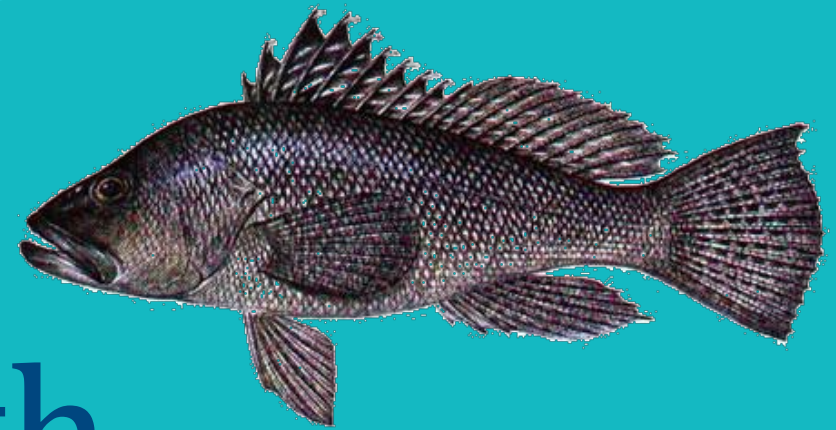




**NOAA  
FISHERIES**



# SEDAR 76 South Atlantic Black Sea Bass

SSC Review

April 2023

Atlantic Fisheries Branch Beaufort, NC

# Outline

- Background
- Data
- Assessment Model
- Assessment Results
- Uncertainty
- Projections



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

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# Background

- SEDAR 25 (2011)
  - Not overfished but not fully rebuilt
    - $SSB_{2020}/MSST=1.13$  but  $SB_{2010}/SSB_{MSY}=0.7$
  - Overfishing occurring
    - $F_{2009-2010}/F_{MSY}=1.07$
- SEDAR 25 Update (2013)
  - Not overfished ( $SSB_{2012}/MSST=1.66$ )
  - Not overfishing ( $F_{2011-2012}/F_{MSY}=0.66$ )
- SEDAR 56 Standard assessment
  - Not overfished ( $SSB_{2016}/MSST=1.15$ )
  - Not overfishing ( $F_{2014-2016}/F_{MSY}=0.64$ )
- SEDAR 76 Operational Assessment
  - This assessment
  - **SPOILER ALERT!!**
  - Overfished and Overfishing

# SEDAR 76

- SEDAR 78 TORs and schedule approved June 2020 and March 2021
  - Extended terminal model year to 2021
- Data submissions completed August 2022
- 1 data scoping call Sept 2022
- 5 assessment webinars Sept 2022 – Feb 2023
- Panel input and approval of all decisions
- SSC review April 2023 (today)

# Outline

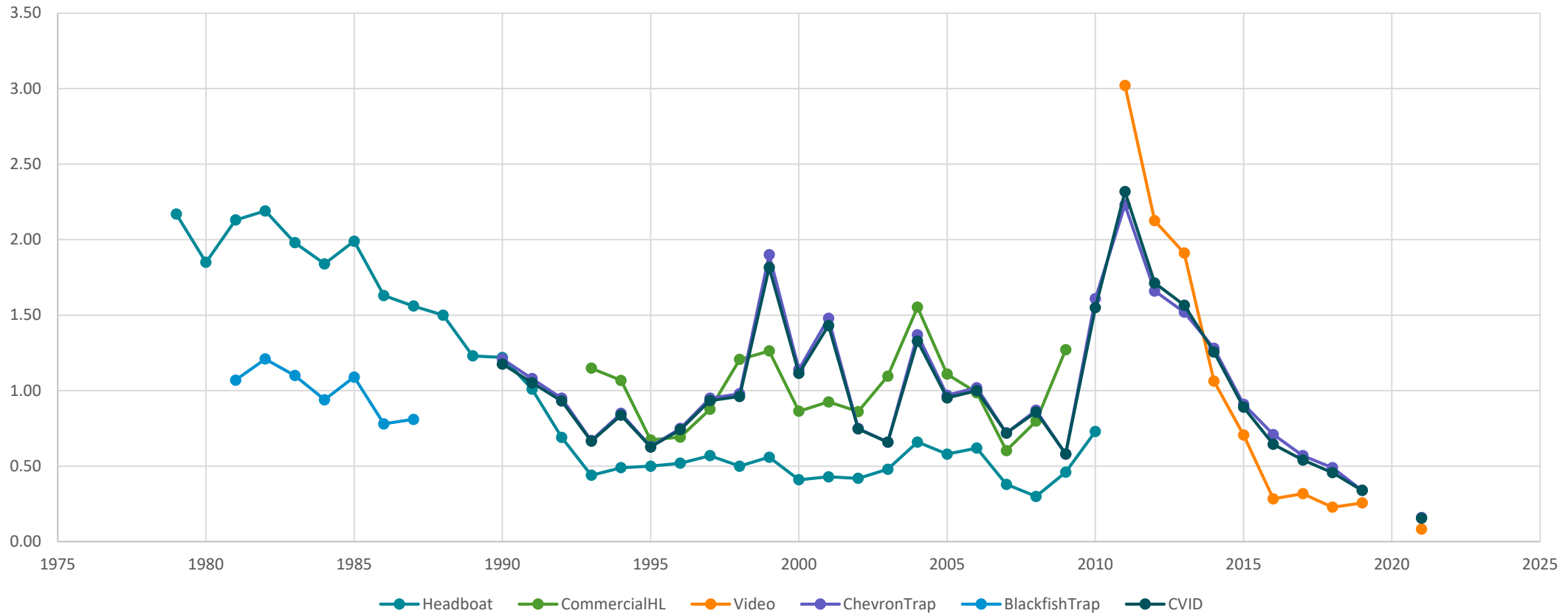
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# Indices of abundance

- Two fishery dependent indices of abundance
  - Commercial handline (1993 – 2009)
  - Headboat (1979 – 2010)
- Two fishery independent indices of abundance
  - MARMAP blackfish trap (1981 – 1987)
  - SERFS combined trap and video (1990 – 2021)
    - Tested sensitivities to combinations of index



# Indices of abundance



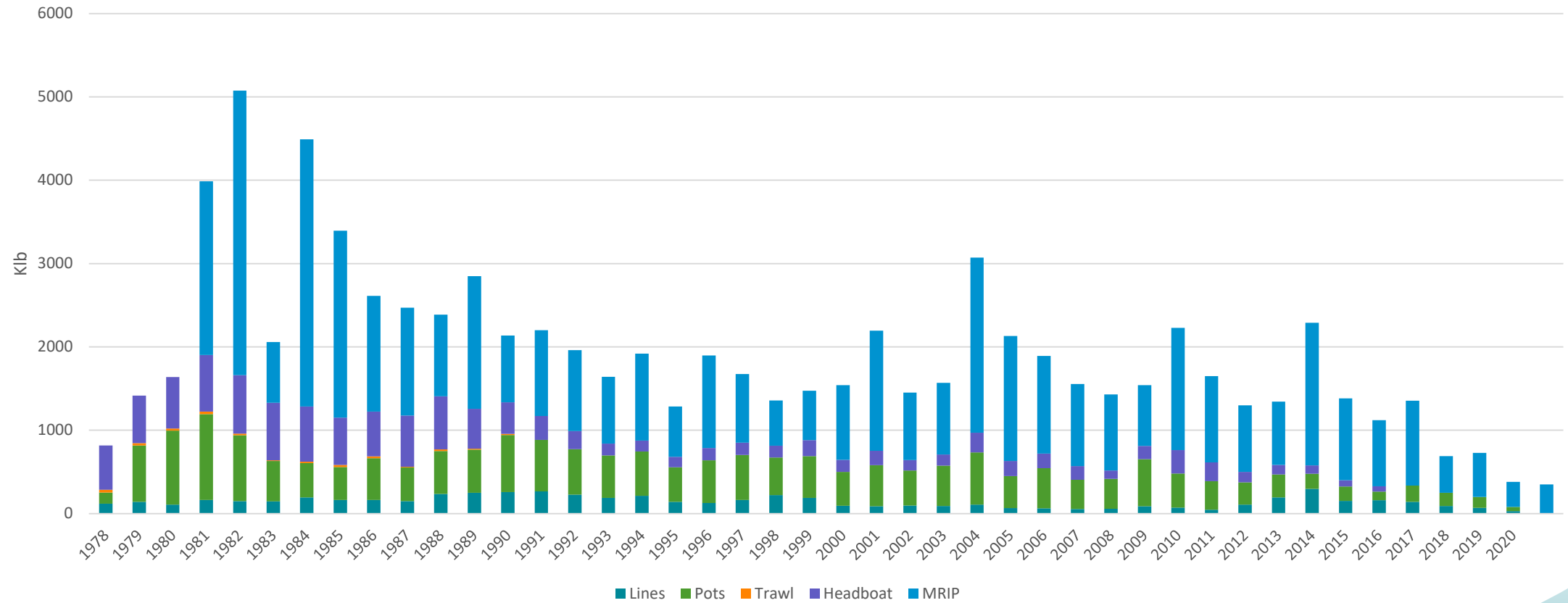


# Landings and Discards

- Eight removal time series
- Commercial
  - Trawl (1978 – 1990)
  - Handline landings (1978 – 2021)
  - Pots landings (1978 – 2021)
  - Discards (open and closed seasons) (1993 – 2021)
- Recreational
  - Headboat landings (1978 – 2021)
  - General recreational landings (1981 – 2021)
  - Headboat discards (1986 – 2021)
  - General recreational discards (1981 – 2021)

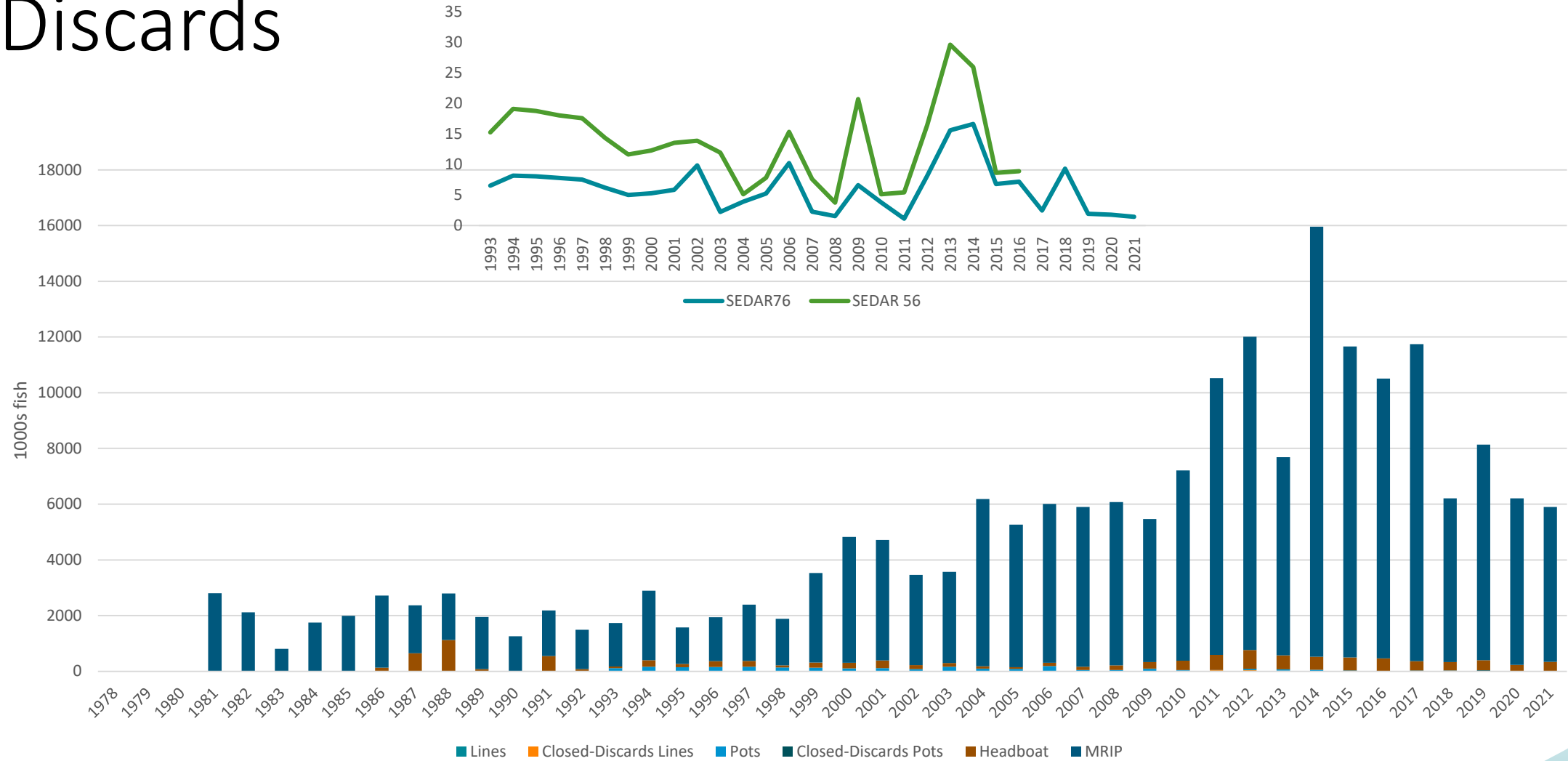


# Landings



# Discards

Handline Open Season Discards



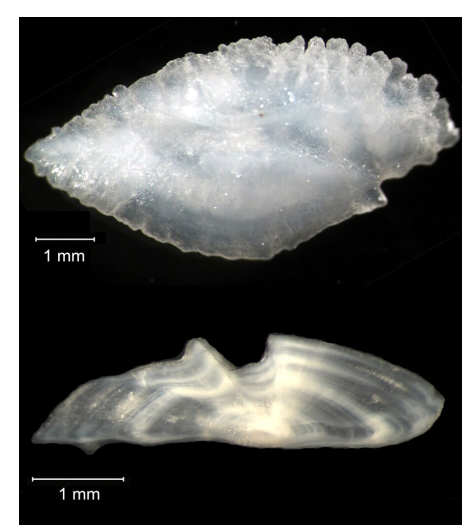
# Composition Data

## Fishery Dependent

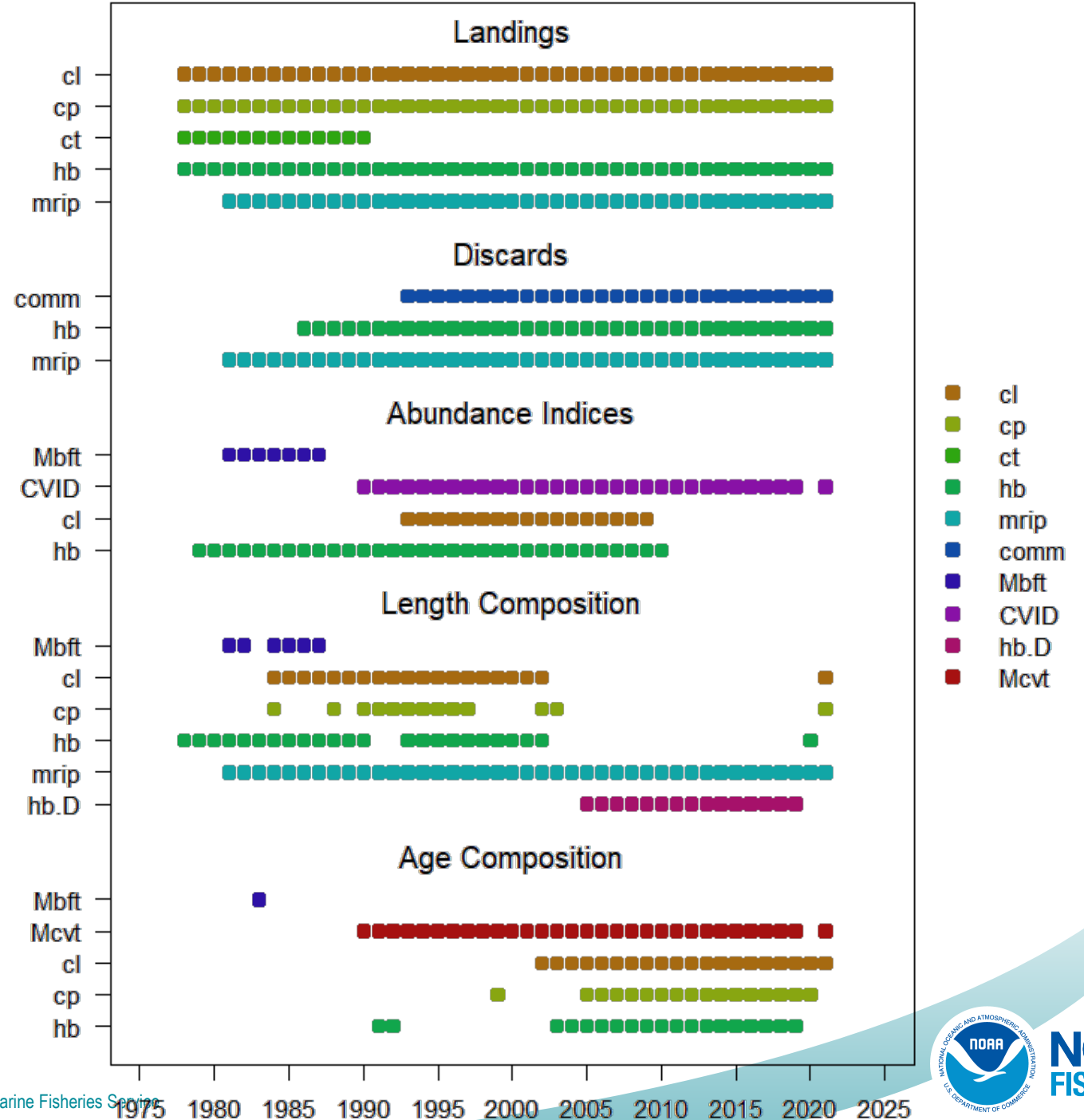
- Handline
  - Age: 2002 - 2021
  - Length: 1984 – 2002
- Pots
  - Age: 1999, 2005 - 2020
  - Length: 1984 – 2003, 2021
- Headboat
  - Age: 1991, 1992, 2003 - 2019
  - Length: 1978 – 2002, 2020
- General Recreation
  - Length: 1981 – 2021
- Headboat discard
  - Length: 2005 – 2019

## Fishery Independent

- MARMAP blackfish trap
  - Age: 1983
  - Length: 1981 – 1983 except 1983
- SERFS
  - Age: 1990-2021, except 2020

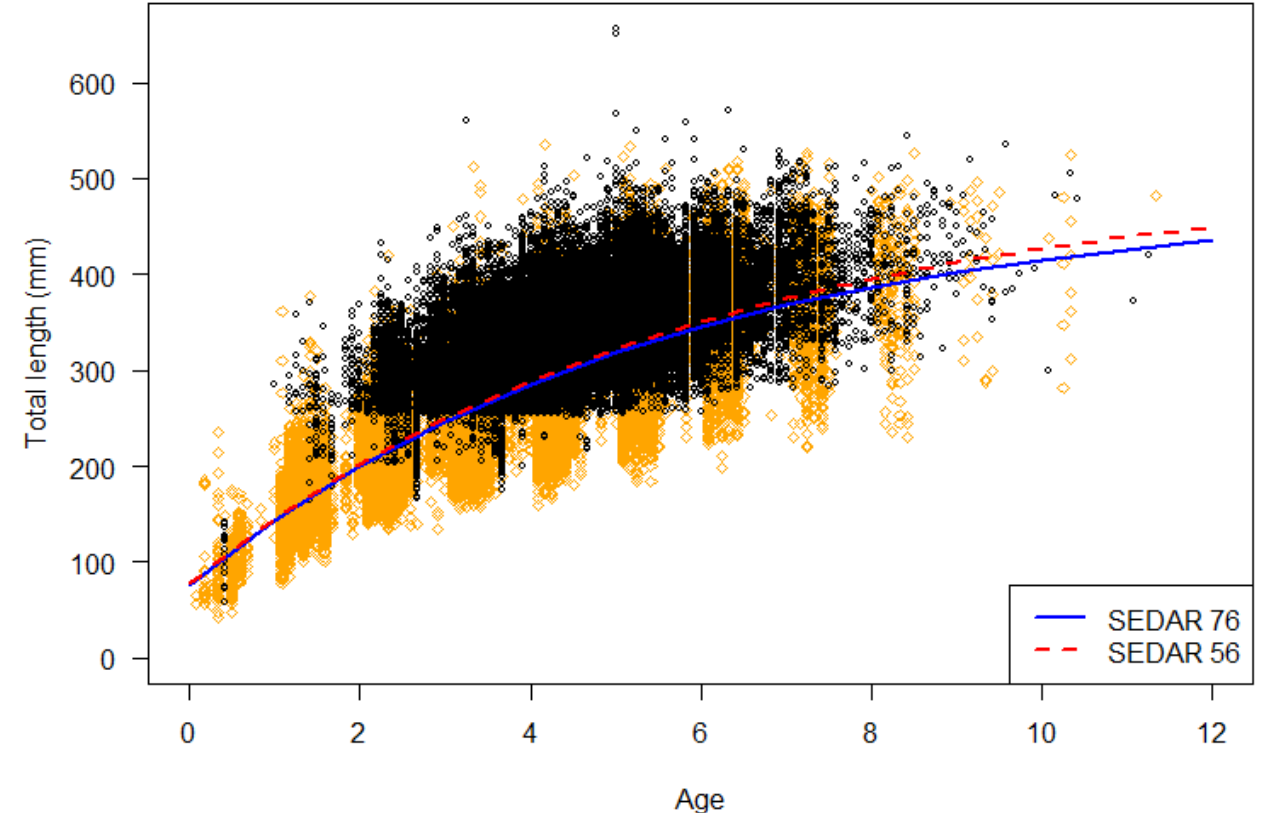


# Data Availability



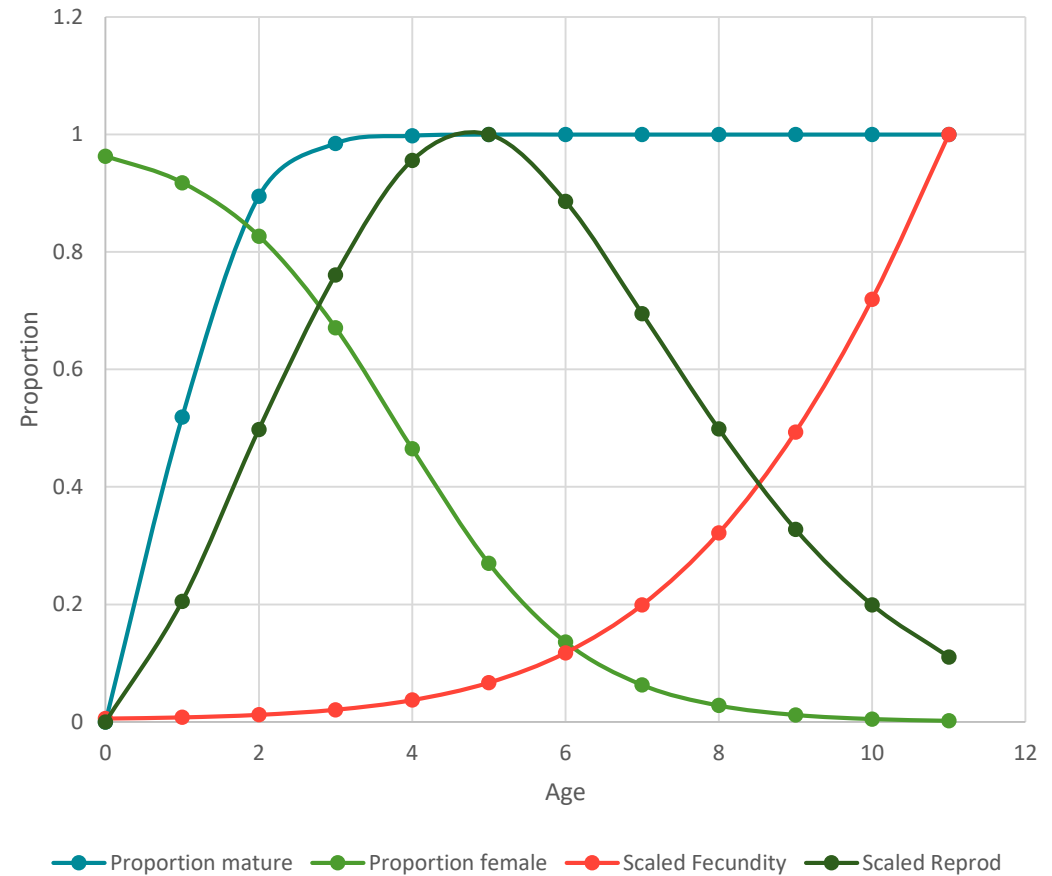
# Life history - Growth

- Updated growth from additions to age/length composition data
- Used standard ADMB code with size limits and weighting by calendar age where ages 9+ were grouped as in SEDAR 25
- Minimal difference in growth curve



# Life history – Fecundity, maturity, etc

- No new information available
- Used ogives from SEDAR 56
- Recruitment modeled with a mean recruitment model



# Life history – Discard mortality

- SEDAR 56 Handline based on Rudershausen et al 2014 – 19%
  - Headboat (15.2) and general rec (13.7) reweighted by FL observer for hire discard and depth data
  - “release of gas from the abdominal cavity during tagging of black sea bass”
- Commercial pot discard based on Rudershausen et al 2008
  - 1.5” panel 14% and 2” panel 6.8%



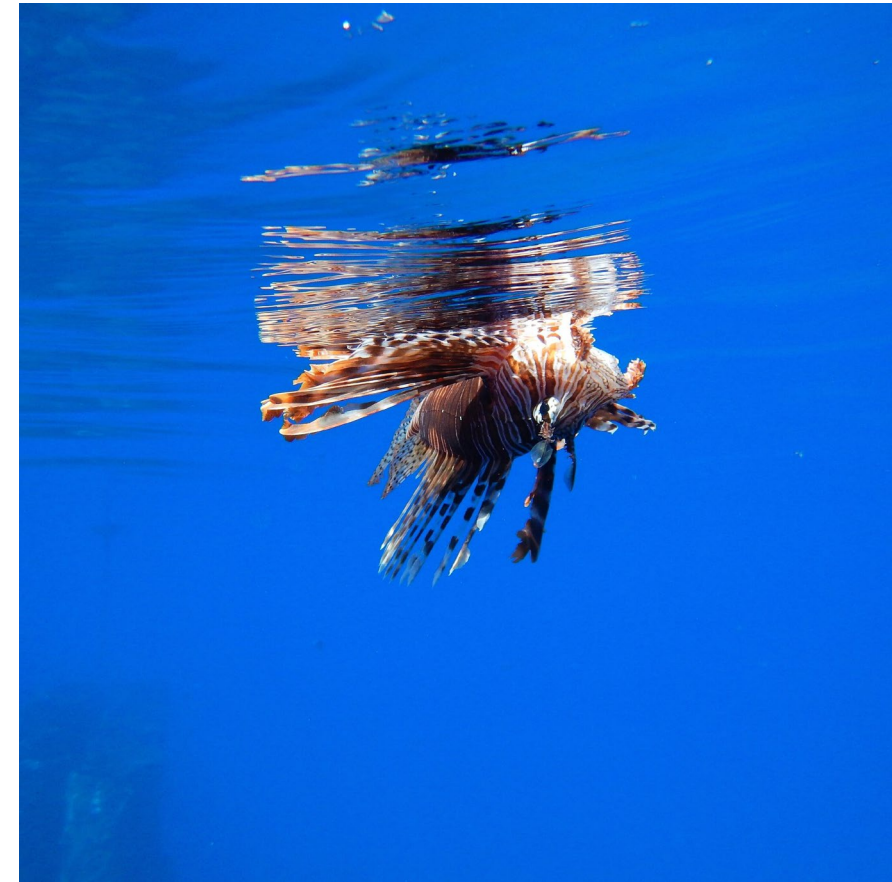


# Life history – Discard mortality

- Rudershausen et al 2020 found that survival from venting and descender devices was 1.5 times the survival of the control
  - No difference in survival between the mitigation techniques
- New studies estimate higher discard mortality
  - Schweitzer et al (2020) commercial trap 1.5” with 2.68” vents 47.1%
    - MD & DE, 25-30 m, Cages 4-10d following sorting by commercial pots, sometimes > 10 minutes exposure before returned to water
  - Zemeckis et al (2020) Headboat vented 21.9% not vented 50.4%
    - NJ 45 – 67 m, Dec – March, Acoustic tagging 128 hr
- Suggests that discard mortality estimates may be underestimated

# Life history – Discard mortality

- Many panel members were hesitant to disregard the Rudershausen et al (2008) level of mortality
- Concerns that the Zemeckis et al (2020) study was in deeper waters than typical in SE
- Concerns that exposure time in Schweitzer et al (2020) was longer than experience in SE
- Retained base levels from SEDAR 56 but expanded uncertainty scenarios



# Life history – Natural mortality

- SEDAR 56

- Used on Hewitt and Hoenig (2005)

$$M = \frac{4.22}{A_{max}} = 0.38$$

- M at age from Lorenzen (1996)

$$M_a = 3.69 * W_a^{-0.305}$$

- SEDAR 76

- Hamel and Cope (2022)

$$M = \frac{5.4}{A_{max}} = 0.49$$

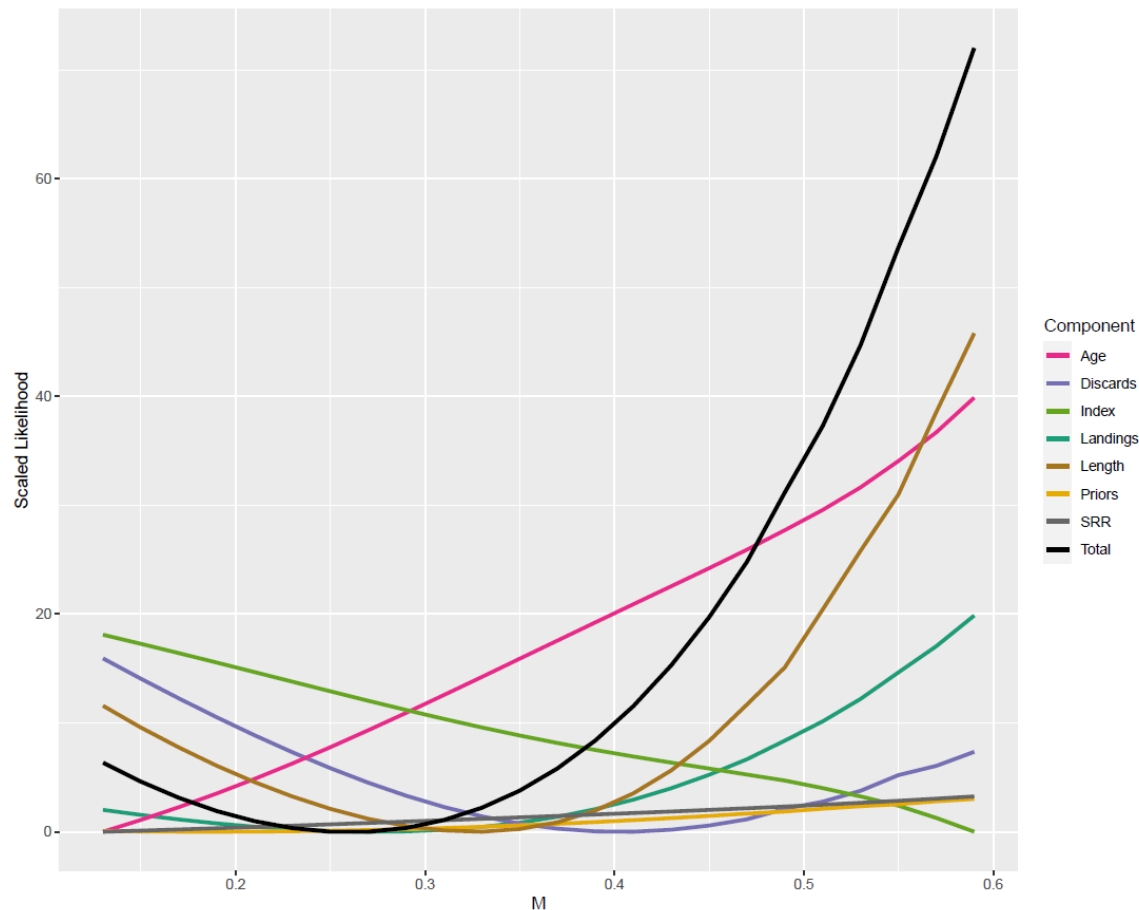
- Lorenzen (2022) and Lorenzen et al (2022) Generalized length inverse mortality model

- $M_a = \beta(L_a)^{-1}$

- $\beta$  would be scaled to a mean M estimate

But Wait There's More!!!

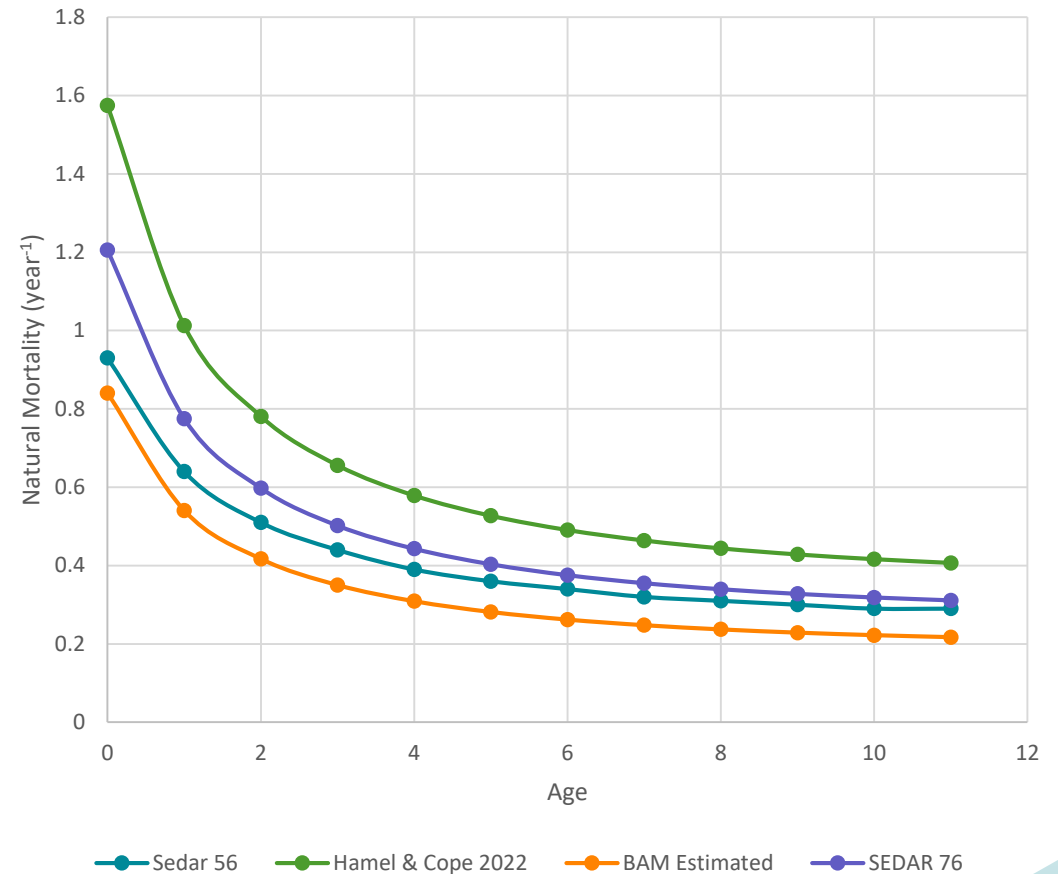
# Life history – Natural mortality



- Estimated mean M as 0.26
- Conflict between age composition and index for SERFS survey
- Panel decided M estimation should be near minimum from the age composition
- Not enough evidence to use as base model

# Life history – Natural mortality

- Most data sources from external M estimates are based on fully selected fish
- Determined age 3 as first fully selected age and scaled mortality to be same as 3+
- Used average of Hamel & Cope (2022) and Bam estimated value
  - $M = 0.375$
  - Scaled by inverse length at age



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# Modifications to BAM

- Added code to accommodate missing year in SERFS data
- Added effective sample size calculations for Dirichlet multinomial composition data
- Estimated all Dirichlet multinomial variance parameters
- Changed biomass calculations from metric tons to 1000 pounds
- Changed phasing of parameter estimates to converge more efficiently
- Changed commercial discard selectivity for 2009-2013 to include open season discard, but before and after this period it does not

# Modifications to BAM

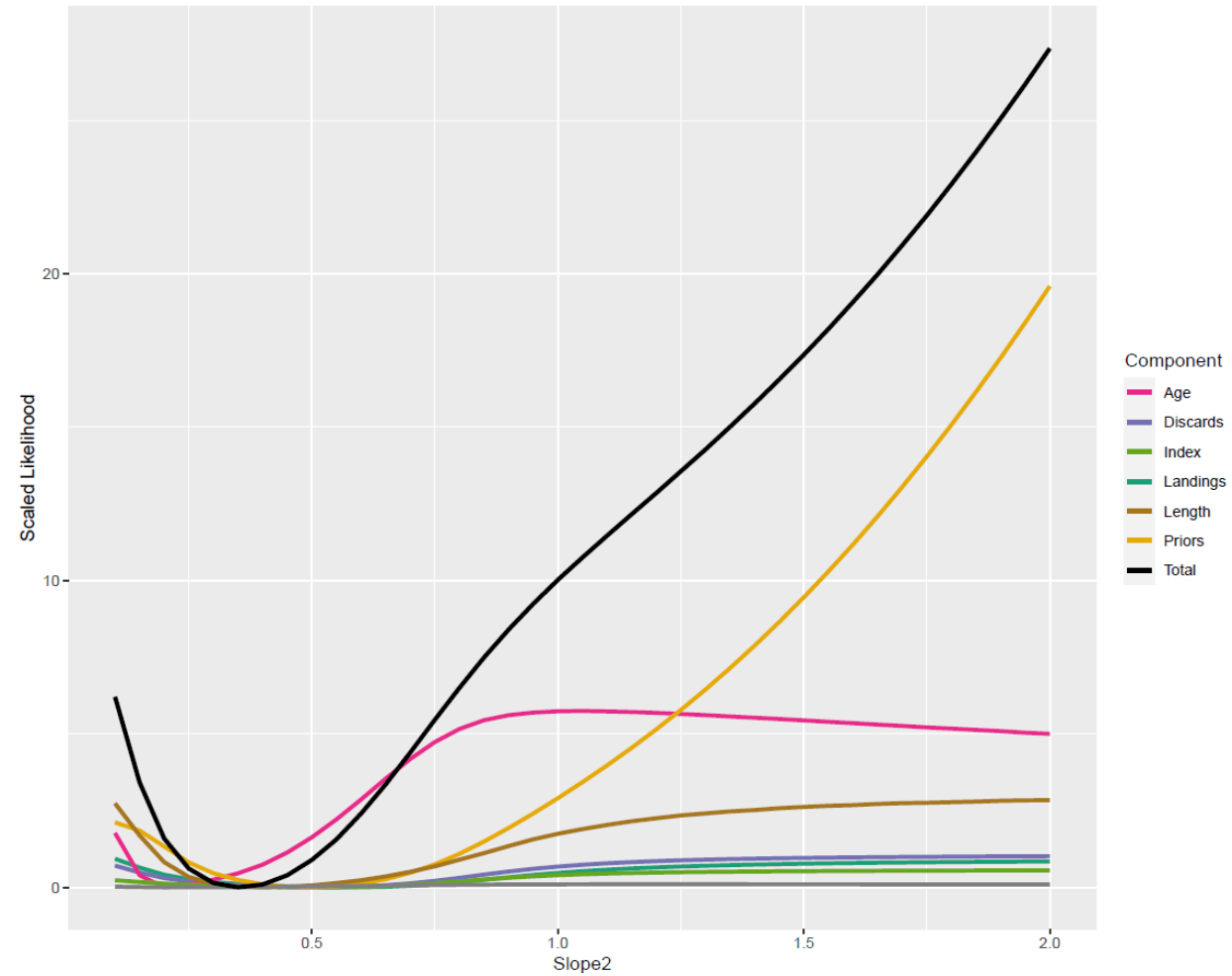
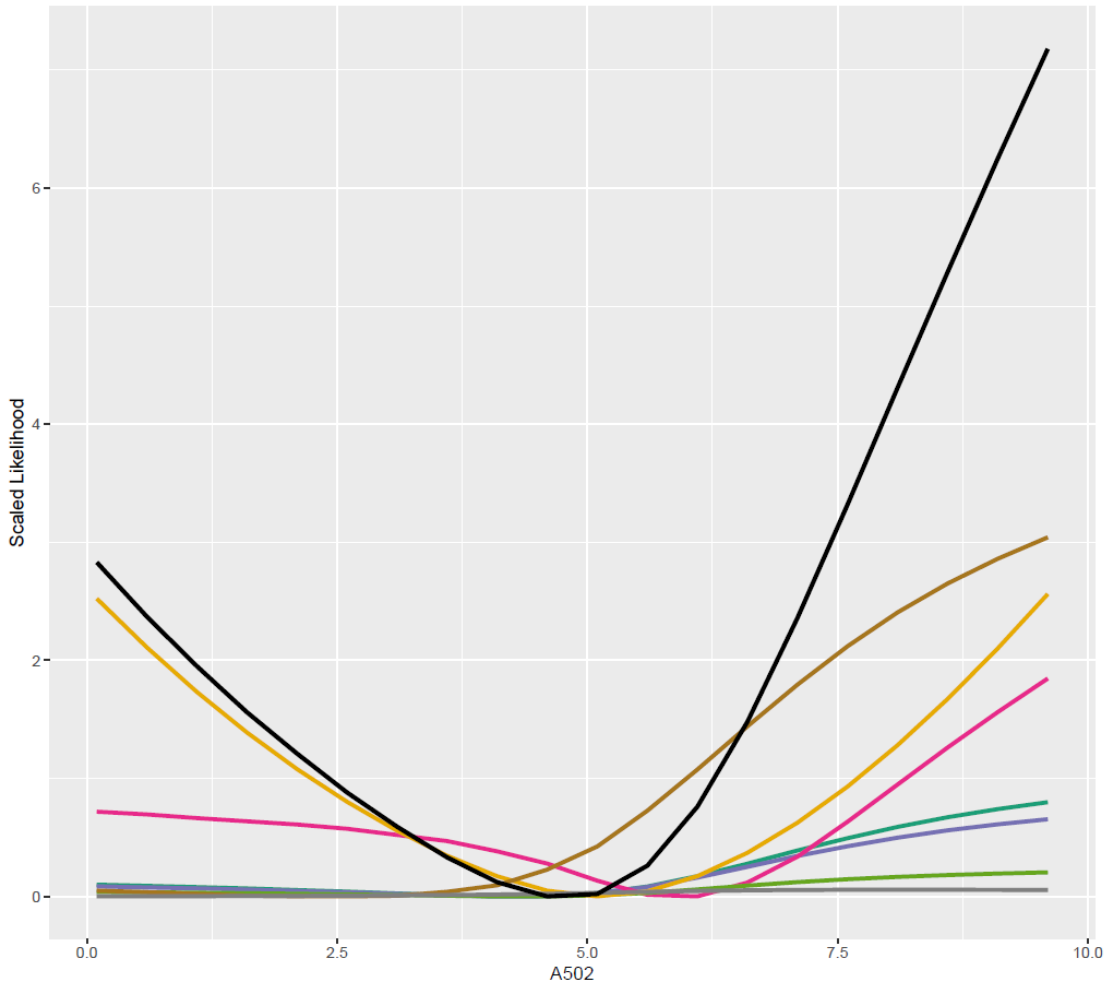
- Corrected start date for rec and comm selectivities recent time blocks
- Corrected general recreational and headboat discard mortality values
- Calculate M-at-age within BAM to allow estimation of M
- Estimate domed selectivity for SERFS survey
- Implemented a mean recruitment model
- Recruitment in last 2 years at recent mean from 2014
- Set  $F_{init}$  equal to 1 because estimated at lower bound



# Domed SERFS Selectivity

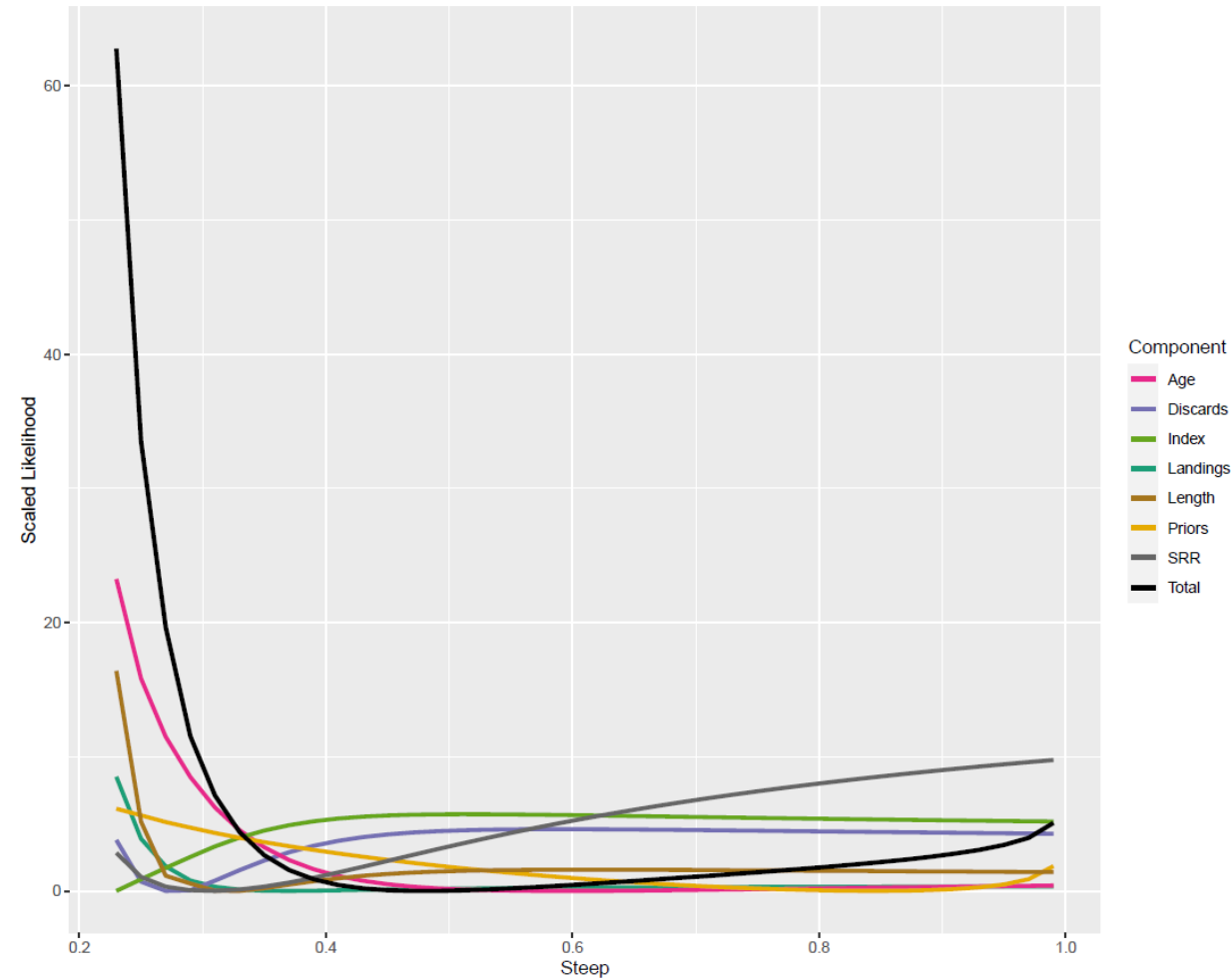
- Investigated possibility of domed selectivity in all fleets and surveys
- Only the SERFS selectivity resulted in an improvement in the likelihood
- Conducted likelihood profiles to determine estimability of parameters

# SERFS Selectivity Profiles



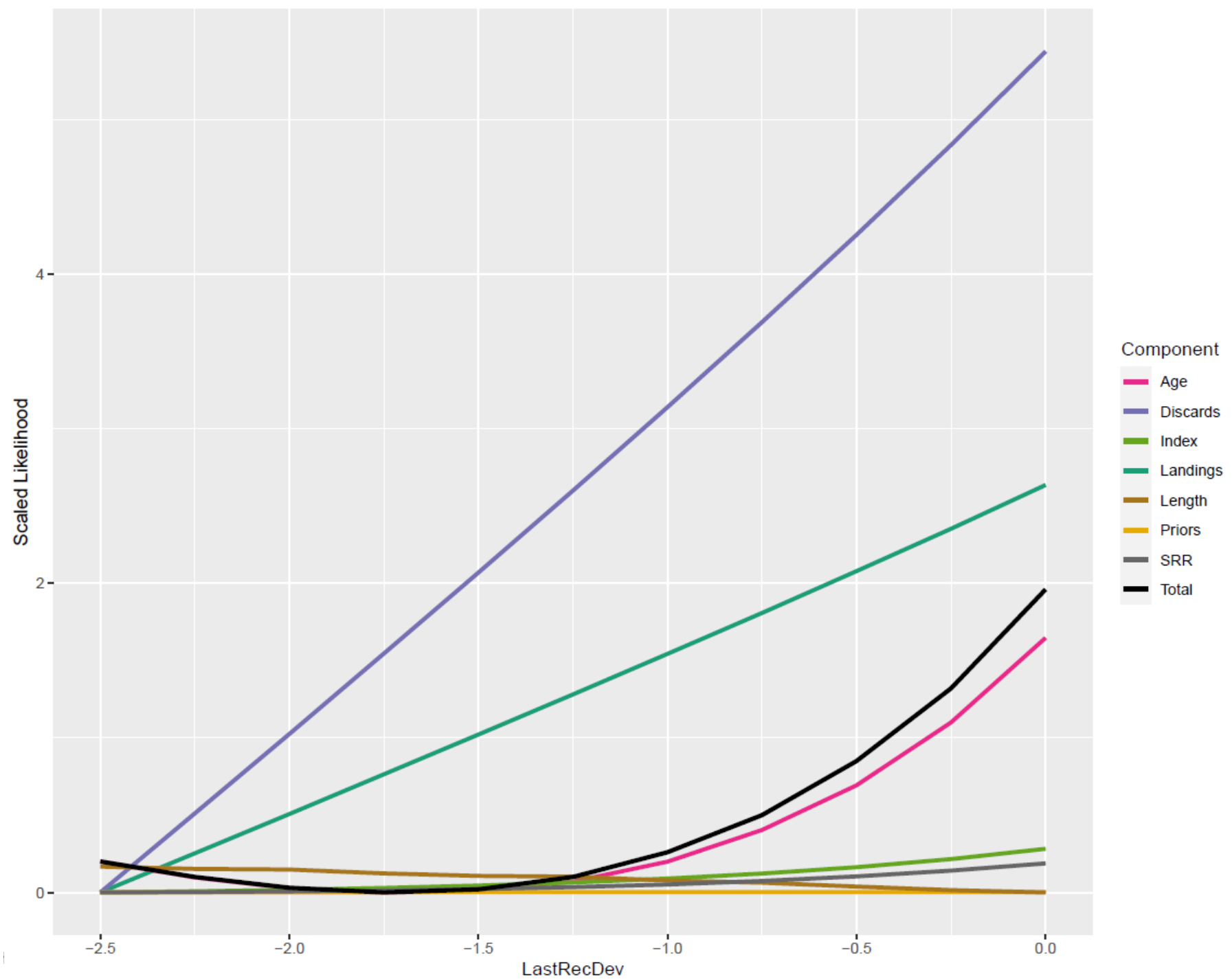
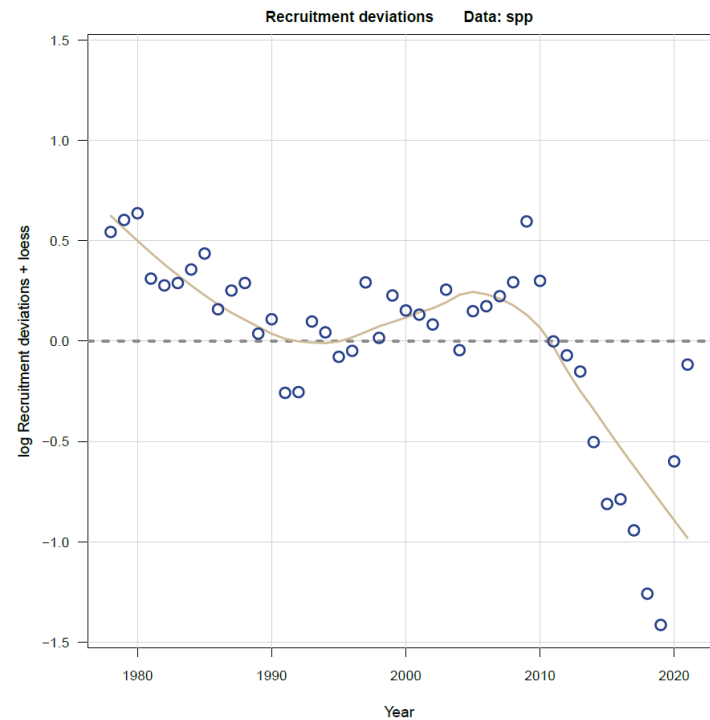
# Spawner-Recruit Model

- Recruitment modeled with mean recruitment model, instead of Beverton-Holt
- Likelihood profile on steepness did not support estimability
  - Each data source preferring upper or lower bound
- No additional information on steepness



