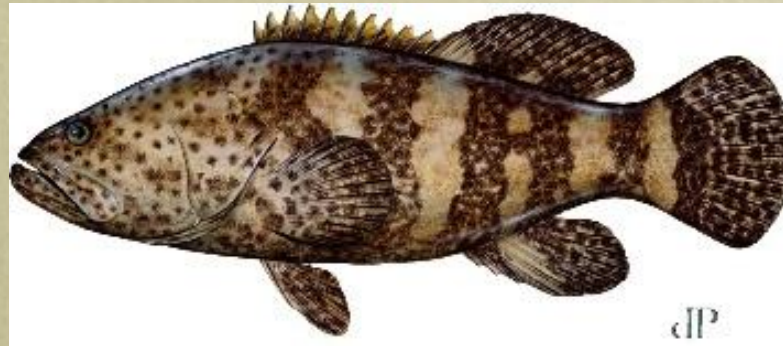


# SEDAR 47: Presentation to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council 17Oct2016



Joe O'Hop and Joseph Munyandorero

Fish and Wildlife Research Institute,  
St. Petersburg, FL





Adult Goliath Grouper aggregating at the MG111 barge wreck off of Jupiter, FL  
in 65 feet of water. Photo by Mr. Walt Stearns,

Underwater Journal (<http://www.waltstearns.com/underwaterjournal.html> )





# Assessment efforts

- SEDAR 3 (2003)
  - Data workshop concluded that data were insufficient to conduct a quantitative stock assessment, but survey data were subsequently discovered leading to the Review Panel recommending that an assessment should be attempted.
- SEDAR 6 (2006)
  - Review workshop only to consider Goliath Grouper and Hogfish assessments.
  - First use of the “catch-free” model and relative benchmarks



# Assessment efforts

- SEDAR 23 (2010) – rejected by Review Panel
  - Data, Assessment, and Review Workshops, Catch-free model used
  - Review Panel rejected the assessment, among other reasons, because it could not provide absolute benchmarks (TORs)
- FWC update (2015)
  - Revised and updated indices for the Catch-free model.
  - Primarily designed to inform the FWC commissioners on current trends in the population since SEDAR 47 was already being planned.



# Assessment efforts

- In planning the analyses for SEDAR 47, data sources were considered to determine whether new types of data suitable for the assessment had become available.
  - Research studies had been conducted on estuarine and offshore portions of the population
    - Good information on sizes of individuals, movements, site fidelity, genetics, potential for nursery habitat identification, mercury levels, and other aspects of its life history.
    - Some potential information on age composition of offshore fish available, but still undergoing evaluation and was not available for the SEDAR 47.
  - Without new data suitable for the assessment, we did not hold data or assessment workshops
    - We used the recommendations from SEDAR 23 to structure data inputs for this assessment.

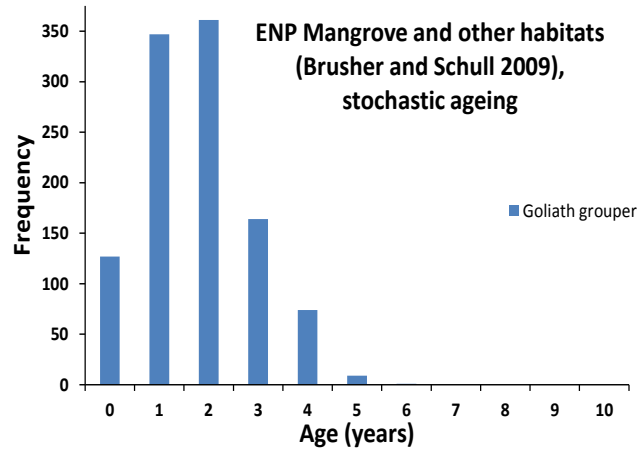
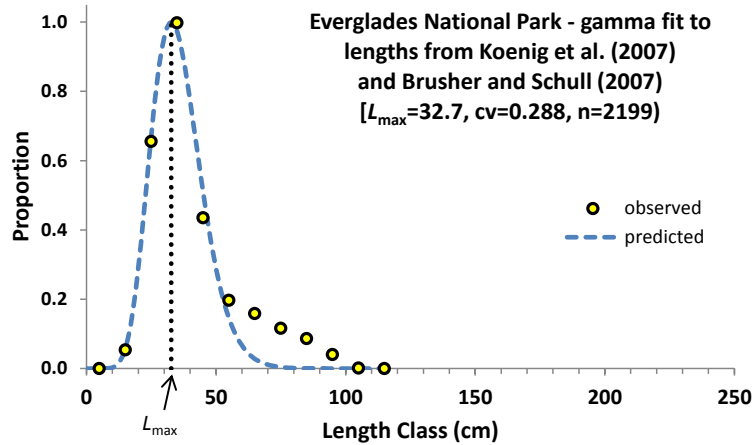




