8 Iceland grounds saithe

pok.27.5a – *Pollachius virens* in Division 5.a

8.1 Stock description and management units

Description of the stock and management units is provided in the Stock Annex.

The stock was benchmarked, and the management plan evaluated in March 2019 (ICES, 2019a). The result was no change in assessment setup. A minor change in the management plan was introduced as $MGMTB_{trigger}$ was decreased from 65 to 61 thousand tonnes to be in line with ICES MSY $B_{trigger}$. Other reference points were unchanged except HR_{lim} and HR_{pa} were introduced to replace F_{lim} and F_{pa}.

Following the management plan, the advised TAC for the fishing year 2023/2024 is 66 533 tonnes but was 71 300 tonnes for the fishing year 2022/2023.

8.2 Fisheries-dependent data

Landings of saithe in Icelandic Waters in 2022 are estimated to have been 61 881 t (Table 8.1 and Figure 8.1). This is 4% increase from last year, but as in most recent years well below the allocated TAC that has been between 75 and 80 thousand tonnes (Figure 8.4)

Of the landings, 53 736 t were caught by trawl, 2635 t by gillnets, and the rest caught by other fishing gear, mostly handlines and Danish seine. In recent decades most of the catch has been taken by bottom trawl (83% in 2010–2017, 90% in 2018–2022), with gillnet and jiggers taking the majority of the rest, 5% each fleet. The share taken by the gillnet fleet was larger in the past, 26% in 1987–1996 compared to 9% in 1998–2022 (Figure 8.1). The reduction in the gillnet fisheries is caused by general reduction in gillnet boats that are mostly targeting cod and increased mesh size in gillnet fisheries targeting cod.

The reduction in the gillnet fleet was driven by boats changing from gillnets and other types of gear to longlines, a change driven by cod and haddock fisheries. Price of large gillnet cod sold for bacalau reduced compared to "normal size", so it became more economical to operate longliners that supply fish evenly throughout the year. Increase in the haddock stock in the early 2000s and progress in automatic baiting were also an important factor. This trend has been changing recently but the effort by longliners decreased by 25% between 2013–2016 and 2020–2022.

For saithe fisheries the important factor is that saithe is rarely caught by longliners, so the fleet has become much less of saithe fleet than before. The share of longlines in the saithe catch increased gradually from 0.8% before 2000 to 2.5% in 2014–2015 but reduced again to 1.5% in 2020 and 0.8% in 2021 and 2022.

The fleet using demersal trawl can be divided in two parts, those that freeze the catch and those that land it fresh. The trend in last decade has been that the proportion of the trawler fleet that land the catch fresh has increased. Freezing trawlers have taken larger proportion of the catch of saithe and redfish compared to cod and haddock (Figure 8.6). The main reason for this is relative price of frozen vs. fresh fish for each species, but mixed fisheries issues like avoiding redfish when landing fresh fish can be a factor (redfish scratches the bycatch). The trend in recent years has been reduction in catch of all species by the freezing trawlers.

Spatial distribution of the saithe fisheries changed much from 2002–2014. (Figures 8.5 and 8.7). Before 2002 most of the saithe was caught south and west of Iceland but between 2012 and 2022 40–50% of the catch have been taken northwest of Iceland. Comparable percentage before 2002 was 3–8%. Similar increase can be seen for golden redfish, but redfish and saithe have for a long time been caught by the same vessels, not necessarily in the same hauls, rather as night and day fish. The area where saithe is caught now (Hali Figure 8.7) has since early in the 20th century been the most important cod fishing ground for trawlers.

8.2.1 Logbook data

Due to data problems hours trawled are missing from the Logbook data in 2022. The data do though exist but need to be linked to the database to get a coherent time-series. The analysis here are therefore only based on data until 2021.

CPUE from the fleet show increasing trend over time (Figure 8.16 and 8.17). Considerable variability can be seen on top of this trend and all measures of CPUE show substantial reduction since 2018.

The GLM indices shown in 8.17 are compiled by a model of the form.

$$C = T^{\gamma} \times \delta_{year}$$

$$C = T^{\gamma} \times \delta_{year}\delta_{freeze}$$

Where C is catch of saithe, T hours trawled. $\delta_{year}$is an estimated year factor δ_{freeze} a factor indicating if the catch is frozen aboard the vessel. γ is an estimated parameter showing relationship between hours trawled and catch.

Those models give similar trend as the indices compiled directly but the interesting observation of those models is that the models predict inverse relationship between hours trawled and saithe catch ($\gamma = -0.25$) (the models are run on all hauls where saithe is registered). The average numbers of hours trawled might be the best measure of the stock size. Shorter hauls means larger stock.

8.2.2 Landings, advice and TAC

For all Icelandic stocks that are managed by a TAC system the TAC is given for fishing year where fishing year **y/y+1** is from September 1st in the year **y** to August 31st in year **y+1**. Assessment done in spring year **y**, is used to give advice for the fishing year starting September 1st the same year. For most stocks the survey conducted in March is the most influential data source and the most recent survey from March in the assessment year is used in the advice process.

The management plan and assessment for Icelandic saithe have been identical since 2010 and both advice and TAC based on the 20% harvest control rule. Since 2014/2015 the TAC has not been caught (Figure 8.4) but in the period 1997/1998 to 2013/2014 the TAC was caught in all years except 2007/2008 and 2008/2009. The catch in the fishing year 2021/2022 is estimated to have been 63 thousand tonnes, while the set TAC was 77.7 thousand tonnes.

The Icelandic Fisheries management system allows some transfer between species based on cod-equivalence factors that are supposed to reflect the price of the species compared to cod (see ICES, 2021). Cod is though not included in the system that is quite limited. In recent years saithe has been converted to other species (Figure 8.2) that are probably more economical to catch than saithe. And considerable part of the saithe quota has not been used, that might be a signal of overestimation of the stock or that catching saithe is not economical. As described before, the fleet has been less of a saithe fleet in recent years and historical assessment shows that fishing mortality of Icelandic saithe was never really high (NWWG report 2002).

8.2.3 Landings by age

Compilation of catch in numbers is based on age and length distributions from the catches where the number aged is usually considerably less than number length measured. Discarding is not considered to be a problem in the Icelandic saithe fisheries, with an estimated discard proportion of 0.1% (annual reports by Palsson *et al.*, 2003 and later). Recently, the fleet does also seem to have difficulty in catching the set TAC making discards more unlikely. Since the amount discarded is likely to be small, not taking discards into account in the total catches and catch in numbers is not considered to have major effect on the stock assessment.

Foreign landings that are 147 tonnes are included in the landings above. They are mostly caught by longlines (75 tonnes), handlines (88 tonnes) and demersal seine (31tonnes). All the foreign landings have in recent years been taken by the Faroese fleet.

Catch in numbers are compiled based on 2 fleets, bottom trawl and gillnets, 1 region and 1 season. Bottom trawl accounts for 90% of the landings and other fleets than gillnets are included with the bottom trawl.

The samples used to derive catch in numbers are both taken by observers at sea and from shore samples. The trawlers that freeze the catch account for large part of sea samples while all shore samples are from fresh fish trawlers. In addition, relatively few fishes from sea samples are sampled for otoliths but the age–length keys are most likely similar.

Length distributions from sea and shore samples show some difference in recent years, the shore samples show more of large fish, specially 105cm+ (Figure 8.8). This difference might be reflecting the difference in composition of the catch of the trawlers that freeze the catch and those that land the catch fresh. Excluding sea samples when compiling catch in number for the year 2022 leads to little change (green and red bars in Figure 8.9). In most years the difference is more.

Length distributions from bottom trawl show tendency to catch small fish from 2000–2017, larger fish in 2018–2020 but smaller again in 2021 and 2022 (Figure 8.10). In 2020 the +105 cm group was unusually abundant.

Numbers sampled in 2020–2022 are shown in Tables 8.2 and 8.3. Sampling effort was low in 2020, mostly due to Covid. In recent years sea samples account on the average for about 75% of the length measured fish that is used in the calculation of the catch in number and 67% of the length samples (Figure 8.3). On the other hand, < 20% of the aged otoliths come from sea samples. These numbers were different in 2020 when no aged fish and 50% of length measured fish came from sea samples.

90% of the length samples are taken from trawl that accounts for ~90% of the catches.

The sampling program has been revised in last decades, the number of age samples reduced and the number of fish per sample has also reduced (Figure 8.3 and stock annex).

Two age–length keys are used to calculate catch-at-age, one key for the gillnet catch and another key for other gears combined. The same length-weight relationship ($W = 0.02498 * L$^2.75674) is applied to length distributions from both fleets.

Catch in numbers by age are listed in Table 8.4 and in Figure 8.9 where they are compared to prediction from last year, fitting reasonably well (red and blue bars).

In recent decade increased proportion of saithe catches has been caught northwest of Iceland (Figure 8.5). This situation could lead to potential problem, if the sampling effort does not follow distribution in the catches. To look at this problem catch in numbers were recompiled using 12 cells, 3 gear (bottom trawl, gillnets and handlines), 2 areas (north and south) and 2 periods (Jan–May and June–Dec). The resulting catch in numbers are nearly identical (Figure 8.11) and using it in assessment leads to less than 1% difference of reference biomass.

8.2.4 Mean weight and maturity-at-age

Weights of all age groups have been below average in recent years, the older age groups though closer to average (Table 8.5 and Figures 8.12–8.14). The large 2012 year class had the lowest mean weight of all year classes at age 4 and 5, both in catches and in the survey. This is in line with density-dependent growth that has been observed in this stock and can for example be seen for year classes 1984 and 2000 that are both large. The long-term trend since 1980 has been decline for younger age groups but increase for older age groups (Figure 8–14).

Weight at age in the landings are used to compile the reference biomass (B4+) that is the basis for the catch advice. Catch weights are also used to compile the spawning stock. Catch weights for the assessment year are predicted by applying a linear model using survey weights in the assessment year and the weight of the same year class in catches in the previous year as predictors (Magnusson, 2012 and stock annex).

Maturity-at-ages 4–9 has decreased in recent years and is currently below the average since 1985 (Table 8.6 and Figure 8.11). A model using maturity-at-age from the Icelandic groundfish spring survey is used to derive smoothed trends in maturity by age and year (see stock annex).

8.3 Scientific surveys

In the benchmarked assessments from 2010 and 2019, only spring survey (ice-smb) data are used to calibrate the assessment. Compared to the autumn survey (ice-smh) the spring survey has larger number of stations (lower CV) and longer time-series. Saithe is among the most difficult demersal fishes to get reliable information on from bottom-trawl surveys. In the spring survey, which has 500–600 stations, a large proportion of the saithe is caught in relatively few hauls and there seems to be considerable interannual variability of the number of these hauls.

The biomass indices from the spring survey (Figure 8.18) fluctuated greatly from 1985–1995 but were consistently low from 1995–2001. Since 1995 the indices have been variable but compared to the period 1985–1995 the variability seems "real" rather than noise. This difference is also seen by the estimated confidence intervals of the indices that are smaller after 1995. In 2018 the indices were the highest in the series and had tripled since 2014. (Table 8.7 and Figure 8.18). Most of the increase was caused by year class 2012 that was strong in the surveys 2015–2020 (Figures 8.20 and 8.21). The biomass index from the March survey reduced much from 2018–2019 but has fluctuated since, with the 2021 value relatively high and 2022 low. Usually, high CV is associated with high average value. The 2023 index is near average, but the CV is the fifth lowest in the series.

Estimated CV of age disaggregated indices from the survey is often relatively high and many relatively low values appear in the survey matrix, both for the youngest and oldest age groups. The youngest age groups (age 3–4 and younger) are considered to inhabit waters shallower than the survey covers and the older age groups are reducing in numbers or could also be more pelagic.

To take this into account the survey residuals are compiled as $\frac{log(I+\epsilon)}{log(\hat{I}+\epsilon)}$ where ϵ is a number that should avoid giving low values too much weight as they do in log-log fit. Typical value of ϵ is the value that 3–4 otoliths will give, that would be 0.15 for saithe. Higher values are used for saithe 0.3 for the older ages, 0.5 for ages 3–5 and 0.7 for age 2, a value giving index of age 2 lower weight when the index is low compared to lower value of ϵ.

The autumn survey shows similar trend as the spring survey and the index was at high level from 2012–2018 (2004 and 2018 are outliers due to large CV). The values before 2000 might be underestimate due to stations added in 2000 (Figure 8.5) in an area where large schools of saithe are sometimes found. Excluding these stations leads to lower but more stable index.

Catch curves from the spring survey indicate that Z ~ 0.5 assuming similar q with age (Figure 8.22).

Indices from the gillnet survey conducted south and west of Iceland since 1996 have been high since 2011 compared to the years 1996–2010 (Figure 8.19). The highest index is in 2019 when the large 2012 yearclass was 7 years old. The 2023 index is among the highest in the series. The gillnet survey is mostly targeting large saithe (mean weight in 2022 was 7.5 kg).

To summarize, survey indices show increasing stock for last 2 years, after decrease from 2018–2021.

The high index in March 1986 (Figure 8.18) was mostly the result of one large haul that is scaled down to the second largest haul when compiling indices for tuning. The scaling is from 16 tonnes to 1 tonne.

Internal consistency in the March survey measured by the correlation of the indices for the same year class in 2 adjacent surveys is relatively poor, with R^2 close to 0.46 where it is highest (Figure 8.21).

8.4 Assessment method

In accordance with the recommendation from the benchmark (ICES, 2019a), a separable forward-projecting statistical catch-age model Muppet (Björnsson, 2019), developed in AD Model Builder, is used to fit commercial catch-at-age (ages 3–14 from 1980 onwards) and survey indices at age (ages 2–10 from 1985 onwards). The selectivity pattern is constant within each of 3 periods (Figure 8.23). Natural mortality is set at 0.2 for all ages. The survey residuals ($\frac{log(I+\epsilon)}{log(\hat{I}+\epsilon)}$) are modelled as multivariate normal distribution with the correlation estimated (one coefficient).

The assessment model is also used for short-term forecast, the Muppet model cannot be run without prediction.

The input for the short-term forecast is shown in Tables 8.5, 8.6 and 8.9. Future weights, maturity, and selectivity are assumed to be the same as in the assessment year, as described in the stock annex. Recruitment predictions are based on the segmented stock–recruitment function estimated in the assessment model which is essentially geometric mean when the stock is above estimated breakpoint that is near B_{loss}.

8.5 Reference points and HCR

In April 2013, the Icelandic government adopted a management plan for managing the Icelandic saithe fishery (Ministry of Industries and Innovation, 2013). ICES evaluated this management plan and concluded that it was precautionary and in conformity with ICES MSY framework.

The management plan for the Icelandic saithe fishery, adopted for the first time in 2013 was re-evaluated by ICES in March 2019 and found to be precautionary and in conformity with ICES MSY approach (ICES, 2019a).

The TAC set in year *t* is for the upcoming fishing year, from 1 September in year *t*, to 31 August in year *t*+1. The TAC according to the management plan is calculated as follows.

If $SSB_y \geq MGMTB_{trigger}$

$$Tac_{y/y+1} = \frac{Tac_{y-1/y} + 0.2 \times B_{4+,y}}{2}$$

If $SSB_y \leq MGMTB_{trigger}$

$$Tac_{y/y+1} = \alpha \times Tac_{y-1/y} + (1-\alpha) \times \frac{SSB_y}{MGMTB_{trigger}} \times 0.2 \times B_{4+,y}$$

$$\alpha = 0.5 \times \frac{SSB_y}{MGMTB_{trigger}}$$

Where $Tac_{y/y+1}$ is the TAC for the fishing year starting 1 September in year y ending 31 August in year $y+1$. $B_{4+,y}$ the biomass of age 4 and older at the beginning of the assessment year compiled from catch weights. The latter equation shows that the weight of the last years Tac does gradually reduce from 0.5 to 0.0 when estimated SSB changes from $MGMTB_{trigger}$ to 0.

Reference points were also re-evaluated at WKICEMSE 2019 (See table below and ICES, 2019a). B_{lim}, B_{pa}, MSY $B_{trigger}$, HR_{MSY} and HR_{Mgt} were unchanged, MGMT $B_{trigger}$ changed from 65 to 61 thousand tonnes and HR_{lim} and HR_{pa} were defined but earlier F_{lim} and F_{pa} had been defined.

Item	B_{lim}	B_{pa}	MSY $B_{trigger}$	MGT $B_{trigger}$	HR_{MSY}	HR_{Mgt}	HR_{lim}	HR_{pa}
Value	44	61	61/65	61	0.2	0.2	0.36	0.26/0.25
Basis	B_{loss}/1.4	B_{loss}	B_{pa}	B_{pa}	Stochastic simulations.			

The recipe to evaluate MSY $B_{trigger}$ and HR_{pa} has changed since 2019 so those reference points were evaluated based on the same simulations as in 2019, leading to MSY $B_{trigger}$ = 65 thousand tonnes and HR_{pa} = 0.25.

8.6 State of the stock

The results of the principal stock quantities (Table 8.8 and Figure 8.24) show that the reference biomass (B4+) has historically ranged from 136 to 415 kt (in 1999 and 1988), but this range has been narrower since 2003, between 235 and 335 kt. The current estimated stock size of $B4+_{2023}$ = 309 kt is above average (75th percentile). Spawning biomass is estimated as 142 kt, also near 75th percentile since 1980 and well above B_{pa} (61 thousand tonnes).

The harvest rate peaked around 29% in the mid-1990s but has since 2013 been near HR_{Mgt} target of 20% on the average. The explanations for close to intended harvest rate since 2013 are two factors that cancel each other out.

- The allocated TAC has not been caught.
- The stock has on the average been overestimated.

Fishing mortality has been low since 2000 compared to before that. Part of the difference is caused by change in selection pattern (Figure 8.23) that leads to F before and after 2004 not being comparable measures of fishing pressure.

Recruitment has been relatively stable since year class 2006 and slightly higher than before. Year class 2012 is estimated to be strong and year class 2015 poor but the remaining year classes from 2006–2018 are close to geometric mean. Geometric mean is the first guess in the model for each year class. Deviations from the mean are then driven by the survey and catches but survey indices for ages 3 and 4 have been around average in recent years, except for year class 2015 where all survey indices have been low, and the year class estimated poor since in the 2018 assessment.

The details of the fishing mortality and stock in numbers are presented in Tables 8.9 and 8.10.

The commercial catch-at-age residuals in 2022 (Figure 8.28) are negative for age 10 but positive for age 7. Age 10 is the largest year class for 20 years (2012) and age 7 the smallest (2007). The survey residuals (Figure 8.27) show large positive values in 2017 and 2018 for ages 4–7, the age groups accounting for most of the biomass, therefore the survey biomass in 2017 and 2018 exceeds prediction by large margin (Figure 8.26). The survey residuals in 2023 are small and the survey biomass in 2023 is above prediction (Figure 8.26).

Assumptions about catch in the assessment year deviate from the stock annex that specifies the catch in the calendar year 2022 as the remaining TAC from the fishing year 2022/2023 on 1 January 2023 plus 1/3 of the catch in the fishing year 2023/2024. 55 thousand tonnes of the catch for the fishing year 2022/2023 were remaining 1 January and the total catch for the calendar year 2023 will be 77 thousand. tonnes following this procedure. Development of landings indicate that the catch for fishing year 2022/2023 will be around 56 thousand tonnes so the parameter "remaining TAC" in the model is set to 40 thousand tonnes. The advice for next fishing year is based on biomass at the beginning of the assessment year so assumptions about catch in the assessment year do not affect the advice.

8.7 Uncertainties in assessment and forecast

The assessment of Icelandic saithe is relatively uncertain due to fluctuations in the survey data, poor recruitment estimates and irregular changes in the fleet selectivity. The internal consistency in the spring bottom-trawl survey is low for saithe (Figure 8.21). This is not surprising, considering the nature of the species that is partly pelagic, schooling, and relatively widely migrating. Mcmc runs of the assessment model assessment model indicate that CV of the biomass 4+ is around 0.19, rather high value for this kind of estimate that is usually underestimation of the real uncertainty.

The 2023 assessment of Icelandic saithe is downward revision of the stock compared to the 2022 assessment, biomass 4+ in 2022 is estimated 6% lower than last year.

The retrospective pattern (Figure 8.29) reveals some of the assessment uncertainty. The harvest control rule evaluations incorporated uncertainties in assessment as well as other sources of uncertainty (ICES, 2019).

Using retrospective pattern based on the assessment years 2018–2022 Mohns rho is 0.30 for the reference biomass, -0.2 for the Harvest rate, 0.34 for SSB and 0.1 for recruitment (Table 8.11 called Stdsettings,figure 8.33). The retrospective pattern in last 5 years is caused by the very high 2018 survey index and then again relatively high 2021 index. Higher Mohns rho for the SSB than for B4+ is not unexpected as old/large saithe are due to pelagic behaviour, difficult to catch by demersal gear. Retrospective pattern of Mohns rho (figure 8.33) shows periods of over and underestimations.

Other model settings have little lower Mohns rho than the adopted settings (table 8.11). SAM model run on the same data has Mohns rho of 0.34 for SSB. None of the settings or models tested solves the recent overestimation problem that is driven by the data. Looking at retrospective pattern of longer timeperiod (figure 8.29) all the settings perform similarly.