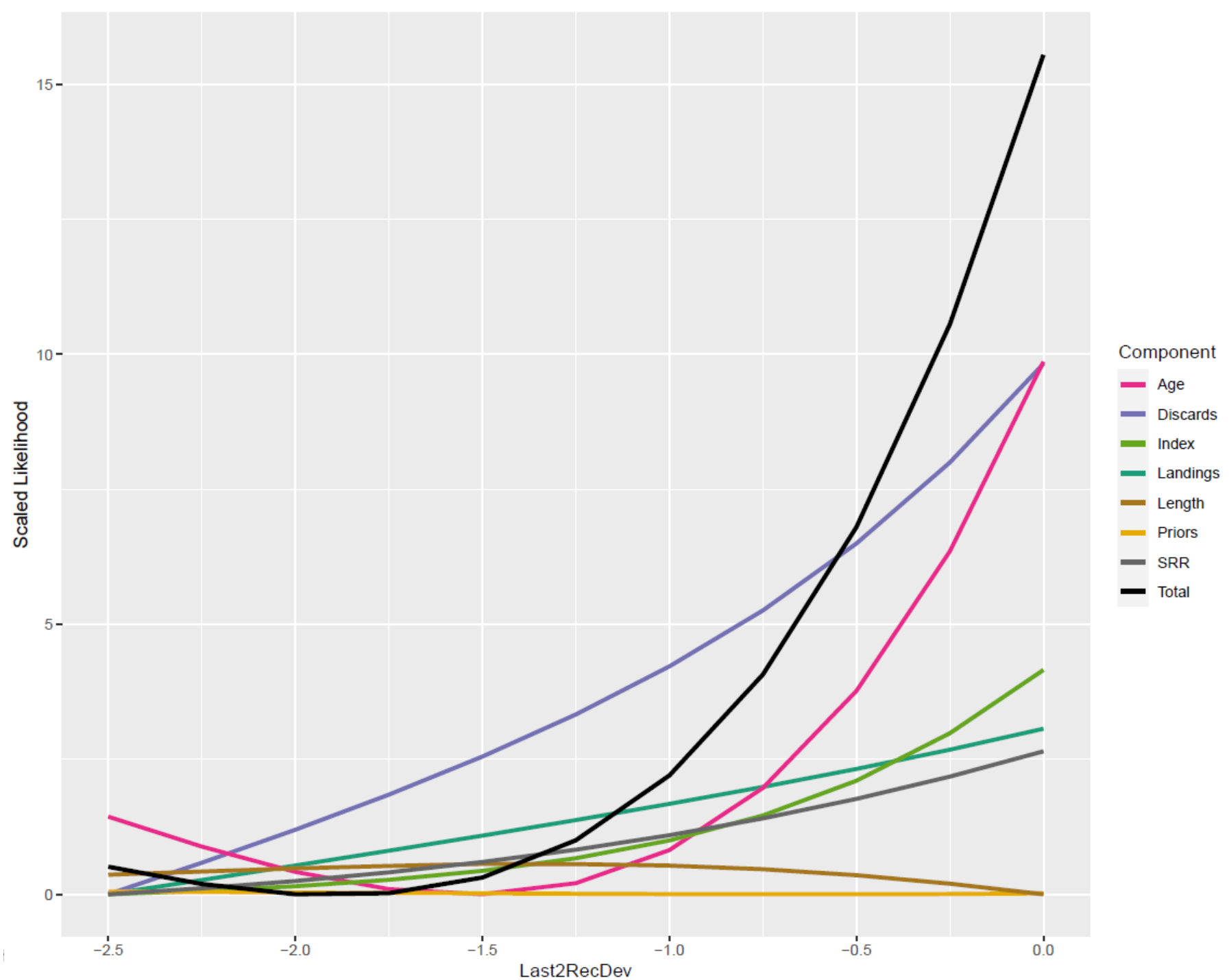
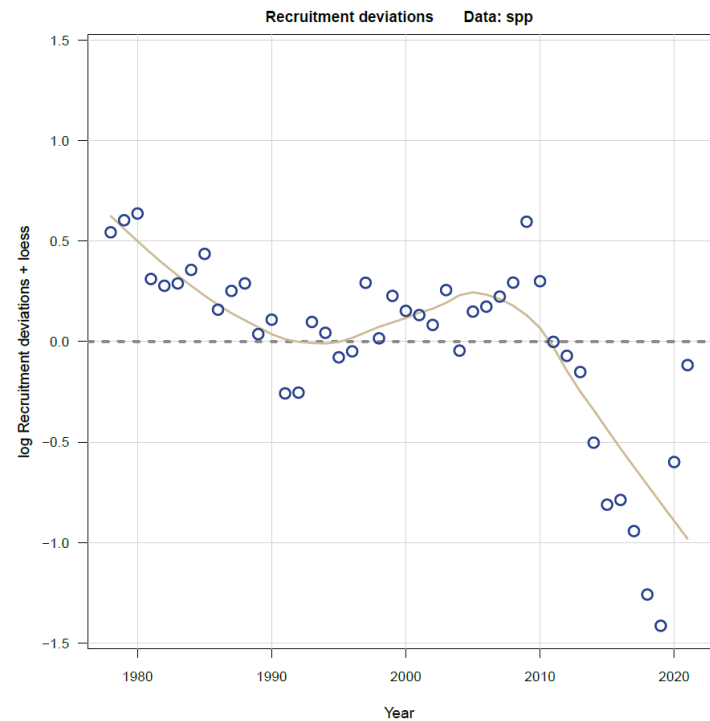
# Terminal Recruitment Deviation

- 2021 is poorly estimated



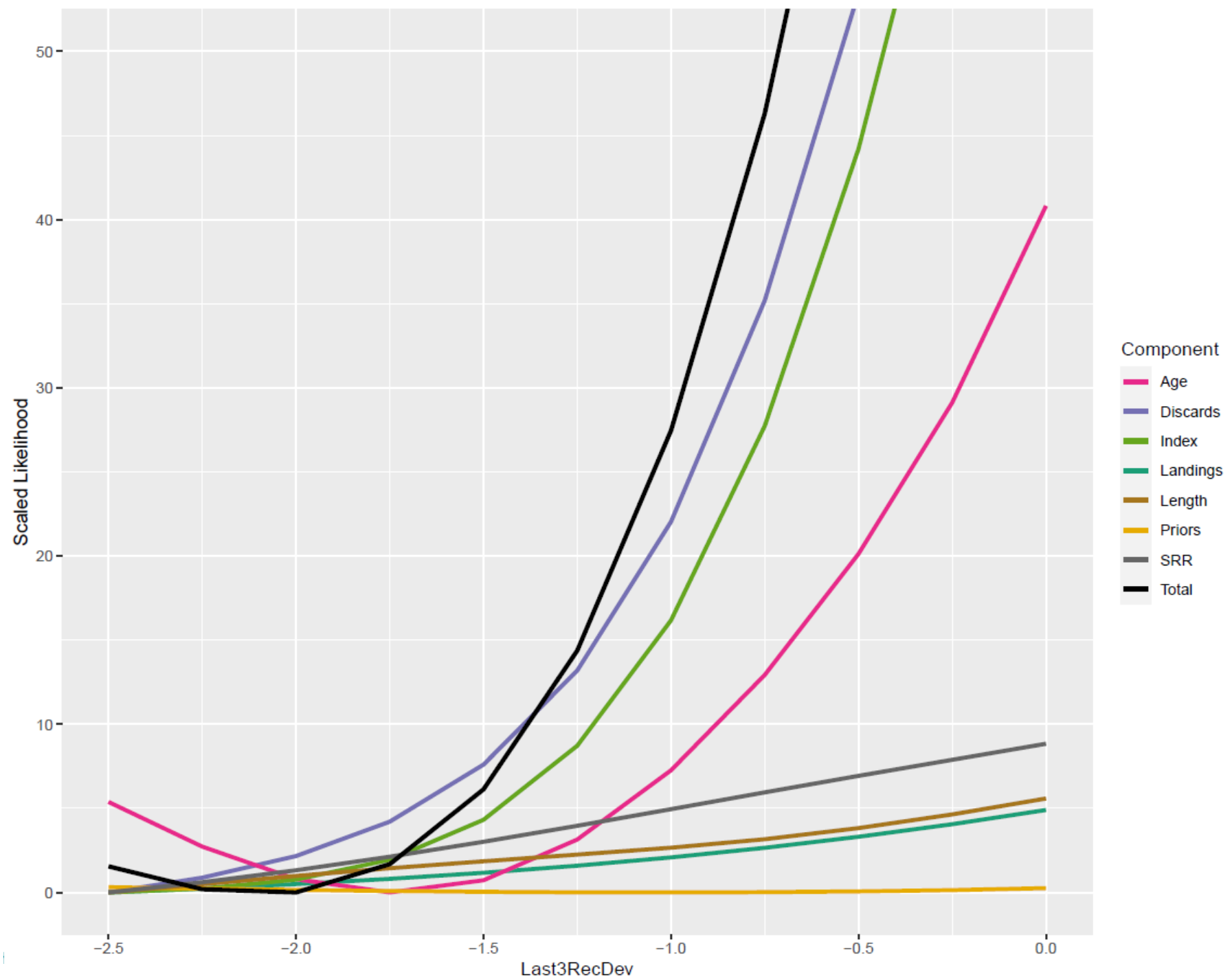
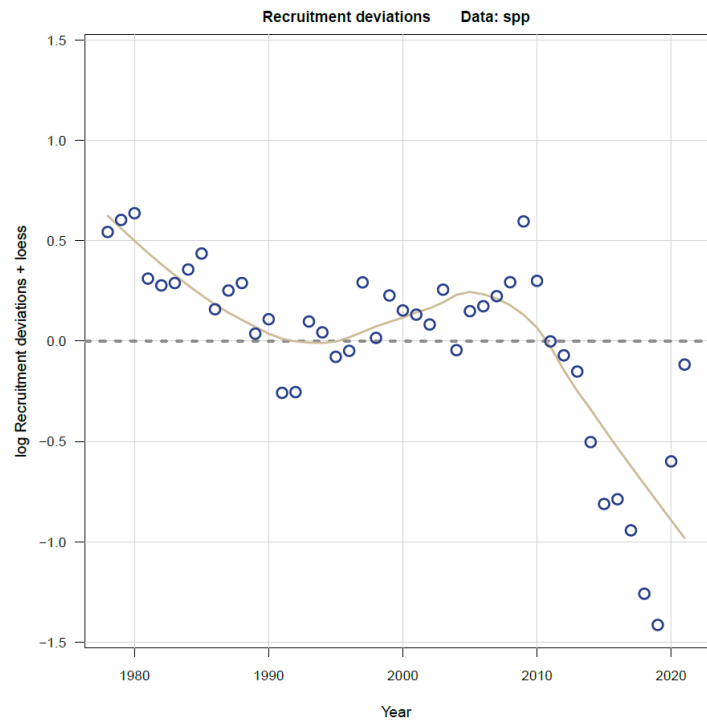
# Terminal Recruitment Deviation

- 2020 is poorly estimated



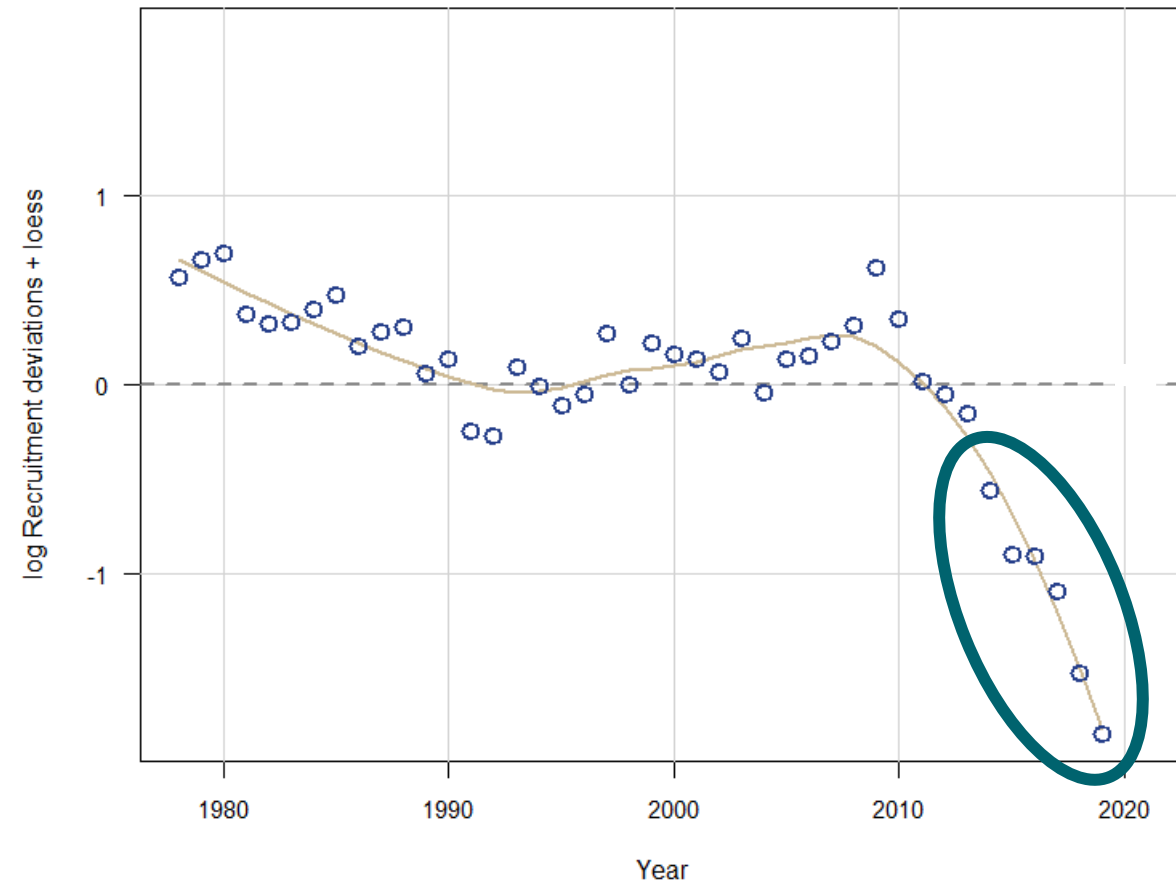
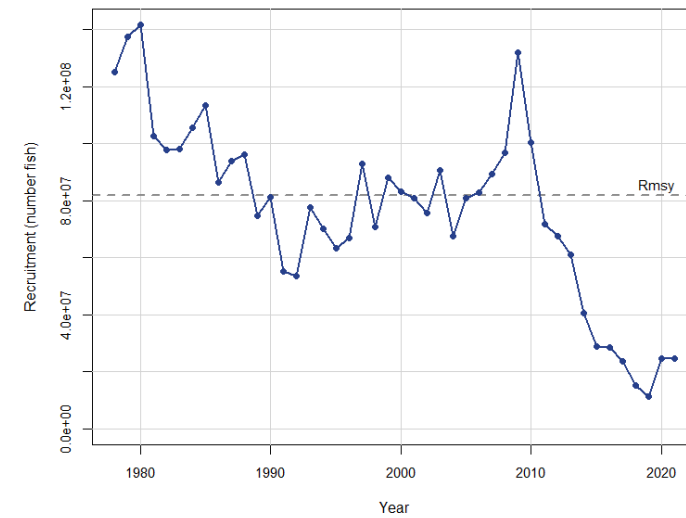
# Terminal Recruitment Deviation

- 2019 is well estimated



# Terminal recruitment deviations

- Estimate rec devs through 2019
- Estimates in 2020 and 2021 are essentially forecasts fixed at recent average (2014 – 2019)
- Change point analysis determined 2014 as cutoff



# Outline

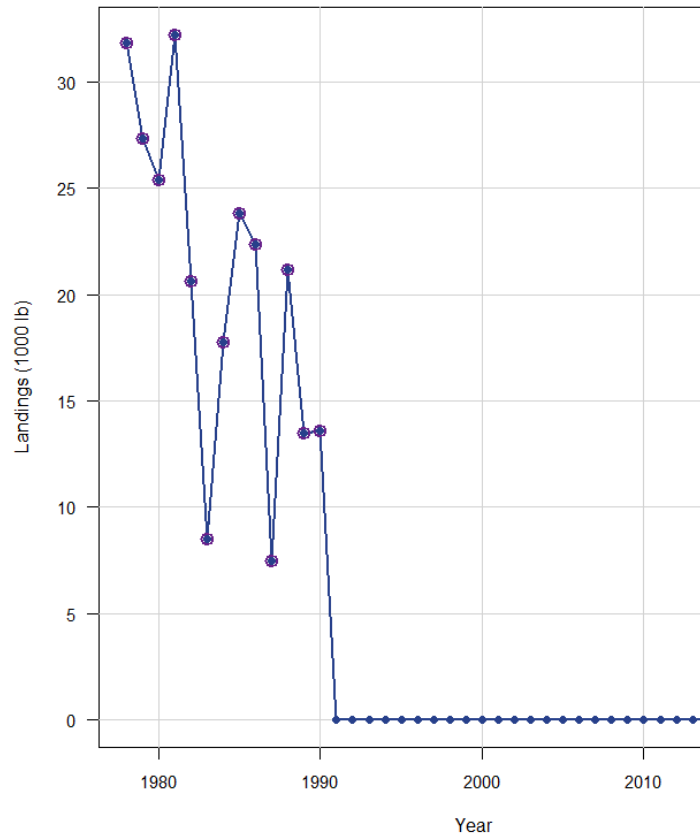
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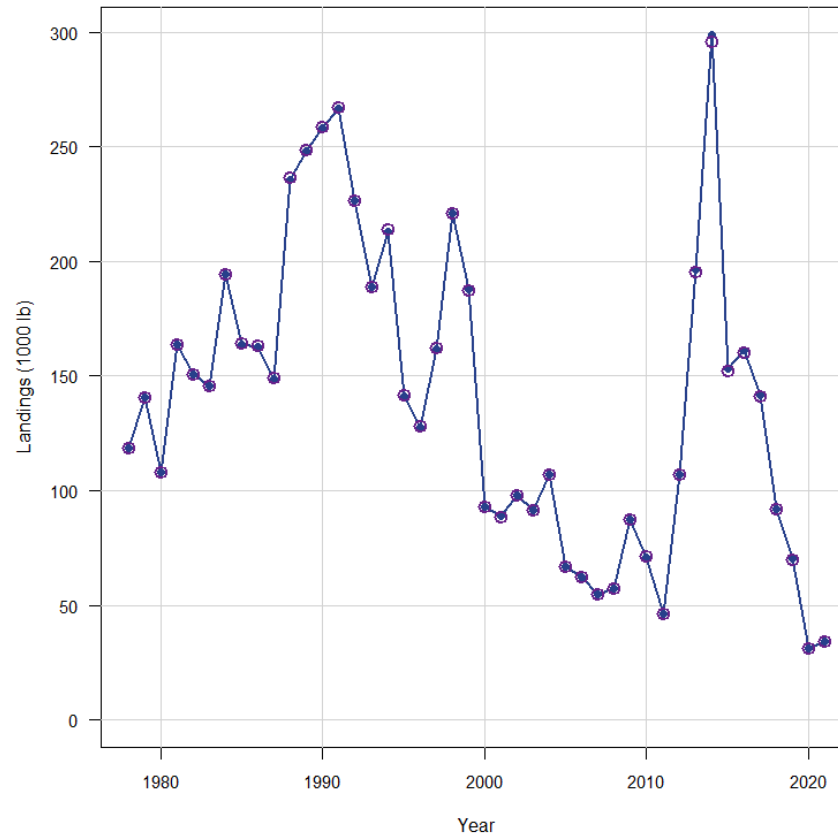


# BAM base model – fits to comm landings

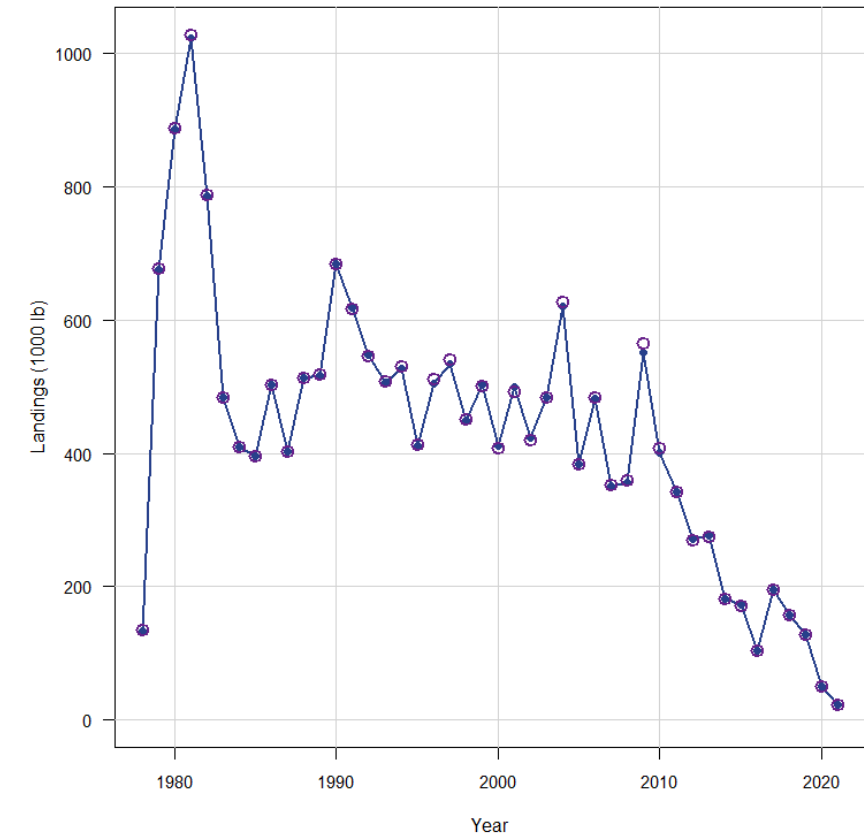
Commercial trawl



Commercial handline

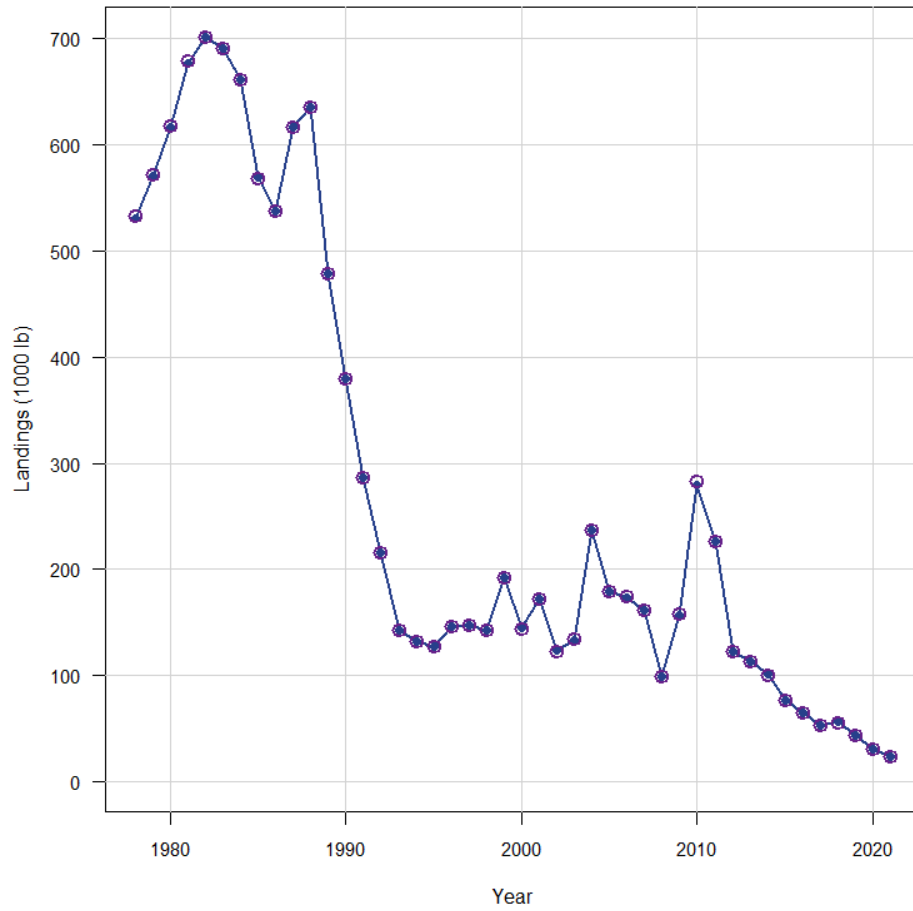


Commercial pots

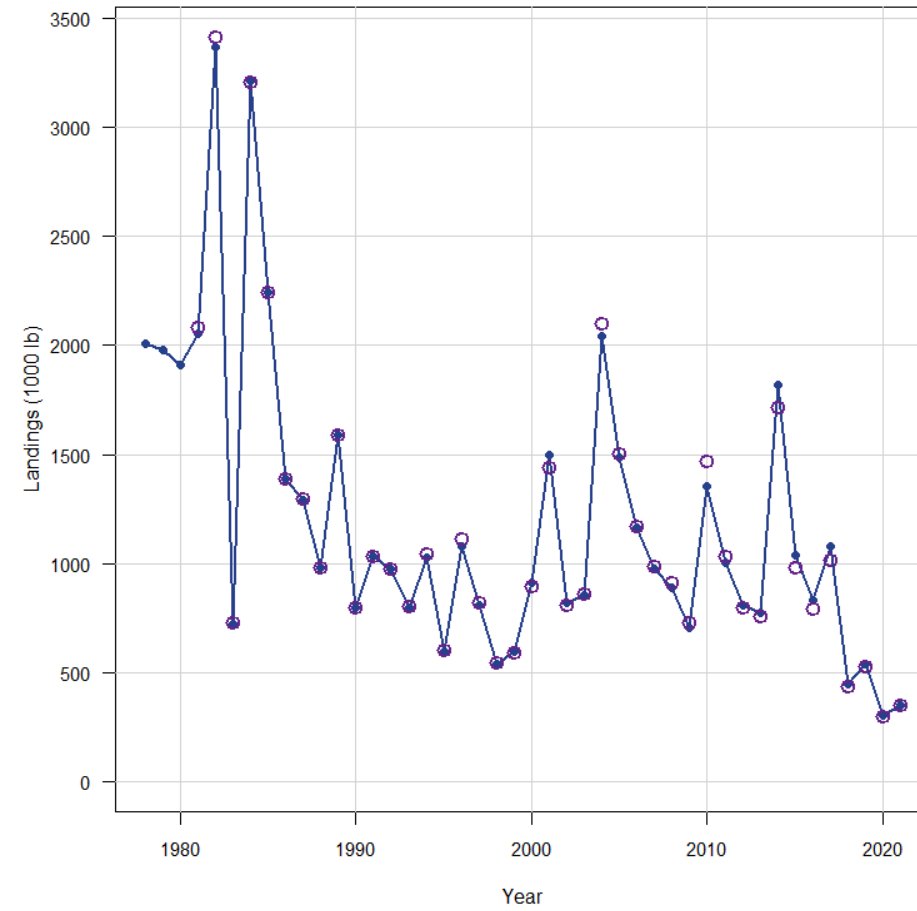


# BAM base model – fits to rec landings

Headboat



General recreational

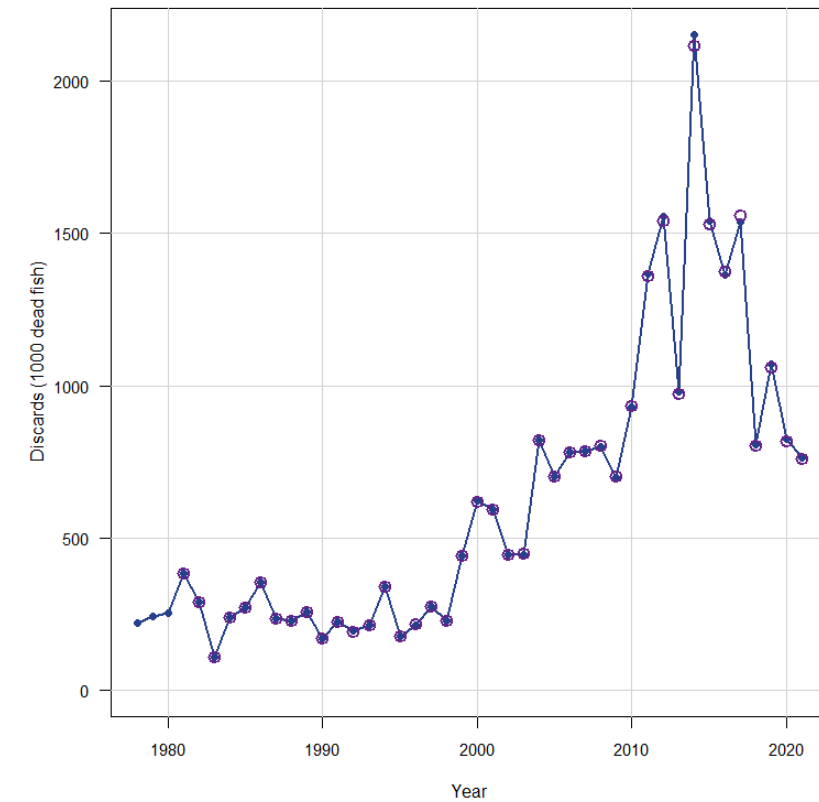
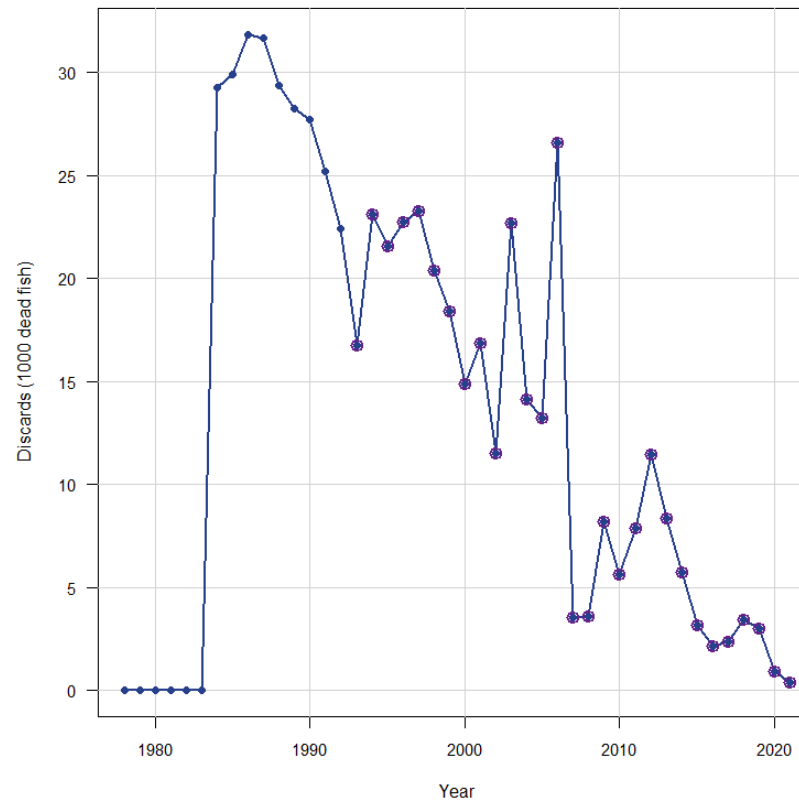
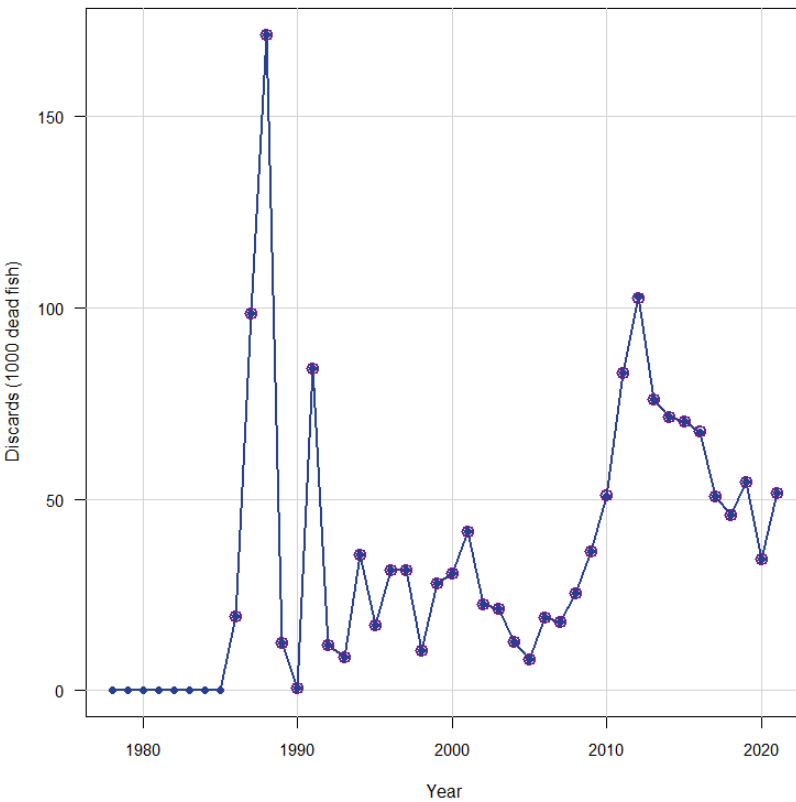


# BAM base model – fits to discards

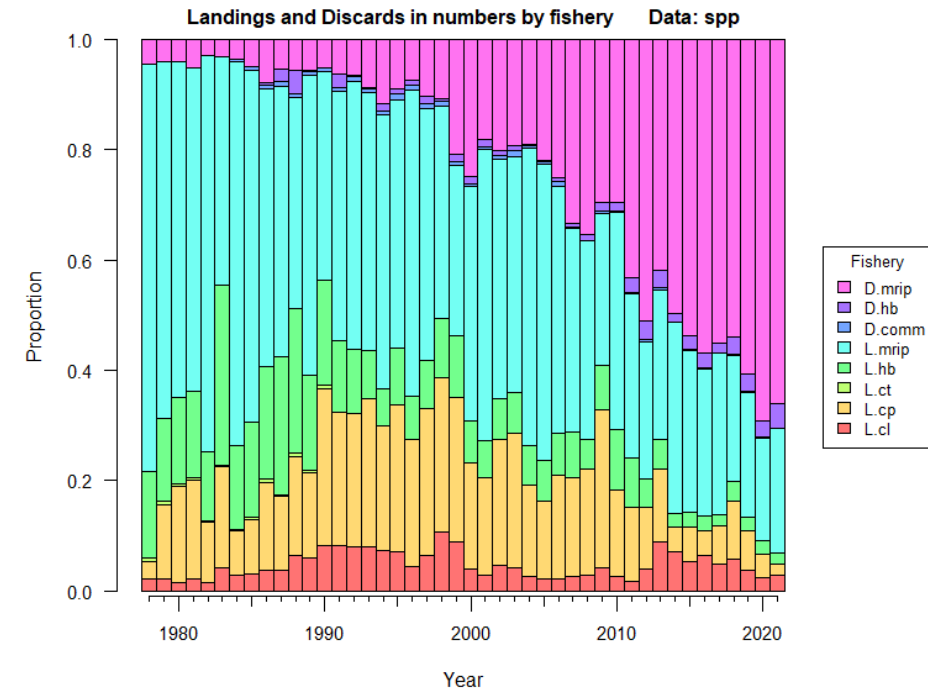
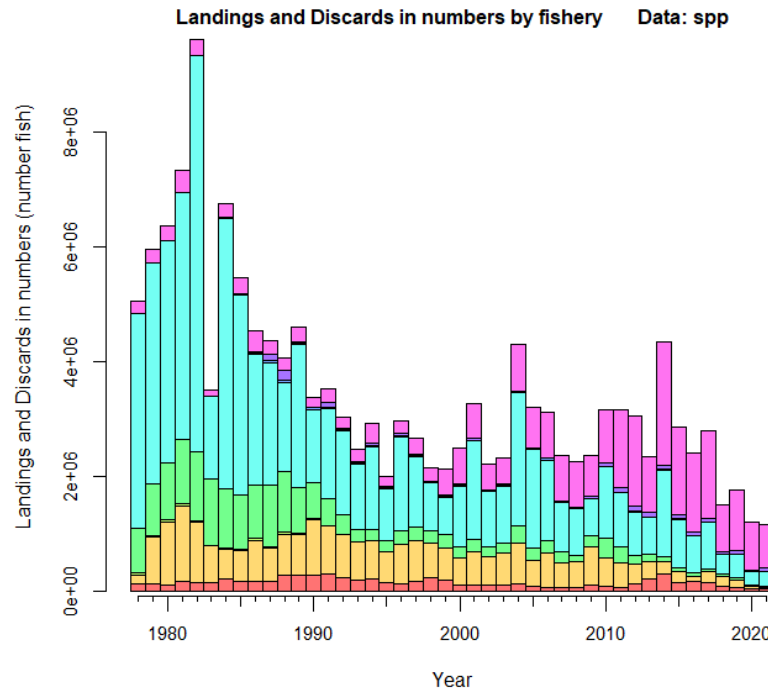
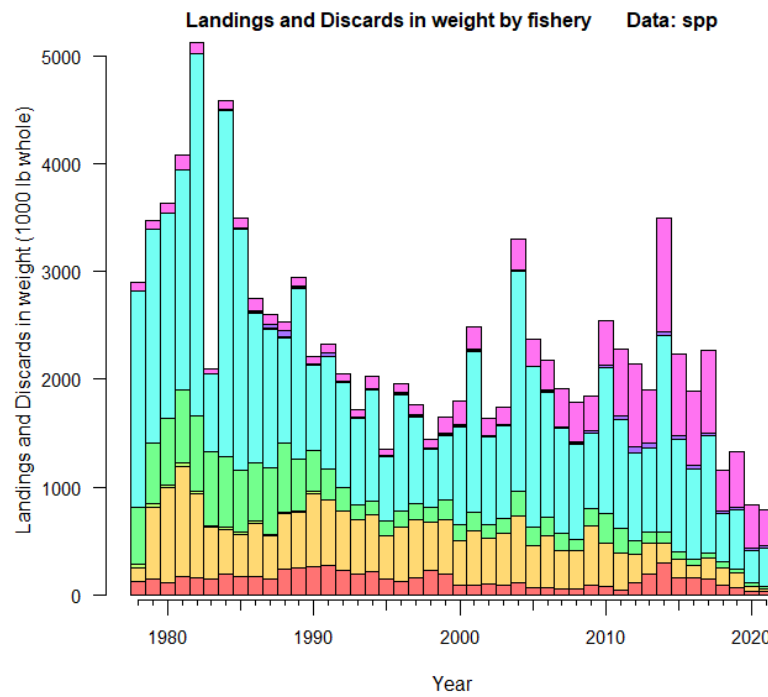
Headboat

Commercial

General recreational

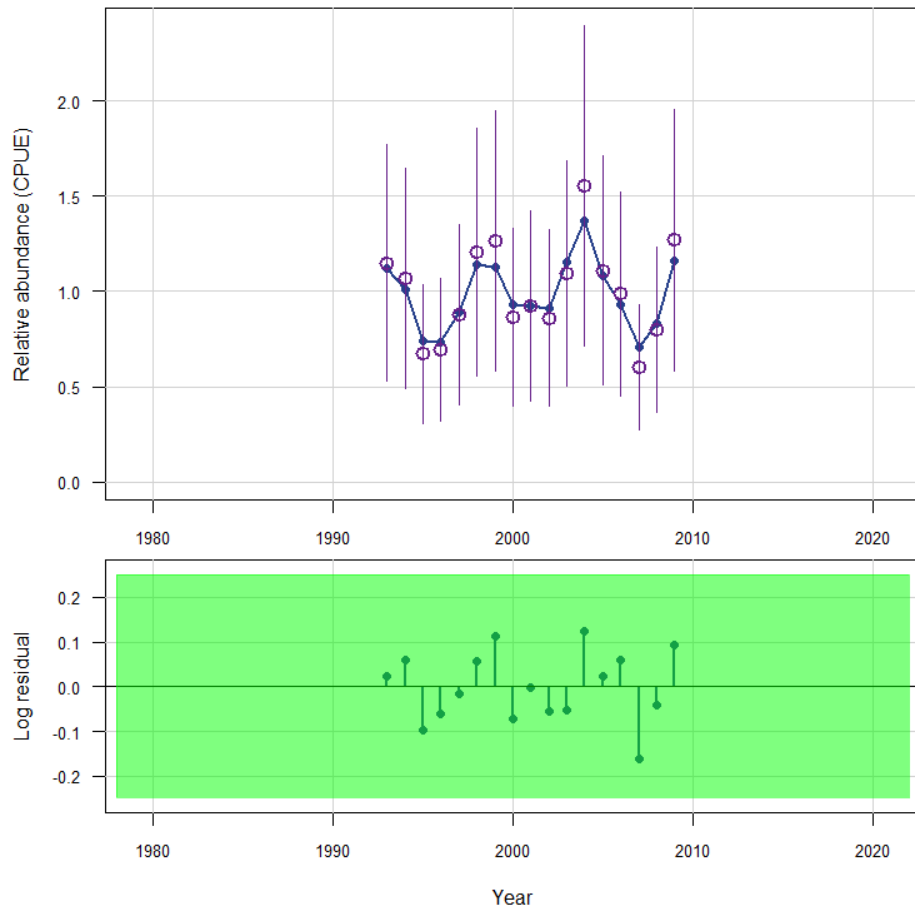


# BAM base model – Estimated Landings and Discard

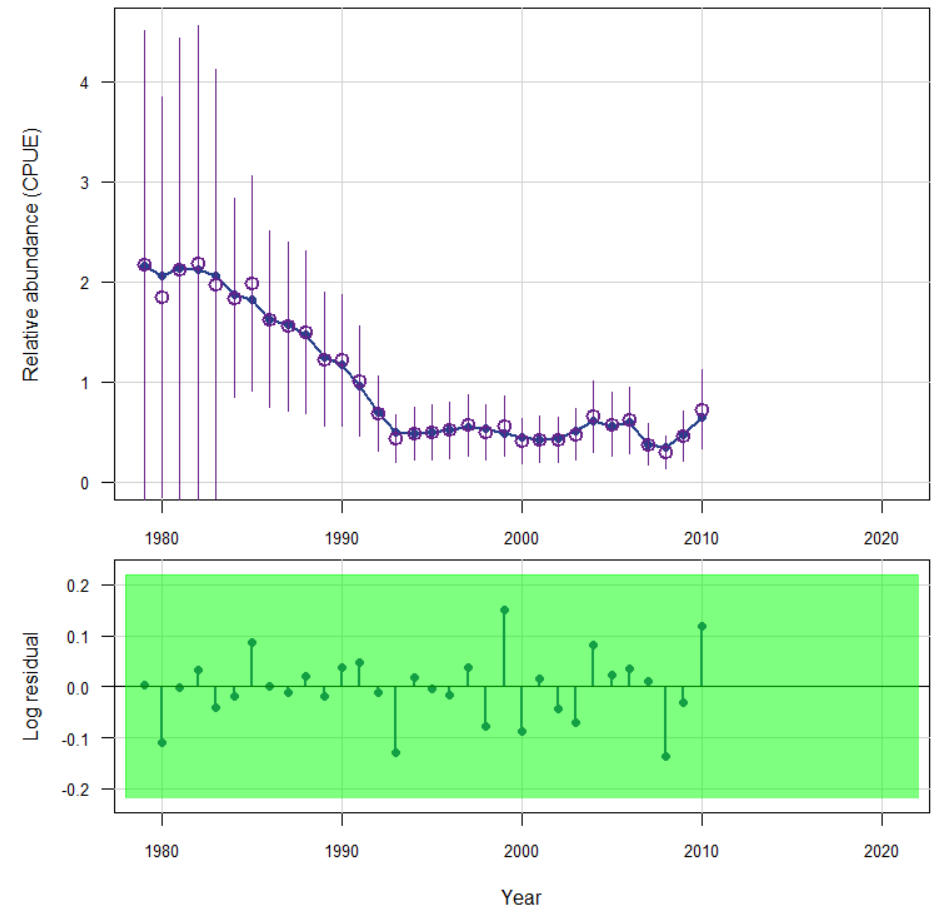


# BAM base model – fits to fishery index

Commercial handline

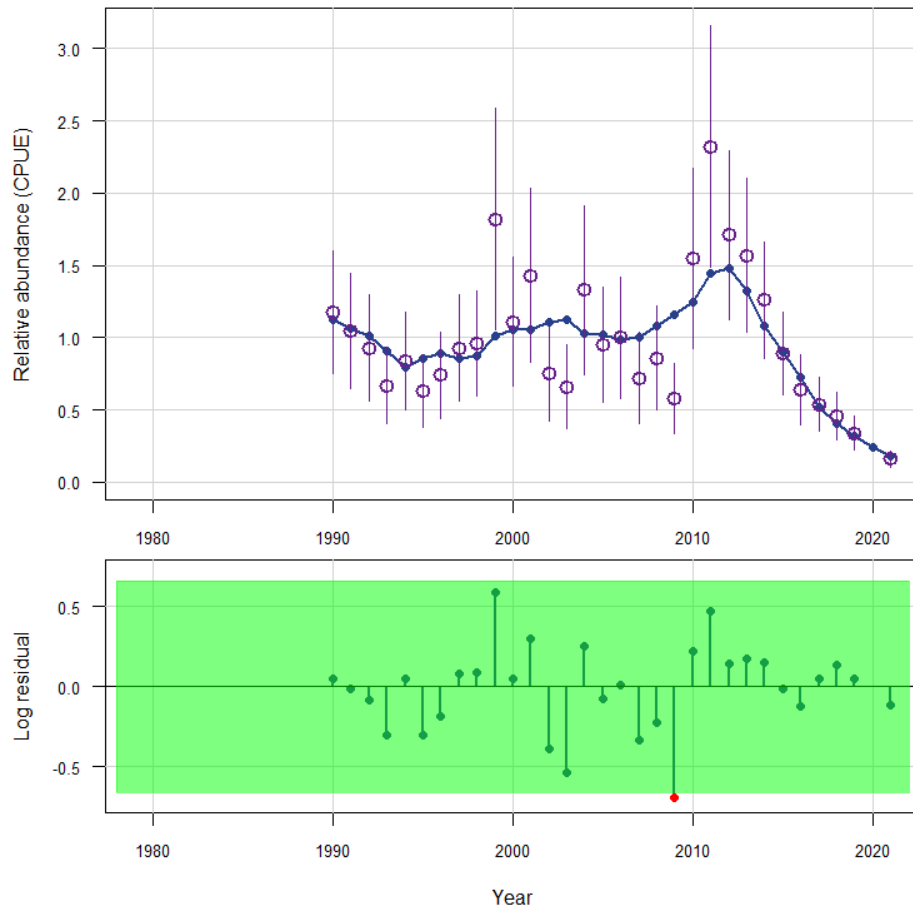


Headboat

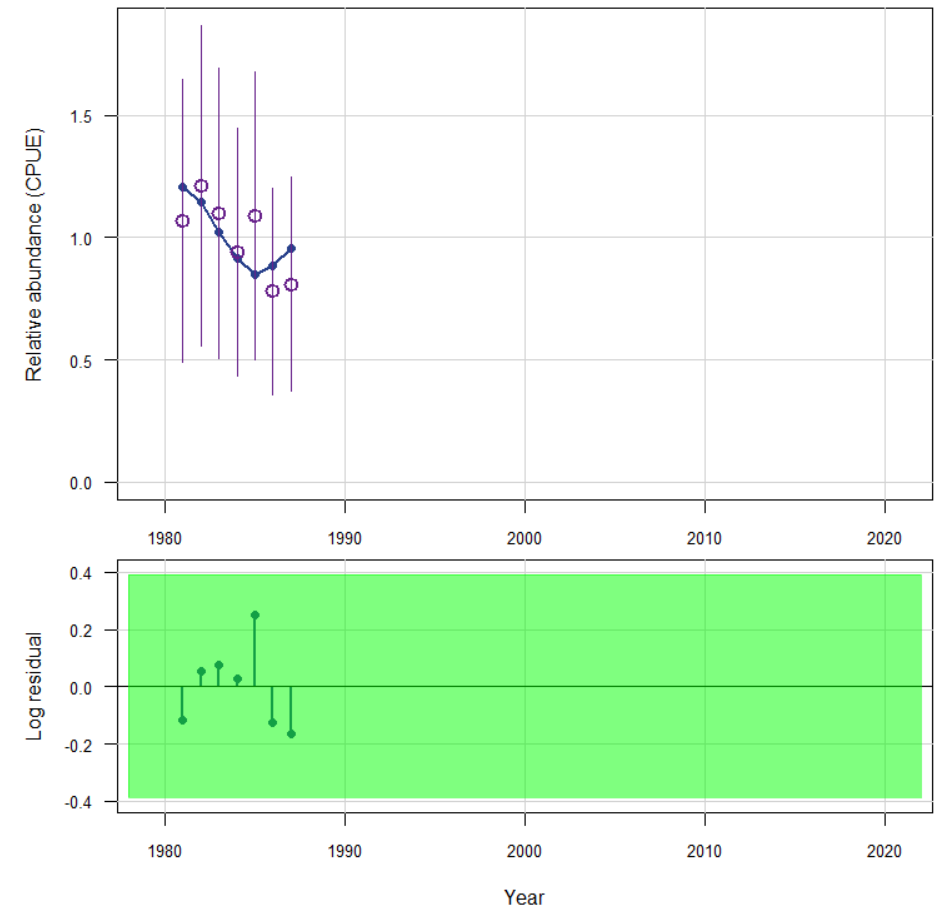


# BAM base model – fits to survey index

SERFS

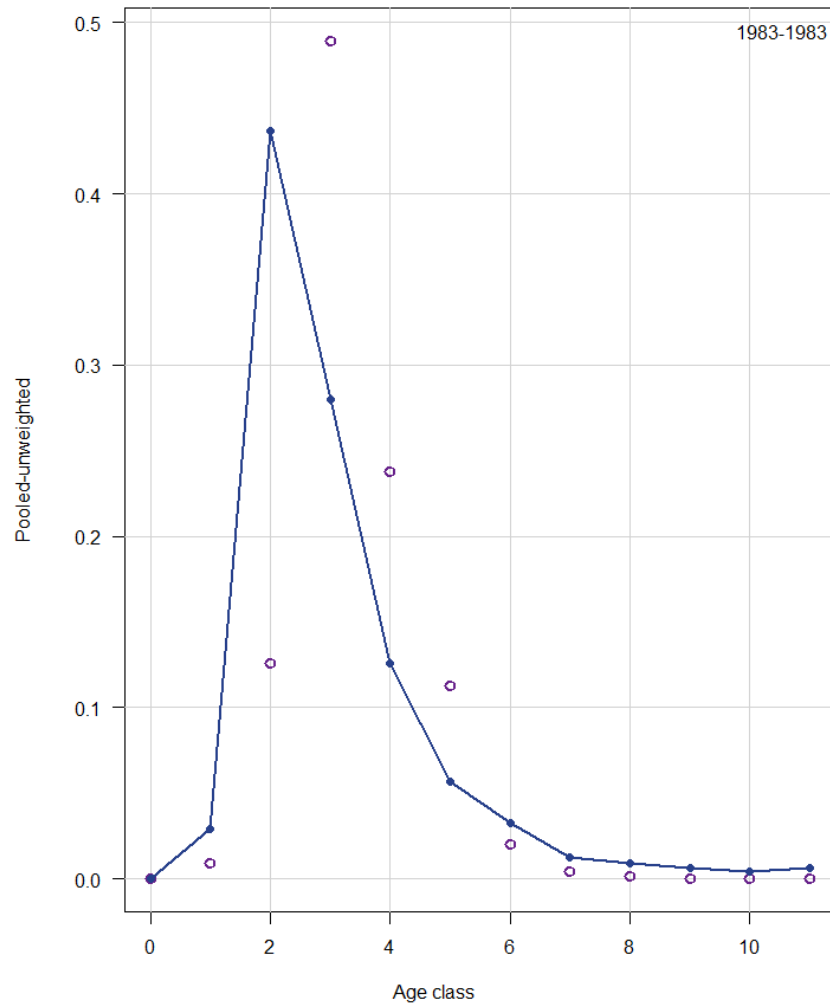


MARMAP blackfish

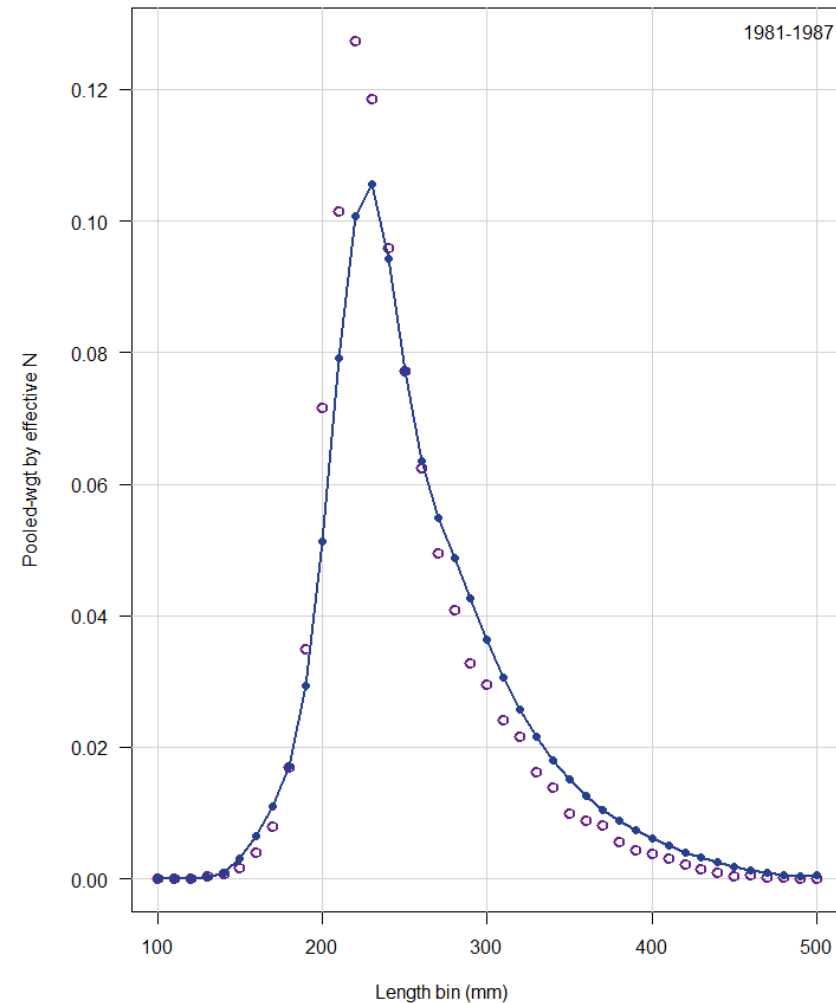


# BAM base model – fits to MARMAP blackfish length and age composition

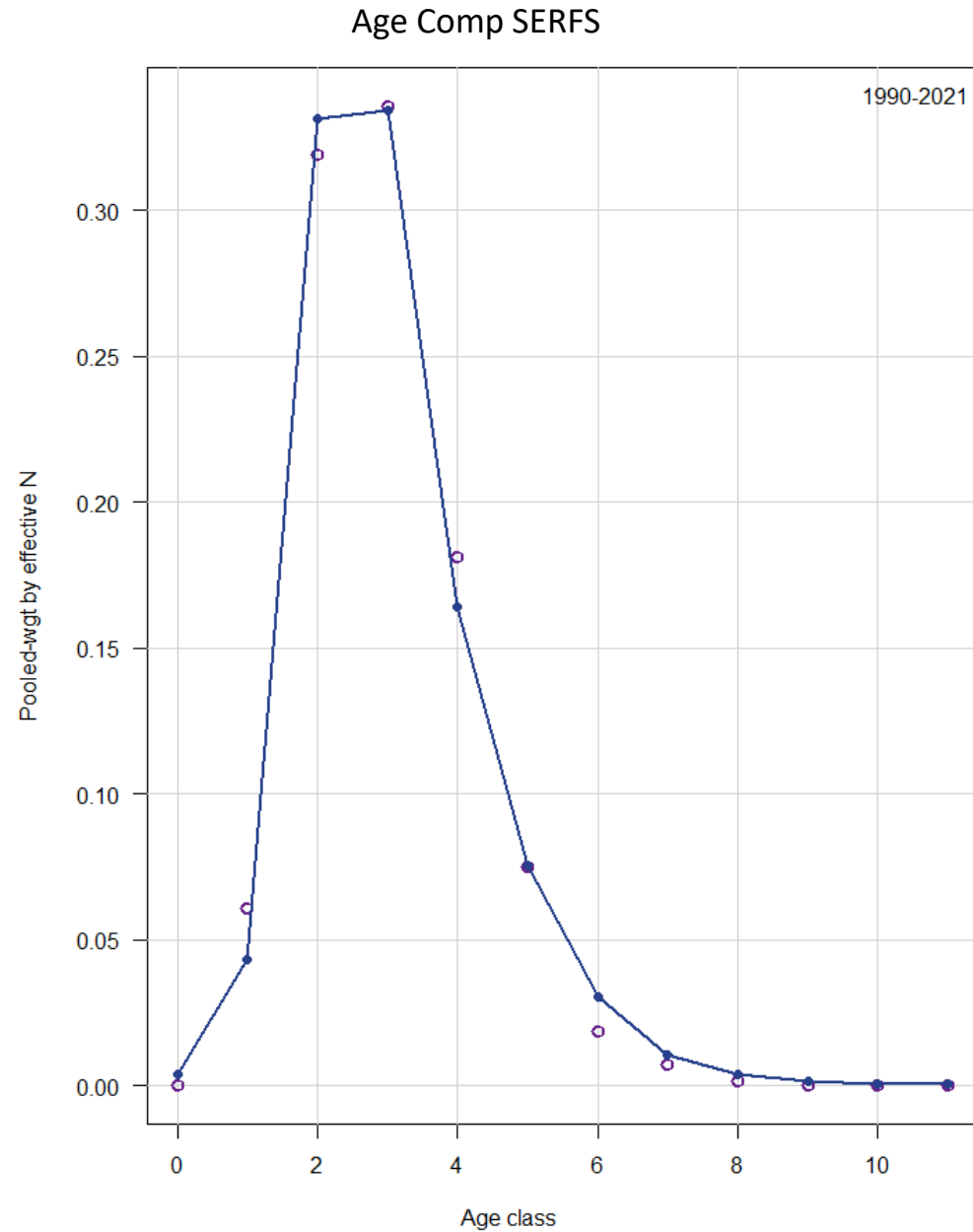
Age Comp MARMAP blackfish



Length Comp MARMAP blackfish



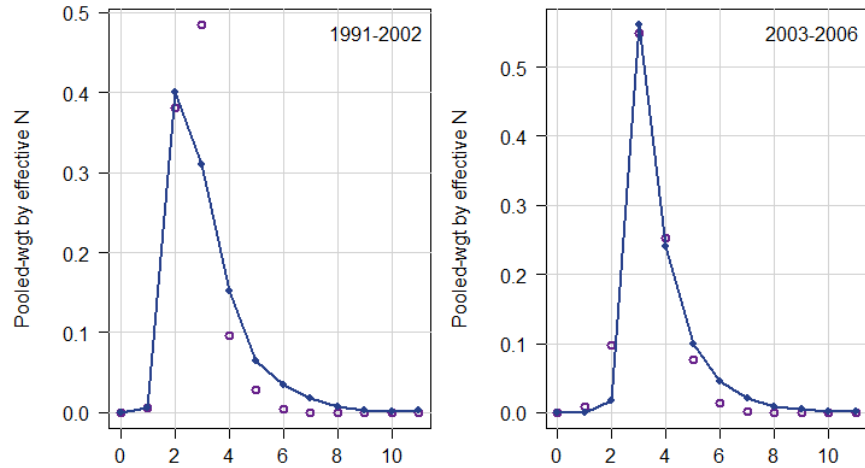
# BAM base model – fits to SERFS age composition



