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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### STOCK

This assessment reports the status of the coastal Pacific Hake (or Pacific Whiting, *Merluccius Productus*) resource off the west coast of the United States and Canada. This stock exhibits seasonal migratory behavior, ranging from offshore and generally southern waters during the winter spawning season to coastal areas between northern California and northern British Columbia during the spring, summer and fall when the fishery is conducted. In years with warmer water temperatures the stock tends to move farther to the North during the summer and older hake tend to migrate farther than younger fish in all years with catches in the Canadian zone typically consisting of fish greater than four years old. Separate, and much smaller, populations of hake occurring in the major inlets of the northeast Pacific Ocean, including the Strait of Georgia, Puget Sound, and the Gulf of California, are not included in this analysis.

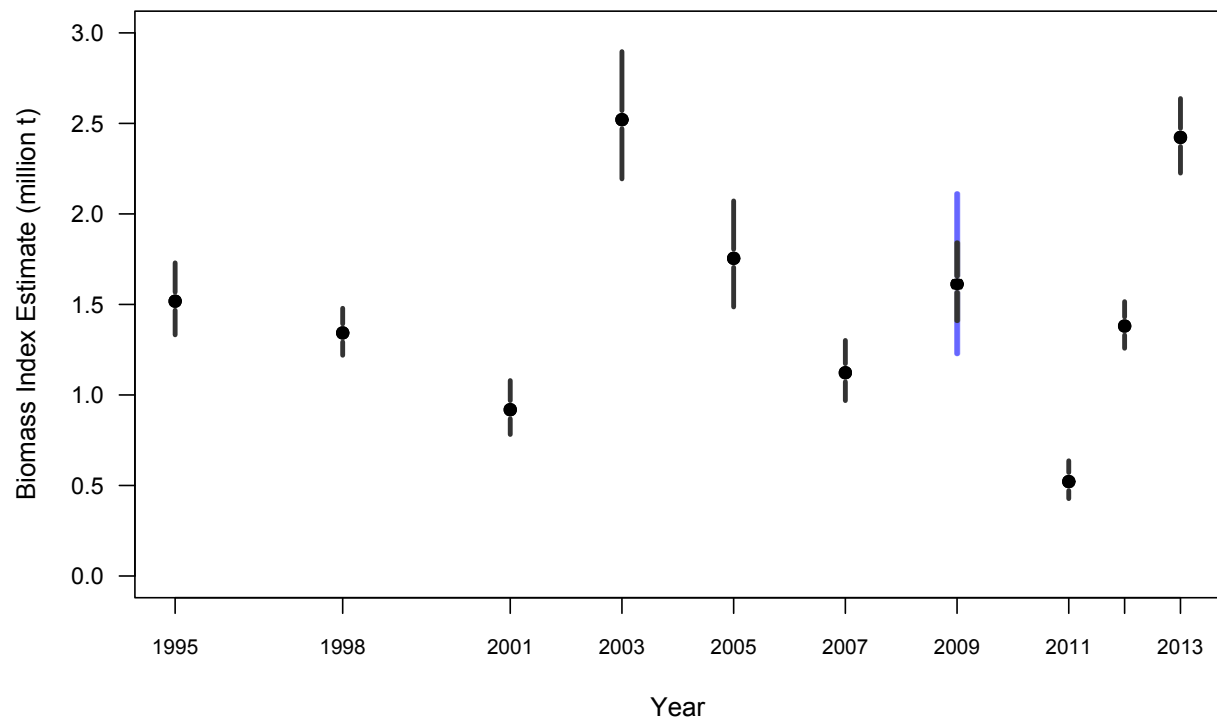
### CATCHES

Coast-wide fishery Pacific Hake landings averaged 224,364 t from 1966 to 2015, with a low of 89,930 t in 1980 and a peak of 363,135 t in 2005. Prior to 1966, total removals were negligible compared to the modern fishery. Over the early period, 1966–1990, most removals were from foreign or joint-venture fisheries. Over all years, the fishery in U.S. waters averaged 168,983 t, or 75.3% of the average total landings, while catch from Canadian waters averaged 55,381 t. Over the last 10 years, 2006–2015, the total average catch is 265,646 with U.S. and Canadian catches averaging 206,859 t and 58,786 t, respectively.

In this stock assessment, the terms catch and landings are used interchangeably. Estimates of discard within the target fishery are included, but discarding of Pacific Hake in non-target fisheries is not. Discard from all fisheries is estimated to be less than 1% of landings in recent years. Recent coast-wide landings from 2010–2014 have been above the long term average of 224,364 t.

Landings between 2001 and 2008 were predominantly comprised of fish from the very large 1999 year class, with the cumulative removal from that cohort exceeding 1.2 million t.





*Figure 2. Acoustic survey biomass index (millions of metric tons). Approximate 95% confidence intervals are based on only sampling variability (1995–2007, 2011–2015) in addition to squid/hake apportionment uncertainty (2009, in blue).*