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2025 AFSC Longline Survey Sept. Plan Team



Kevin Siwicke & MESA Staff

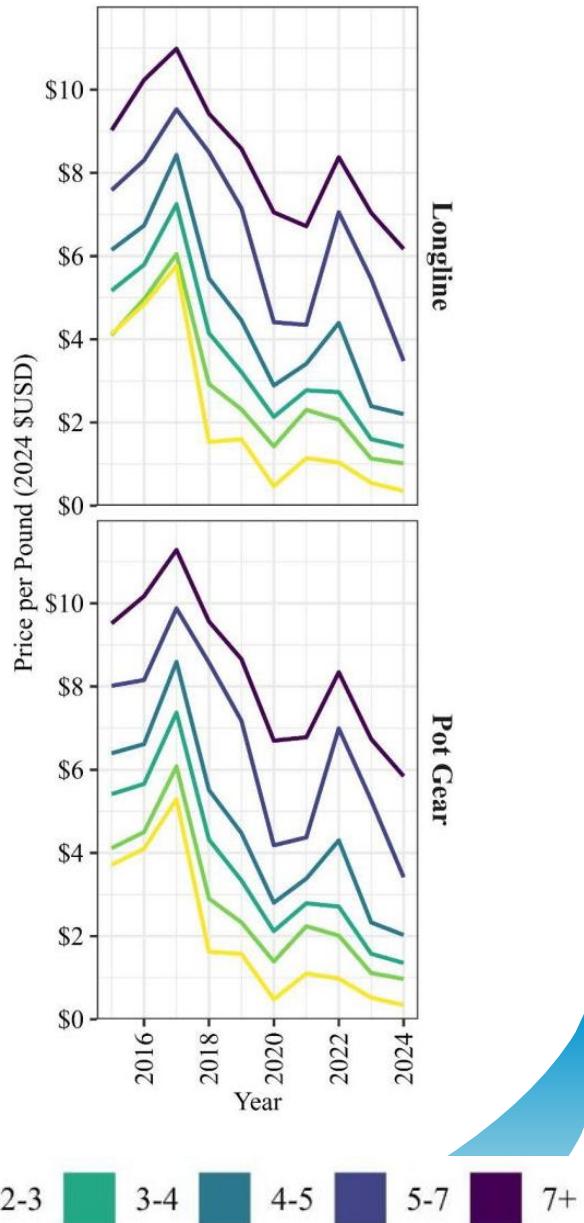
Longline Survey History

- Annual hook-and-line survey
1979-2023
- Samples Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska continental slope 200 - 1,000m
- Operated on a cost-recovery basis with sale of the catch covering vessel costs
- Before 2020 there were two vessel companies, but only one since



2024 Longline Survey Cancellation

- Declining margins and losses in recent years
- Economic value of sablefish declined due to record high abundance and poor markets
- Survey was projected to operate at an economic loss in 2024
- Government contract structure was unable to provide financial guarantee
- In April 2024, the survey was cancelled



Size Cat. <2 2-3 3-4 4-5 5-7 7+



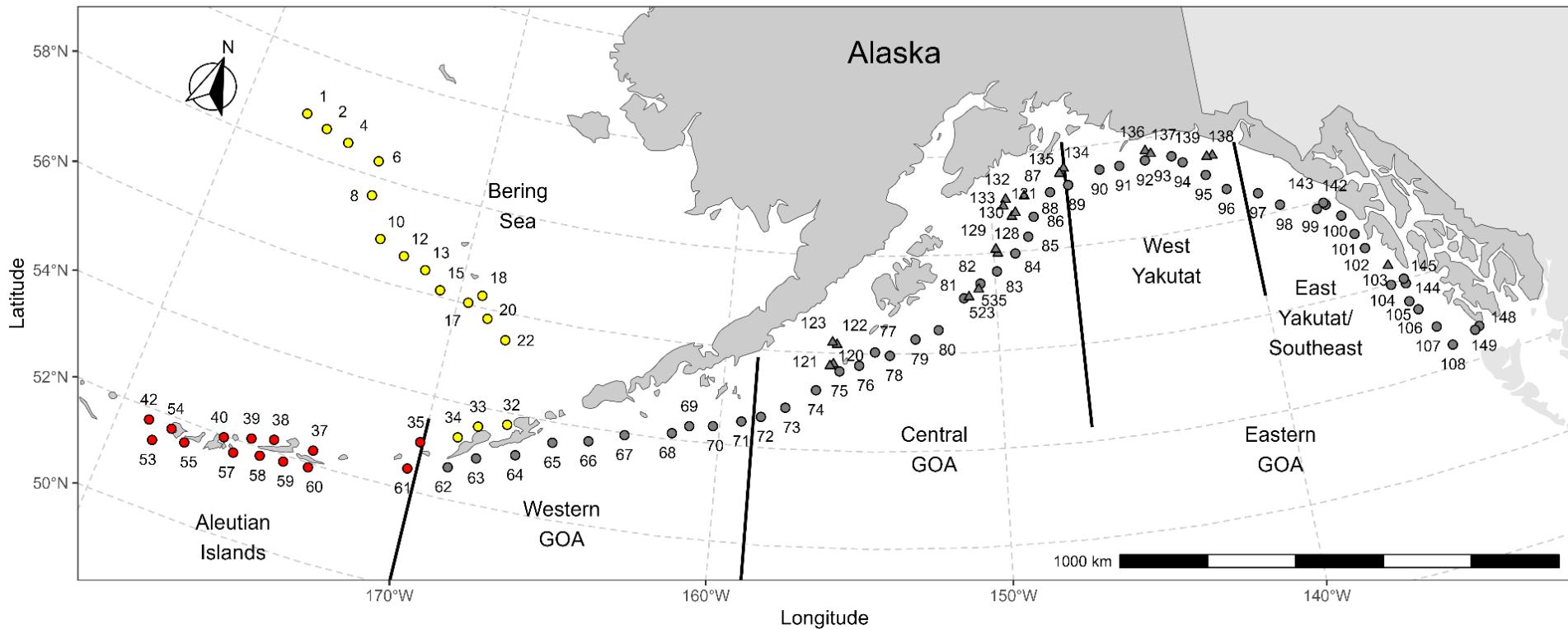
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2025/26 Longline Survey Contract



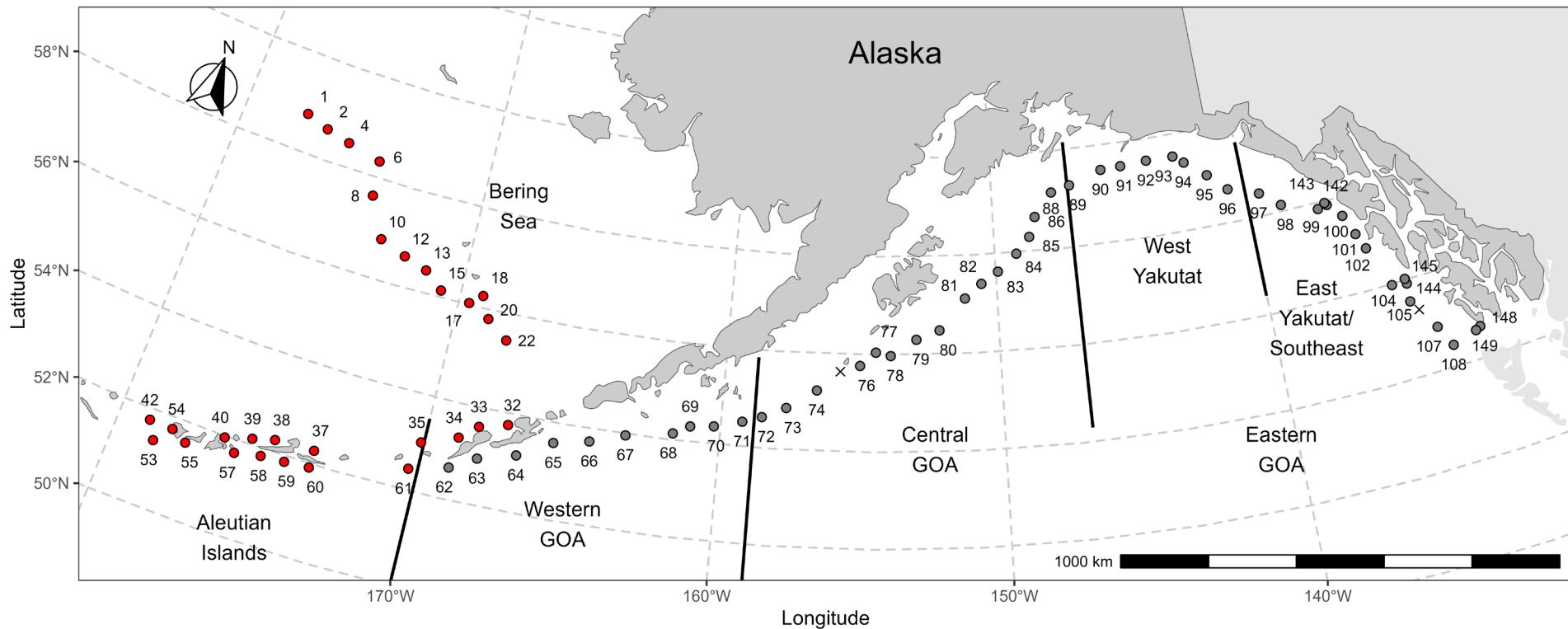
- Restructured to guarantee a daily rate to remove market volatility risk to vessel
- Daily rate is offset by sale of retained catch to reduce net cost to government
- Vessel days reduced and survey design re-structured
 - Previously sampled GOA every year and BS or AI every other year ~90 DAS
 - Now sample GOA in odd years for 50 DAS (2025) and BSAI in even years for 34 DAS (2026)
- Government obligated full contract amount in order to underwrite the contract (delayed start date from 6/1 to 7/15)