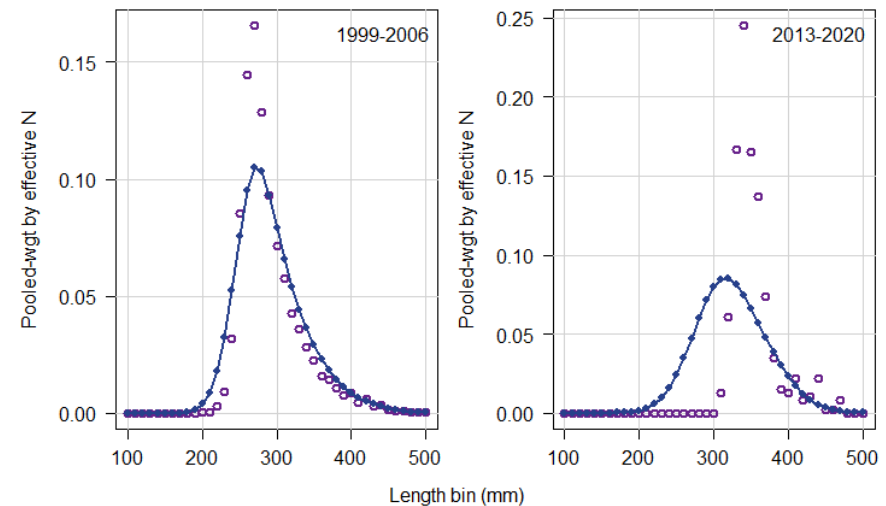
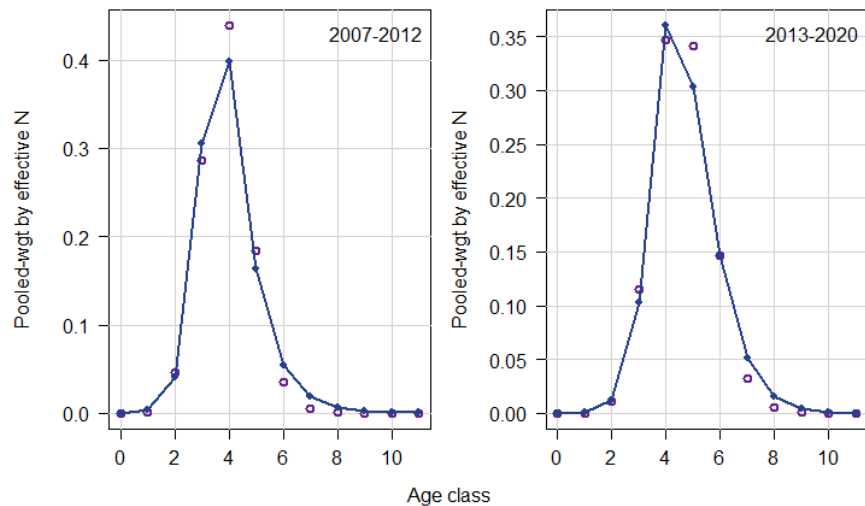
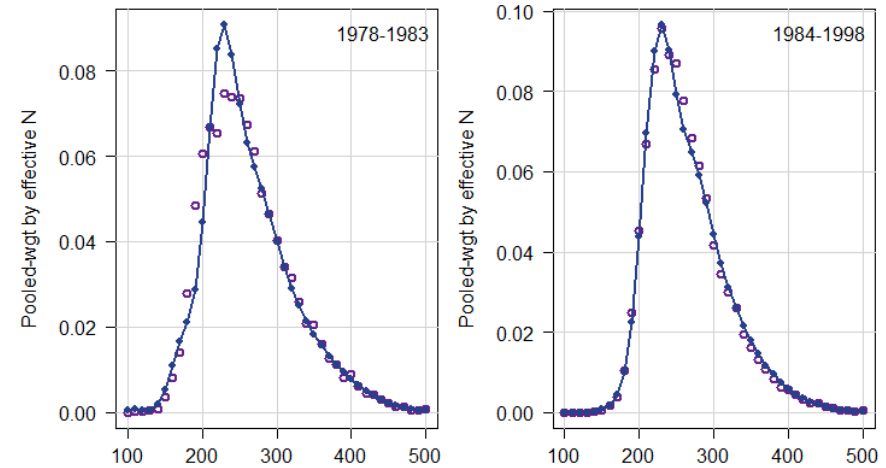


# BAM base model – fits to Headboat length and age composition

Age Comp headboat

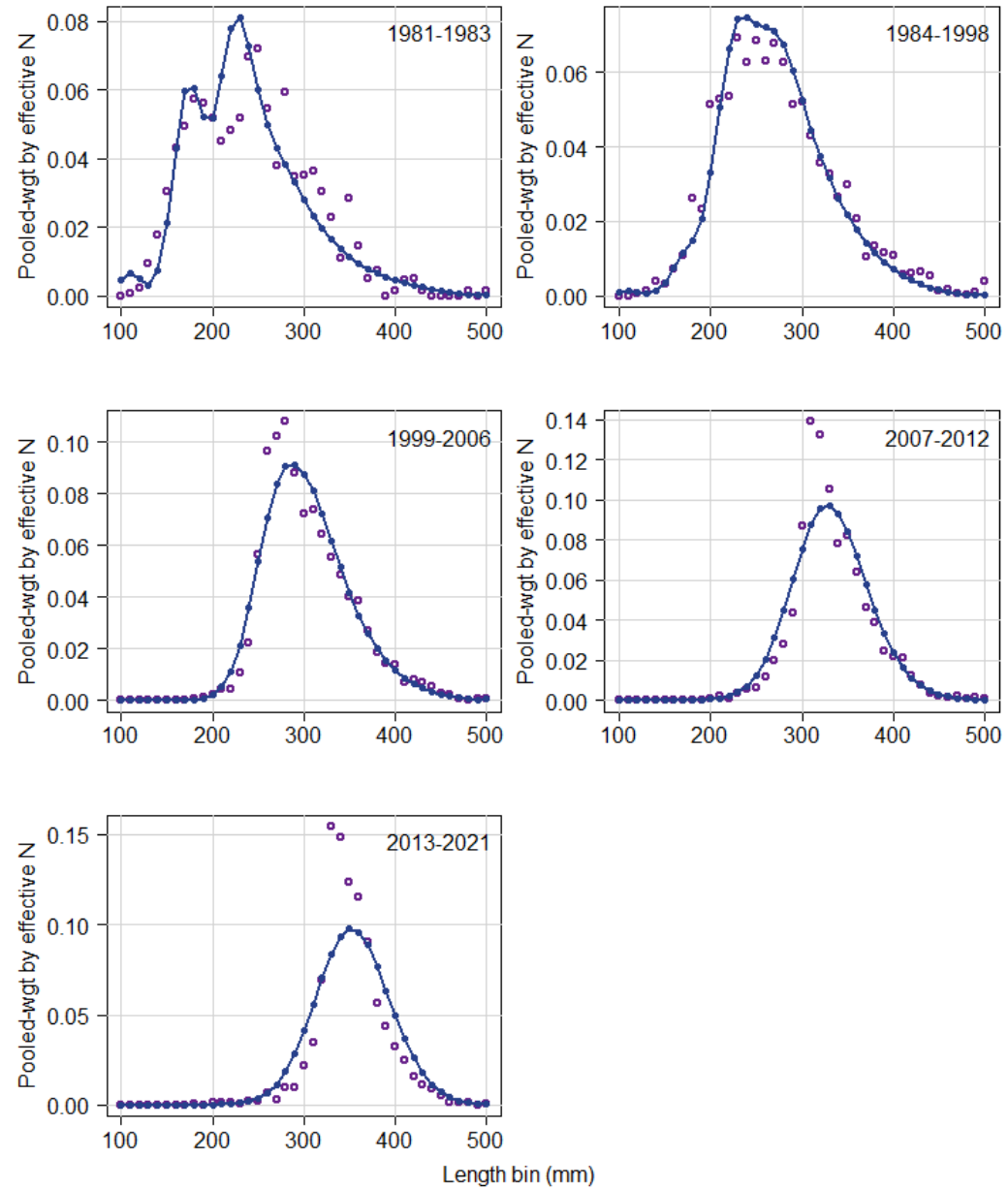


Length Comp headboat

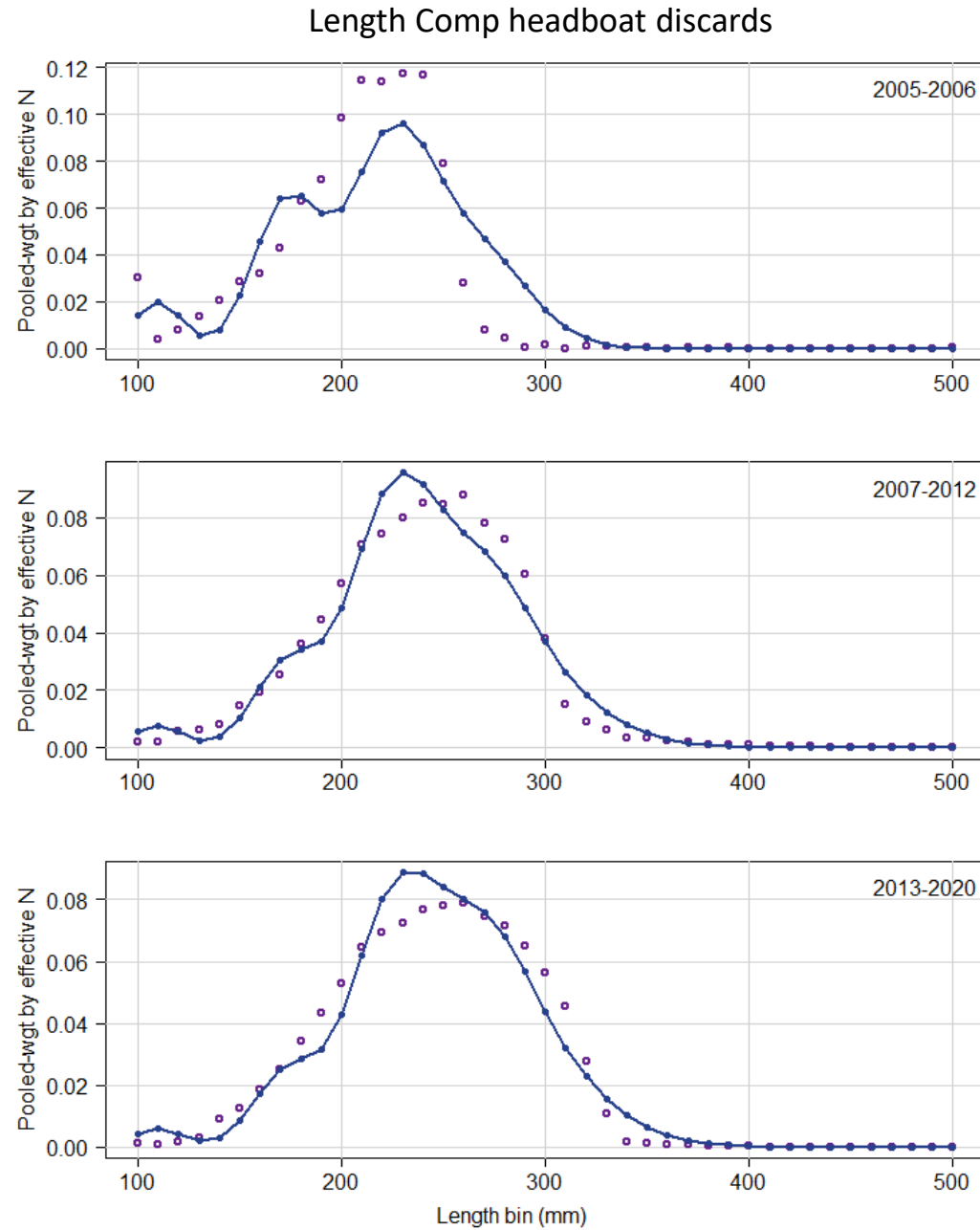


# BAM base model – fits to general recreational length composition

Length Comp general recreational

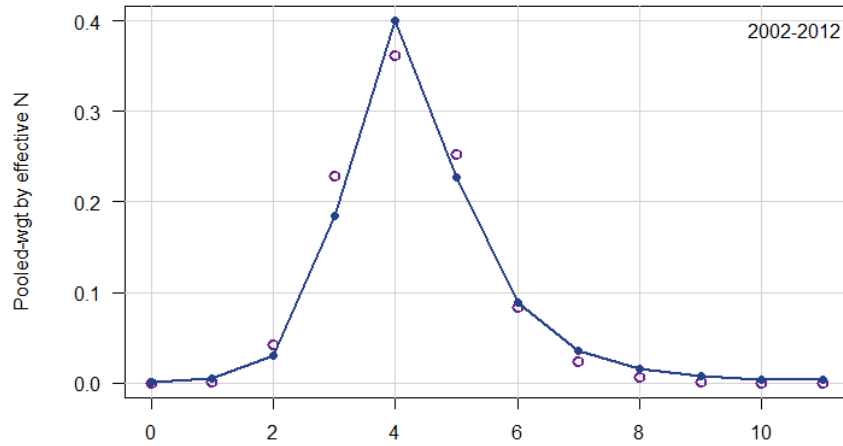


# BAM base model – fits to Headboat discards length composition

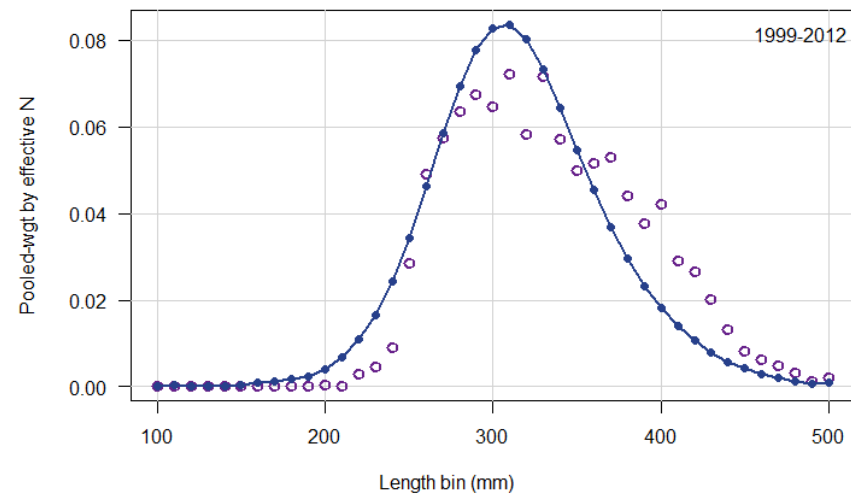
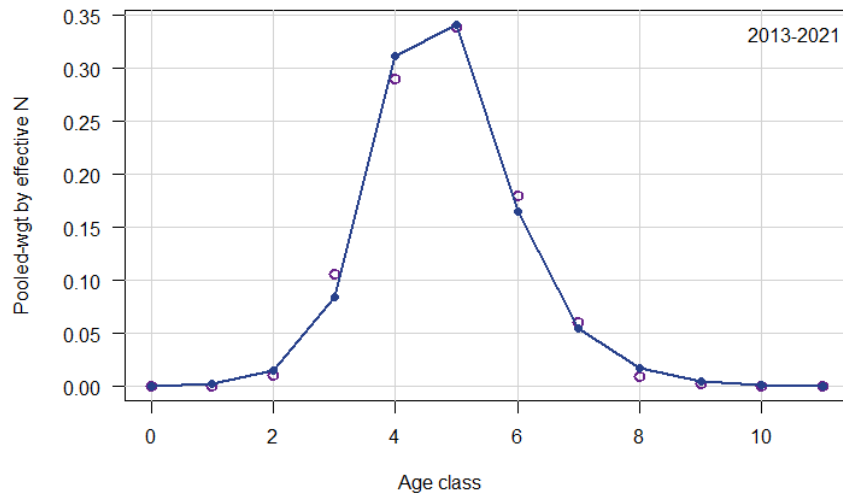
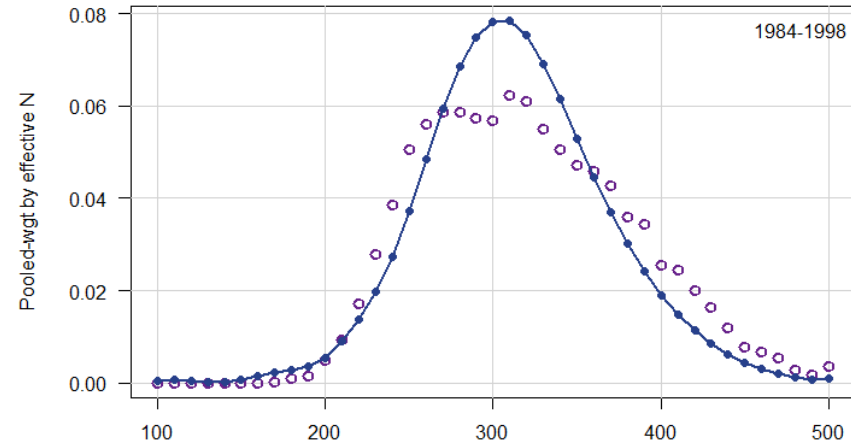


# BAM base model – fits to commercial handline length and age composition

Age Comp commercial handline

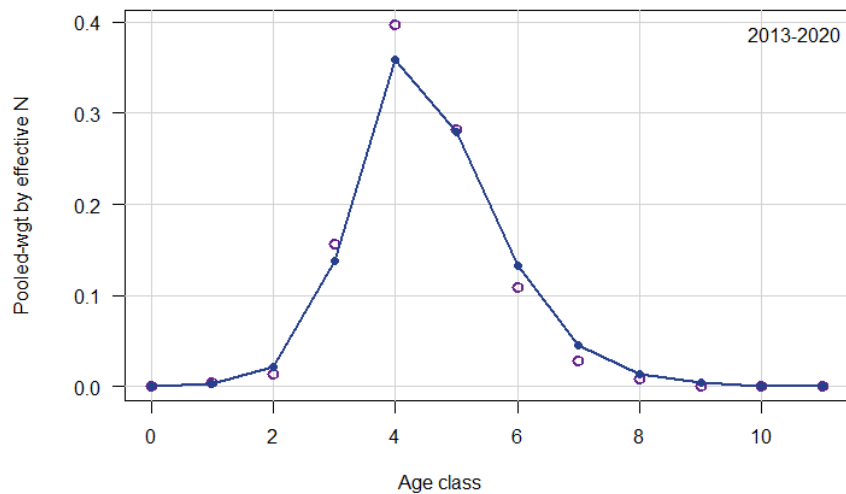
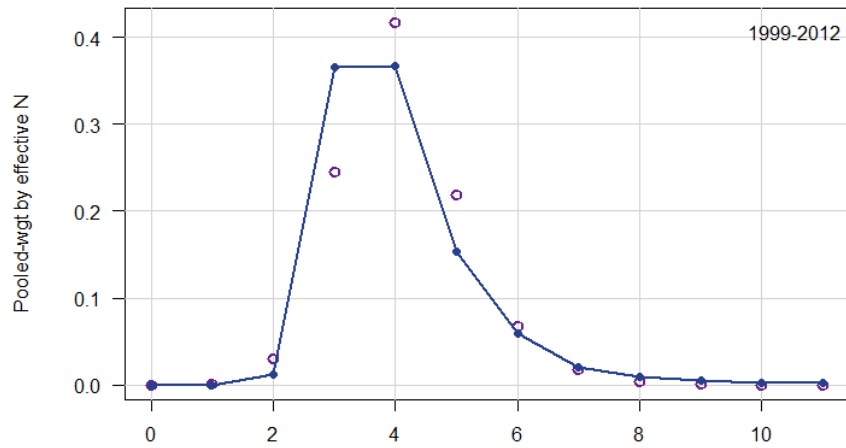


Length Comp commercial handline

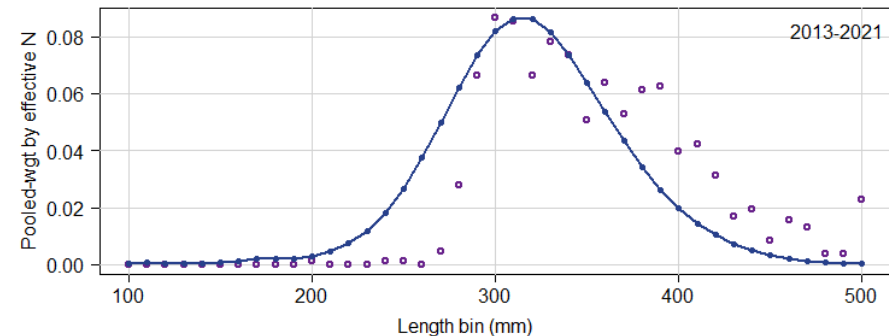
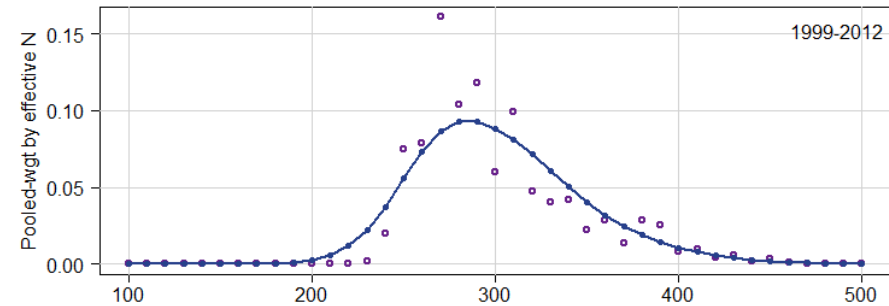
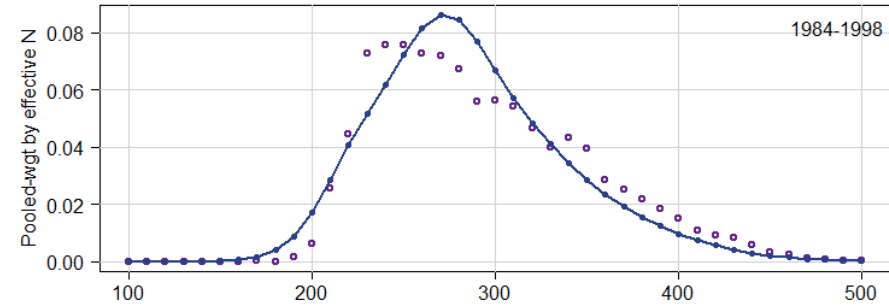


# BAM base model – fits to commercial pots length and age composition

Age Comp commercial pots

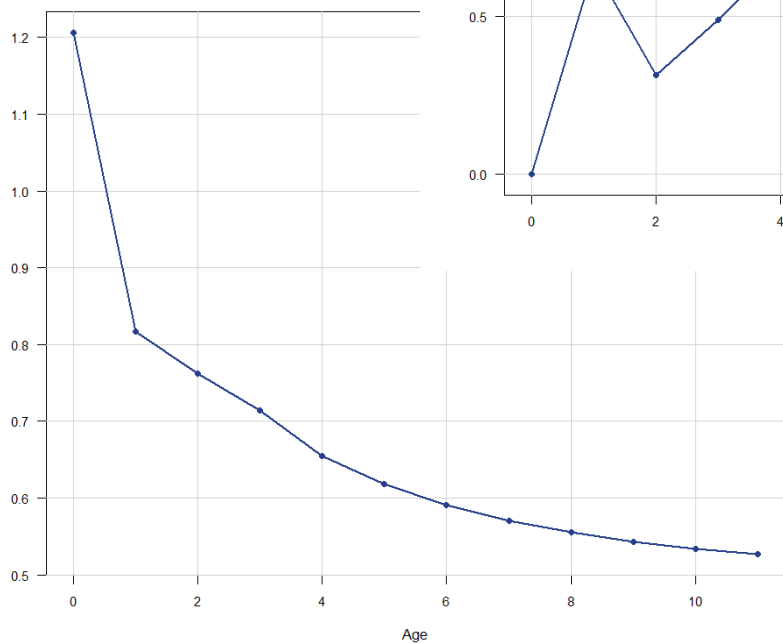


Length Comp commercial pots

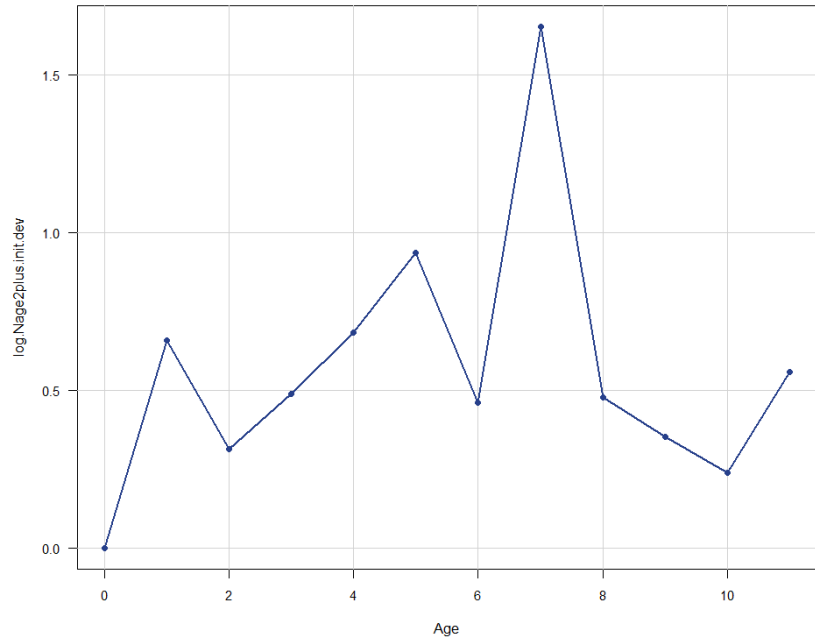


# BAM base model – Initial conditions

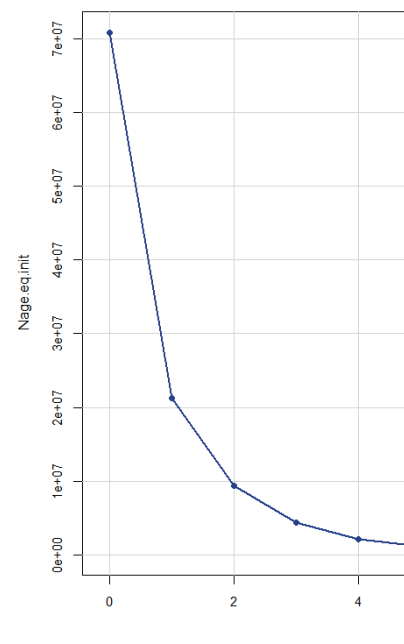
Initial Z at age



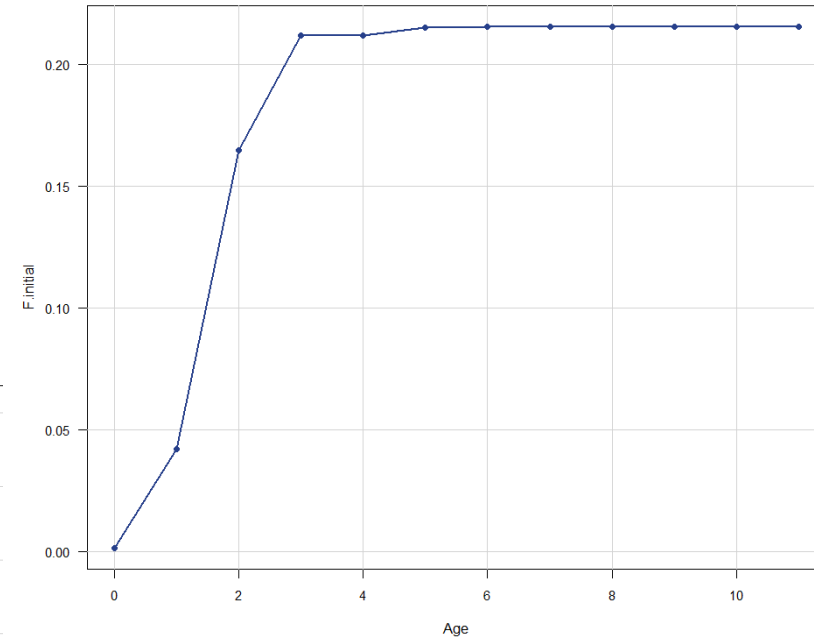
Initial N deviates



Initial N at age

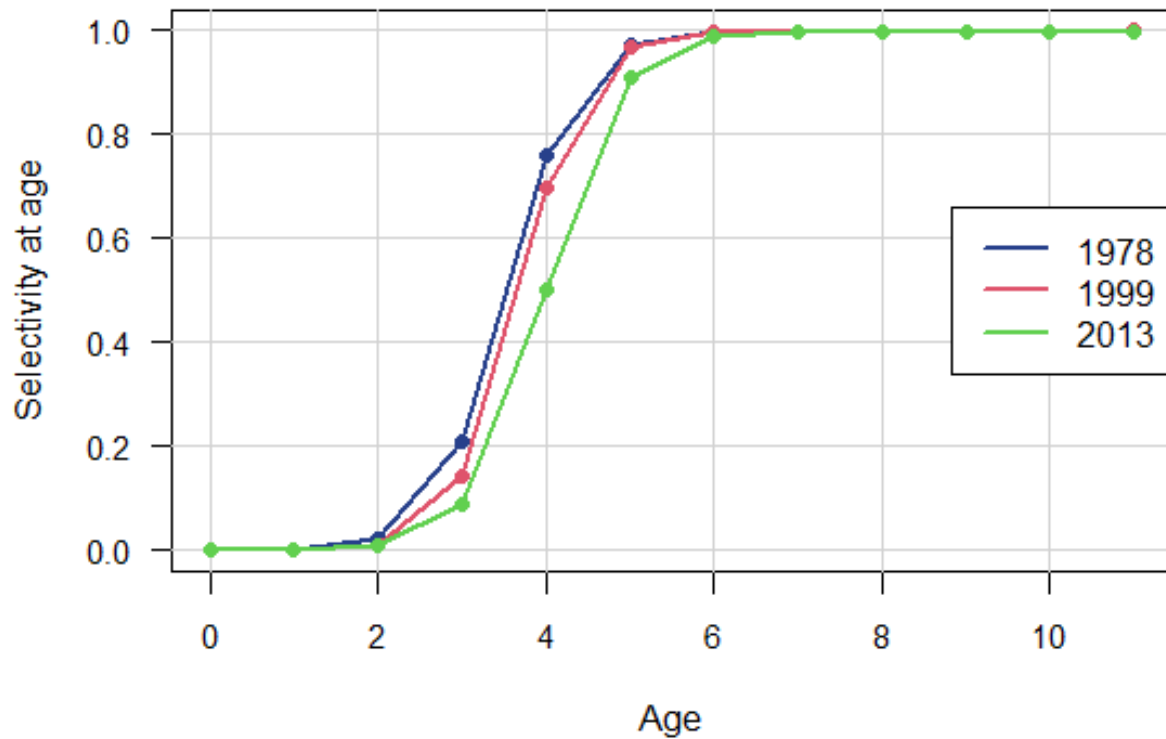


Initial F at age

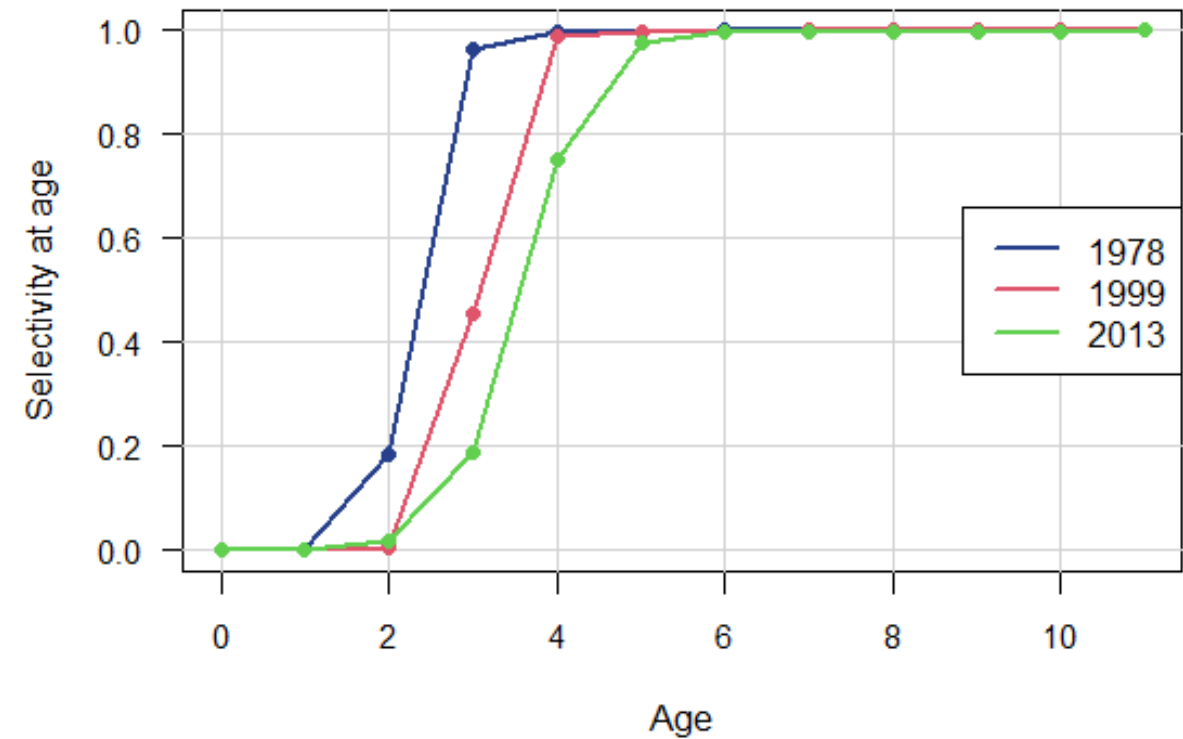


# BAM base model – Commercial selectivity

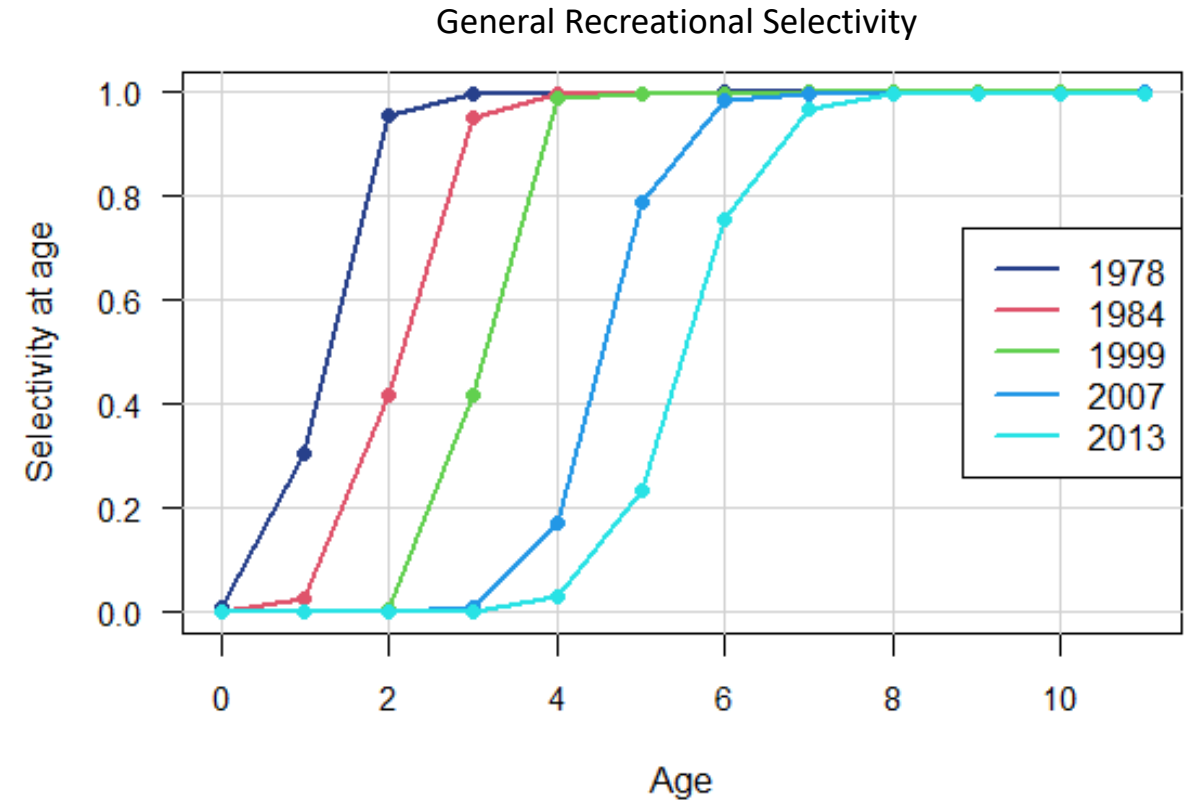
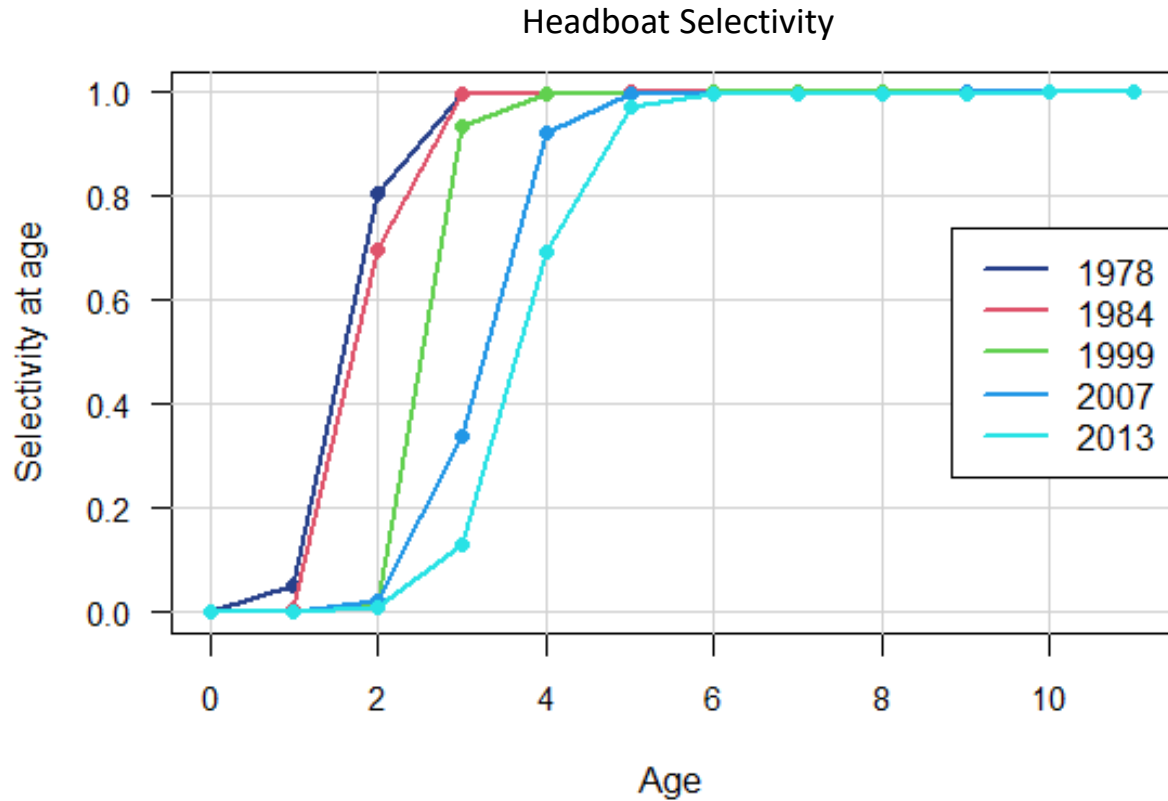
Commercial Lines Selectivity



Commercial pots Selectivity



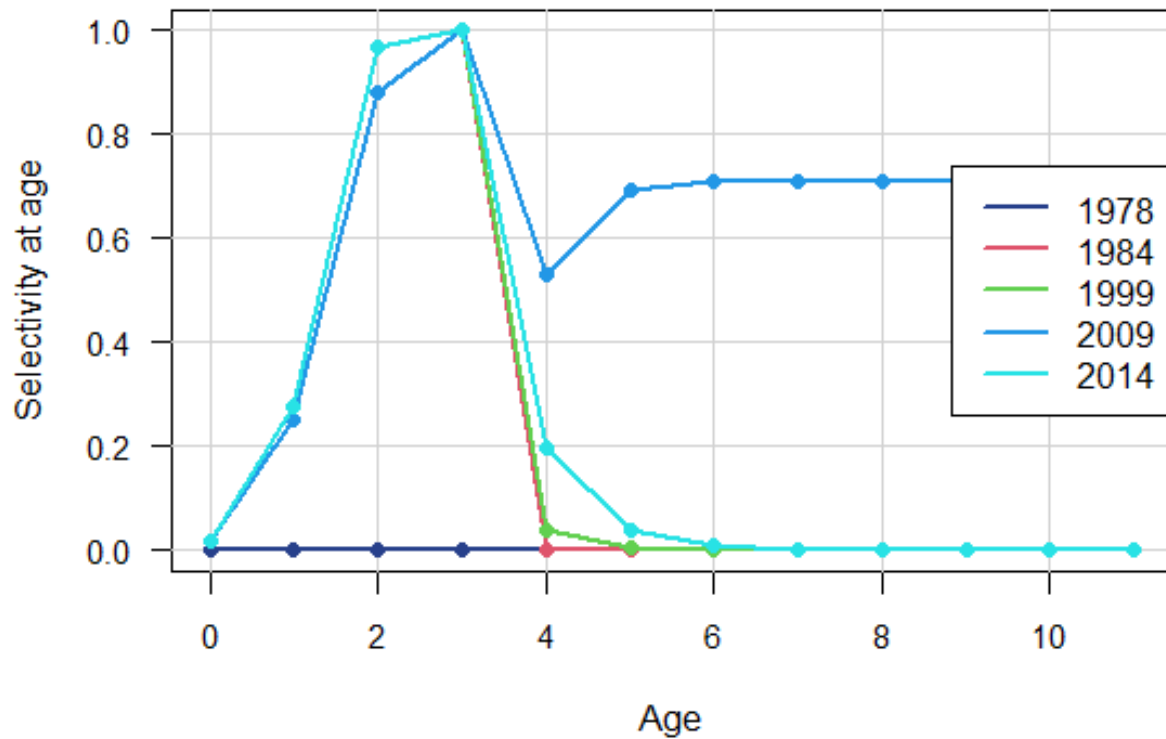
# BAM base model – Recreational selectivity



