Data Rich but Model Resistant: An Evaluation of Data-Limited Methods to Manage Fisheries with Failed Age-based Stock Assessments

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Introduction

In the U.S., integrated fisheries stock assessment models that are most frequently age-structured are used to estimate annual stock abundance (biomass), fishing mortality rates, and management reference points (Maunder and Punt 2013). These models must undergo peer review, where an independent panel of experts determines whether or not results from the model are suitable as the basis for determining stock status and for setting catch advice. There are a number of model diagnostics that are used to evaluate uncertainty and stability of assessment model results, but one that is commonly used and carries substantial weight during review is the retrospective pattern. A retrospective pattern is a systematic inconsistency among a series of sequential assessment estimates of population size (or other related assessment variables), based on increasing time periods of data used in the model fitting (Mohn 1999). These inconsistencies in assessment estimates are indicative of one or more mismatches between model assumptions and patterns in the data used to fit the model. Large or persistent retrospective patterns indicate an instability in model results, and may therefore be the basis for a peer review panel to determine that model results are not suitable for management purposes (Punt et al. 2020).

Many stock assessments in the Northeast U.S. have a history of strong retrospective patterns, whereby estimates of biomass are typically revised downward and estimates of fishing mortality rate are revised upward as new data are added to the model. NOAA Fisheries, the New England Fishery Management Council, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission manage these stocks, and retrospective issues remain a challenge for managers when setting catch advice and tracking stock status. This problem has been particularly acute for, but not limited to, stocks in the New England groundfish complex (NEFSC 2002, 2005, 2008, 2015a, 2015b, 2017, 2019; Deroba et al. 2010), managed under NOAA Fisheries and the New England Council's Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) fishery management plan.

The magnitude of the retrospective pattern is typically measured with a statistic called Mohn's rho (Mohn 1999). Mohn's rho can be used to adjust terminal year estimates of biomass in anticipation that the retrospective pattern will persist, and so some accounting for the pattern will provide a more accurate estimate. Stock assessments where the so-called rho-adjusted value is outside the 90% confidence interval of the terminal year estimate of spawning stock biomass (SSB) or fishing mortality rate are classified as strong retrospective patterns. In these cases, the rho-adjusted values are used for status determination and to modify the starting population for projections used to provide catch advice (Brooks and Legault 2016).

There is no formal criteria in the region for rejecting an assessment based on Mohn's rho, but large, positive values of rho (especially those persisting) have played an important role in the rejection of recent age-based assessments, including Atlantic mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*), Georges Bank Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*), Georges Bank yellowtail flounder (*Limanda ferruginea*), and witch flounder (*Glyptocephalus cynoglossus*) (Deroba et al. 2010; Legault et al. 2014; NEFSC 2015a, 2015b). In each of these cases, and another where the assessment rejection was not based on the retrospective pattern (black sea bass, *Centropristis striatus*, NEFSC 2012), the Councils have relied on a variety data-limited approaches for setting catch advice for these stocks (McNamee et al. 2015; NEFSC 2015a, 2015b; Wiedenmann 2015). These approaches have all been ad-hoc, and a recent analysis suggested that some of the data-limited approaches may not be suitable for stocks in the Northeast U.S. with a history of high exploitation rates (Wiedenmann et al. 2019). In addition, large, positive retrospective patterns persist for a number of other stocks in the region (NEFSC 2019), raising concerns that additional stocks may rely on data-limited approaches in the future. Therefore, there is an immediate need to identify suitable data-limited approaches for setting catch advice and for stocks with age-based assessments that did not pass review.

We developed a management strategy evaluation (MSE; e.g., Punt et al. 2016) to evaluate the suitability of alternative data-limited methods for setting target catches when age-based stock assessments fail. In particular, focus was placed on methods that use survey indices of abundance, or more generally, index based methods (IBMs).

Methods

Overview

The MSE used here attempted to approximate a process where an age-based assessment was rejected due to a retrospective pattern, requiring catch advice to be determined using an IBM. As such, the operating model (OM) used to define the “true” underlying biological and fishery dynamics was also age-based. The OM was run for an initial 50 year period of time (called the base period) that controls the historical population dynamics and fishing pressure, and allows for sufficient data to be simulated in the observation model to be used in the different IBMs. After the base period, a given management approach (i.e., IBM) was applied to set the target catch for the stock, which is then removed from the population with some degree of implementation error. This process is repeated at a fixed interval for 40 years in what is called the feedback period. Multiple OMs were developed so that the performance of the IBMs could be compared among several sources of uncertainty that are especially common in the northeast US, but relevant more broadly. The set of OMs included two versions with time varying dynamics in the last 20 years of the base period, that if left misspecified as time invariant, would be sufficient to generate retrospective patterns resulting in the rejection of an age-based stock assessment, requiring transition to an IBM. The details of each of these components are described in sections below.

Operating and Observation Models

The Woods Hole Assessment Model (WHAM, Miller and Stock 2020; Stock and Miller 2021) was used as the basis for the OM in the MSE. WHAM is an R package and the general model is built using the Template Model Builder package (Kristensen et al. 2016). While WHAM can serve as a stock assessment model used to estimate parameters, it can also simulate the data needed for age-based stock assessments and IBMs given a range of input parameters. WHAM was used to simulate data with known properties during the base and feedback periods. Catch and index observations upon which the IBMs largely relied were simulated according to user supplied biological and fishery parameters for each scenario (see below). Catches during the feedback period were iteratively updated based on an IBM and harvest control rule that used the simulated observations to make catch advice. Catch advice from a given combination of IBM and control rule was specified in two year blocks, a typical catch specification timeframe for New England and Mid-Atlantic Council managed fisheries. WHAM used these catches, along with the user supplied biological and fishery data, to have the simulated population respond to the IBM, thereby completing the closed-loop simulation aspect of an MSE.

The age-structured OM had ten ages, with the oldest age being a plus group. Maturity- and weight-at-age were time and simulation invariant and equaled values intended to be groundfish-like for the region (Table 1). The OM simulated catch and age composition data for a single fishery with logistic selectivity (Table 1; see below). Annual, total catch observations (metric tons) were simulated as lognormal deviations from the underlying "true" catches with a coefficient of variation (CV) equal to 0.1. Fishery age composition data was assumed to follow a multinomial distribution with an effective sample size (ESS) equal to 200. Two fishery independent surveys were simulated and were intended to represent the spring and fall, coastwide bottom trawl surveys conducted in the region. Both surveys were assumed to have time invariant logistic selectivity and constant catchability. Annual survey observations were simulated as lognormal deviations from the underlying "true" survey catches with a CV of 0.3 in the spring survey and 0.4 in the fall. Survey age composition data were assumed to follow a multinomial distribution with an ESS equal to 100 in both seasons.

