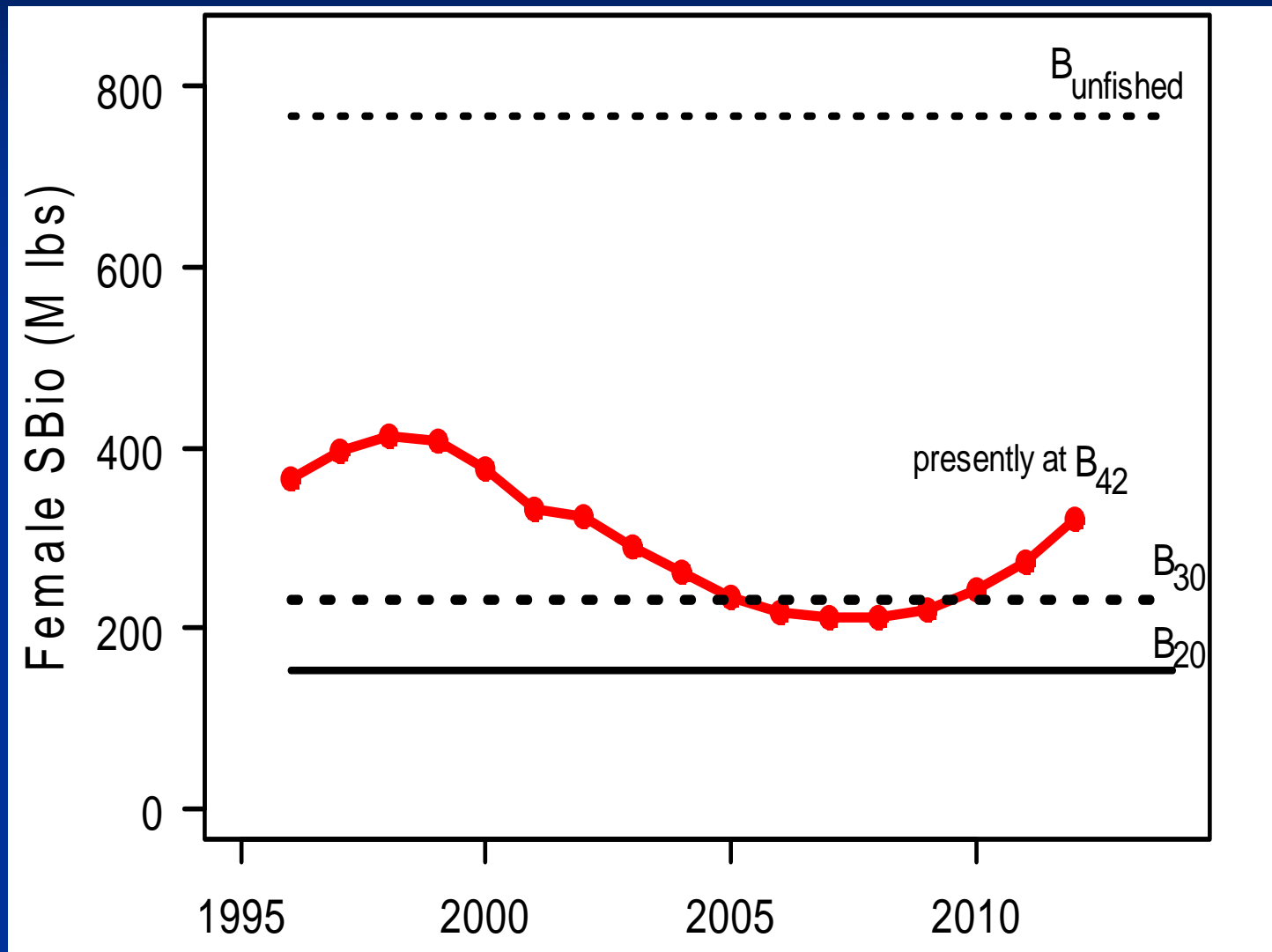
Declining size-at-age



Decline in size-at-age since 1993



Reference points (WobbleSQ)



Catch Limit Considerations

- ❖ Commission's goal to achieve target harvest rates in all areas.
- ❖ Commission's request to staff to present uncertainty in the assessment, harvest rate determination, and apportionment process.
- ❖ Continuing retrospective reductions in estimates of year class strengths and previous Ebio. Investigation of the impacts of both current harvest rates and the harvest policy target rates are ongoing.
- ❖ Declining size at age and effect on Ebio estimation
- ❖ Continued declines in coastwide Ebio estimates

Issues in Setting Catch Limits

- ❖ Commission asked the staff to provide some explicit measures of uncertainty in the assessment and catch limit process. The staff had previously presented a conceptual review of sources of uncertainty (Clark et al. 2004) and we are developing a comprehensive framework for incorporating sources of uncertainty when evaluating harvest strategies.
- ❖ Uncertainty exists at all stages of every assessment and catch limit recommendations, including those for halibut.
- ❖ The primary sources of uncertainty are structural (i.e., model formulation), retrospective estimation of cohort strengths (hence Ebio), and model parameter estimation.
- ❖ Apportionment introduces a subsequent suite of uncertainties.

Staff Recommendations for Setting Catch Limits I

- ❖ Staff used WobbleSQ model variant based both on objective criteria of model fits and a precautionary approach to determining catch limits.
- ❖ Staff notes that retrospective issues continue to be evident in biomass estimation. This has been observed in other catch at age models (e.g., sablefish, Pacific hake) and the direction of bias may depend on the stock trajectory.
- ❖ In addition, the normal assessment process continually revises historical estimates of cohort strengths (hence their contribution to current Ebio). When these estimates are lower than previous estimates (the retrospective issue) they contribute, along with whatever other changes result from the addition of new data, to a lower estimate of current Ebio.

Staff Recommendations for Setting Catch Limits II

- ❖ Staff has not yet determined whether a change in approach to setting catch limits should be recommended and will continue examination of the issue during 2012. In particular, we need to determine whether any danger to the stock over the long term exists because of the retrospective issue, or whether current HRs are simply suboptimal, and whether a change in the applied (i.e., a modification of the target) harvest rate should be recommended.
- ❖ In addition, the eventual implementation of a Management Strategy Evaluation framework will provide a vehicle to examine this question more comprehensively.

Apportionment Procedures

- ❖ As in 2011, staff continues the use of the 0-400 fm depth range as the basis for apportionment because it incorporates the active commercial fishing area, recognizing that all alternatives have potential for bias. Staff has proposed research to address these potential biases through survey expansion, subject to funding.
- ❖ As in 2011, the staff continues the use of the hook competition and survey timing adjustment factors to survey WPUE, and Kalman averaging of the adjusted factors, when conducting apportionment.
- ❖ As in 2011, staff continues the use of the Slow Up – Full Down (SUFulID) harvest control rule.

2012 Catch Limit Recommendations

Regulatory Area	2011 Catch Limit	Staff	CB (Millions of Pounds)	PAG	IPHC Approved
2A ¹	0.910	0.989	0.99	0.989	0.989
2B ^{1,2}	7.650	6.633	7.04	6.633	7.038
2C ²	2.330	2.624	2.62	2.624	2.624
3A ²	14.360	11.918	11.92	11.918	11.918
3B	7.510	5.070	5.07	5.070	5.070
4A	2.410	1.567	1.57	1.567	1.567
4B	2.180	1.869	1.87	1.869	1.869
4CDE ³	3.720	2.465	3.095	2.465	2.465
4C ⁴	1.690	1.107	1.400	1.107	1.107
4D ⁴	1.690	1.107	1.400	1.107	1.107
4E ⁴	0.340	0.250	0.295	0.250	0.250
Total	41.070	33.135	34.175	33.135	33.540

¹ Combined sport and commercial allocation (2A includes tribal); incidental retention during sablefish fishery

² Presumes adherence to sport management targets: 2C 0.931 Mlb charter; 3A 3.103 Mlb charter

³ Allocation for combined Areas 4C, 4D, 4E

⁴ NPFMC Plan: 4C , 4D: 46.43% of 80K less than 4CDE quota, 4E: 7.14% + 80K

Management Regulations

Fishing periods and catch sharing

- ❖ Adopted March 17 - November 7 for quota share fisheries
- ❖ Area 2A commercial and treaty Indian fisheries should fall within adopted season
- ❖ In 2A, a series of 10-h periods starting June 27 for the directed fishery
- ❖ Endorse Management Councils' catch sharing plans for Areas 2A and 4CDE
- ❖ Endorse DFO commercial:sport allocation plan for Area 2B

Regulation Changes

Area 2A logbook options

Allow harvesters to use the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Fixed Gear logbook for the Area 2A commercial halibut fishery.