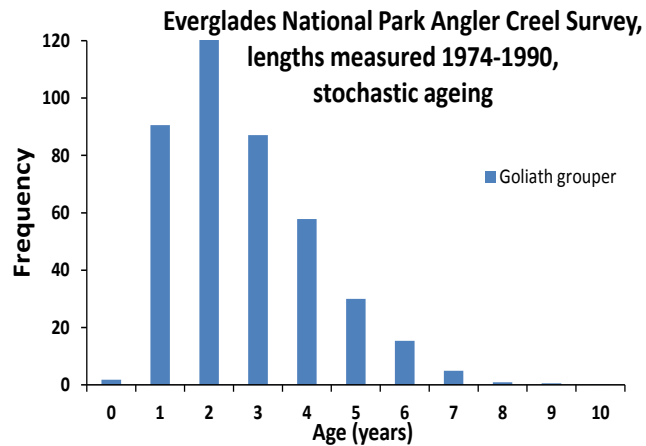
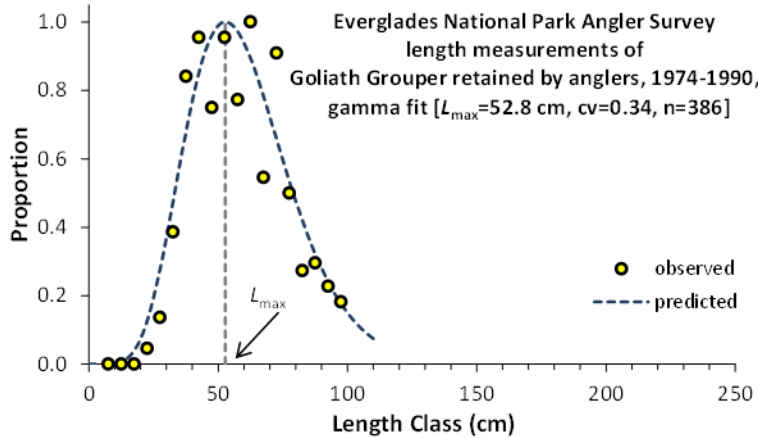
# Since SEDAR 23:

- Length measurements
  - Underwater
  - Capture, episodic mortality events
- Dorsal fin rays
  - Genetics (kinship analyses in progress)
  - Ages – fin rays still being evaluated
- Mark-recapture
  - Movements
  - Site fidelity
  - Potential estimate of total mortality – (depends on ages)
- Refinements to model inputs
  - new structure for MRFSS/MRIP index
  - recreational data re-estimated
  - two models:
    - Catch-free (Porch et al. 2004)
    - Stochastic Stock Reduction Analysis (Martell et al. 2008)

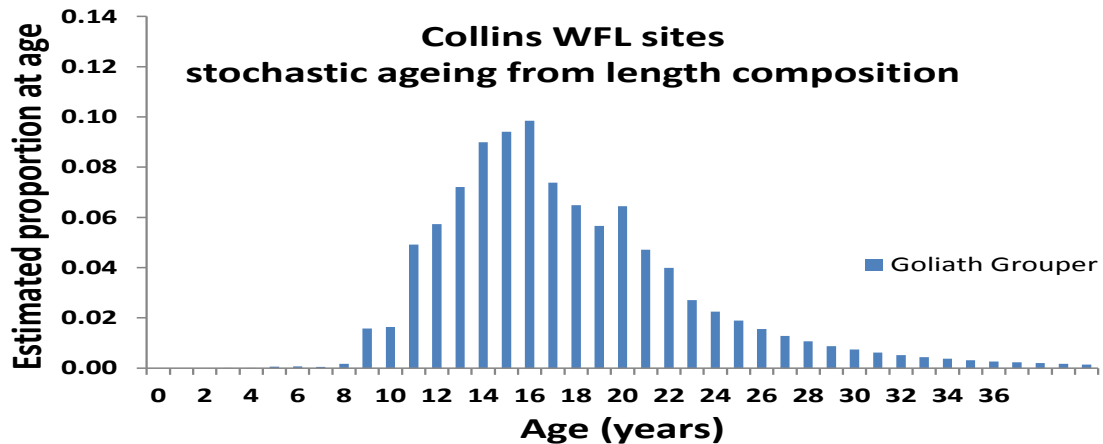
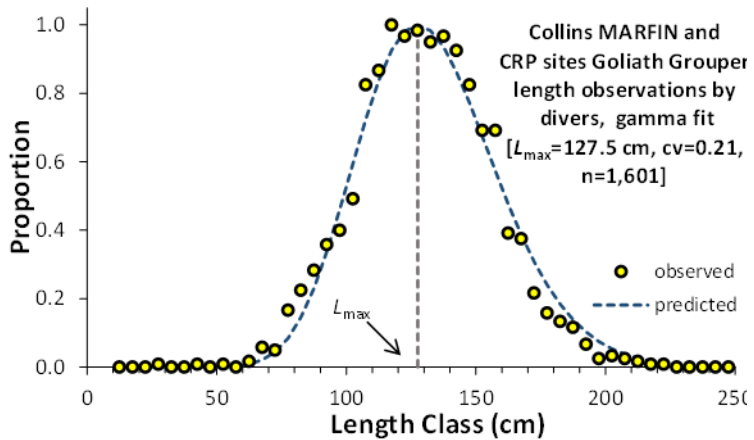