Annual recruitment was simulated as autoregressive, lag-1 (AR-1) deviations from an underlying Beverton-Holt stock-recruitment relationship with steepness equal to 0.74. The degree of correlation in the AR-1 process equaled 0.4 with a conditional standard deviation about this relationship equal to 0.5. Unfished recruitment was time- and simulation invariant and equaled 10-million age-1 fish. All these stock-recruitment values were based on an average of groundfish parameters estimated for the region.

Index Based Methods Explored

The range of IBMs evaluated was generally constrained to those that have been used or were considered plausible (e.g., based on data requirements) for the Northeast Shelf. Ultimately, thirteen IBMs were selected for evaluation. Although catch-curve analyses are not currently applied in the region, they were included here since age information is available for most of the stocks, and because Wiedenmann et al. (2019) showed they performed well in application to groundfish stocks. Two additional IBMs (Islope and Itarget) not currently used in the region were also evaluated, as these have been tested in other applications and shown promise (Geromont and Butterworth 2015a, 2015b; Carruthers et al. 2016; Wiedenmann et al. 2019). An ensemble of models was also considered based on recent findings that improved performance can result from combining the results from multiple models (Anderson et al. 2017; Rosenberg et al. 2018; Spence et al. 2018; Stewart and Hicks 2018). The catch advice from the ensemble approach equaled the median of the catch advice from a range of other methods (Table 2). The DLM approach was excluded from the ensemble due to the relatively long computing time required. Other methods were excluded (CC-FM, ES-FM, ES-Fstable) because they were slight variations of a more generic IBM (i.e., CC- and ES-) and including them all may have unduly overweighted the performance of the ensemble towards these methods. In these cases, the methods retained in the ensemble had superior performance than the alternatives based on preliminary results, or had already been considered for application in the region. The full range of methods included in this analysis were detailed below with equations (Table 2). The performance of each method was compared using a range of metrics with data that would lead to retrospective patterns in an age-based stock assessment (see below).

Other data-limited methods exist for setting catch advice that were not included in this evaluation, and they vary widely in complexity, data inputs, and assumptions required (e.g., Carruthers and Hordyk 2018). Length based methods were not evaluated to keep the overall number of methods tractable, and due to the availability of age based information in the region. Methods that require only catch data or snap shots of survey data were not considered due to the availability of the relatively long and contiguous Northeast Fisheries Science Center's spring and fall, coastwide bottom trawl surveys. Complete catch histories are not available for stocks in the region (i.e., from the inception of fishing). Furthermore, assumptions of surplus production models are likely violated due to time varying productivity (e.g., in recruitment or natural mortality), and surplus production model fits resulted in different estimates of biomass over time compared to age-based assessments for many stocks

(Wiedenmann et al. 2019). Consequently, methods that required complete catch histories, assumed underlying surplus production population dynamics, or required assumptions about relative depletion (e.g., DCAC in MacCall 2009; DB-SRA in Dick and MacCall 2011) were also omitted from consideration.

Each of the methods evaluated produces a single target catch value that was fixed over a two year interval. If the methods were being applied in year y, then target catches are set for years $y+1$ and $y+2$ (denoted $C_{targ,y+1:y+2}$). In practice, the timing of setting target catches in the region generally occurs in late summer or early fall in between the spring and fall surveys, and before complete catch data are available. Therefore, in year y complete catch data are available through year $y-1$, and survey data are available for the spring survey through year y and for the fall survey through year $y-1$. In practice, the data-limited methods that have been applied have used an average of the spring and fall index, and that approach was followed here. If a method for setting catches uses an average of spring and fall, the average index in year y included the spring data in year y and the fall data in year $y-1$:

$\bar{I}_y = \frac{I_{fall,y-1}+I_{spr,y}}{2}$.

Control Rules

Most IBMs do not have the ability to estimate a biomass reference point (e.g., B_{MSY}), which made consideration of so called biomass-based harvest control rules that reduce F or catch in response to estimated changes in relative stock status impossible. Lack of clarity exists, however, on whether the catch advice from IBMs should be treated as an overfishing limit (OFL) or an acceptable biological catch (ABC). OFLs are equated to the catch that would result from applying F_{MSY}, whereas an ABC is a catch reduced from the OFL to account for scientific uncertainty. Each IBM was evaluated using two "harvest control rules": 1) the catch advice from a given IBM was applied directly and assumed to serve as a proxy for the catch associated with F_{MSY}, thereby being equated to an OFL (catch multiplier = 1), and 2) the catch advice from a given IBM was reduced by 25% to account for unspecified scientific uncertainty, thereby being equated to an ABC (catch multiplier = 0.75). Catches were reduced by 25% to approximate an ABC because using the catch associated with 0.75 F_{MSY} is a common default ABC control rule in the region.

Application of a Statistical Catch-at-Age Assessment (SCAA)

A SCAA model was also applied to all scenarios to generate catch advice for comparison with the IBMs. Although virtual population analysis (VPA) are also used for some age-based assessments in the region, SCAA models are more widely used. Applications of the SCAA model assumed that the assessment had the correct underlying structure for selectivity, and CVs and ESS were specified at their true underlying values. The SCAA model estimated annual recruitment deviations assuming no underlying stock-recruit relationship, annual fully-selected fishing mortality rates, fishery and survey selectivity parameters (logistic), abundance-at-age in year one of the period being assessed, and survey catchabilies. Mohn's rho was calculated (7 year peels) for abundance at age for all model fits during the feedback period and used to retro-adjust abundance at age for projections (divided by one plus Mohn's rho). Catch advice was determined by specifying fully-selected $F = 0.75F_{40\%}$, always assuming M=0.2.

Study Design

In addition to the two control rules applied for each IBM described above, three aspects of the OM were varied in a full factorial study design: fishing history, fishery selectivity, and cause of the retrospective pattern. Two variants of fishing history were considered, with fully selected fishing mortality during the base period either constant at a level equal to $2.5F_{MSY}$ (always overfishing; referred to as "*OF*" below) or equaling $2.5F_{MSY}$ in the first half of the base period then a knife-edged decline to F_{MSY} for the second half of the base period (referred to as "*KF*" below). These patterns in fishing mortality rate were based on observed patterns for Northeast groundfish (Wiedenmann et al. 2019). These two different fishing intensities during the latter half of the base period led to different starting conditions for the feedback period.