Canadian commercial logbook

Changed IPHC regulations for Area 2B logbooks to match Canadian Integrated Logbook regulations, requiring latitude/longitude for fishing location and catch weights recorded by set.

Regulation Changes

Area 2C Sport Fishing regulations for Charter Vessel fishing

The Commission adopted NPFMC recommendation to change the existing one-fish bag limit with 37-in maximum length for charter fishing in Area 2C, to a one-fish bag limit with reverse-slot limit length restriction ($\leq 45 / \geq 68$ in., head on). In addition, the entire carcass must be retained on board the vessel until all fillets are offloaded.

The Commission noted for this and other sport fisheries that reporting does not currently account for mortality of fish that are discarded, nor are there data collection programs to estimate the numbers and length frequency of discarded fish from which such mortality could be estimated.

Commission Initiatives/Direction to Staff

Bycatch Issues

- Joint workshop with NPFMC on bycatch issues/halibut management April 24-25, 2012 in Seattle (Crowne Plaza Hotel). Detailed agenda being developed and will be distributed. Panelist from directed fishery recommended.
- Commission updated timelines and tasks for the Halibut Bycatch Work Group.
- Staff to review estimates of bycatch in state-managed fisheries and update where necessary/possible.

Commission Initiatives/Direction to Staff

Release mortality in recreational fisheries

Staff to communicate with all agencies involved in recreational fisheries requesting implementation of data collection programs and estimation of release mortality for these fisheries.

Nursery grounds

Staff to review information on known nursery grounds at the request of industry.

Halibut in California

Staff to work with PFMC and stakeholders to develop framework to account for halibut abundance in California as part of the assessment and apportionment process.

Commission Initiatives/Direction to Staff

Assessment work team

The Commission will develop a multi-year plan to review current and planned research activities as well as to plan and prioritise activities in the following areas:

- peer review of the current assessment model,
- analysis of the causes for the currently observed retrospective bias in estimates of exploitable biomass,
- analysis of the ongoing decline in halibut size at age, and
- development of a Management Strategy Evaluation for the halibut stock.

Commission Initiatives/Direction to Staff

Performance Review

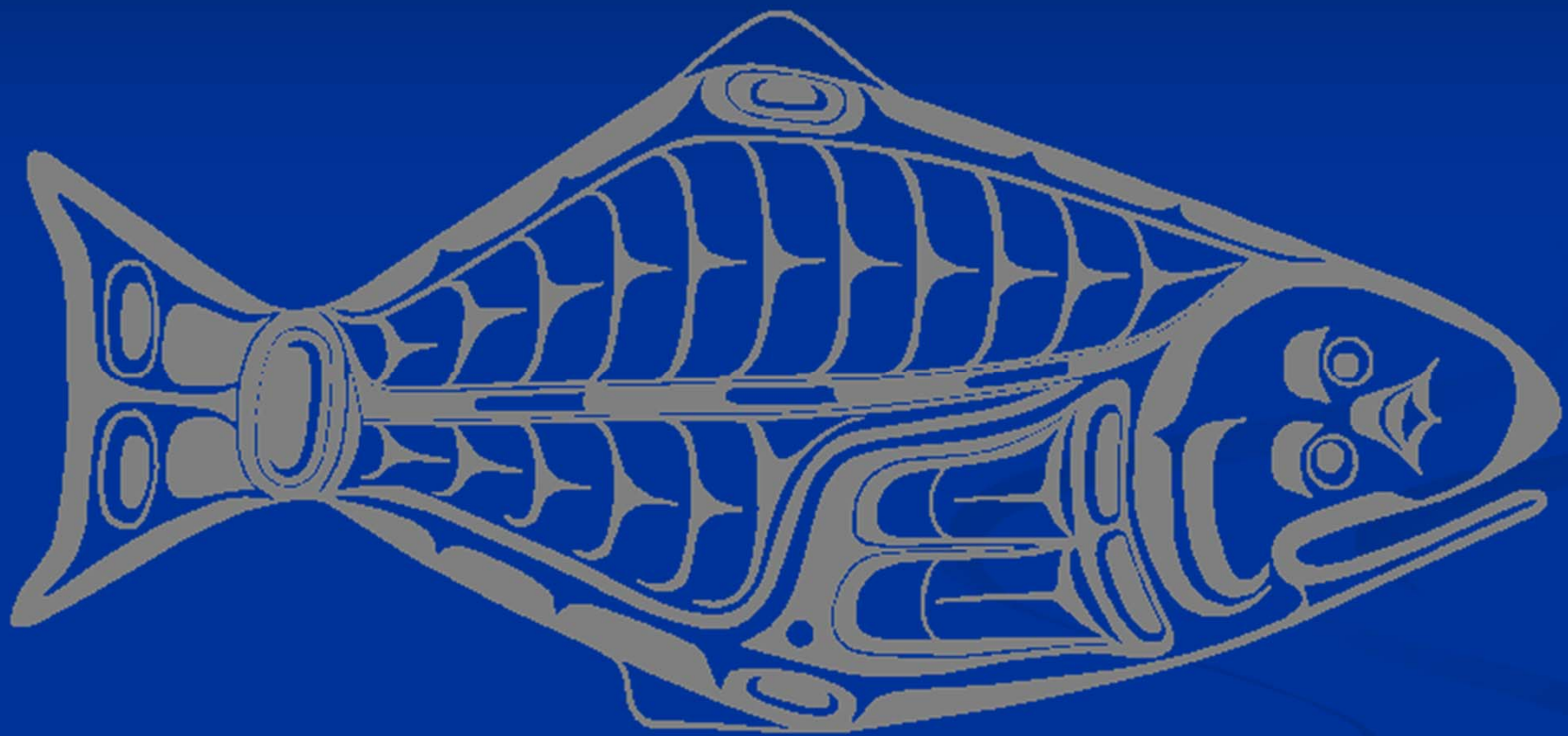
The independent consultants contracted to conduct a Performance Review of the Commission attended all sessions of the Annual Meeting. The consultants' report will be submitted to the Commission by April 30, 2012 and a public presentation of their findings will occur in spring 2012. The Commission will announce any actions arising from this review during its next cycle of meetings.