2022/23 Survey Geographic Coverage



- Bering Sea – odd years
- Aleutian Islands – even years
- GOA - annual
- 180 skates per day
- 45 hooks per skate
- Data depth stratified

2025/26 Survey Geographic Coverage



- Bering Sea – even years
- Aleutian Islands – even years
- GOA – odd years
- 180 skates per day
- 45 hooks per skate
- Data depth stratified

Impacts to Assessments

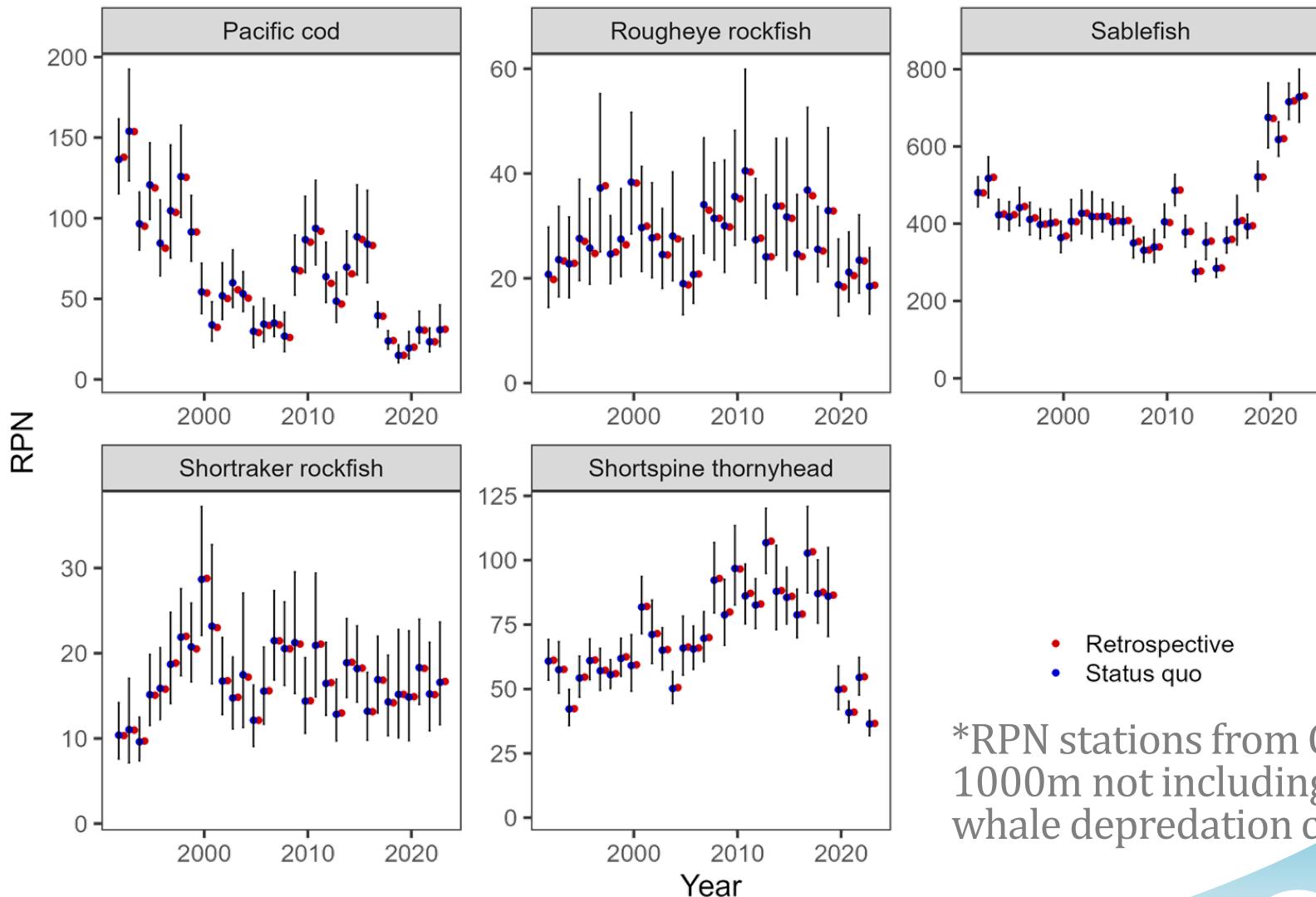
- Loss of 2 GOA RPN stations
 - Stations were chosen based on highest sampling frequency relative to geographic area sizes to minimize overall data loss
 - Stn. 75 in CGOA and 106 in the EGOA
- Sampling GOA and BSAI every other year
 - Most assessments are by FMP so creates a biennial survey similar to trawl surveys
 - Sablefish is AK-wide and has to deal with GOA one year and BSAI a different year



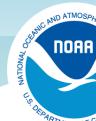
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Impacts to Assessments

GOA - remove 75 & 106



*RPN stations from GOA, 150-1000m not including sperm whale depredation correction



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2025 GOA Survey in Numbers

- 371,700 hooks fished in 46 days
 - 126,299 sablefish caught
- 2,869 sablefish otoliths collected (length/weight/sex)
- Tagged:
 - 3,998 sablefish
 - 197 shortspine thornyhead
- Recaptured 19 tagged sablefish (18-NMFS, 1-Canadian), and 1 SST (NMFS)
- 90 temperature-depth profiles
- Special Projects:
 - 26 eyes from sablefish for stable isotope analysis (Rogers)
 - Age validation and Epigenetics: genetics, otoliths and eyes ($\Delta^{14}\text{C}$) from 30 sablefish and 16 shortraker (Patterson/Portnoy)



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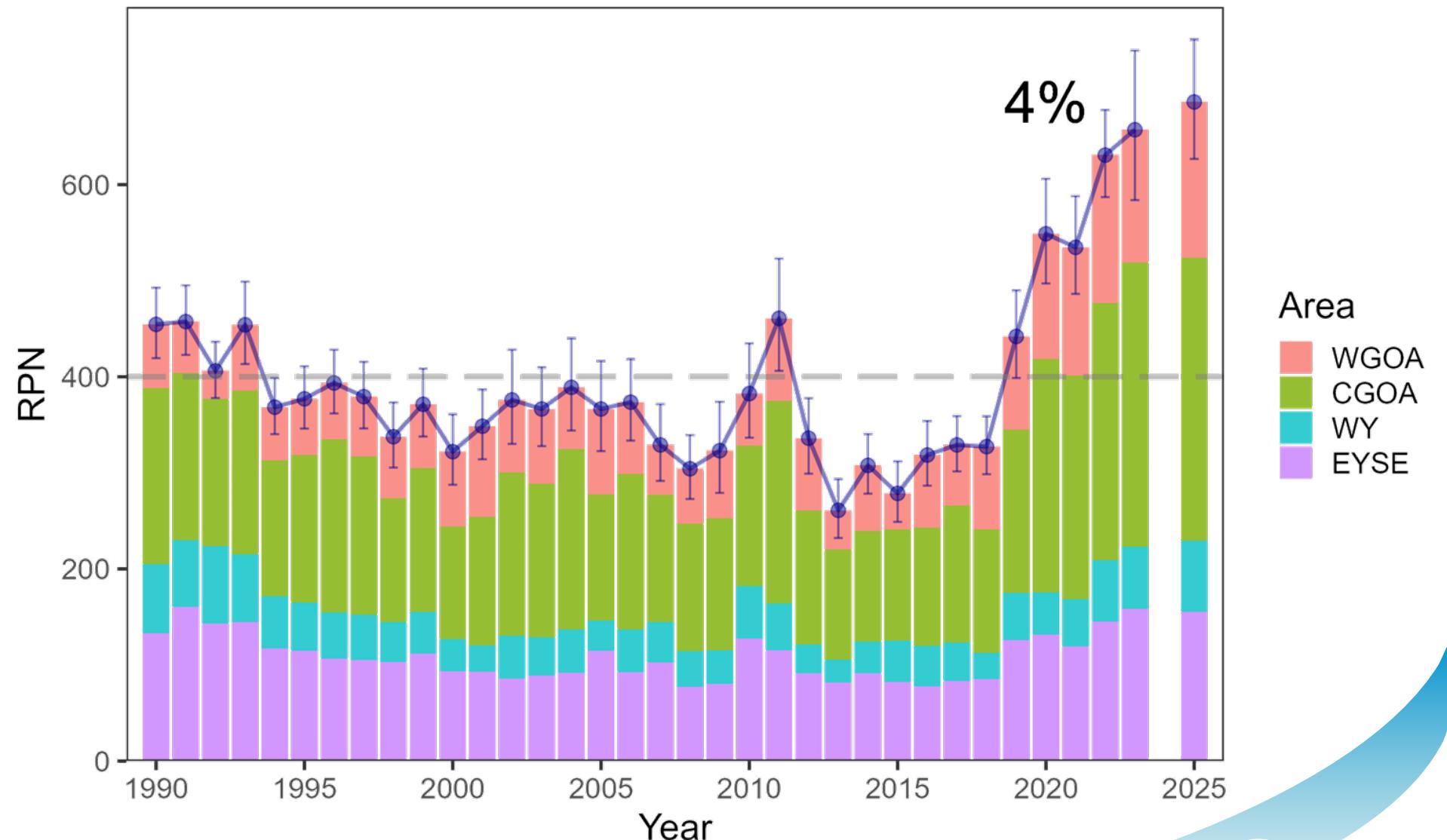
GOA Species Lengths