Two variations of the OM were considered with either time invariant, asympototic, fishery selectivity in the base and feedback periods (referred to as "*S1*" below), or a change in selectivity after the first half of the base period so that the age at 50% selectivity increased from approximately 3.7 to 5 (referred to as "*S2*" below; Table 1). The asymptotic selectivity pattern was based on Northeast groundfish fishery selectivity patterns. The change in the selectivity pattern when selectivity varied through time approximated an increase in mesh size in the fishery to avoid younger fish.

Two different sources of stock assessment misspecification leading to retrospective patterns were considered, temporal changes in natural mortality and misreported catch. The degree to which natural mortality and unreported catch changed through time was determined by attempting to achieve an average Mohn's rho of approximately 0.5 for SSB when an SCAA model (i.e., configured using WHAM) was used to fit the simulated data. We also fit the same SCAA configuration to data without misspecified M or catch to verify that retrospective patterns were not present on average (Figure 1.2). A third source of misspecification was also attempted, time varying survey catchability, but this source of misspecification was unable to produce severe enough retrospective patterns and was abandoned.

For the natural mortality misspecification, the true natural mortality changed from 0.2 to 0.32 for the *OF* fishing history or to 0.36 for the *KF* fishing history, with the differences between fishing histories necessary to produce the desired retrospective pattern severity. In each case, natural mortality trended linearly from 0.2 to the higher value between years 31 and 40 of the base period. Natural mortality remained constant at the higher level throughout the feedback period. Those IBMs that required a natural mortality rate used the value from before any change in natural mortality (0.2) because the change in natural mortality is meant to be unknown.

For catch misspecification, a scalar multiple of the true catch observation is provided as the observed catch to the IBMs. The scalar is 0.2 for fishing intensity *OF* and both selectivity patterns, 0.44 for fishing intensity *KF* and selectivity scenario *S2*, or 0.4 for fishing history *KF* and selectivity *S1*. The shift in scalar trended linearly from 1 to the lower value between years 31 and 40 of the base period. These scalars were applied only to the aggregate catch so that they affect all catches at age equally. When catch misspecification was applied in conjunction with an IBM during the feedback period, the true catch in the OM equaled the catch advice provided by the IBM multiplied by the inverse of the scalar multipliers (i.e., the true catches were higher than the IBM catch advice). Thus, when the scalar multipliers were applied to the true catch from the OM in order to provide observed catches at the next application of the IBM, the observed catch equaled the catch advice from the previous application of the IBM, on average. In other words, managers and analysts would be given the perception that the IBM catch advice was being caught by the fishery, when in fact the true catches were always higher.

Fourteen methods for setting catches were explored (13 IBMs and the SCAA) and were applied to all 16 scenarios, which created 224 factorial combinations in the study design. For each element of the full factorial combinations, 1,000 simulations were conducted. Two IBMs (AIM and ES-Fstable) had two failed simulations each, which were caused by relatively high catch advice (i.e., requiring relatively high F) that triggered errors in the Newton-Raphson iterations used to determine that F that would produce the desired catch. This small number of failures was unlikely to effect results and conclusions, and so were not considered further. A naming convention was developed to more easily label and track results among scenarios (Table 3).

Some sensitivity runs were also conducted with all sources of retrospective pattern removed for two of the scenarios. All the IBMs, except DLM and SCAA were applied to these sensitivity runs.

Performance Metrics

A total of 50 performance metrics were recorded during the simulations, but many were redundant and displayed similar tradeoffs among the IBMs and SCAA model. So six metrics thought to be of broad interest were reported here, each calculated and reported separately for a short-term (i.e., first six years of the feedback period) and long-term (i.e., last 20 years of the feedback period) period. These metrics were selected to represent the tradeoffs in terms of benefits to the fishery and risks to the stock. The specific metrics reported were: mean catch relative to MSY, mean interannual variation in catch (A'mar et al. 2010), mean $\frac{SSB}{SSB_{MSY}}$, mean number of years among simulation with SSB less than half SSB_{MSY}, mean number of years among realizations that fully-selected fishing mortaity was greater than the F_{MSY}, and mean $\frac{F}{F_{MSY}}$.

Results

Overall performance varied widely across methods, and the individual performance of a method was sensitive to the different scenarios explored. Performance for each method was sensitive the source of the retrospective pattern (missing catch or M), the exploitation history, the time period the method was applied (short- or long-term), and whether or not a 25% buffer was applied when setting the catch advice from a given method. Overall, similar results occurred for the scenarios with one or two selectivity blocks, so the impact of the selectivity scenarios was not discussed further.

Aggregate performance

In Figure 1, median performance measures are shown, calculated across all scenarios combined. In general, methods that resulted in high mean F/F_{MSY} (Figure 1B) resulted in lower stock biomass (Figure 1A), higher risks of overfishing (Figure 1E) and of being overfished (Figure 1F), and vice-versa. Higher F values were also associated with higher catches (Figure 1C), on average, and a greater variability in catch, but there were some conservative methods that also resulted in high catch variability (CC-FM, CC-FSPR; Figure 1D).

A number of methods performed poorly overall, resulting in high exploitation rates and low stock size, on average (Figure 1). These methods include AIM, three of the four expanded survey biomass methods (ES-FM, ES-FSP, and ES-Fstable), and the skate method. The Itarget and Ensemble methods also resulted in $SSB < SSM_{MSY}$ and $F > F_{MSY}$, on average, though departures from the MSY levels were not as severe as the other methods (Figure 1). The remaining methods (CC-FM, CC-FSPR, DLM, ES-Frecent, Islope, Ismooth, and SCAA) were able to limit overfishing and keep biomass above SSB_{MSY}, on average, although for four of these methods (CC-FM, CC-FSPR, DLM, and Ismooth) biomass was was more than 50% higher than SSB_{MSY} (Figure 1).

Scenario-dependent performance

The source of the retrospective pattern had a large impact on results for a given method. The relationship between SSB/SSB_{MSY} and C/MSY is shown across scenarios for the different sources of retrospective error. Stock size and catch (relative to MSY levels) are clustered for many of the methods with no overlap between M and unreported catch sources (AIM, ES-FM, ES-FSPR, ES-Fstable, Itarget, Skate, Ensemble, and SCAA). For all of these methods, SSB/SSB_{MSY} was lower when unreported catch was the source of the retrospective pattern, and C/MSY was also lower except for the Itarget and the SCAA methods(Figure 2). The source of the retrospective pattern also had a large impact on the other performance measures (Figure 3). In general, when unreported catch was the source of the retrospective pattern interannual variability in catch was higher, overfishing was more frequent and with a larger F/F_{MSY},and the stock had a higher risk of being overfished (Figure 3). Seven methods (AIM, ES-FM, ES-FSPR, ES-Fstable, Itarget, Skate, Ensemble) resulted in overfishing in nearly every year of the feedback period (often with very high F/F_{MSY}) when missing catch was the source of the retrospective pattern (Figure 3B, 3E). The SCAA method also resulted in frequent overfishing under the missing catch scenario, but less so when the stock was more depleted at the start of the feedback period (Figure 1E). Interestingly, in this case the SCAA method resulted in overfishing 77% of the time, yet the average F/F_{MSY} was 0.97 (Figure 3B, 3E), indicating that the magnitude of overfishing, when it occurred, was not high.