Looking at metrics from (nearly) converged assessment (assessment year < 2019, year <= assessment the values are shown in Table 8.12 based on assessment years 2000–2017. Bias is defined as $\overline{log(\frac{B_{y,y}}{B_{y,assY}})}$ and CV as $\sigma^{log(\frac{B_{y,y}}{B_{y,assY}})}$. Mohns rho is really another way to present bias. The selection of years to use is the difference between Tables 8.11 and 8.12, in 8.12 the results are based on the assessment years 2001–2018 but the results for Table 8.11 on assessment years 2018–2022. The results shown in Table 8.12 are in line with the assumptions used in the HCR evaluations in 2022 (CV = 0.22, bias = 0 and first order autocorrelation = 0.5.

Using peels of 5 years for stock with low fishing mortality is rather questionable, the assessments used in the evaluations have not converged. Retrospective pattern of Mohns rho illustrates this problem well (Figure 8.33). The value of Mohns rho cannot be obtained from the HCR simulations where only current estimate and "correct value" are available, the first value is the basis for advice and the second value basis for development of the stock. Intermediate values do not affect, neither the advice nor the stock.

Alternative settings of the Muppet model and one SAM run were tested (Figure 8.30) compared to the results. The results show low estimated biomass when the survey data are downweighted, the same result is obtained with the leaveout run in SAM, both showing that catch in numbers indicate smaller stock compared to survey indices. The estimated uncertainty in the run where the survey is downweighted is though very high ($CV_{B4+} \approx 0.4$) Winchorised surveycd indices lead to less noise in the indices and therefore more weight on the survey in the assessment. The Adapt model used is just the Muppet model, using N of the oldest fish from the forward running model. The backwards running model is selected by changing one number in the main input file. An advantage with the Adapt approach is that CV of survey can be estimated independently for each age group, if attempted in a catch-at-age model the survey CV of one age will be set to zero. "The reweighted" model show lower biomass but it does also converge to lower biomass as the selection pattern of the oldest fish is different. Compared to last years the difference between the estimate of B4+ from different models is smaller.

All the models except the model with less weight on survey show similar retrospective pattern in recent years, ≈6% reduction in estimate of B4+ between assessment years 2022 and 2023 and ≈30% between assessment years 2018 and 2023.

The table below show $B4+_{2023}$, the number that matters for the advice. The values are in thousand tonnes.

Std settings 2023	Winchorised survey	Adapt	LessWeight on survey	Reweighed survey CV	Ages 3–14 in survey.	Survey CV	Std settings 2022	SAM
309	391	290	196	274	348	287	312	334

If all the models would be taken as equally plausible configurations (which they are not) the average B4+2023 is 305 and CV 0.19. Estimated CV in of B4+ based on the standard settings is also 0.19.

The SAM settings are correlated random walk, 3 observation variance blocks for the catches and 4 for the survey.

One problem in the assessment is the fact that the TAC has not been fished in some recent years (Figure 8.4). Despite overestimation of the stock, the assessment models do not indicate high fishing mortality nor harvest rate in last 5 years (Figure 8.24), mostly because the TAC has not been fished. The selection pattern observed since 2004 (Figure 8.23) indicates that the fisheries are targeting younger fish than before, something that could be interpreted as lack of large fish.

This trend is even greater than observed in the figure as mean weight at age of ages 4–5 have been low in recent years (Figure 8.12). The gillnet survey that is an indicator of large saithe shows high abundance in 2023 (Figure 8.19) and the autumn survey shows similar trend as the March survey (figure 8.18).

The problem seen in recent years is not new and the fact that fishing mortality of saithe was never high, indicates that it is difficult to catch saithe. One reason is that most of the gear is demersal while saithe is partly pelagic. Change of fleet and fishing practice in recent 20 years might also have effects.

The effect of too high TAC of saithe is increased catch of some other species through the transfer system, something that could change with higher price of saithe. Also, too much effort is used to fish saithe and at the same time avoid catching other species. Cod landed fresh should no be much older than 2–3 days, so cod is avoided during first days of a fishing trip. To account for problems in mixed fisheries the best solution is to reduce the harvest rate of saithe below what single species MSY considerations would call for.

8.8 Ecosystem considerations

Changes in the distribution of large pelagic stocks (blue whiting, mackerel, Norwegian spring-spawning herring, Icelandic summer-spawning herring) may affect the tendency of saithe to migrate off shelf and between management units. Saithe is a migrating species and makes both vertical and long-distance feeding and spawning migrations (Armannsson *et al.*, 2007, Armannsson and Jonsson, 2012, i Homrum *et al.*, 2013). The evidence from tagging experiments (ICES, 2008) show some migrations along the Faroe-Iceland Ridge, as well as onto the East Greenland shelf.

Saithe is an important predator of capelin and is included in the predation model used to compile advice for Icelandic capelin.

8.9 Possible changes in assessment setup.

The assessment of Icelandic cod was benchmarked in 2021 and a number of changes done in the model formulation that lead to substantial downward revision of the biomass (ICES, 2021). All the changes had to do with treatment of survey indices in the model.

1. With lower fishing effort the abundance of old age groups increased. For some of those age groups (10+) the number caught had been so low that sampling error related to few otoliths had been the most important uncertainty. Ages 11 and older in the surveys were earlier not used in the tuning as they were minor part of the stock (1–2%). Not including them in the survey lead to "ghostfish" i.e dome shaped selection pattern of the fleet, not an impossible pattern but not acceptable without some proofs, especially when the older fish becomes larger part of the stock.
2. For ages 6–9 abundance increased, and non-linear relationships started to show up, that was not apparent when range of values was smaller.
3. The relationship between abundance indices of ages 1–3 and older fish changed. The change can either be related to increased mortality or changed behaviour or less coastal spatial distribution.
4. The VPA version of Muppet was run and CV in the survey estimated for each age group using a VPA model. That pattern was then used in the separable model with one estimated multiplier.

Looking at saithe only factor 4 was relevant. Estimating power curves turned out to lead to no improvement of fit and the power coefficients were not far from 1 and quite variable in retrospective runs. Age composition of saithe has not been changing dramatically in recent years but old saithe has always been common compared to old cod. Looking at all aged fish since 1980 number of cod otoliths is 3.5 times the number of saithe otoliths but for ages > 12 years the number of saithe is larger than number of cod. Changes in spatial distribution of recruits could be relevant to saithe but the recruitment indices are of too low quality to be able to detect such changes. The common perception about saithe is that the nursery areas are close to shore while the nursery areas of cod are both close to shore and in deeper waters.

What was then left was to re estimate the survey CV pattern with age (like redefining observation error blocks in SAM) and increase the number of age groups in the tuning fleet. In addition, a version of the model that uses the estimated survey CV was run.

To revise the pattern of survey CV with age the VPA model is used, estimating CV in the survey for each age group. The VPA model used is just the Muppet model, first the model is run in the forward model but then the number of fish in the oldest age group is used for VPA. If large changes in the CV pattern are observed the procedure might be reiterated.

To look again at the value of ϵ in survey residuals in ($\frac{log(I+\epsilon)}{log(\hat{I}+\epsilon)}$) the number of aged saithe in the survey is 900 and the average total index around 20. Four otoliths do therefore correspond to ϵ = 0.15 which would be the suggested value to use for all age groups based only on this consideration. Other factors like poor spatial coverage of recruits might be used to justify higher values. In some of the alternative tested, age 2 was not included in the tuning fleet.

When doing the reweighting scheme, the pattern of ϵ must be exactly the same in the linked separable and VPA model. In principle the objective function for models using the same pattern of ϵ can be compared but if ϵ is different the comparison might be questionable.

When compiling the survey indices, relative standard error in the estimation of the indices is also compiled $CV_{s,y,a} = \frac{\sigma_{I_{y,a}}}{I_{y,a}}$ where $\sigma_{I_{y,a}}$ is standard error in the indices. High value indicates that few stations are responsible for large part of the index, it is the part of the uncertainty that can be improved by increasing the number of stations. There are other uncertainties that cannot be reduced by increasing the number of stations in the same area, like the proportion of fish that is pelagic or closer to coast that the survey covers. The model setup is to use $CV_{s,y,a}$ but add to that an estimated CV by age called $CV_{2,a}$ $CV_{s,y,a} = \frac{\sigma_{I_{y,a}}}{I_{y,a}}$. $CV_{tot,y,a}$ = $\sqrt{\left(CV_{s,y,a}^2 + CV_{2,a}^2\right)}$.

$CV_{2,a}$ can here be estimated for each age group as $CV_{tot,y,a}$ is never going to be 0.

Using this approach, the variance-covariance matrix (approximately 9x9) must be recalculated and inverted at every time-step, not a difficult task for today's computers.

In Figures 8.29 and 8.31 and the Tables 8.11 and 8.12 the results of 4 settings are compared. All the settings are based on the same data except the number of age groups in the survey varies.

1. Oldsettings. The adopted model from the benchmark 2019.
2. ChangedCVpattern. ϵ = 0.1 for all age groups. Age 2 not included and pattern of CV by age in the survey re-estimated.
3. surveyCV. Model uses estimated $CV_{y,a}$in survey as described above.
4. Ages3to14. ϵ = 0.1 for all age groups. Survey indices age 3–14. Pattern of CV by age in the survey estimated.

Model 1 is tuned with ages 2–10, 2 and 3 with ages 3–10 and 4 with 3–14. Models 1–3 are based on constant q by age for ages 7 and older but model 4 with constant q for ages 10 and older. Assumptions about age above which q does not change is an important factor in the settings.

Looking at Mohns rho, model 4 performs best for last 5 years. Looking at difference between contemporary and converged assessment in the years 2001–2018 model 1 performs best but the metrics for models 1 and 2 are similar. The Mohns rho indicates that recruitment estimates are reasonable in last 5 years but historically recruitment of saithe is not well estimated, this is just coincidence for this short period. Mohns rho from the SAM model is around 0.34 (for SSB), similar to the other models.

Comparing models 1 and 2 B4+2023 is 309 vs. 274 thousand tonnes (table in section 8.7), and the objective function -794.7 vs. -777.7. Model 1 fits the data better and indicates larger stock. Retrospective performance of model 1 is also better. Model 3 has an objective function of -879.6 but with 8 more parameters than model 1, might indicate that the approach used was promising. Model 4 uses more data than the other models, the objective function is therefore not comparable.

An interesting factor to look at in the models is estimated q from the surveys (Figure 8.32). Model 4 uses ages 3–14 for tuning but the other models 2–10 or 3–10. q is constrained to be identical for ages 9 and older in model 4 but ages 7 and older for the other models that use age groups until 10. This assumption at whigh age q becomes constant has considerable effect on estimated stock size.

Estimated selection (since 2004) in the model is also somewhat different (Figure 8.32). Models 1 and 3 have different selection pattern for older fish and do therefore not converge to exactly the same biomass in the period after 2003. The Adapt model (shown in Figure 30) might be considered as some kind of truth in this respect although is not completely insensitive to the number in the oldest age group that it gets from a separable model.

In summary, no obvious choice can be pointed at if a new model was adopted today. What works best for last 5 years according to Mohns rho does not work best when comparing contemporary and converged assessment 2001–2018ou.

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8.11 Tables and figures

Table 8.1. Saithe in Division 5.a. Nominal catch (t) by countries, as officially reported to ICES.

	Belgium	Faroes	France	Germany	Iceland	Norway	UK[1]	UK[2]	UK	Total
1980	980	4930			52436	1				58347
1981	532	3545			54921	3				59001
1982	201	3582	23		65124	1				68931
1983	224	2138			55904					58266
1984	269	2044			60406					62719
1985	158	1778			55135	1	29			57101
1986	218	2291			63867					66376
1987	217	2139			78175					80531
1988	268	2596			74383					77247
1989	369	2246			79796					82411
1990	190	2905			95032					98127
1991	236	2690			99811					102737
1992	195	1570			77832					79597
1993	104	1562			69982					71648
1994	30	975		1	63333					64339
1995		1161		1	47466	1				48629
1996		803		1	39297					40101
1997		716			36548					37264
1998		997		3	30531					31531
1999		700		2	30583	6	1	1		31293
2000		228		1	32914	1	2			33146
2001		128		14	31854	44	23			32063
2002		366		6	41687	3	7	2		42071
2003		143		56	51857	164			35	52255

[1] England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

[2] Scotland.

	Belgium	Faroes	France	Germany	Iceland	Norway	UK[1]	UK[2]	UK	Total
2004		214		157	62614	1	105			63091
2005		322		224	67283	2			312	68143
2006		415		33	75197	2			16	75663
2007		392			64008	3			30	64433
2008		196			69992	2				70190
2009		269			61391	3				61663
2010		499			53772	1				54272
2011		735			50386	2				51123
2012		940			50843					51783
2013		925			57077					58002
2014		746			45733	4				46483
2015		499			47973	3				48473
2016		287			48920	5				49212
2017		261			48786	4			4	49057
2018		270			65090					65360
2019		231			64295	6				64532
2020		188			50058	6				50253
2021		156			59618	1				59774
2022		147			61734	1				61881

Table 8.2. Saithe in Division 5.a. Sampling from catches 2020–2022.

Year	Fleet	Landings (t)	No. of otolith samples	No. of otoliths aged	No. of length samples	No. of length measurements	No. of sea length samples
2020	Longlines	745	0	0	1	8	1
2020	Gillnets	2573	3	75	9	630	6
2020	Jiggers	1794	4	87	8	365	0
2020	Danish seine	980	3	75	4	410	1
2020	Bottom trawl	43842	31	775	57	8182	26
2020	Other gear	319	0	0	0	0	0
2020	Total	50253	41	1012	79	9595	34

Year	Fleet	Landings (t)	No. of otolith samples	No. of otoliths aged	No. of length samples	No. of length measurements	No. of sea length samples
2021	Longlines	457	0	0	0	0	0
2021	Gillnets	2968	2	50	2	234	0
2021	Jiggers	1648	2	50	2	195	0
2021	Danish seine	1184	8	200	8	932	0
2021	Bottom trawl	53249	58	1560	159	29047	115
2021	Other gear	261	0	0	0	0	0
2021	Total	59766	71	1885	172	30533	115
2022	Longlines	500	1	25	1	125	0
2022	Gillnets	2636	5	100	6	707	1
2022	Jiggers	3473	5	100	5	600	0
2022	Danish seine	1478	3	60	3	360	0
2022	Bottom trawl	53736	48	969	75	9998	33
2022	Other gear	59	0	0	0	0	0
2022	Total	61882	78	1578	107	14042	34

Table 8.3. Saithe in Division 5.a. Sampling from catches 2022. No age samples were taken at sea.

Gear	Length sea-samples	Length shore-samples	Age sea-samples	Age shore-samples
Bottom trawl	33	59	5	59
Demersal seine	0	3	0	3
Gillnets	1	5	0	5
Handlines	0	5	0	5

Table 8.4. Saithe in Division 5.a. Commercial catch-at-age (thousands).

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12+
1980	275	2540	5214	2596	2169	1341	387	262	155	209
1981	203	1325	3503	5404	1457	1415	578	242	61	417
1982	508	1092	2804	4845	4293	1215	975	306	59	129
1983	107	1750	1065	2455	4454	2311	501	251	38	18
1984	53	657	800	1825	2184	3610	844	376	291	546
1985	376	4014	3366	1958	1536	1172	747	479	74	166

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12+
1986	3108	1400	4170	2665	1550	1116	628	1549	216	95
1987	956	5135	4428	5409	2915	1348	661	496	498	133
1988	1318	5067	6619	3678	2859	1775	845	226	270	132
1989	315	4313	8471	7309	1794	1928	848	270	191	221
1990	143	1692	5471	10112	6174	1816	1087	380	151	168
1991	198	874	3613	6844	10772	3223	858	838	228	51
1992	242	2928	3844	4355	3884	4046	1290	350	196	125
1993	657	1083	2841	2252	2247	2314	3671	830	223	281
1994	702	2955	1770	2603	1377	1243	1263	2009	454	428
1995	1573	1853	2661	1807	2370	905	574	482	521	154
1996	1102	2608	1868	1649	835	1233	385	267	210	447
1997	603	2960	2766	1651	1178	599	454	125	95	234
1998	183	1289	1767	1545	1114	658	351	265	120	251
1999	989	732	1564	2176	1934	669	324	140	72	75
2000	850	2383	896	1511	1612	1806	335	173	57	57
2001	1223	2619	2184	591	977	943	819	186	94	69
2002	1187	4190	3147	2970	519	820	570	309	101	53
2003	2284	4363	6031	2472	1942	285	438	289	196	72
2004	952	7841	7195	5363	1563	1057	211	224	157	124
2005	2607	3089	7333	6876	3592	978	642	119	149	147
2006	1380	10051	2616	5840	4514	1989	667	485	118	229
2007	1244	6552	8751	2124	2935	1817	964	395	190	99
2008	1432	3602	5874	6706	1155	1894	1248	803	262	307
2009	2820	5166	2084	2734	2883	777	1101	847	555	373
2010	2146	6284	3058	997	1644	1571	514	656	522	409
2011	2004	4850	4006	1502	677	1065	1145	323	433	469
2012	1183	4816	3514	2417	903	432	883	1015	354	549
2013	1163	5538	6366	2963	1610	664	375	537	460	320
2014	668	3499	4867	2805	1276	725	347	241	312	401

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12+
2015	781	2712	6461	2917	1509	694	589	249	133	347
2016	1588	6230	2653	2838	1648	1059	526	337	148	131
2017	750	3333	7542	1806	1449	813	648	229	127	237
2018	689	6681	4267	7908	1446	962	455	258	192	175
2019	1292	1585	6325	2752	4543	693	675	339	242	231
2020	1333	2310	1496	3228	1334	1700	710	351	379	666
2021	1832	6777	4160	1305	2380	1082	1303	471	197	190
2022	1861	5748	6217	2662	1129	1066	935	592	310	357

Table 8.5. Saithe in Division 5.a. Mean weight at age (g) in the catches and in the spawning stock, with predictions in grey.

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12+
1980	1428	1983	2667	3689	5409	6321	7213	8565	9147	9979
1981	1585	2037	2696	3525	4541	6247	6991	8202	9537	9523
1982	1547	2194	3015	3183	5114	6202	7256	7922	8924	10021
1983	1530	2221	3171	4270	4107	5984	7565	8673	8801	9445
1984	1653	2432	3330	4681	5466	4973	7407	8179	8770	10520
1985	1609	2172	3169	3922	4697	6411	6492	8346	9401	10767
1986	1450	2190	2959	4402	5488	6406	7570	6487	9616	11080
1987	1516	1715	2670	3839	5081	6185	7330	8025	7974	10886
1988	1261	2017	2513	3476	4719	5932	7523	8439	8748	9823
1989	1403	2021	2194	3047	4505	5889	7172	8852	10170	11194
1990	1647	1983	2566	3021	4077	5744	7038	7564	8854	11284
1991	1224	1939	2432	3160	3634	4967	6629	7704	9061	9547
1992	1269	1909	2578	3288	4150	4865	6168	7926	8349	10181
1993	1381	2143	2742	3636	4398	5421	5319	7006	8070	9842
1994	1444	1836	2649	3512	4906	5539	6818	6374	8341	10388
1995	1370	1977	2769	3722	4621	5854	6416	7356	6815	8799
1996	1229	1755	2670	3802	4902	5681	7182	7734	9256	9601
1997	1325	1936	2409	3906	5032	6171	7202	7883	8856	9865
1998	1347	1972	2943	3419	4850	5962	6933	7781	8695	10043

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12+
1999	1279	2106	2752	3497	3831	5819	7072	8078	8865	10872
2000	1367	1929	2751	3274	4171	4447	6790	8216	9369	10443
2001	1280	1882	2599	3697	4420	5538	5639	7985	9059	10419
2002	1308	1946	2569	3266	4872	5365	6830	7067	9240	10190
2003	1310	1908	2545	3336	4069	5792	7156	8131	8051	10825
2004	1467	1847	2181	2918	4017	5135	7125	7732	8420	9547
2005	1287	1888	2307	2619	3516	5080	6060	8052	8292	8569
2006	1164	1722	2369	2808	3235	4361	6007	7166	8459	9583
2007	1140	1578	2122	2719	3495	4114	5402	6995	7792	9848
2008	1306	1805	2295	2749	3515	4530	5132	6394	7694	9589
2009	1412	1862	2561	3023	3676	4596	5651	6074	7356	9237
2010	1287	1787	2579	3469	4135	4850	5558	6289	6750	8785
2011	1175	1801	2526	3680	4613	5367	5685	6466	6851	7739
2012	1160	1668	2369	3347	4430	5486	6161	6448	7220	8236
2013	1056	1675	2219	3244	4529	5628	6397	7055	7378	8342
2014	1211	1575	2229	2983	4378	5598	6773	8023	7875	9020
2015	1072	1639	2141	3122	4262	5555	6633	7697	8269	8773
2016	1105	1468	2260	3071	4127	5272	6379	7247	8566	8969
2017	1282	1674	2199	3255	4314	5718	6361	7630	8590	9238
2018	1346	1724	2335	3005	4178	5319	6544	7773	8530	9324
2019	1485	2054	2449	3128	4104	5694	6483	7750	8563	9488
2020	1285	2015	2386	3131	4065	5059	6284	7025	8285	9175
2021	1336	1719	2515	3227	4379	5296	6265	7152	8045	9062
2022	1226	1857	2394	3139	4117	5367	6081	6751	7963	8842
2023	1282	1757	2525	3301	4285	5261	6520	6976	8098	9129
2024	1282	1757	2525	3301	4285	5261	6520	6976	8098	9129

Table 8.6. Saithe in Division 5.a. Maturity-at-age, with predictions in grey.