Common name	Lengths collected
sablefish	93,164
shortspine thornyhead	4,347
rougheye rockfish	3,392
Pacific cod	2,652
giant grenadier	1,898
shorthraker rockfish	1,738
redbanded rockfish	867
arrowtooth flounder	561
yelloweye rockfish	304
Pacific grenadier	229
spiny dogfish	50
rosethorn rockfish	34
dusky rockfish	25
Greenland turbot	1
Kamchatka flounder	1
Total	109,263



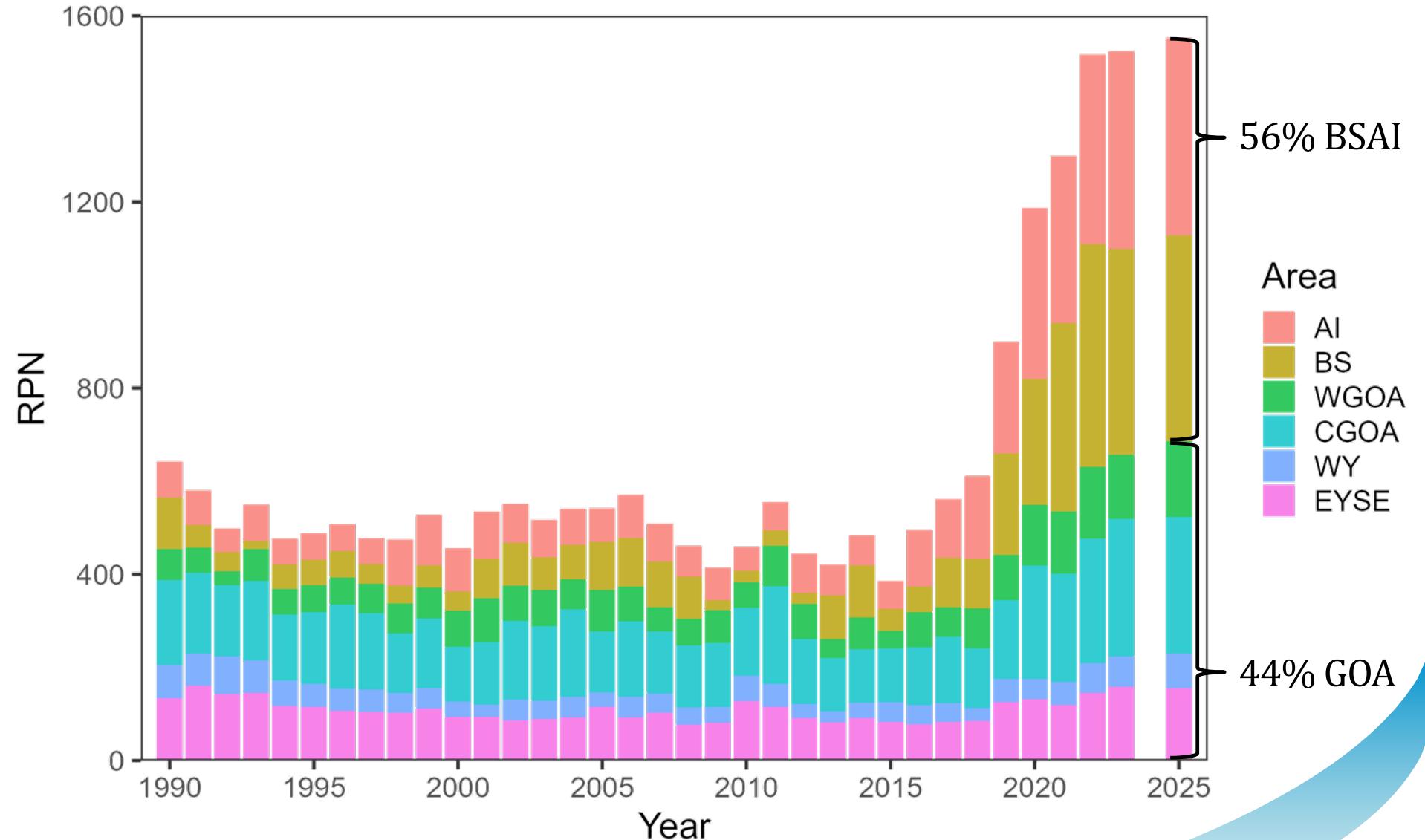
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GOA Sablefish



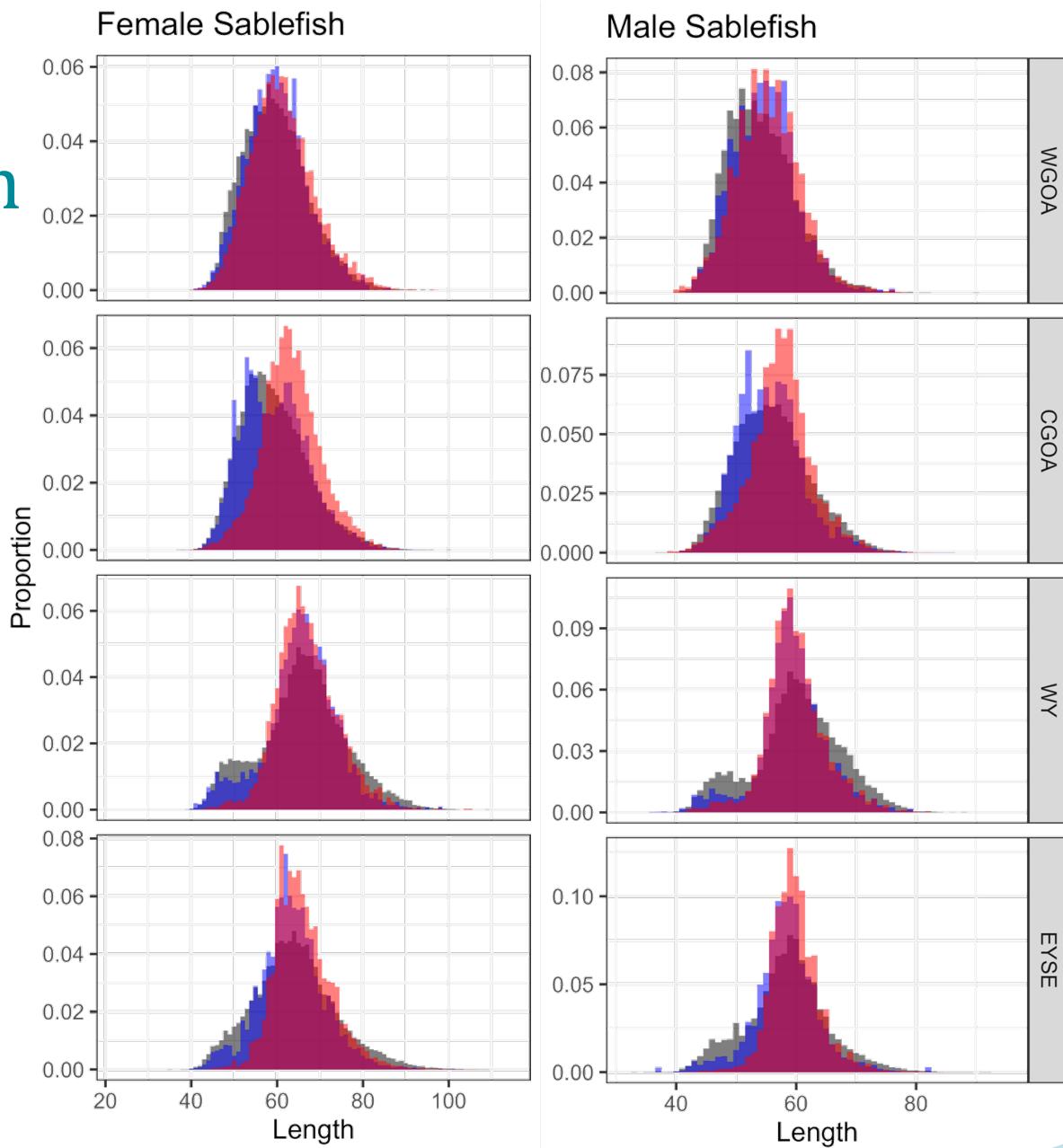
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Sablefish AK-wide (2023 BSAI)