Exploitation history also impacted the performance of many of the other methods. For four methods (Islope, Ismooth, DLM and ES-Frecent), exploitation rates were higher when the stock experienced overfishing for the entire base period. Although these methods were less conservative when the stock was currently experiencing overfishing, the impact was more dramatic in the short-term. Over time as these methods were used, F declined and remained below F_{MSY} in the long-term (Figure 4A), allowing stock recovery. The majority of the other methods also resulted in greater exploitation rates in the short-term, though some methods kept $F/F_{MSY} < 1$ regardless of the time-period (CC-FM, CC-FSPR, and SCAA), while others (AIM, ES-Fstable, Skate, Ensemble) kept $F/F_{MSY} > 1$ over the short- and long-term (Figure 4A). For the ES-FM and ES-FSPR methods, there was not a consistent pattern in exploitation rates when comparing the short- and long-term periods (Figure 4A).

As expected, application of a buffer to the catch advice resulted in lower exploitation rates compared to no buffer across all methods, but the magnitude of the impact differed by method(Figure 4B). Use of the buffer tended to result in greater reductions in F for the poor-performing methods that resulted in $F/F_{MSY} >> 1$. Methods like AIM, ES-FM, ES-FSPR, ES-Fstable and Skate all had large reductions in F when the buffer was applied, but the reduction was insufficient to reduce $F/F_{MSY} < 1$ (Figure 4B). For some methods (CC-FM, CC-FSPR, SCAA), the median F/F_{MSY} was always below 1 with or without the buffer, whereas for other methods (DLM, ES-Frecent, Islope, Ismooth, Itarget, and Ensemble) there were instances where using a buffer pushed F/F_{MSY} below 1 (though it depended on the exploitation history; Figure 4B).

The median performance measures reported thus far do not express the full range of results across individual runs, however. When all the simulations are plotted, there is clearly a wide range of possible outcomes for the population, indicating that performance for a particular series of environmental conditions, expressed through recruitment deviations, can vary widely. For example, Figure 5 shows the long-term average SSB/SSB_{MSY} and C/MSY relationship across runs for a single scenario. Different patterns in the relationship between the SSB and catch ratios resulted, with methods falling into two groups. In the first group, there is a near linear relationship between SSB/SSB_{MSY} and C/MSY (AIM, ES-Fstable, ES-FSPR, ES-M,Itarget, Skate, Ensemble, and SCAA; Figure 5). In the second group (CC-FSPR, CC-FM, DLM, ES-Frecent, Ismooth,and Islope) have a much more diffuse relationship, with a wide range of C/MSY for a given SSB/SSB_{MSY}. The linear or diffuse relationships persisted across scenarios, although the upper limit of C/MSY was greatly reduced for the diffuse methods when the buffer was applied to the catch advice. The linear or diffuse patterns have implications for the trade-offs among methods, with linear relationships having higher certainty of performance but lower population sizes on average. The more diffuse relationships can also result in situations where the population is quite high but the catch is low relative to MSY, meaning the F is quite low.

Sensitivity runs

Takeaway from sensitivity runs? I didn't have access to these results (I think), and am not sure what we want to say here.

Discussion

Overall, none of the IBMs considered in these simulations performed better than the rho-adjusted SCAA model. So in situations where an SCAA model is rejected due to a strong retrospective pattern, there should not be an expectation that an index based method will perform better than the rejected model. These simulations were by necessity limited in scope, so it is not clear that this will always be the case, especially if the retrospective pattern is much larger than examined in this study.

There were two groups of IBMs that performed similarly. In situations where the stock is felt to be in poor condition, CC-FSPR, CC-FM, DLM, Ismooth, ES-Frecent, and Islope should be candidates for consideration because they had better performance rebuilding an overfished stock. In situations where the stock is felt to be in good condition, Skate, AIM, ES-Fstable, ES-FSPR, ES-M, Ensemble, and Itarget should be candidates for consideration because they had higher short term catch.

Acknowledgements

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Tables

Table 1.

Age	Maturity	Weight (kg)	Fishery Selectivity (before change if applicable)	Fishery Selectivity (after change if applicable)
1	0.04	0.15	0.07	0.02
2	0.25	0.5	0.17	0.05
3	0.6	0.9	0.36	0.12
4	0.77	1.4	0.61	0.27
5	0.85	2.0	0.81	0.50
6	0.92	2.6	0.92	0.74
7	1.0	3.2	0.97	0.89
8	1.0	4.1	0.99	0.96
9	1.0	5.9	1.0	0.99
10+	1.0	9.0	1.0	1.0

Table 2.

Method	Details
Ismooth	$C_{targ,y+1:y+2} = \overline{C}_{3,y}(e^{\lambda})$ where $\overline{C}_{3,y}$ is the most recent three year average $\overline{C}_{3,y} = \frac{1}{3}\sum_{t=1}^{t=3} C_{y-t}$ and λ is the slope of a log linear regression of a LOESS-smoothed average index of abundance (spring and fall) with span = 0.3: $\hat{I}_y = loess(\hat{I}_y)$ and $LN(\widehat{I_y}) = b + \lambda y$
Islope	$C_{targ,y+1:y+2} = 0.8\overline{C}_{5,y}(1 + 0.4e^{\lambda})$ where $\overline{C}_{5,y}$ is the most recent five-year average catch through year $y - 1$: $\overline{C}_{5,y} = \frac{1}{5}\sum_{t=1}^{t=5} C_{y-t}$ and λ is the slope of a log-linear regression of the most recent five years of the averaged index.
Itarget	$C_{targ,y+1:y+2} = \left[0.5C_{ref}\left(\frac{\overline{I}_{5,y}-I_{thresh}}{I_{target}-I_{thresh}}\right)\right]$ $\overline{I}_{5,y} \geq I_{thresh}$ $C_{targ,y+1:y+2} = \left[0.5C_{ref}\left(\frac{\overline{I}_{5,y}}{I_{thresh}}\right)^2\right]$ $\overline{I}_{5,y} < I_{thresh}$ C_{ref} is the average catch over the reference period (years 26 through 50): $C_{ref} = \frac{1}{25}\sum_{y=26}^{y=50} C_y$ I_{target} is 1.5 times the average index over the reference period: $I_{target} = \frac{1}{25}\sum_{y=26}^{y=50} \overline{I}_y$ $I_{thresh} = 0.8\ I_{target}$, and is the most recent five year average of the combined spring and fall index: $\overline{I}_{5,y} = \frac{1}{5}\sum_{t=1}^{t=5} \overline{I}_{y-t+1}$
skate	$C_{targ,y+1:y+2} = F_{rel}\overline{I}_{3,y}$ where $F_{rel} = median\left(\frac{\overline{C}_{3,\mathbf{Y}}}{\overline{I}_{3,\mathbf{Y}}}\right)$ is the median relative fishing mortality rate calculated using a 3 year moving average of the catch and average survey index across all available years ($\mathbf{Y}$): $\overline{C}_{3,y} = \frac{1}{3}\sum_{t=1}^{t=3} C_{y-t}$ and $\overline{I}_{3,y} = \frac{1}{3}\sum_{t=1}^{t=3} I_{y-t+1}$