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1980	0	0.08	0.184	0.37	0.603	0.798	0.911	1	1	1

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1981	0	0.08	0.184	0.37	0.603	0.798	0.911	1	1	1
1982	0	0.08	0.184	0.37	0.603	0.798	0.911	1	1	1
1983	0	0.08	0.184	0.37	0.603	0.798	0.911	1	1	1
1984	0	0.08	0.184	0.37	0.603	0.798	0.911	1	1	1
1985	0	0.08	0.184	0.37	0.603	0.798	0.911	1	1	1
1986	0	0.073	0.169	0.346	0.578	0.78	0.902	1	1	1
1987	0	0.067	0.156	0.324	0.554	0.763	0.893	1	1	1
1988	0	0.061	0.145	0.305	0.532	0.746	0.884	1	1	1
1989	0	0.057	0.136	0.289	0.513	0.732	0.876	1	1	1
1990	0	0.054	0.129	0.278	0.5	0.721	0.87	1	1	1
1991	0	0.053	0.126	0.272	0.492	0.715	0.867	1	1	1
1992	0	0.053	0.126	0.272	0.492	0.715	0.867	1	1	1
1993	0	0.054	0.129	0.278	0.499	0.721	0.87	1	1	1
1994	0	0.058	0.137	0.291	0.515	0.734	0.877	1	1	1
1995	0	0.063	0.149	0.313	0.541	0.754	0.888	1	1	1
1996	0	0.073	0.169	0.345	0.577	0.78	0.902	1	1	1
1997	0	0.086	0.197	0.389	0.623	0.81	0.917	1	1	1
1998	0	0.104	0.232	0.439	0.67	0.84	0.932	1	1	1
1999	0	0.125	0.271	0.49	0.714	0.866	0.944	1	1	1
2000	0	0.146	0.307	0.534	0.748	0.885	0.952	1	1	1
2001	0	0.162	0.333	0.565	0.771	0.897	0.958	1	1	1
2002	0	0.169	0.345	0.577	0.78	0.902	0.96	1	1	1
2003	0	0.167	0.342	0.574	0.778	0.901	0.959	1	1	1
2004	0	0.16	0.33	0.561	0.768	0.896	0.957	1	1	1
2005	0	0.149	0.313	0.541	0.754	0.888	0.954	1	1	1
2006	0	0.139	0.294	0.52	0.737	0.879	0.95	1	1	1
2007	0	0.13	0.278	0.5	0.722	0.87	0.946	1	1	1
2008	0	0.124	0.268	0.486	0.711	0.864	0.943	1	1	1
2009	0	0.12	0.261	0.477	0.703	0.86	0.941	1	1	1

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2010	0	0.117	0.256	0.471	0.698	0.857	0.939	1	1	1
2011	0	0.115	0.251	0.465	0.693	0.854	0.938	1	1	1
2012	0	0.112	0.246	0.458	0.687	0.85	0.936	1	1	1
2013	0	0.108	0.238	0.448	0.678	0.845	0.934	1	1	1
2014	0	0.103	0.229	0.435	0.666	0.838	0.931	1	1	1
2015	0	0.098	0.219	0.421	0.654	0.83	0.927	1	1	1
2016	0	0.093	0.209	0.407	0.64	0.822	0.923	1	1	1
2017	0	0.088	0.201	0.394	0.628	0.814	0.919	1	1	1
2018	0	0.085	0.193	0.383	0.617	0.807	0.915	1	1	1
2019	0	0.082	0.188	0.375	0.608	0.801	0.913	1	1	1
2020	0	0.08	0.184	0.369	0.603	0.797	0.911	1	1	1
2021	0	0.079	0.182	0.365	0.599	0.794	0.909	1	1	1
2022	0	0.078	0.18	0.362	0.596	0.793	0.908	1	1	1
2023	0	0.077	0.178	0.36	0.593	0.791	0.907	1	1	1
2024	0	0.077	0.178	0.36	0.593	0.791	0.907	1	1	1

Table 8.7. Saithe in Division 5.a. Survey indices by age.

Year	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1985	0.59	0.57	3.1	5.32	1.81	1.1	0.52	1.43	0.16
1986	2.34	2.46	2.15	2.21	1.5	0.65	0.3	0.19	0.32
1987	0.38	11.84	13.22	6.61	4.09	3.19	0.82	0.37	0.27
1988	0.31	0.47	2.74	2.86	1.76	0.98	0.42	0.07	0.08
1989	1.42	4.01	5.08	6.68	2.65	1.74	0.89	0.37	0.01
1990	0.73	1.32	4.96	6.42	12.53	3.38	1.23	0.65	0.12
1991	0.22	1.38	1.7	2.18	1.12	2.49	0.31	0.02	0.04
1992	0.14	0.91	5.91	5.67	2.84	2.69	1.93	0.28	0.06
1993	1.27	11	1.93	6.61	2.33	2.2	1.02	3.92	0.66
1994	0.83	0.72	1.96	1.79	2.07	0.72	1.13	1.2	2.77
1995	0.49	1.98	1.12	0.52	0.29	0.34	0.1	0.15	0.15
1996	0.13	0.49	3.78	1.16	1.03	0.59	0.98	0.06	0.09

Year	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1997	0.32	0.91	4.73	3.98	0.95	0.4	0.16	0.1	0.05
1998	0.13	1.66	2.36	2.55	1.27	0.72	0.3	0.09	0.07
1999	0.73	3.74	0.94	1.27	1.7	0.59	0.16	0.02	0.02
2000	0.38	2.01	2.55	0.61	0.86	0.54	0.45	0.08	0.03
2001	0.92	2.06	2.73	1.68	0.22	0.23	0.4	0.14	0.07
2002	1.02	2.23	3.01	3.11	2.19	0.42	0.47	0.32	0.22
2003	0.05	9.79	5.14	2.98	1.37	0.78	0.21	0.05	0.1
2004	0.9	1.39	9.6	6.27	4.52	1.52	0.84	0.17	0.17
2005	0.25	4.29	2.41	7.5	4.73	2.36	0.88	0.45	0.13
2006	0	2.19	6.77	1.98	8.86	3.5	1.21	0.29	0.25
2007	0.06	0.31	1.75	3.27	0.82	1.64	0.71	0.29	0.16
2008	0.08	2.26	1.81	2.88	4.05	0.62	0.79	0.34	0.15
2009	0.21	2.45	1.85	0.69	0.91	0.84	0.12	0.26	0.15
2010	0.07	1.24	5.07	2.55	0.64	0.61	0.47	0.07	0.12
2011	0.15	3.84	4.24	3.1	1.17	0.41	0.39	0.44	0.17
2012	0.02	1.77	12.01	6.75	2.76	0.63	0.17	0.38	0.5
2013	0.11	4.28	7.57	6.85	4.67	2.58	1.12	0.3	0.43
2014	0.03	0.39	3.89	3.74	2.02	0.87	0.42	0.15	0.11
2015	0.04	1.08	1.93	3.22	1.73	0.82	0.72	0.66	0.43
2016	0.05	3.17	16.21	2.75	2.27	1.08	0.53	0.44	0.28
2017	0.02	1.48	6.67	14.64	3.03	1.68	0.87	0.45	0.3
2018	0.03	0.5	17.92	10.51	15.28	1.51	0.84	0.43	0.32
2019	0.08	3.75	1.22	3.46	2.61	4.07	0.82	0.61	0.14
2020	0.09	1.89	2.57	0.7	2.14	1.19	2.36	0.35	0.18
2021	0.36	2.55	4.53	3.42	1.06	2.69	0.67	1.17	0.23
2022	1.2	2.43	4.39	3	1.11	0.24	0.69	0.25	0.53
2023	0.07	1.67	7.07	4.03	2.32	0.65	0.22	0.58	0.26

Table 8.8. Saithe in Division 5.a. Main population estimates.

Year	Recruitment (Age 3) in thousands	Stock size		Harvest rate B_{4+}	Total catch
		Reference biomass ages 4+	SSB		
1980	28192	313209	113020	0.184	57659
1981	20201	305792	119945	0.211	57548
1982	21583	295534	137282	0.204	67865
1983	32173	270927	137433	0.218	56504
1984	41807	288111	140130	0.194	60405
1985	35327	300144	138313	0.205	53728
1986	67037	319105	136634	0.236	65230
1987	90796	335800	128503	0.233	80237
1988	50542	414853	125523	0.194	77244
1989	32082	397462	129228	0.233	82339
1990	20860	377099	136747	0.267	97537
1991	29490	336930	147046	0.259	102201
1992	14921	288754	138698	0.257	79568
1993	19971	231567	114625	0.286	71539
1994	17867	188580	94905	0.283	63559
1995	30189	154742	70708	0.274	48296
1996	26077	151447	61813	0.248	39352
1997	17249	159408	62799	0.205	36671
1998	8975	157893	69591	0.195	30657
1999	31382	136557	75122	0.235	30898
2000	32352	148536	77963	0.215	32751
2001	55606	170165	85938	0.226	31570
2002	65042	230044	104811	0.212	41969
2003	73060	293231	129777	0.206	52306
2004	25944	335145	150261	0.202	64668
2005	72692	301174	160727	0.243	69054
2006	41824	326546	168182	0.208	75462

Year	Recruitment (Age 3) in thousands	Stock size		Harvest rate B_{4+}	Total catch
		Reference biomass ages 4+	SSB		
2007	18512	297172	163117	0.228	64261
2008	25951	265668	161063	0.238	69426
2009	37833	238498	149129	0.235	60266
2010	35912	235096	137377	0.22	53853
2011	42532	235760	127657	0.217	50769
2012	38799	237477	122264	0.233	51252
2013	39130	239293	120639	0.207	57522
2014	28155	231539	116626	0.205	45538
2015	79582	227694	118826	0.215	48476
2016	38042	278409	124782	0.176	49223
2017	49172	300729	137827	0.2	49054
2018	15597	327378	152843	0.195	65583
2019	31952	301107	161955	0.181	63130
2020	47304	278450	155009	0.203	50245
2021	46581	295244	158585	0.207	59762
2022	51293	295201	145219	0.21	61872
2023	32332	308827	142362		

Table 8.9. Saithe in Division 5.a. Stock in numbers. Shaded area is input to prediction.

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1980	32.2	24.7	28.2	46.9	31	10.3	8.2	3.7	1.3	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.1
1981	48	26.4	20.2	22.7	35.3	21.3	6.3	4.7	2	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2
1982	62.4	39.3	21.6	16.3	17.2	24.7	13.4	3.7	2.6	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
1983	52.7	51.1	32.2	17.4	12.2	11.8	14.9	7.5	2	1.4	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.1
1984	100	43.1	41.8	26	13.3	8.6	7.5	9.1	4.3	1.1	0.8	0.4	0.1	0.1
1985	135.5	81.9	35.3	33.8	19.9	9.4	5.6	4.6	5.3	2.6	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.1
1986	75.4	110.9	67	28.5	25.8	14	6	3.4	2.6	3.1	1.5	0.4	0.3	0.1
1987	47.9	61.7	90.8	54	21.5	17.8	8.7	3.5	1.8	1.5	1.7	0.9	0.2	0.2
1988	31.1	39.2	50.5	72.9	39.9	14.2	10.2	4.6	1.7	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.5	0.1
1989	44	25.5	32.1	40.6	54.3	26.9	8.4	5.6	2.3	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.3
1990	22.3	36	20.9	25.8	30.4	37	16.2	4.7	2.9	1.3	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.3
1991	29.8	18.2	29.5	16.7	19.1	20.2	31.4	8.6	2.3	1.5	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.1
1992	26.7	24.4	14.9	23.6	12.3	12.5	11.4	16.2	4.1	1.1	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1
1993	45	21.8	20	12	17.4	8.1	7.1	5.9	7.7	2	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.1
1994	38.9	36.9	17.9	16	8.7	11.2	4.4	3.6	2.7	3.7	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.1
1995	25.7	31.9	30.2	14.3	11.5	5.5	5.9	2.1	1.5	1.2	1.5	0.4	0.1	0.1
1996	13.4	21.1	26.1	24.1	10.2	7.2	2.8	2.7	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.2	0.1

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1997	46.8	11	17.2	20.9	17.6	6.6	3.9	1.4	1.2	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.1
1998	48.3	38.3	9	13.6	14.8	11.5	4	2.1	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2
1999	83	39.5	31.4	7.1	9.9	10.1	7.3	2.3	1.2	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1
2000	97	67.9	32.4	24.9	5.2	6.7	6.4	4.3	1.3	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.1	0
2001	109	79.4	55.6	25.7	18	3.5	4.2	3.7	2.2	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.1	0
2002	38.7	89.2	65	44.4	18.9	12.5	2.3	2.6	2.1	1.2	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1
2003	108.4	31.7	73.1	51.8	32.4	12.9	8	1.4	1.4	1.1	0.7	0.2	0.1	0
2004	62.4	88.8	25.9	58.2	38	22.3	8.4	4.8	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.1
2005	27.6	51.1	72.7	20.4	39.8	23.9	13.8	5.3	3.1	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.1
2006	38.7	22.6	41.8	57.1	13.7	24.4	14.5	8.5	3.4	1.9	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1
2007	56.4	31.7	18.5	32.7	37.7	8.2	14.4	8.7	5.3	2	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
2008	53.6	46.2	26	14.5	22	23.1	5	8.8	5.5	3.3	1.3	0.7	0.1	0.1
2009	63.5	43.9	37.8	20.2	9.4	12.8	13.2	2.9	5.4	3.3	2	0.7	0.4	0.1
2010	57.9	51.9	35.9	29.6	13.3	5.6	7.5	7.9	1.8	3.2	2	1.2	0.4	0.3
2011	58.4	47.4	42.5	28.2	19.7	8.1	3.3	4.5	5	1.1	2	1.2	0.7	0.3
2012	42	47.8	38.8	33.4	19	12.2	4.9	2.1	2.9	3.1	0.7	1.2	0.7	0.4
2013	118.7	34.4	39.1	30.5	22.5	11.7	7.4	3	1.3	1.8	2	0.4	0.8	0.5
2014	56.8	97.2	28.2	30.6	20	13.3	6.8	4.4	1.9	0.8	1.1	1.1	0.3	0.5

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
2015	73.4	46.5	79.6	22.2	21	12.7	8.4	4.3	2.9	1.2	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.2
2016	23.3	60.1	38	62.8	15.3	13.4	8	5.3	2.9	1.9	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.5
2017	47.7	19.1	49.2	30.1	43.6	9.8	8.5	5.1	3.5	1.9	1.2	0.5	0.2	0.3
2018	70.6	39	15.6	39.1	21.5	29.2	6.5	5.7	3.5	2.4	1.3	0.8	0.3	0.1
2019	69.5	57.8	32	12.3	26.8	13.6	18.2	4.1	3.7	2.3	1.5	0.8	0.5	0.2
2020	76.5	56.9	47.3	25.2	8.4	16.9	8.4	11.5	2.7	2.4	1.5	1	0.5	0.3
2021	48.2	62.6	46.6	37.5	17.7	5.5	10.9	5.5	7.8	1.8	1.6	0.9	0.6	0.3
2022	50.2	39.5	51.3	36.7	25.5	11	3.4	6.8	3.6	4.9	1.1	1	0.6	0.4
2023	51.4	41.1	32.3	40.3	24.7	15.7	6.7	2.1	4.4	2.2	3.1	0.7	0.6	0.4
2024	51.6	42.1	33.6	25.5	27.5	15.5	9.7	4.2	1.4	2.8	1.4	1.9	0.4	0.4
2025	32.2	24.7	28.2	46.9	31	10.3	8.2	3.7	1.3	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.1

Table 8.10. Saithe in Division 5.a. Fishing mortality rate. Shaded areas show predictions i.e. where catches are unknown.

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1980												
1981	0.016	0.085	0.177	0.294	0.362	0.434	0.403	0.434	0.337	0.356	0.356	0.356
1982	0.015	0.076	0.158	0.263	0.323	0.388	0.36	0.388	0.301	0.318	0.318	0.318
1983	0.017	0.088	0.183	0.303	0.373	0.448	0.415	0.448	0.347	0.367	0.367	0.367
1984	0.014	0.07	0.147	0.243	0.299	0.359	0.333	0.359	0.279	0.294	0.294	0.294

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1985	0.013	0.067	0.14	0.231	0.285	0.342	0.317	0.342	0.265	0.28	0.28	0.28
1986	0.014	0.071	0.148	0.246	0.302	0.363	0.337	0.363	0.282	0.297	0.297	0.297
1987	0.016	0.082	0.171	0.283	0.348	0.418	0.388	0.418	0.324	0.343	0.343	0.343
1988	0.02	0.102	0.213	0.352	0.434	0.521	0.483	0.521	0.404	0.426	0.426	0.426
1989	0.018	0.094	0.195	0.323	0.398	0.478	0.444	0.478	0.371	0.392	0.392	0.392
1990	0.017	0.089	0.186	0.308	0.379	0.455	0.422	0.455	0.353	0.372	0.372	0.372
1991	0.02	0.102	0.212	0.351	0.432	0.519	0.481	0.519	0.402	0.425	0.425	0.425
1992	0.021	0.108	0.226	0.374	0.461	0.554	0.513	0.554	0.429	0.453	0.453	0.453
1993	0.02	0.106	0.221	0.366	0.451	0.542	0.502	0.542	0.42	0.444	0.444	0.444
1994	0.022	0.115	0.239	0.396	0.488	0.586	0.543	0.586	0.454	0.48	0.48	0.48
1995	0.025	0.13	0.271	0.448	0.552	0.663	0.615	0.663	0.514	0.543	0.543	0.543
1996	0.025	0.132	0.275	0.456	0.562	0.674	0.625	0.674	0.523	0.552	0.552	0.552
1997	0.022	0.115	0.239	0.397	0.488	0.586	0.544	0.586	0.455	0.48	0.48	0.48
1998	0.035	0.143	0.228	0.307	0.406	0.506	0.536	0.504	0.504	0.458	0.458	0.458
1999	0.028	0.115	0.184	0.247	0.327	0.407	0.432	0.406	0.406	0.369	0.369	0.369
2000	0.029	0.12	0.191	0.256	0.339	0.422	0.448	0.421	0.421	0.383	0.383	0.383
2001	0.031	0.125	0.2	0.268	0.355	0.442	0.469	0.441	0.441	0.401	0.401	0.401
2002	0.026	0.105	0.167	0.224	0.297	0.369	0.391	0.368	0.368	0.334	0.334	0.334

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
2003	0.028	0.113	0.181	0.243	0.321	0.4	0.424	0.399	0.399	0.362	0.362	0.362
2004	0.027	0.111	0.176	0.237	0.314	0.39	0.414	0.389	0.389	0.354	0.354	0.354
2005	0.038	0.181	0.264	0.276	0.261	0.229	0.253	0.244	0.268	0.257	0.257	0.257
2006	0.042	0.197	0.288	0.302	0.286	0.25	0.276	0.266	0.293	0.281	0.281	0.281
2007	0.045	0.215	0.314	0.329	0.311	0.272	0.301	0.29	0.319	0.306	0.306	0.306
2008	0.042	0.199	0.29	0.305	0.288	0.252	0.279	0.268	0.296	0.284	0.284	0.284
2009	0.049	0.232	0.339	0.356	0.337	0.295	0.326	0.314	0.346	0.331	0.331	0.331
2010	0.047	0.222	0.324	0.34	0.322	0.282	0.311	0.3	0.33	0.317	0.317	0.317
2011	0.043	0.205	0.299	0.313	0.296	0.259	0.287	0.276	0.304	0.292	0.292	0.292
2012	0.041	0.193	0.282	0.296	0.28	0.245	0.271	0.261	0.287	0.275	0.275	0.275
2013	0.041	0.194	0.284	0.298	0.281	0.246	0.272	0.262	0.289	0.277	0.277	0.277
2014	0.047	0.222	0.324	0.34	0.321	0.281	0.311	0.299	0.33	0.316	0.316	0.316
2015	0.037	0.174	0.253	0.266	0.252	0.22	0.243	0.234	0.258	0.248	0.248	0.248
2016	0.036	0.173	0.253	0.265	0.251	0.22	0.243	0.234	0.258	0.247	0.247	0.247
2017	0.035	0.165	0.241	0.253	0.239	0.209	0.231	0.223	0.246	0.235	0.235	0.235
2018	0.029	0.138	0.201	0.211	0.199	0.175	0.193	0.186	0.205	0.196	0.196	0.196
2019	0.037	0.177	0.259	0.271	0.257	0.225	0.248	0.239	0.264	0.253	0.253	0.253
2020	0.038	0.179	0.262	0.274	0.259	0.227	0.251	0.242	0.266	0.255	0.255	0.255

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
2021	0.032	0.154	0.225	0.236	0.223	0.195	0.216	0.208	0.229	0.22	0.22	0.22
2022	0.039	0.187	0.274	0.287	0.271	0.238	0.262	0.253	0.279	0.267	0.267	0.267
2023	0.041	0.194	0.283	0.297	0.281	0.246	0.272	0.262	0.289	0.277	0.277	0.277
2024	0.038	0.181	0.264	0.277	0.262	0.23	0.254	0.244	0.269	0.258	0.258	0.258

Table 8.11. Mohns rho for the 5 models compared as candidate assessment model. The value is based on assessment years 2018–2022. Stdsettings is the adopted model today. The lower table applies if year < Assessment year but the upper table if year <= Assessment year.

model	B4+	ssb	N3	hr	f4–9
Stdsettings	0.304	0.3407	0.102	−0.2001	−0.229
ChangedCVpattern	0.2307	0.2806	0.0529	−0.1593	−0.1868
SurveyCV	0.2097	0.2472	−0.0089	−0.1433	−0.1698
Ages3to14	0.2279	0.255	−3e-04	−0.161	−0.1879

model	B4+	ssb	N3	hr	f4–9
Stdsettings	0.263	0.2777	0.1848	−0.2001	−0.229
ChangedCVpattern	0.203	0.2356	0.1328	−0.1593	−0.1868
SurveyCV	0.1841	0.2063	0.1463	−0.1433	−0.1698
Ages3to14	0.2007	0.2061	0.1305	−0.161	−0.1879

Table 8.12. Bias, CV and Mohns rho for the 4 models compared as candidate assessment model based on "converged assessment" i.e. results from assessment years 2000–2017 compared to results for same years from the 2022 assessment.