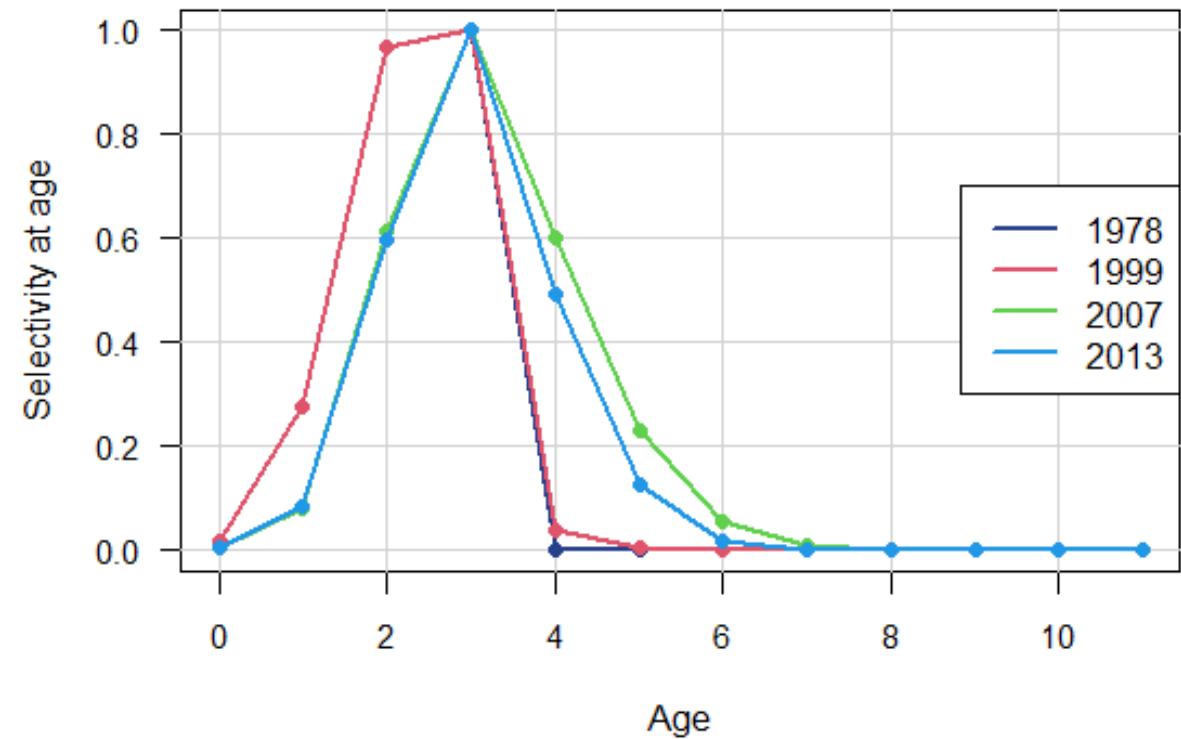


# BAM base model – Discard selectivity

Commercial Discard Selectivity

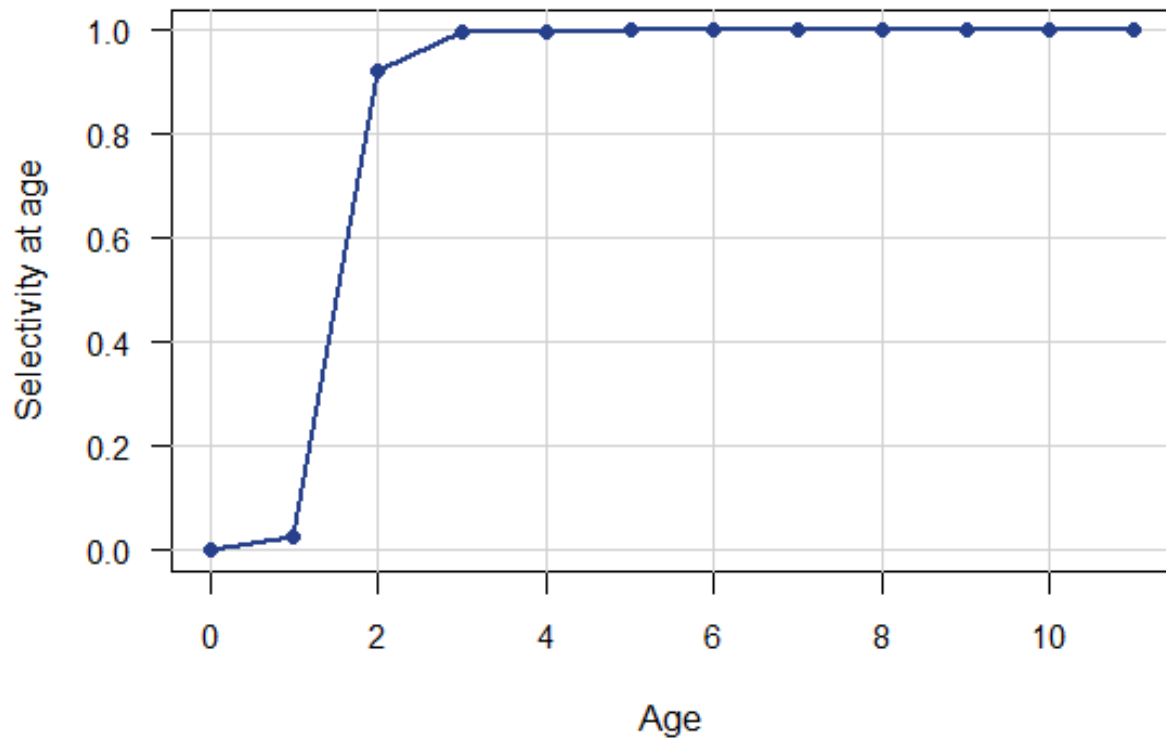


General Recreational and Headboat discard Selectivity

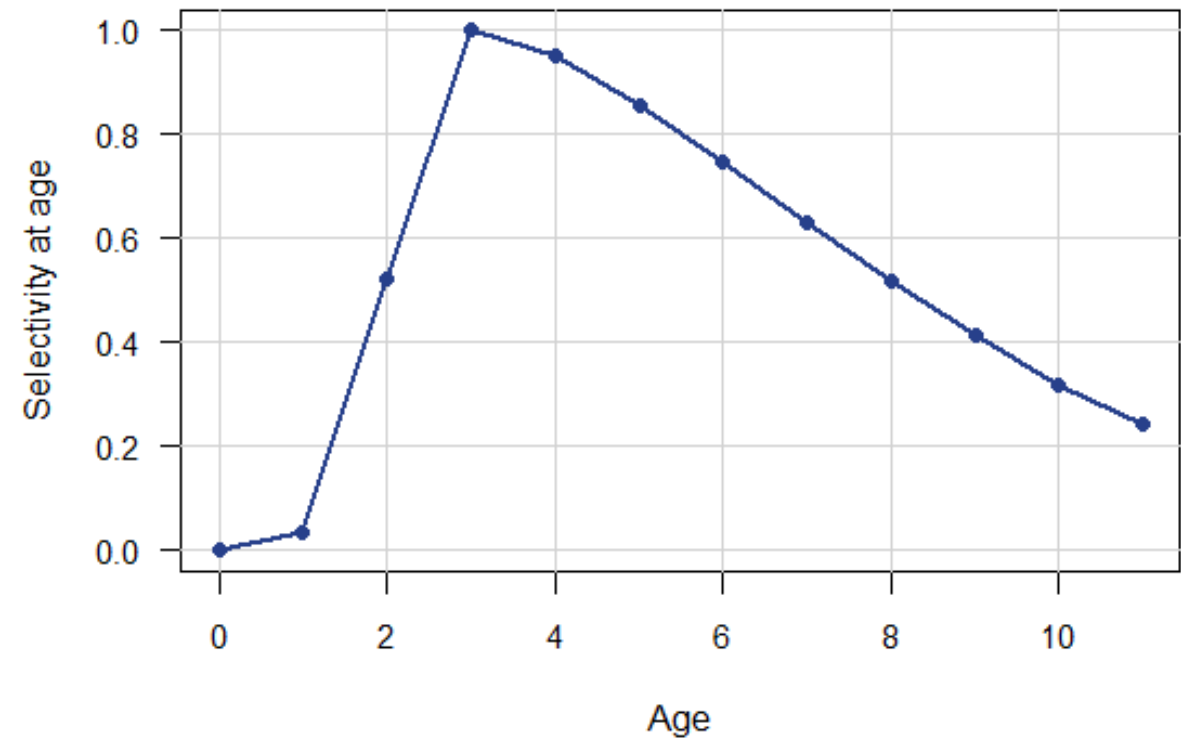


# BAM base model – Survey selectivity

MARMAP Blackfish Survey Selectivity

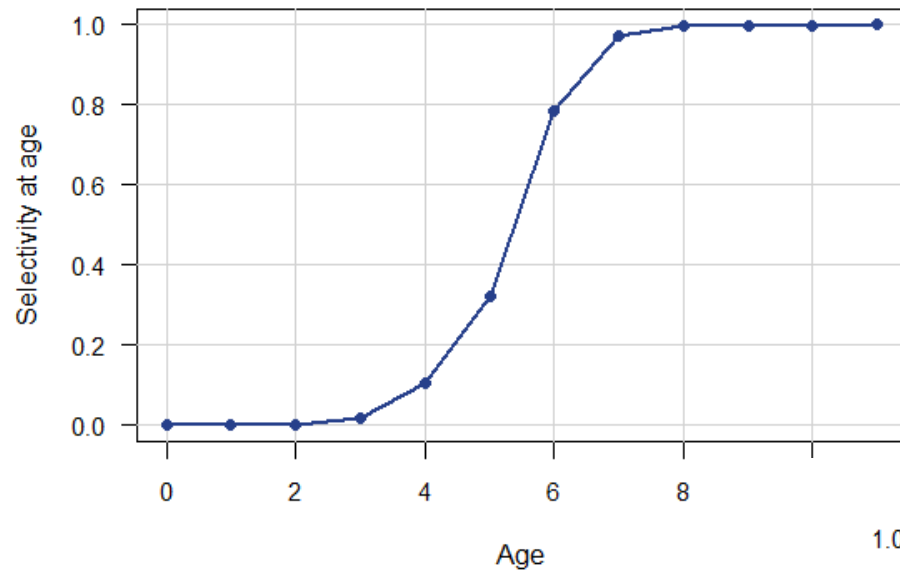


SERFS Survey Selectivity

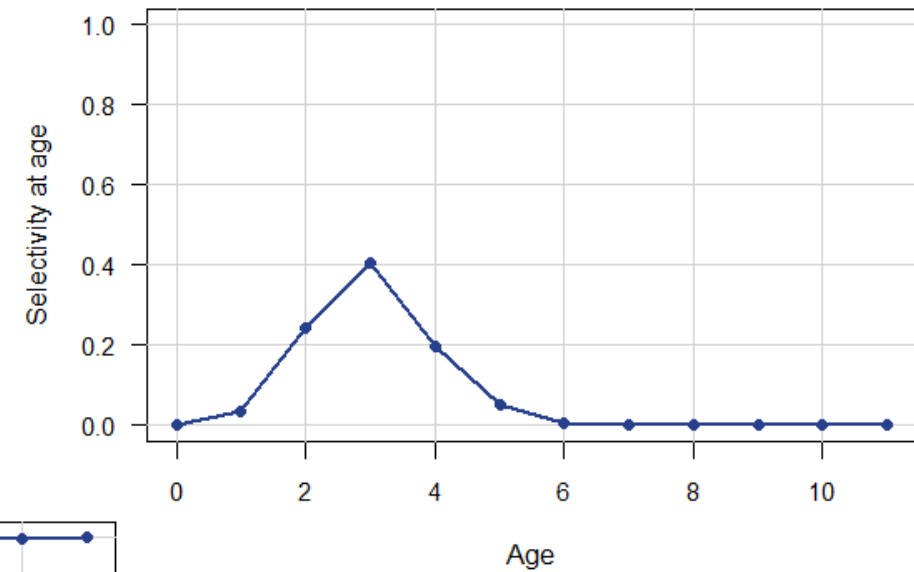


# BAM base model – Weighted selectivity

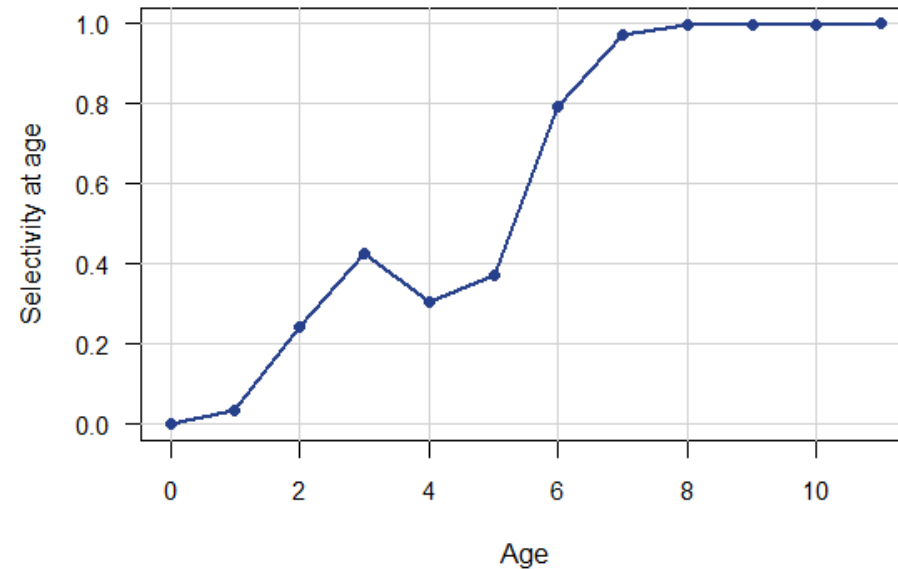
Landings weighted Selectivity



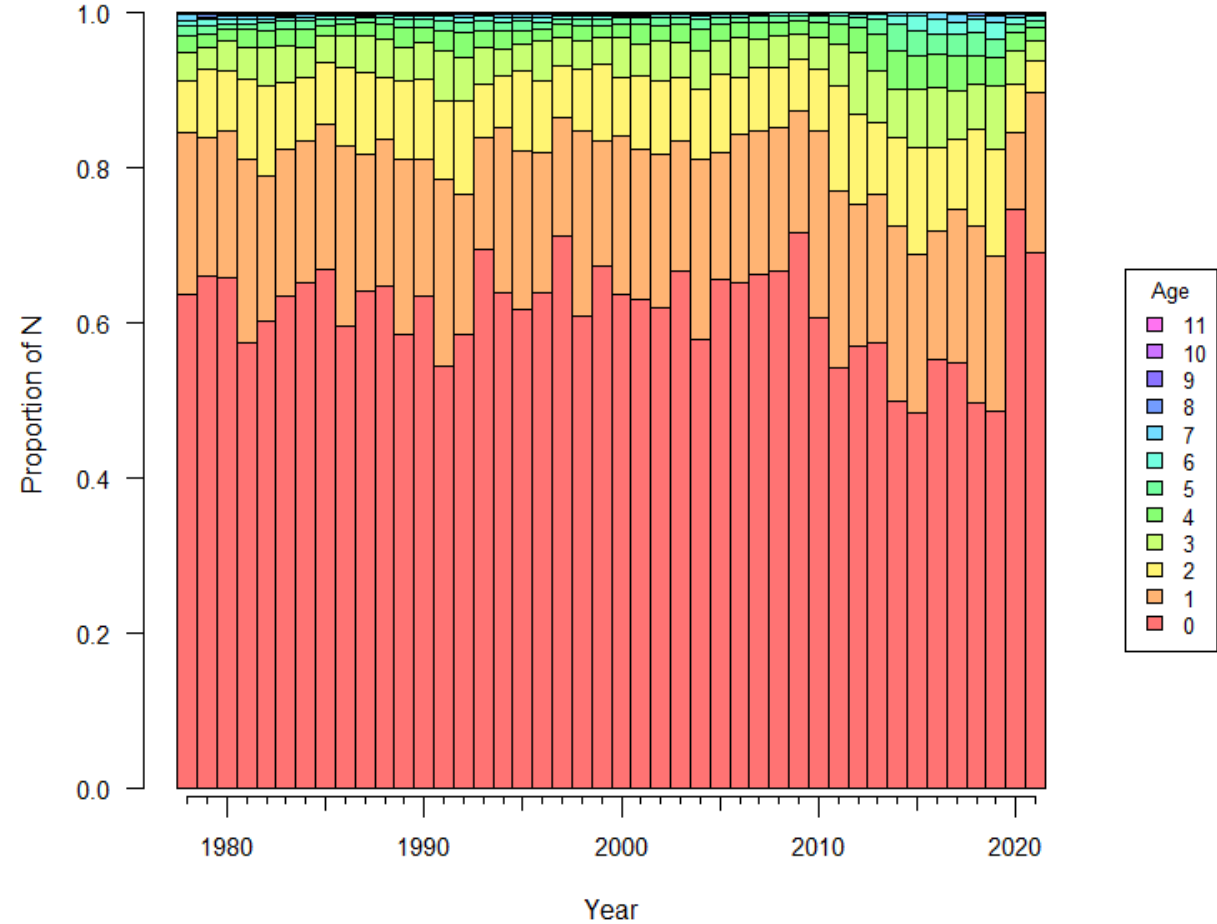
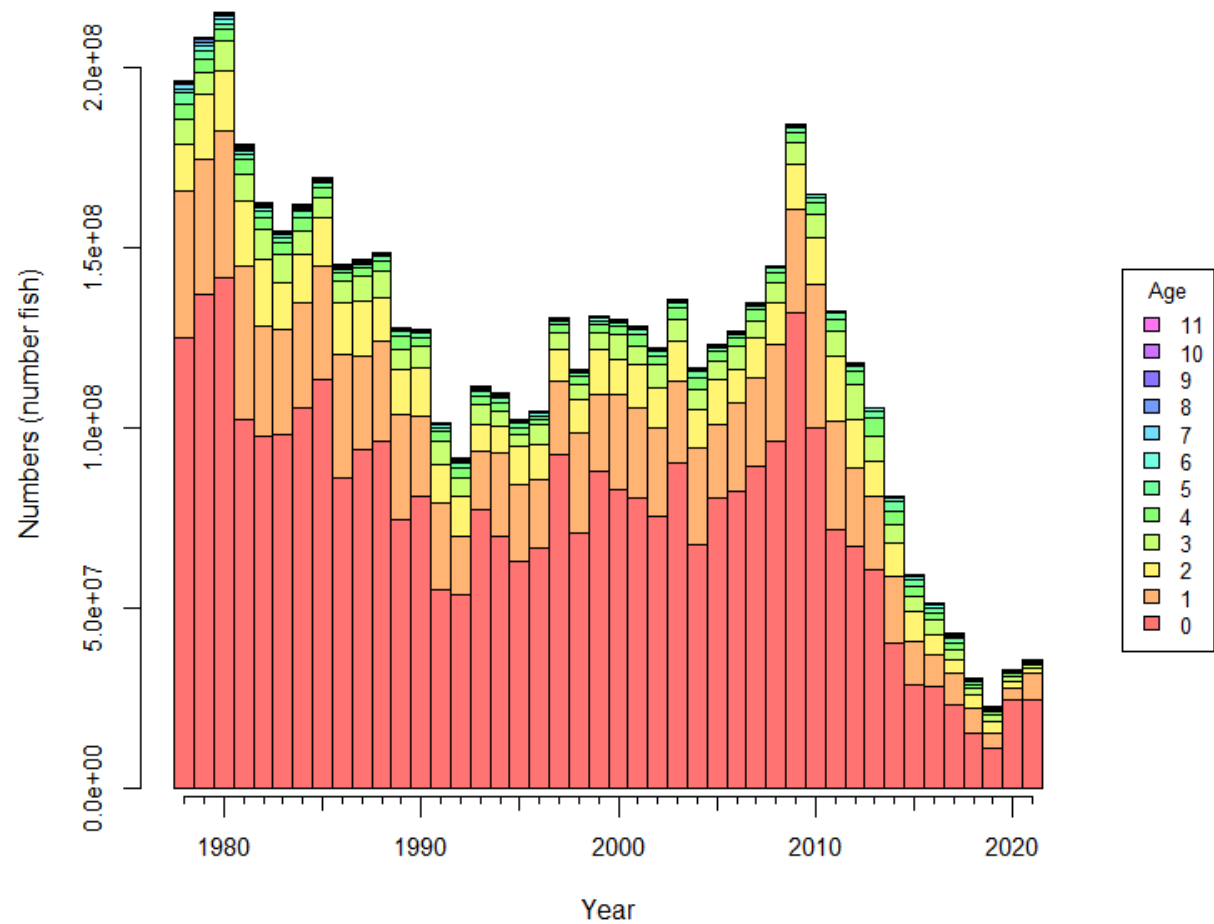
Discards weighted Selectivity



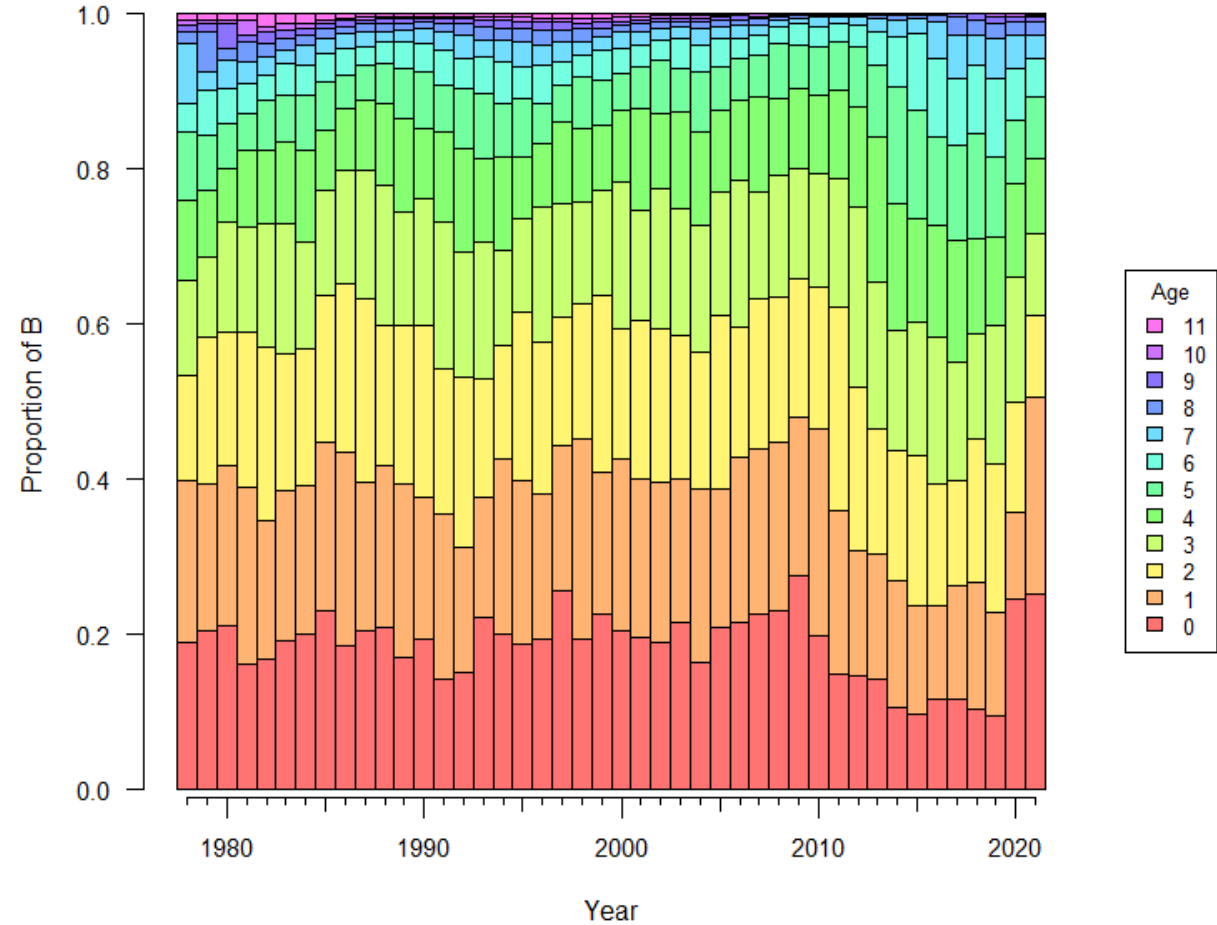
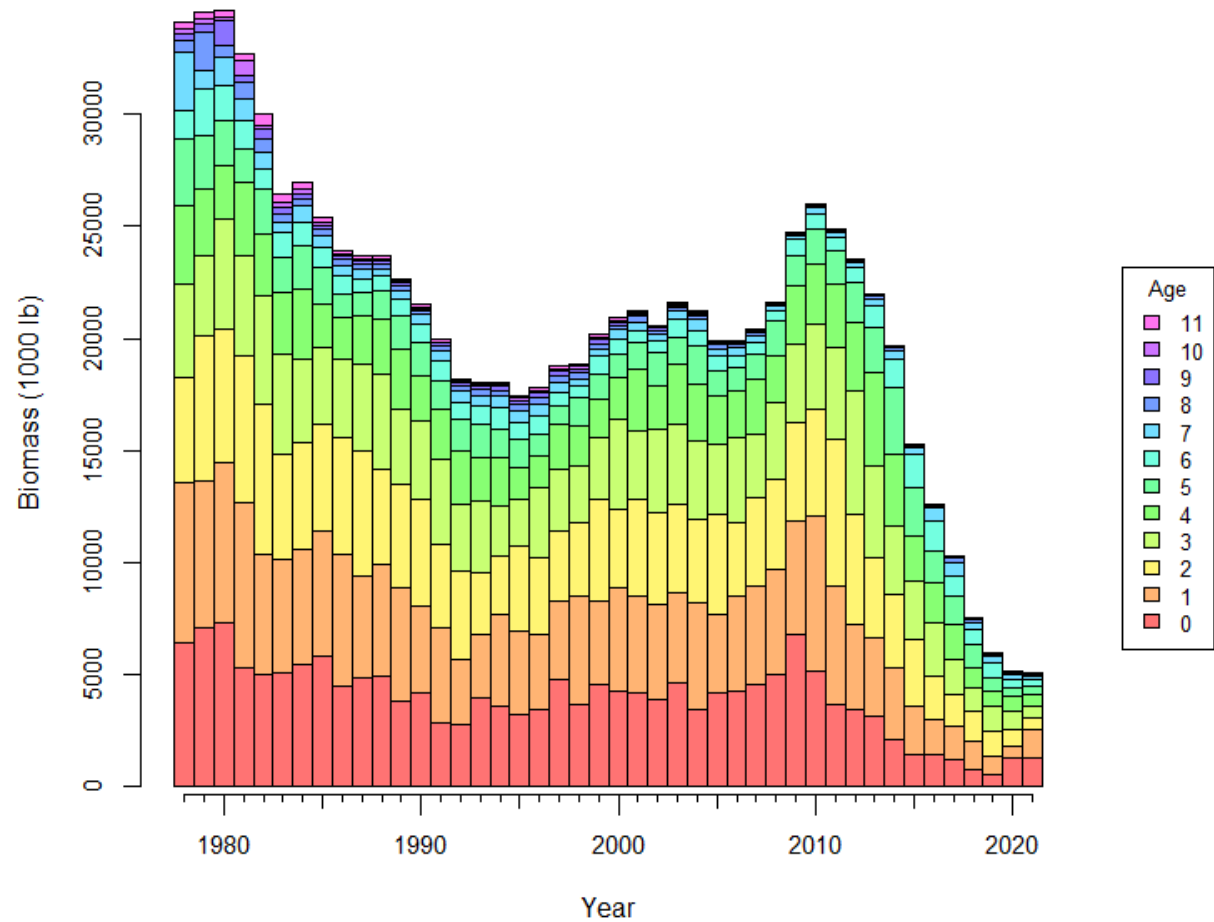
Total weighted Selectivity



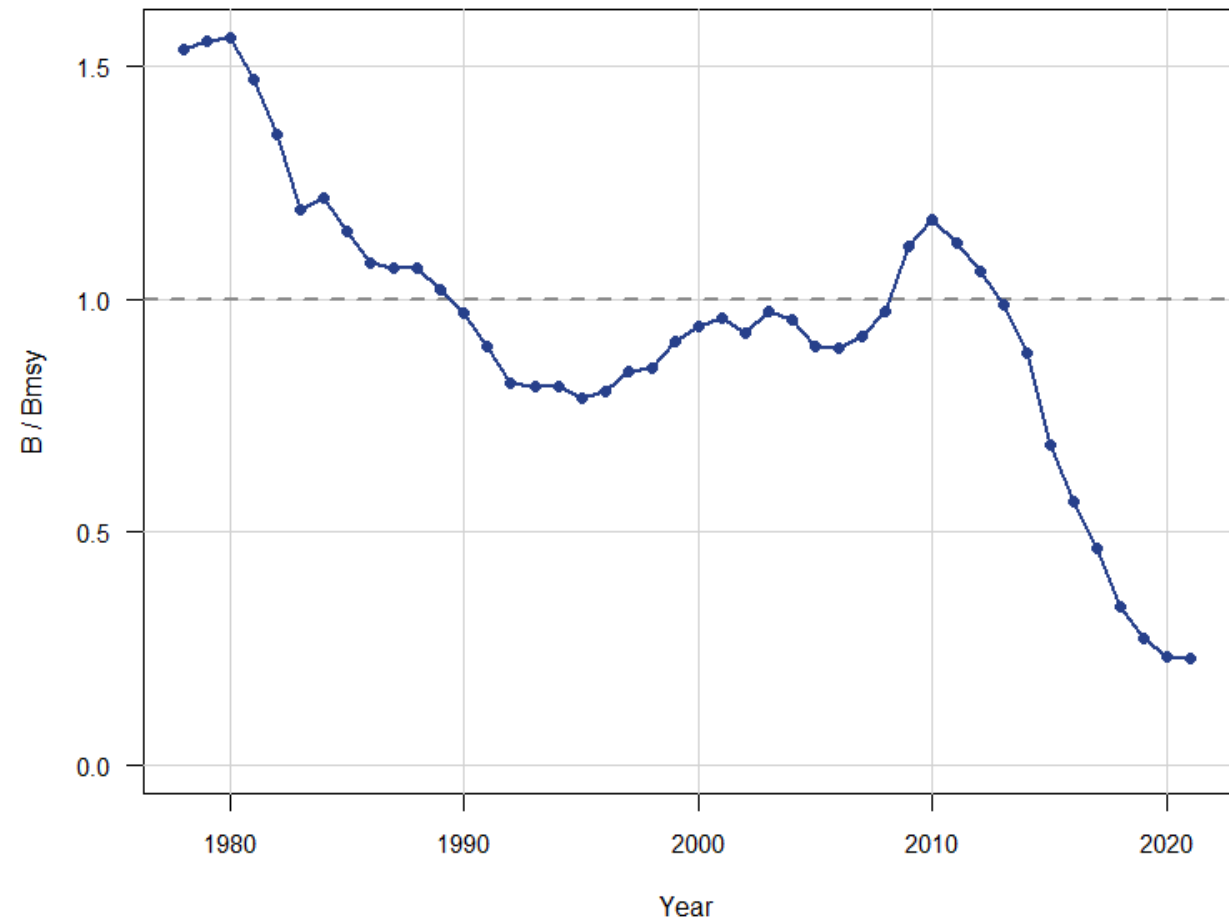
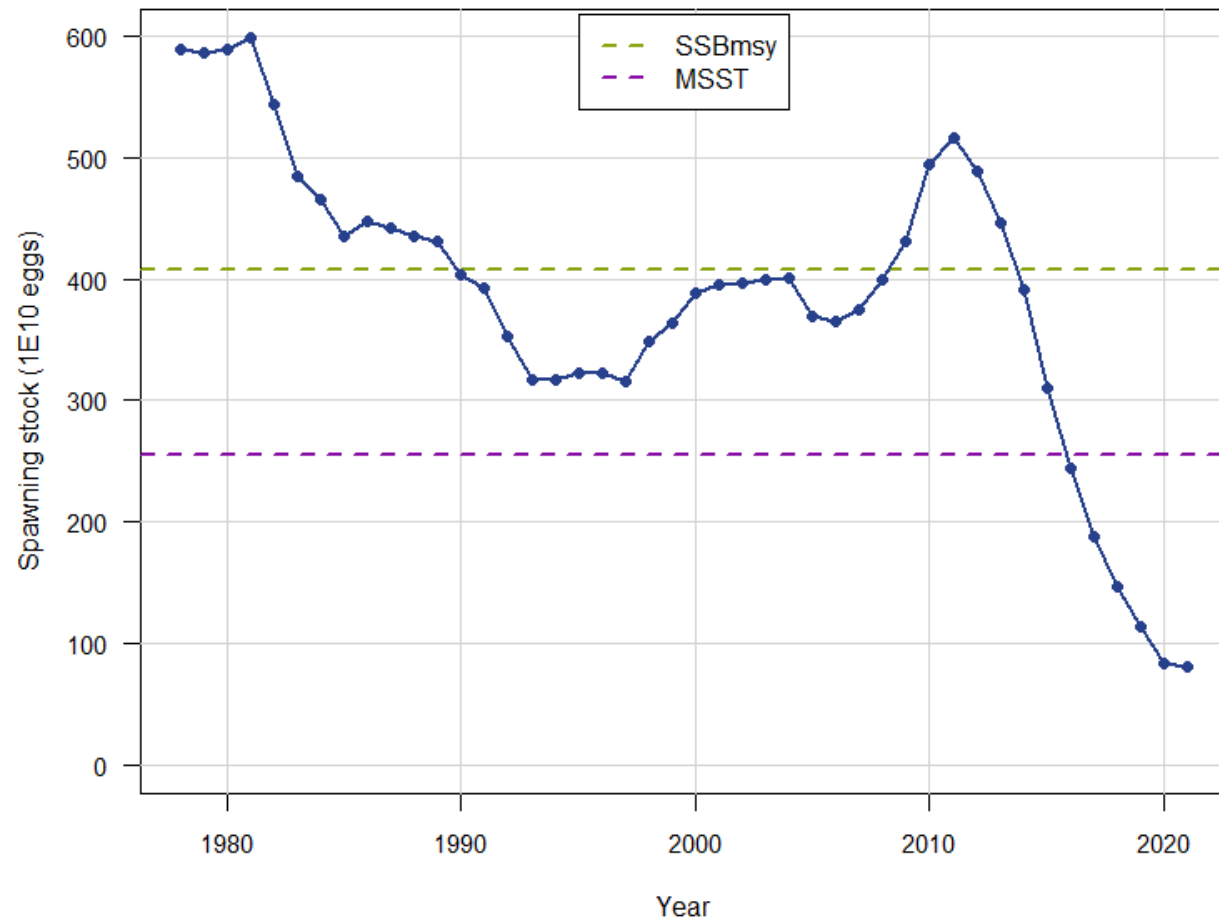
# BAM base model – Abundance at age



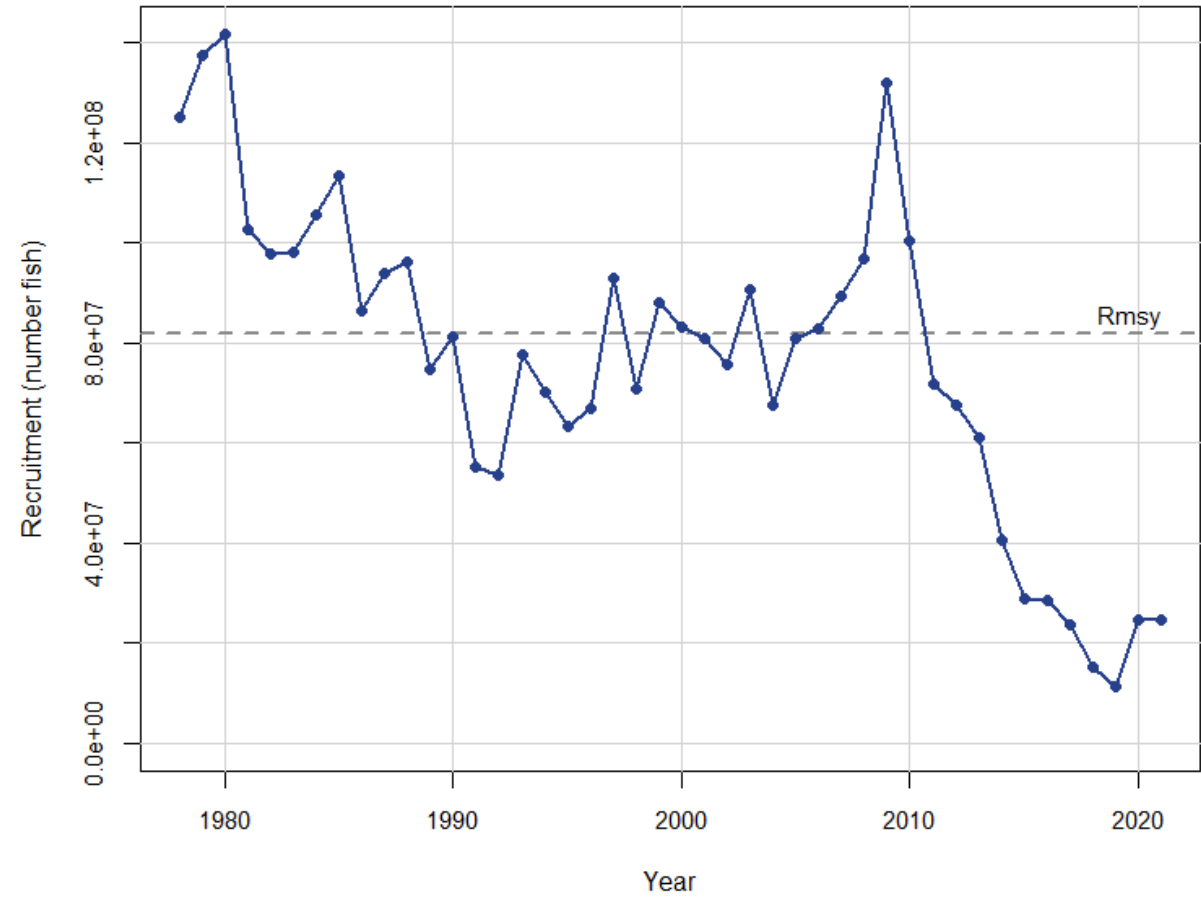
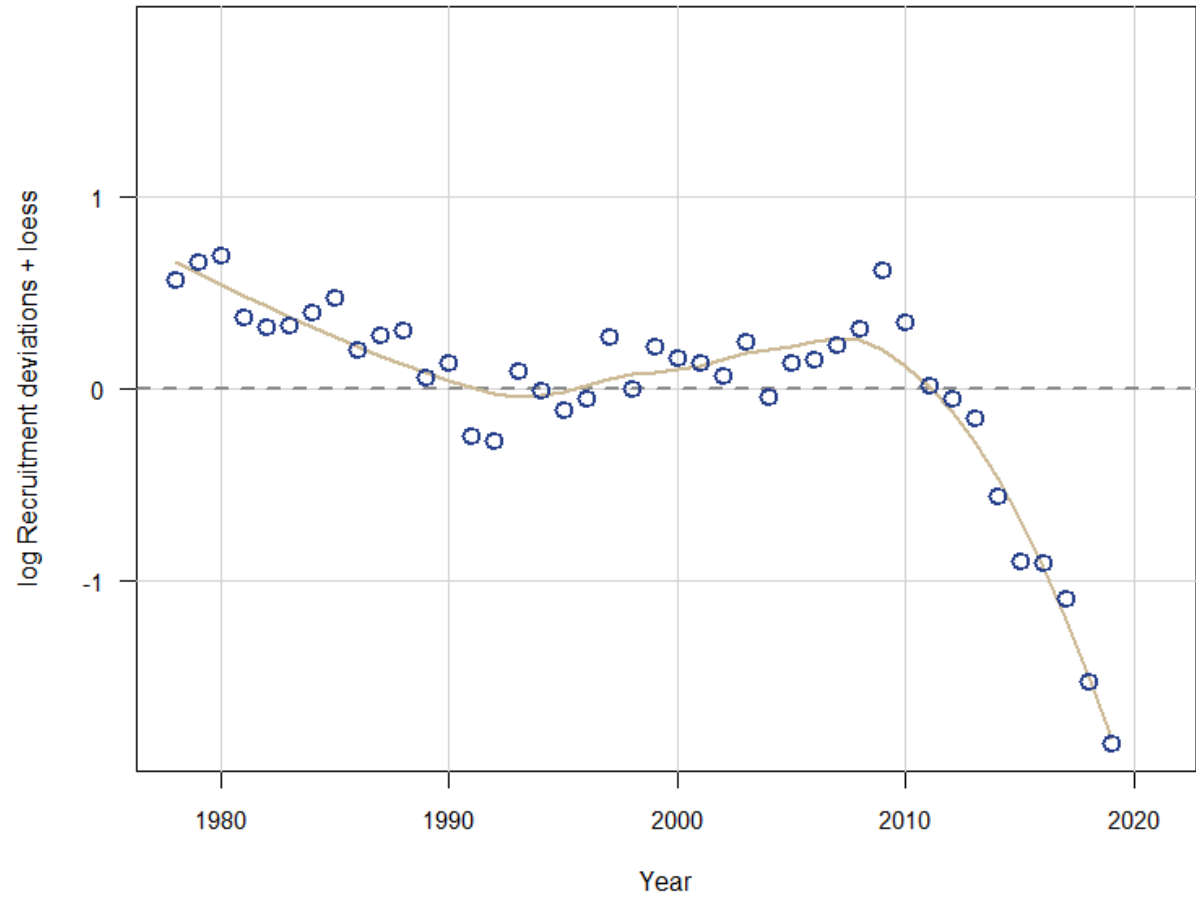
# BAM base model – Biomass at age



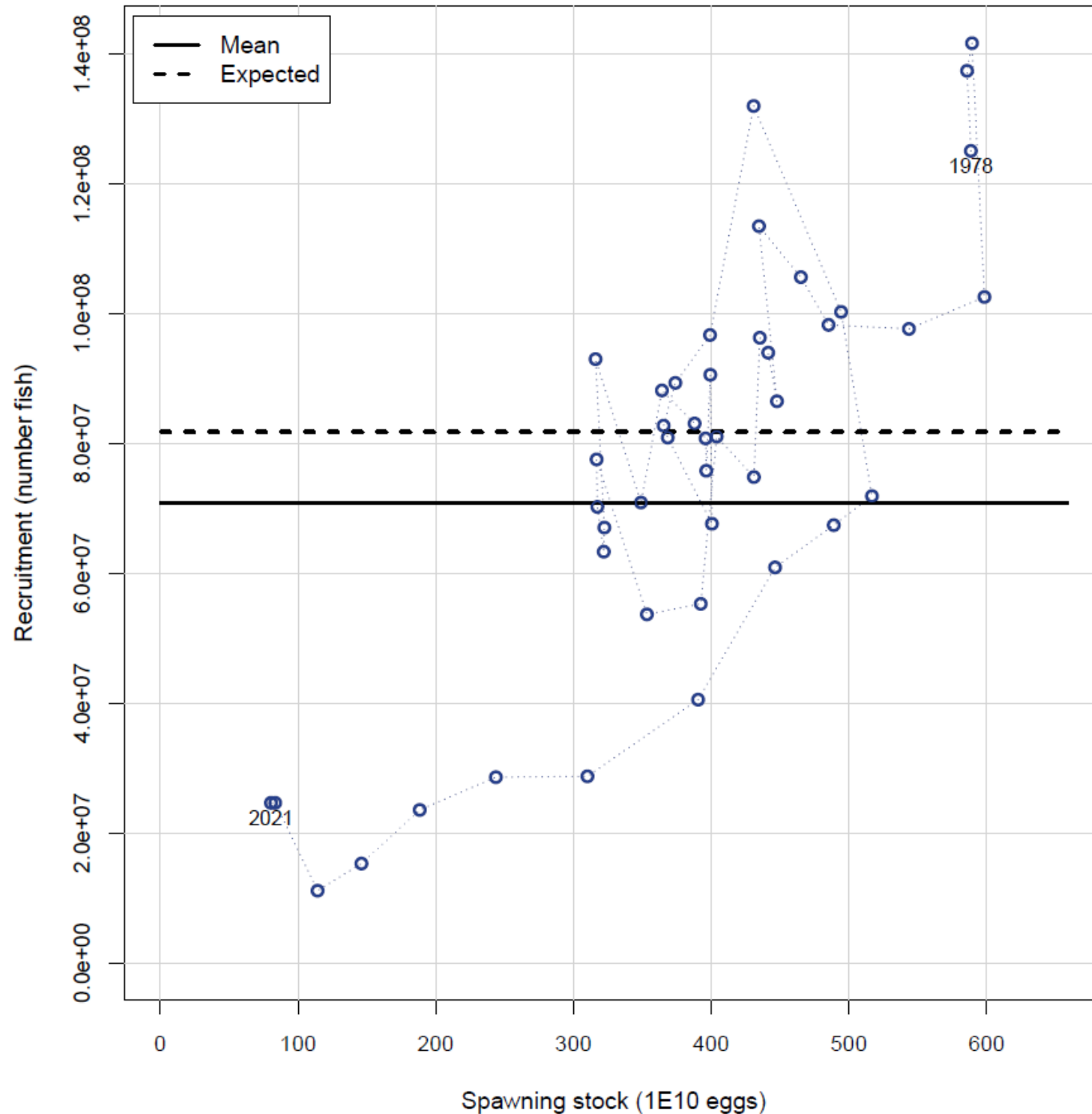
# BAM base model – Spawning stock



# BAM base model – Recruitment

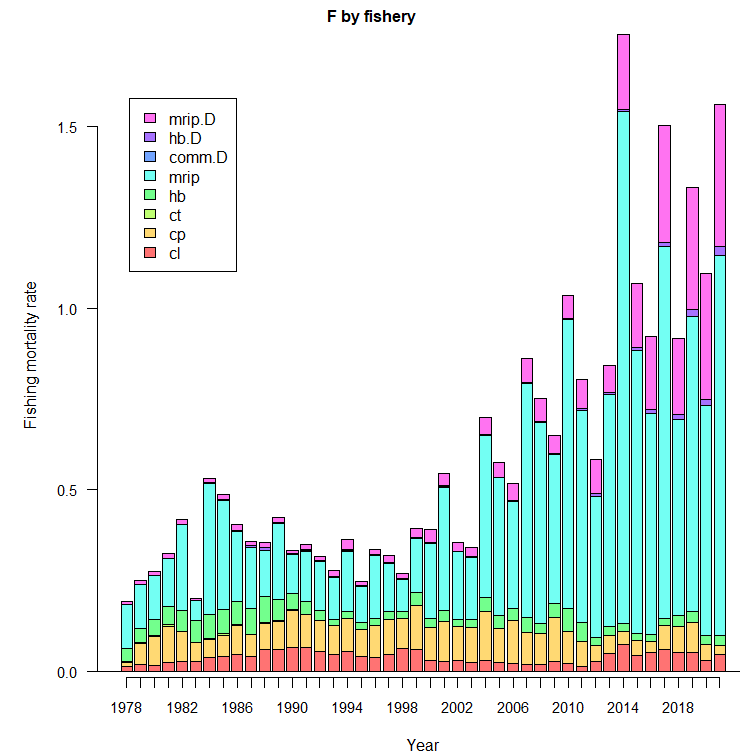
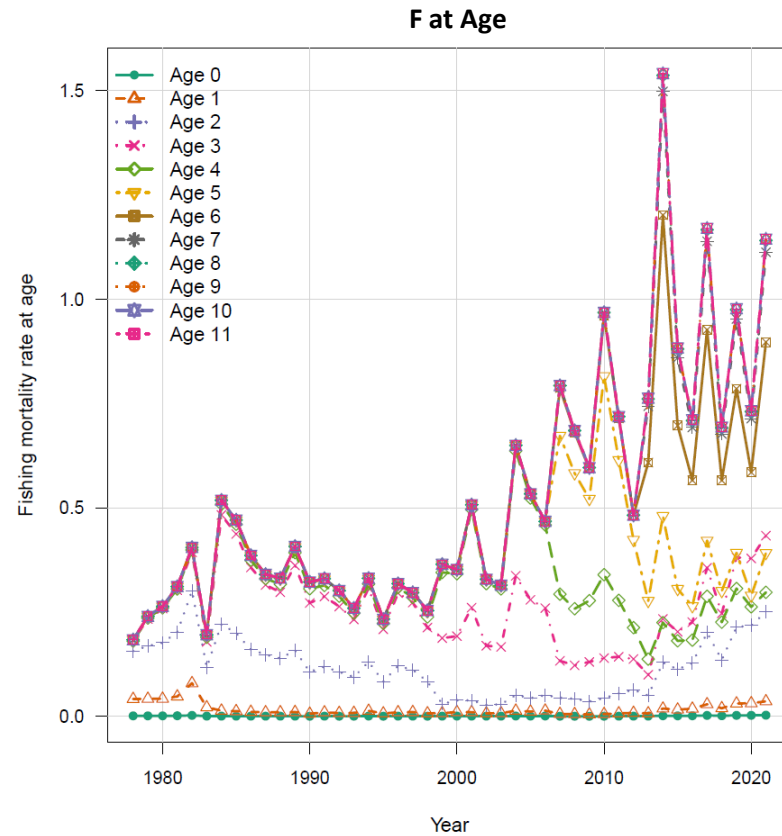
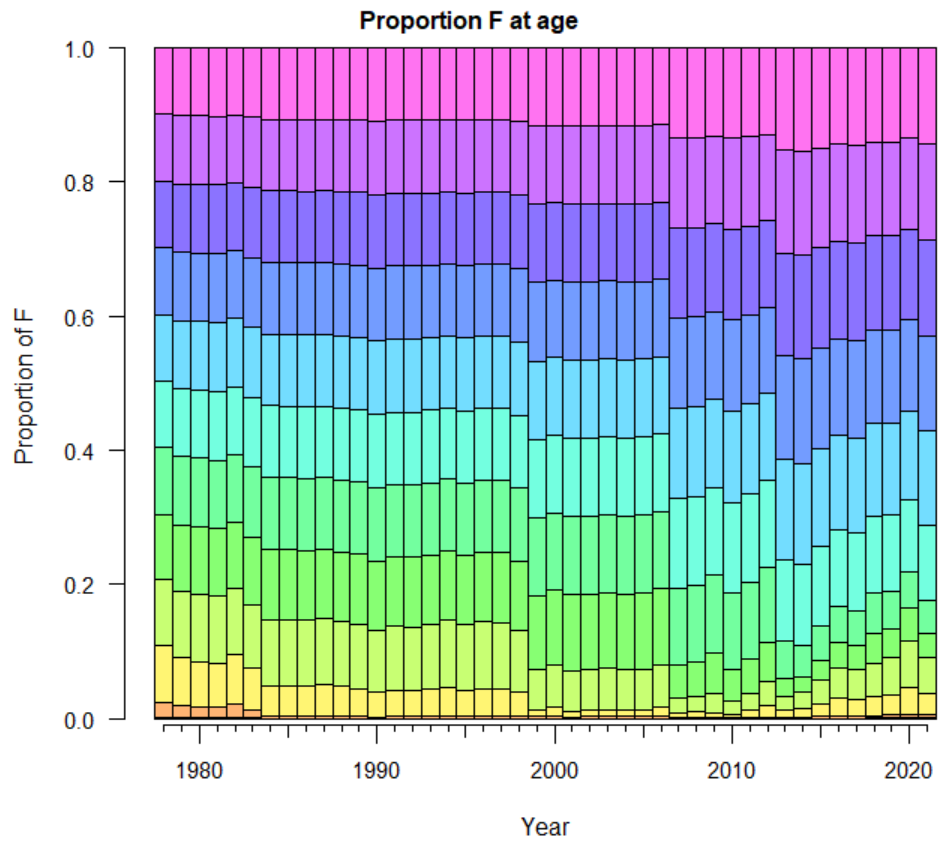


# BAM base model – Spawners-recruits



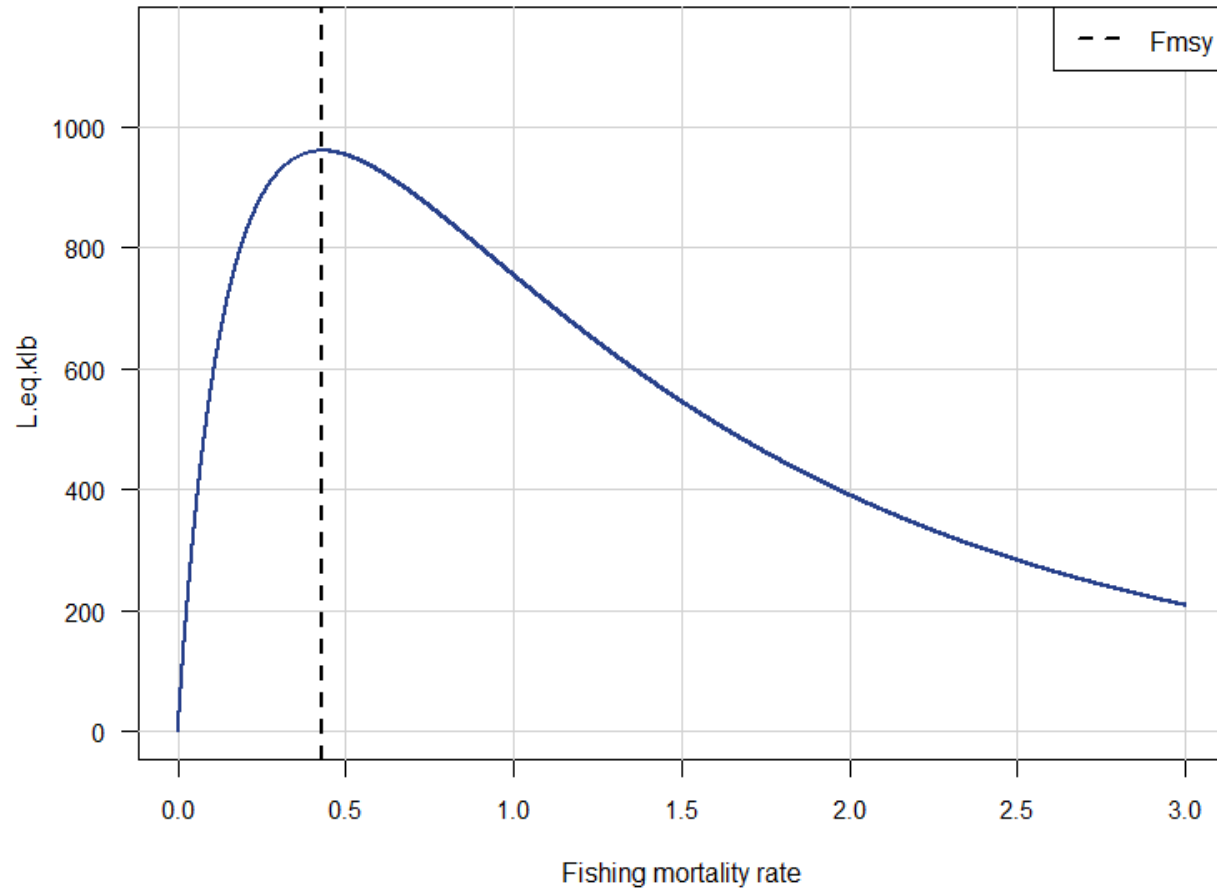


# BAM base model – Fishing mortality

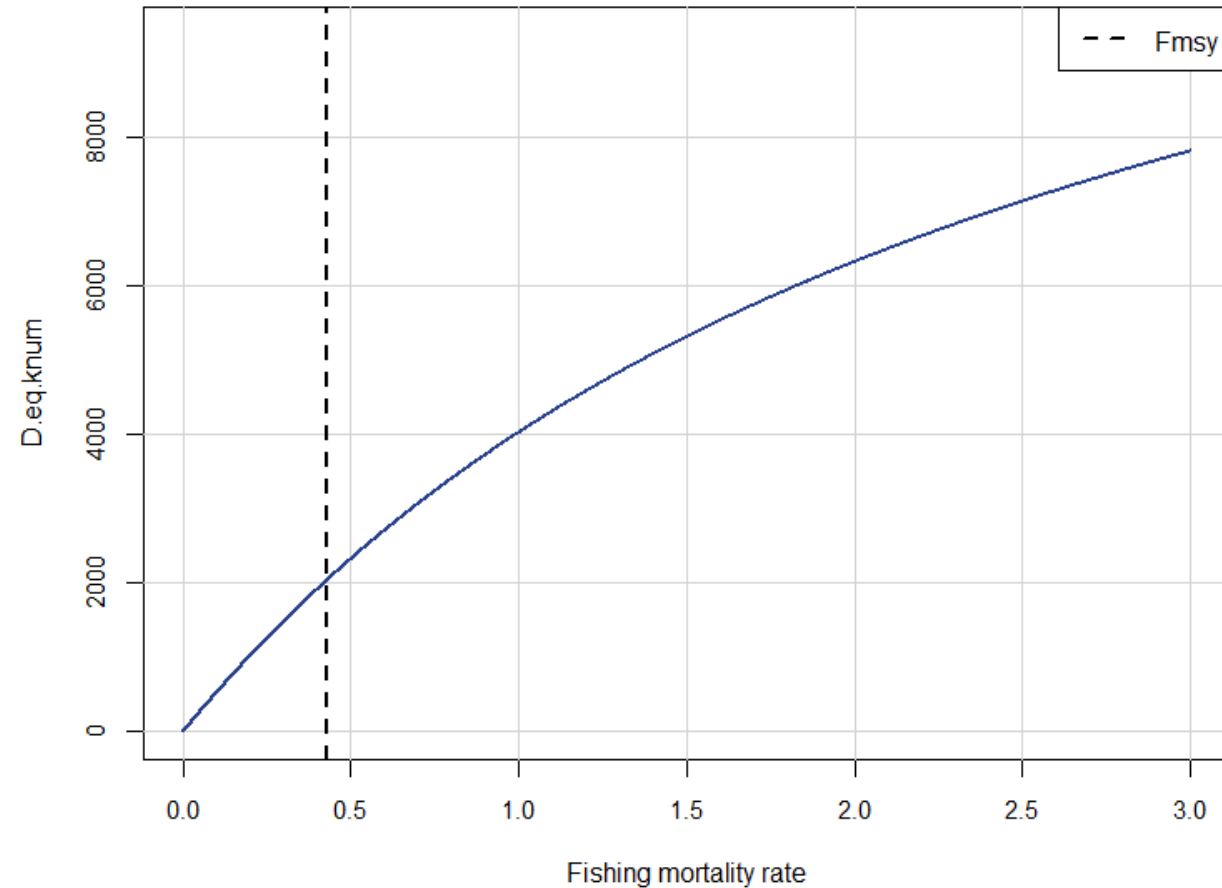


# BAM base model – Equilibrium Landings and Discard

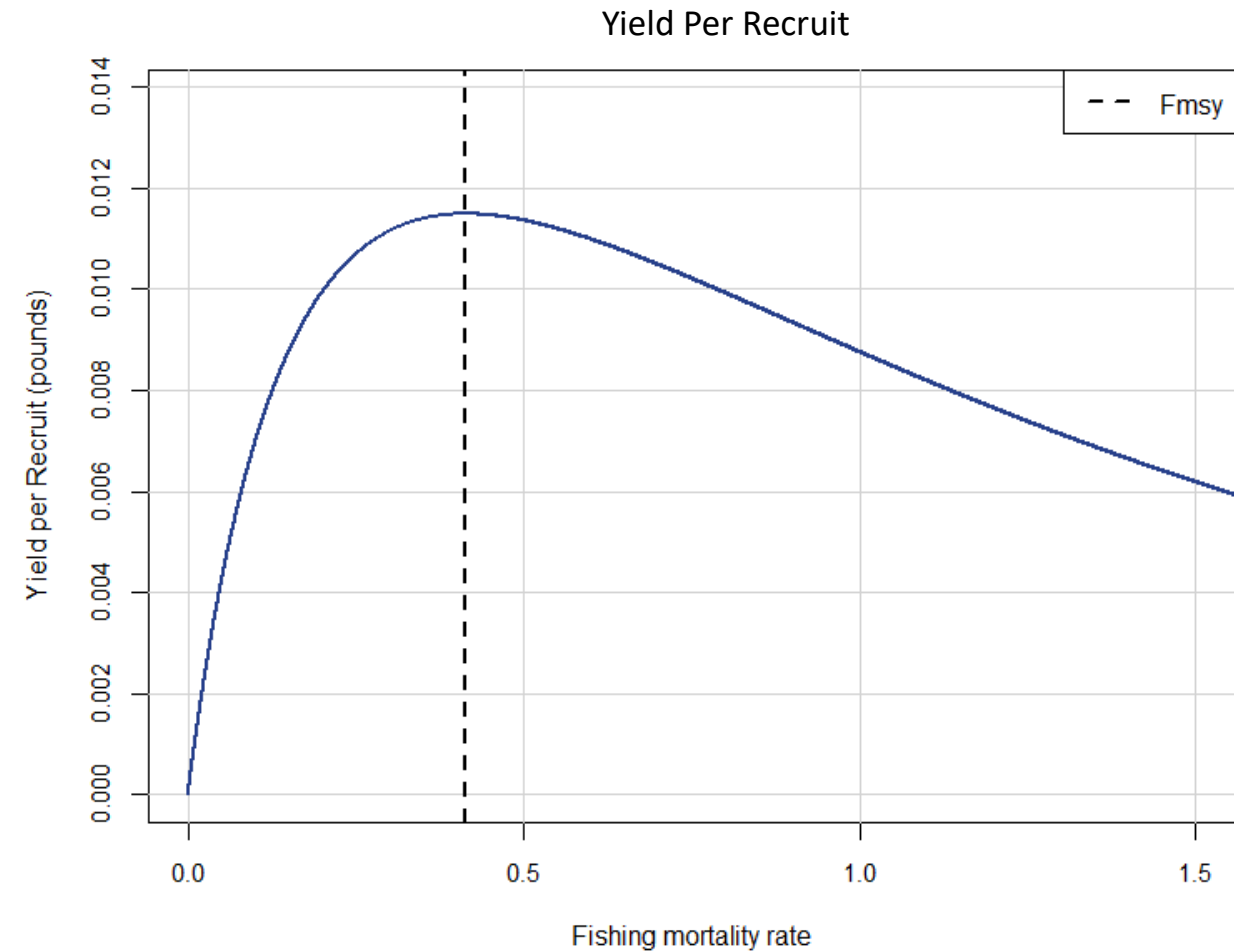
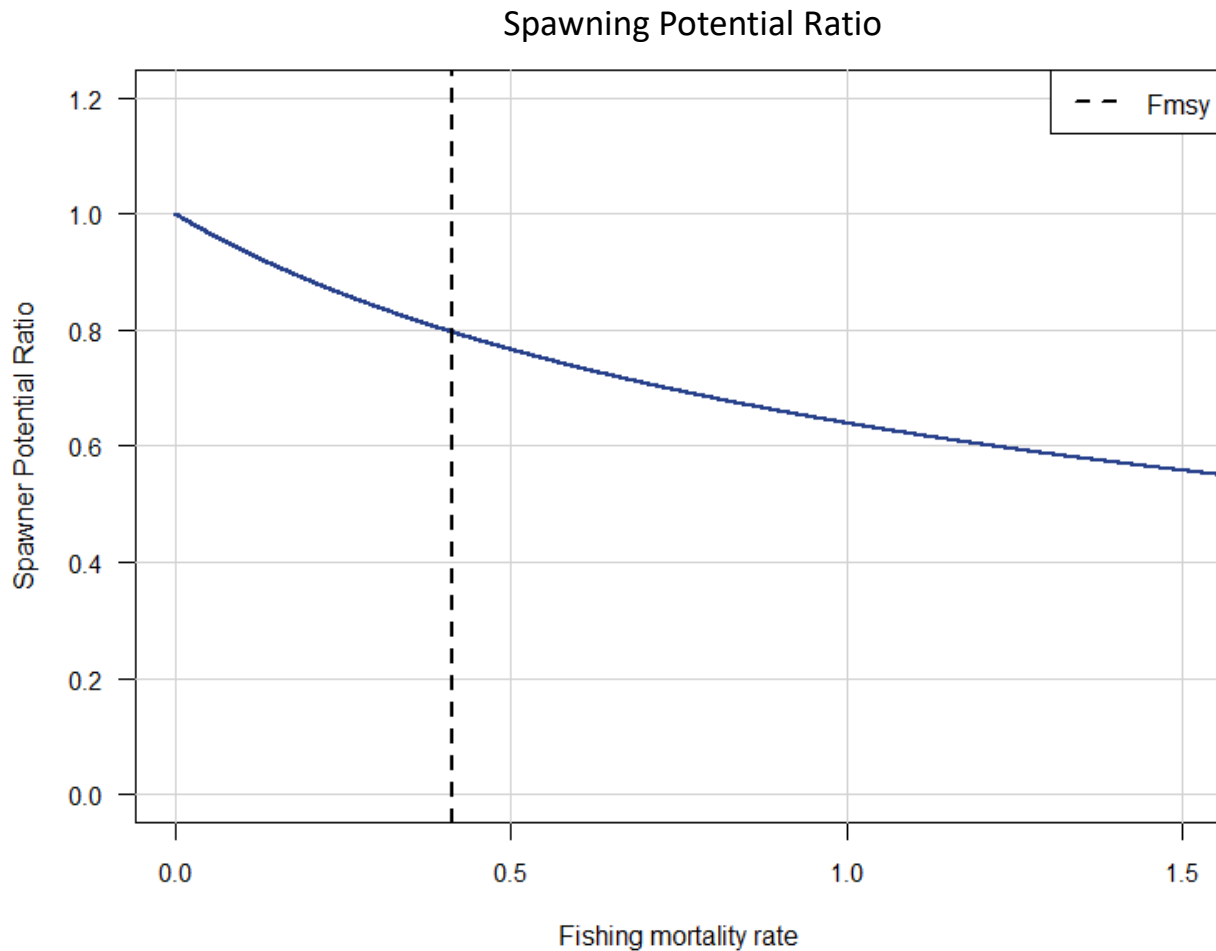
Equilibrium Landings