Method	Details
An Index Method (AIM)	AIM first calculates the annual relative F: $F_{rel,y} = \frac{C_y}{\frac{1}{3}\sum_{t=1}^{t=3}\bar{I}_{y-t+1}}$ and the annual replacement ratio: $\Psi_y = \frac{\bar{I}_y}{\frac{1}{5}\sum_{t=1}^{t=5}\bar{I}_{y-t}}$. These values are used in a regression: $LN(\Psi_y) = b + \lambda LN(F_{rel,y})$ to determine $F_{rel,*}$, which is the value of $F_{rel,y}$ where the predicted $\Psi = 1$ or $LN(\Psi) = 0$. $F_{rel,*}$ is called either the "stable" or "replacement" F, and is used to calculate the target catch: $C_{targ,y+1:y+2} = \bar{I}_y F_{rel,*}$.
Dynamic Linear Model (DLM)	Langan (2021).
Expanded survey biomass method 1 $F_{40\%}$ (ES-FSPR)	$C_{targ,y+1:y+2} = B_{\bar{I},y}\mu_{targ}$ where $B_{\bar{I}}$ is the average of estimated fully-selected biomass from each survey: $B_{\bar{I},y} = \frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{I_{spr,y}}{q_{spr}} + \frac{I_{fall,y-1}}{q_{fall}}\right)$ and target exploitation fraction, μ_{targ} is calculated as: $\mu_{targ} = \frac{F_{targ}}{Z_{targ}}\left(1 - e^{-Z_{targ}}\right)$ $F_{targ} = F_{40\%}$ and $Z_{targ} = F_{targ} + M$
Expanded survey biomass method 2 $F =$ AIM replacement (ES-Fstable)	Same as the above expanded survey method, but with μ_{targ} equal to the stable exploitation fraction $F_{rel,*}$ calculated using the AIM approach (see above).
Expanded survey biomass method 3 $F = M$ (ES-FM)	Same as the above expanded survey methods, but with the target exploitation rate set to the assumed M: $F_{targ} = M$.
Expanded survey biomass method 4 $F =$ recent average (ES-Frecent)	Same as the above expanded survey methods, but with the target exploitation fraction set to the most recent three year average exploitation fraction: $\mu_{targ} = \frac{\sum_{y-2}^{y}\mu_y}{3}$ $\mu_y = \frac{C_{y-1}}{B_{\bar{I},y}}$

Method	Details
Catch curve Method 1 $F_{40\%}$ (CC-FSPR)	$C_{targ,y+1:y+2} = \frac{F_{targ}}{Z_{avg,y}} B_{cc,y} \left(1 - e^{-Z_{avg,y}}\right)$ where B_{cc} is the estimated biomass: $B_{cc,y} = \frac{C_{y-1}}{\frac{F_{avg,y}}{Z_{avg,y}}\left(1-e^{-Z_{avg,y}}\right)}$ with $Z_{avg,y} = \frac{Z_{spring,y}+Z_{fall,y-1}}{2}$ $F_{avg,y-1} = Z_{avg,y-1} - M$ and, $F_{targ} = F_{40\%}$.
Catch curve Method 2 M (CC-FM)	Same as catch curve method 1 above, but with $F_{targ} = M$.
Ensemble	Median of catch advice provided by AIM, CCFSPR, ES-Frecent, ES-FSPR, Islope, Itarget, Ismooth, and Skate methods.

Table 3.

Position	Factors	Values
1	retrospective source	C = catch M = natural mortality N = none
2	fishing history	F = Fmsy in second half of base period O = overfishing throughout base period
3	fishery selectivity blocks	1 = constant selectivity 2 = selectivity changes in second half of base period
4	catch advice multiplier	A = applied as is from IBM R = reduced (multiplied by 0.75) from IBM