<http://www.iphc.int/component/content/article/253.html>

Commission Initiatives/Direction to Staff

2013 Annual Meeting

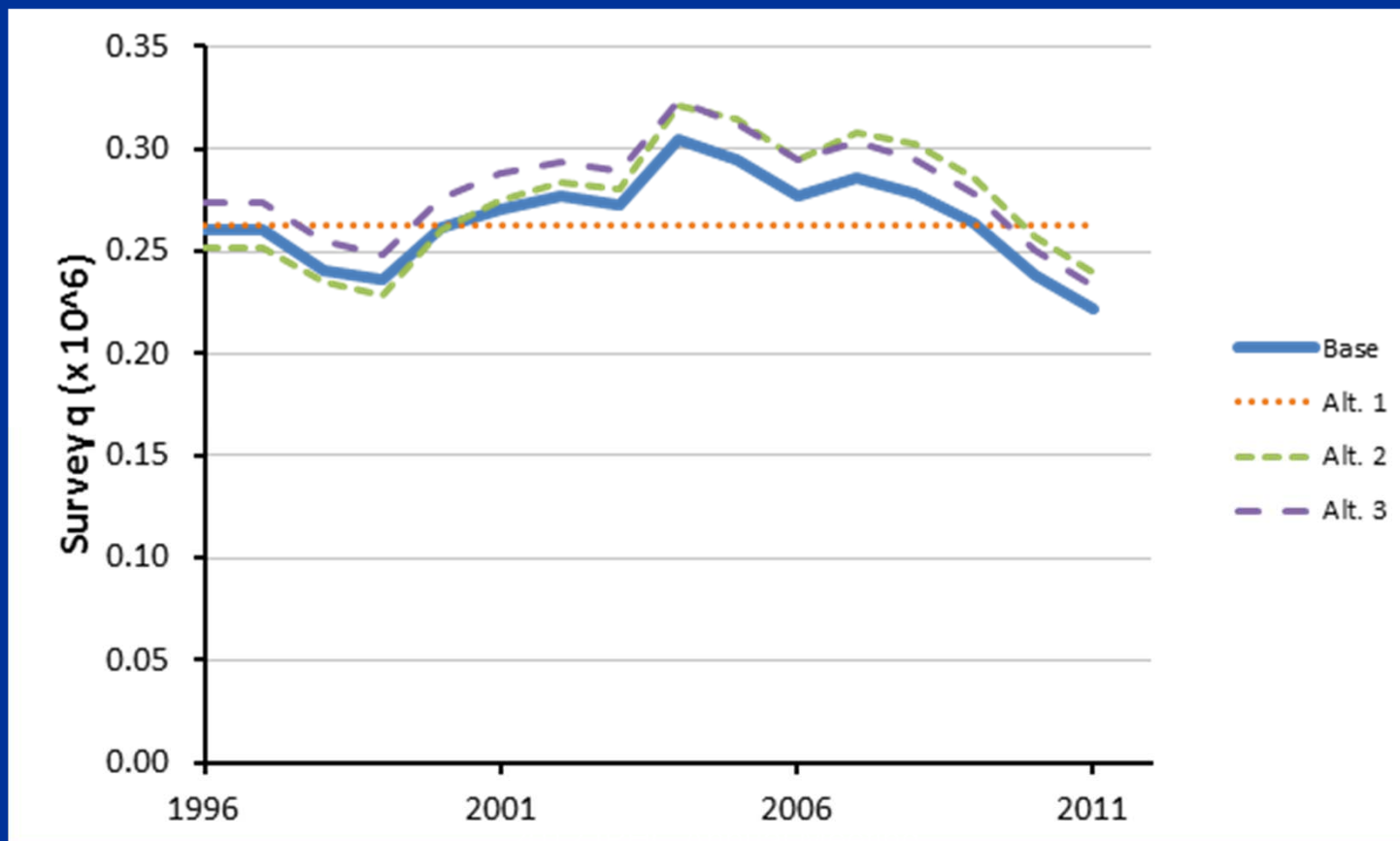
The 89th Annual Meeting of the Commission will be held January 22-25, 2013 at the Empress Hotel in Victoria, B.C., Canada



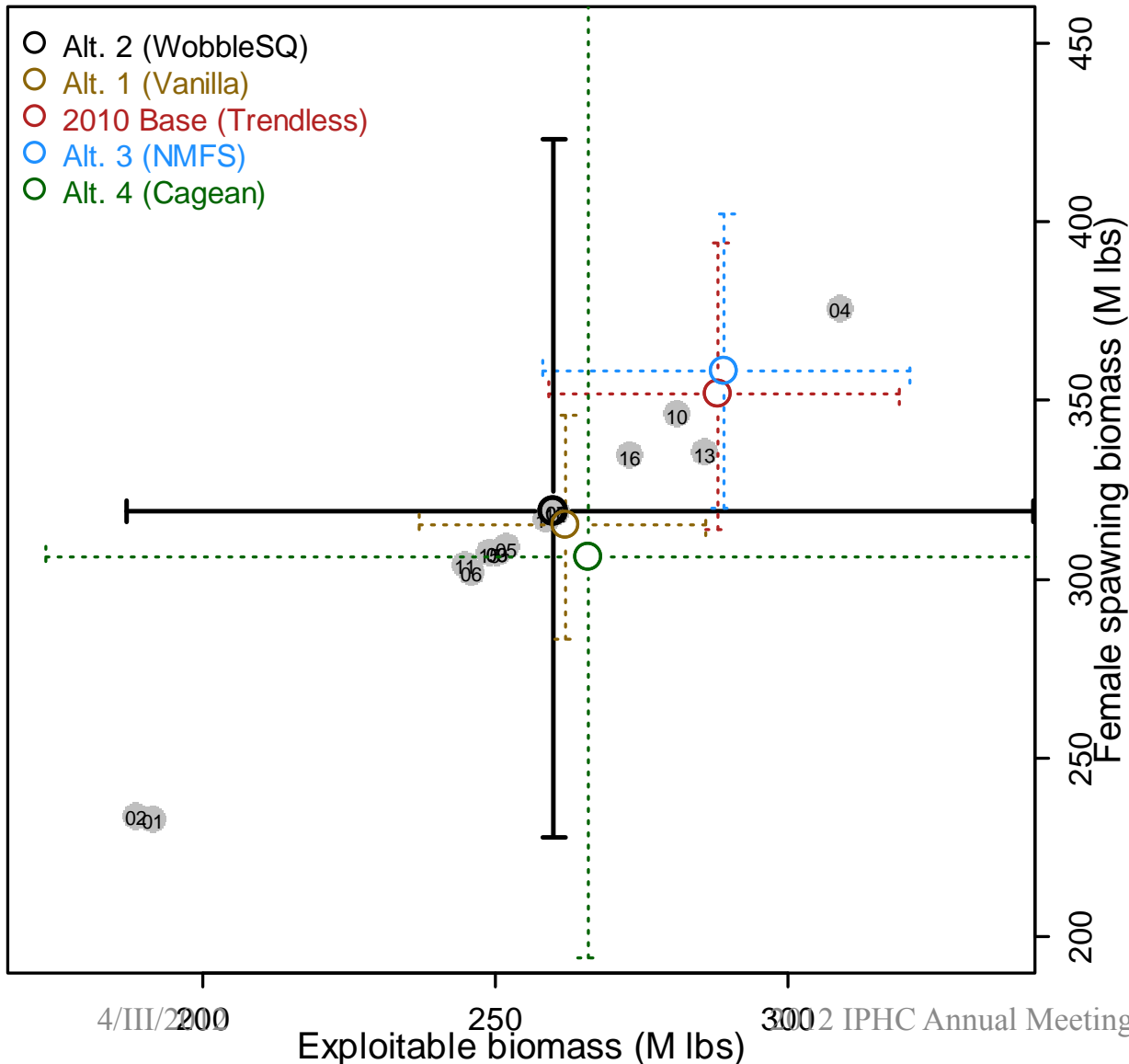
EXTRA SLIDES

Statistical comparison of model variants

Model	Number of parameters	Δ AIC	Exploitable Biomass (Mlb)	Spawning Biomass (Mlb)
Trendless (Base2010)	187	+20	288	352
Vanilla (Alt. 1)	173	+334	262	315
WobbleSQ (Alt. 2)	187	0	260	319
NMFS (Alt. 3)	171	+129	289	358
CAGEAN (Alt. 4)	145	+127	266	306