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GOA Sablefish Lengths

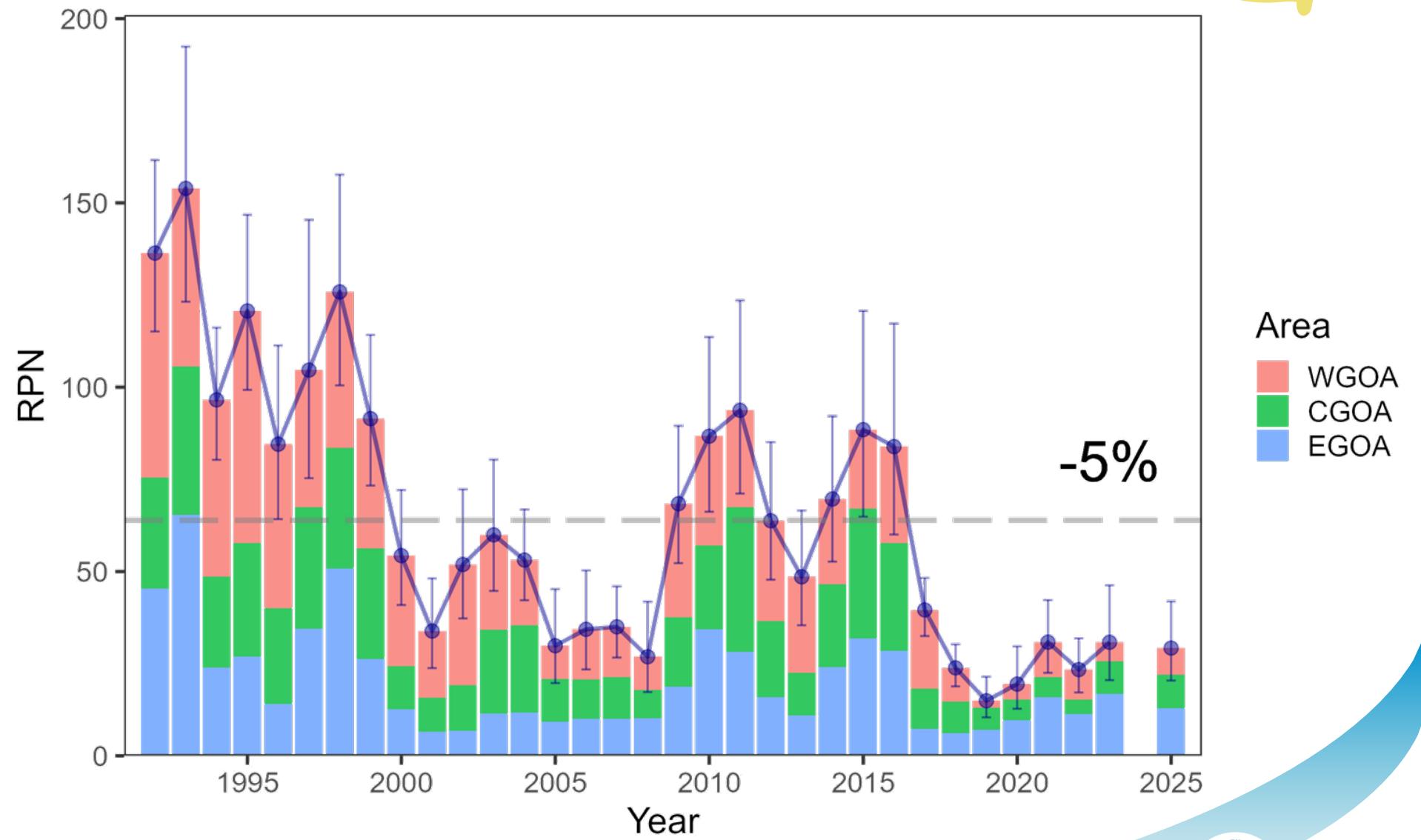


Year
10yrMean
2023
2025



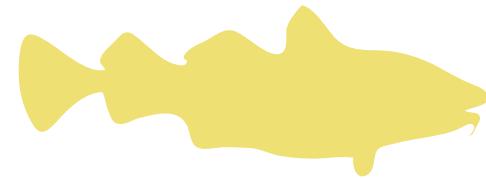
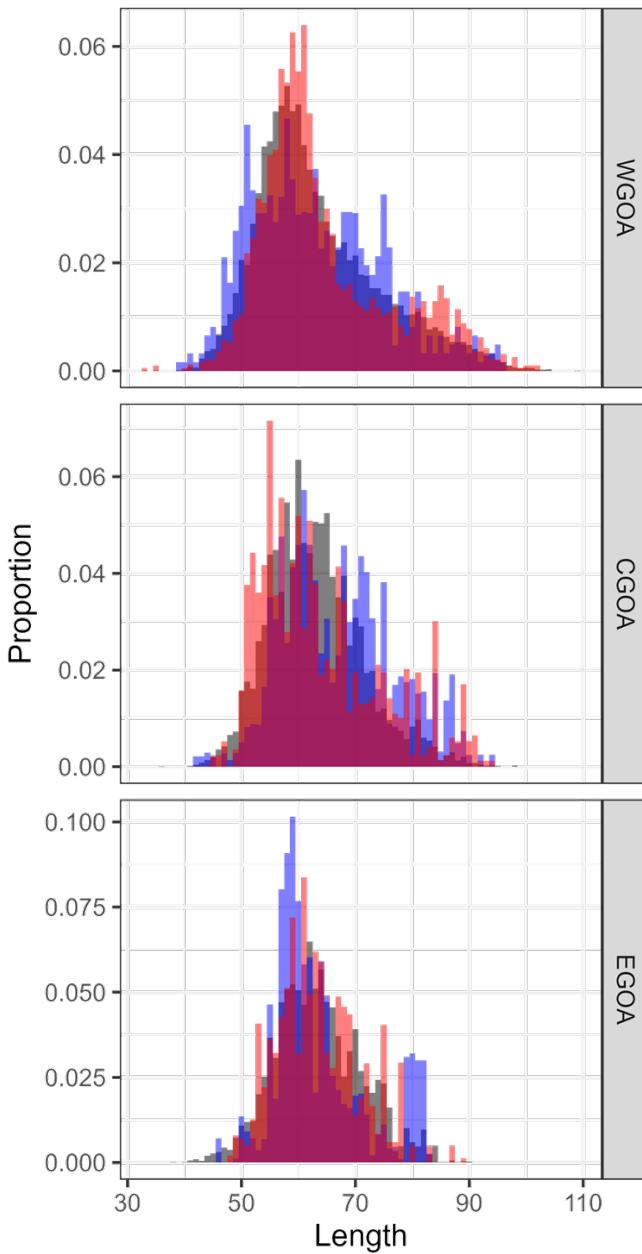
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GOA P. Cod



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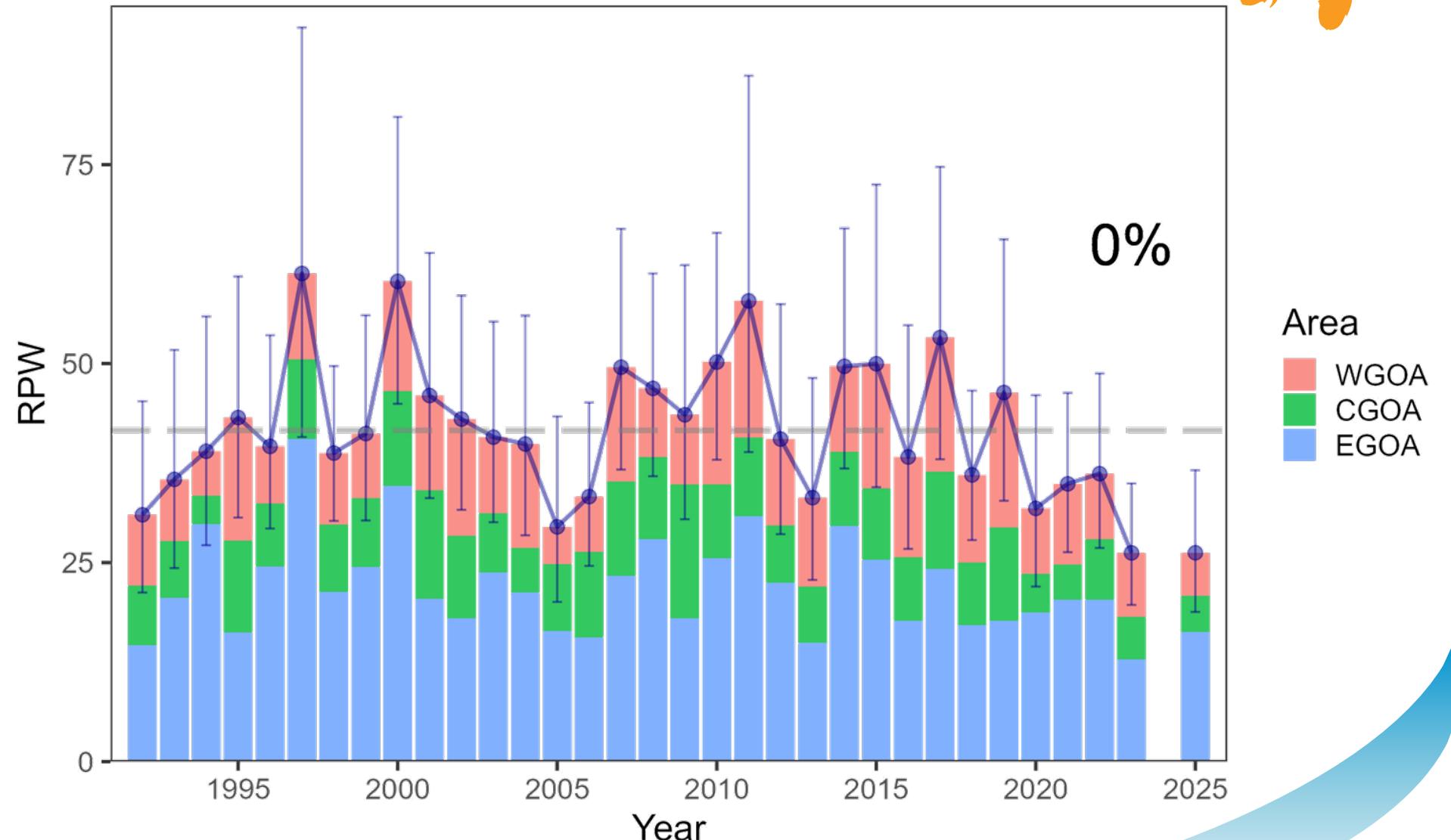
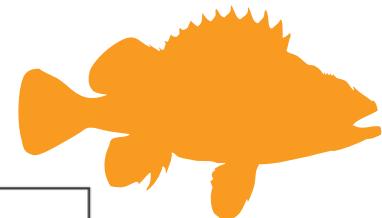
P. cod