Figures

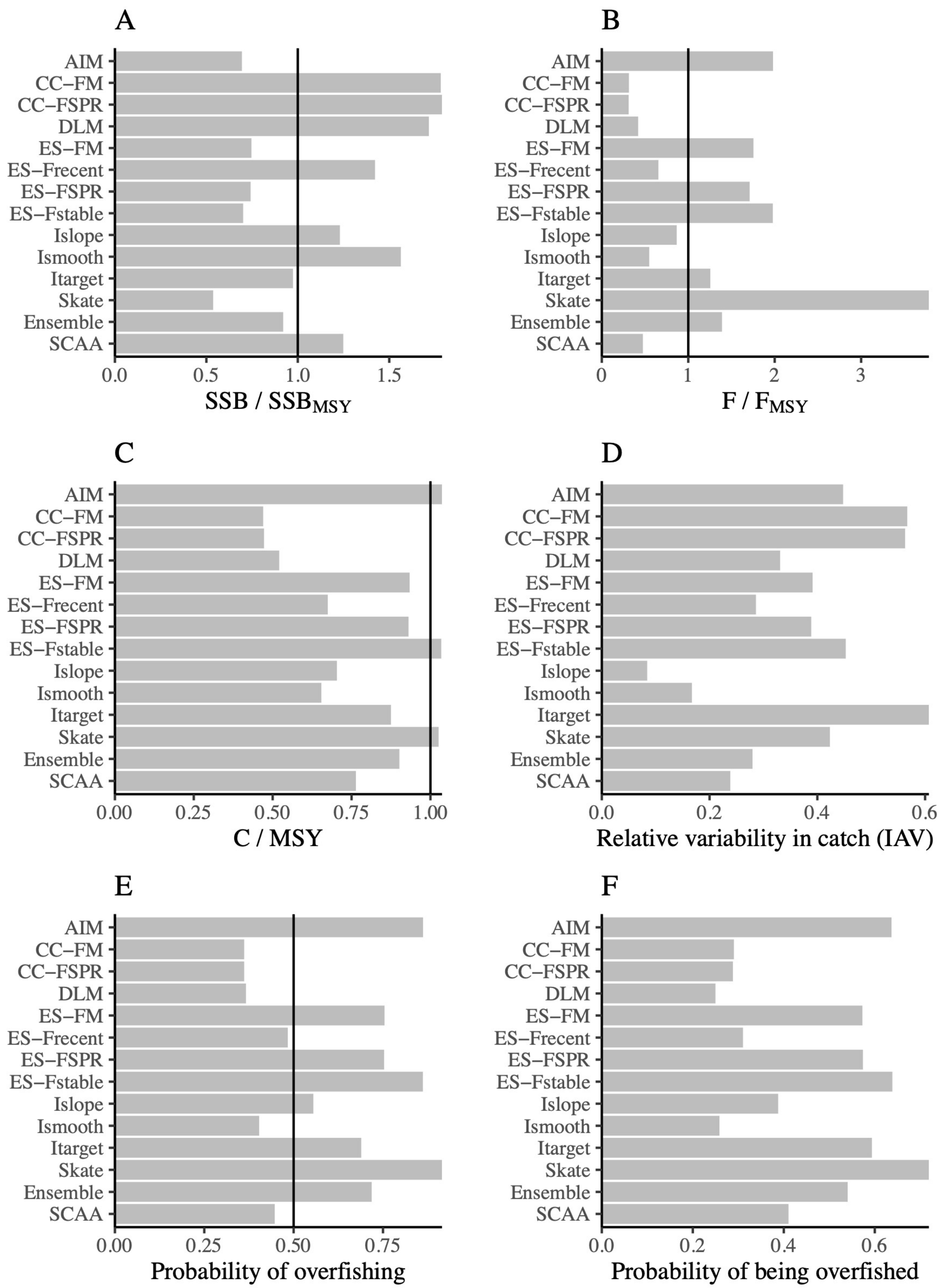

Figure 1: Figure 1. Median performance measures across all scenarios and runs for each method. Vertical lines are shown at a value of 1 for the perfrormance measures that are relative to the MSY reference points (A,B,C), and at a value of 0.5 for the probability of overfishing (E).

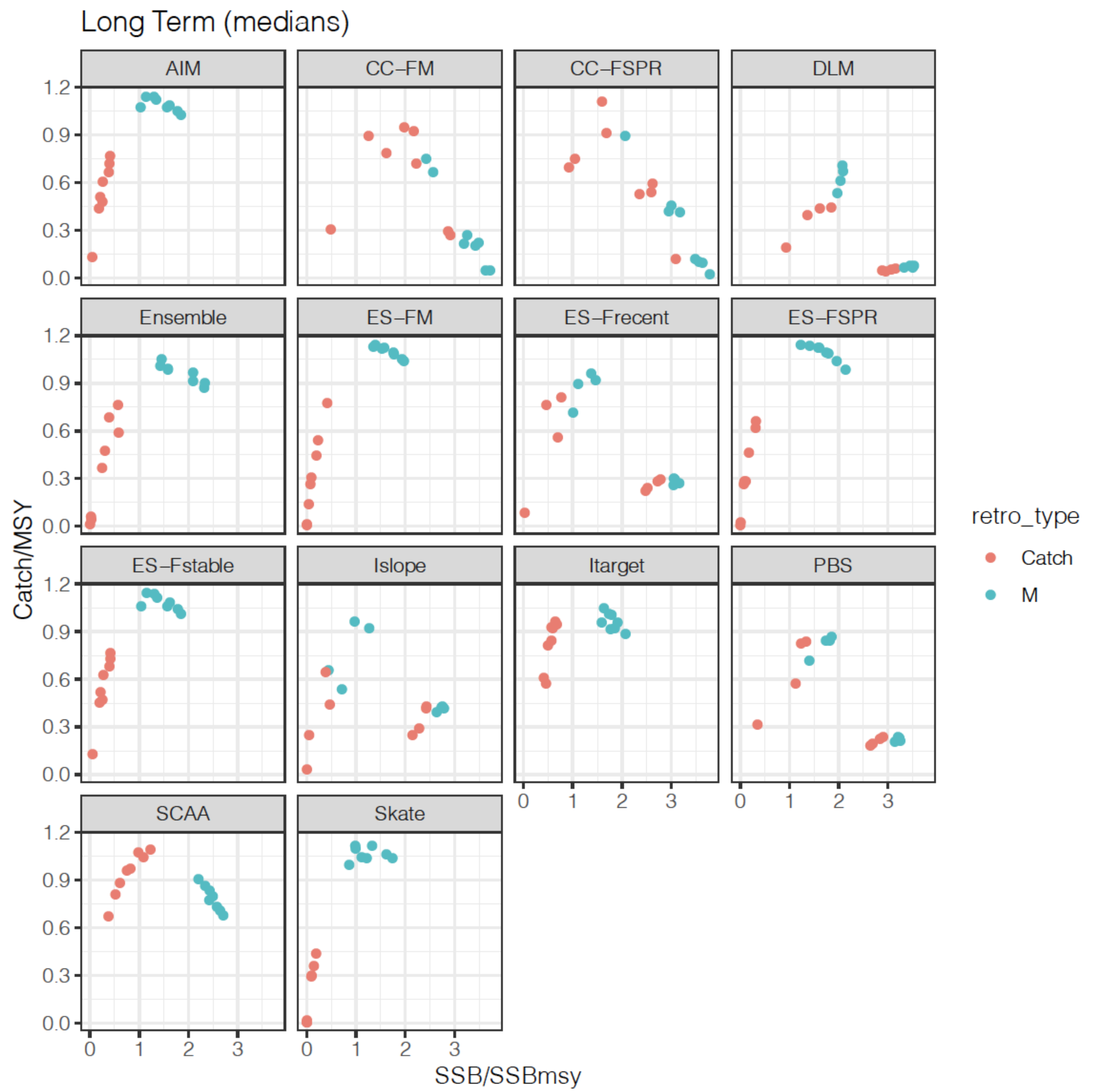

Figure 2: Figure 2. Relationship between long-term average spawning biomass and average catch (relative to MSY levels) for each method. Each point represents the median for a given scenario, separated by the source of the retrospective pattern (catch or M). **NOTE to coauthors: this was taken from the mass output figures Chris provided. If we want to keep this we'll want to 1) change font to Times, 2) reorder to consistent with other Figs (alphabetical except for Ensebmle and SCAA which are last), 3) change the points for retro source so distinguishable in B&W, 4 change X axis title to SSB_{MSY}).