Length-frequencies, stochastic ageing

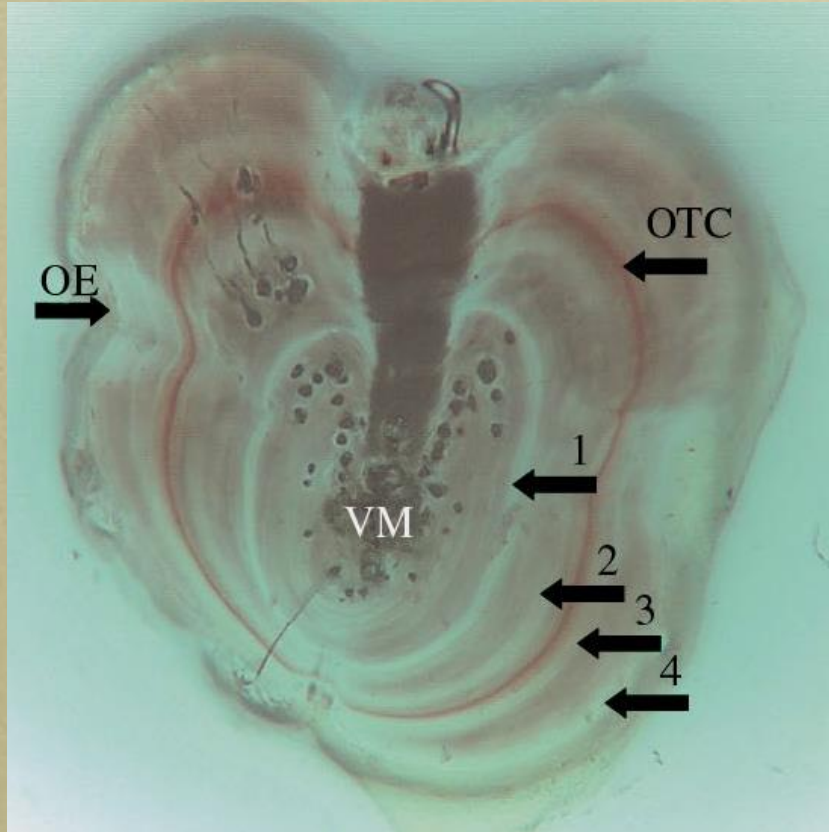


Estuarine vs. Offshore

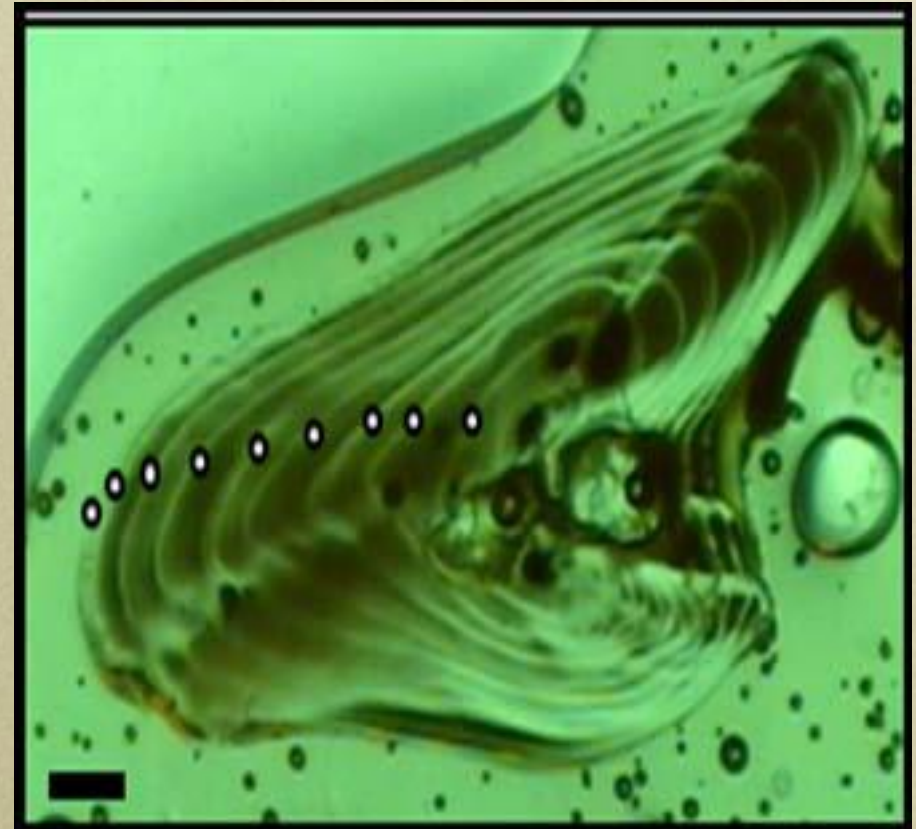


# Non-lethal ageing techniques

Dorsal spine cross-section  
(Brusher and Schull 2009)



Dorsal fin ray cross-section  
(Murie et al. 2009)