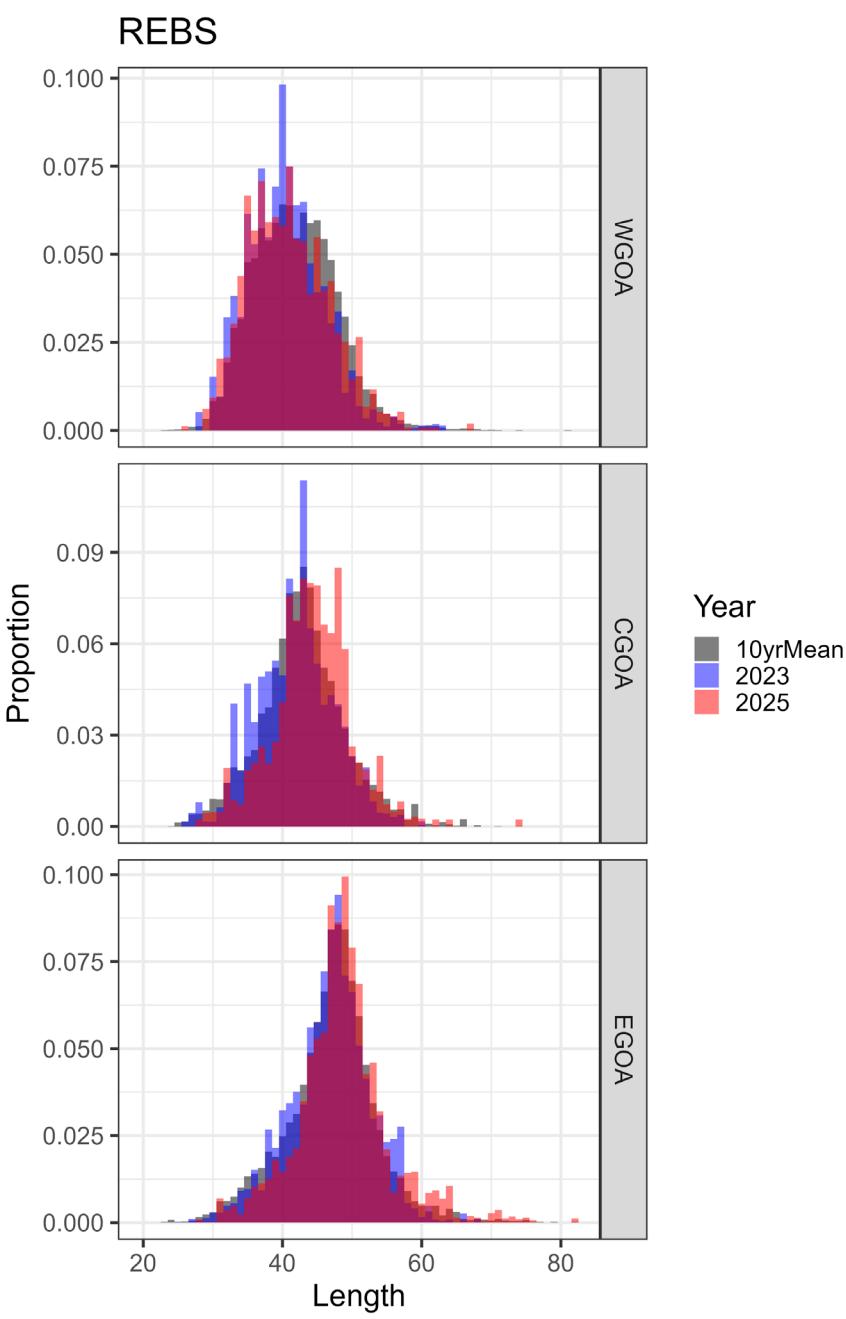


GOA P. Cod Lengths

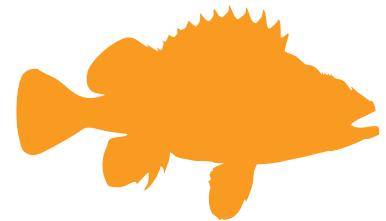
Year
10yrMean
2023
2025

GOA RE/BS

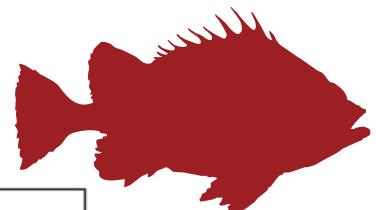




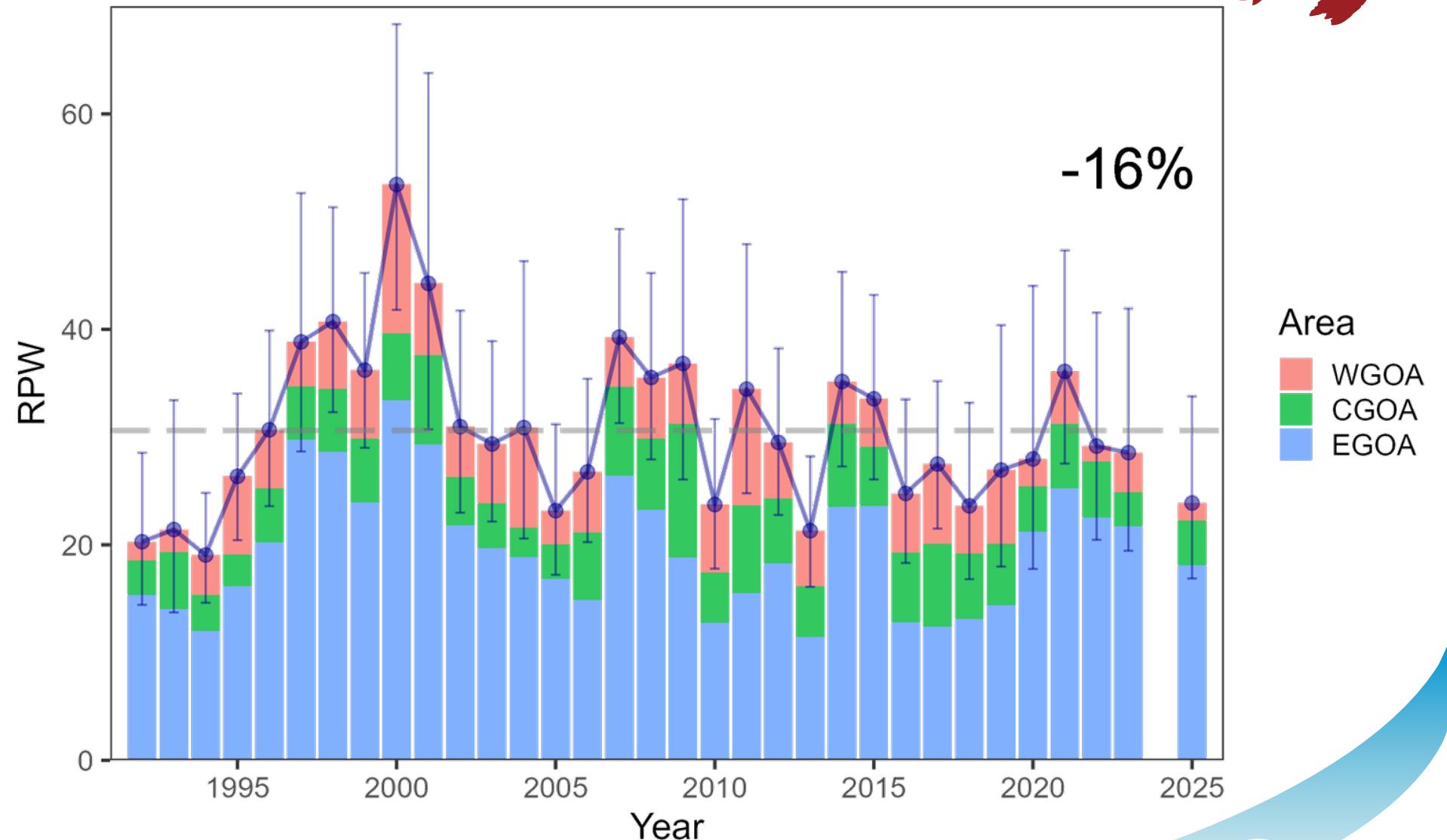
GOA RE/BS Lengths



GOA Shortraker