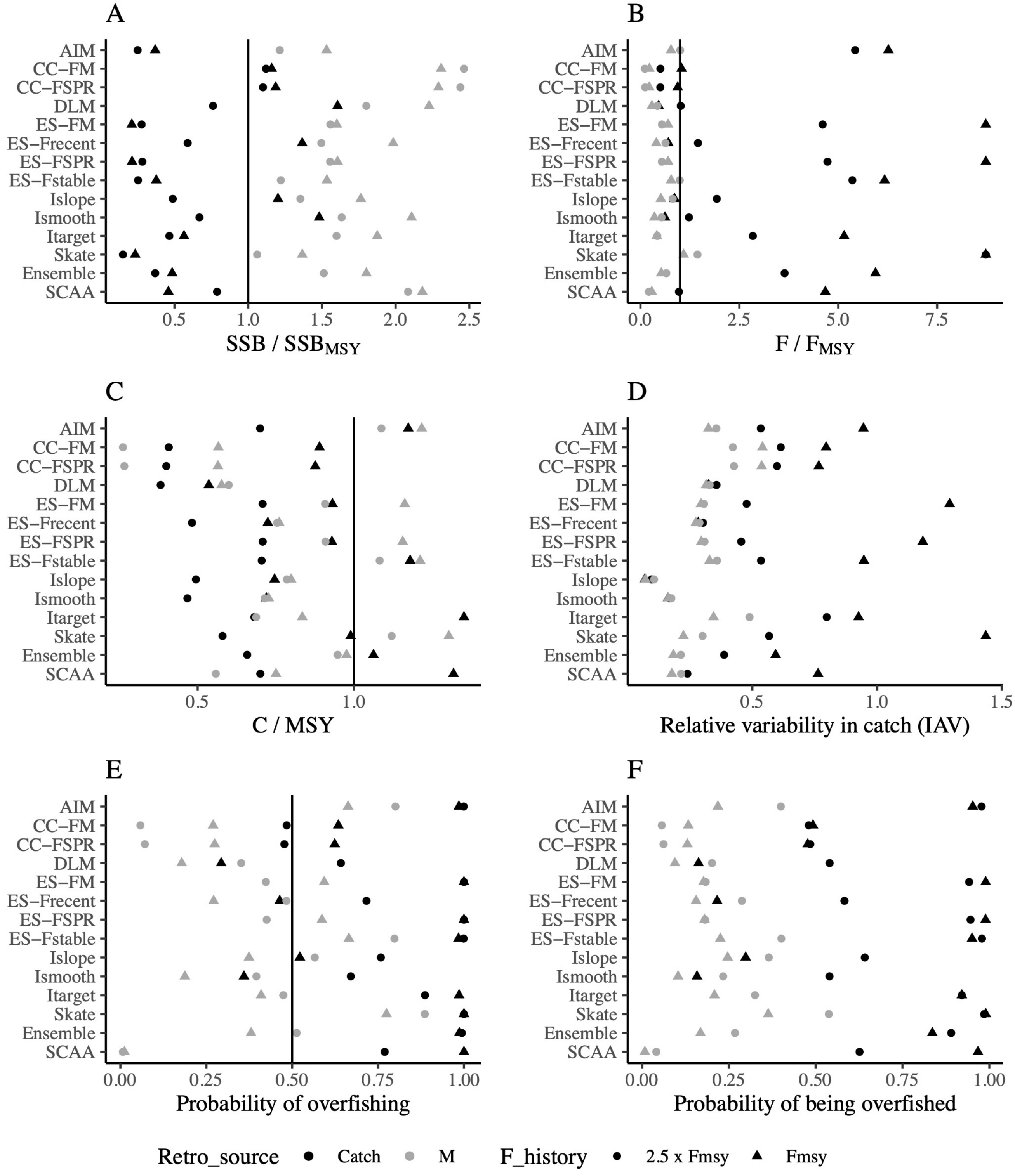

Figure 3: Figure 3. Median performance measures for each method, with separated out by the source of the retrospective error (catch = black, M = gray) and the exploitation history in the base period (always overfishing at $2.5xF_{MSY}$ (circle), or F reduced to F_{MSY} during base period (triangle)) . Vertical lines are shown at a value of 1 for the perfrormance measures that are relative to the MSY reference points (A,B,C), and at a value of 0.5 for the probability of overfishing (E).