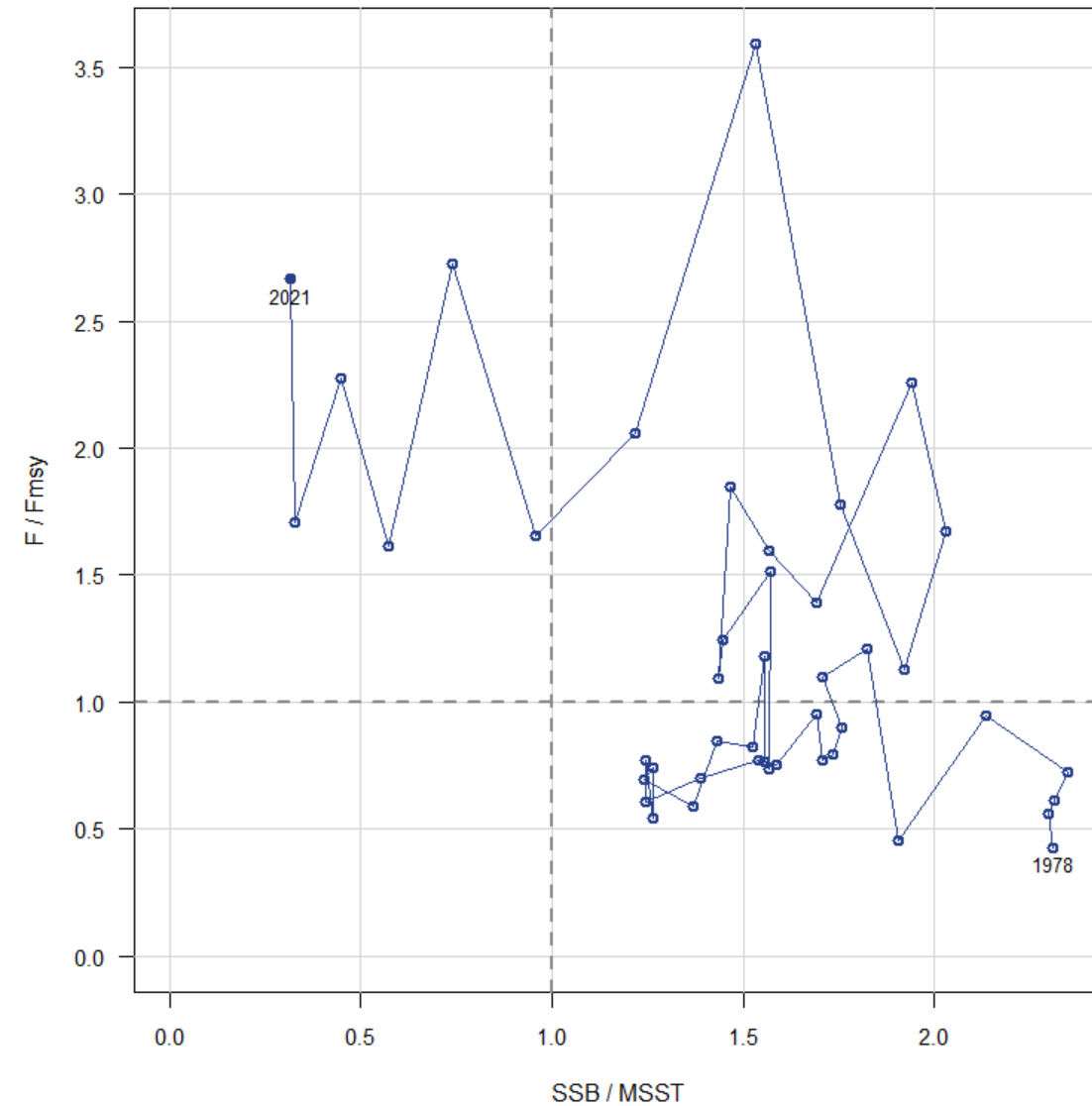
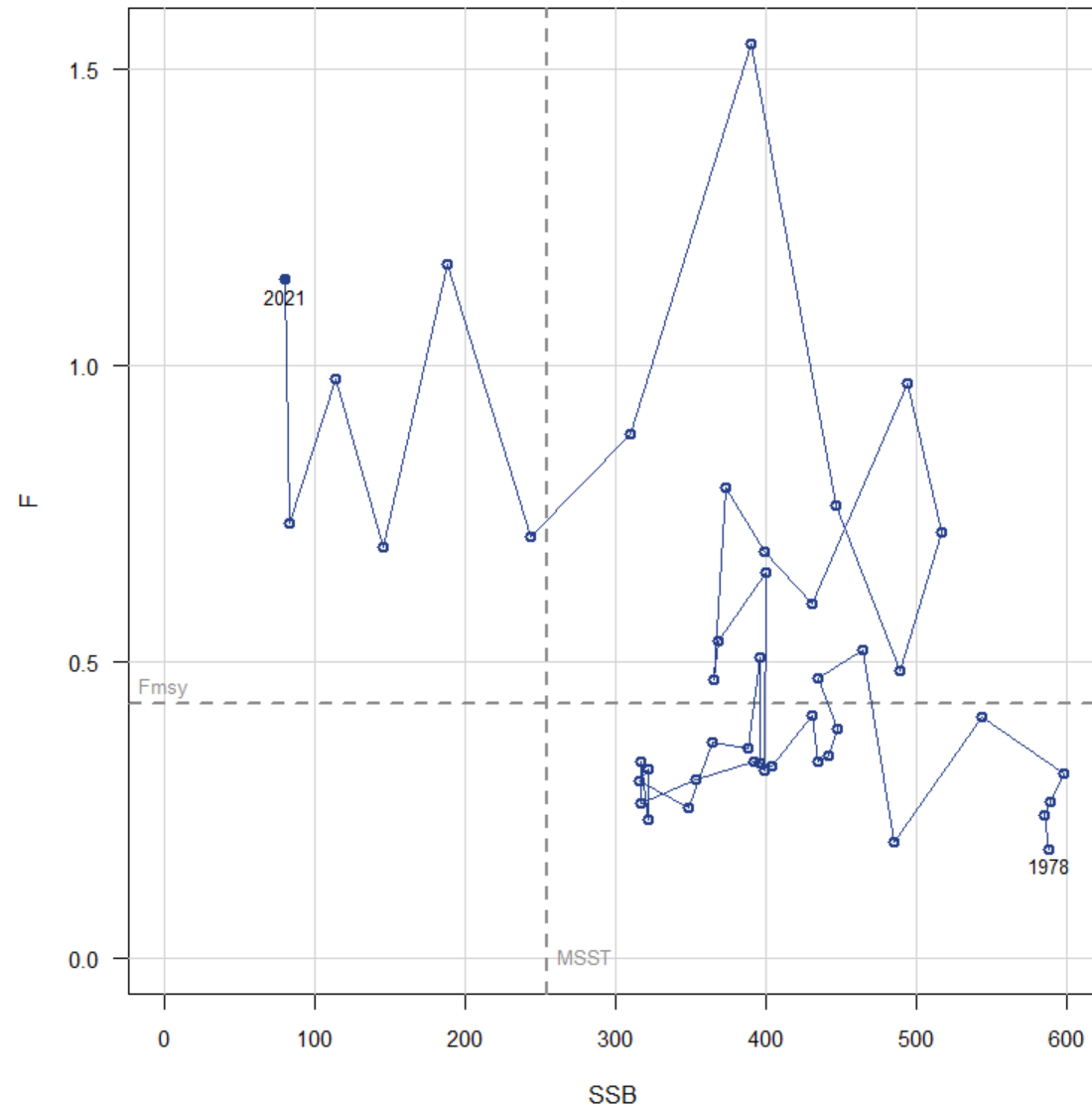
Equilibrium discards



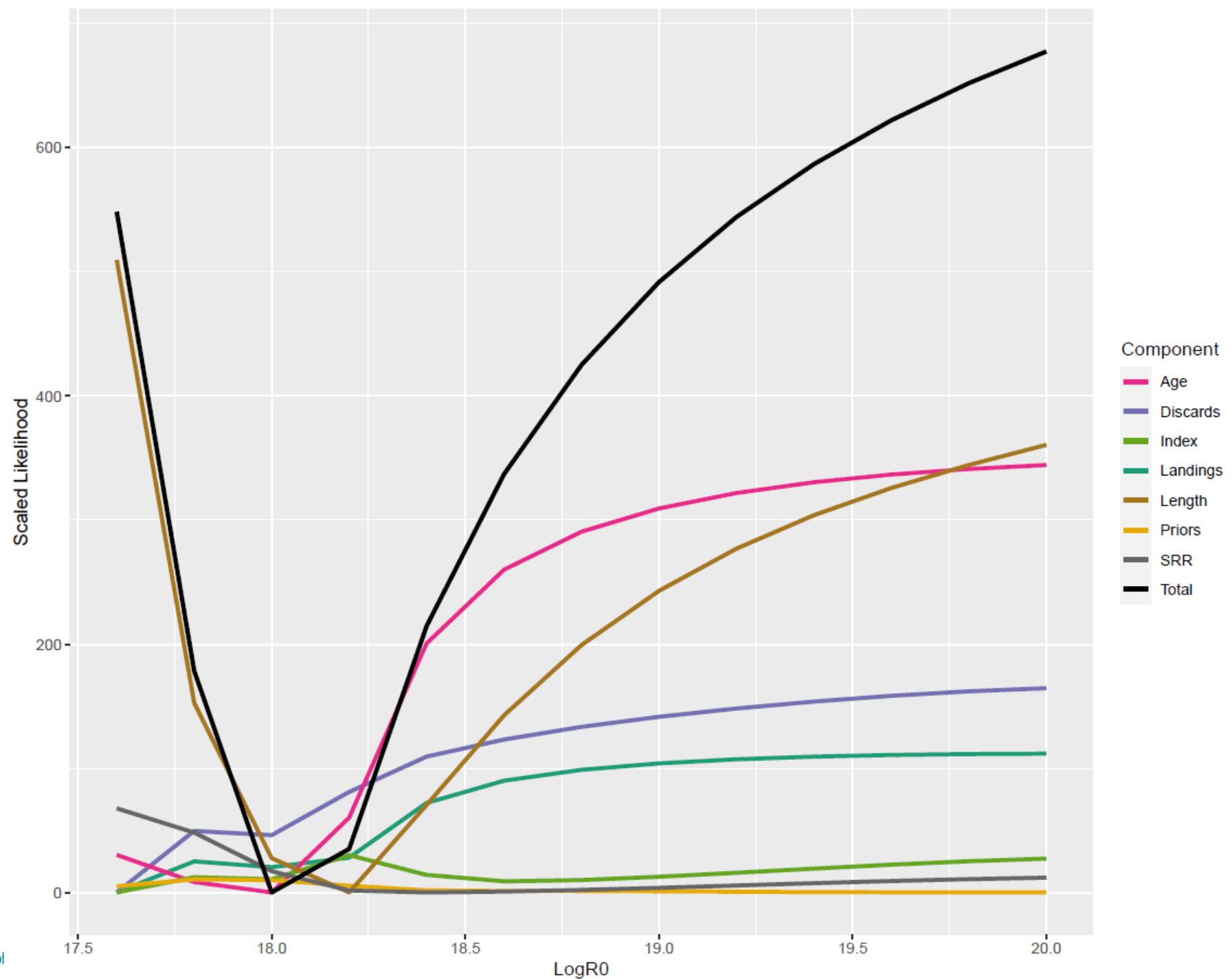
# BAM base model – Per recruit



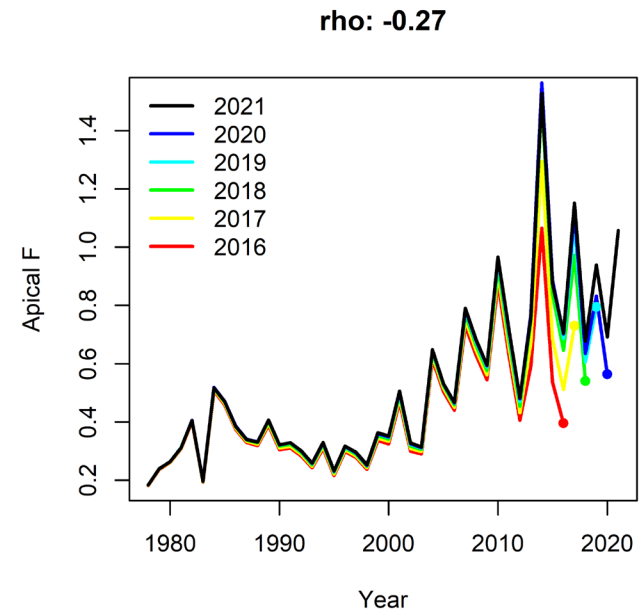
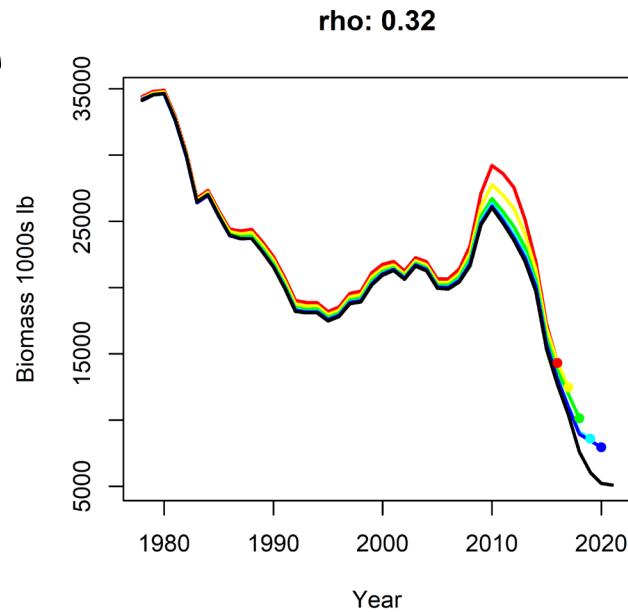
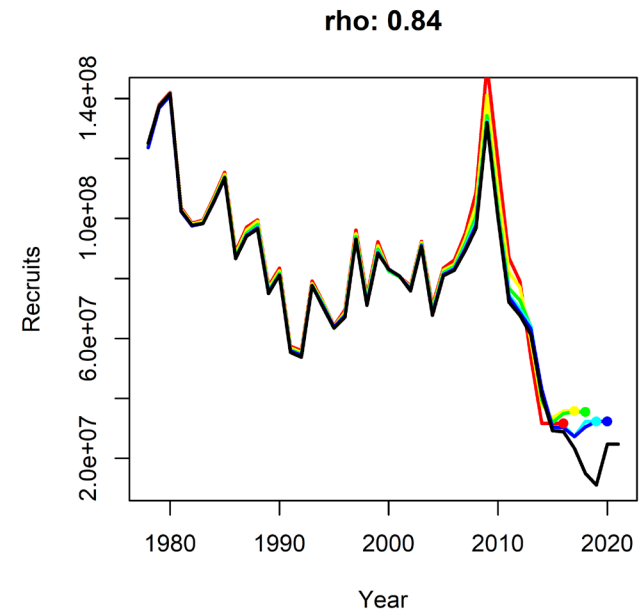
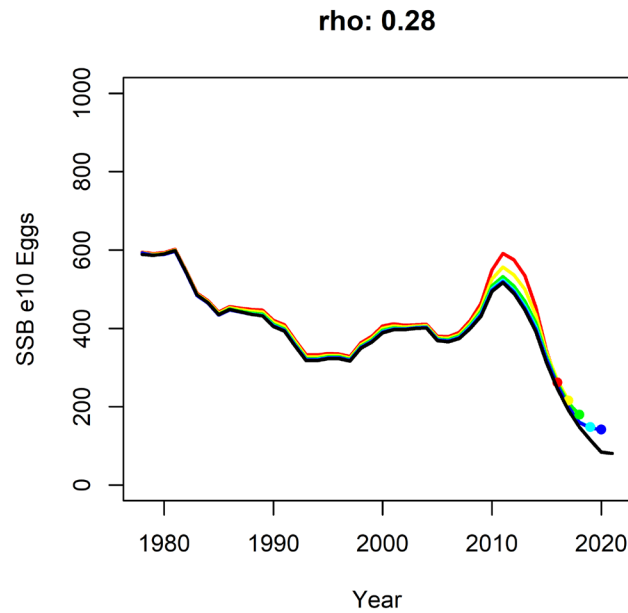
# BAM base model – Phase plot



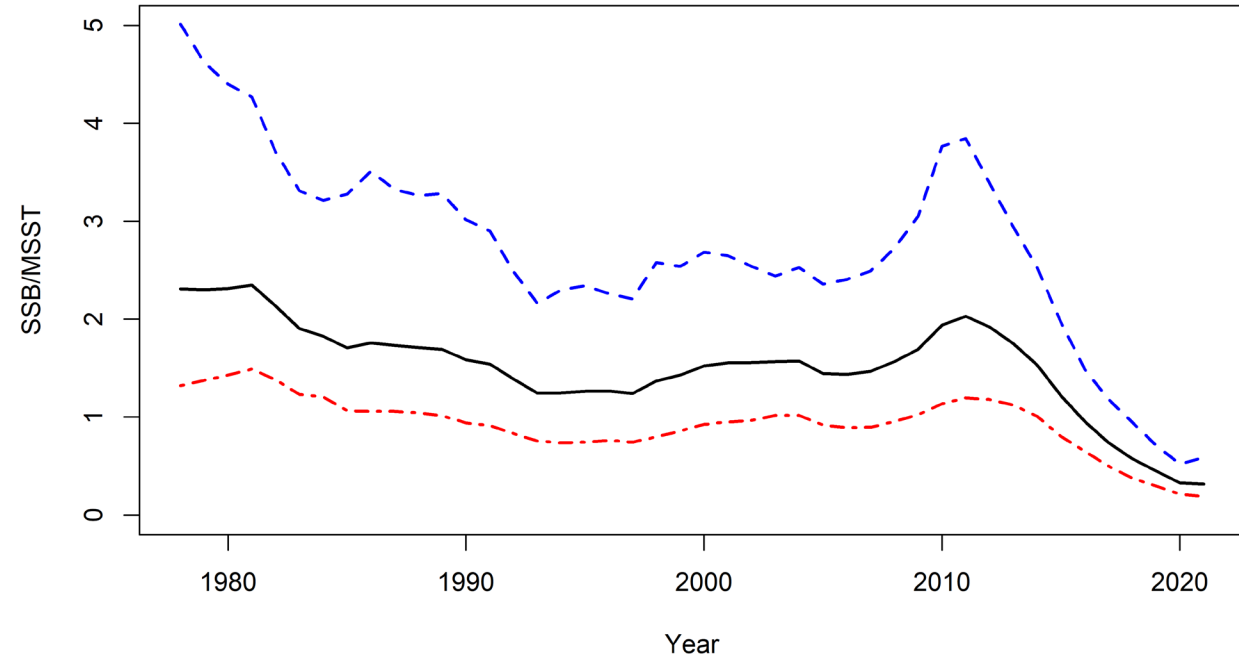
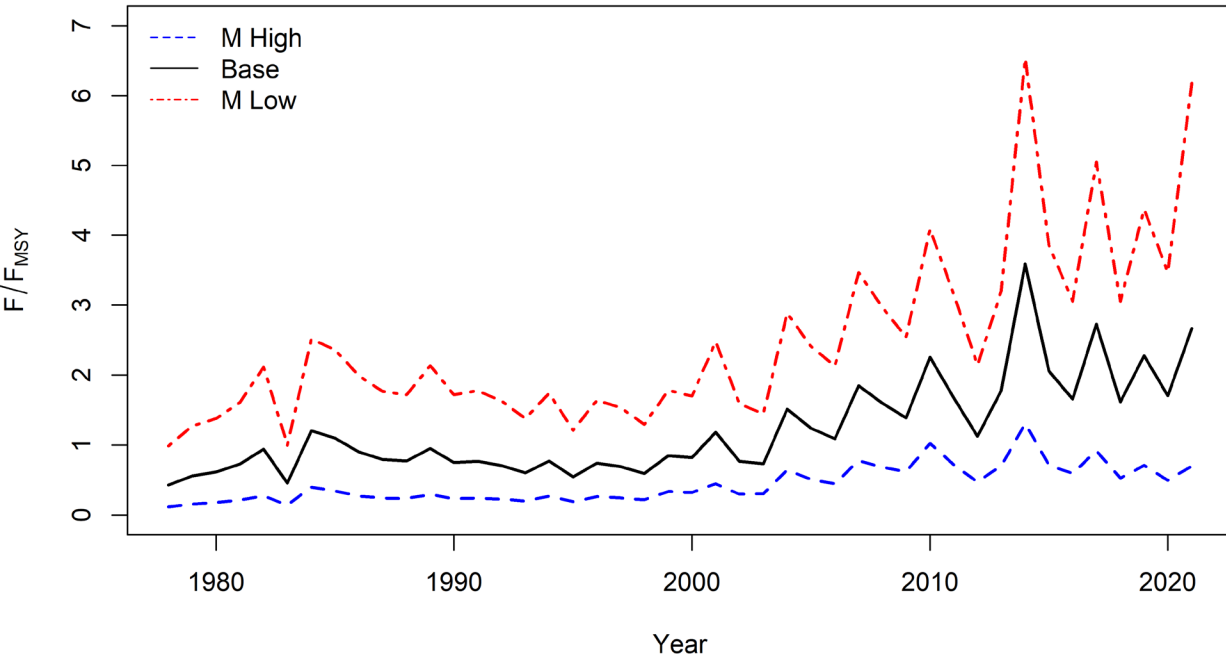
# BAM base model – Log R0 Profile



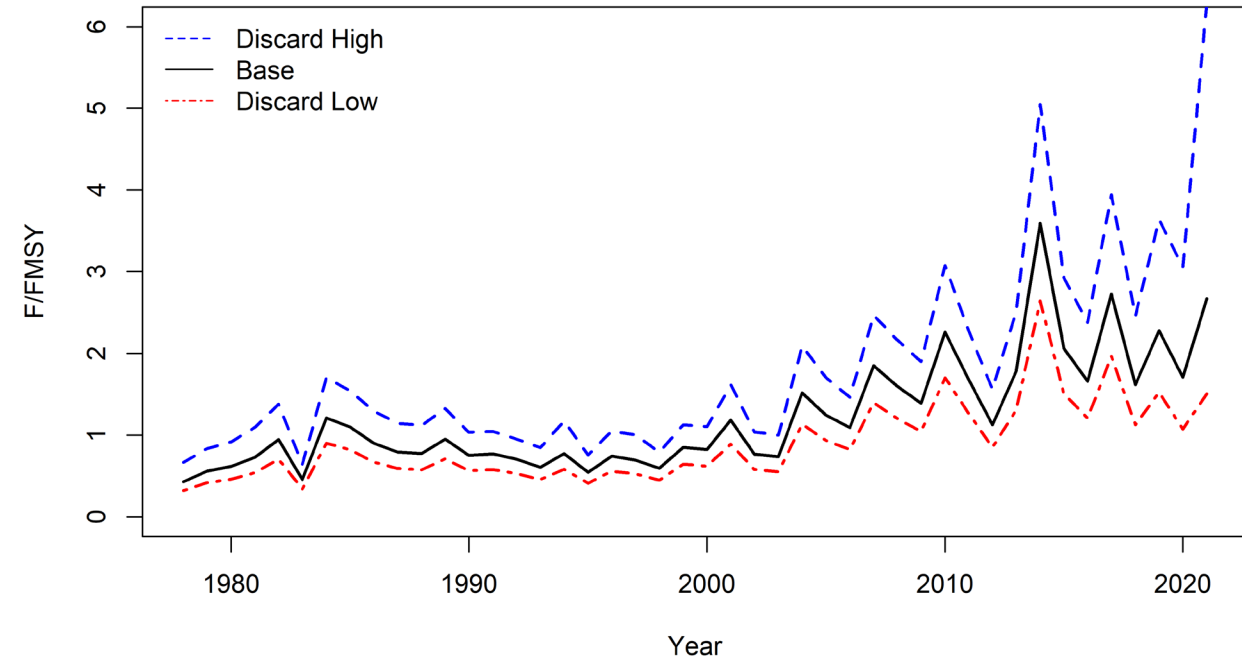
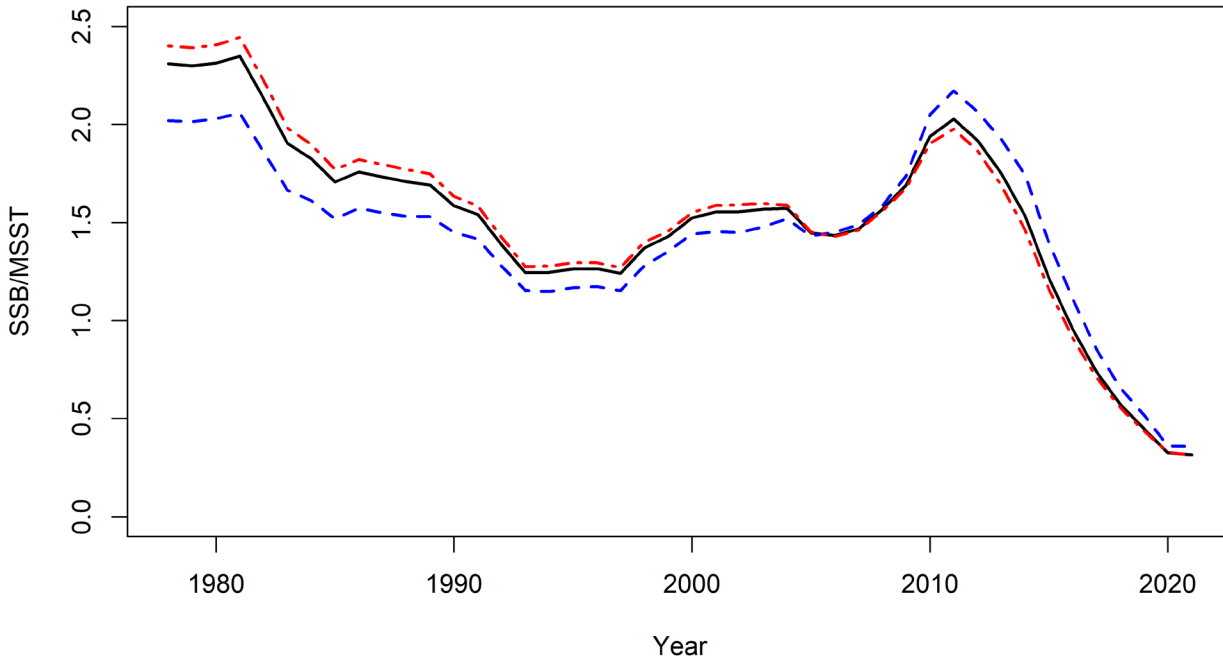
# BAM base model – Retrospective analysis



# BAM base model – Natural mortality sensitivity

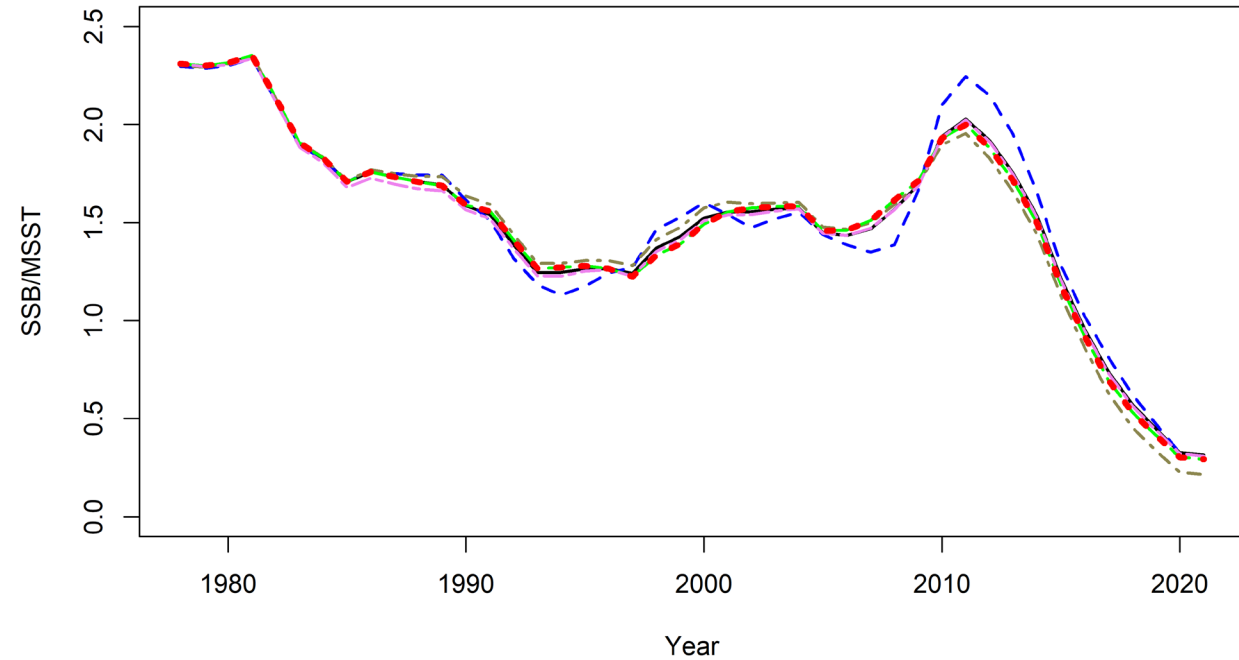
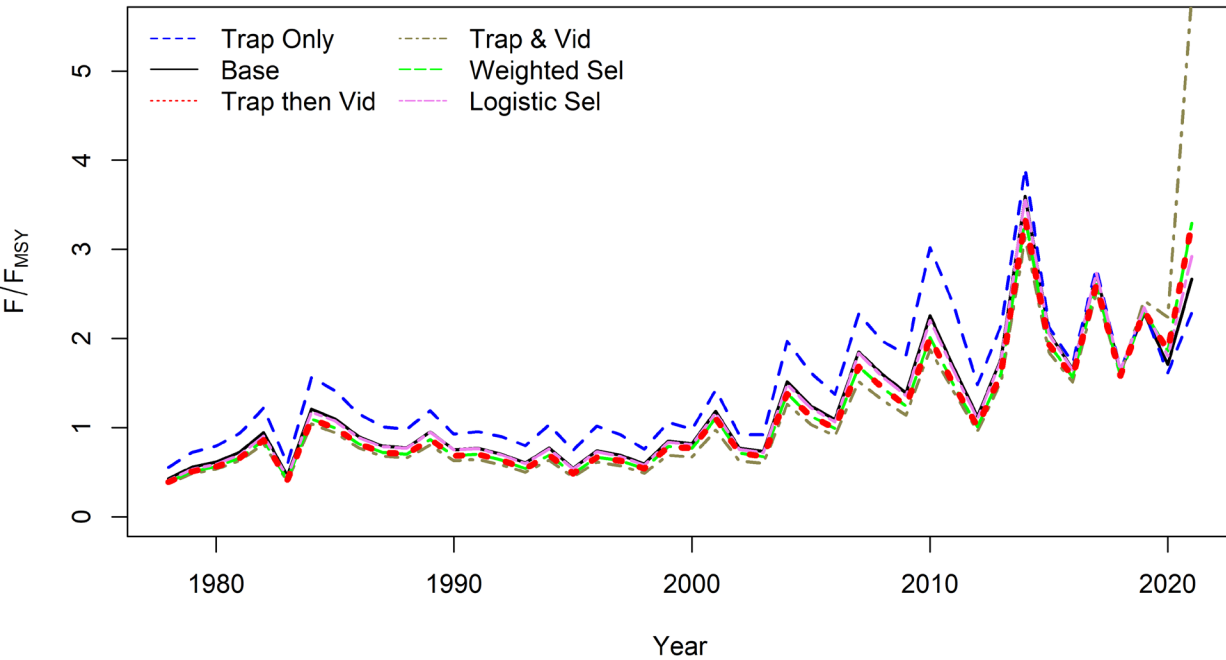


# BAM base model – Discard mortality sensitivity

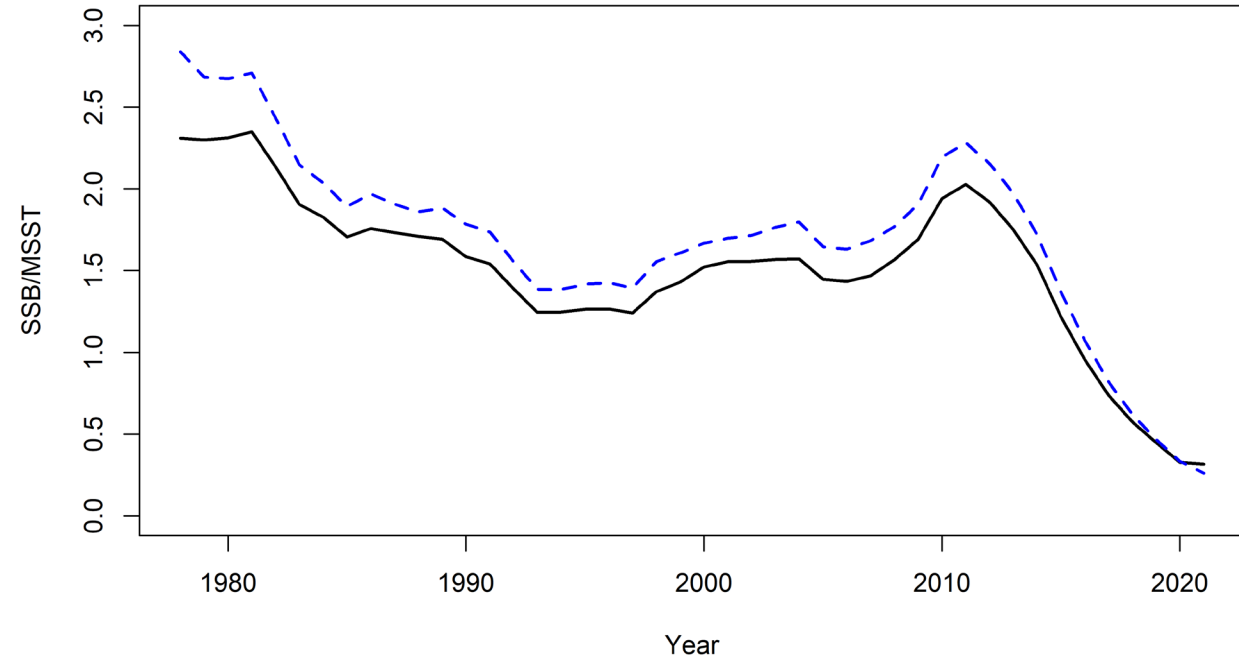
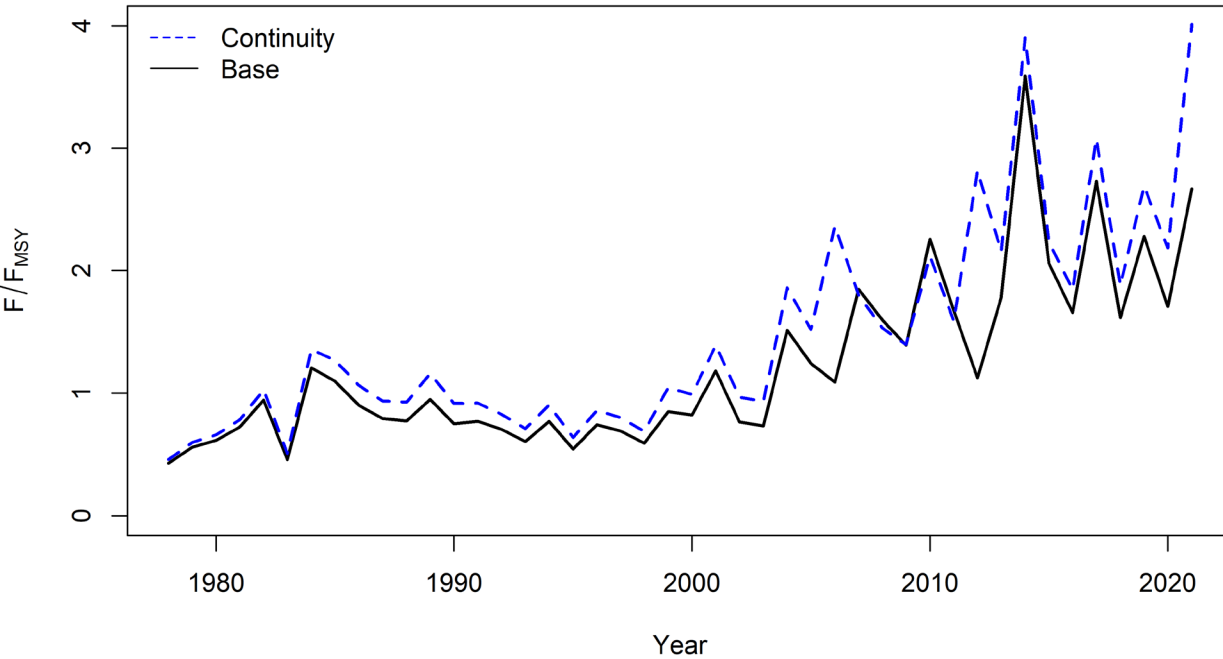




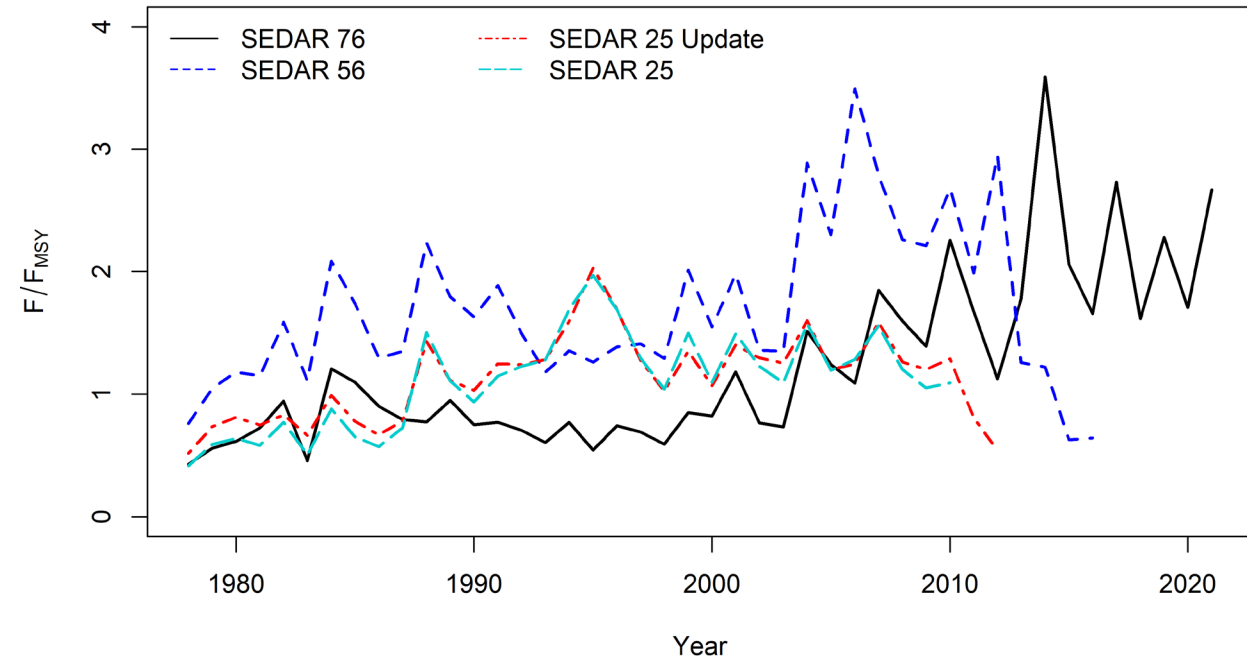
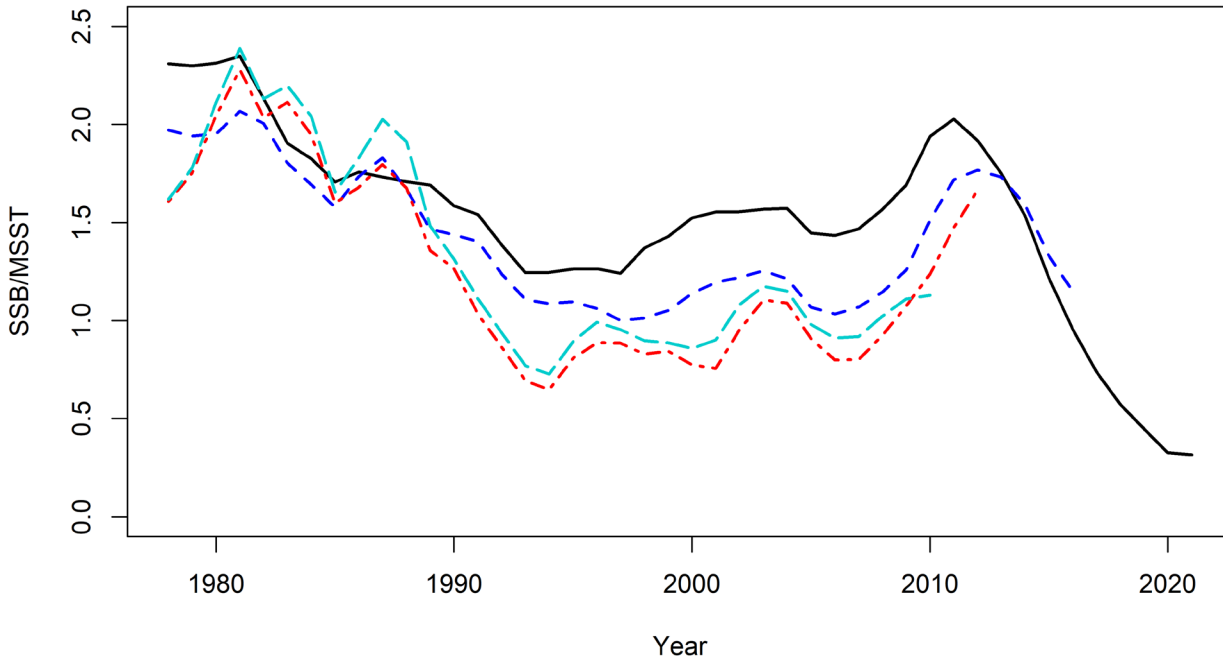
# BAM base model – SERFS sensitivity



# BAM base model – Continuity sensitivity



# BAM base model – Previous assessments



# Outline

- Background
- Data
- Assessment Model
- Assessment Results
- **Uncertainty**
- Projections



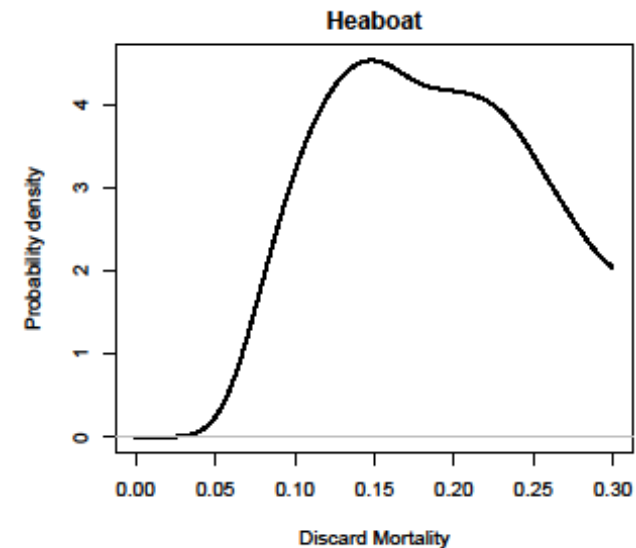
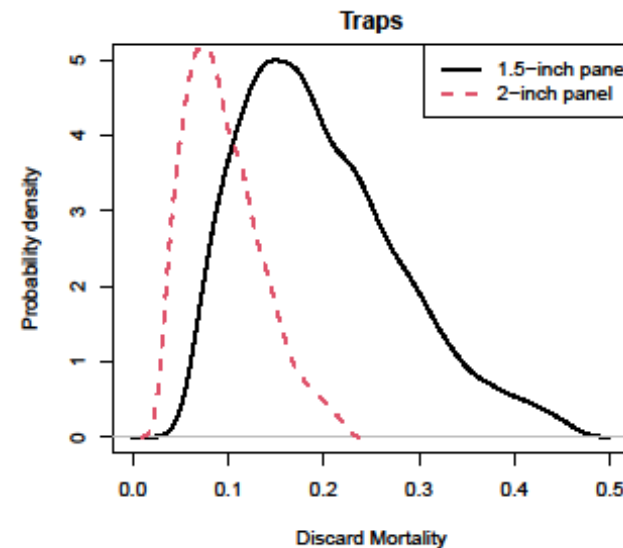
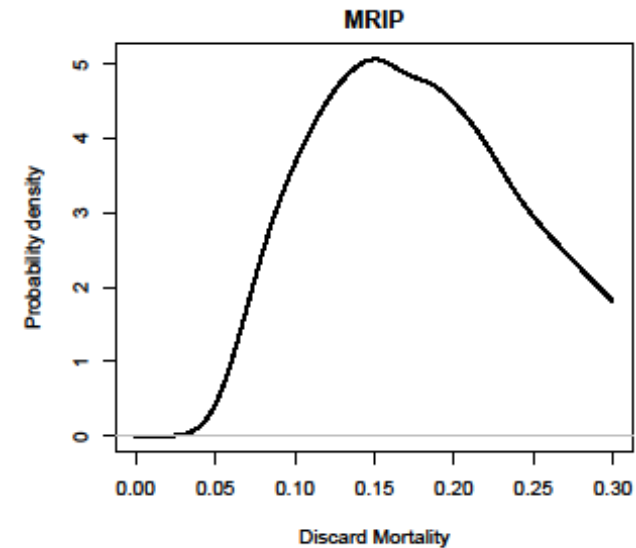
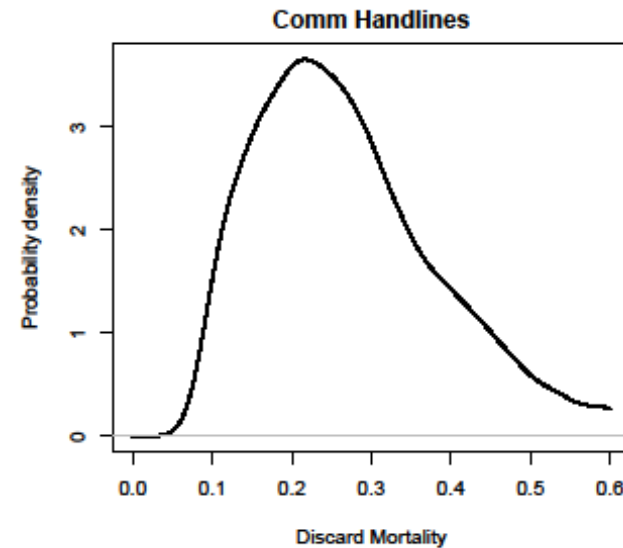
**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

# Characterizing uncertainty: Monte Carlo/Bootstrap Ensemble (MCBE)

- Bootstrap the data
  - Multinomial resampling of age and length compositions
  - Multiplicative lognormal error on indices and removals
- Monte Carlo draws
  - Natural mortality: Drawn from  $U(0.22, 0.6)$
  - Discard Mortality: Drawn from fleet specific truncated gamma distribution
  - Index weights : Drawn from  $U(1.875, 3.125)$  as in SEDAR 56
- 4000 model fits
  - 3929 (98%) trials converged with parameters away from bounds