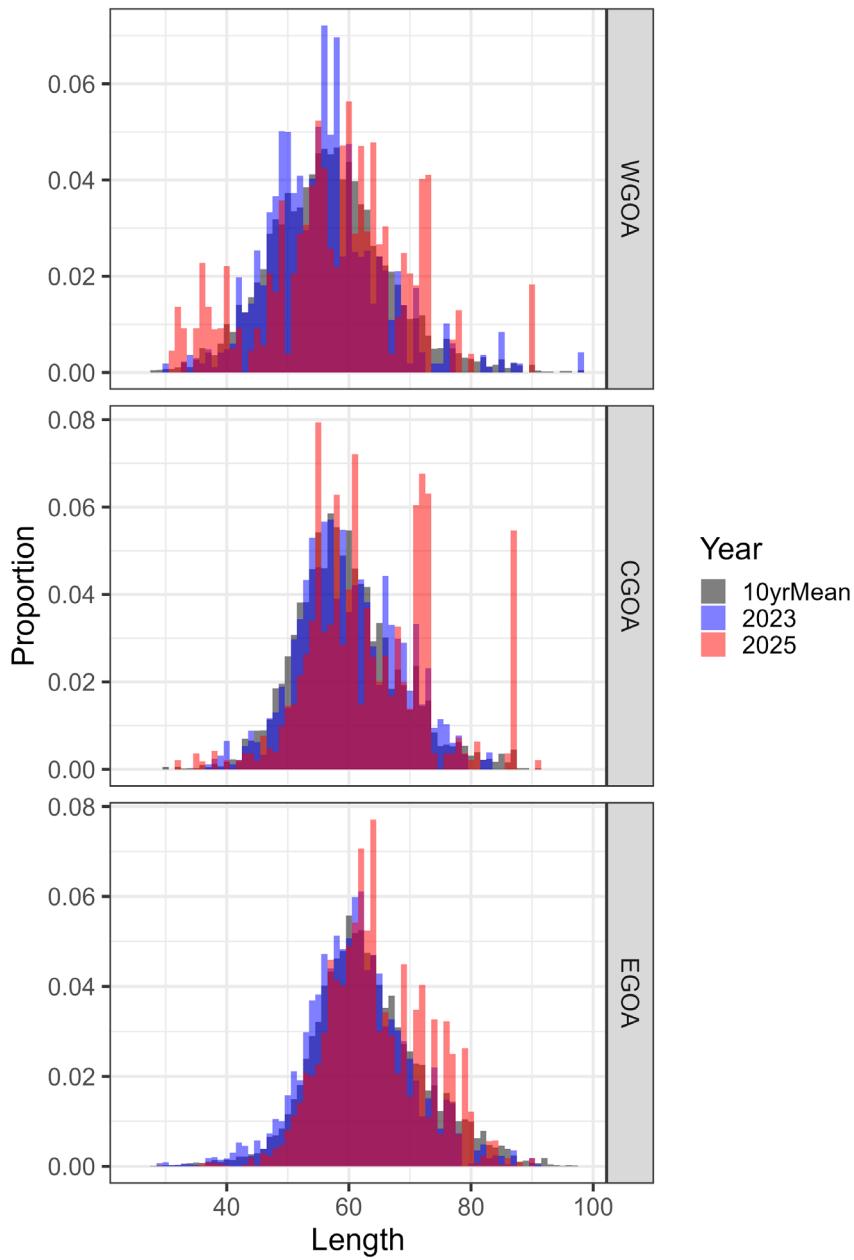


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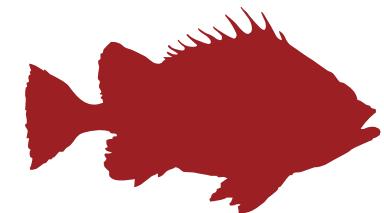


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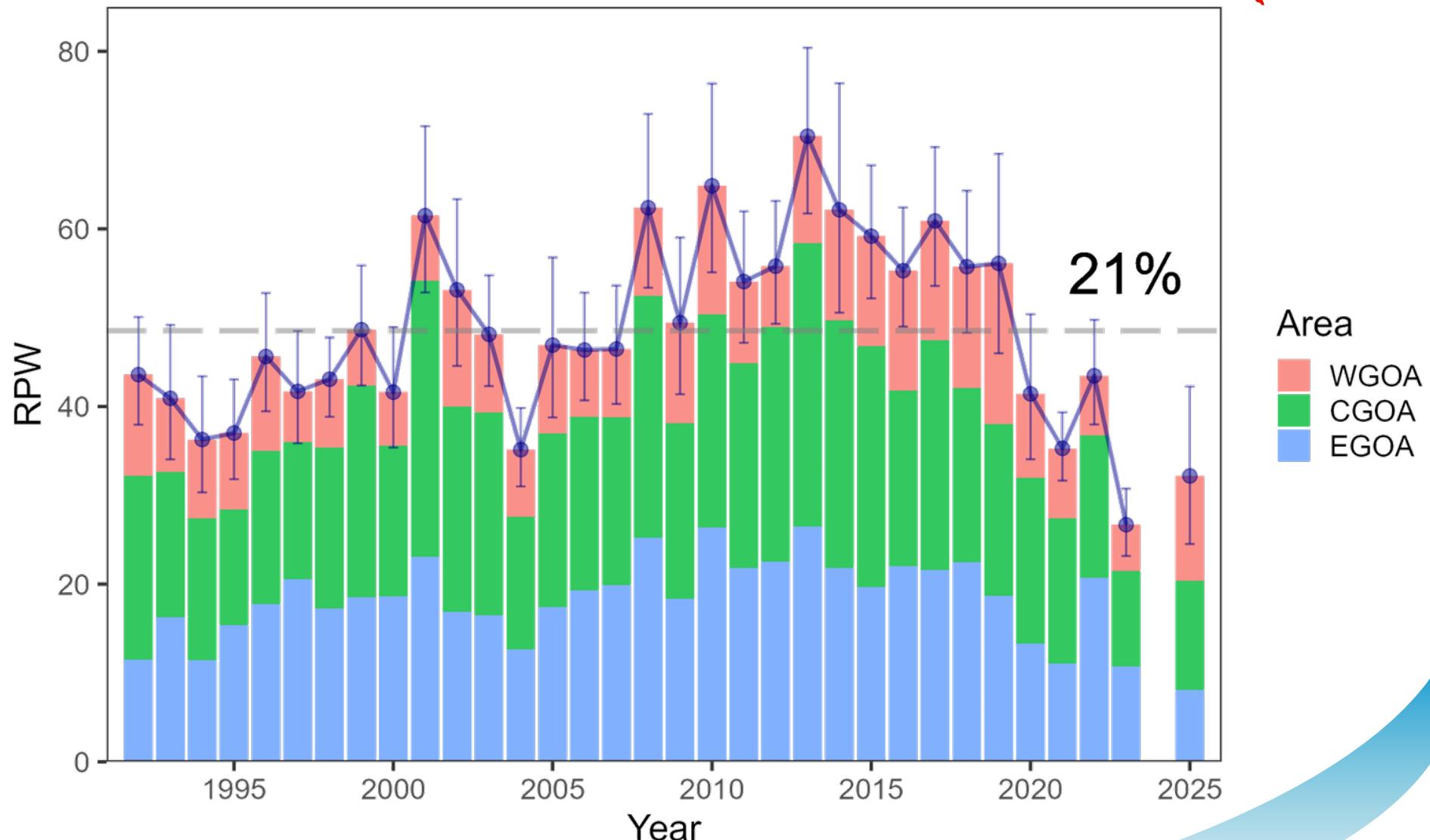
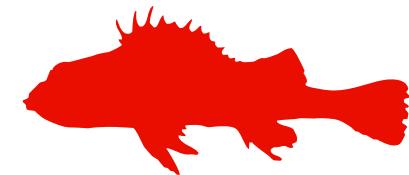
Shortraker