WobbleSQ as base model

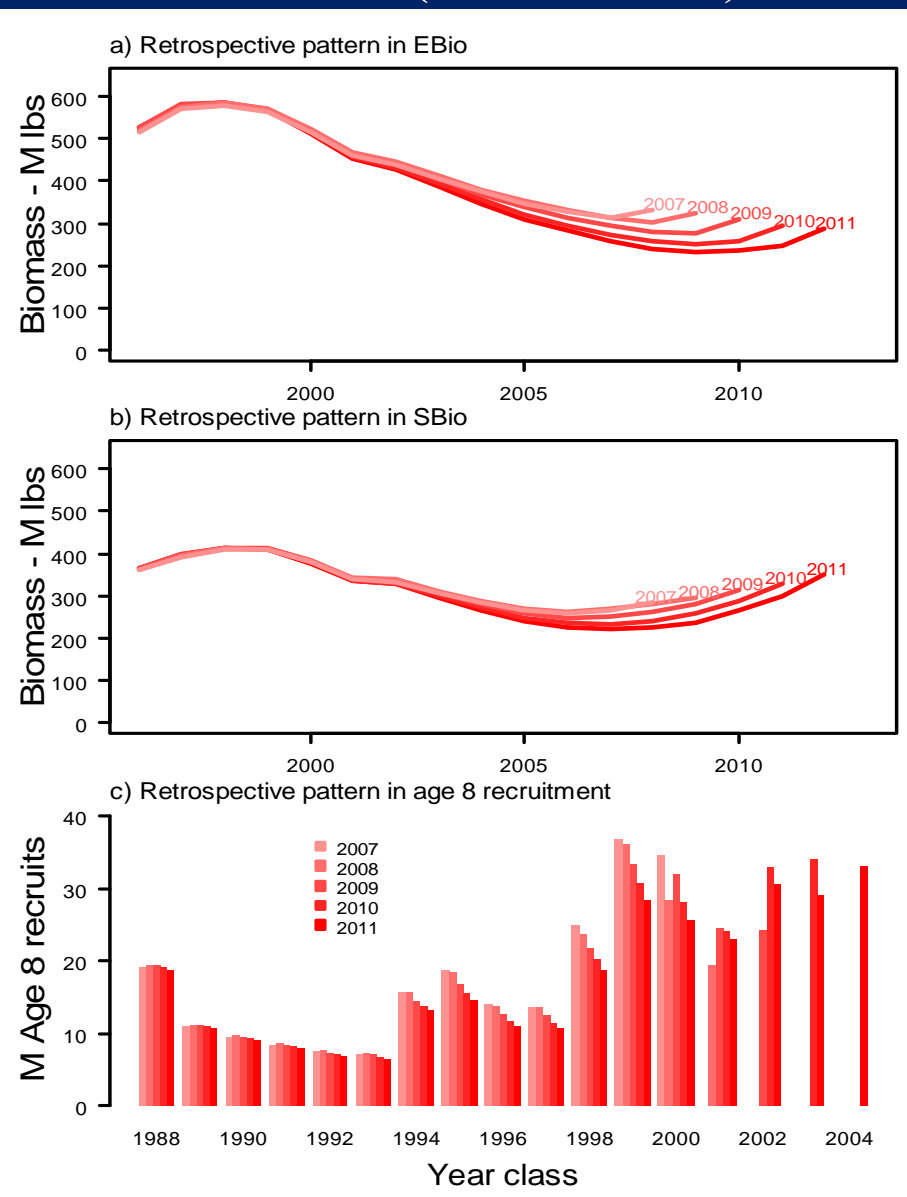


Model variants

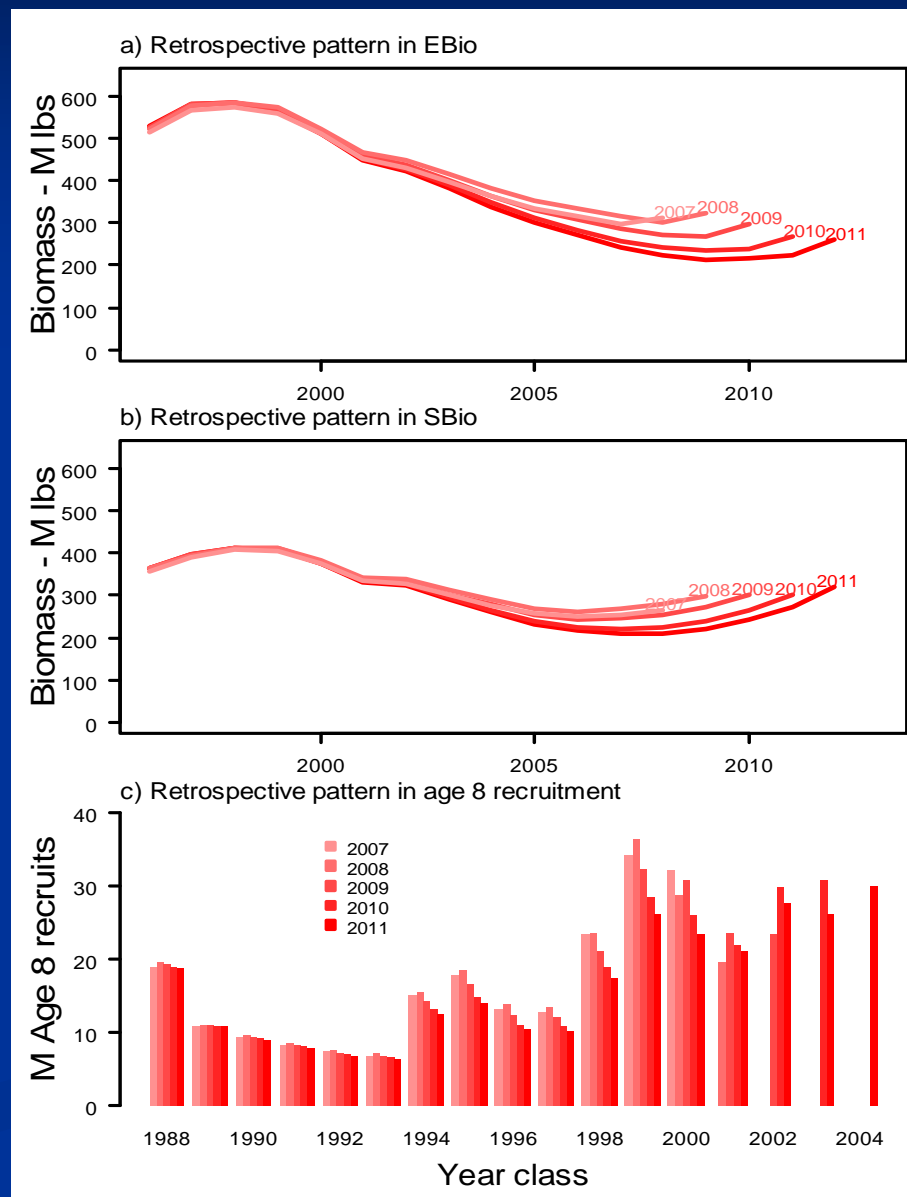
01	Estimate M - both sexes
02	Fixed M
03	Fit to Bycatch LFs, not PD
04	cq = .01
05	cq=.05
06	cq=50
07	sq=.01
08	sq=.1
09	turn off robustify
10	turn off variance scaling
11	CPUE lambda=0
12	CPUE Total lambda=0
13	Single sex params
14	Survey domed sel.
15	Don't fit to Bycatch
16	Double bycatch