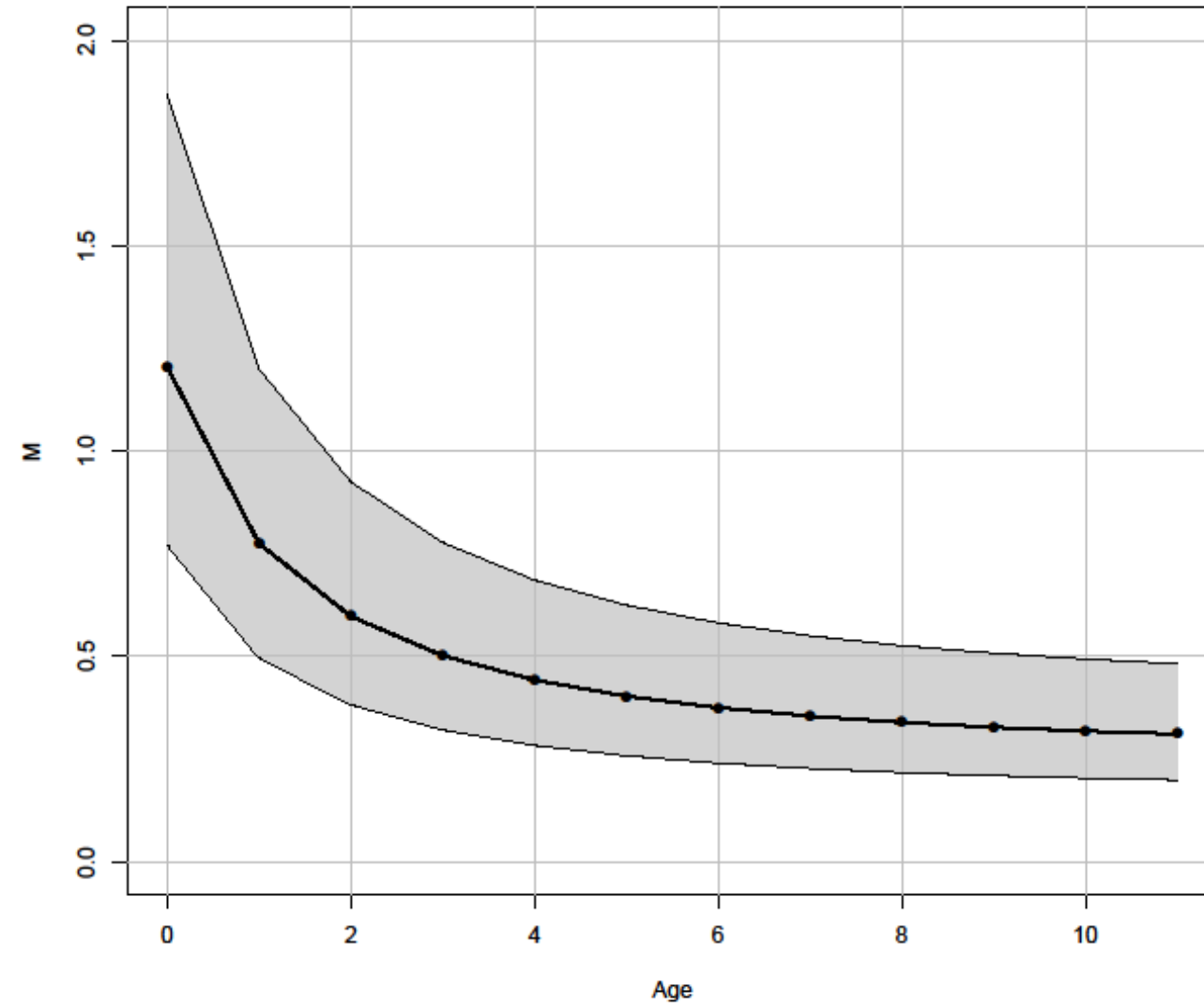
# Uncertainty in Discard Mortality

- Assessment panel decided on a 95% CI of  $0.5 \times \text{value} - 3 \times \text{value}$  for fleet specific discard mortality rates from SEDAR 56
- Fit a gamma distribution to the mode and 95% CI for each fleet to estimate the  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  parameters
- Truncated the distribution at  $0.9 \times 2.5\%$  and  $1.1 \times 97.5\%$
- Drew value from truncated gamma distribution for each fishery except 2" pot was set to  $0.483 \times 1.5$ " pot value

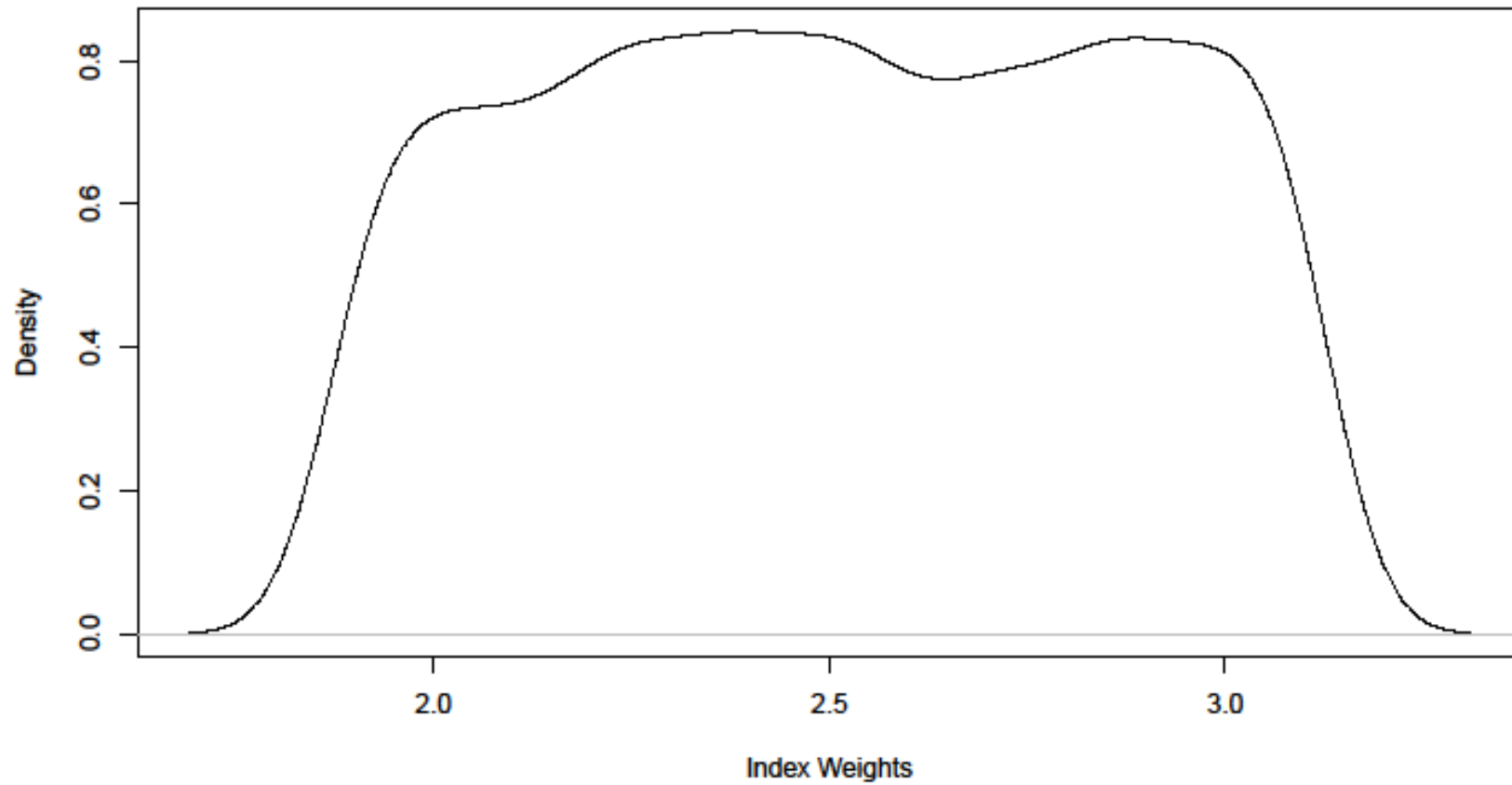


# Uncertainty in M

- Range of natural mortality came from 2 sources
- Upper bound (0.6)
  - Upper 97.5% from Hamel and Cope (2022) bootstrap of data with maximum age  $\sim N(11, 1)$
- Lower bound (0.22)
  - Lower 2.5% from MCBE analysis that estimated M within BAM

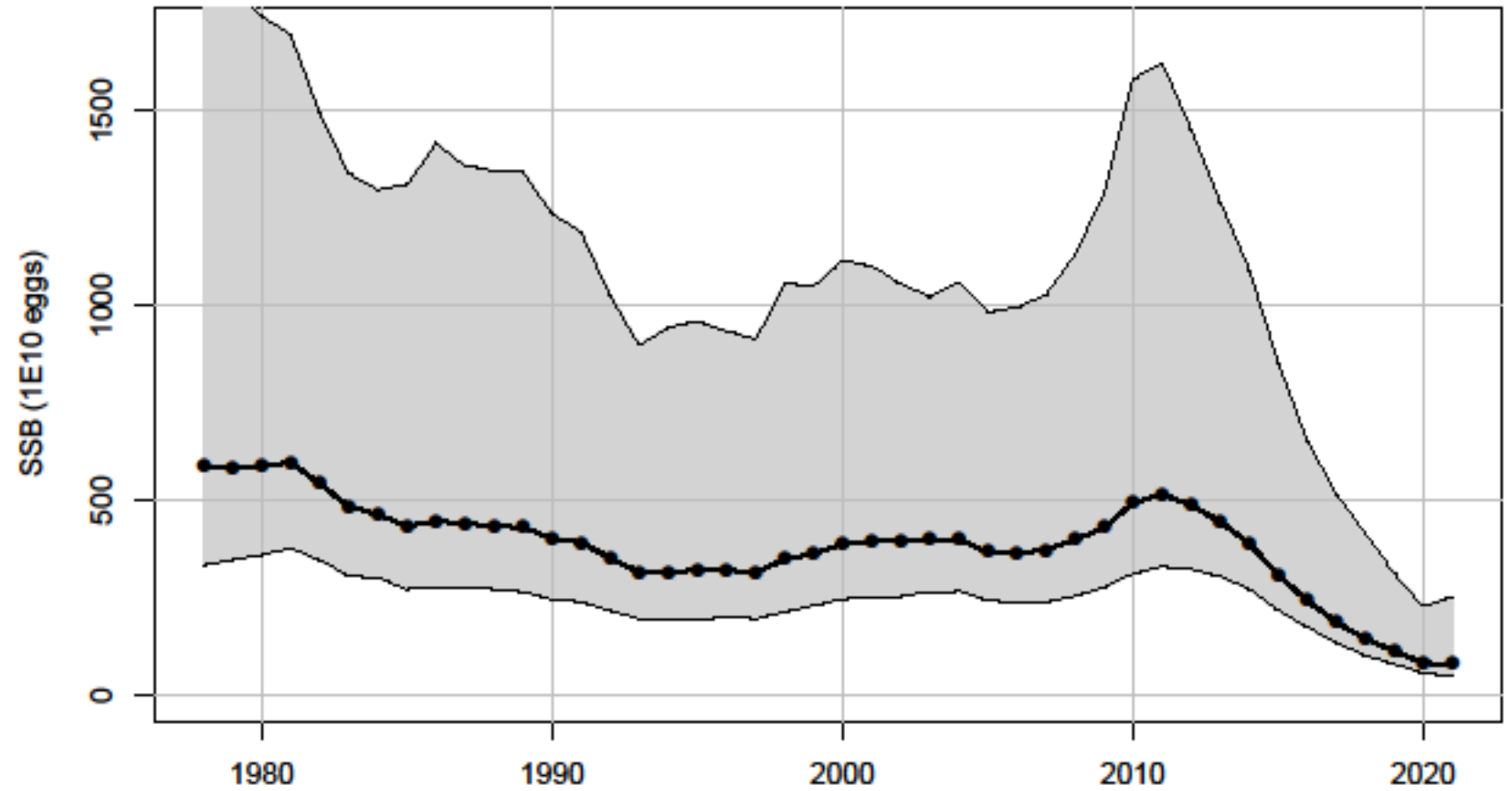


# Uncertainty in weight on indices

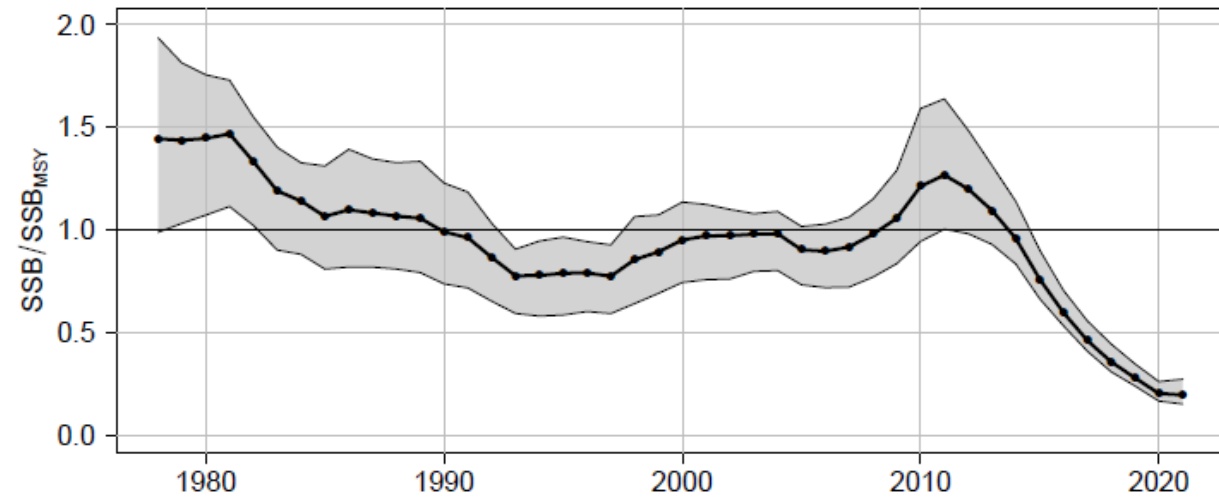
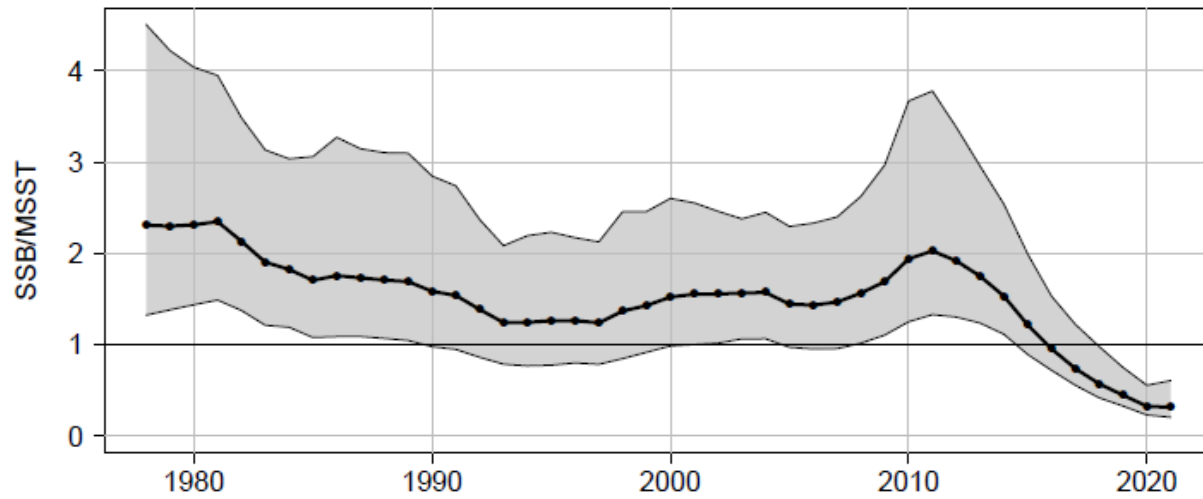




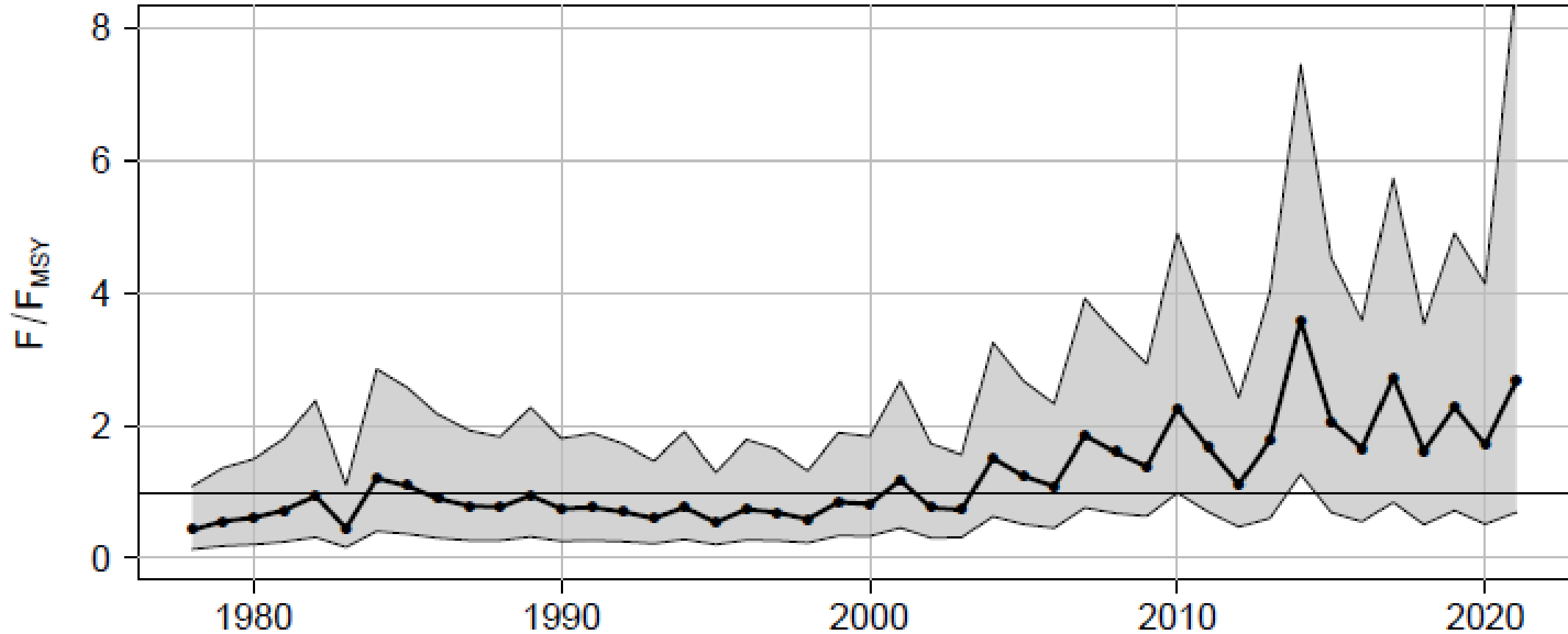
# MCBE – SSB



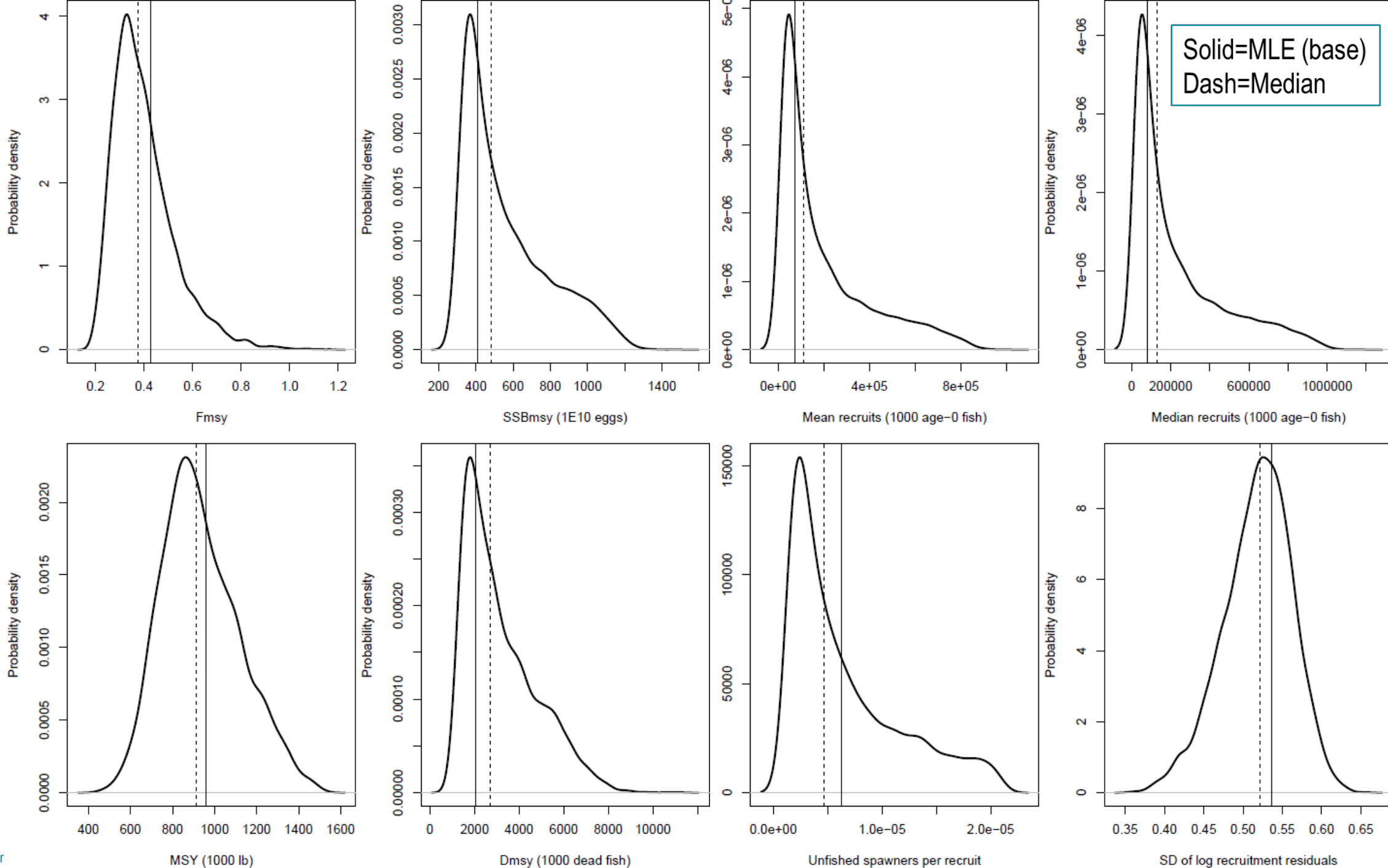
# MCBE – Relative spawning stock



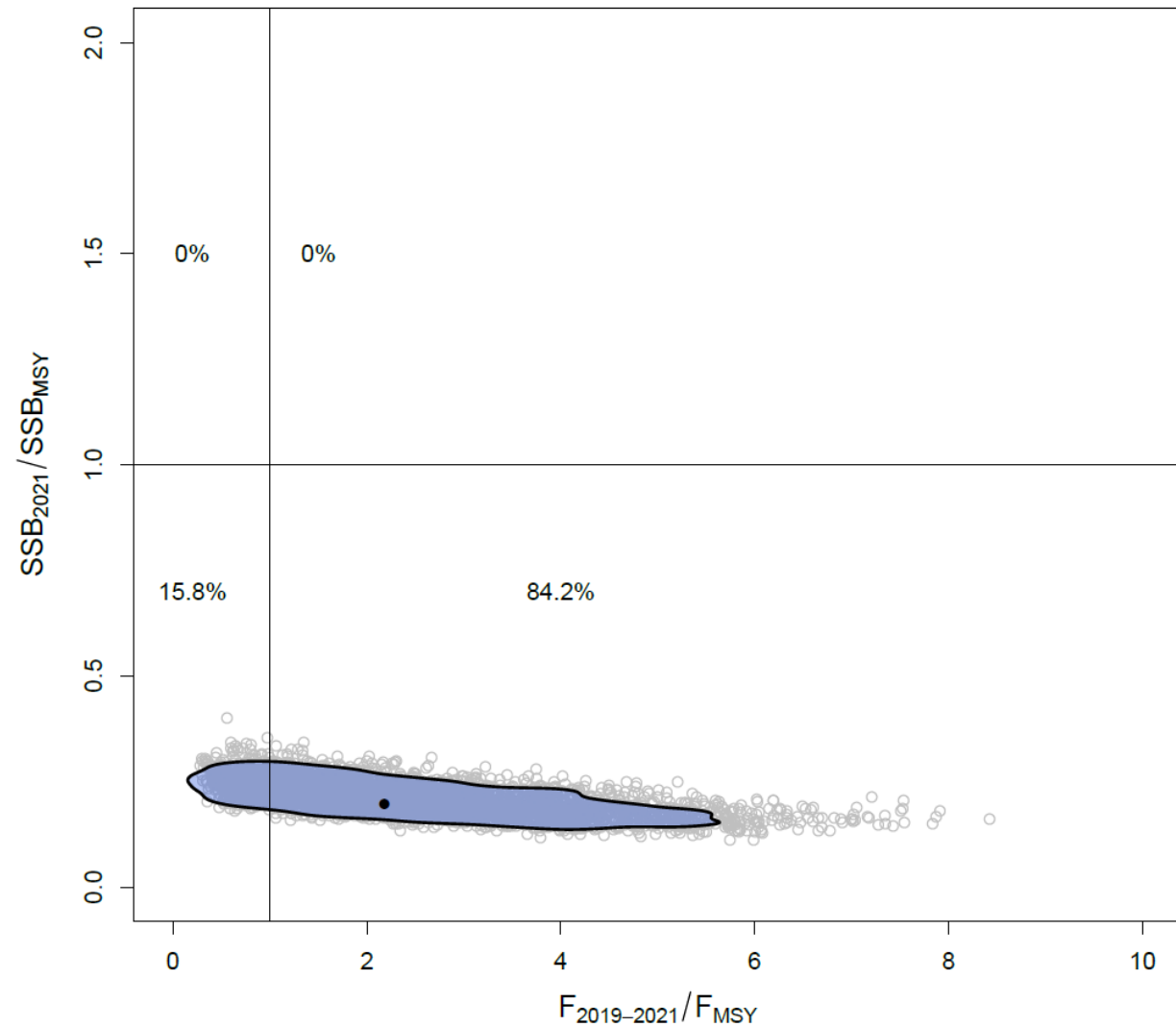
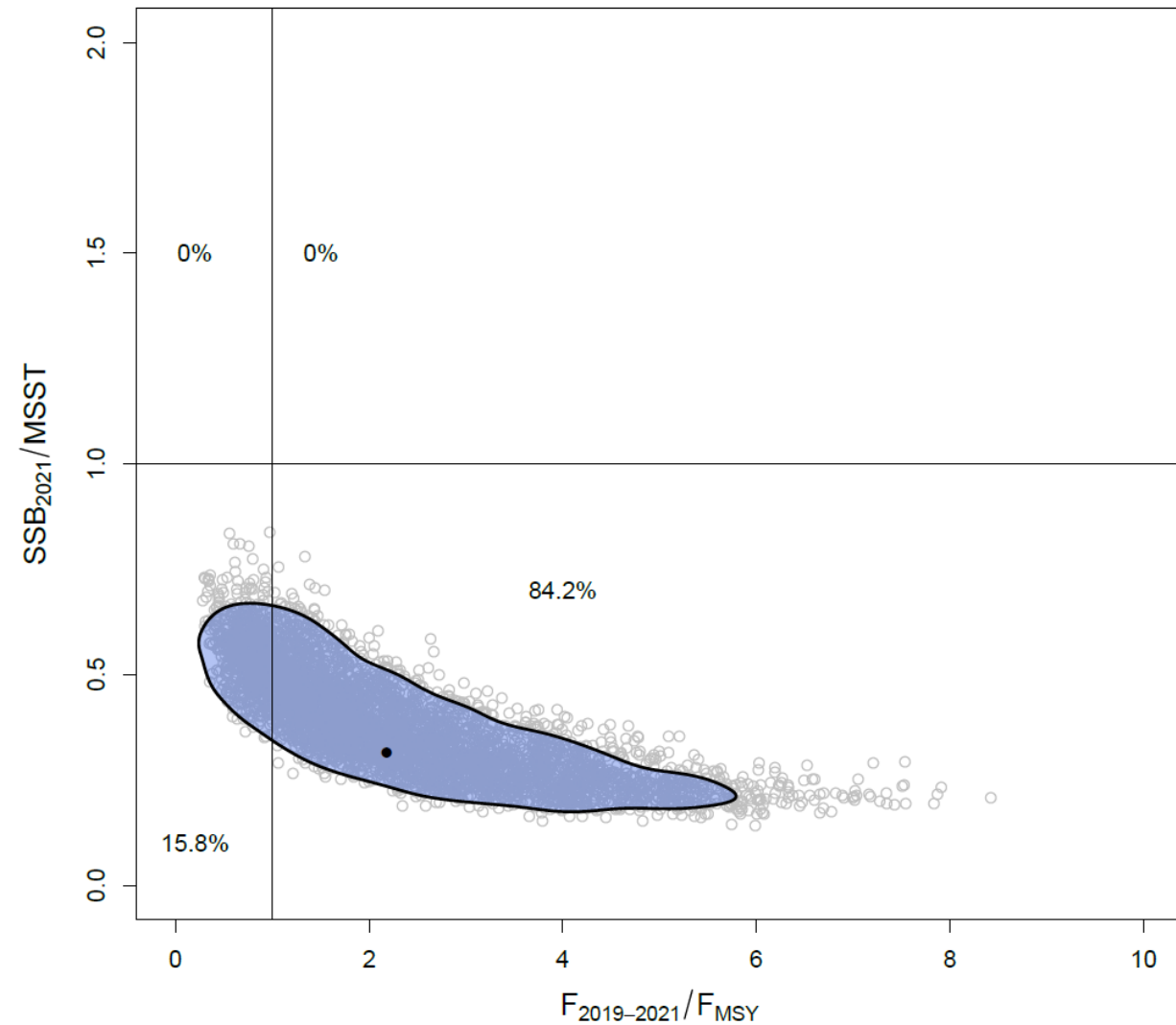
# MCBE – Fishing mortality



# MCBE Bench marks



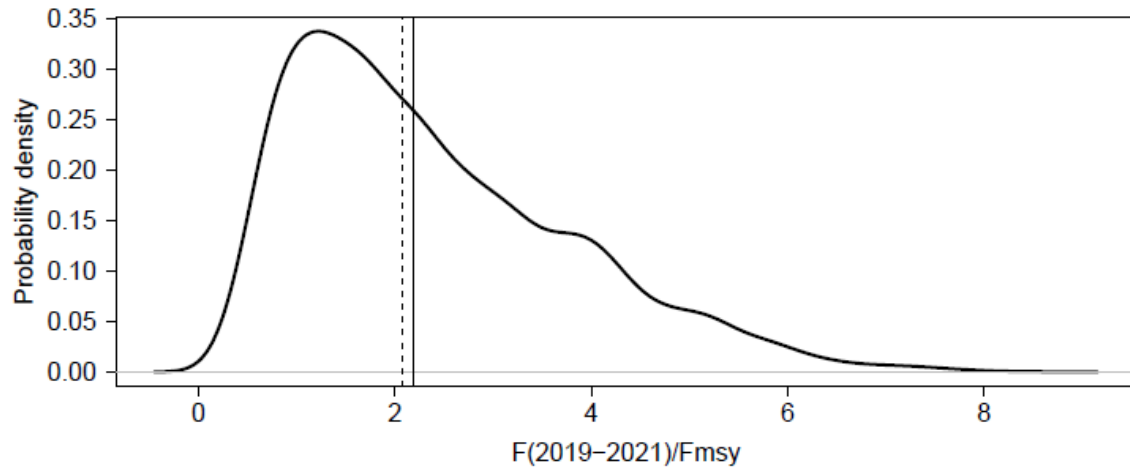
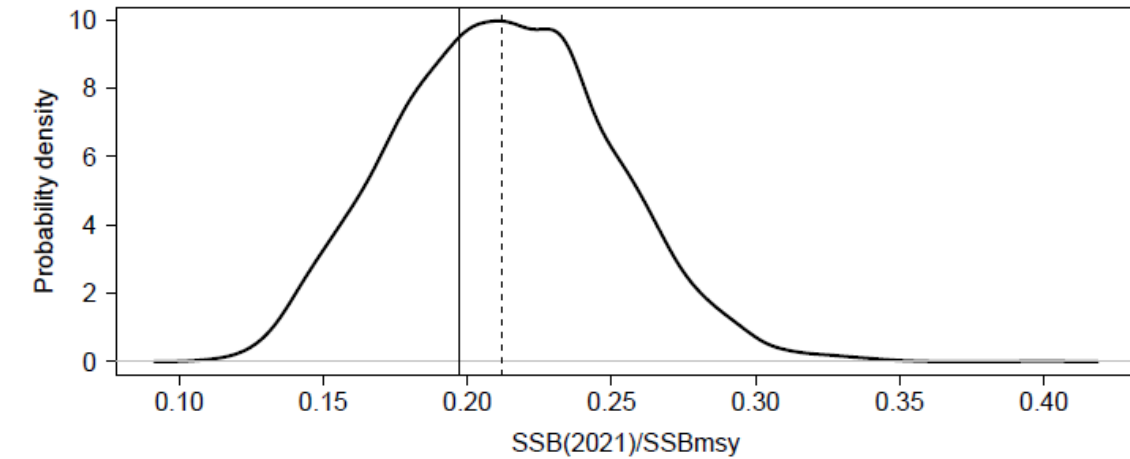
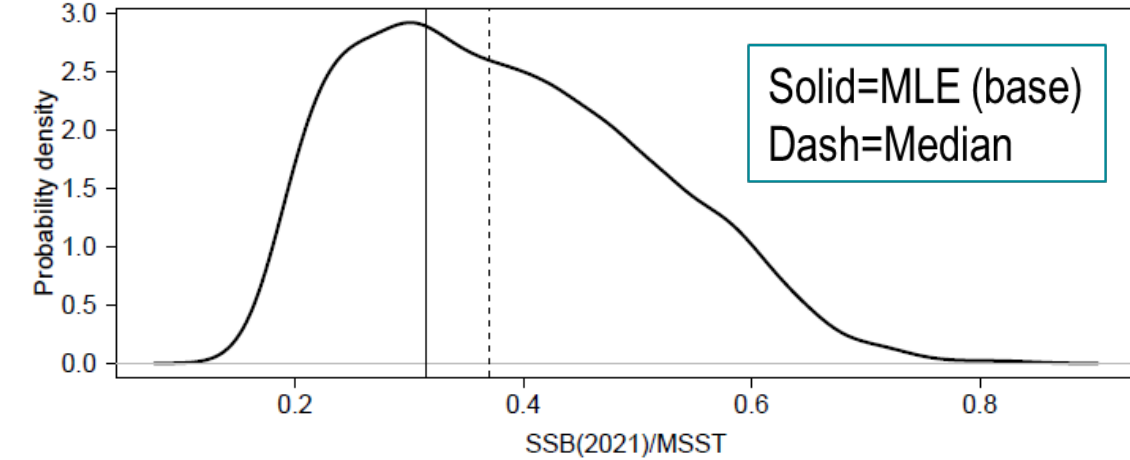
# MCBE – Management quantities



# MCBE – Status indicators

100% of distribution below 1.0 (i.e., overfished)

~84.2% of distribution above 1.0 (i.e., overfishing)



# MCBE – Status Indicators

Quantity	Units	Estimate	Median	SE
$F_{MSY}$	$y^{-1}$	0.48	0.37	0.13
$75\%F_{MSY}$	$y^{-1}$	0.36	0.28	0.10
$B_{MSY}$	1000 lb	53481.22	27725.96	22013.58
$SSB_{MSY}$	1E10 eggs	752.58	480.84	228.19
MSST	1E10 eggs	254.75	284.71	63.20
MSY	1000 lb	959.85	911.56	184.75
$L_{75\%MSY}$	1000 lb	937.39	888.39	181.78
$L_{current}$	1000 lb	544.23	536.40	65.80
$D_{MSY}$	1000 dead fish	931.45	2694.03	1600.53
$D_{75\%MSY}$	1000 dead fish	1586.27	2094.29	1251.13
$D_{current}$	1000 dead fish	437.42	1242.30	530.60
$R_{MSY}$	millions fish	390.60	127.32	232.69
$F_{2019-2021}/F_{MSY}$	—	2.18	2.07	1.42
$SSB_{2021}/MSST$	—	0.32	0.37	0.13
$SSB_{2021}/SSB_{MSY}$	—	0.20	0.21	0.04

# Summary of assessment results

- SA black seabass is overfished/depleted (100%)
- Overfishing is occurring in terminal years (84% of MCBE runs)
- Natural mortality and discard mortality are important sources of uncertainty in this assessment
  - Though stock status is robust to range used in this assessment
- Pattern of low recruitment since 2014 raises the question of a regime shift



# Klaer et al (2015) scoring rubric with score $\geq 7$ supports acceptance of a regime shift

**Table 1**  
Scoring guidelines.

Score	Observed change in a productivity indicator	Understanding of assessment model input data	Understanding of assessment model structural assumptions	Explanatory hypothesis
0	Short period less than one generation	Model input uncertainties are unknown	Key population parameters affected have not been identified	The mechanism is unknown
1	More than one generation	A number of model inputs are uncertain and the extent of uncertainty has not been characterised	Modeled changes in one or more key population parameters have fitted with observed biomass changes	A plausible mechanism for productivity shift has been developed from general knowledge of biophysical processes Output from a limited biophysical or multispecies model is consistent with observed patterns of change in productivity
2	Multiple generations and across several assessment/management cycles	Uncertain model inputs have been characterised and plausible ranges for those uncertainties have been investigated	Modeled changes in key production parameters have been somewhat validated by investigation of alternative model structures and/or improved model behaviour such as the removal of retrospective patterns Validated modeled changes are consistent with output from a biophysical or multispecies model	Output from a comprehensive biophysical multispecies model is consistent with observed patterns of change in productivity
3	Multiple generations and across many regular assessment/management cycles in the same timeframe	The character of model inputs is well understood and uncertainty has largely been eliminated or well estimated statistically		

1

2 or 3

0

0

- Current research
- Multi-spp evidence
- Nature of any mechanism would be critical



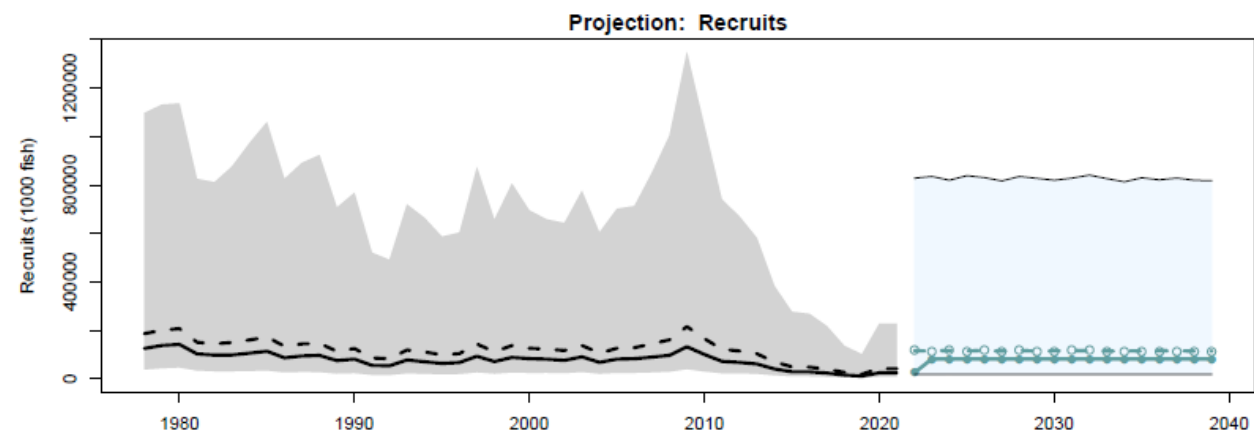
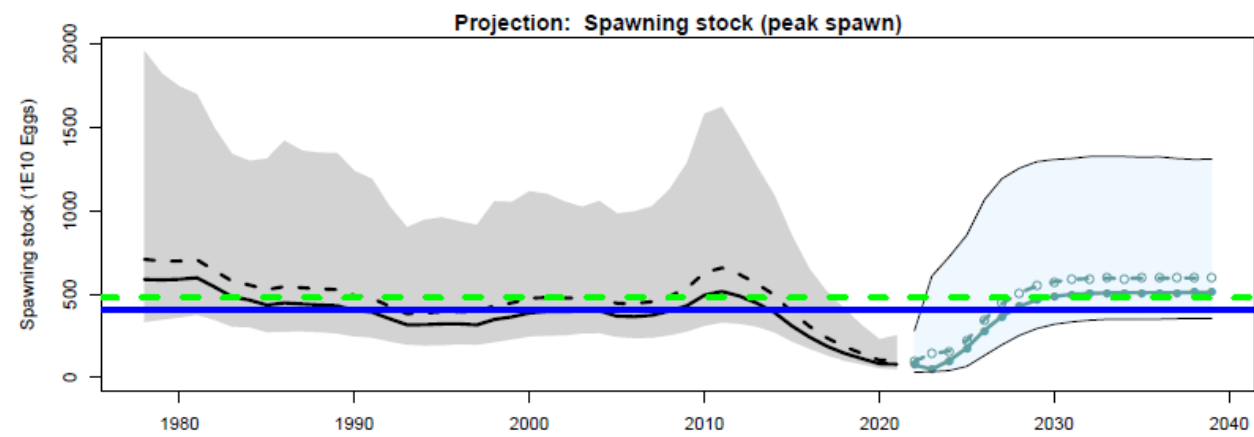
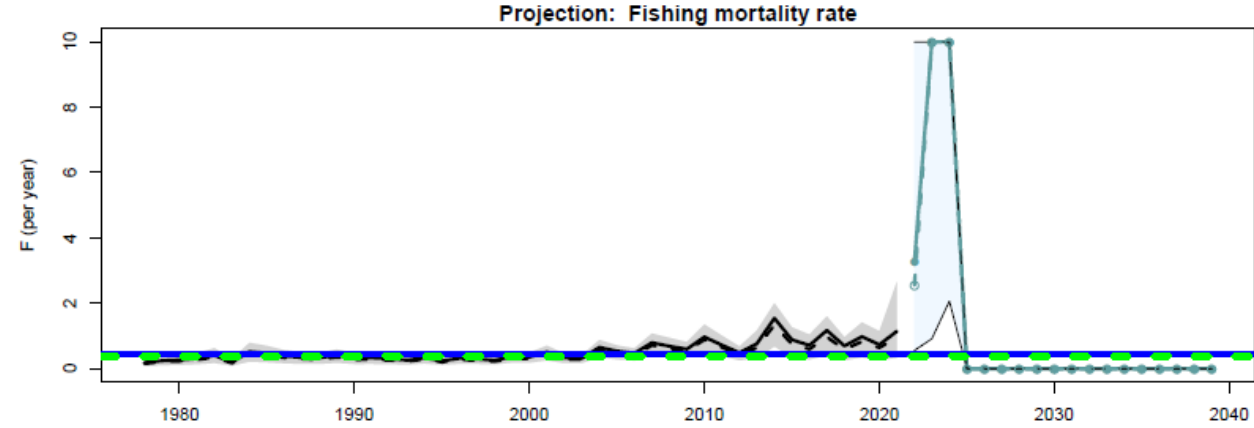
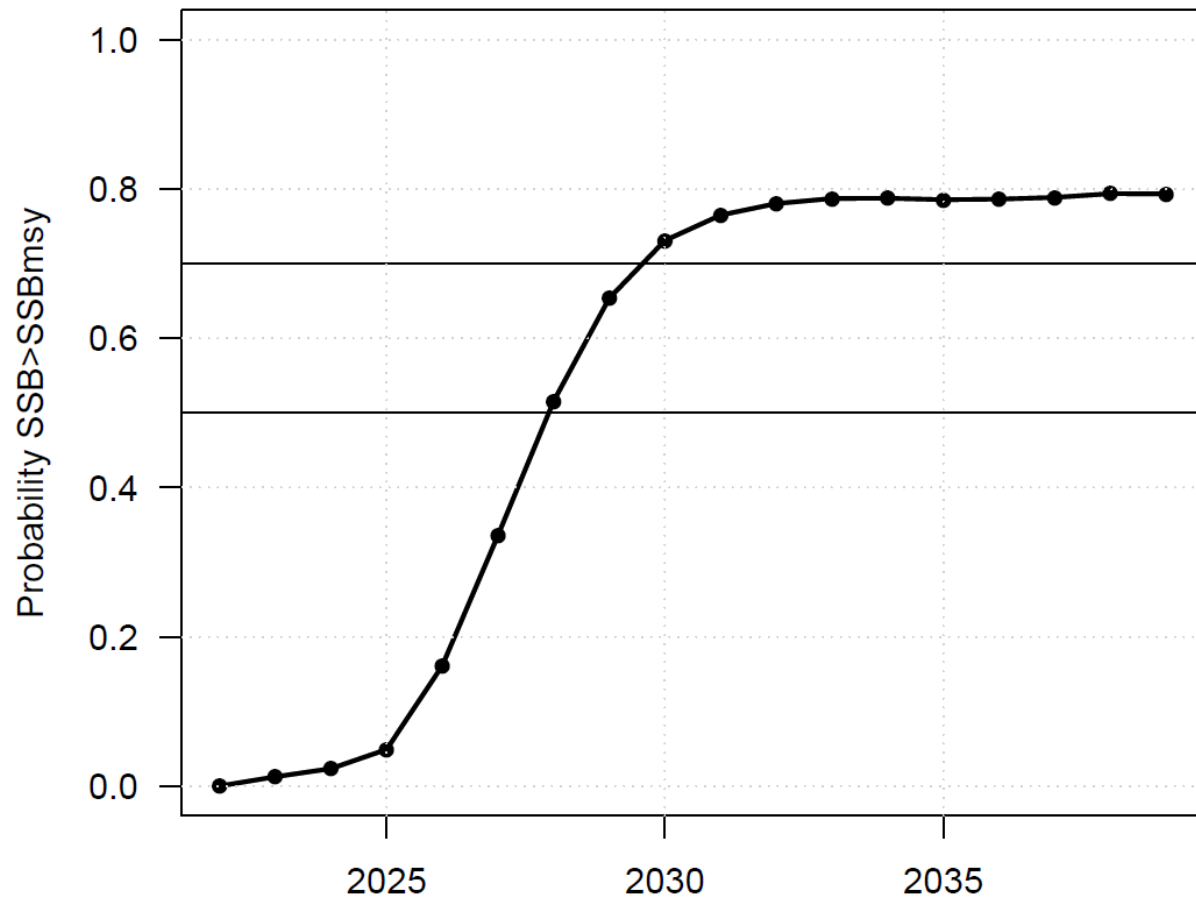
# Outline

- Background
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- **Projections**

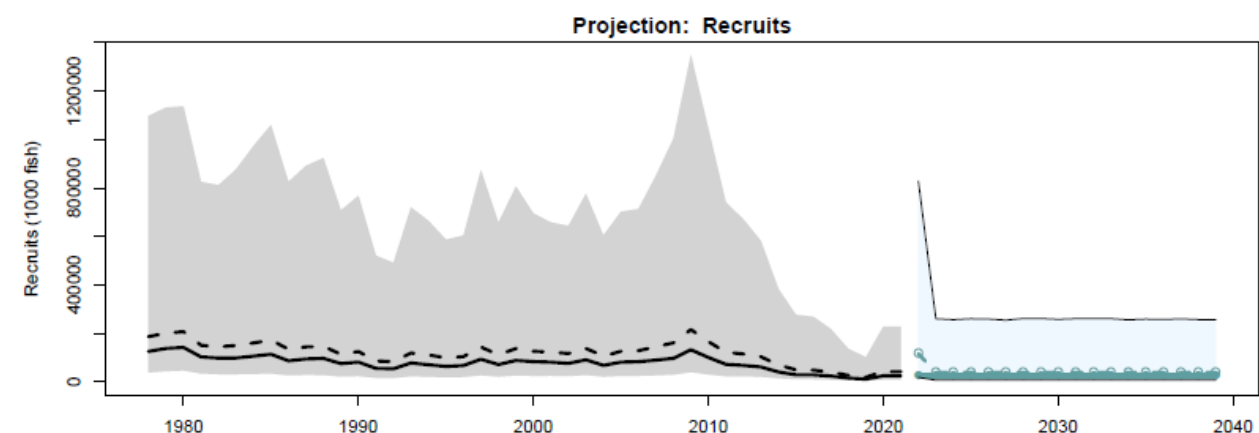
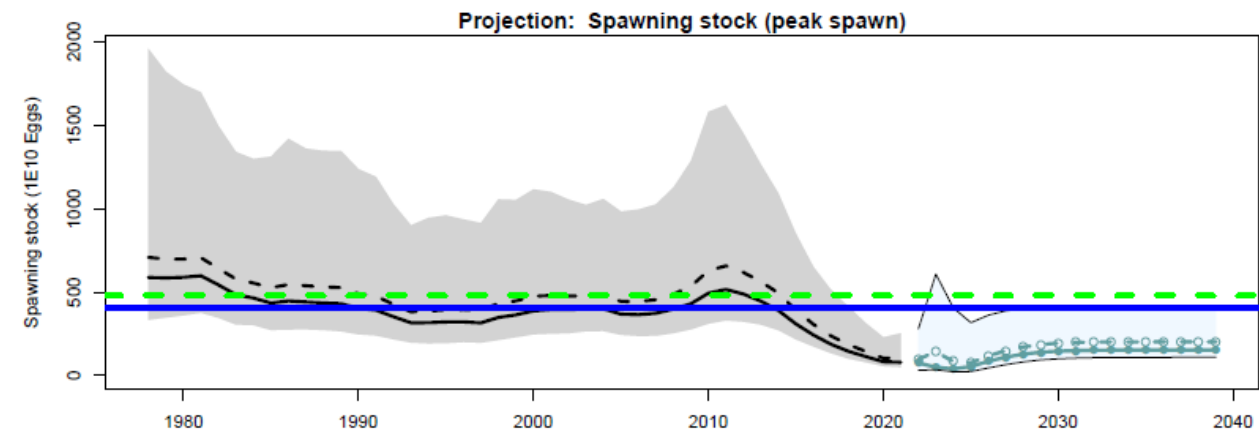
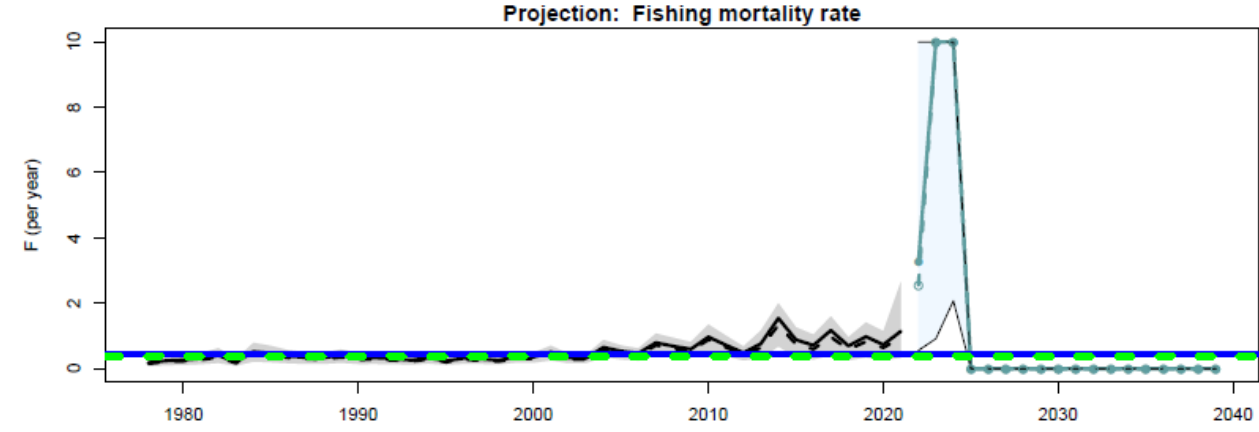
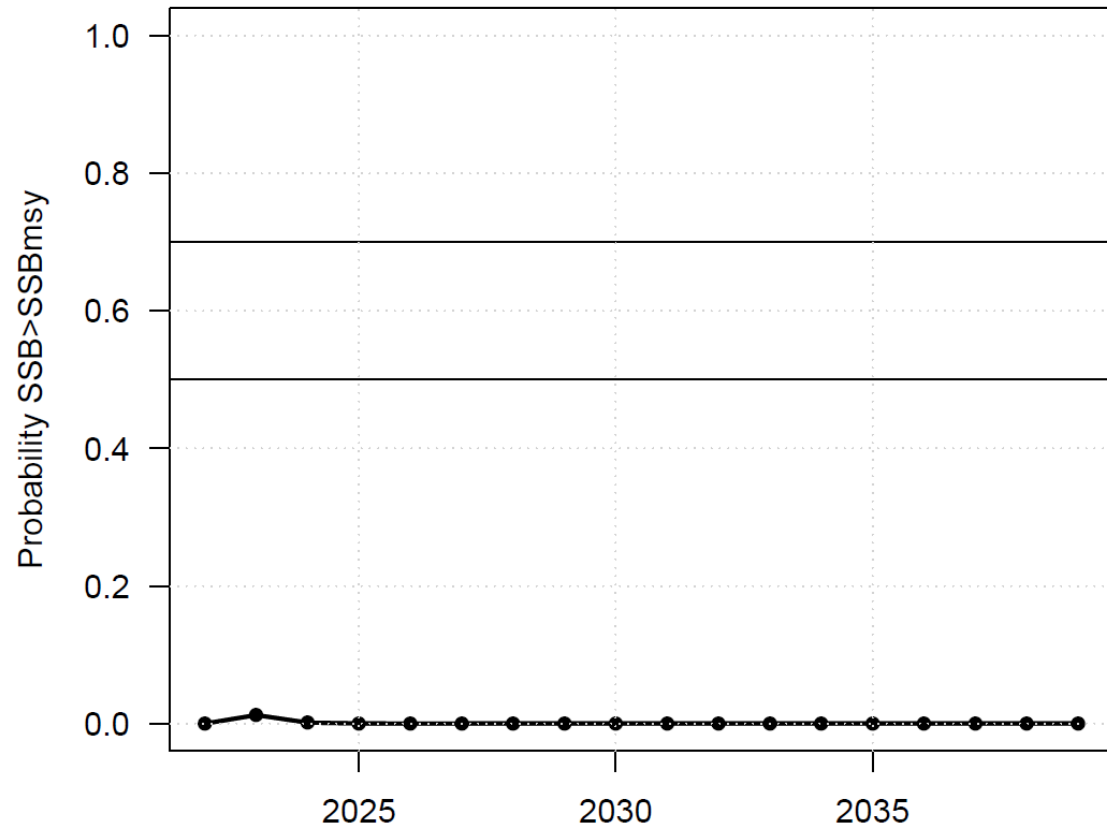
# Projections