Parameter	Model	Bias	CV	Mohn's rho
b4p	Stdsettings	−0.032	0.234	−0.006
b4p	ChangedCVpattern	−0.013	0.277	0.023
b4p	SurveyCV	0.133	0.25	0.175
b4p	Ages3to14	−0.133	0.267	−0.095
fbar	Stdsettings	0.003	0.264	0.037
fbar	ChangedCVpattern	−0.022	0.304	0.023
fbar	SurveyCV	−0.146	0.269	−0.105
fbar	Ages3to14	0.099	0.297	0.152
hr	Stdsettings	0.007	0.218	0.03
hr	ChangedCVpattern	−0.018	0.249	0.012
hr	SurveyCV	−0.124	0.229	−0.093
hr	Ages3to14	0.082	0.24	0.116
n3	Stdsettings	−0.247	0.346	−0.176
n3	ChangedCVpattern	−0.271	0.317	−0.201
n3	SurveyCV	−0.141	0.283	−0.1

Parameter	Model	Bias	CV	Mohn's rho
n3	Ages3to14	−0.344	0.307	−0.259
ssb	Stdsettings	−0.057	0.293	−0.018
ssb	ChangedCVpattern	−0.016	0.355	0.042
ssb	SurveyCV	0.131	0.315	0.192
ssb	Ages3to14	−0.166	0.344	−0.107

Table 8.13. Saithe in Division 5.a. Output from short-term projections.

2023			
B4+	SSB	Fbar	Landings
309	142	0.245	62.2

2024				2025		
B4+	SSB	Fbar	Landings	B4+	SSB	Rationale
294	140	0.267	65.2	276	137	20% HCR

20% HCR = average between 0.2 B4+ (current year) and last year's TAC.

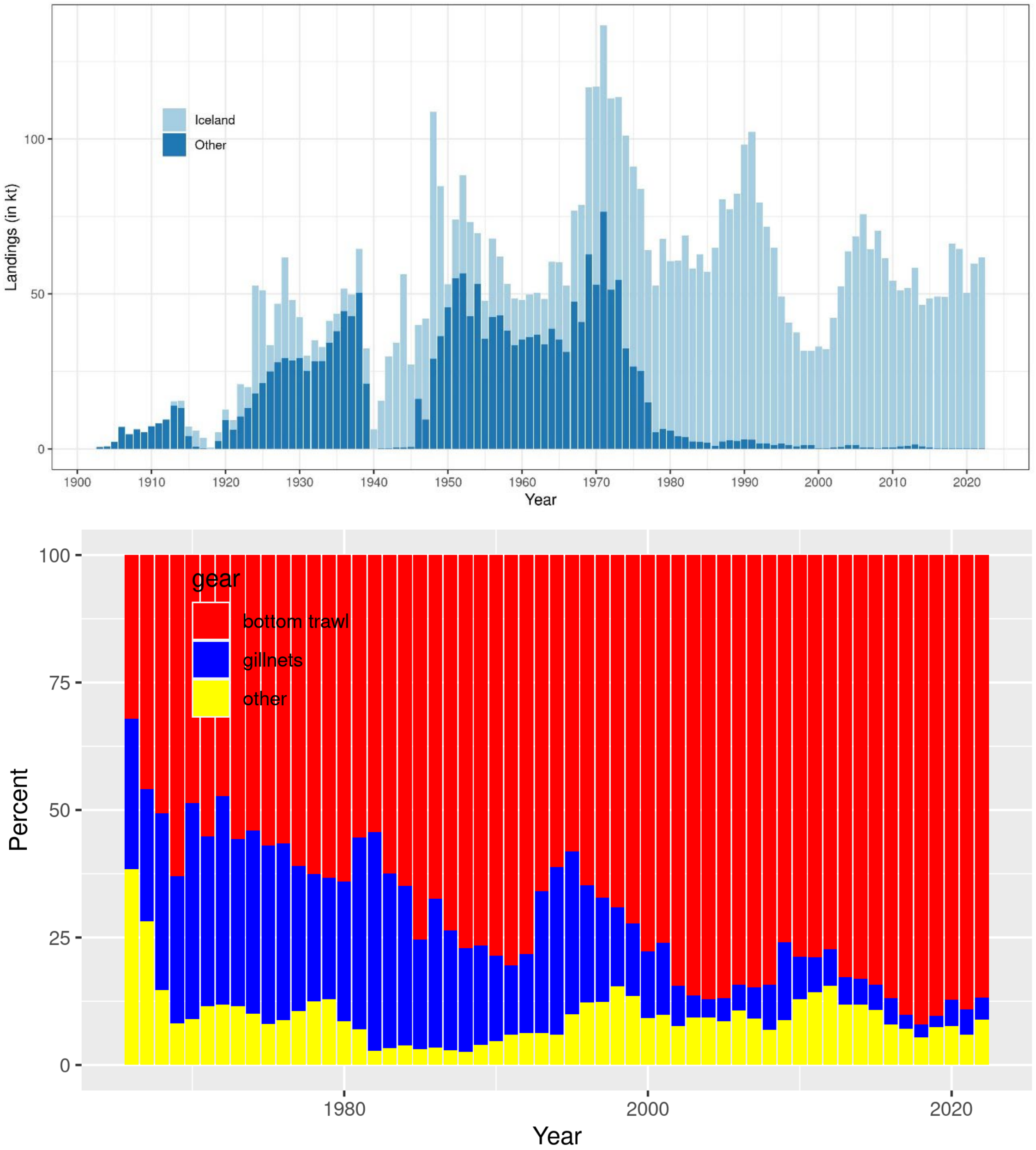

Figure 8.1 Saithe in Division 5.a. Landings by country. Landings and percent by gear.

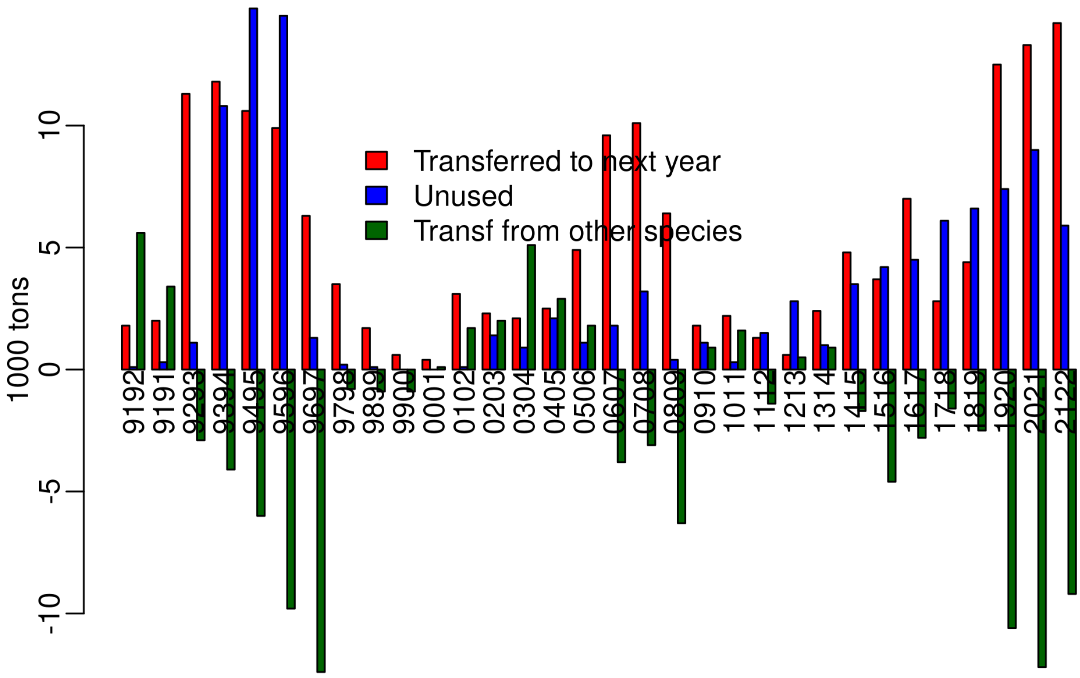

Figure 8.2 Saithe in Division 5.a. Upper figure. Cumulative landings in the current fishing year (left) and calendar year (right). The vertical (green line) in the left figure shows the quota for the current fishing year. Lower figure. Transfer of quota to next fishing year, unused quota, and transfer from other species (negative transfer from other species means transfer to other species).

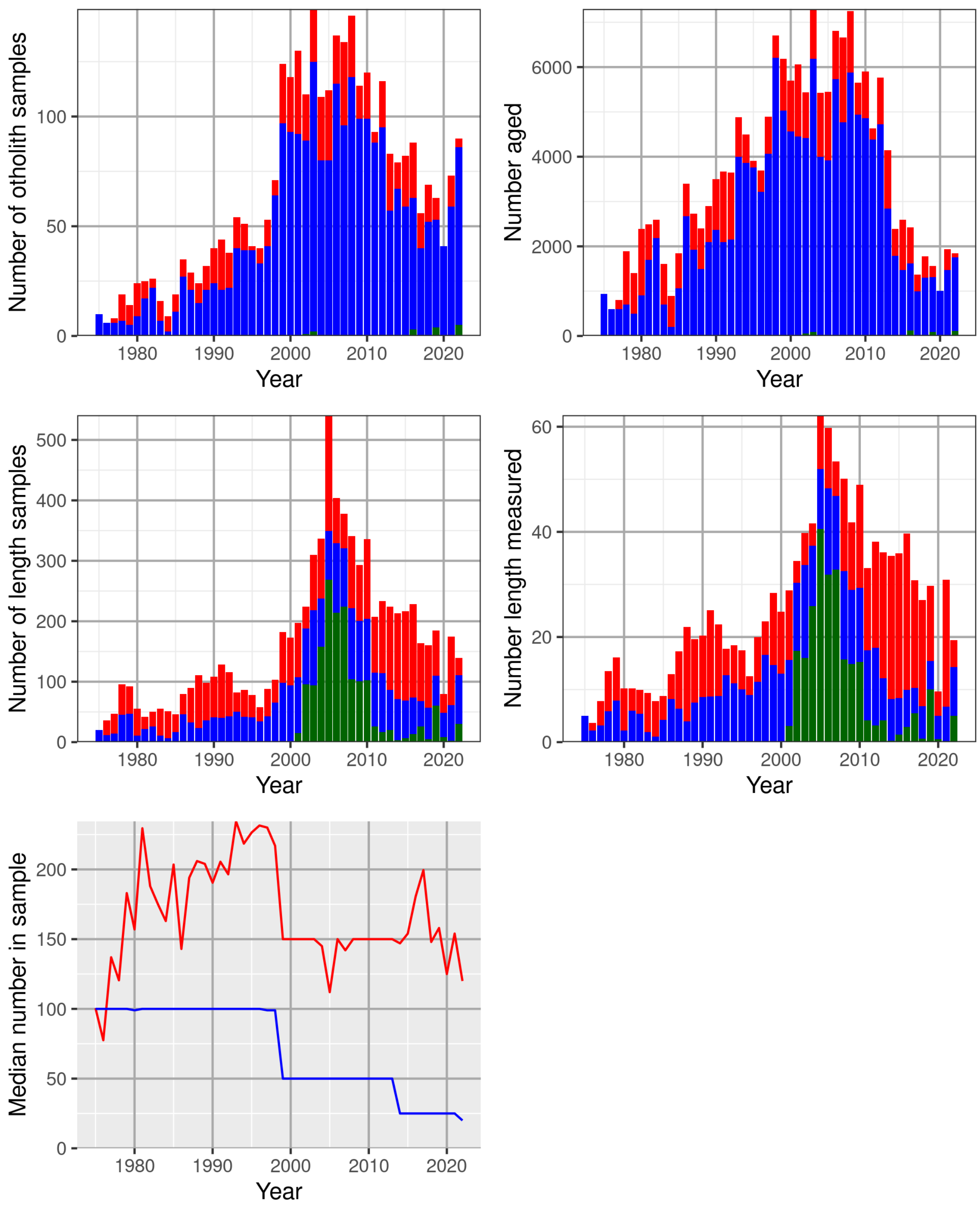

Figure 8.3 Saithe in Division 5.a. Development of sampling intensity from catches. Red is sea samples from the Fisheries Directorate, blue harbour samples from the MFRI and green from a discard project, combination of sea and shore samples.

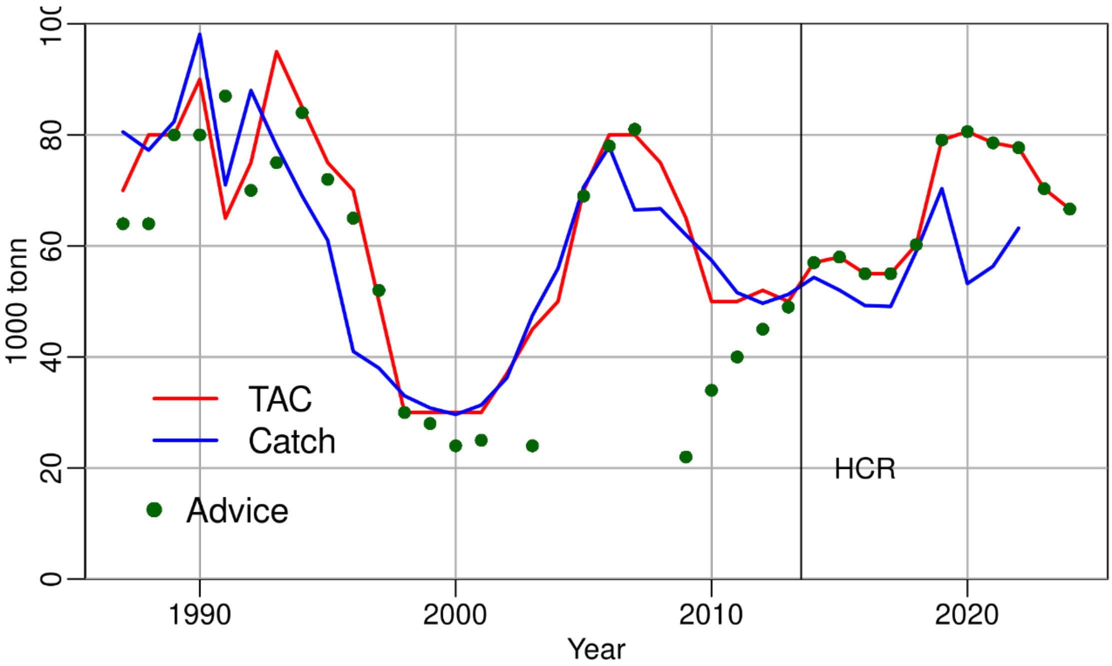

Figure 8.4. Advice, TAC and catch of saithe since 1987.

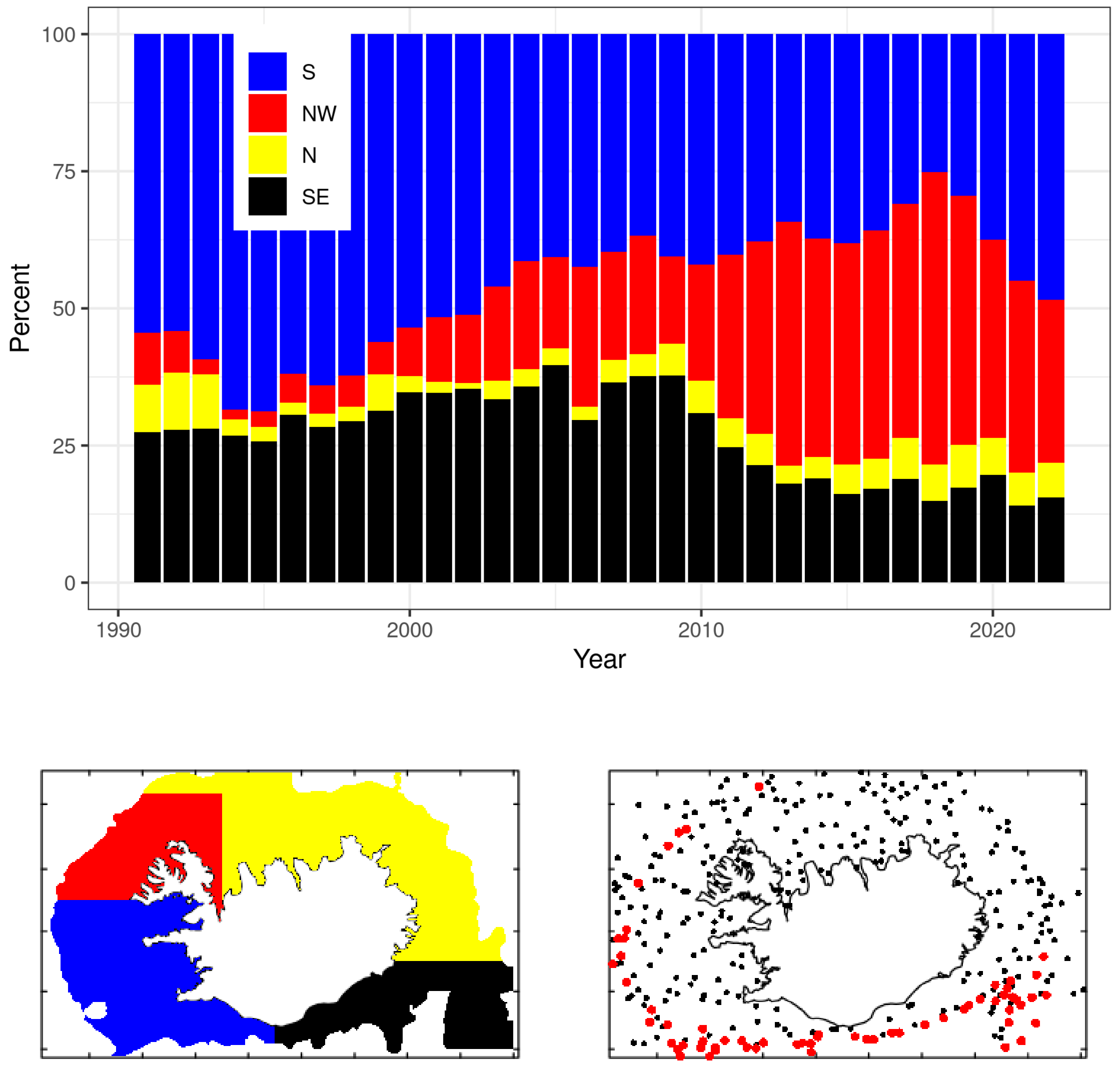

Figure 8.5. Saithe in Division 5.a. Upper figure percent of landings by regions defined in the lower figure to the left. Lower right, stations added in the autumn survey in 2000 (red dots).