Retrospective behavior in 2 models

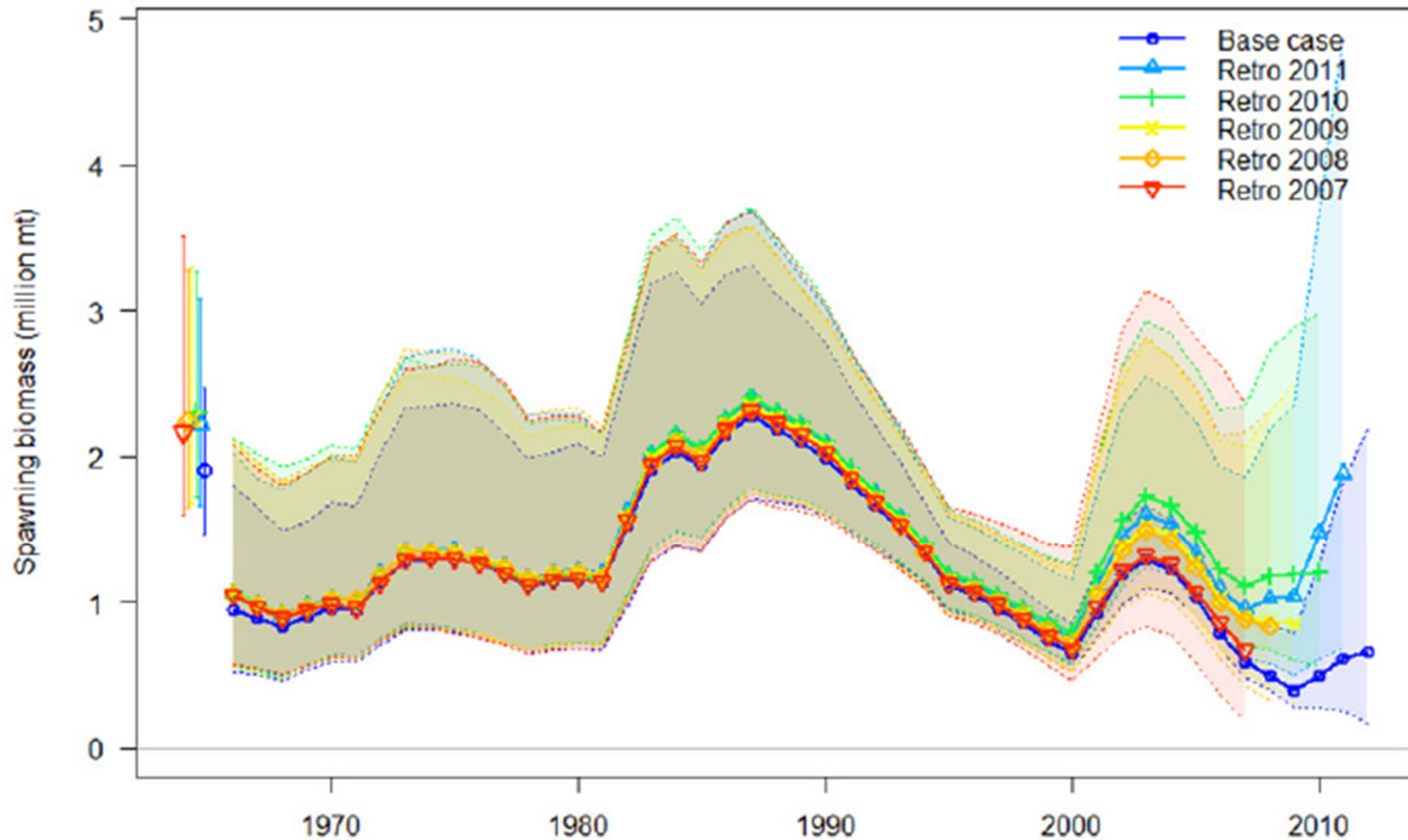
Trendless (Base 2010)



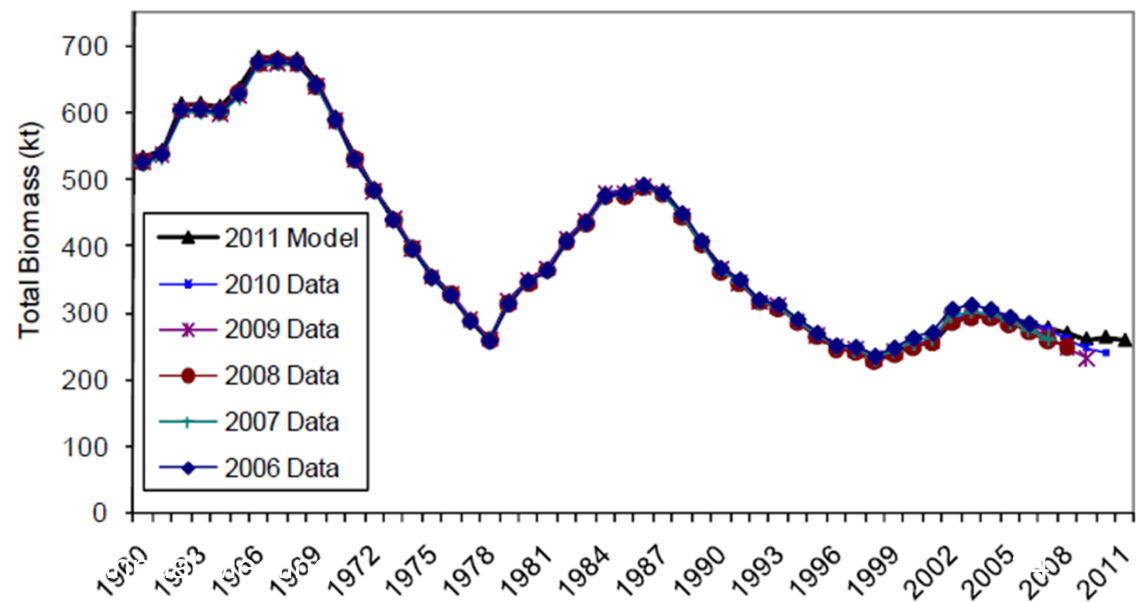
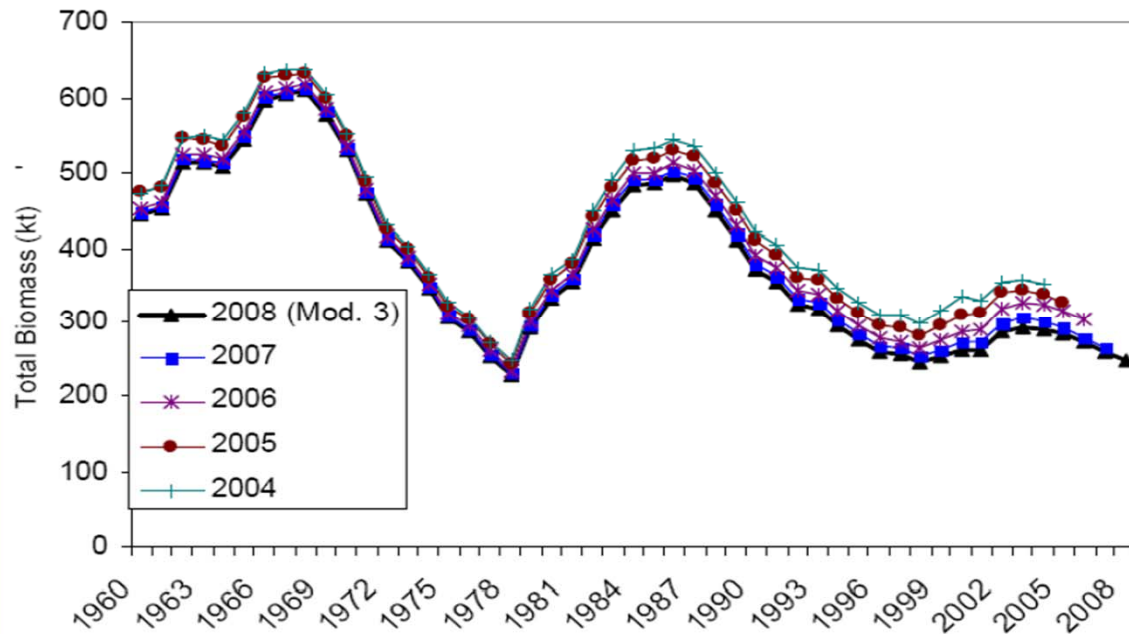
WobbleSQ (Alt. 2)