- 4 Scenarios
  - $F=0$  with long-term average recruitment
  - $F=0$  with recent average recruitment
  - $F_{\text{current}}$  with recent average recruitment
  - $F_{\text{MSY}}$  with recent average recruitment
- New  $F$  starts in 2025
- Interim period (2022-2024) applies average removals from 2019-2021 with a maximum  $F = 10$
- For scenarios with long-term average recruitment starts in 2023

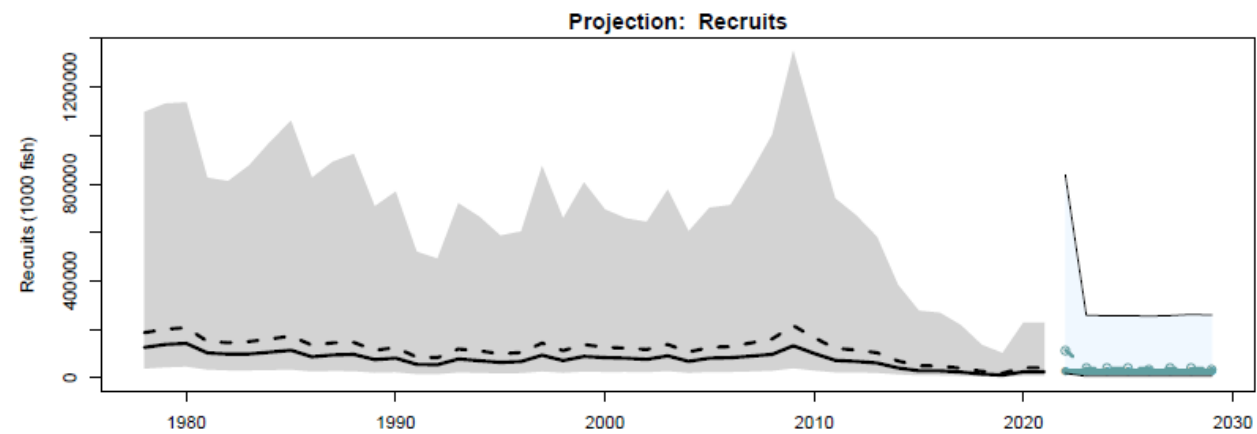
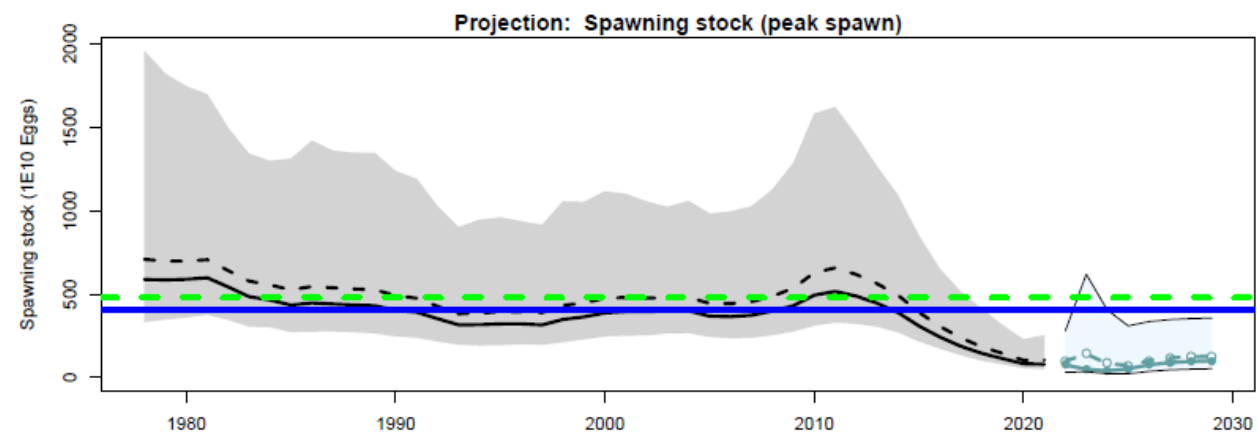
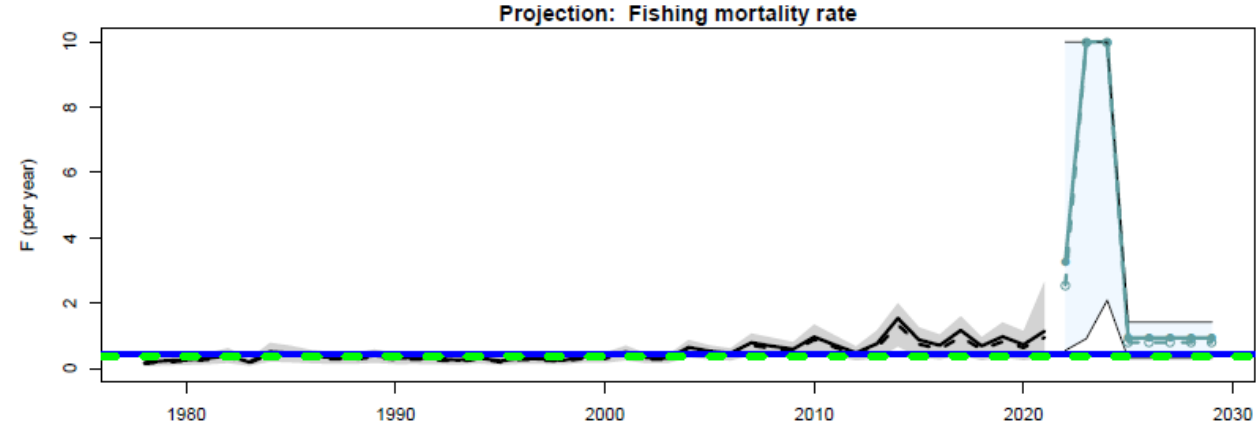
# F=0 with long-term average recruitment



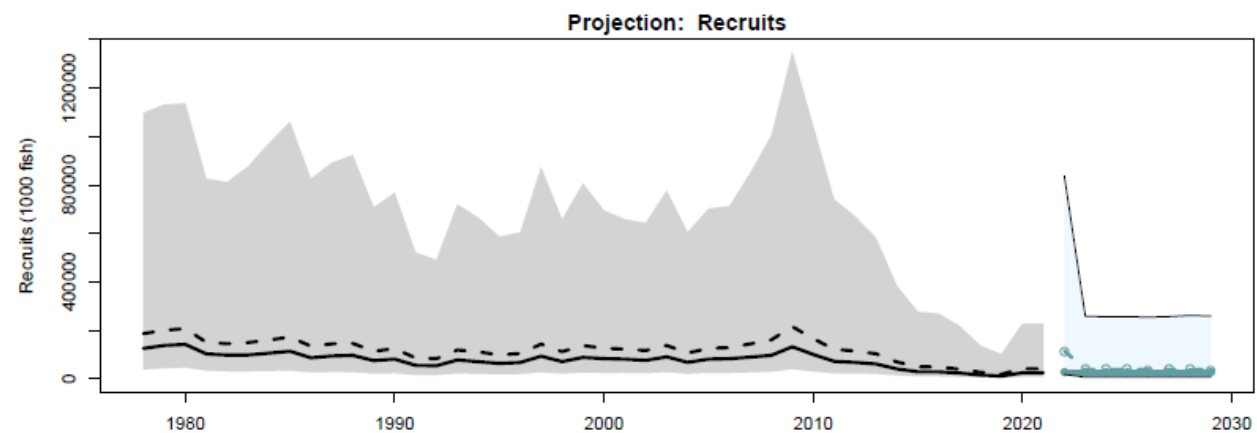
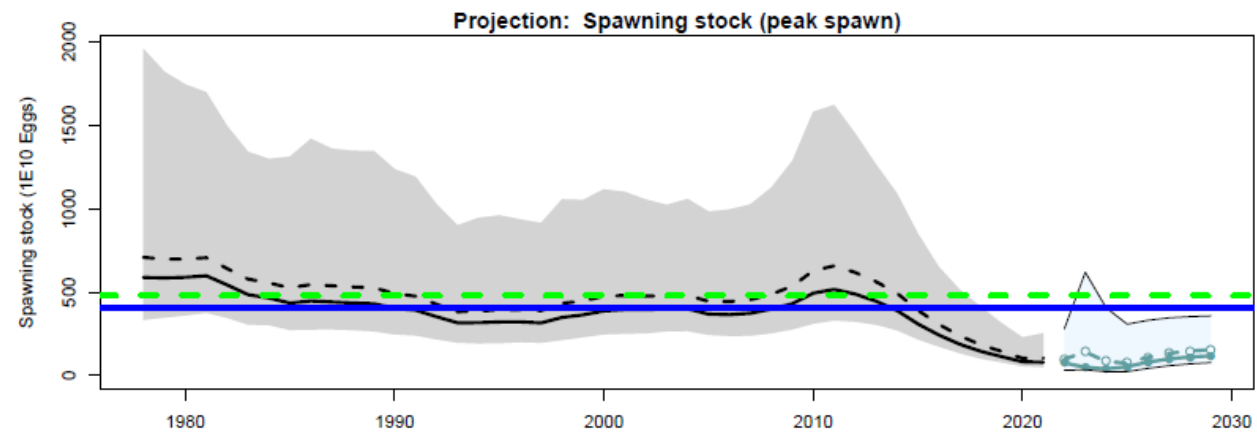
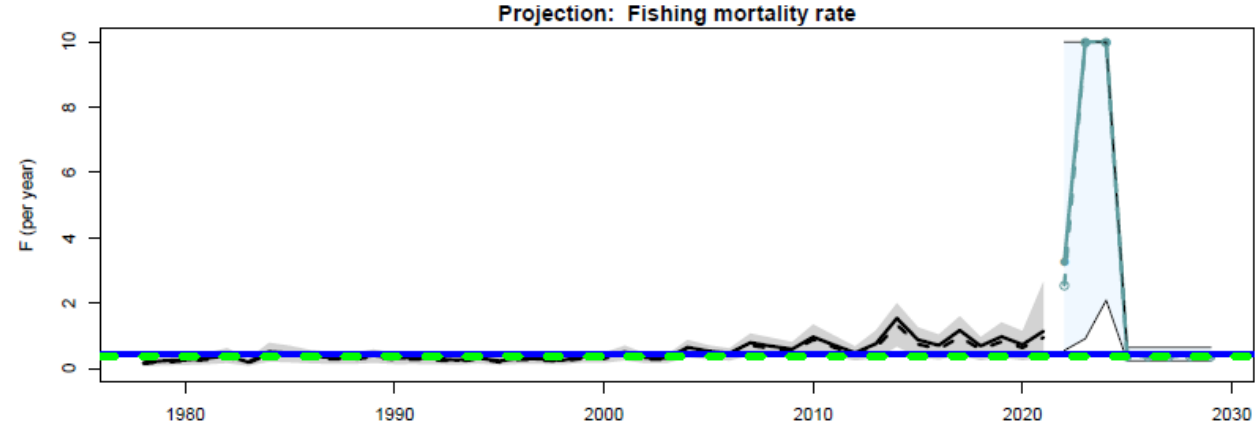
# F=0 with recent average recruitment



$F = F_{\text{current}}$  with recent average recruitment



$F = F_{MSY}$  with recent average recruitment



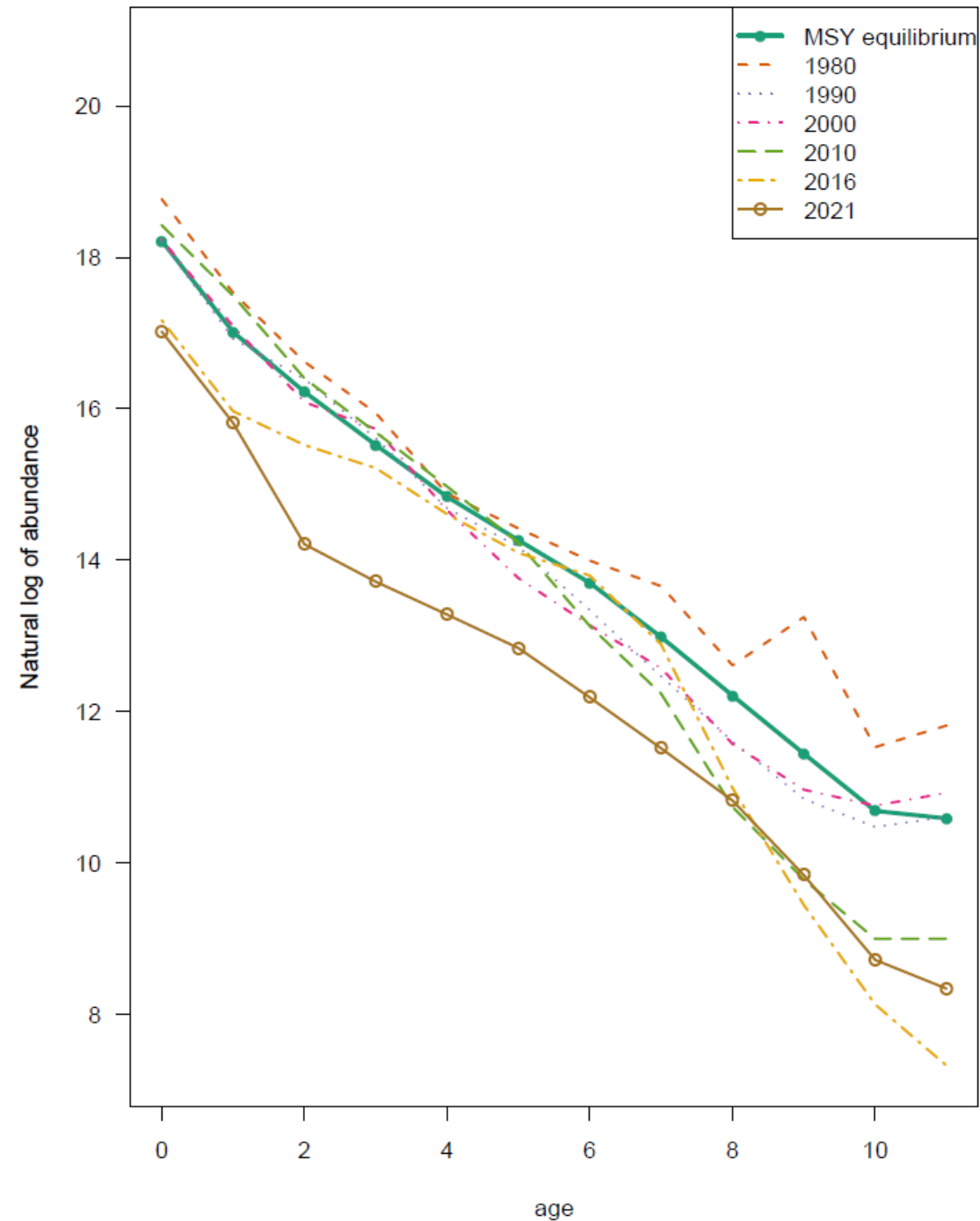
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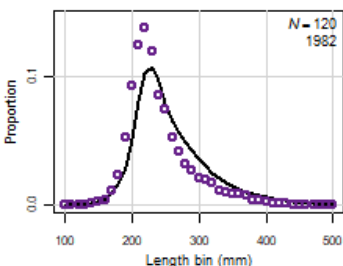
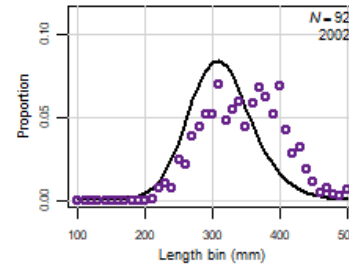
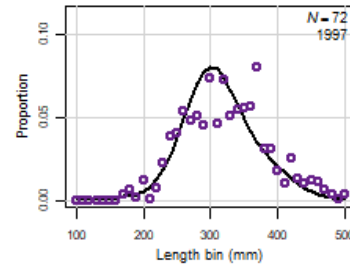
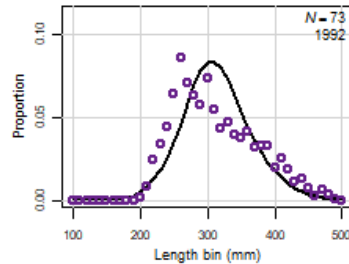
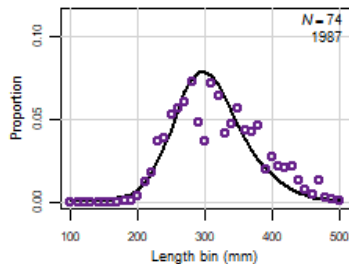
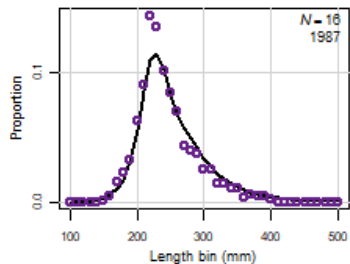
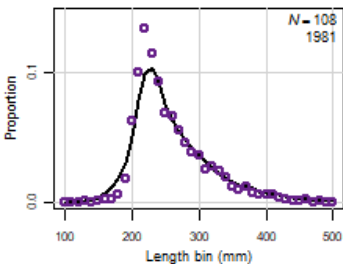
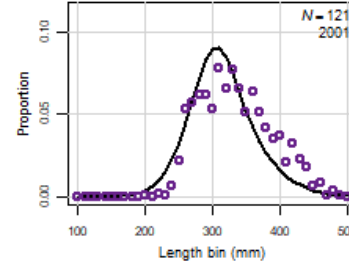
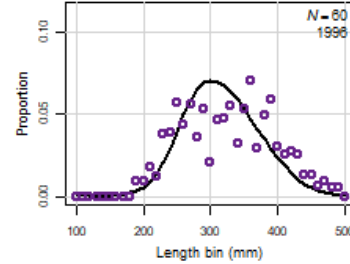
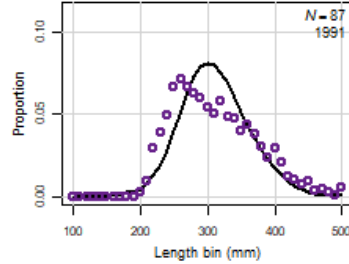
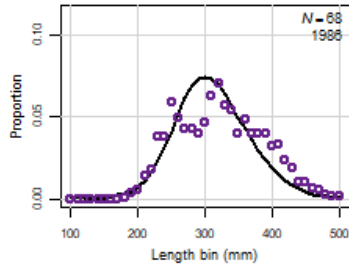
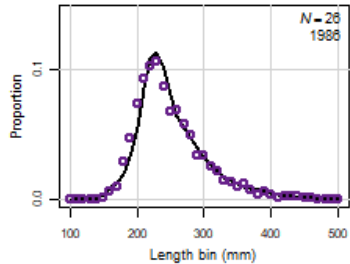
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**FISHERIES**



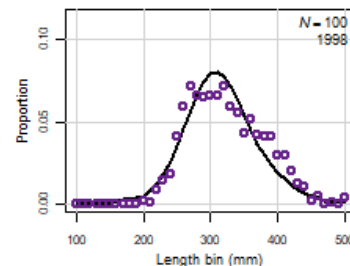
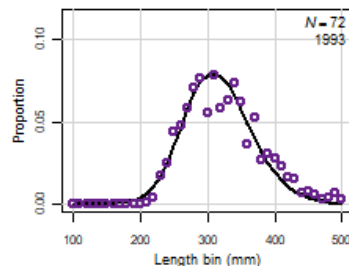
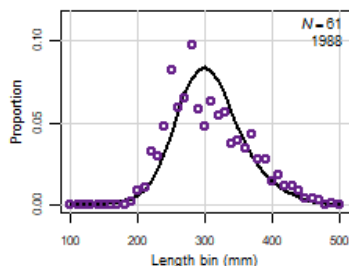
# BAM base model – abundance age structure



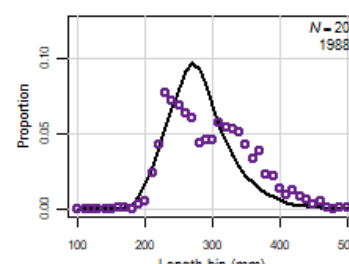
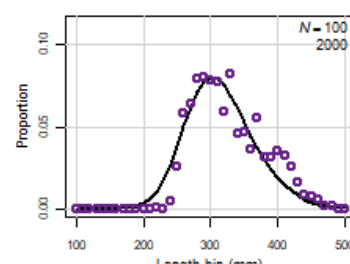
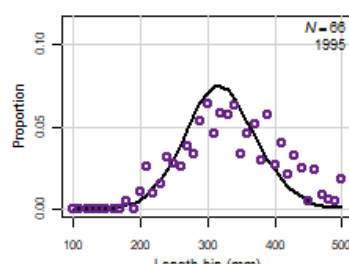
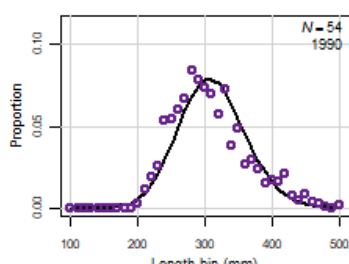
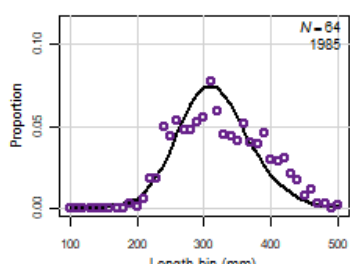
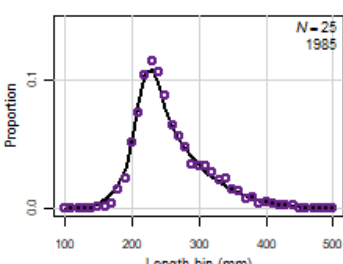
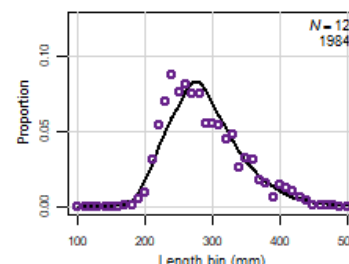
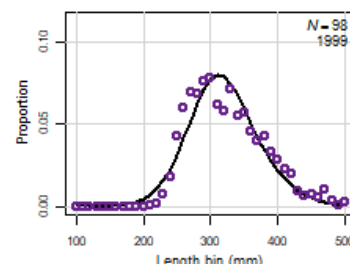
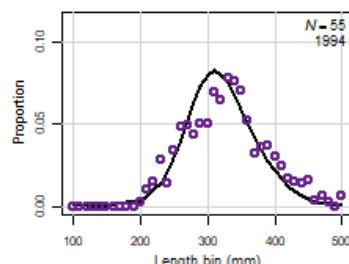
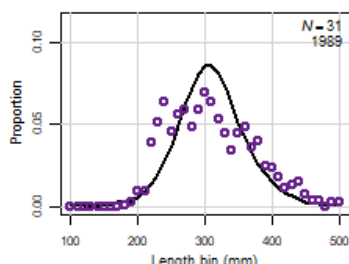
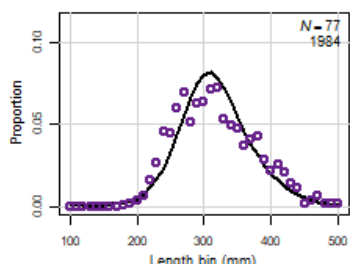
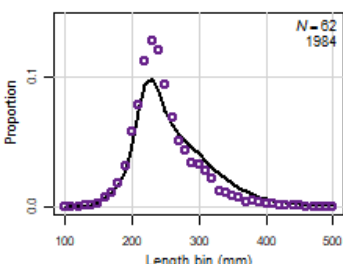
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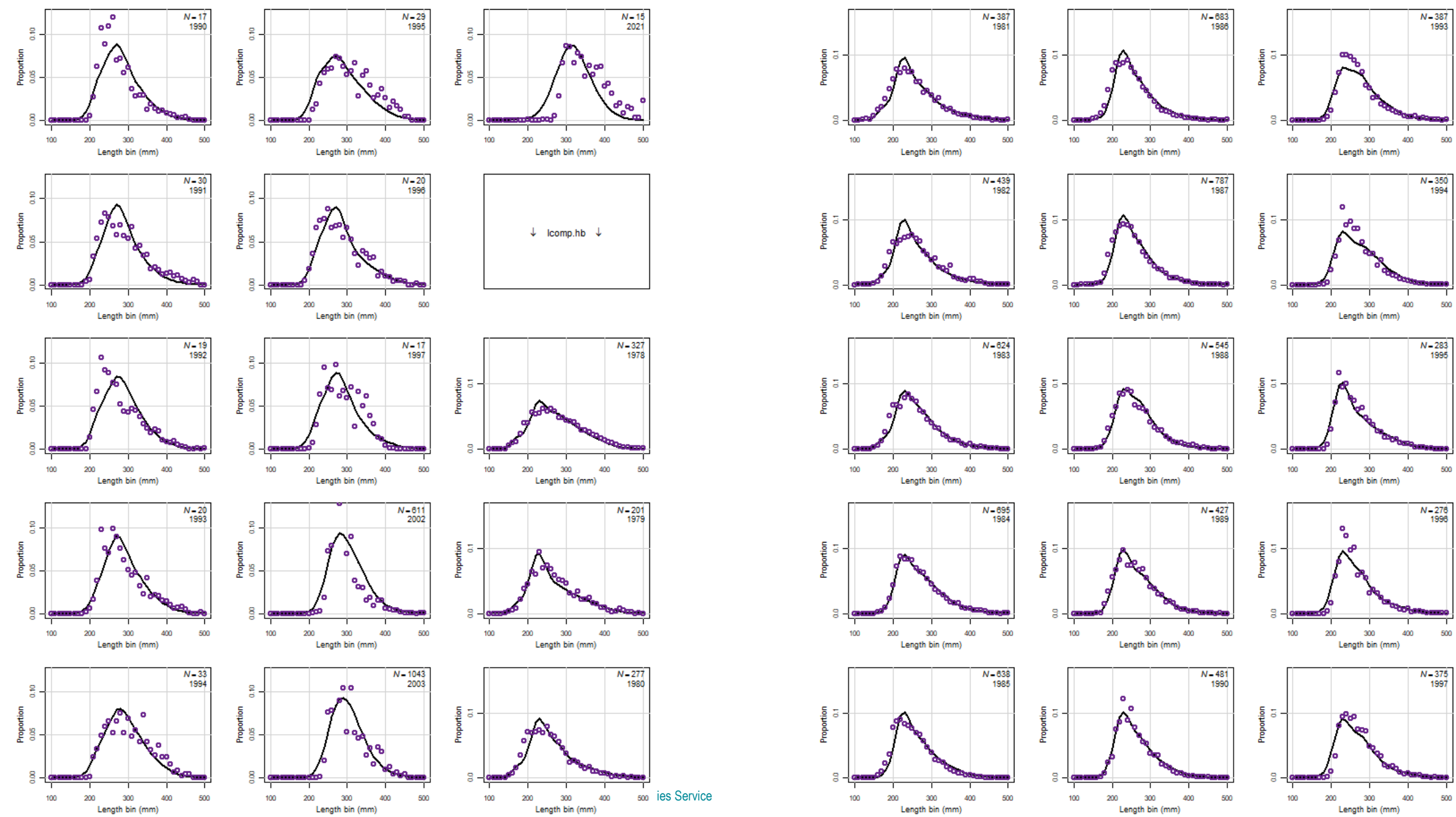


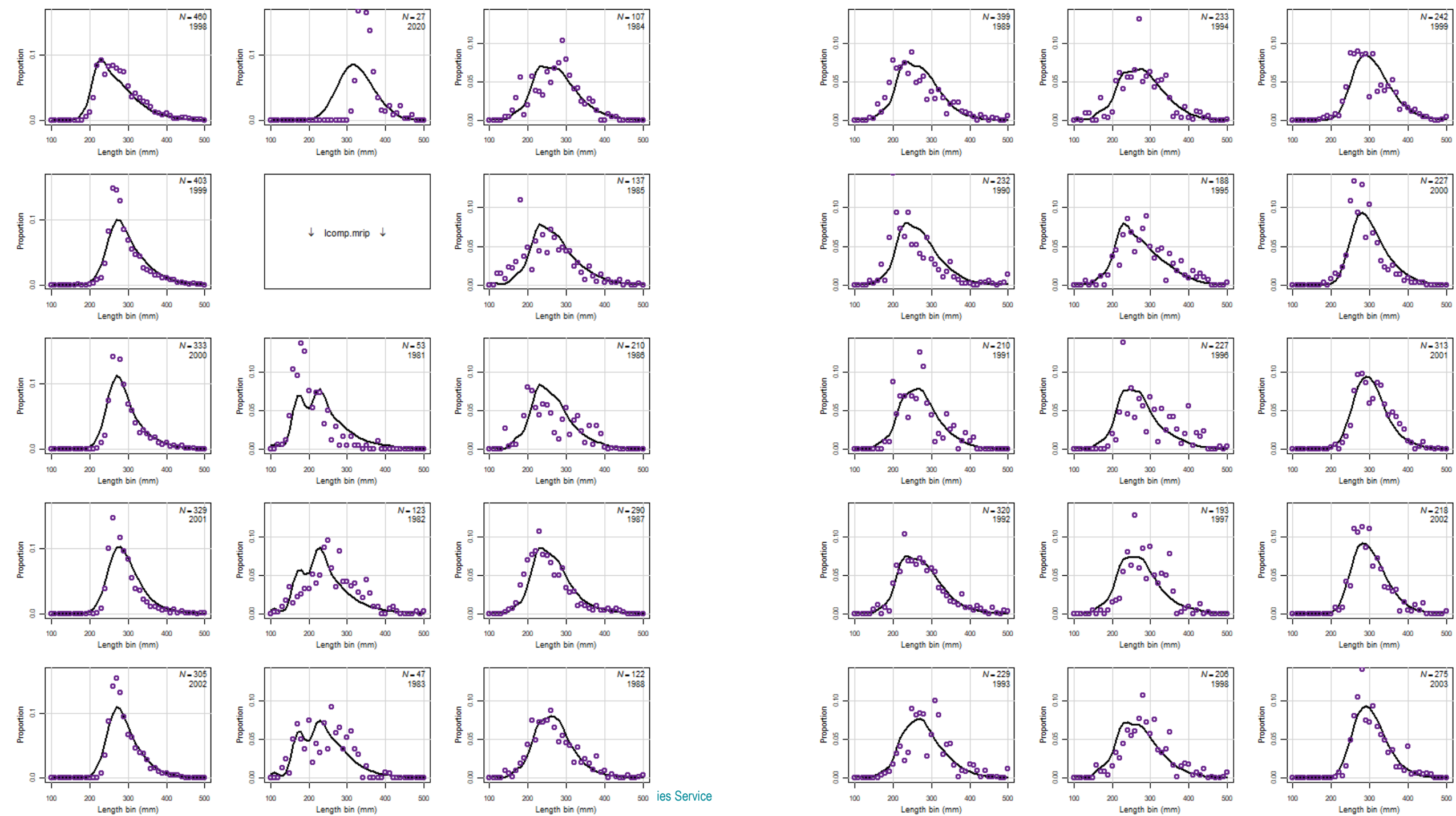
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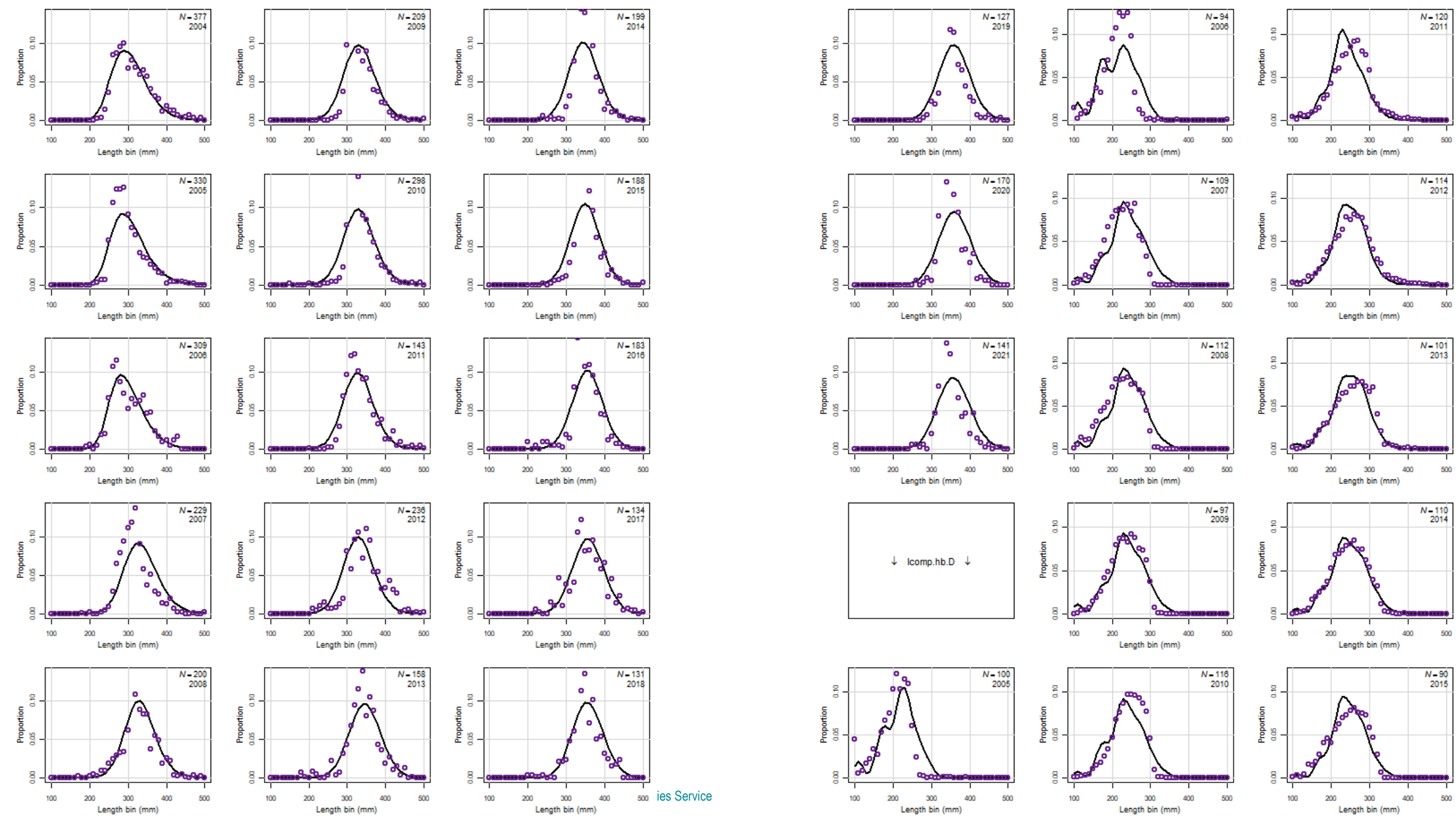


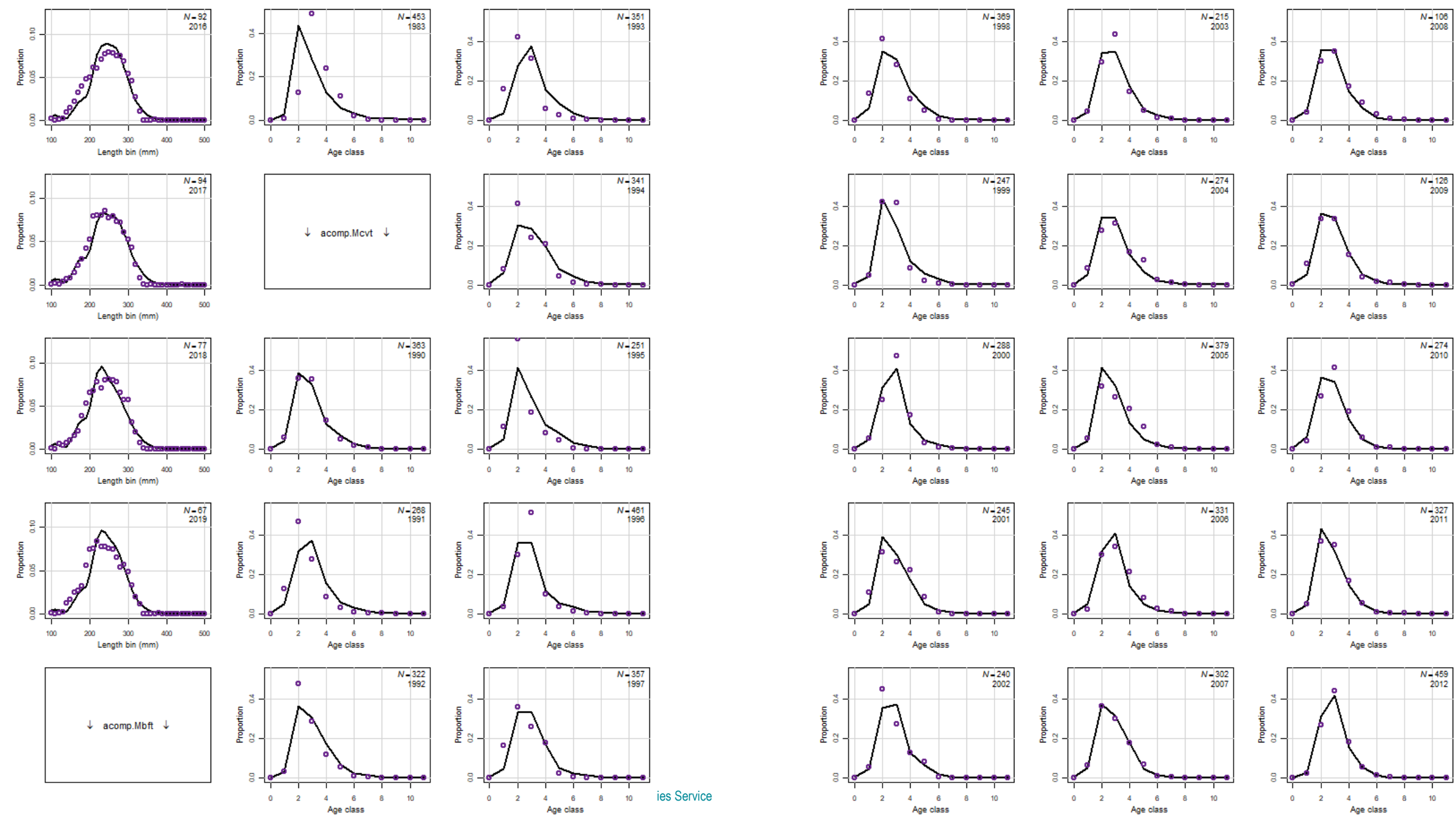
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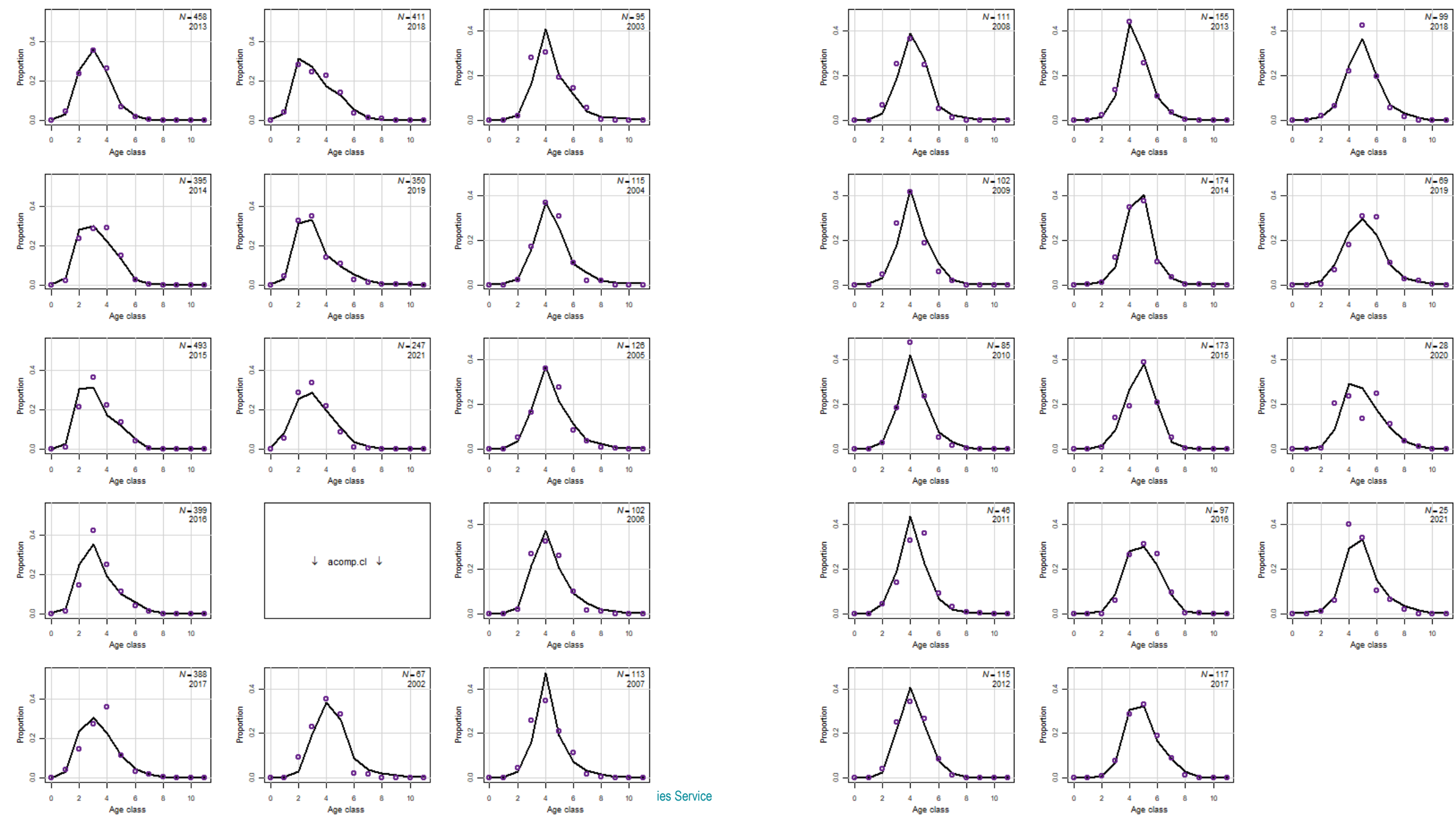




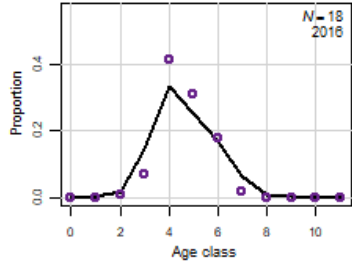
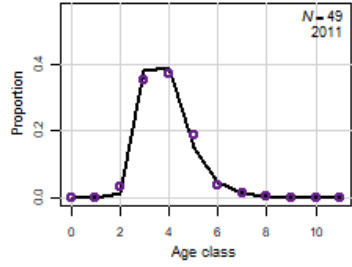
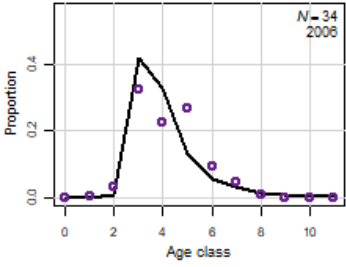
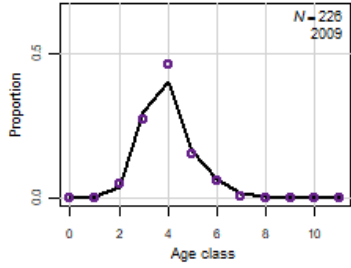
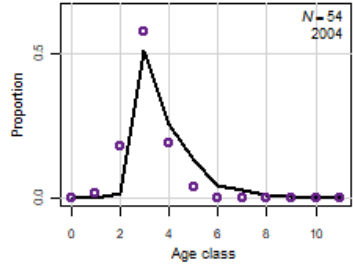
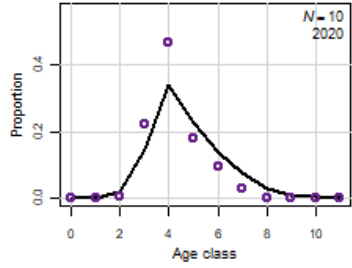
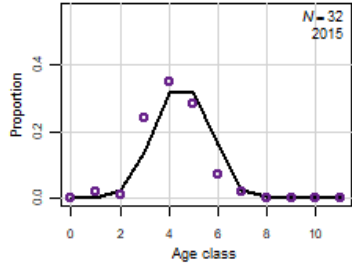
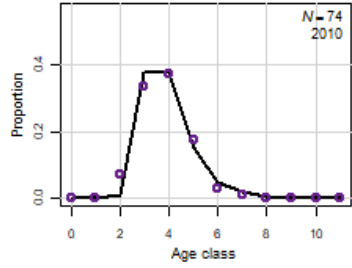
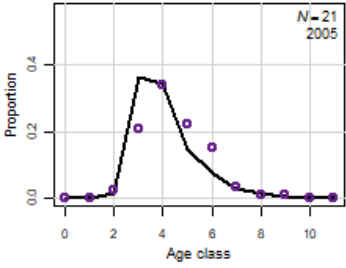
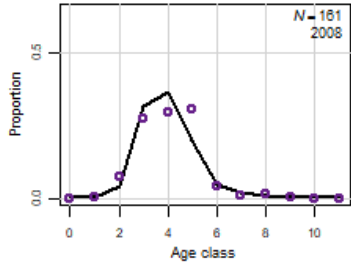
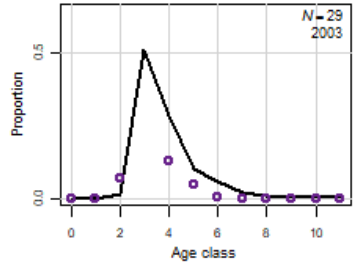
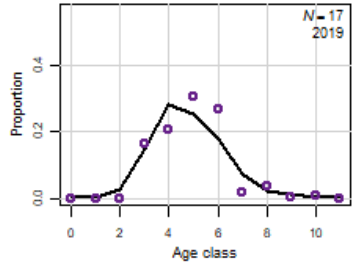
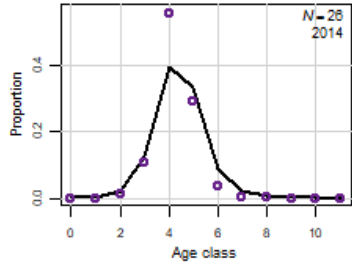
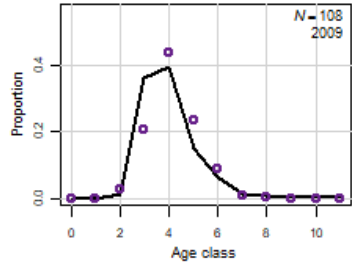
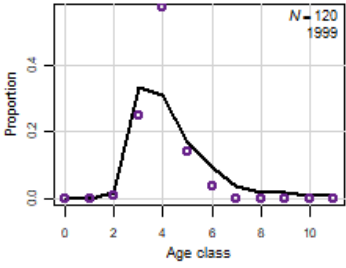
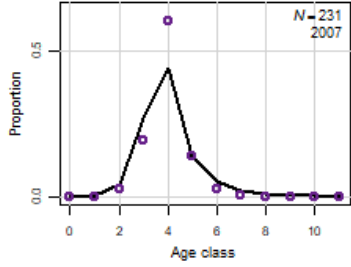
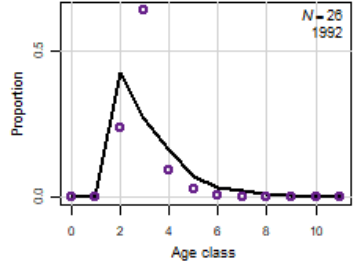
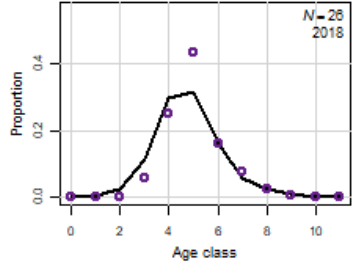
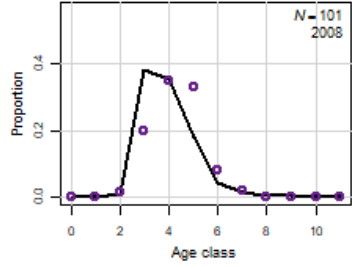




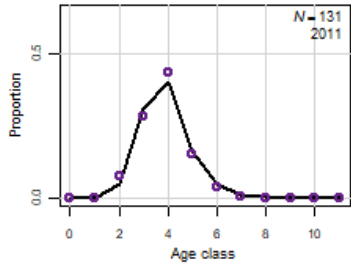
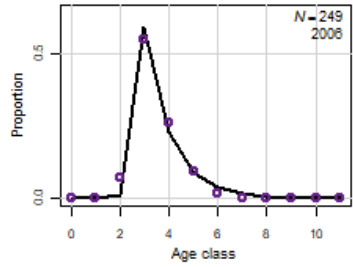
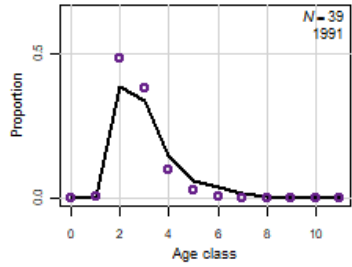
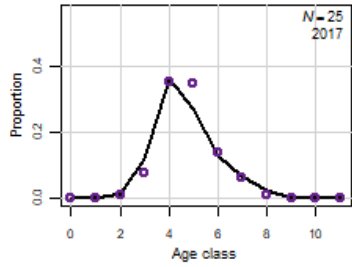
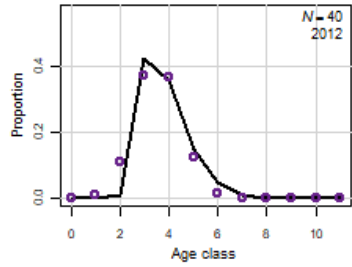
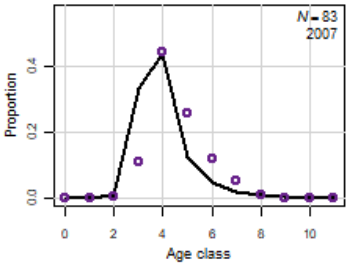
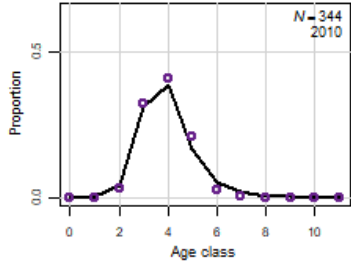
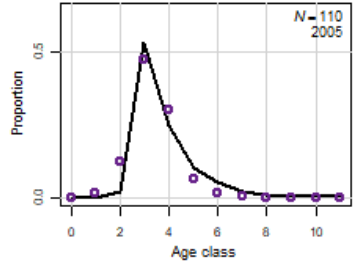