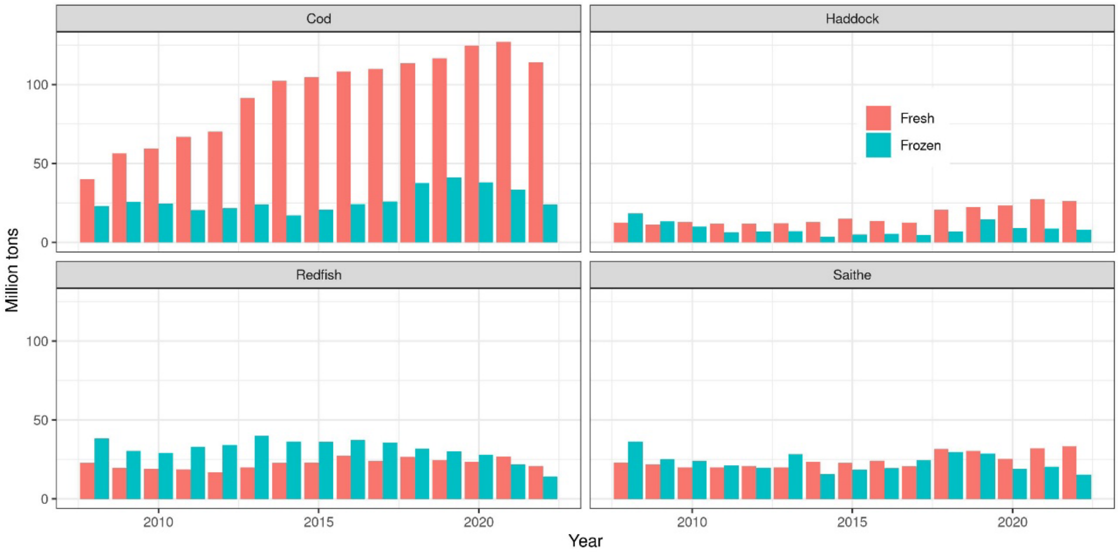

Figure 8.6 Saithe in Division 5.a. Catch by trawlers divided between those that freeze the catch and those that do not. Number of trawlers landing more than 500 tonnes has been reducing gradually from 42 in 2008 to 33 in 2020. Freezing trawlers landing > 500 tonnes were 26 in 2008 but 9 in 2020.

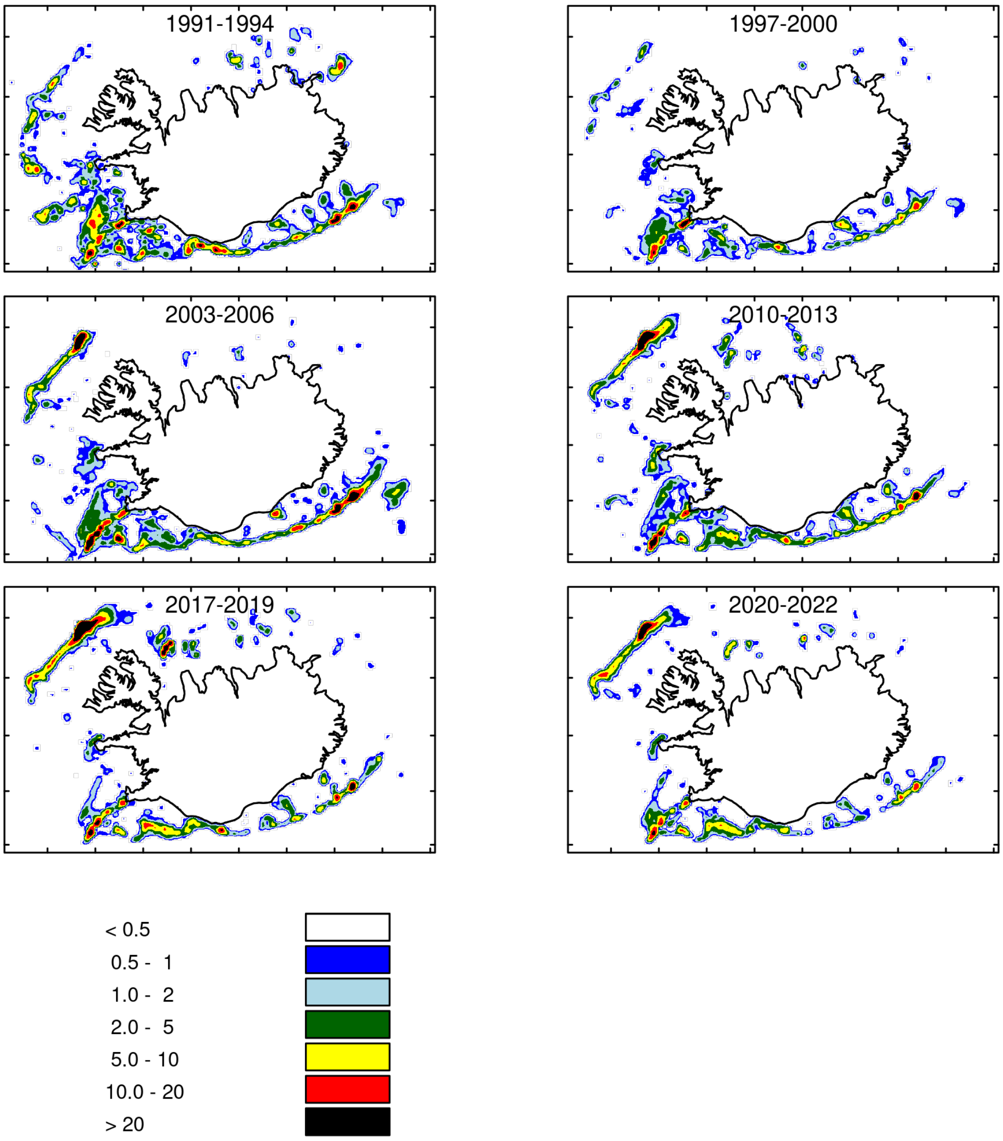

Figure 8.7. Spatial distribution of saithe catch as tonnes per square nautical mile per year.

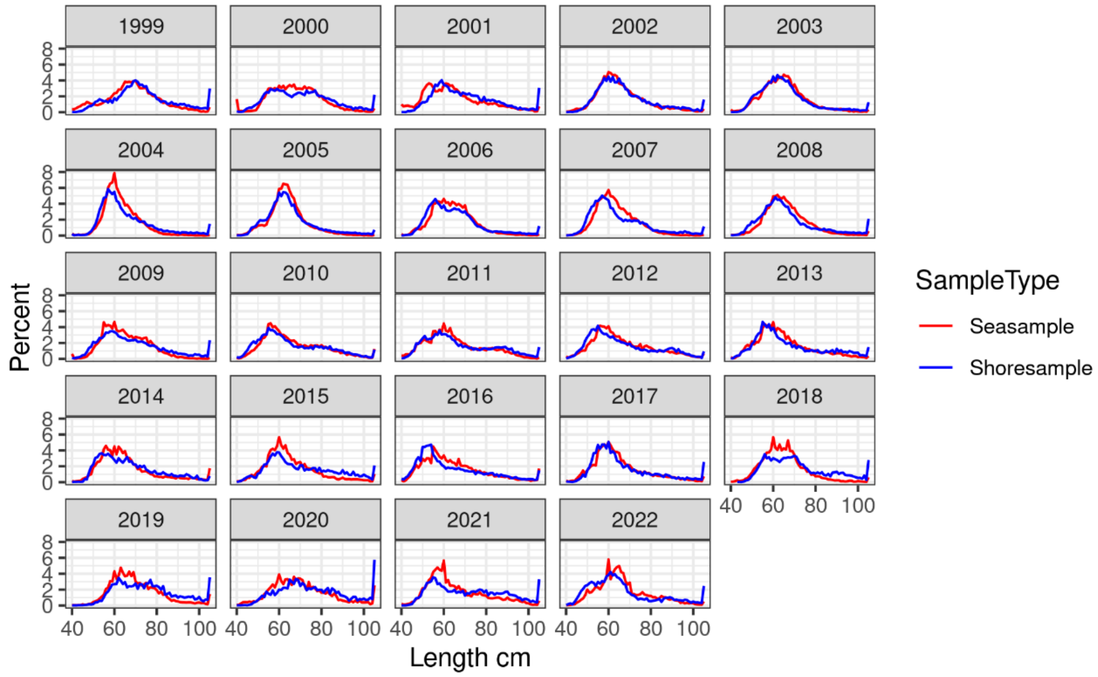

Figure 8.8. Length distributions from sea and shore samples.

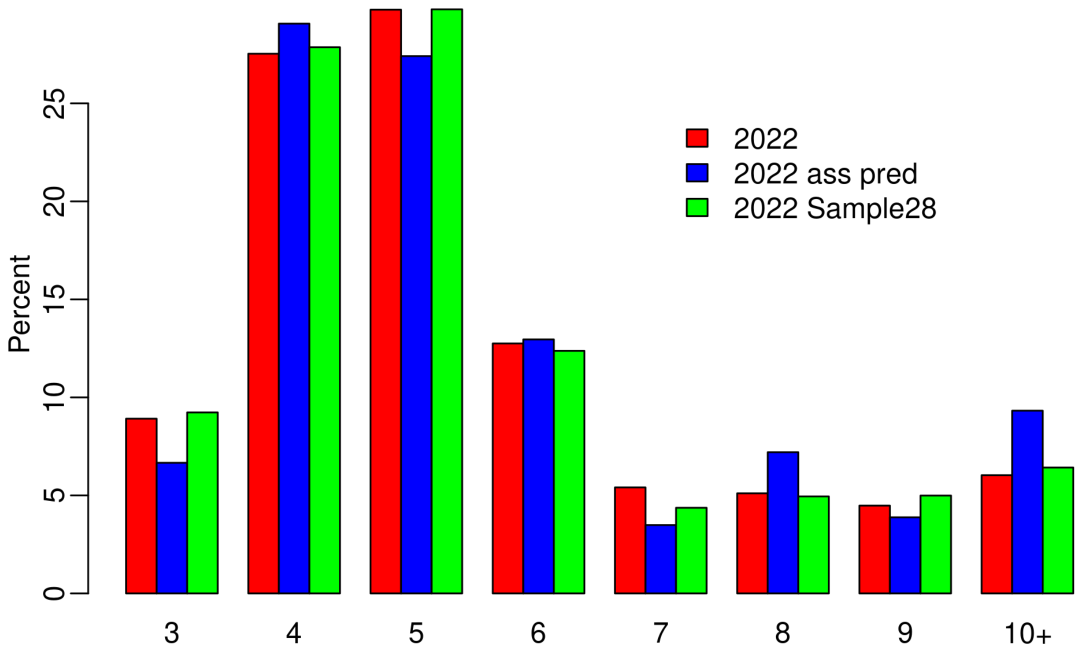

Figure 8.9. Catch in numbers 2022 compared to last year's prediction. The green bars show catch in numbers only based on shore samples and discard samples.

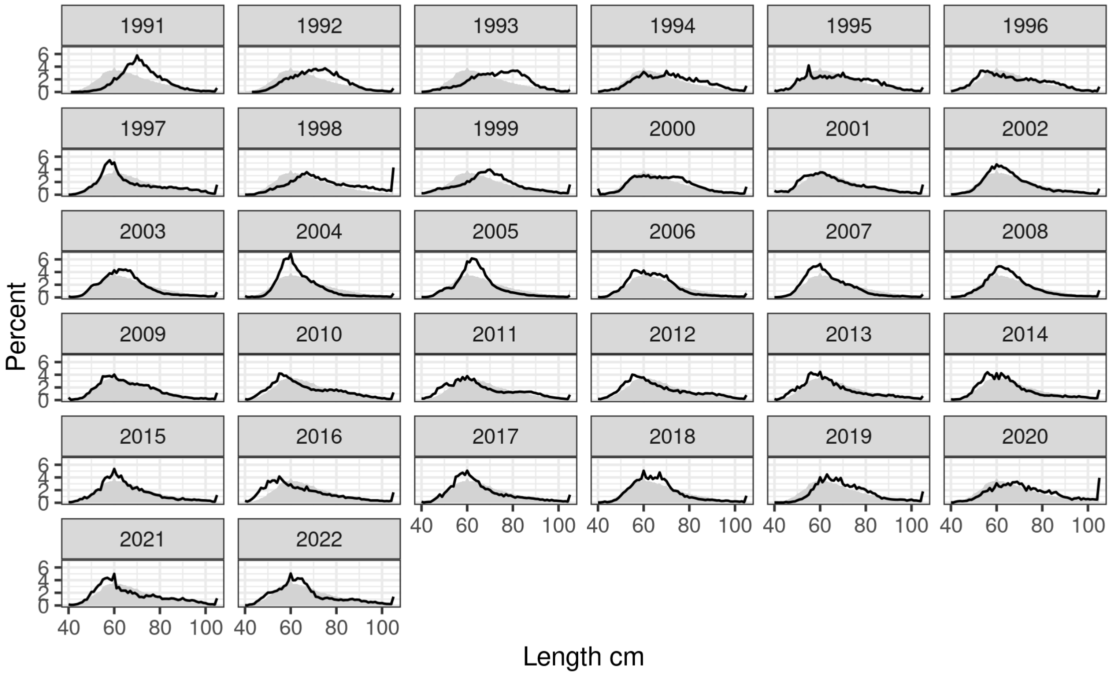

Figure 8.10. Length distributions from bottom-trawl catches (lines) compared to average (grey shading).

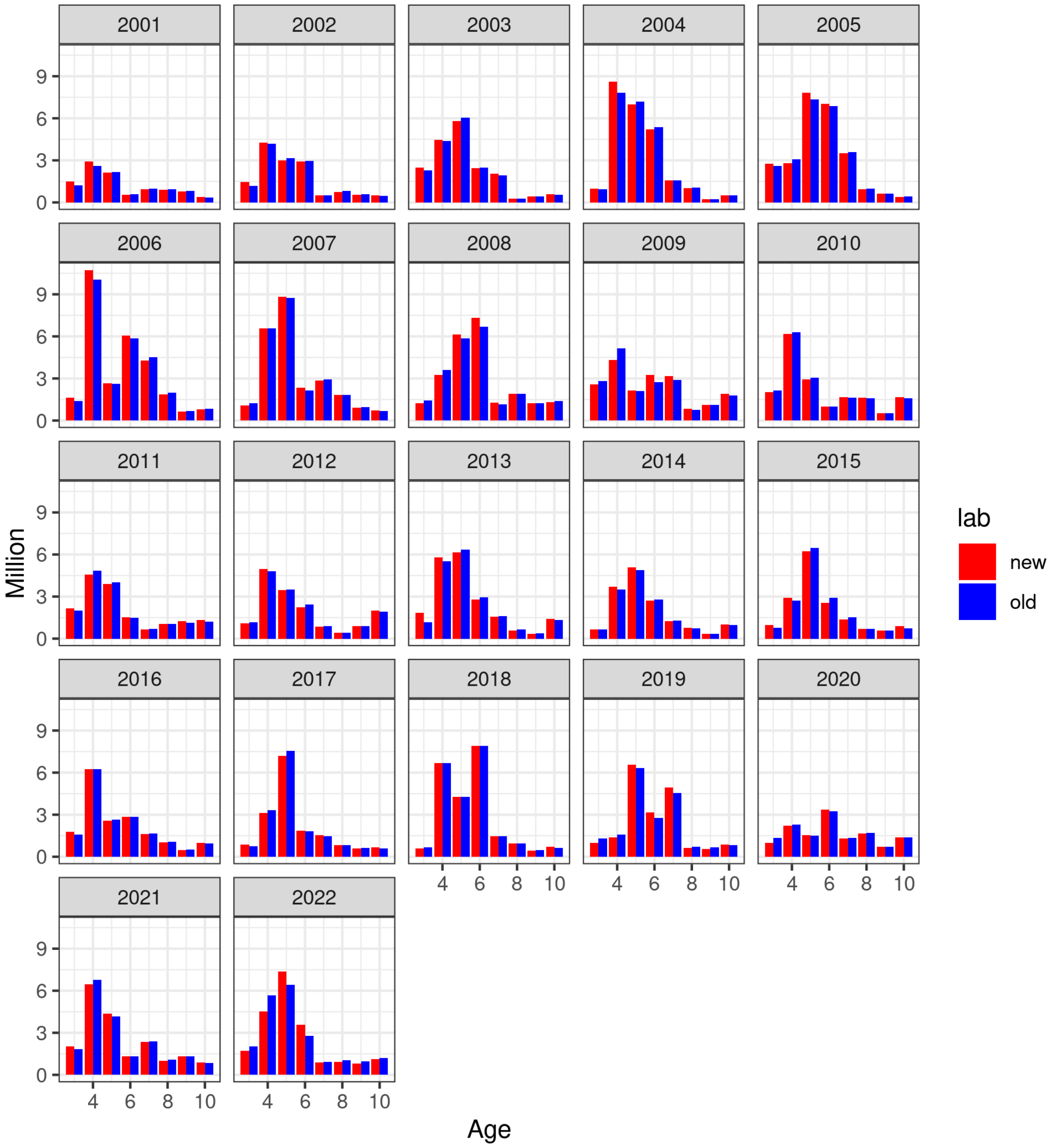

Figure 8.11. Catch in numbers 2000–2021 compiled by 1 region and 1 time interval (old) compared to catch in numbers compiled by 2 regions and 2 time intervals (new). The regions are shown in Figure 8.6, north red and yellow and south blue and black.

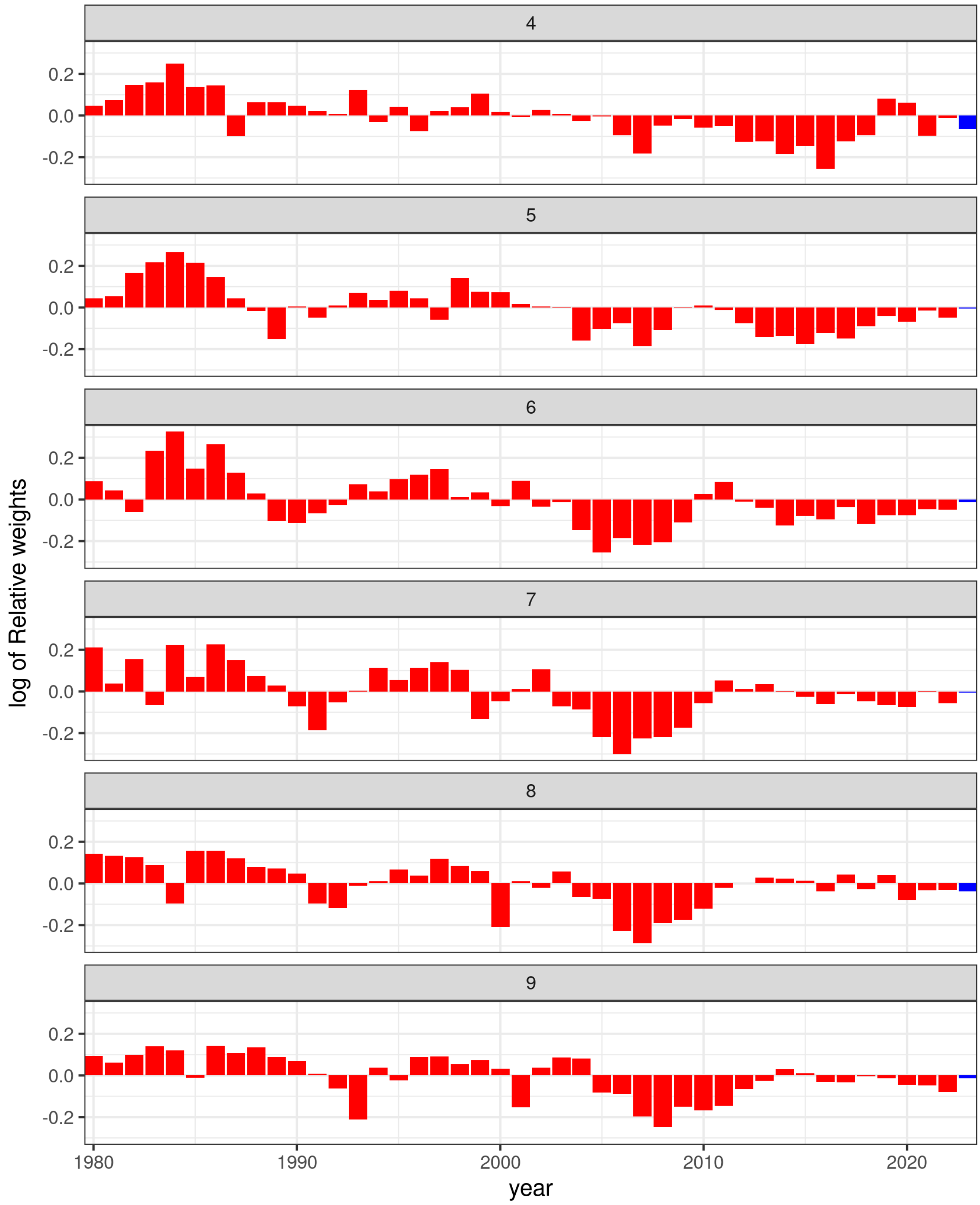

Figure 8.12. Saithe in Division 5.a. Weight at age in the catches, as relative deviations from the mean. Blue bars show prediction.