Retrospective behavior Pacific Hake

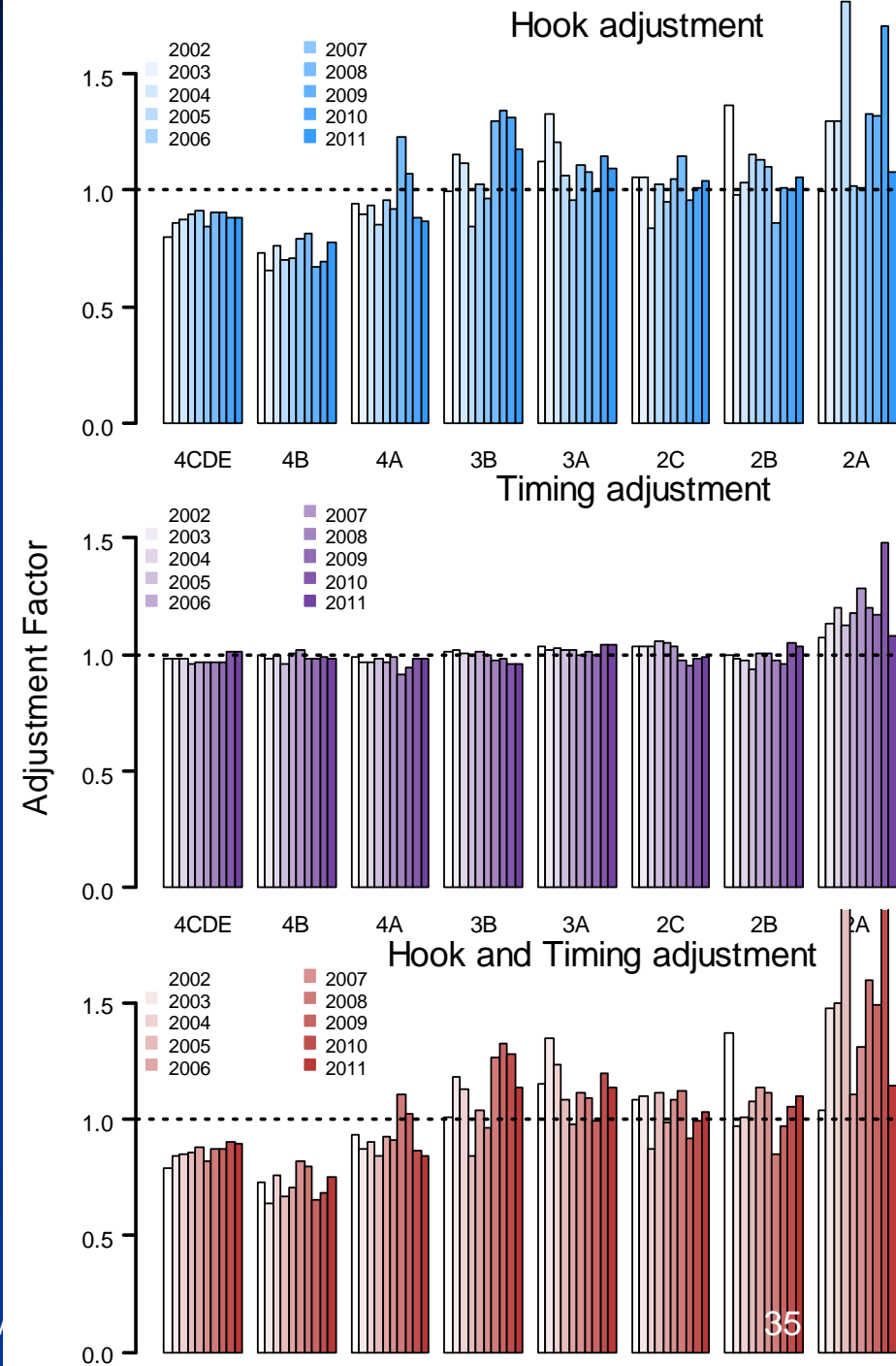
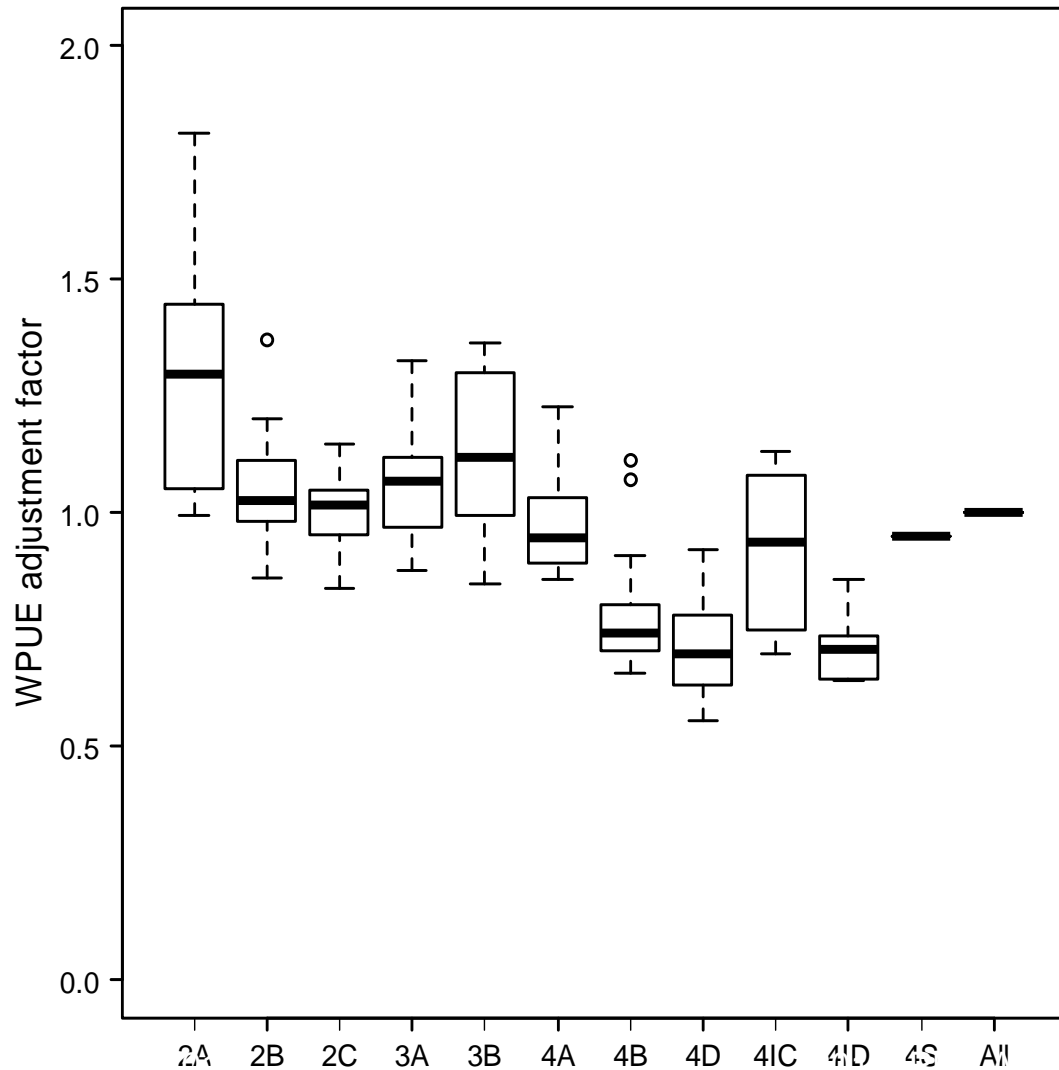