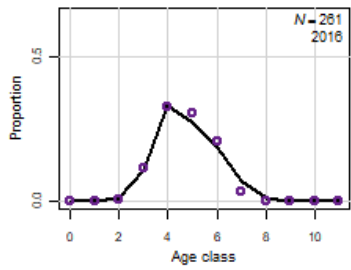
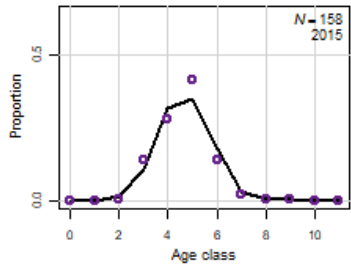
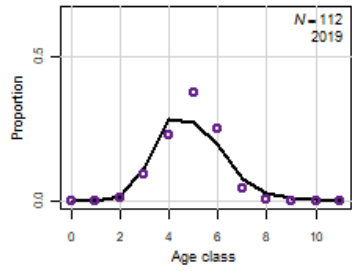
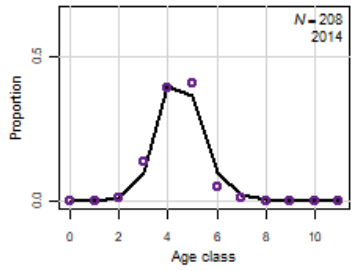
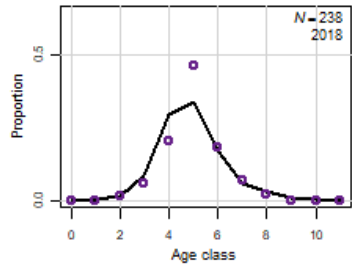
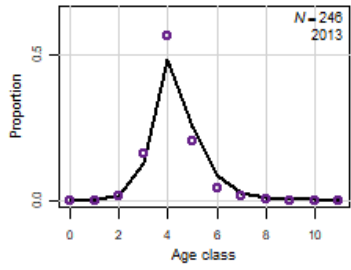
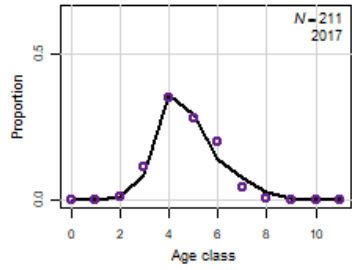
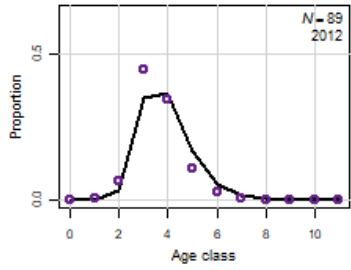
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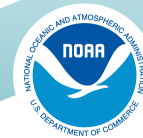
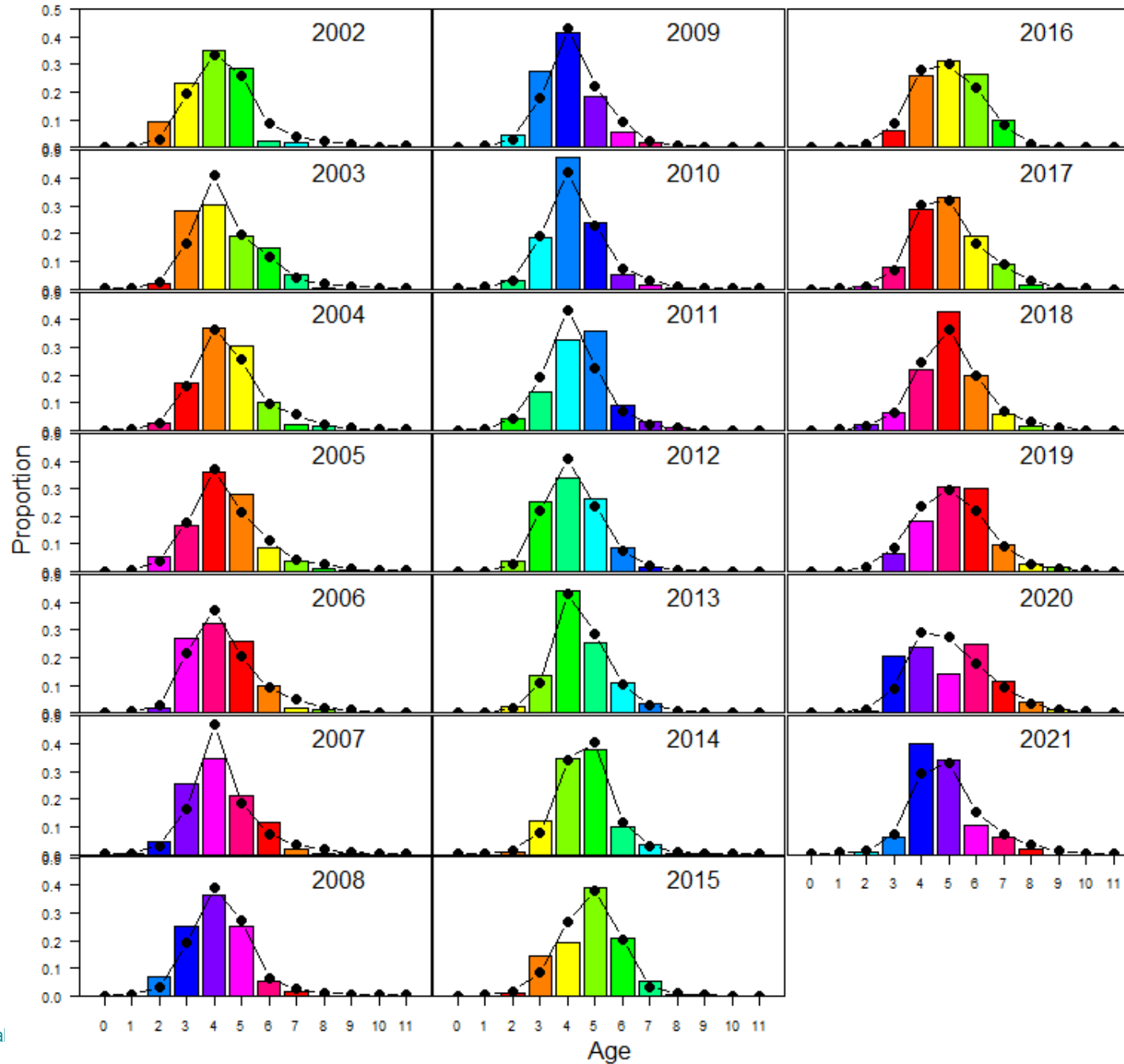
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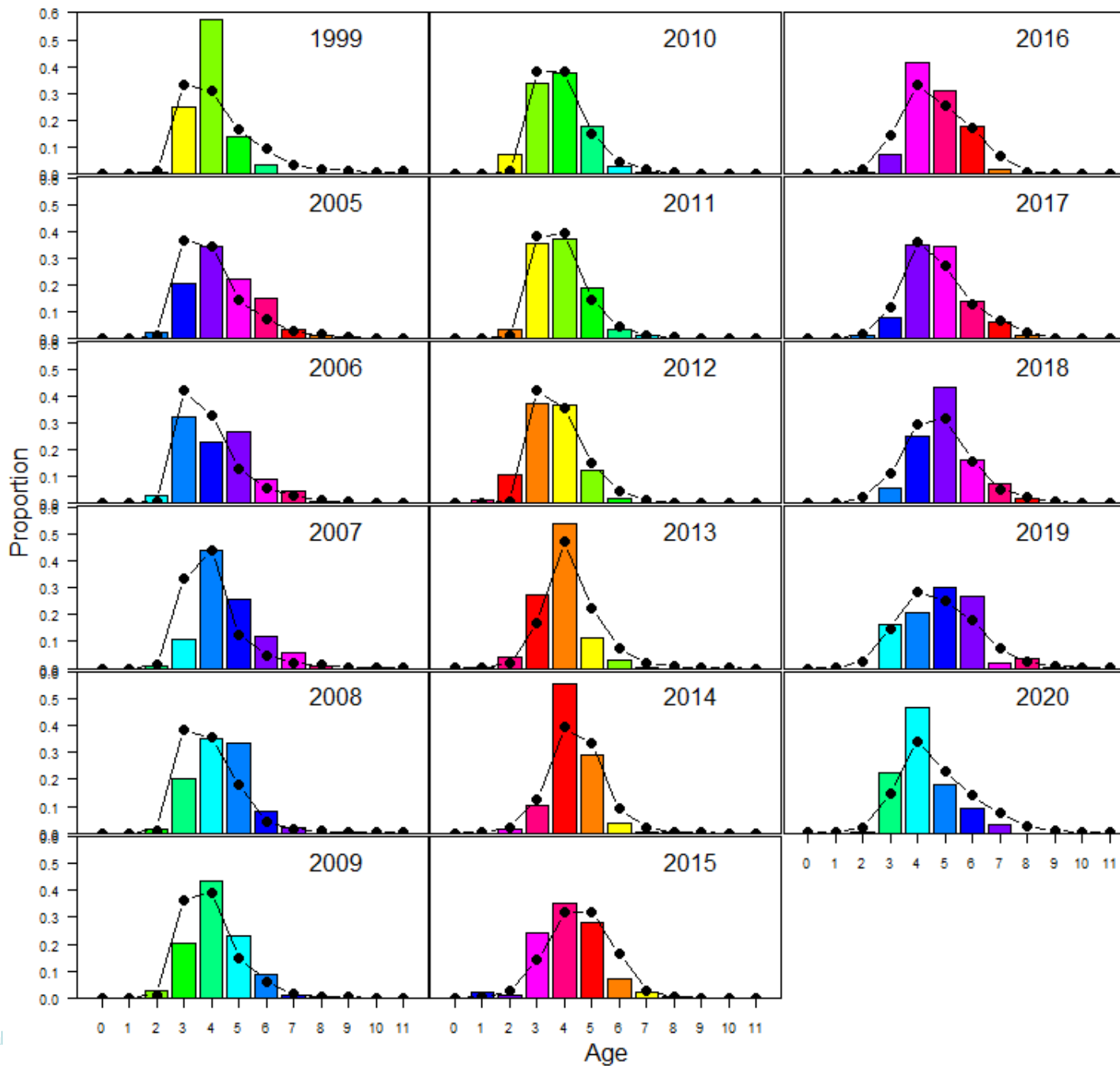


Fishery: cl, Observed (bars), Predicted (dots)



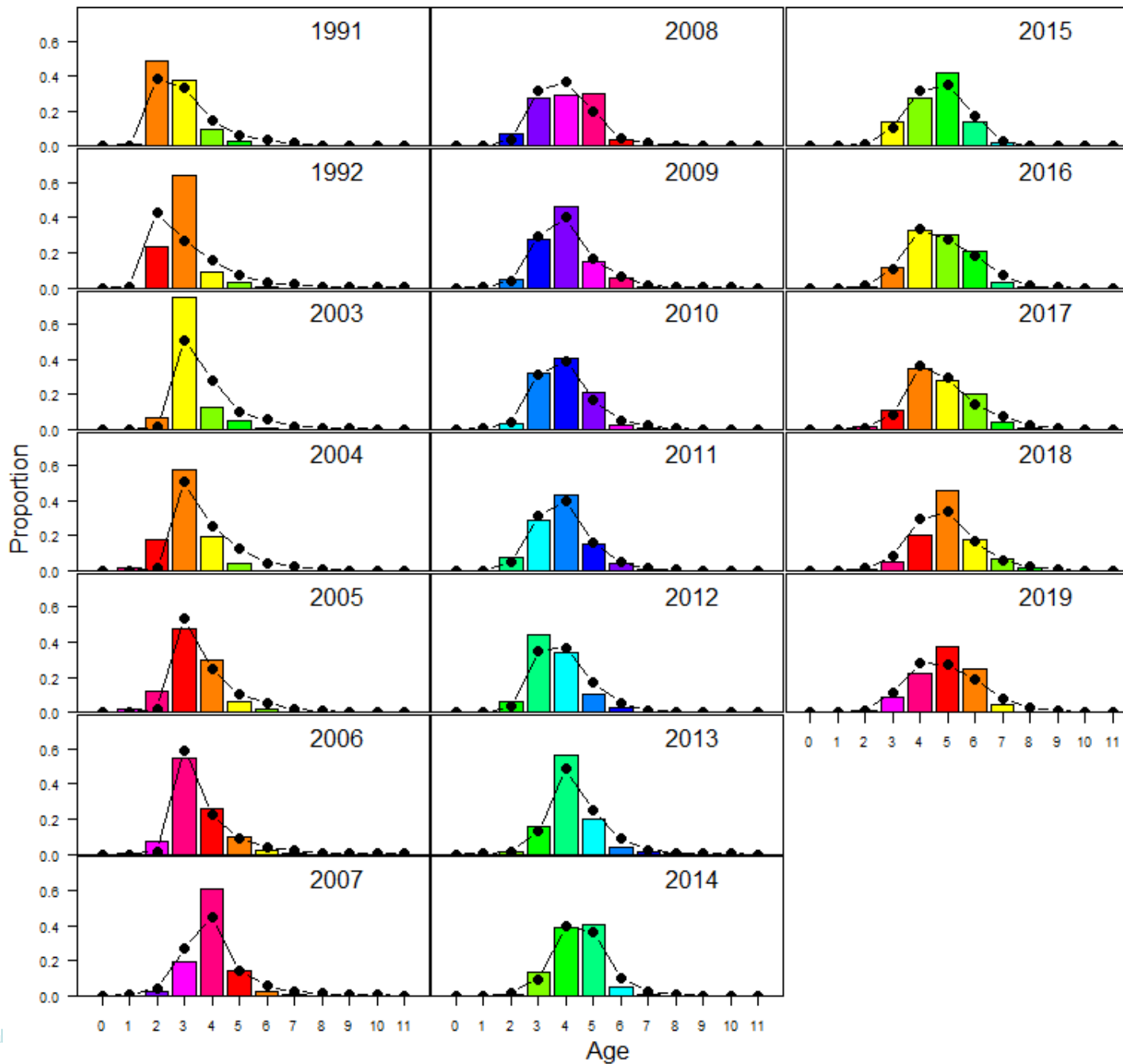
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FISHERIES

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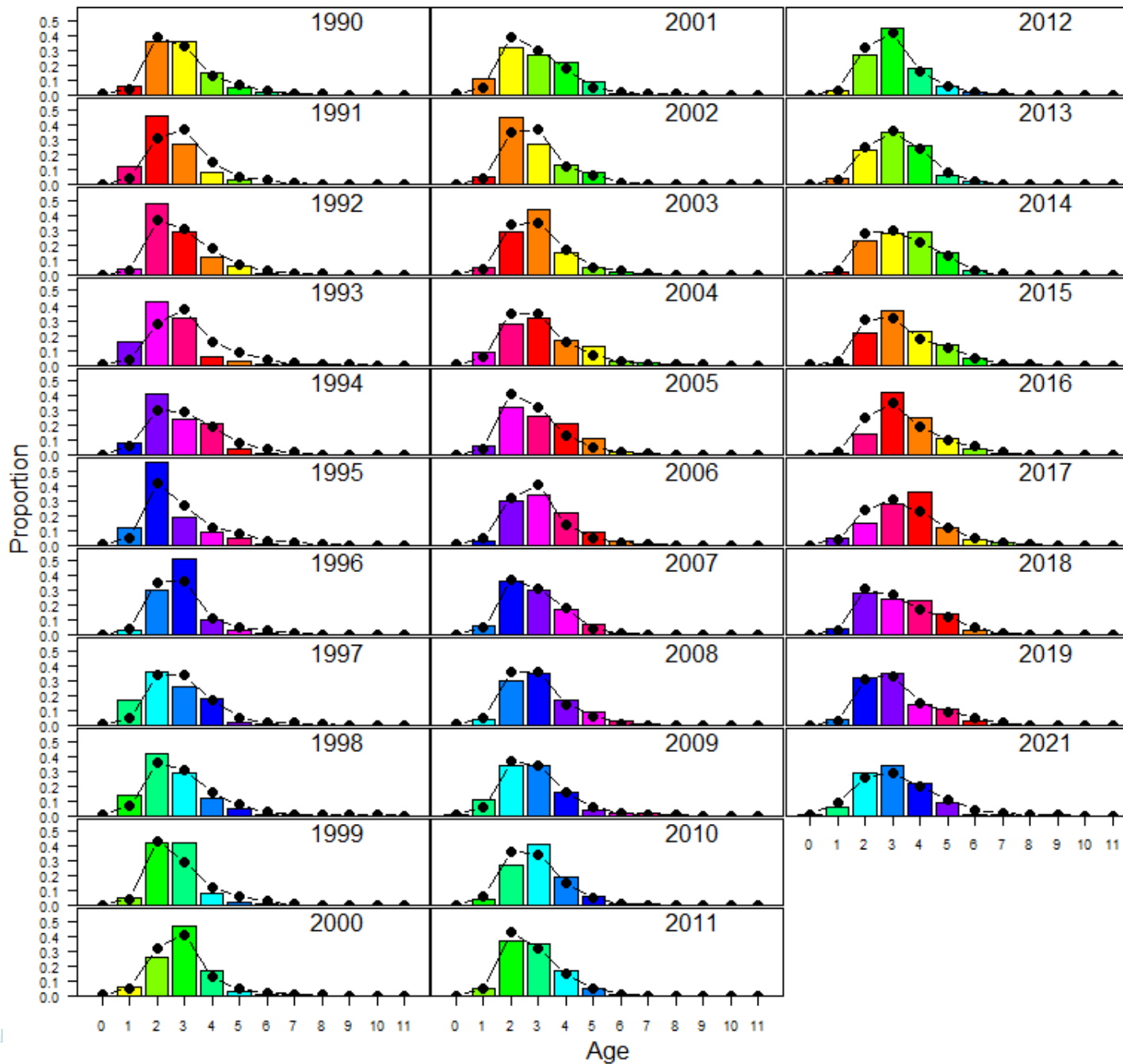
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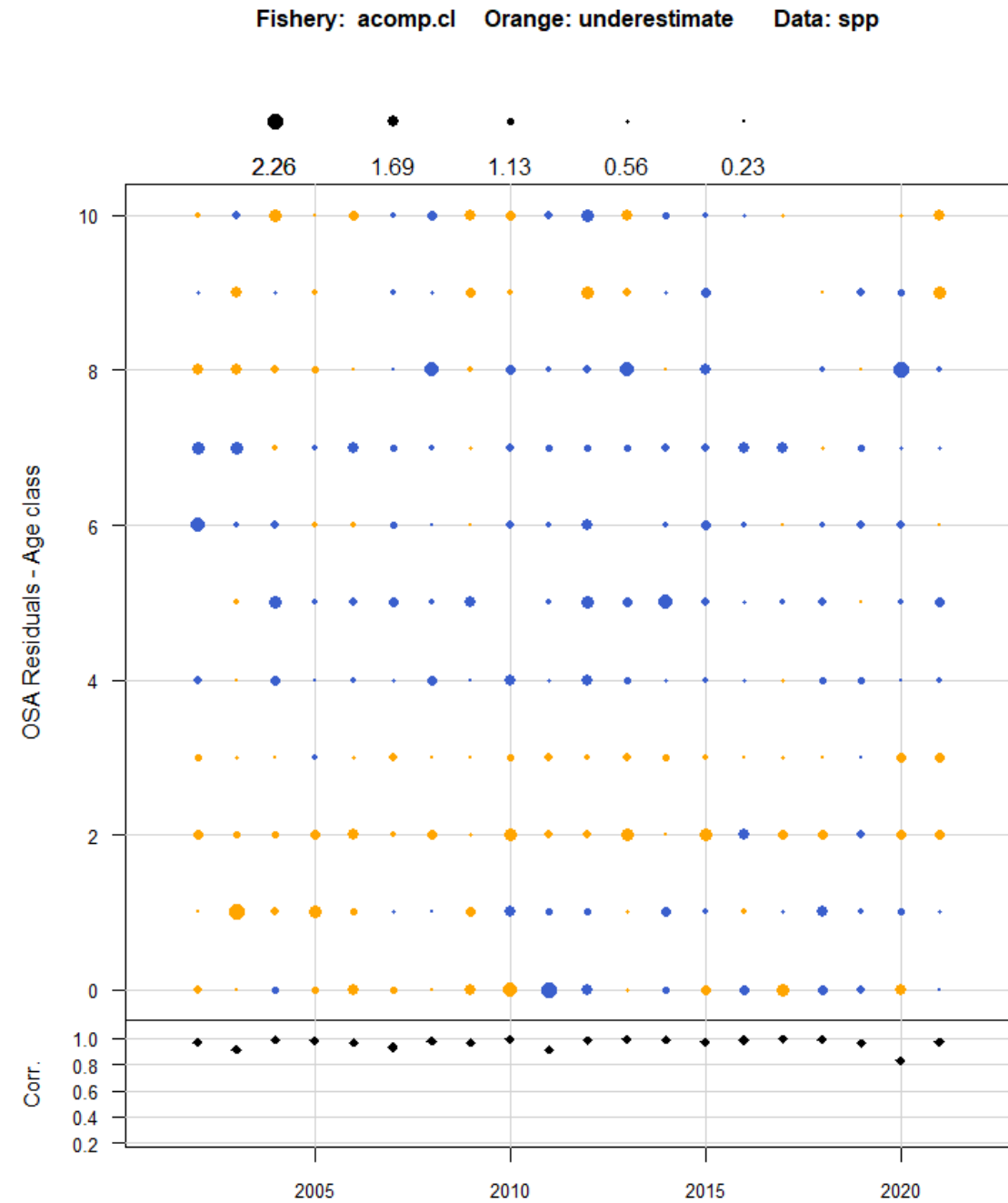
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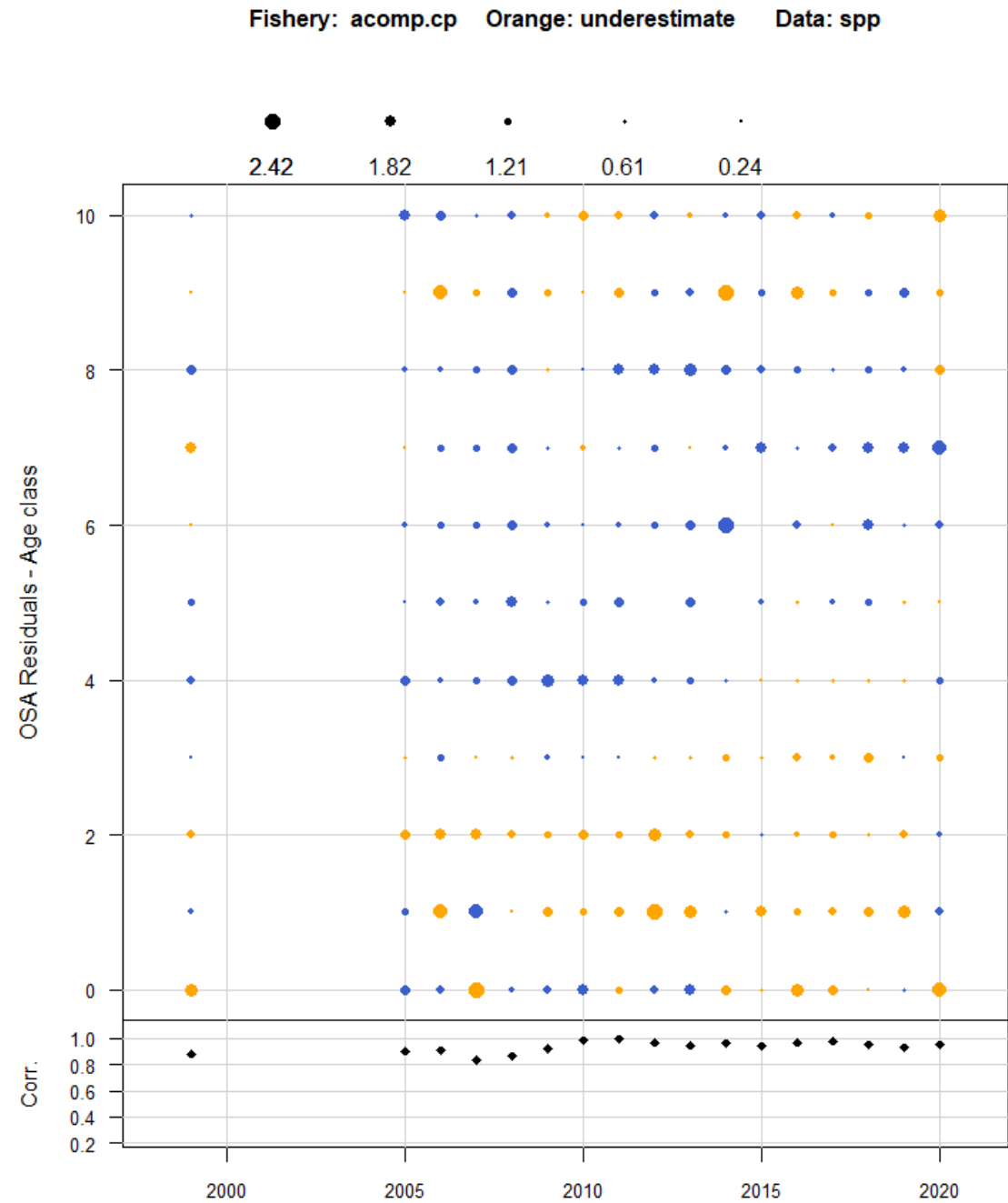


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FISHERIES

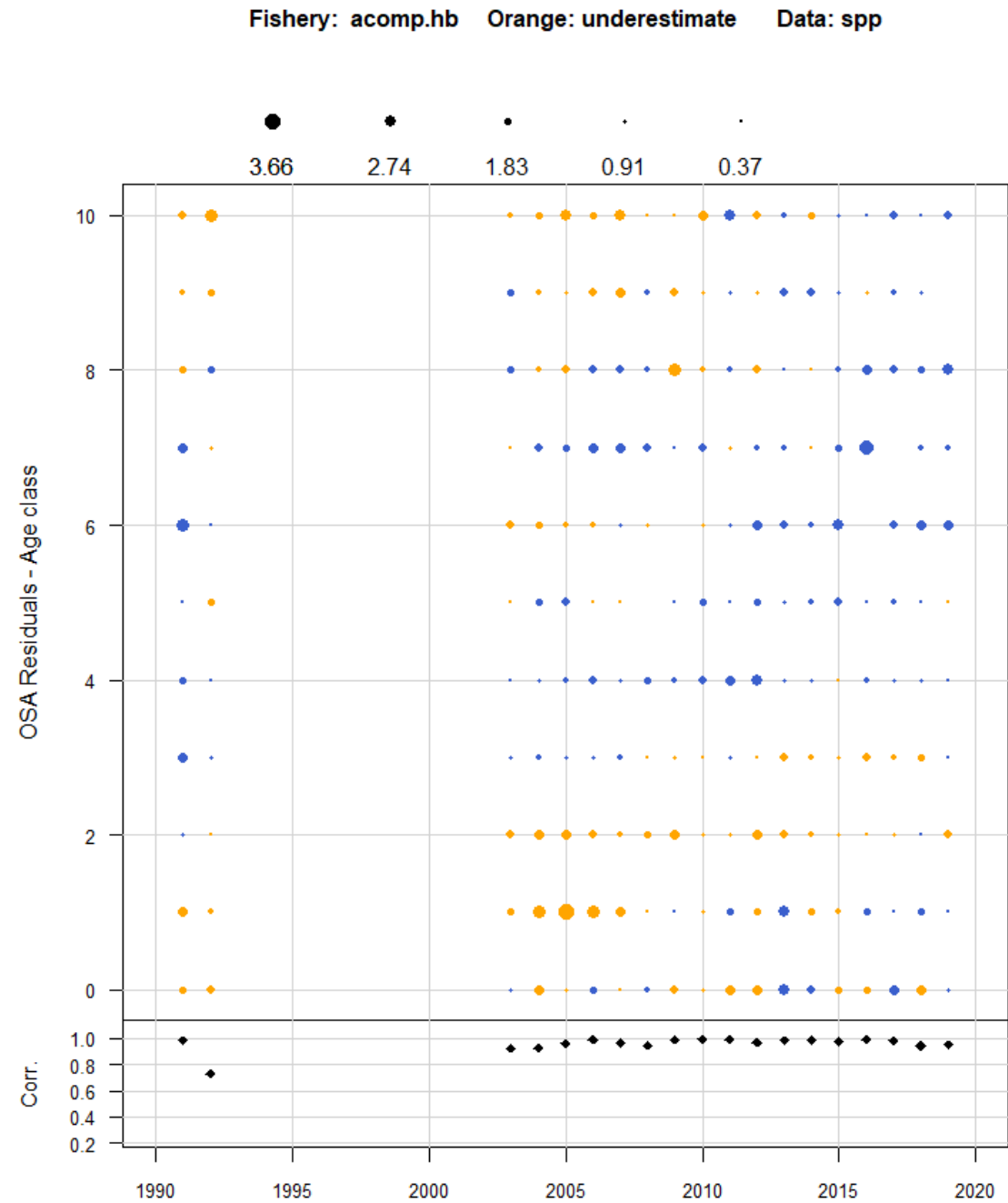
# One Step Ahead Residuals Age composition commercial handline



# One Step Ahead Residuals Age composition commercial pots

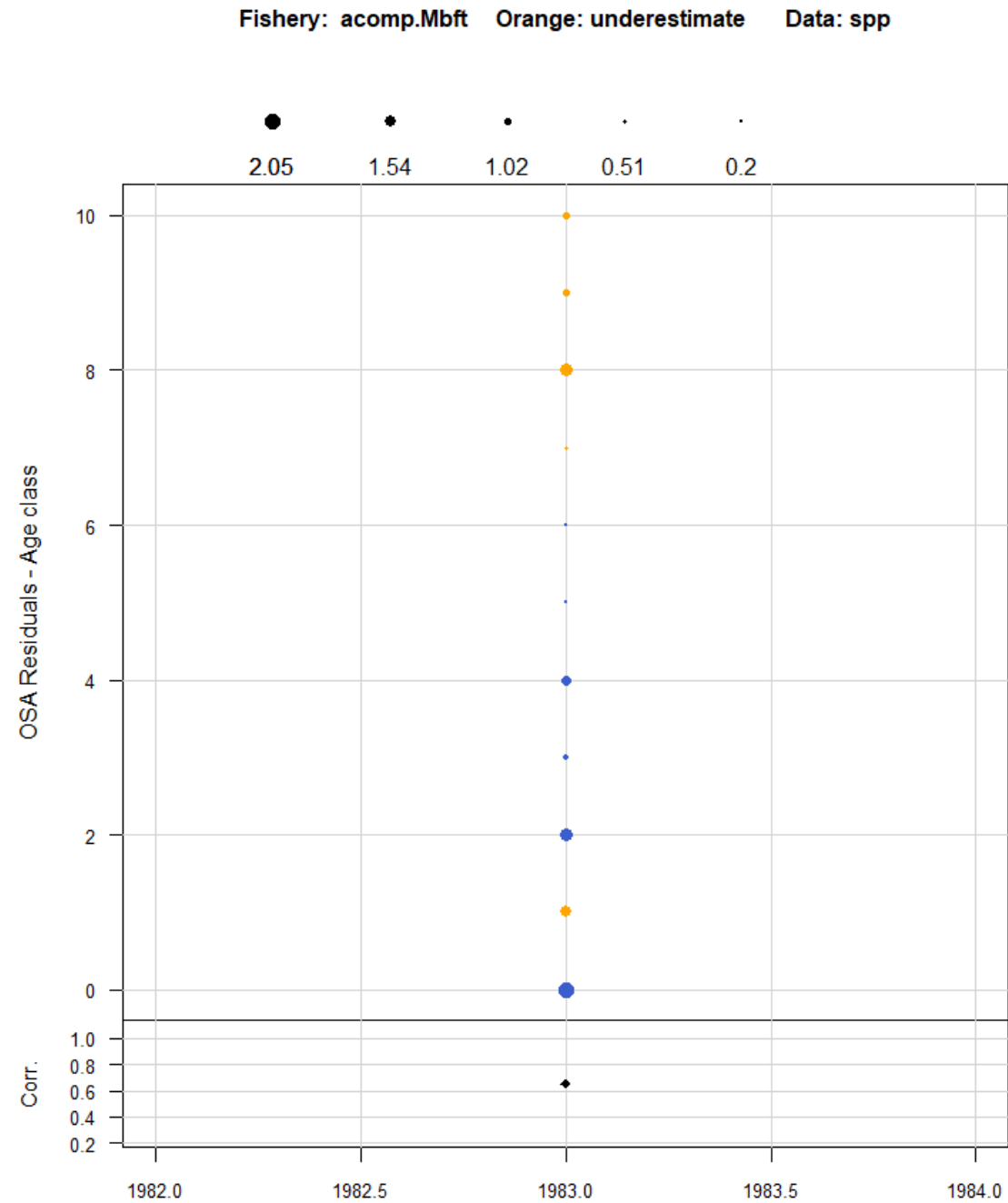


# One Step Ahead Residuals Age composition headboat

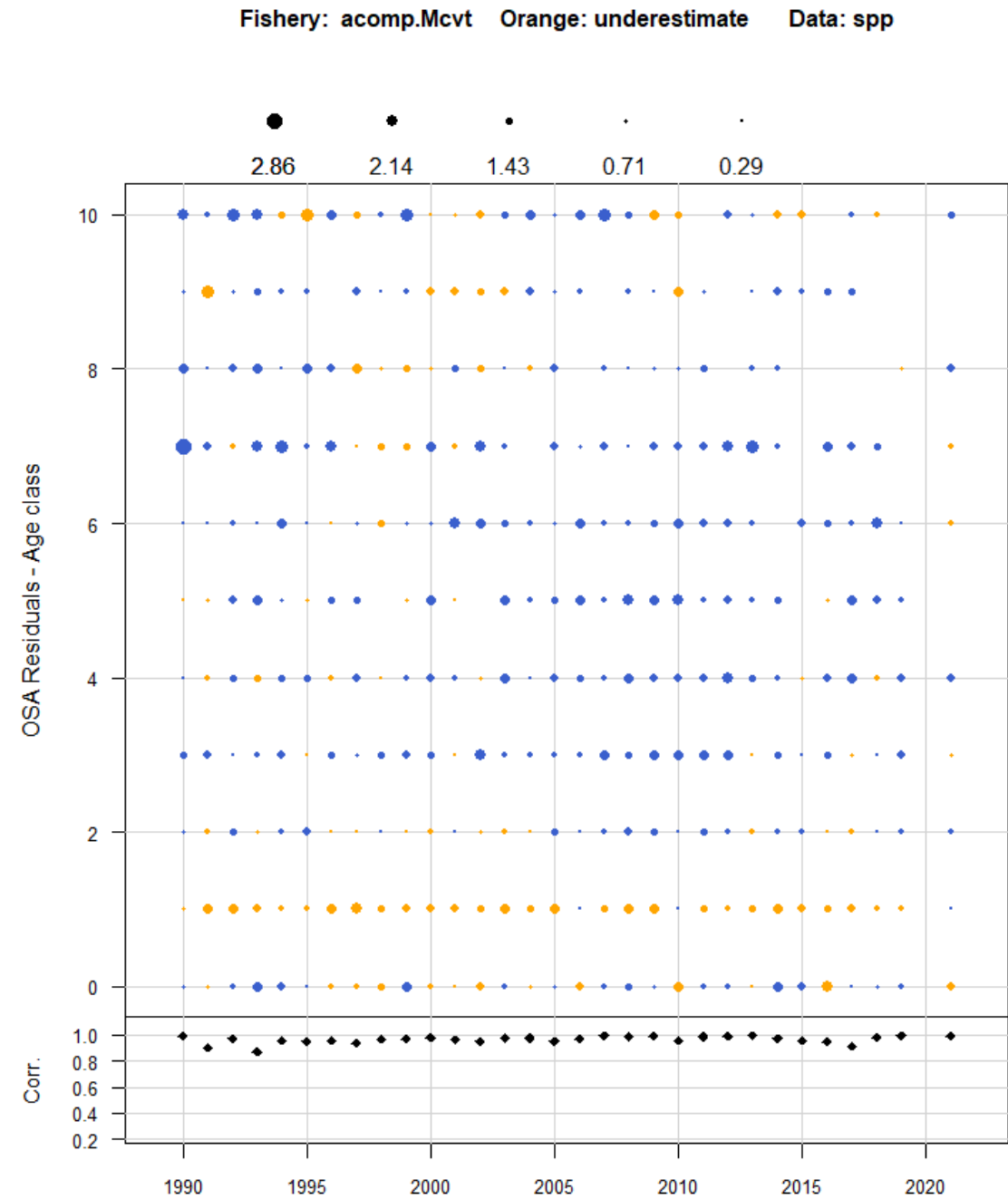




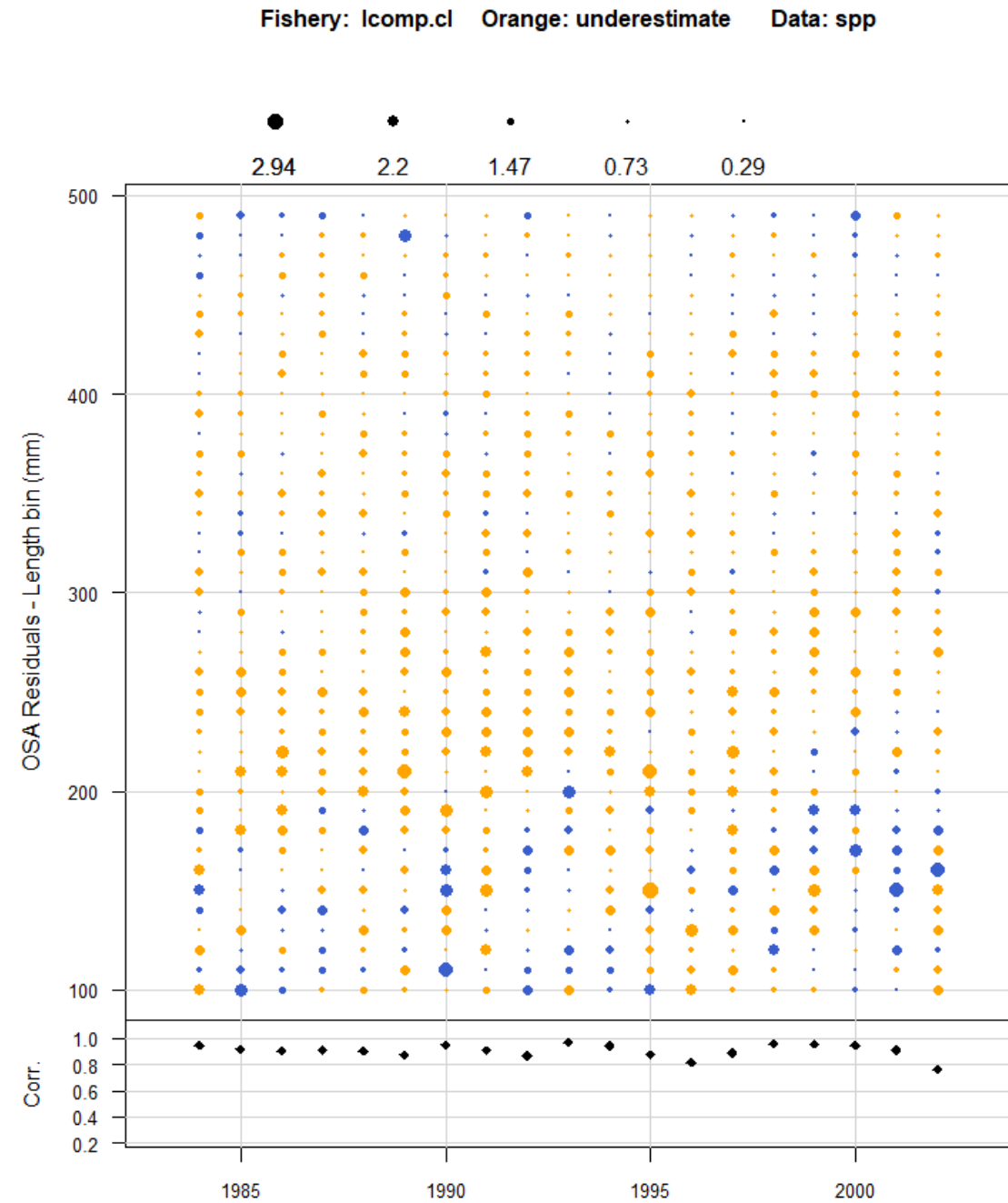
# One Step Ahead Residuals Age composition MARAMAP blackfish survey



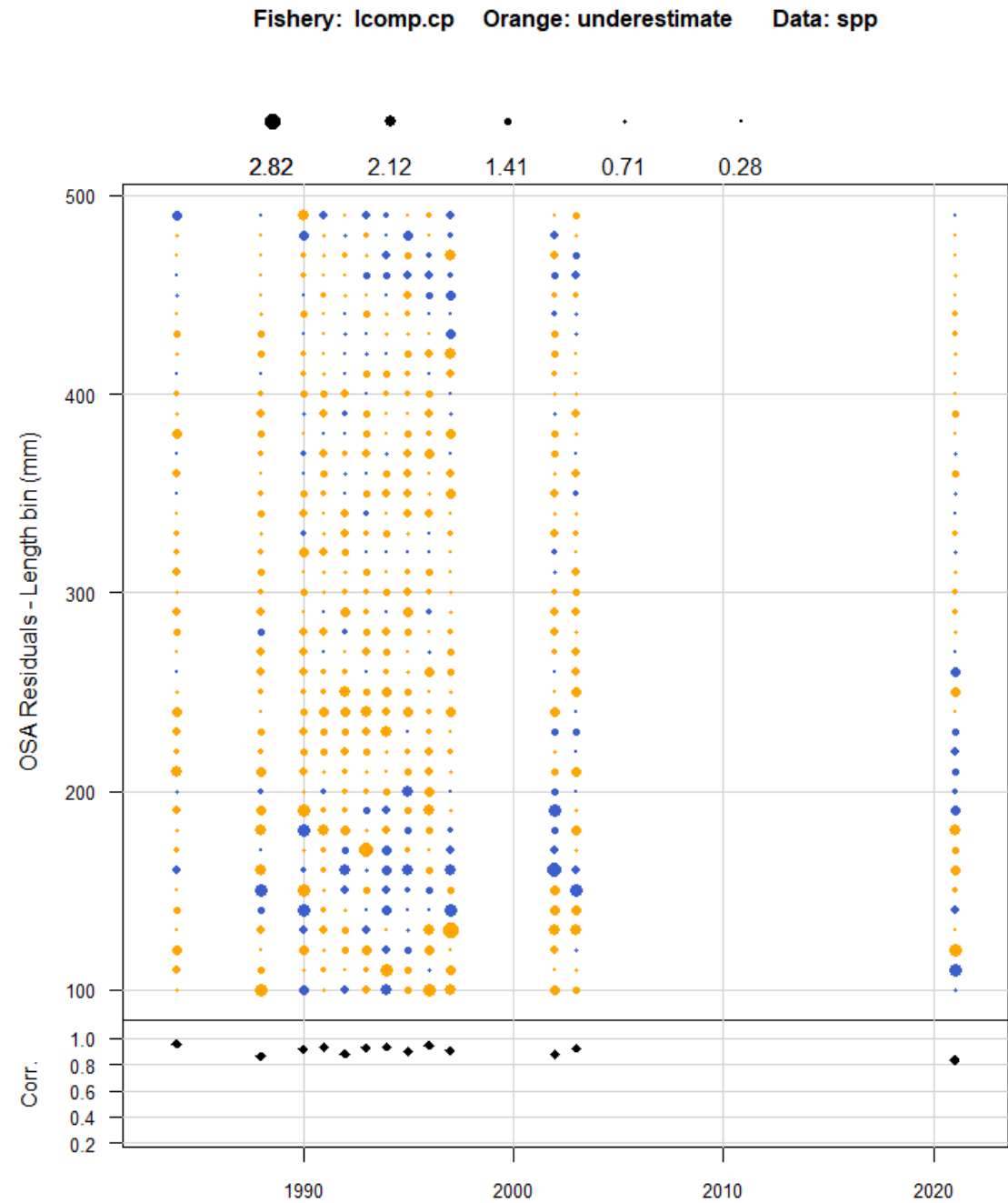
# One Step Ahead Residuals Age composition SERFS



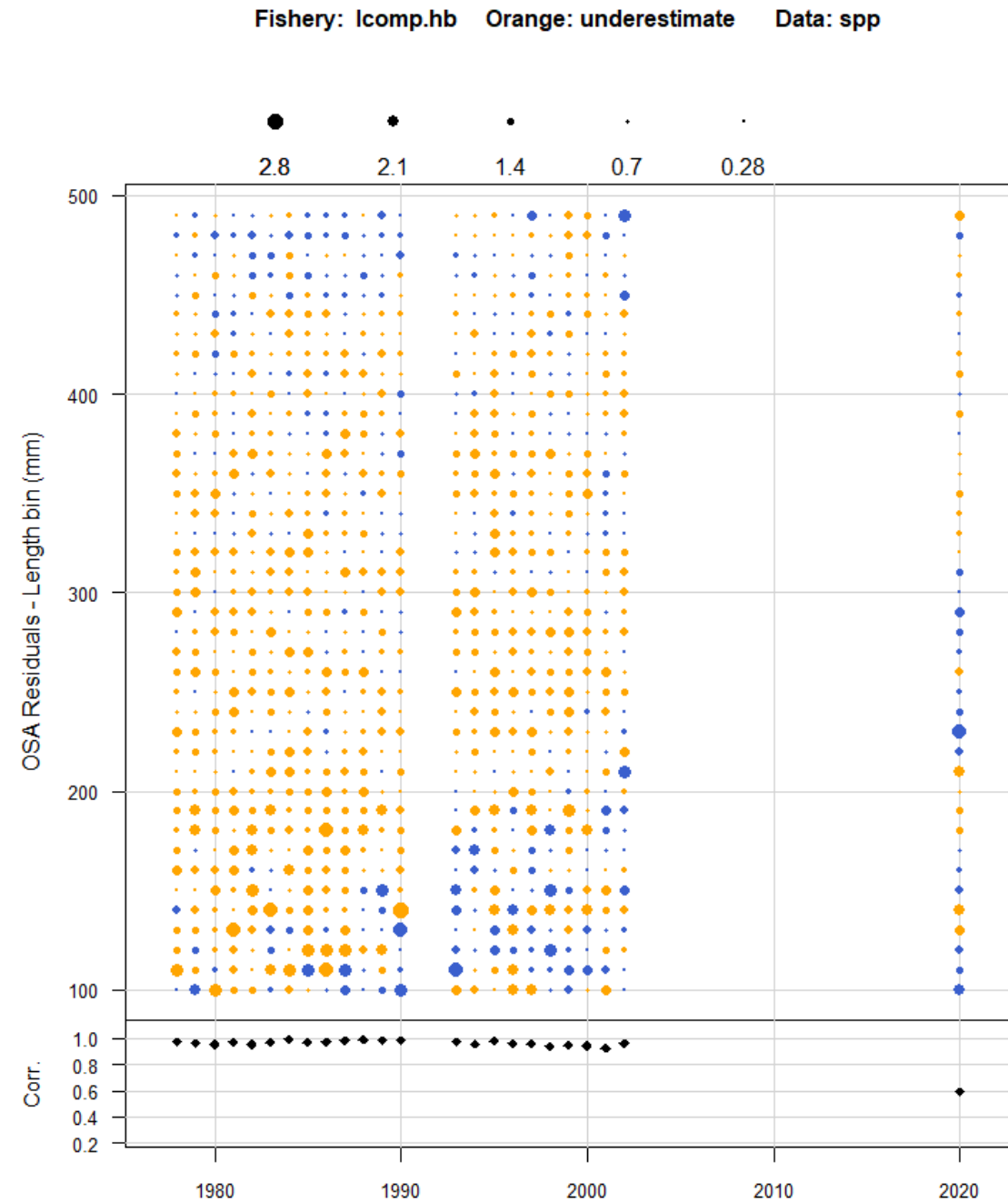
# One Step Ahead Residuals Length composition commercial handline



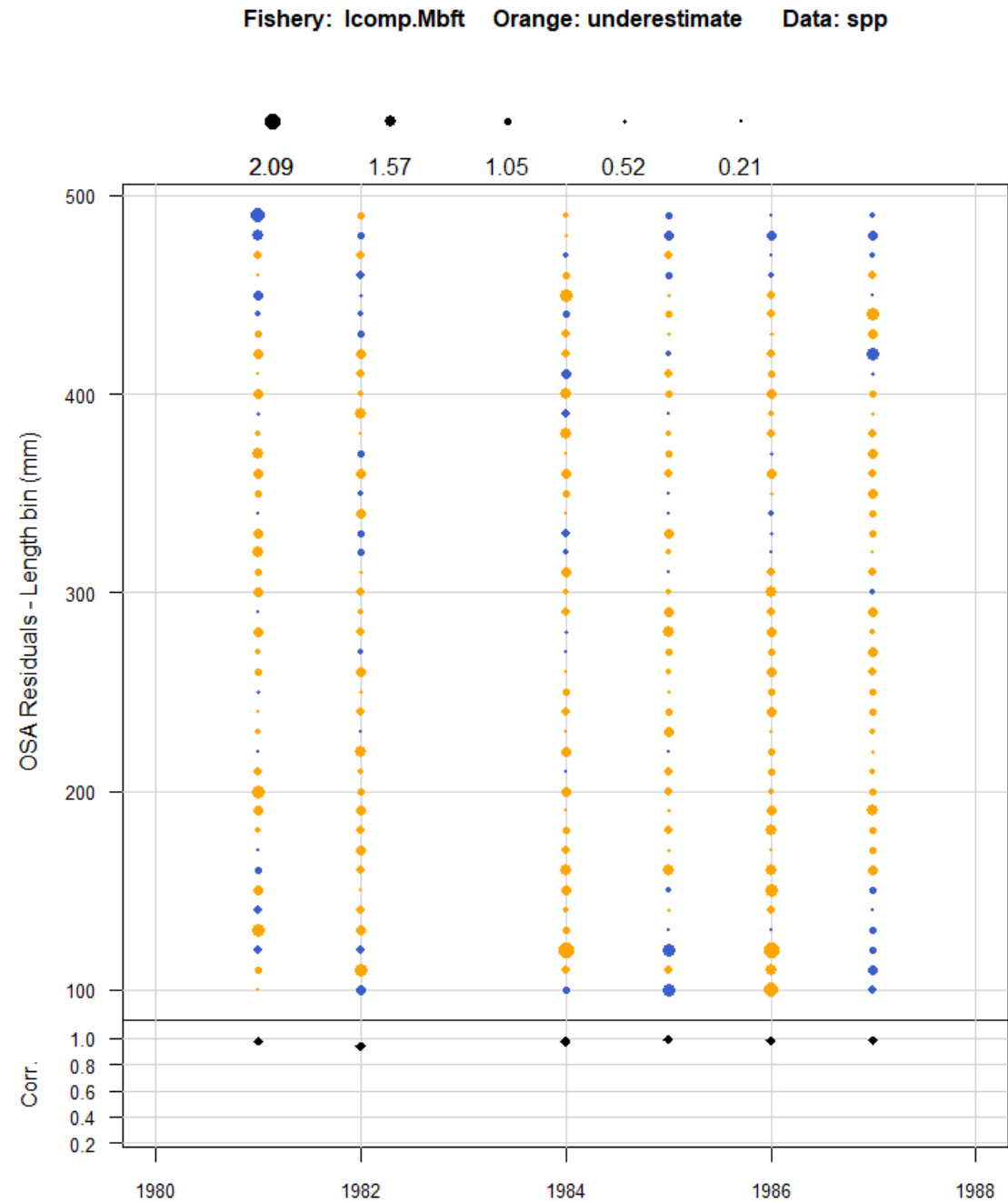
# One Step Ahead Residuals Length composition commercial pots



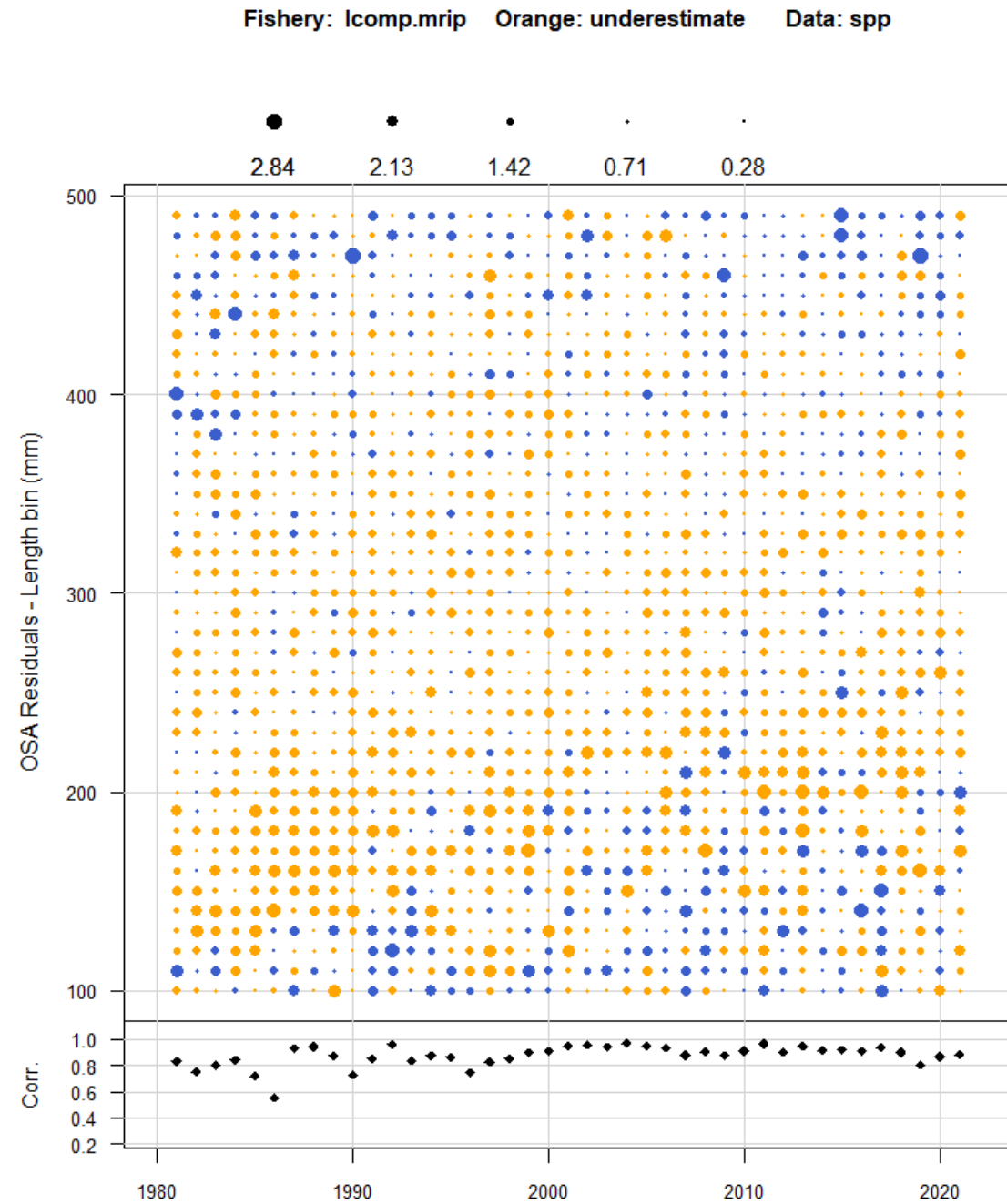
# One Step Ahead Residuals Length composition headboat



# One Step Ahead Residuals Length composition MARAMAP blackfish survey



# One Step Ahead Residuals Length composition general recreational



# One Step Ahead Residuals Length composition headboat discards