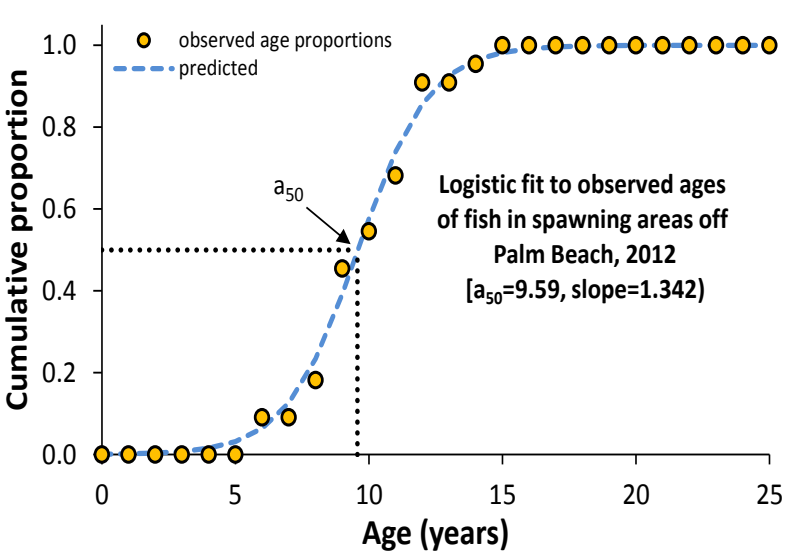
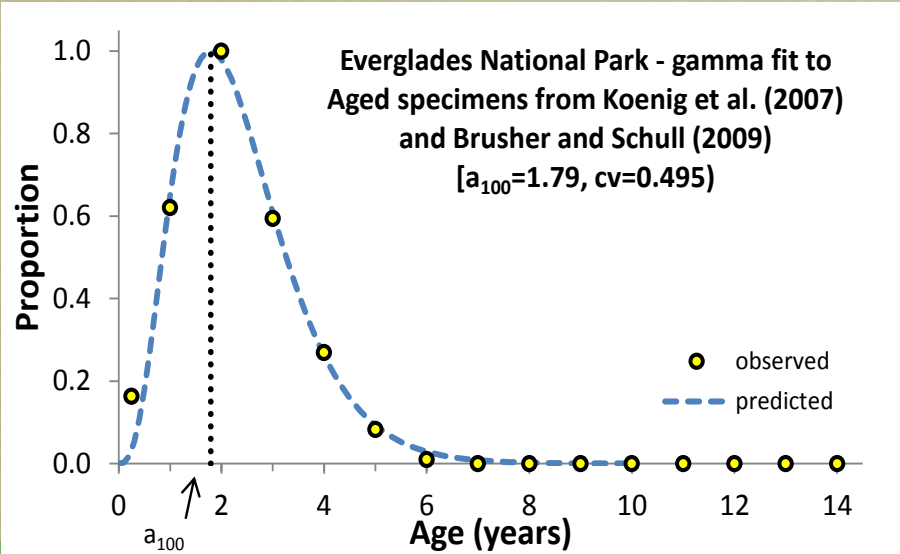
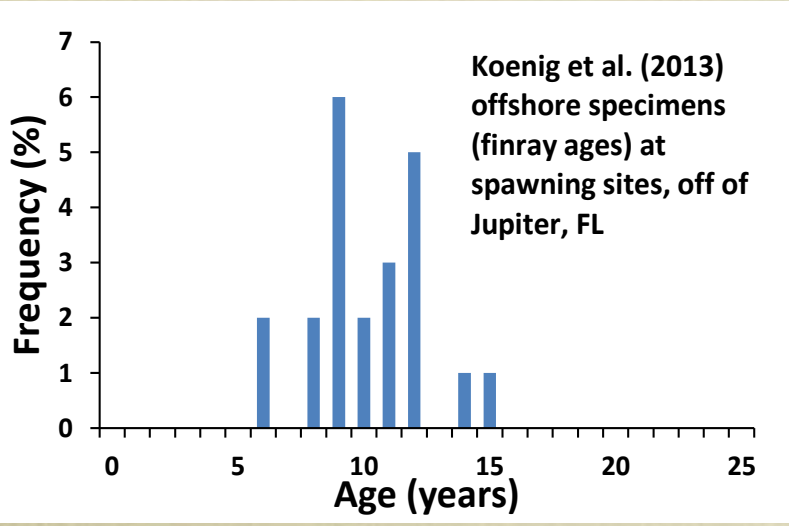
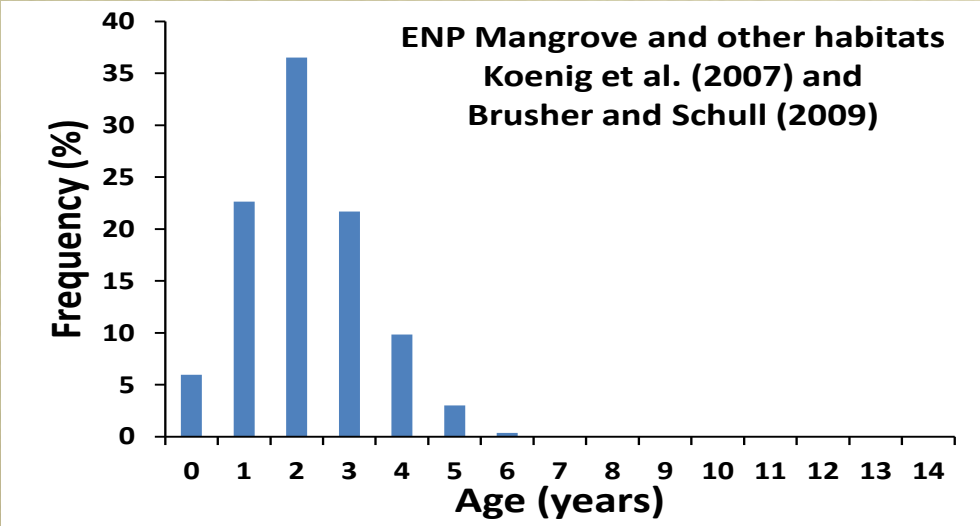
Brusher, J. H., and J. Schull. 2009. Non-lethal age determination for juvenile goliath grouper (*Epinephelus itajara*) from southwest Florida. *Endangered Species Research* 7:205-212.

Murie, D., D. Parkyn, C. C. Koenig, F. C. Coleman, J. Schull, and S. Frías-Torres. 2009. Evaluation of finrays as a non-lethal ageing method for protected goliath grouper *Epinephelus itajara* in Florida *Endangered Species Research* 7:213-220.