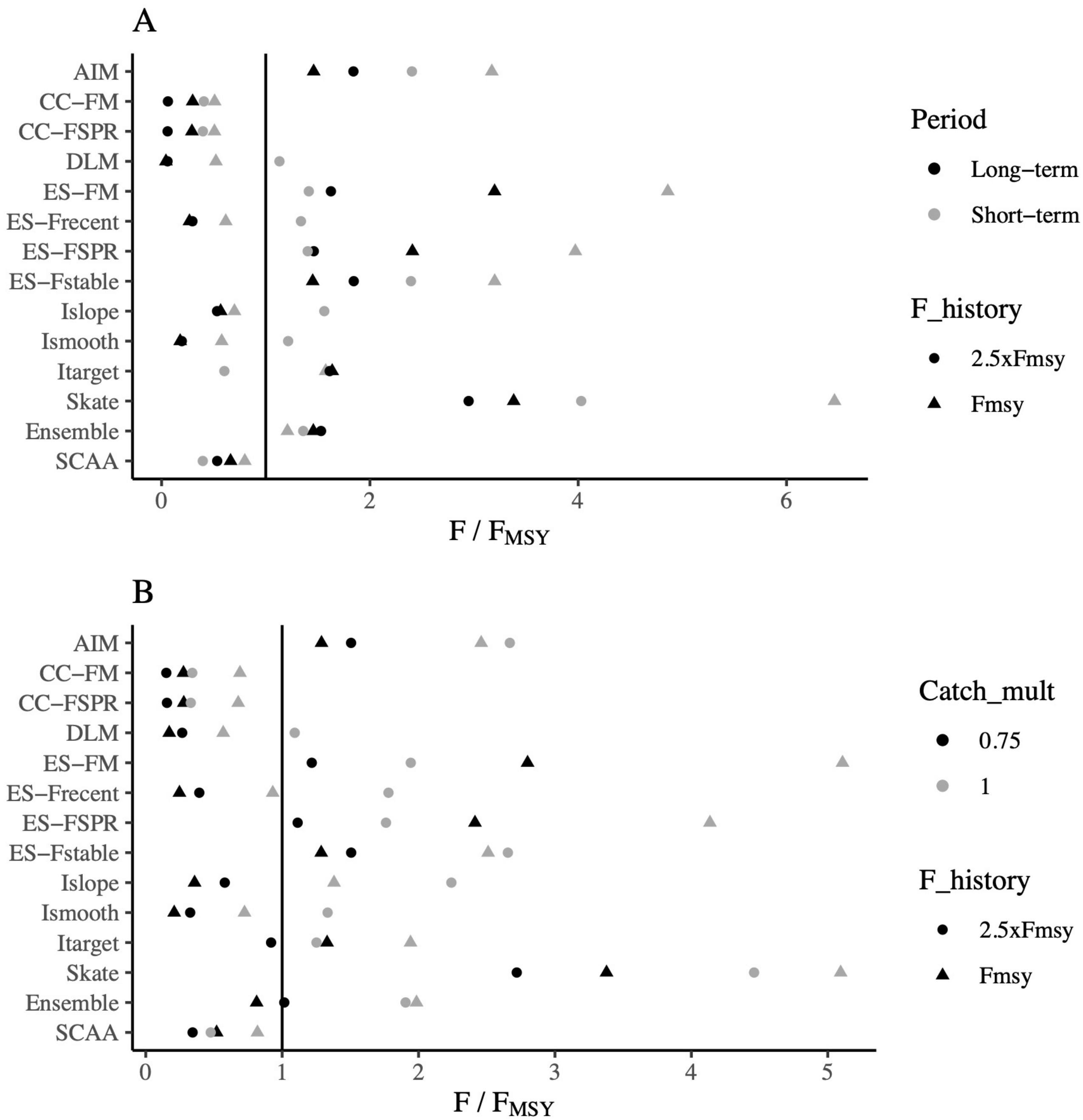

Figure 4: Figure 4. Median F/F_{MSY} for each method, with results separated by the exploitation history in the base period (always overfishing at $2.5xF_{MSY}$ (circle), or F reduced to F_{MSY} during base period (triangle)) showing A) short- (gray) versus long-term (black) values, and B) with (black) or without (gray) a buffer applied when setting the catch (catch_mult = 0.75 or 1). NOTE: I could add other PMs here too, but didn't think it necessary to have the full suite of PMs

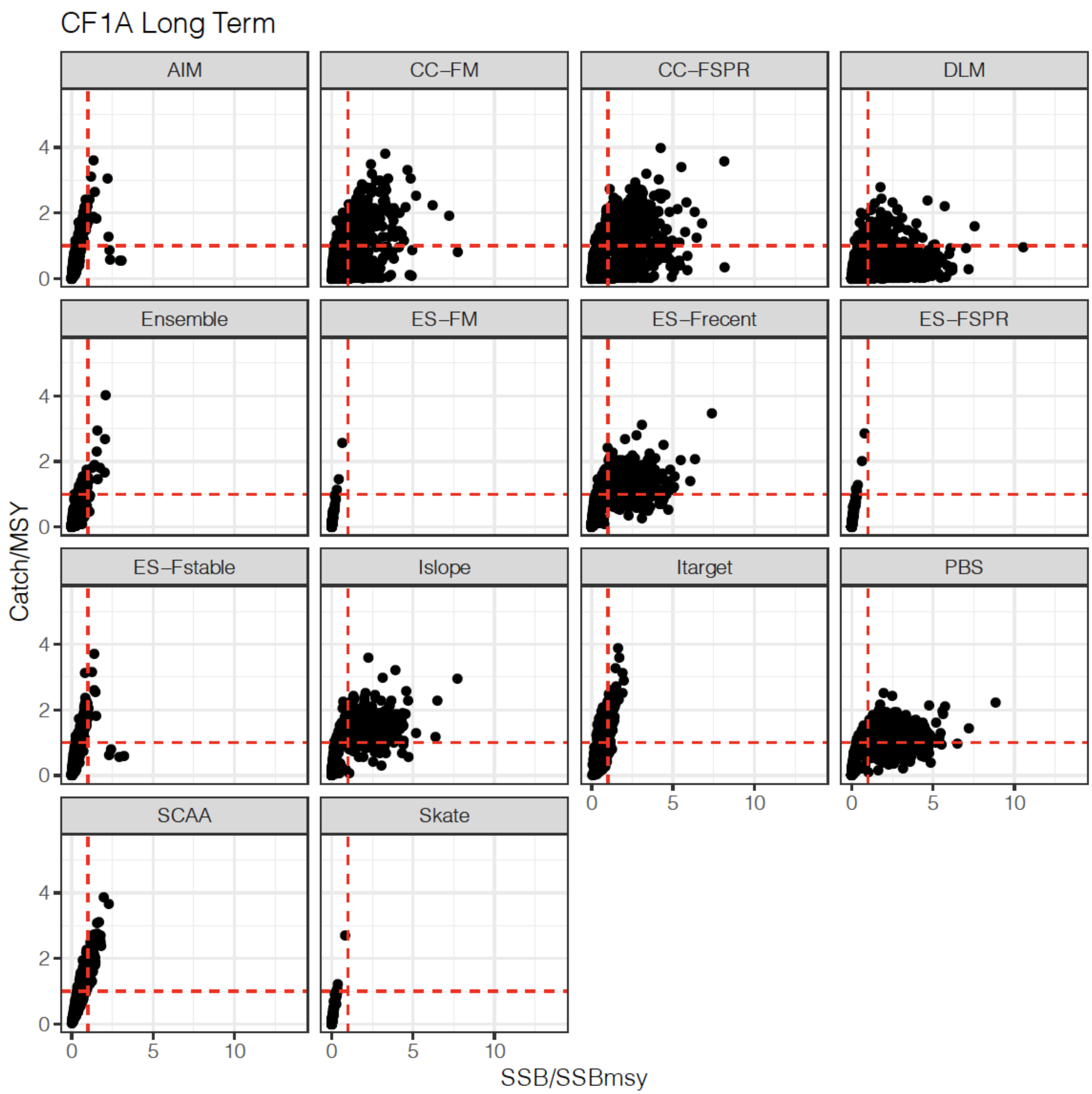

Figure 5: Figure 5. Relationship between long-term average catch / MSY and average SSB/SSB_{MSY} by method. Each point represents the average for a single iteration for the scenario where catch was the source of the retrospective pattern with F reduced to F_{MSY} in the second half of the base period, there was a single selectivity block, and where no buffer was applied to the catch advice (catch multiplier = 1).