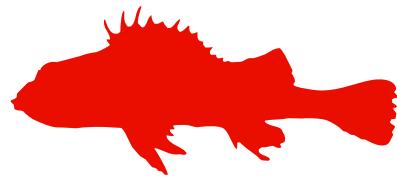
GOA Shortraker Lengths



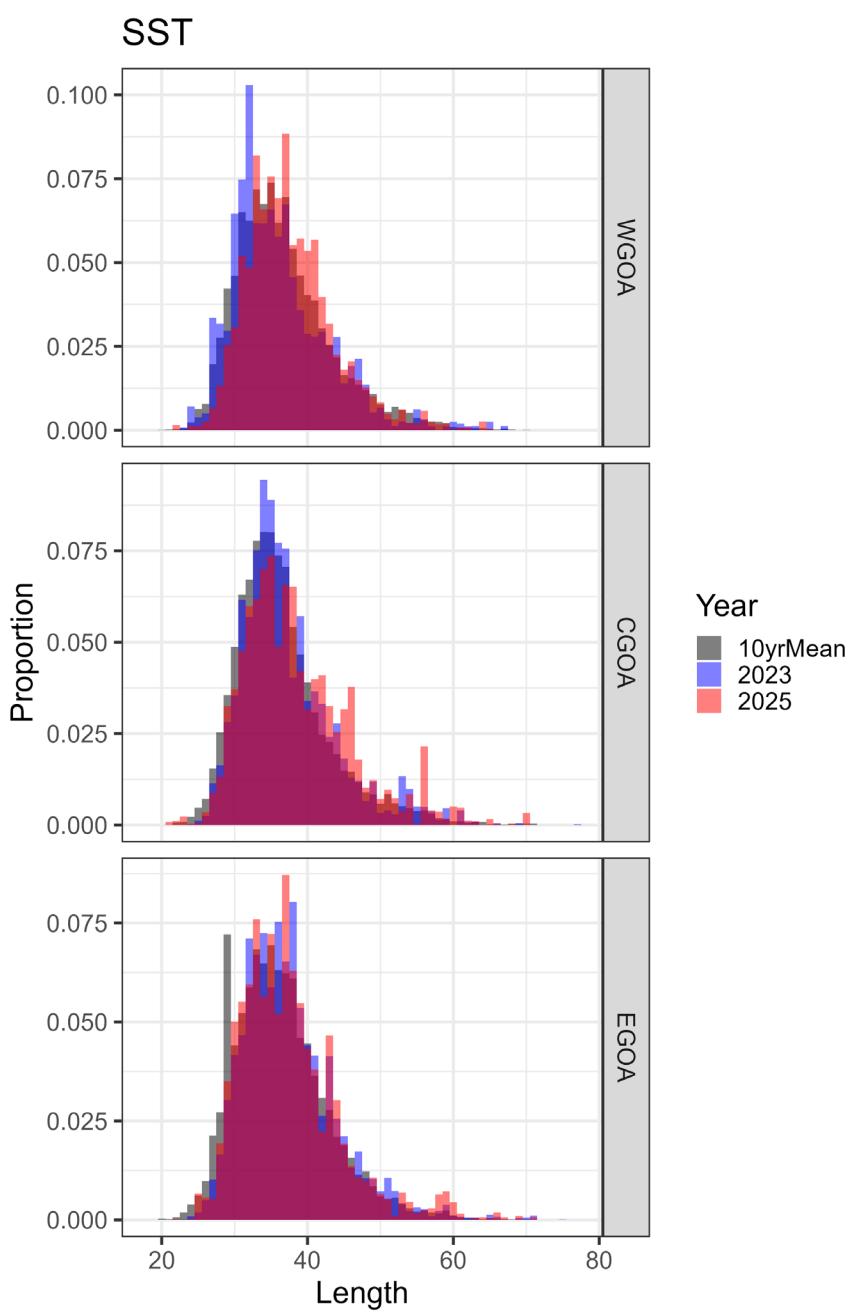
GOA Shortspine Thornyhead



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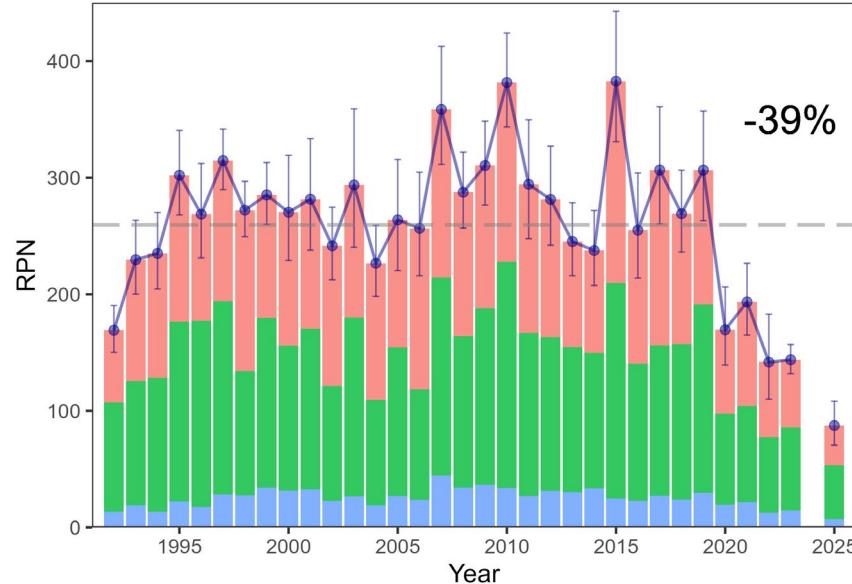
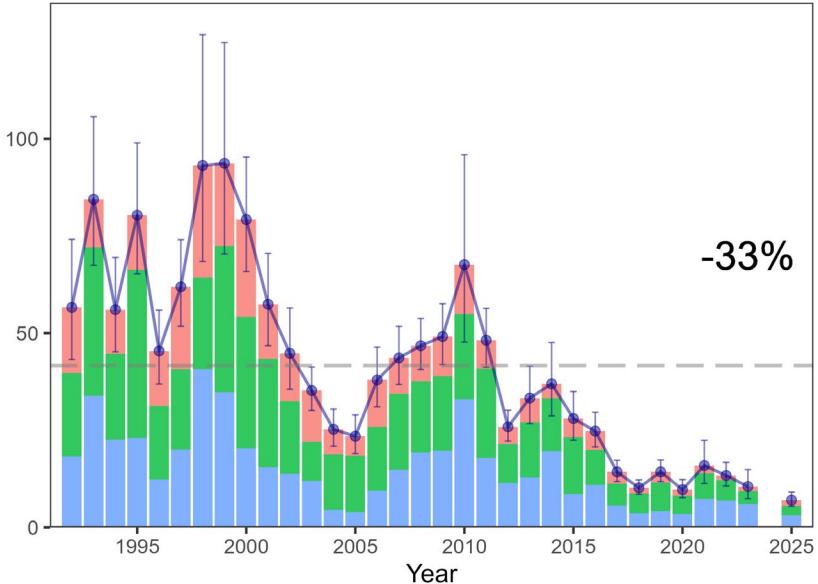
GOA Shortspine Thornyhead Lengths



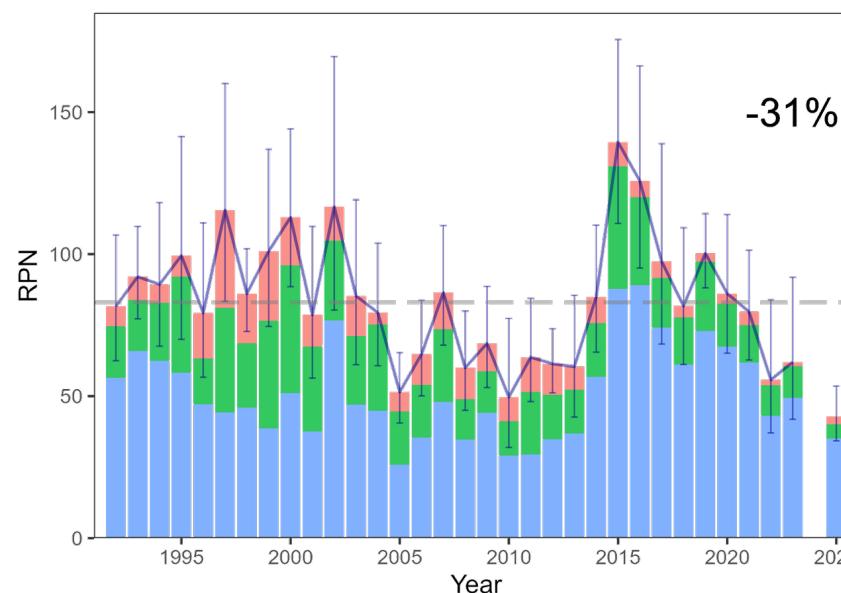
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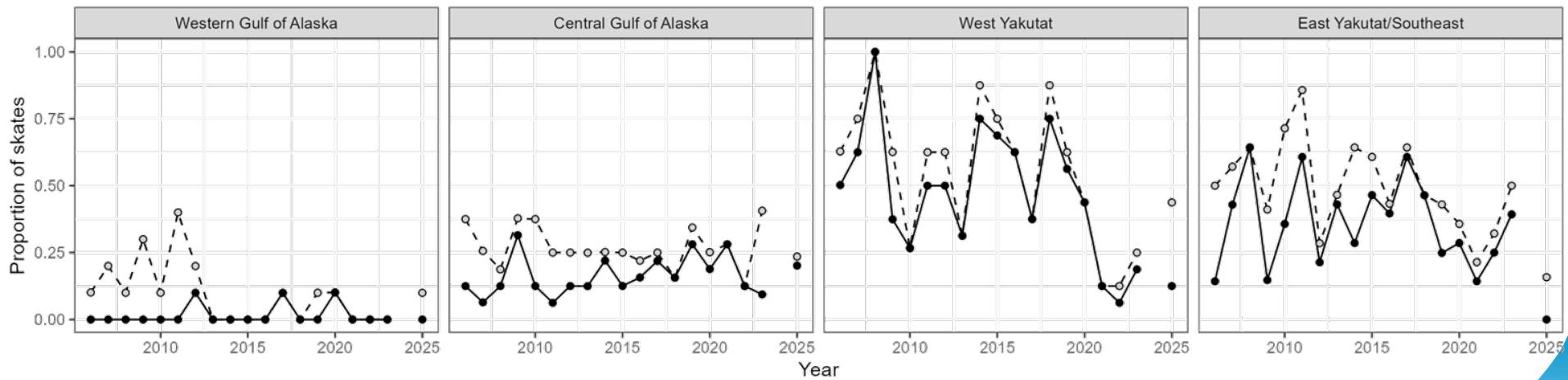
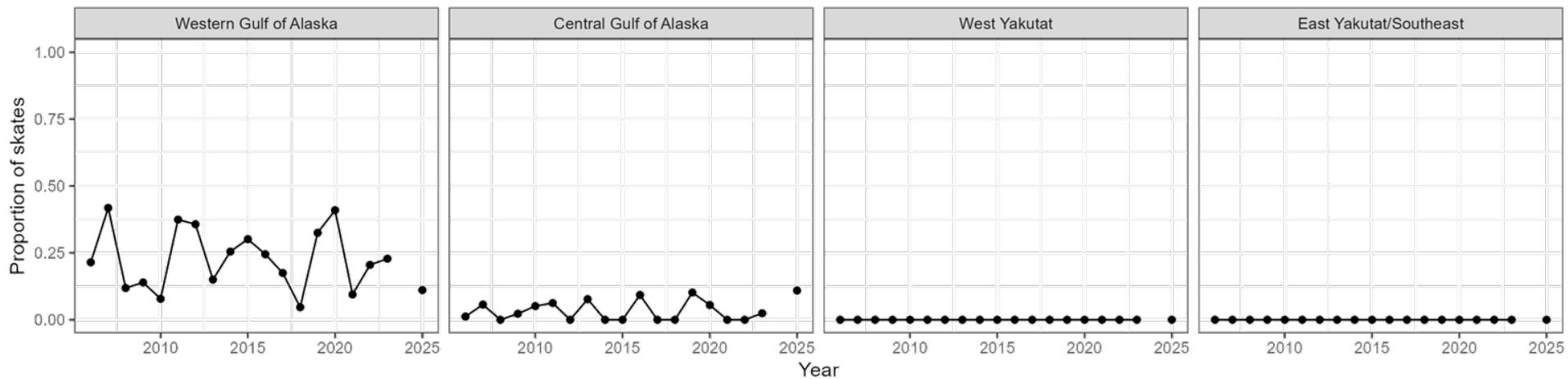
RPN