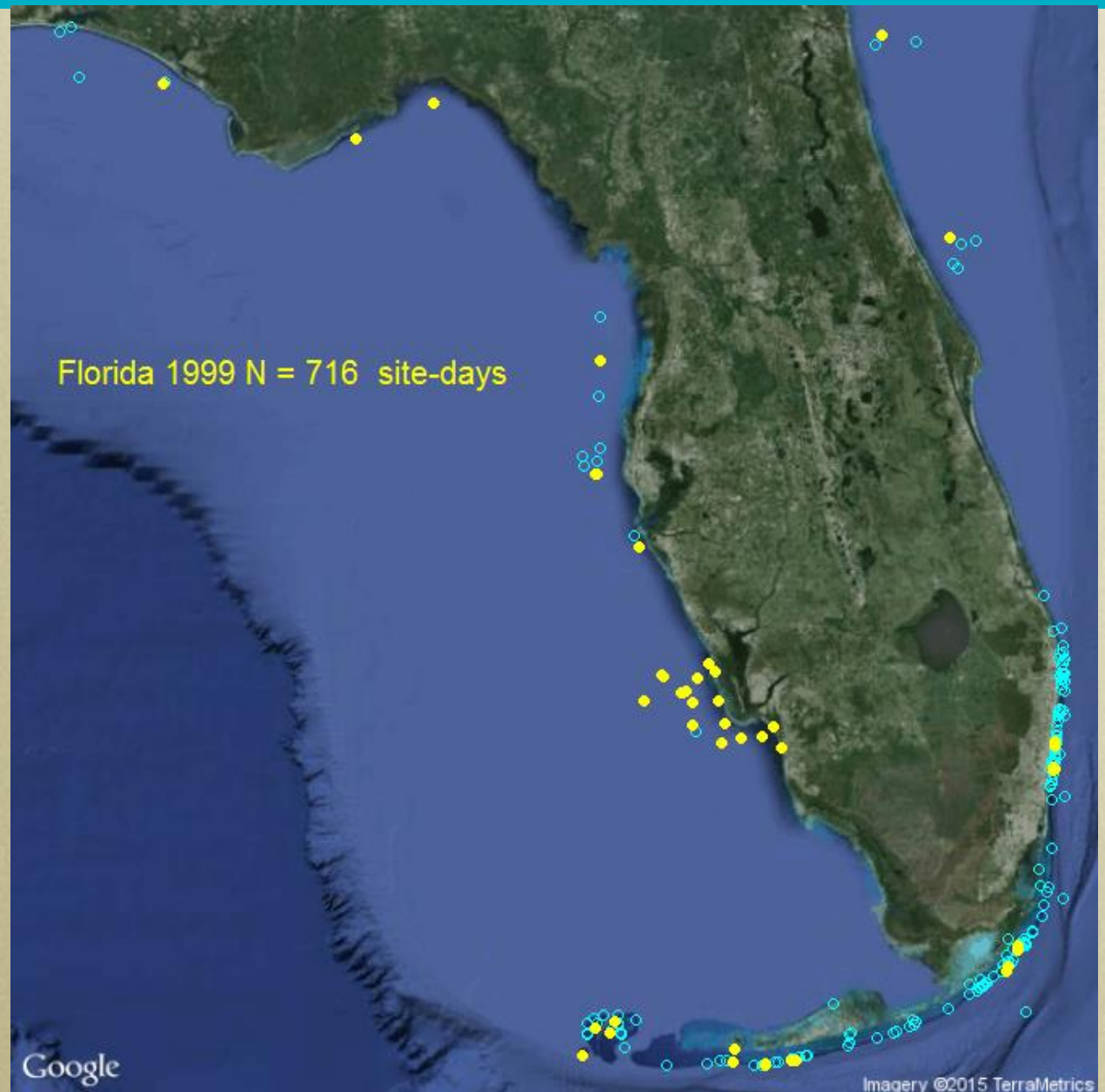
# Estuarine and offshore vulnerability curves (SEDAR 47) estimated for Goliath Grouper – aged specimens