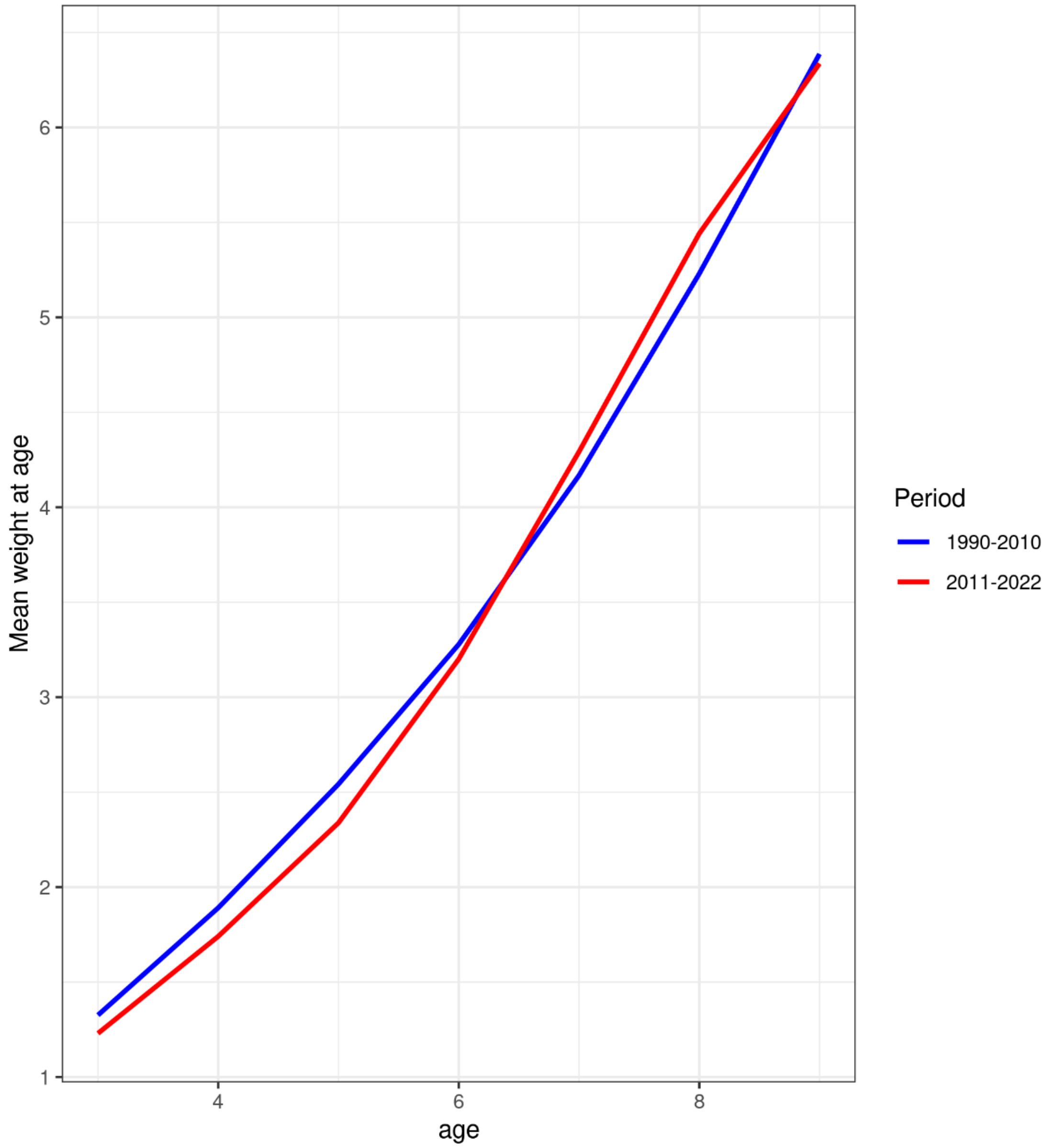

Figure 8.13. Saithe in Division 5.a. Weight at age in the catches shown as average for 2 periods.

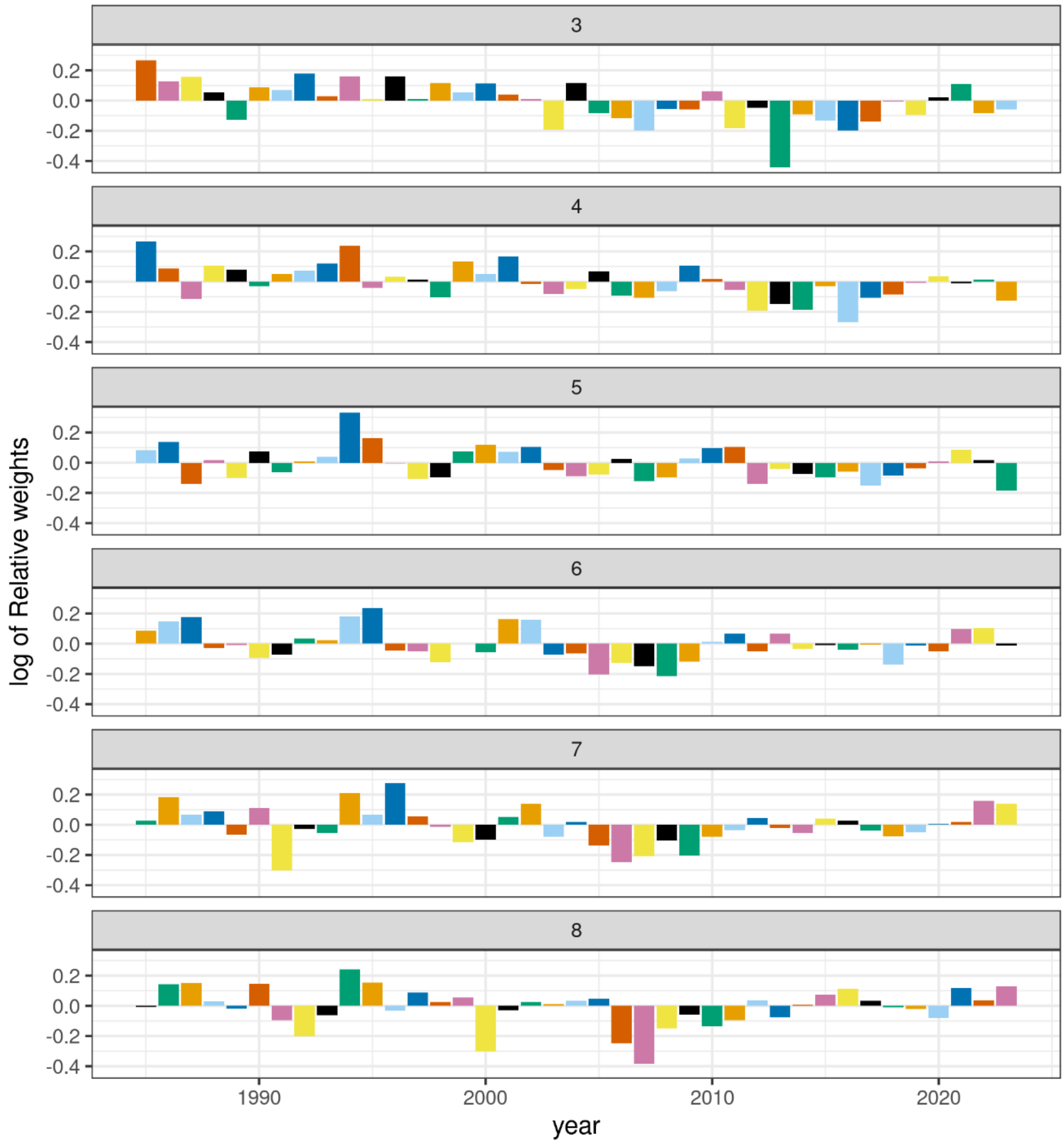

Figure 8.14 Saithe in Division 5.a. Weight at age in the survey, as relative deviations from the mean. Colours can be used to follow year classes.

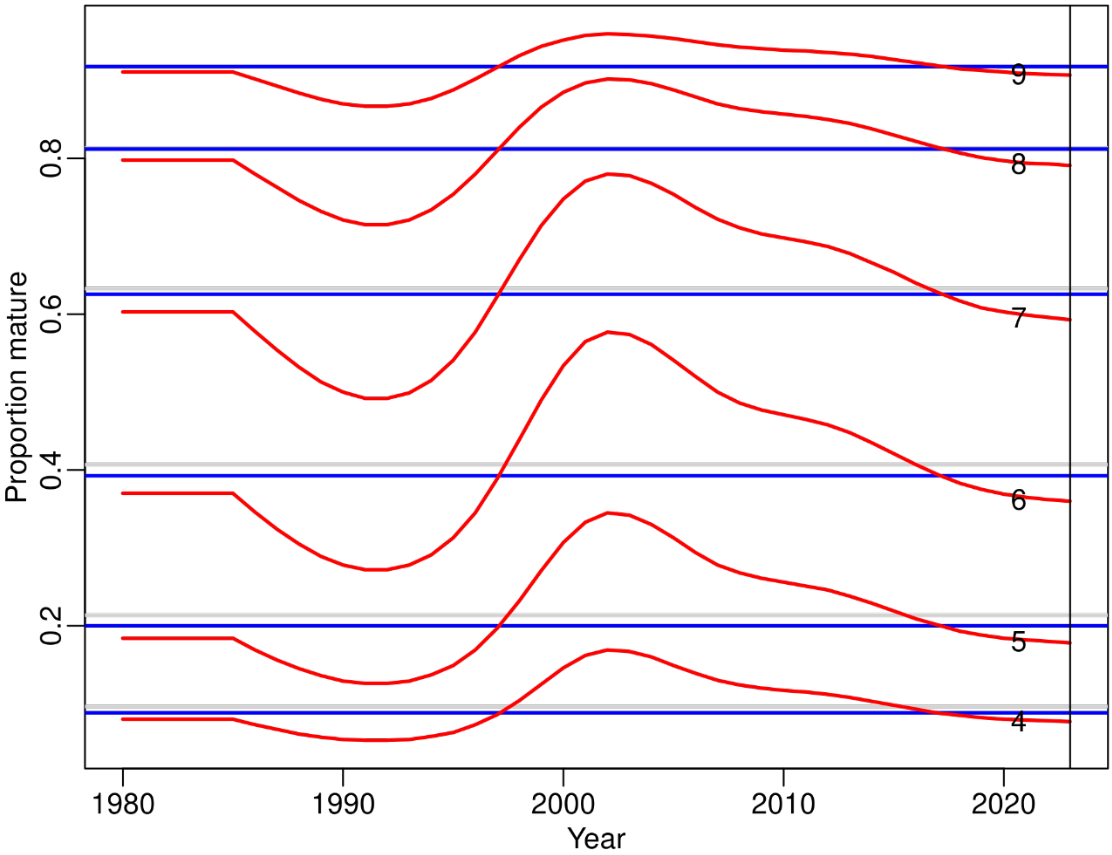

Figure 8.15. Saithe in Division 5.a. Maturity-at-age used for calculating the SSB. The horizonal lines show the average of last 10 years (blue one) and the average since 1985.

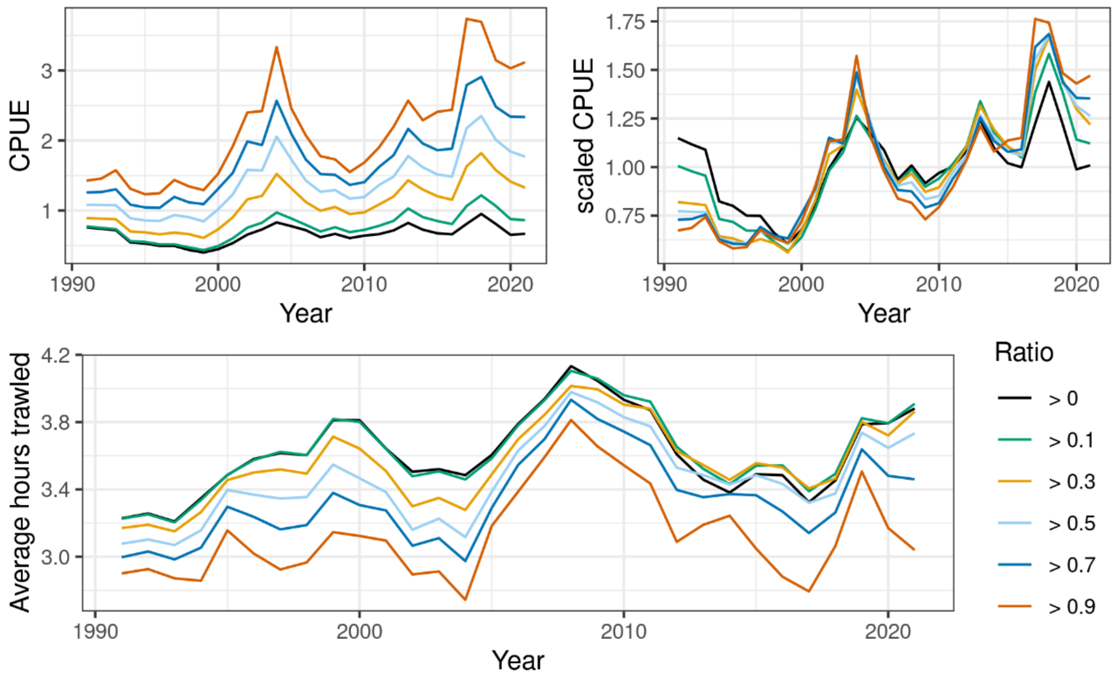

Figure 8.16. CPUE, CPUE scaled to an average of 1 and average numbers of hour trawled. Different colours indicate selection of tows where proportion of saithe of the total catch exceeds certain specified value.

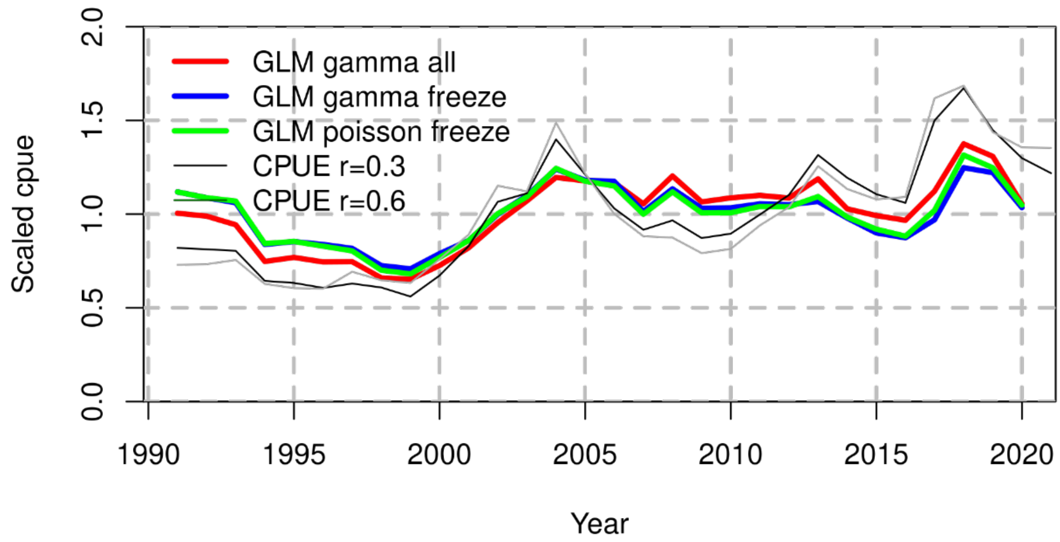

Figure 8.17. CPUE compiled from 3 different models compared to CPUE compiled in similar way as shown in figure 8.16. All curves scaled to an average of 1.

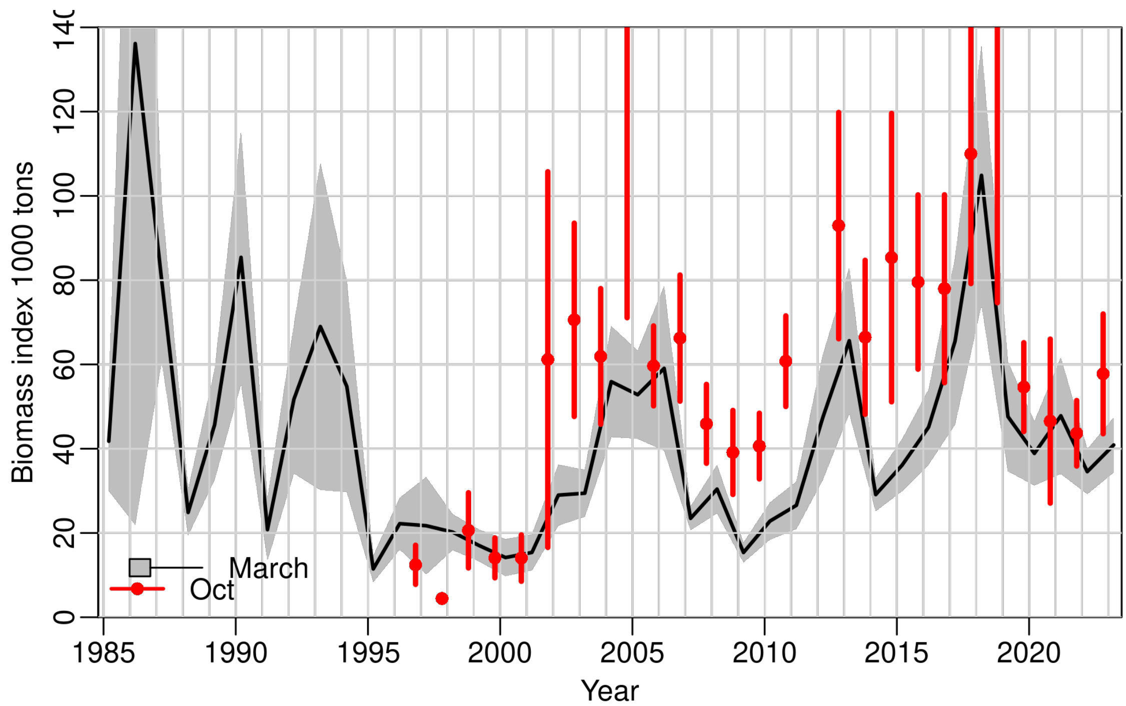

Figure 8.18. Saithe in Division 5.a. Biomass index from the groundfish surveys in March and October.

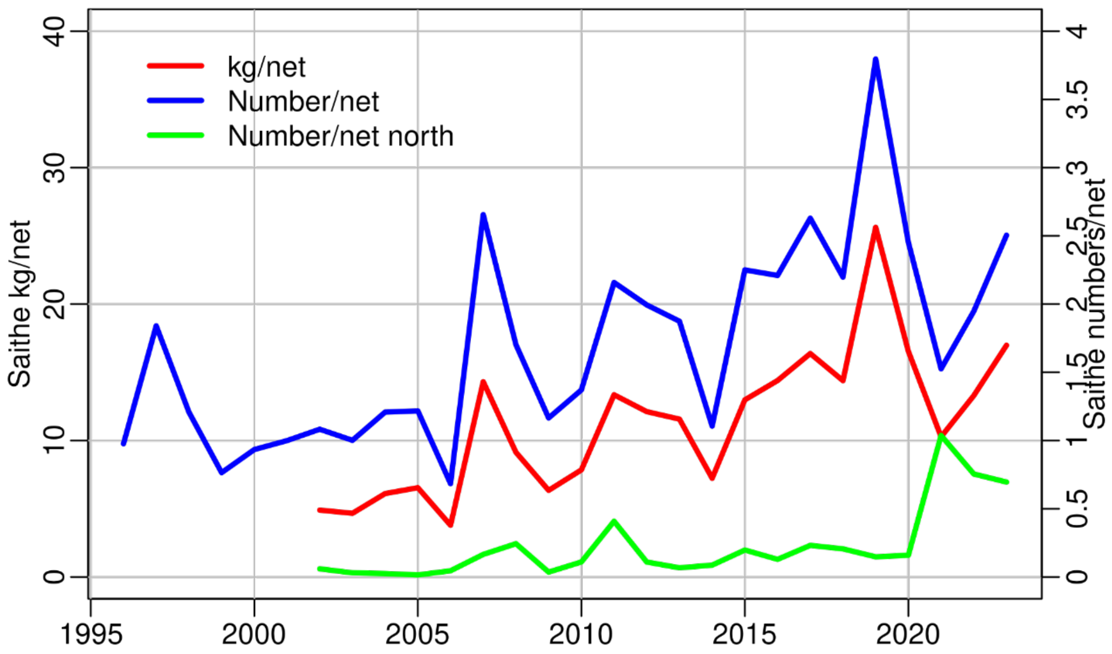

Figure 8.19. Saithe in Division 5.a. Indices from the gillnet survey in April 1996–2023. Saithe was not length measured in the survey before 2002 so catch in kg cannot be compiled.