Pacific halibut

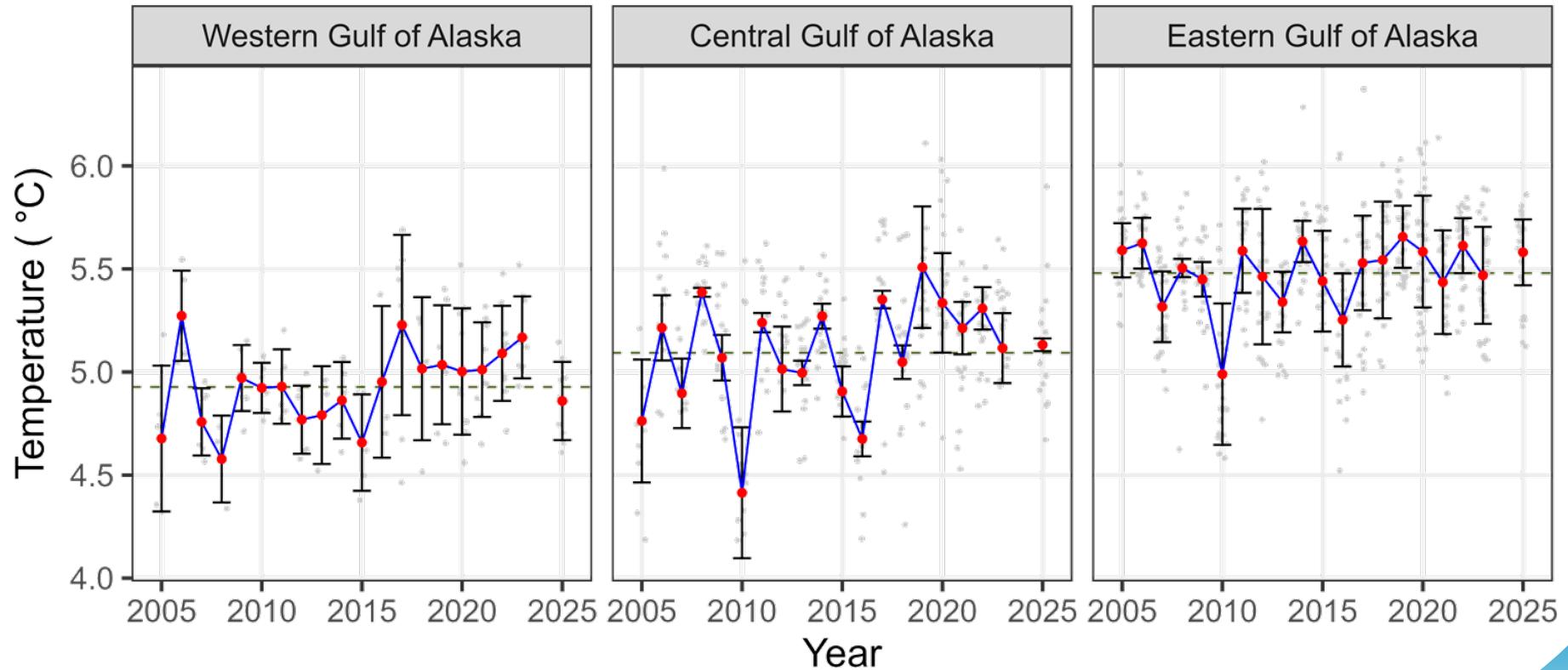


Top: Killer Whale Depredation



Bottom: Sperm Whale Presence (open) and Depredation (closed)

Subsurface Temperature (Area-weighted index ~250 m)



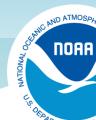
*2025 timing changed, and shallow-gullies no longer sampled

Thank You!



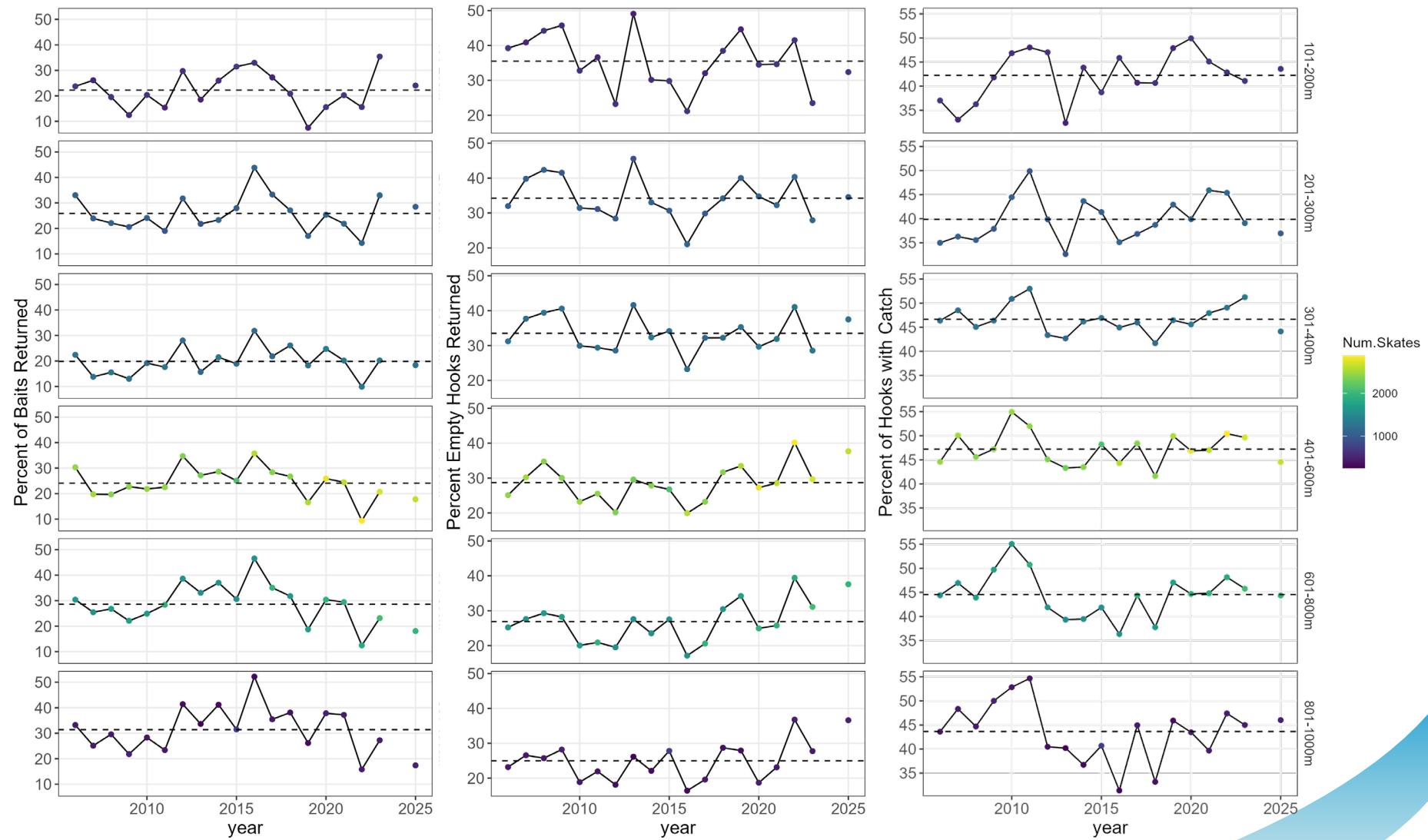
- Contract Biologists: James Millsaps and Fen Renner
- Field staff: Pete Hulson, Katy Echave, Brenna Hsieh, Kristin Omori, and Ben Williams
- Survey/Contract Logistics: Pat Malecha
- FV Alaskan Leader captains, crew, and staff
- RACE Division/Net Loft assistance

Questions?



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EXTRA SLIDE: Hooks (Bait vs. Empty vs. Catch)



*RPN stations from GOA only