Estuarine Fish

Offshore Fish

# REEF (Reef Environmental Education Foundation)

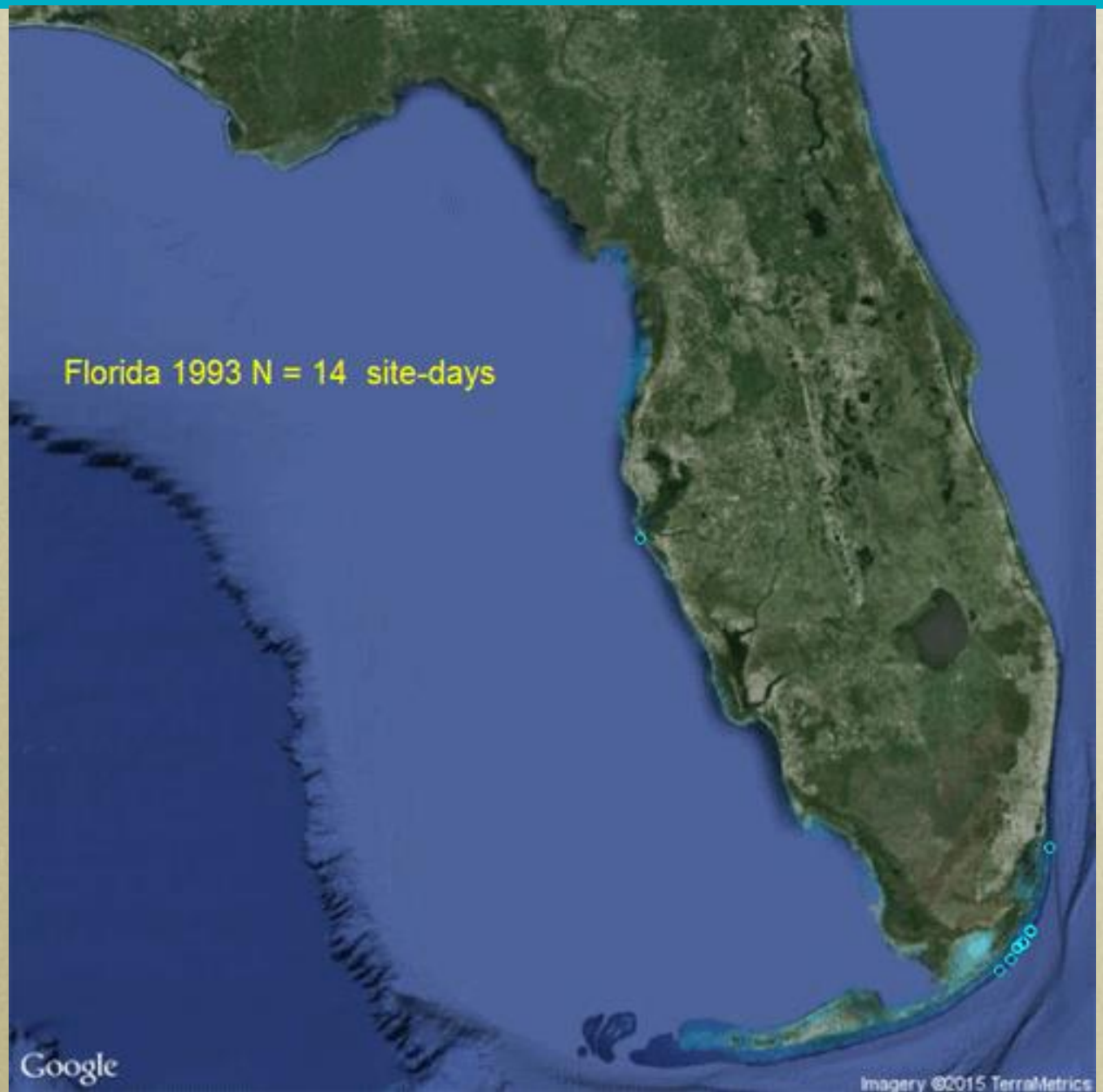


open blue circles: sites without Goliaths  
yellow dots: sites with Goliaths at least once in a year.



# REEF

## 1993-2014



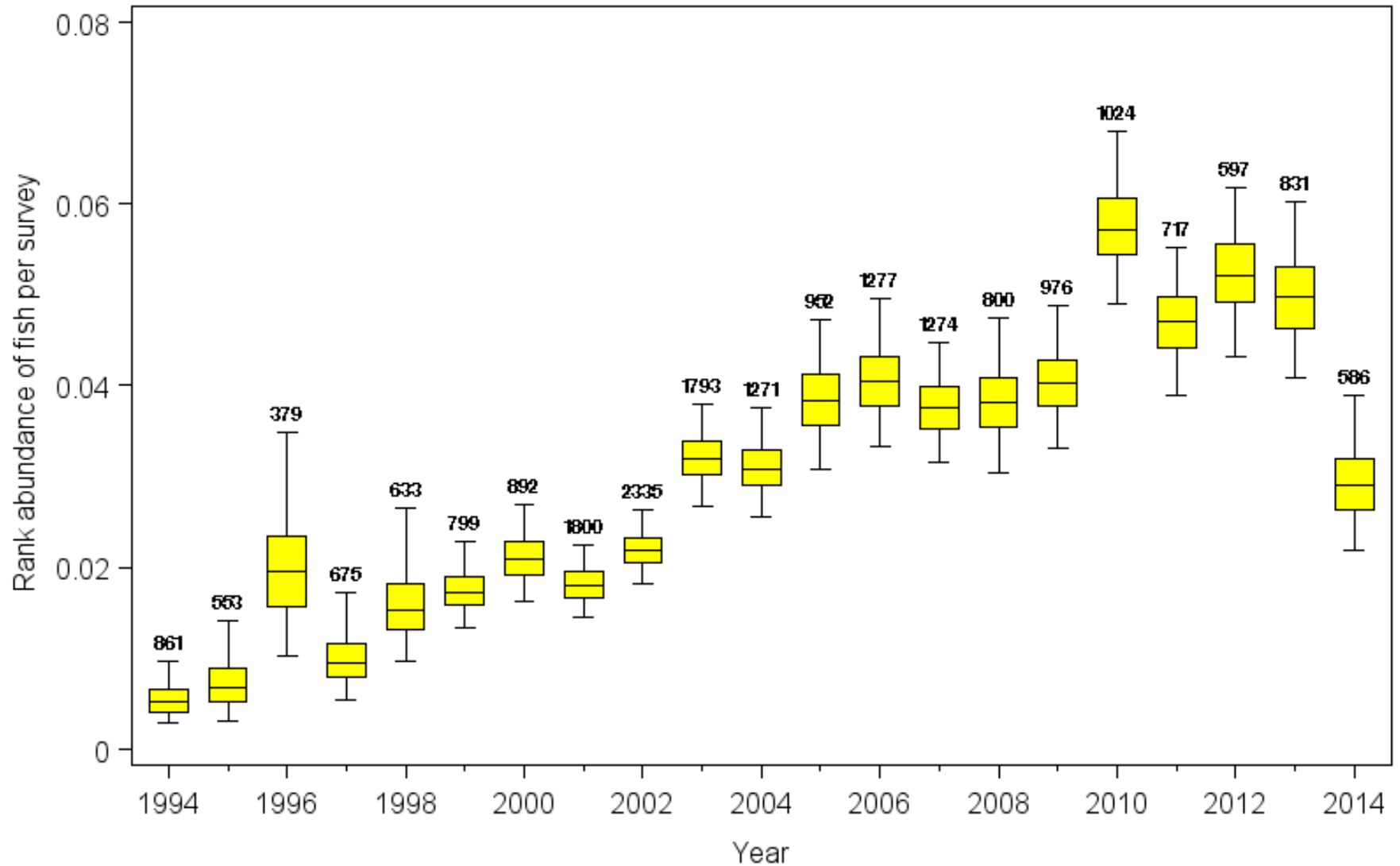
open blue circles: sites without Goliaths  
yellow dots: sites with Goliaths at least once in a year.