AK Sablefish retrospective behavior



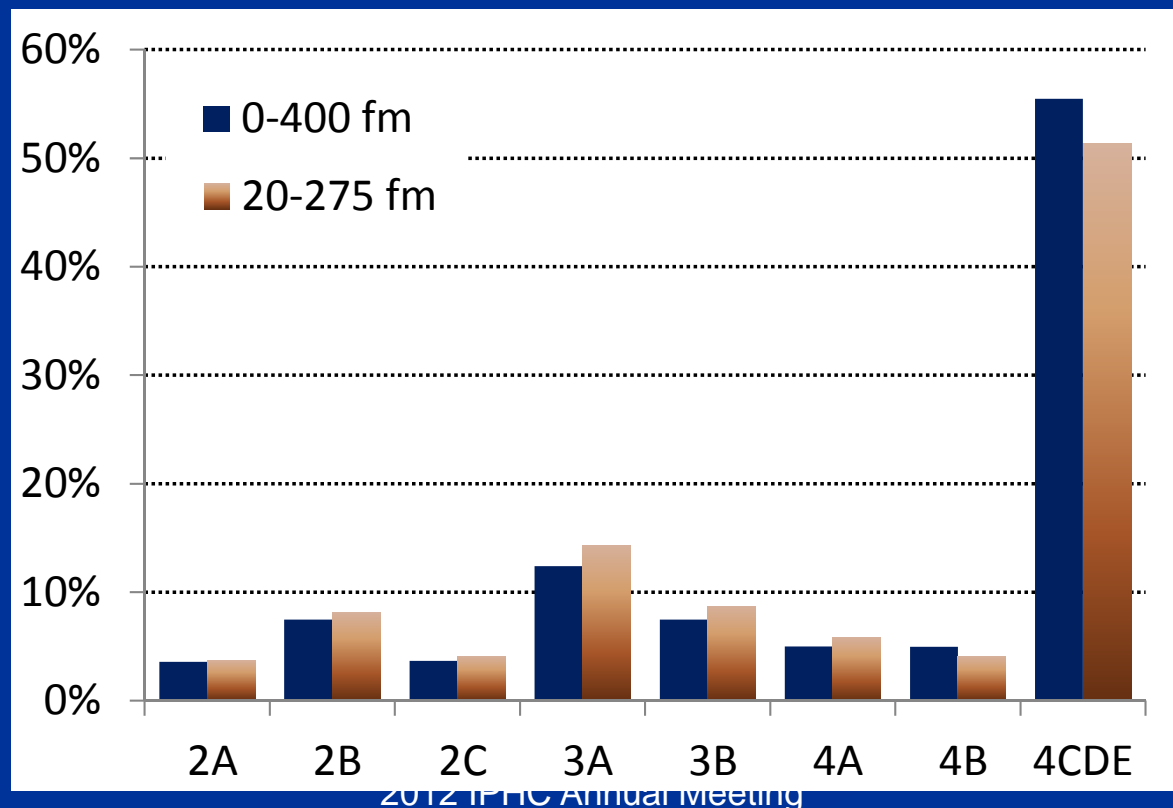
WPUE adjustments

Hook adjustment



Two factors in constructing CW dataset for assessment and apportionment

- ❖ Use of adjustment factors or not
- ❖ Definition of bottom area: 0-400 or 20-275
- ❖ Should match apportionment criteria
- ❖ Influence on EBio estimates: 288-292 M lbs, 254-262 M lbs



INCIDENTAL CATCH RECOMENDATIONS IN THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

Regulations governing incidental harvest of halibut in the salmon troll fishery and commercial sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis require the Council to adopt recommended halibut landing restrictions to allow incidental harvest while assuring quotas are not exceeded.

Salmon Troll Fishery

The halibut regulations allocate 15 percent of the non-Indian commercial halibut allocation in Area 2A to the salmon troll fishery as an incidental catch. Regulations (beginning in 2001) direct that the primary management objective is to harvest the incidental quota in the May/June salmon troll fishery with a secondary objective to harvest any remaining quota during July through September. The Council has successfully used landing ratios and a total trip limit to assure a manageable progression of the fishery in past years. A summary of management information for the incidental halibut fishery since the initial season in 1995 is provided in Agenda Item H.2.a, Attachment 1.

Commercial Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

The total Area 2A halibut quota is large enough this year (over 932,034 pounds) to provide for an incidental halibut harvest in the commercial sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis. This incidental fishery is allocated that portion of the Washington sport allocation in excess of 214,110 pounds, provided a minimum of 10,000 pounds is available, up to a maximum of 70,000 pounds. The most recent year the Area 2A allocation was sufficient to provide for incidental harvest was 2009. In past years, the Council has successfully used landing restrictions to maintain the harvest within the allocation. A summary of management information for the incidental halibut fishery since the initial season in 2001 is provided in Agenda Item H.2.a, Attachment 1.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt for public review a range of landing restrictions for halibut caught incidentally in the non-Indian commercial troll season that comports with the troll salmon management options, and assures a reasonable utilization of the incidental catch while not exceeding the quota.**
- 2. Adopt for public review, a range of landing restrictions, including season dates for incidental halibut harvest in the commercial sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington.**

Reference Materials:

- 1. Agenda Item H.2.a, Attachment 1: Summary of Pacific Halibut Incidental Catch Management.**

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Public Review Options for 2012

Chuck Tracy

PFMC
02/03/12

SUMMARY OF PACIFIC HALIBUT INCIDENTAL CATCH MANAGEMENT

Salmon Troll Fishery

The table below provides the number of licenses, allocation, harvest, and landing restrictions for the incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery since the initial season in 1995.

Incidental Halibut Management in Area 2A Salmon Troll Fishery.

Year	Licenses Issued					Pounds of Halibut		Restriction	
	WA	OR	CA	AK-2A	Total	Allocation	Total Harvest	Halibut per Chinook	Trip Limit
1995	14	104	2	5	125	16,068	2,125	1 per each 20	None
1996	22	82	5	14	123	16,068	9,521	1 + 1 per each 15	20
1997	59	187	10	19	275	21,635	17,570	1 + 1 per each 10	20
1998	44	188	15	18	265	25,344	13,124	1 + 1 per each 8	25
1999	54	193	12	25	284	23,490	9,955	1 + 1 per each 5	35
2000	49	154	8	24	235	24,464	22,350	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2001	63	232	13	37	347	34,046	34,100	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2002	60	223	7	41	331	39,300	41,000	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2003	60	209	10	44	323	39,300	41,917	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2004	74	212	11	47	344	44,554	42,798	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2005	79	249	12	52	392	39,918	42,187	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2006	54	138	6	26	224	41,464	34,354	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2007	62	188	17	25	292	43,667 ^{a/}	24,126	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2008	55	60	4	16	135	37,707	16,685	1 + 1 per each 2	35
2009	65	49	4	14	132	29,362	11,310	1 + 1 per each 2	35
2010	79	125	7	22	233	25,035	28,627	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2011	77	182	26	31	316	28,126	26,172	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2012	-	-	-	-	-	30,568	-	-	-

a/ 40,227 preseason allocation plus 3,440 transferred inseason from directed halibut fishery.

Commercial Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

The table below provides the allocation, total harvest, landing restrictions, and season dates for the incidental halibut catch in the fixed-gear sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis since the initial season began in 2001.

Incidental Halibut Management in the Area 2A Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis, Washington.				
Pounds of Halibut			Restrictions	
Year	Allocation	Total Harvest	Halibut per Sablefish (dressed weight)	Season Dates
2001	47,946	26,945	2+80 lb per 1,000 lb	Aug. 15-Oct. 31
2002	88,389	66,599	2+150 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 31
2003	70,000	65,325	2+150 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 31
2004	70,000	67,837	2+100 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 31
2005	70,000	68,013	2+100 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 23
2006	70,000	64,624	2+100 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 31
2007	70,000	45,780	2+100 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 31
2008	70,000	39,729	2+100 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 31
2009	11,895	5,415	100 lb per trip	May 1-Oct. 31
2010	0	-	-	-
2011	0	-	-	-
2012	21,173	-	-	-

PFMC
02/02/12

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
INCIDENTAL CATCH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR
SABLEFISH FISHERIES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) recommends for the Salmon troll fishery that the options contained within Agenda Item H2.b, Supplemental SAS Report, be adopted for public review. Those options are:

1. Status quo; 1 + 1 per each 3 (halibut per Chinook), 35 halibut trip limit
2. 1 + 1 per each 4 “ “ “ , 20 “ “ “
3. 1 + 1 per each 3 “ “ “ , 15 “ “ “

With the sablefish fixed gear fishery, harvestable amount of halibut is enough to allow retention in the north of Point Chehalis fishery for 2012. The GAP recommends the following options for public review:

1. Status quo; 100 lb per trip
2. 2 + 50 lb per 1000 lb. (Halibut per Sablefish, dressed weight)
3. 400 lb per trip.

Option #2 is calculated from the 2001 fishery where the harvest was 26,945 lb at 80 lb per 1000 lb. 50 lb per 1000 should result in a harvest close to 21,173.