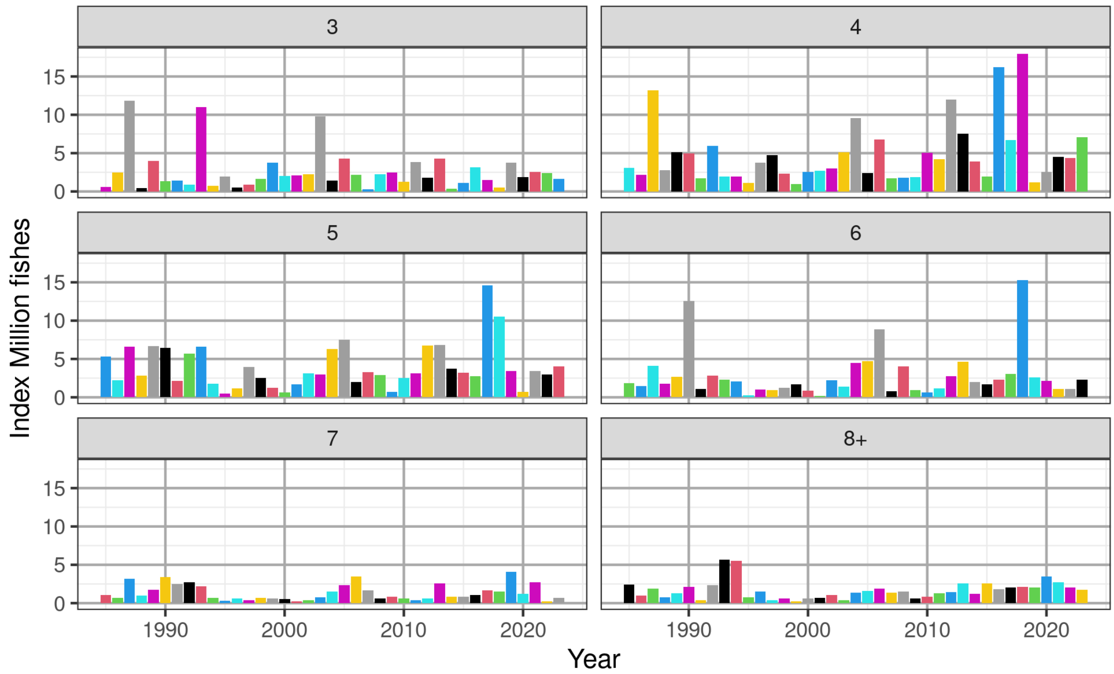

Figure 8.20. Saithe in Division 5.a. Survey indices by age from the spring survey. The colours follows year classes except of course for age 8+.

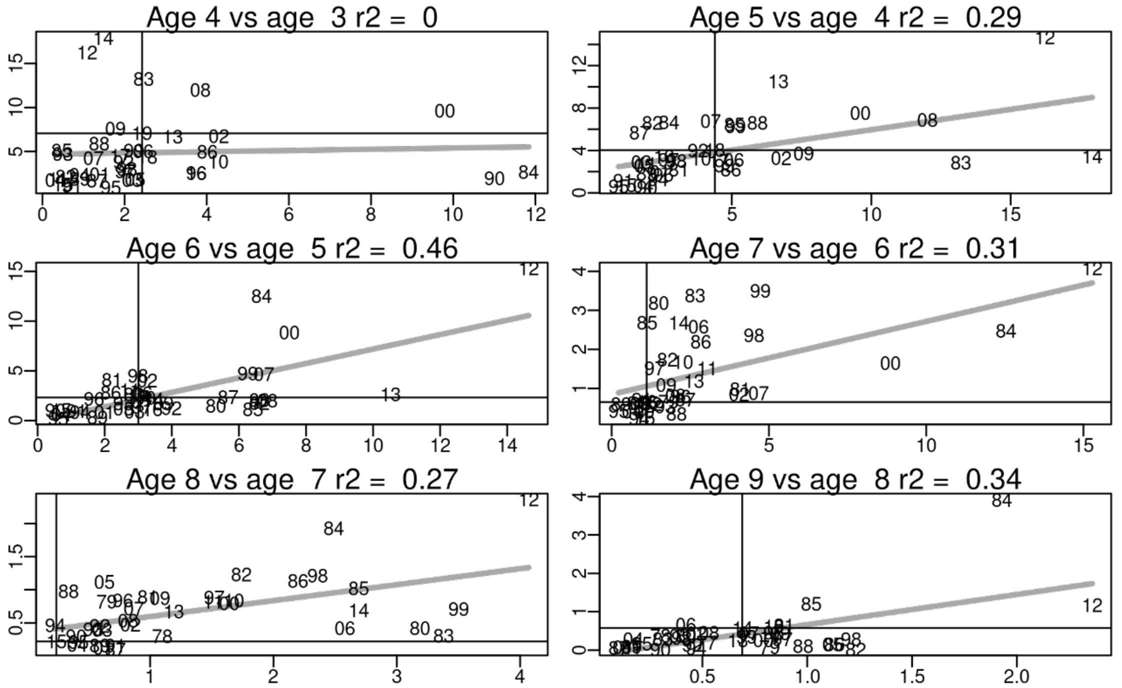

Figure 8.21. Saithe in Division 5.a. Survey indices by age from the spring survey plotted against indices of the same cohort one year earlier. The grey lines show the most recent values.

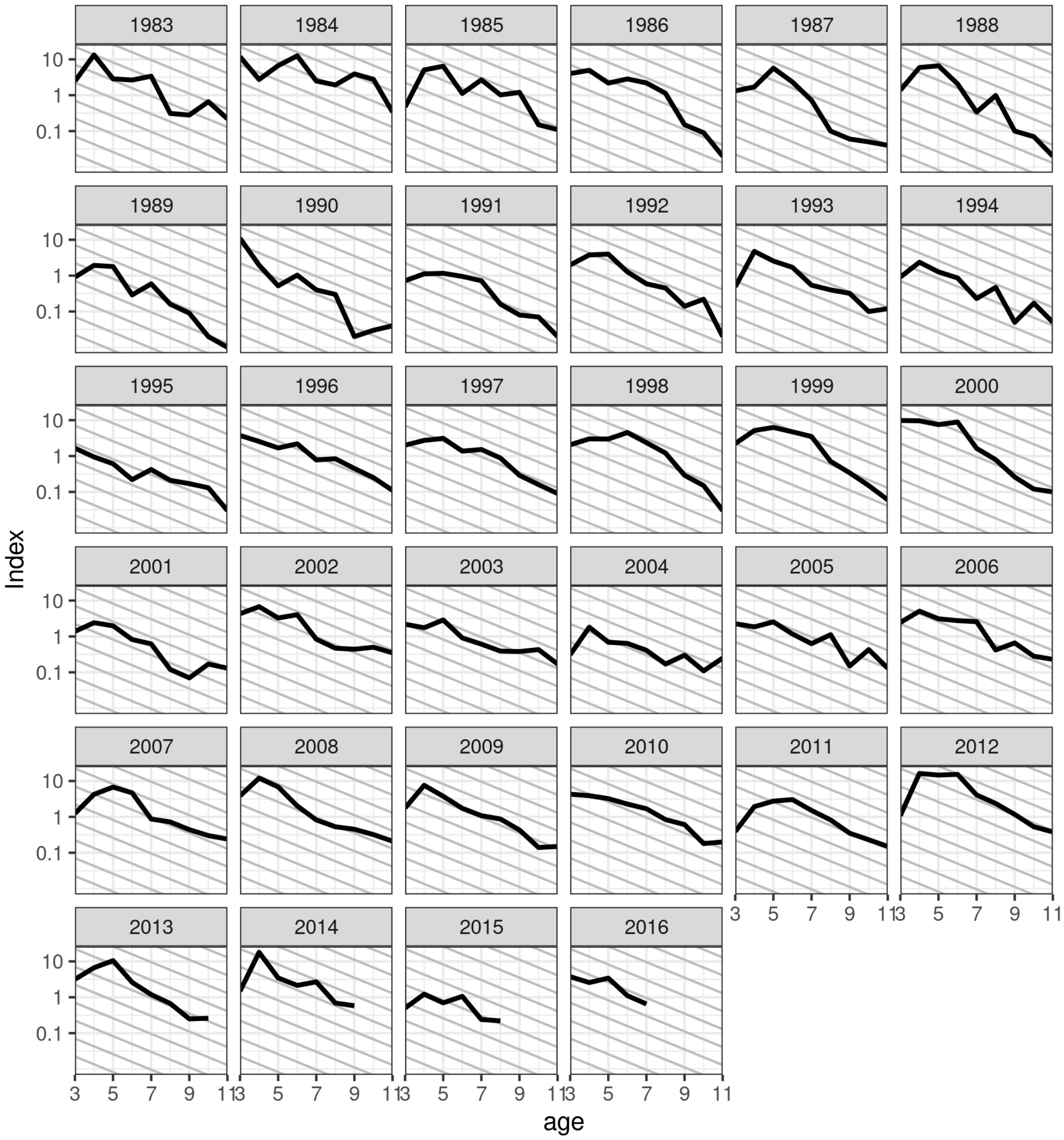

Figure 8.22. Saithe in Division 5.a. Survey indices by age from the spring survey plotted as catch curves for each year class. The grey lines correspond to Z = 0.5.

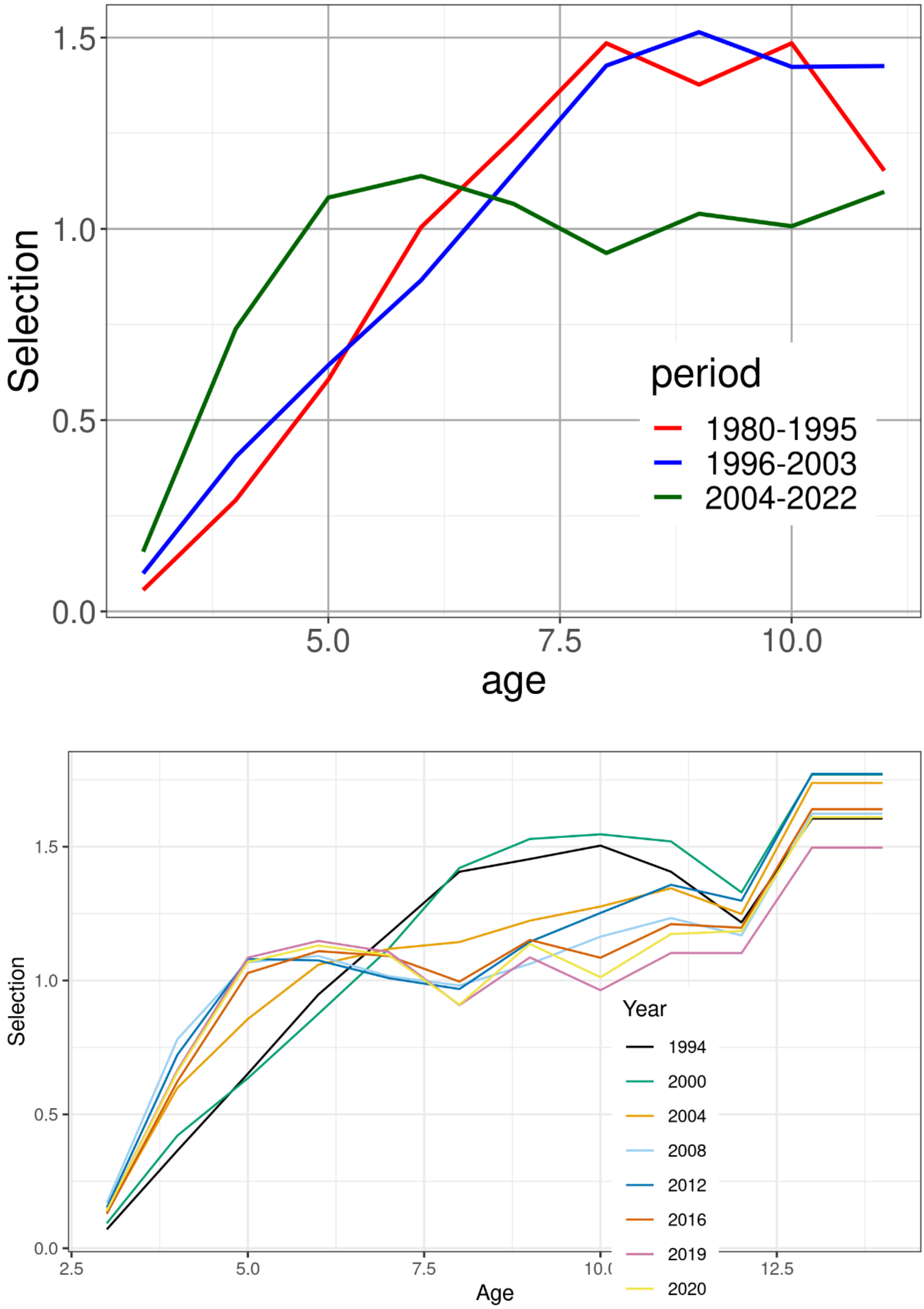

Figure 8.23. Upper figure. Estimated selectivity patterns for the 3 periods, 1980–1996, 1997–2003 and 2004–2020. Lower figure estimated selection from the SAM model. The timing of selection change around 2004 is also evident in the SAM model results.

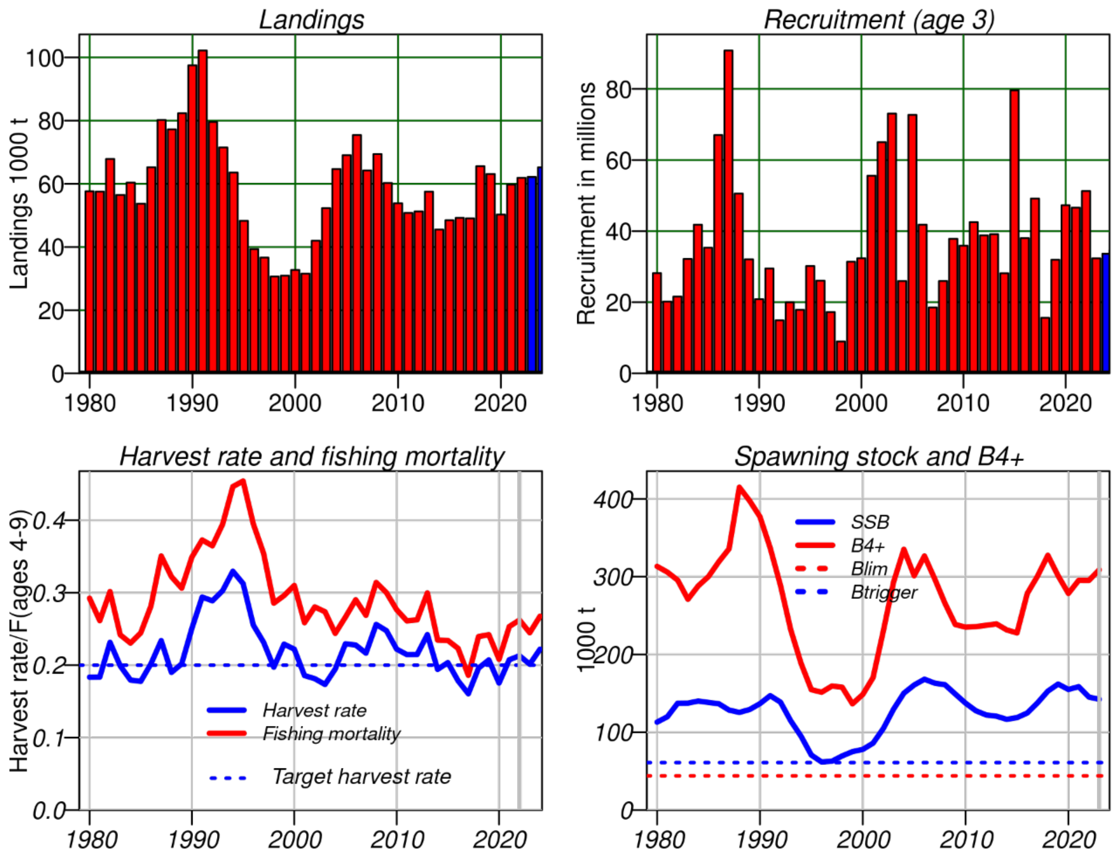

Figure 8.24. Saithe in Division 5.a. Results from the adopted benchmark (SPALY) model and short-term forecast.

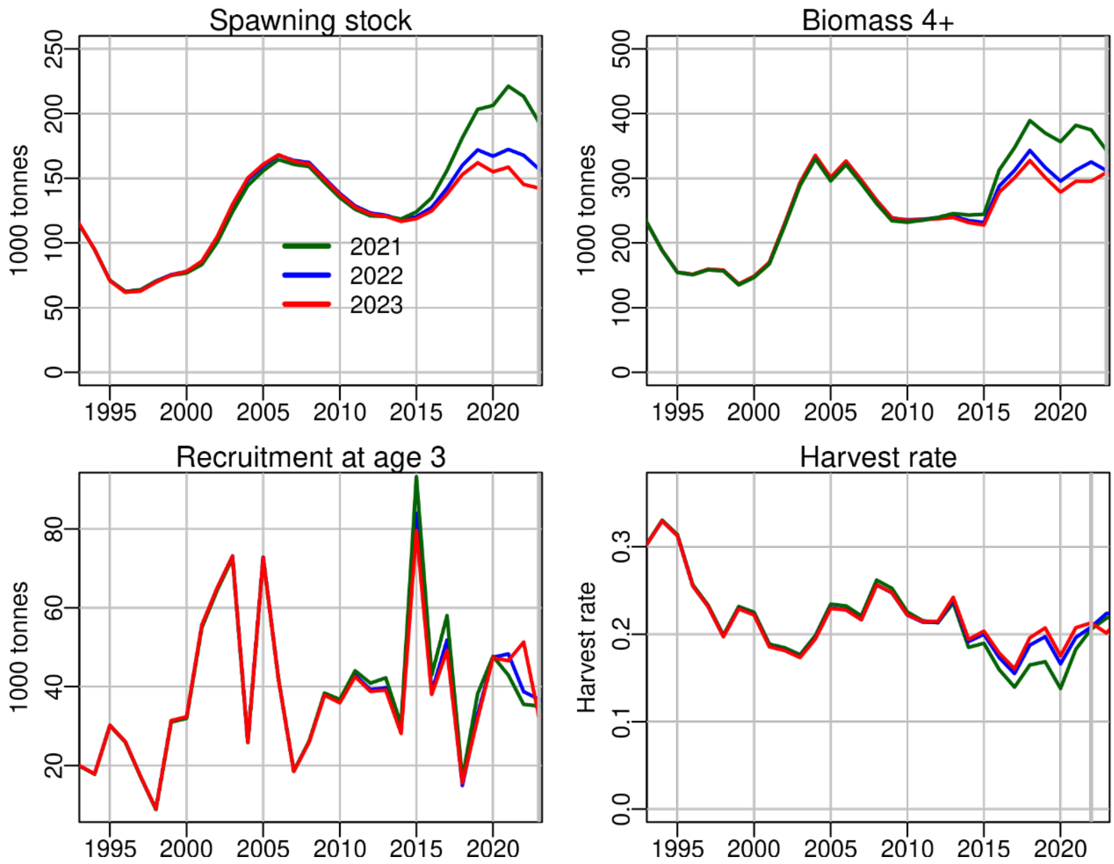

Figure 8.25. Saithe in Division 5.a. Comparison of this year's assessment and short-term forecast with results from two earlier years.

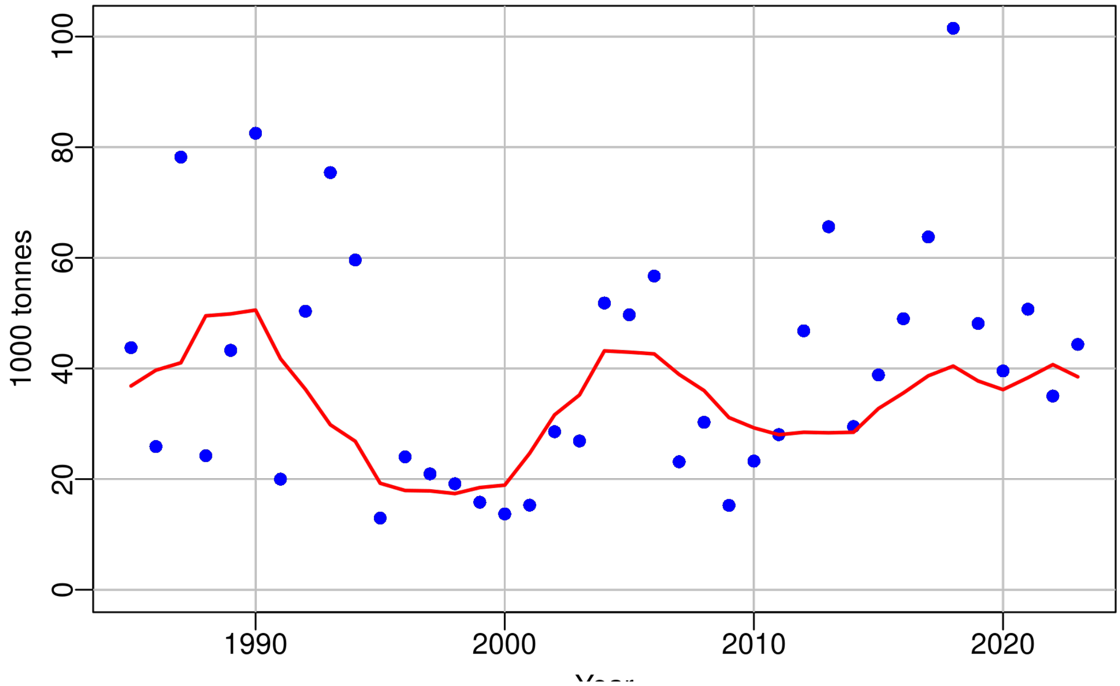

Figure 8.26. Saithe in Division 5.a. Observed and predicted survey biomass from the "SPALY model".