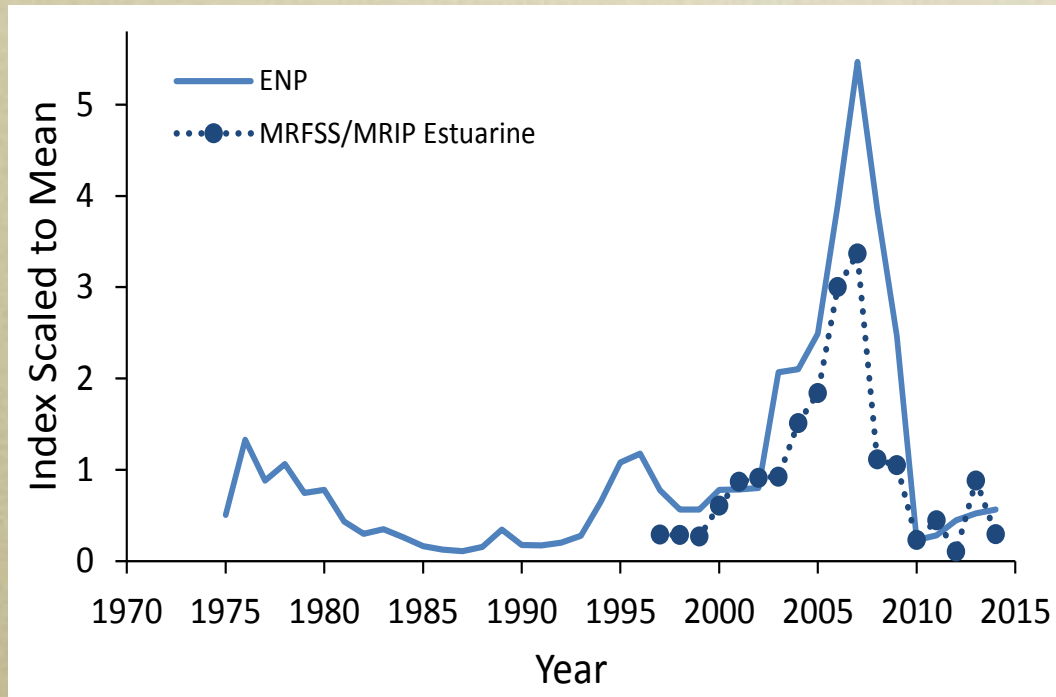


# REEF Index

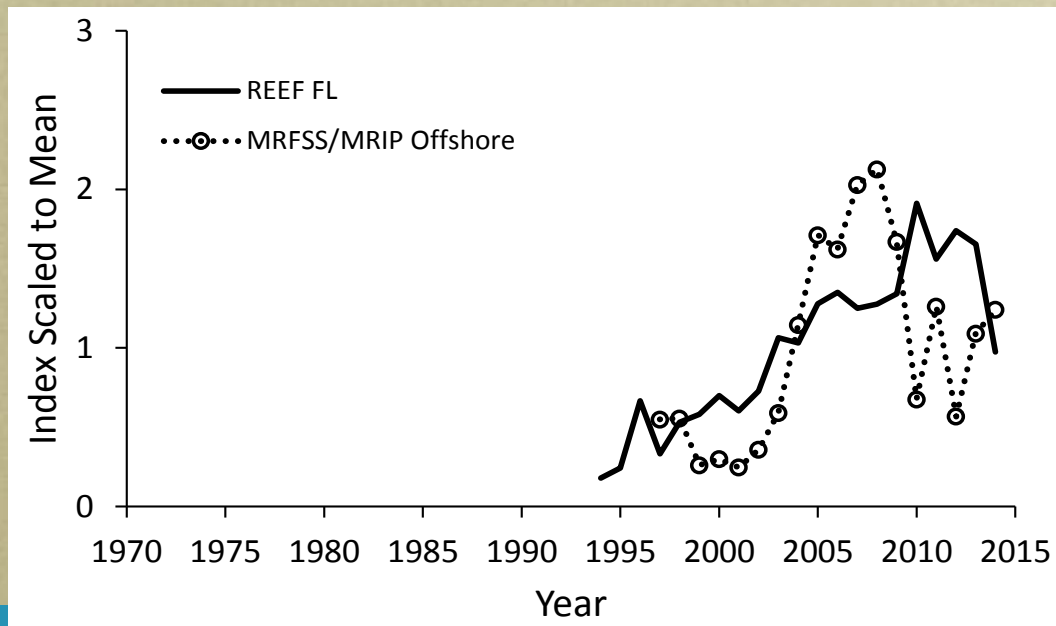
REEF Index: new\_hab\_FL\_S47



The indices scaled to their means



Estuarine Indices



Offshore Indices



Fig. 4.4.1 a,b

# The Catch-free and SSRA models are types of Age-structured Surplus Production Models (ASPM)

- Replaces estimation of production model parameters through incorporation of a stock-recruitment relationship dependent on spawning stock size
- Attempts to account for age structure of the population through time
- Projects population forward through time through age-structured simulations, accounting for time lags, fleet selectivities, and age schedules for biological parameters (e.g., growth, maturity, fecundity, etc., most often fixed rather than model-estimated)
- Tuned with age-aggregated or age-structured abundance indices, each with its own unique age-selection
- Typically, ASPMs do not directly incorporate age or size composition of catches, and age schedules are specified by the user (estimated externally to the model)
- The Catch-free model is unique among this class of models in that it does not use any information on fishery removals for its estimates.