Option #3 is calculated from the 2009 fishery where harvest was 5,415 lb at 100 lb per trip or approximately one-fourth of what is available for 2012.

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON INCIDENTAL CATCH REGULATIONS
IN THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) recommends the following options for public review:

- Option 1: Status quo: Beginning May 1, license holders may land no more than one Pacific halibut per each three Chinook, except one Pacific halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut per open period.
- Option 2: Beginning May 1, license holders may land no more than one Pacific halibut per each four Chinook, except one Pacific halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 20 halibut per open period.
- Option 3 –: Beginning May 1, license holders may land no more than one Pacific halibut per each three Chinook, except one Pacific halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 15 halibut per open period.

PPMC
03/4/12

UPDATE ON REVIEW OF PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT UNDER THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) AND STATUS OF PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES FOR INCIDENTAL CATCH RETENTION OF PACIFIC HALIBUT IN THE LIMITED ENTRY FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

At its March 2011 meeting, the Council recommended advancing alternatives for Pacific halibut bycatch retention in fixed gear sablefish fisheries south of Point Chehalis, Washington, but to restrict application of alternatives for retention to the limited entry fixed gear sablefish sector, and to limit viable alternatives to those that do not increase impacts on yelloweye rockfish. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is scheduled to provide a process update on consideration of further developing alternatives and NEPA review of the Area 2A catch sharing plan.

Council Action:

- 1. Provide guidance on schedule and process expectations.**
- 2. Discuss agency participation and lead role.**
- 3. Provide guidance on alternatives for halibut bycatch retention as appropriate.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.3.b, NMFS Report: National Marine Fisheries Service NEPA Scoping Results on Catch Sharing Plan Implementation and Changes to Incidental Catch Retention of Pacific Halibut in the Limited Entry Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery.
2. Agenda Item H.3.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Provide Guidance on the Review, Scheduling, and Further Development of Alternatives for Analysis

Chuck Tracy

PFMC
02/13/12

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE NEPA SCOPING RESULTS ON CATCH SHARING
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND CHANGES TO INCIDENTAL CATCH RETENTION OF PACIFIC
HALIBUT IN THE LIMITED ENTRY FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERY

At the March 2011 Council meeting under agenda item F.3 (Preliminary Alternatives for incidental catch retention of pacific halibut in the limited entry and open access fixed gear sablefish fisheries) the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) stated that it would conduct initial National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping on two issues and bring those results back to the Council in 2012. Issue 1 was the continued implementation of the Council's Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) and Issue 2 was the Council's final motion in March of 2011 regarding changing allocations to the incidental catch retention provisions in the CSP.

As stated at the March 2011 meeting, Issue 1 was an examination of NEPA coverage on the current implementation of the Council's CSP and annual management measures. During scoping it was determined that at this time NMFS does not need to conduct any additional analysis on the current CSP or annual management measures. NMFS will continue to conduct NEPA scoping each year on any changes to the CSP and regulations and will determine at that time if additional NEPA analysis is needed.

Issue 2 was changes to the CSP regarding incidental catch retention of halibut in the limited entry fixed gear (LEFG) sablefish fishery. To evaluate the appropriate level of NEPA NMFS used the Council's final motion as guidance. The Council's final motion on the issue was as follows:

Discontinue any further exploration of incidental catch retention of halibut in the sablefish Open Access fisheries, but continue to explore incidental catch retention in the LEFG sablefish fishery south of point Chehalis in a manner that does not result in increased yelloweye rockfish mortality.

NMFS has determined that an Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of NEPA for this issue. At this time NMFS is not presenting any further analysis.

PFMC
02/13/12

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON UPDATE ON REVIEW OF PACIFIC
HALIBUT MANAGEMENT UNDER THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT
(NEPA) AND STATUS OF PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES FOR INCIDENTAL CATCH
RETENTION OF PACIFIC HALIBUT IN THE LIMITED ENTRY FIXED GEAR
SABLEFISH FISHERIES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a report from Mr. Kevin Duffy of NMFS regarding this agenda item. It was discussed that the GAP has in the past (March 2011) supported analysis of this proposal. The GAP continues to support the proposal as defined by the statement contained in Agenda Item H.3.b, NMFS Report; “Discontinue any further exploration of incidental catch retention of halibut in the sablefish Open Access fisheries, but continue to explore incidental catch retention in the limited entry fixed gear sablefish fishery south of Point Chehalis in a manner that does not result in increased yelloweye rockfish mortality.”

The GAP does not believe that this issue should receive a higher priority than others currently on the Council agenda. Completion of current trawl individual fishing quota trailing amendments, for example, and other ongoing initiatives approved previously by the Council should be completed before dedicating Council staff time to this proposed amendment.

PFMC
03/05/12

F/V Top Gun

Jeff Miles
PO Box 424
Port Orford, OR 97465
541-332-1835

Mr. Dan Wolford
Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Chairman Wolford:

I fish for blackcod, crab, tuna, nearshore rockfish and halibut out of Port Orford. I have fished for 35 years; I started commercial fishing with my dad on his boat.

I am concerned about the problem of discarding halibut when we blackcod fish. This discard problem isn't minor. Analysis from the Observer Program indicates thousands and thousands of pounds of halibut are discarded by blackcod fishermen each year. Responsible fishermen do not think discarding is acceptable. I believe we should consider options to the halibut derby fishery including a blackcod bycatch option similar to what is used for troll salmon bycatch of halibut.

Allowing bycatch of halibut in the blackcod fishery would not have any more impact on yellow eye rockfish because the halibut would be caught during normal fishing activities. When targeting halibut in the derby fishery the yellow eye bycatch rate is higher.

I encourage the Council to continue to analyze options to reduce discards in the halibut fishery and to improve opportunities for halibut retention. This is an important issue to many west coast fishermen.

Sincerely,

Jeff Miles, F/V Top Gun



Port Orford Ocean Resource Team

PO Box 679
351 W 6th Street
Port Orford, OR97465
P: 541.332.0627
F: 541.332.1170
info@oceanresourceteam.org
oceanresourceteam.org

February 8, 2012

Mr. Dan Wolford
Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Chairman Wolford:

I am writing on behalf of the Port Orford Ocean Resource Team (POORT) to express our support for continued analysis of options to provide a by-catch allowance of Pacific halibut in the fixed-gear fishery for sablefish within halibut area 2A. The fishing community of Port Orford, Oregon has a long history of participation in the Pacific halibut and fixed-gear sablefish fisheries. Management changes over time have diminished the opportunity for our fishermen to access the halibut fishery yet we still catch halibut in our directed sablefish fishery.

Since 2006 POORT has advocated making these changes for fixed-gear fishermen to reduce by-catch mortality and to better utilize valuable resources. We note that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife presentation March 2011 (Agenda Item F.3.b) clearly outlines the issues and presents several options which would provide quota transfer under the Catch Sharing Plan to allow an incidental take of halibut. Again, we encourage you to continue with the process to analyze and select options for a by-catch allowance of halibut in the sablefish fishery.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions about this important matter, please contact me at (541) 332-0627.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Leesa Cobb".

Leesa Cobb, Executive Director