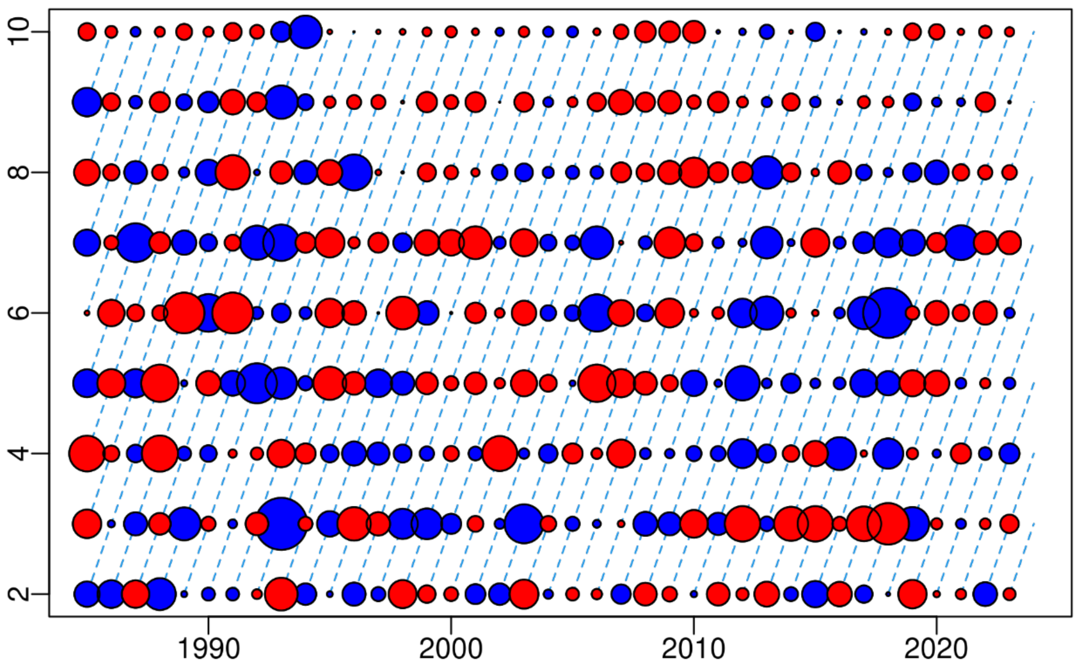

Figure 8.27. Saithe in Division 5.a. Survey residuals from the "Adopted model". The residuals are standardized.

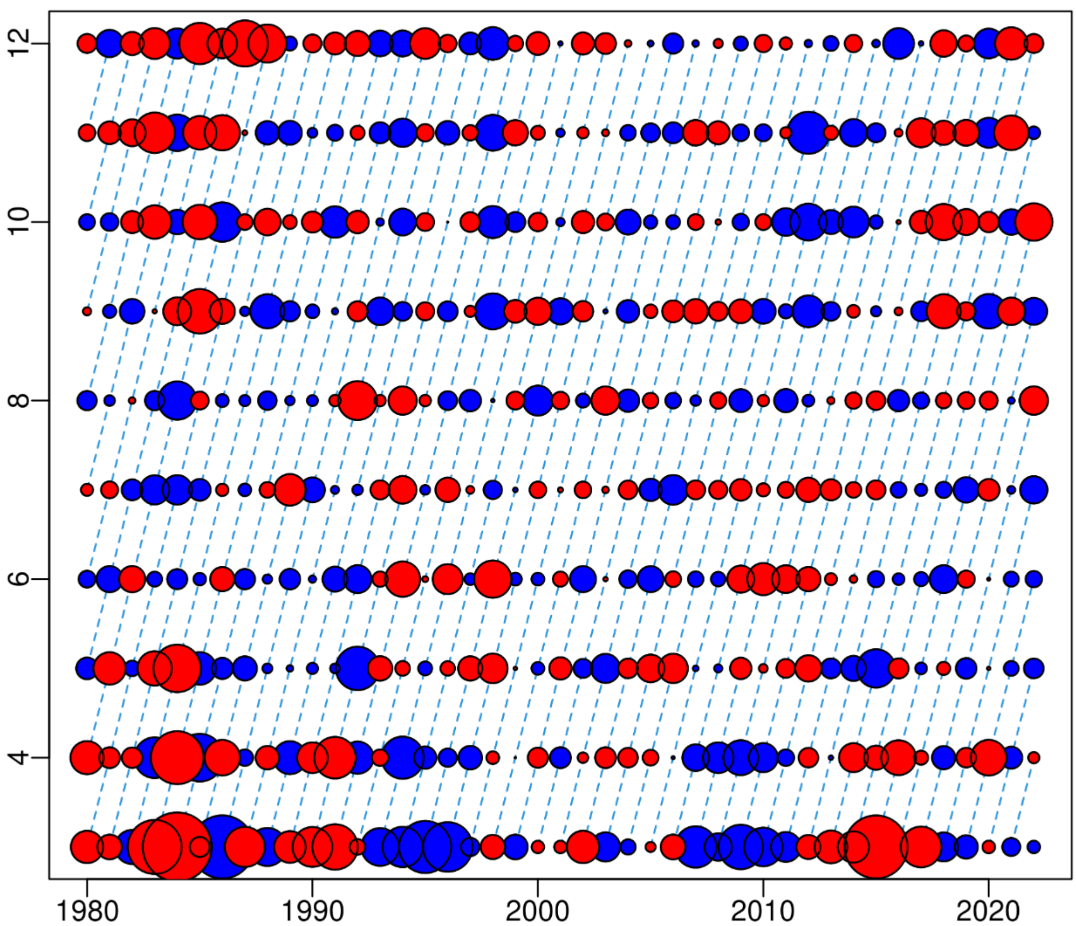

Figure 8.28. Saithe in Division 5.a. Catch residuals from the "Adopted model".

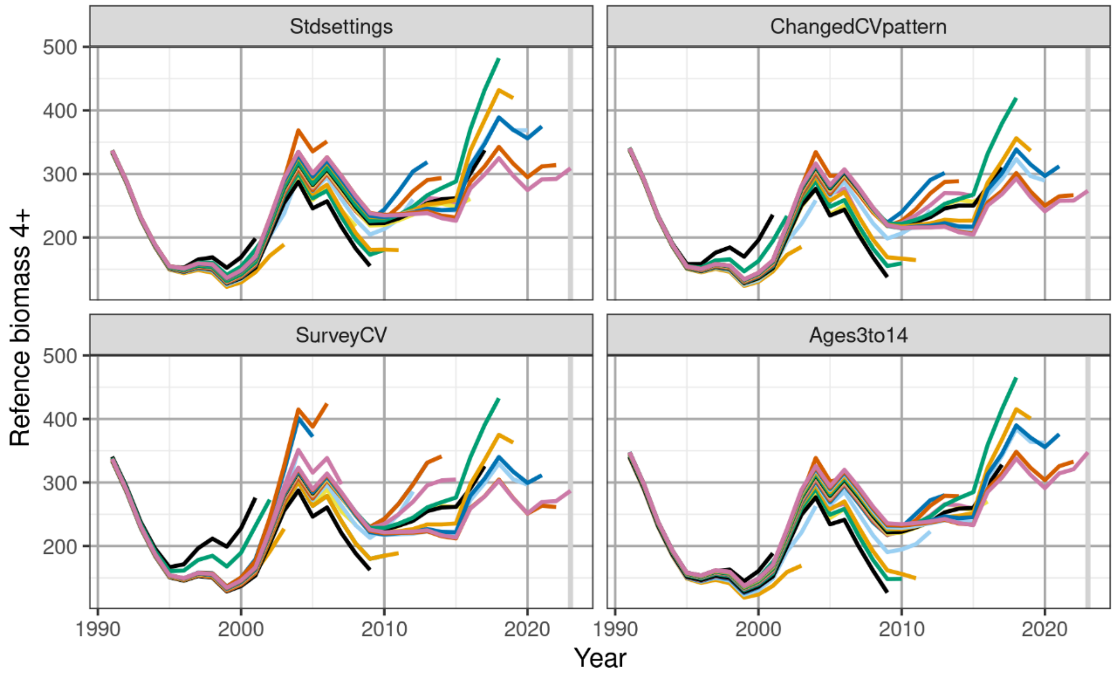

Figure 8.29. Saithe in Division 5.a. Retrospective pattern for the adopted assessment model (Oldsettings) and alternative configurations of the model. The figure shows estimate of B4+, the metric affecting advised catch. The grey vertical lines show the year 2021.

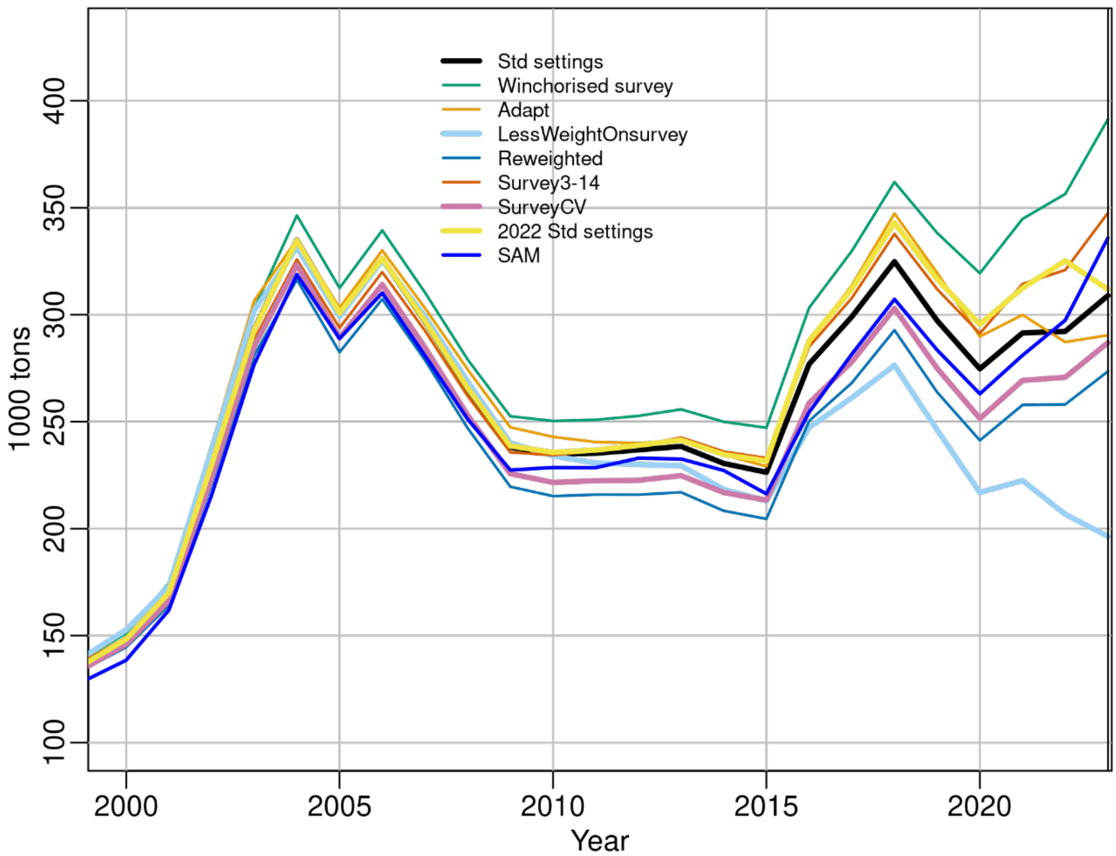

Figure 8.30. Saithe in Division 5.a. Comparison between the default separable model (Muppet) and alternative assessment models and model settings.

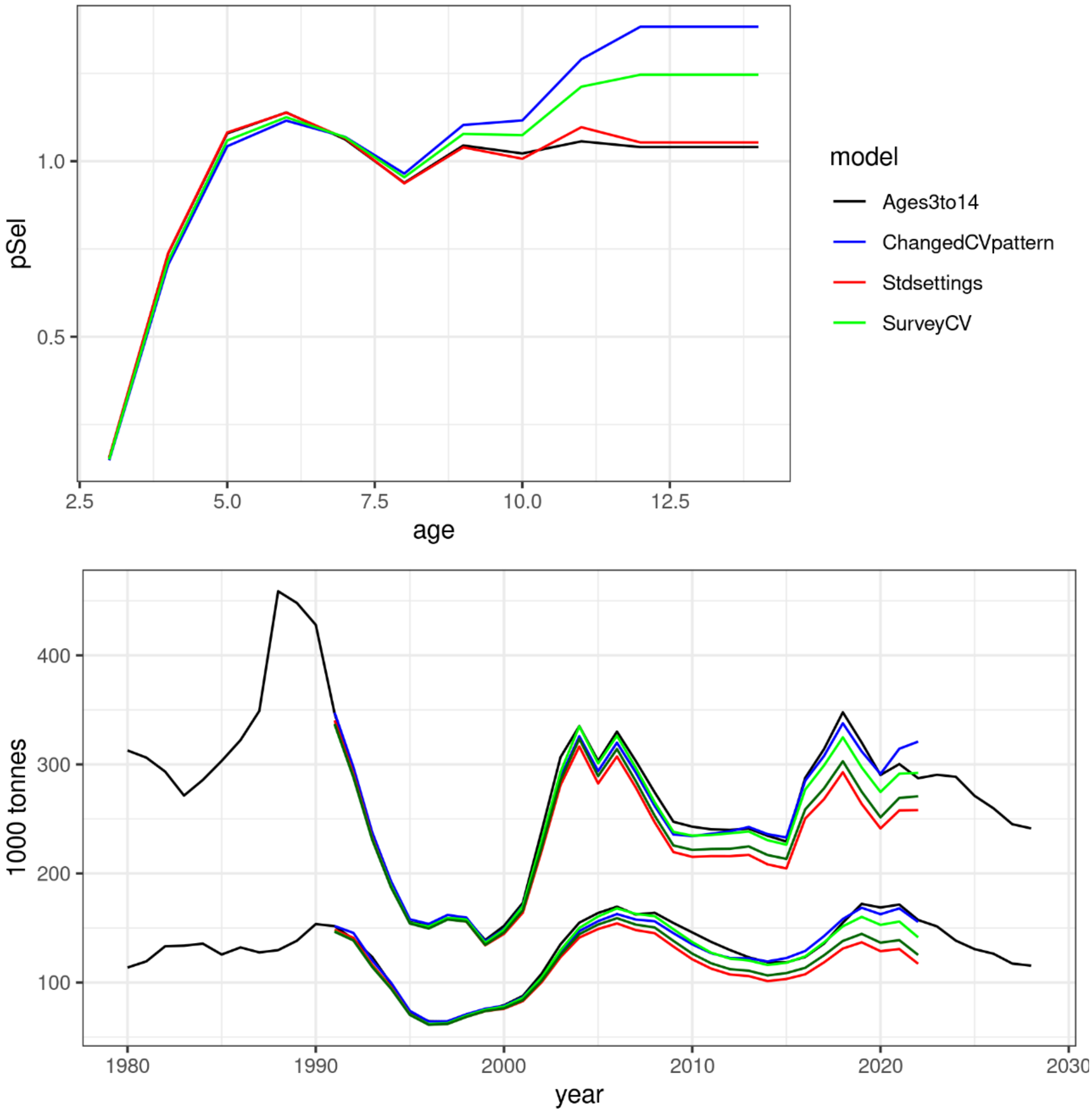

Figure 8.31. Saithe in Division 5a. Comparison between 2023 assessment results of the models shown in Figure 8.29. The Adapt model is added to the list shown there to see the "converged biomass". The lower figure shows B4+ and SSB.

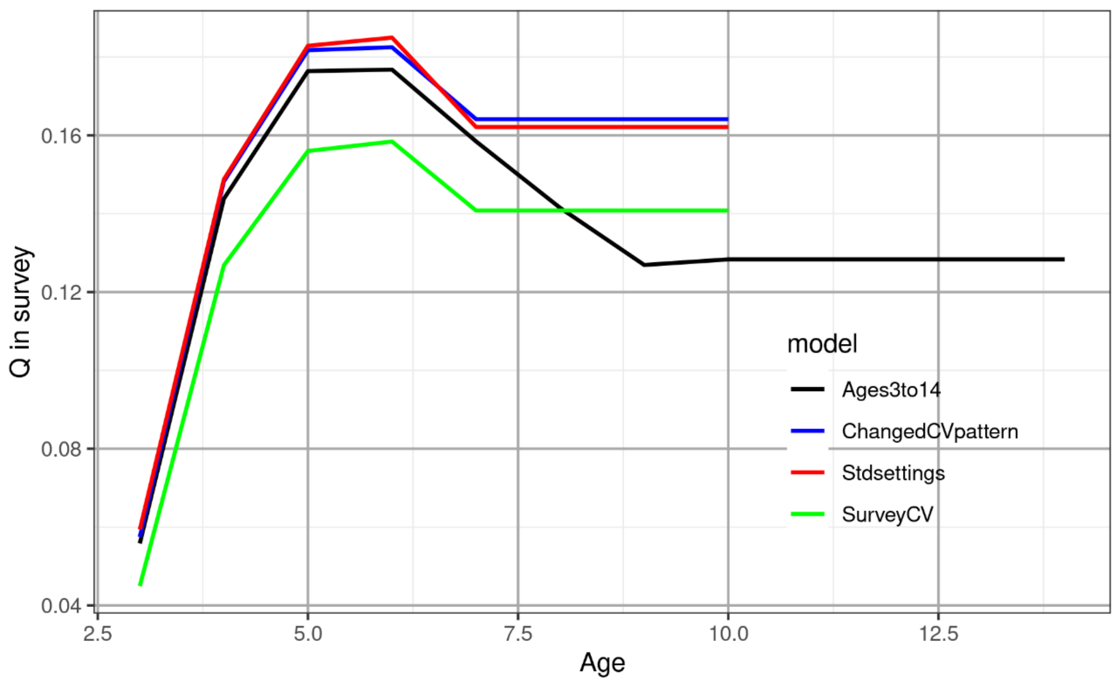

Figure 8.32. Saithe in Division 5a. Q by age in the March survey for the different models.

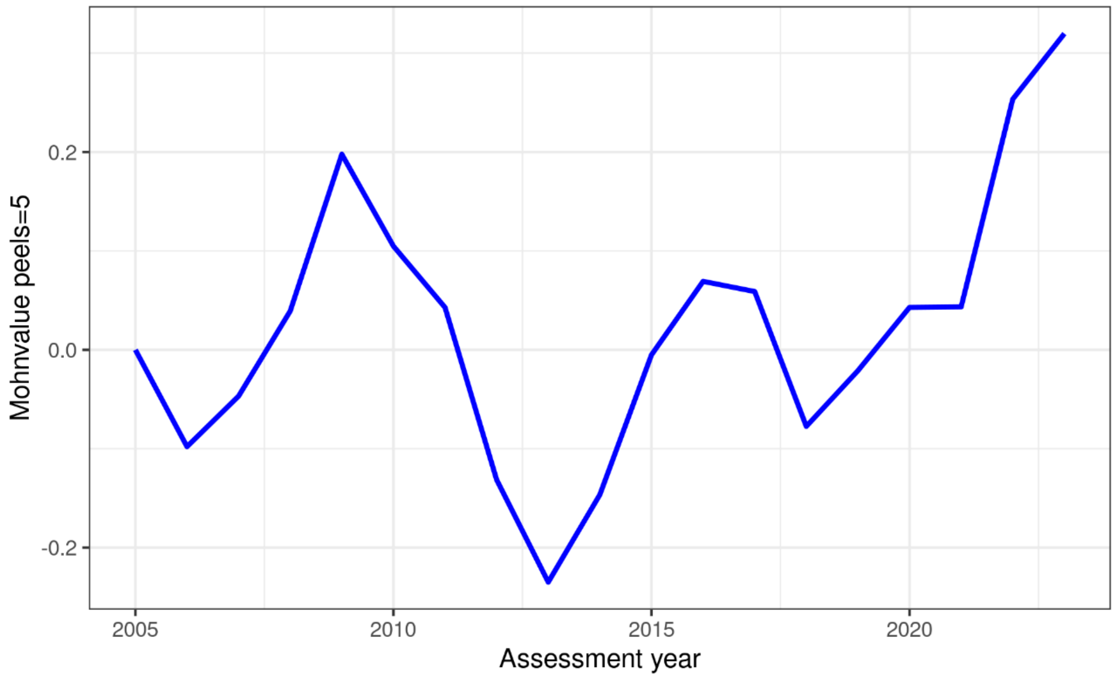

Figure 8.33. Saithe in Division 5a. Retrospective pattern of Mohns rho for B4+.

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