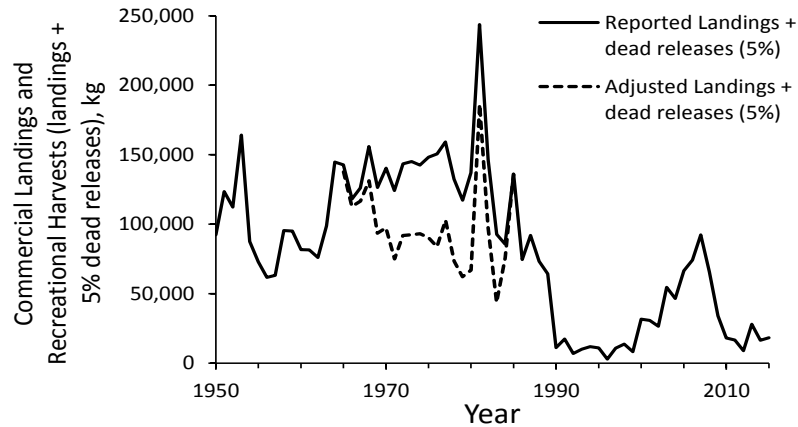


# Typical Age-structured Surplus Production Model inputs

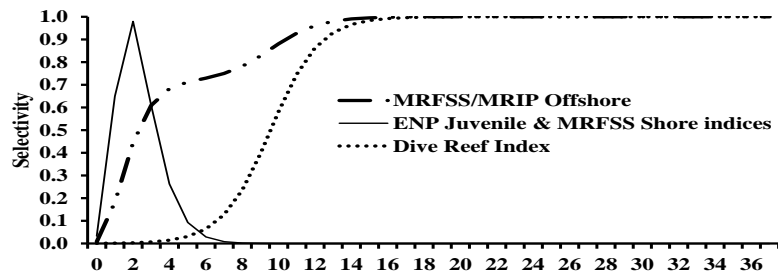
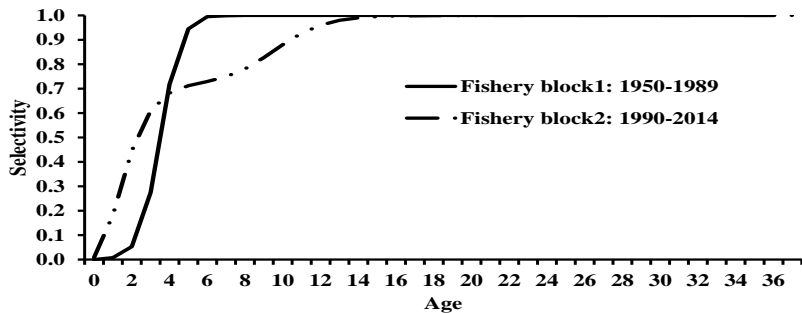
Biological parameters

(growth, maturity, fecundity, weight-at-age)

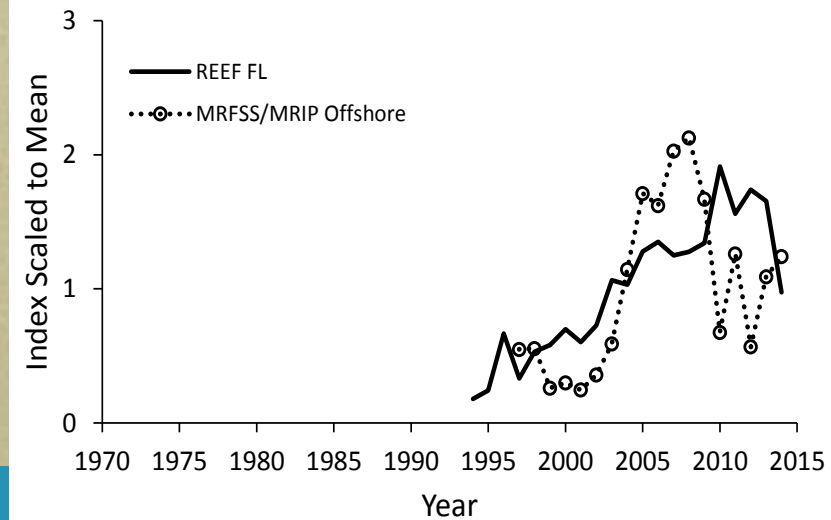
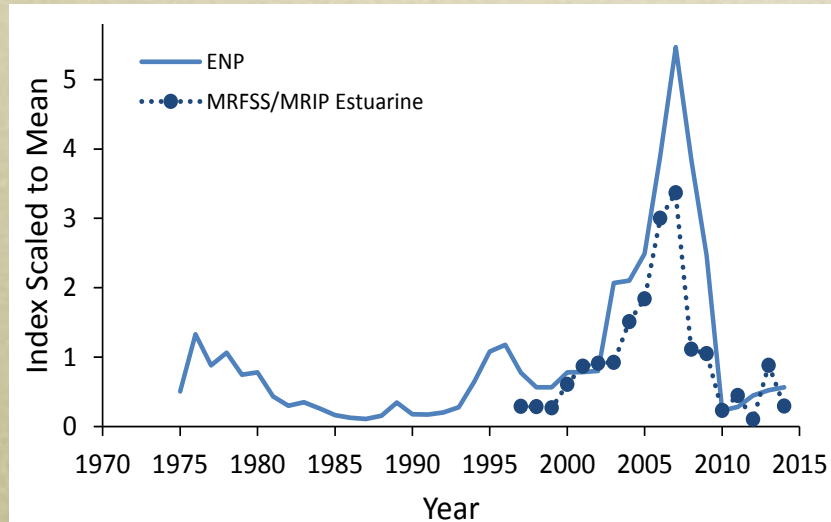
## Harvests (removals)



## Vulnerabilities/selectivities

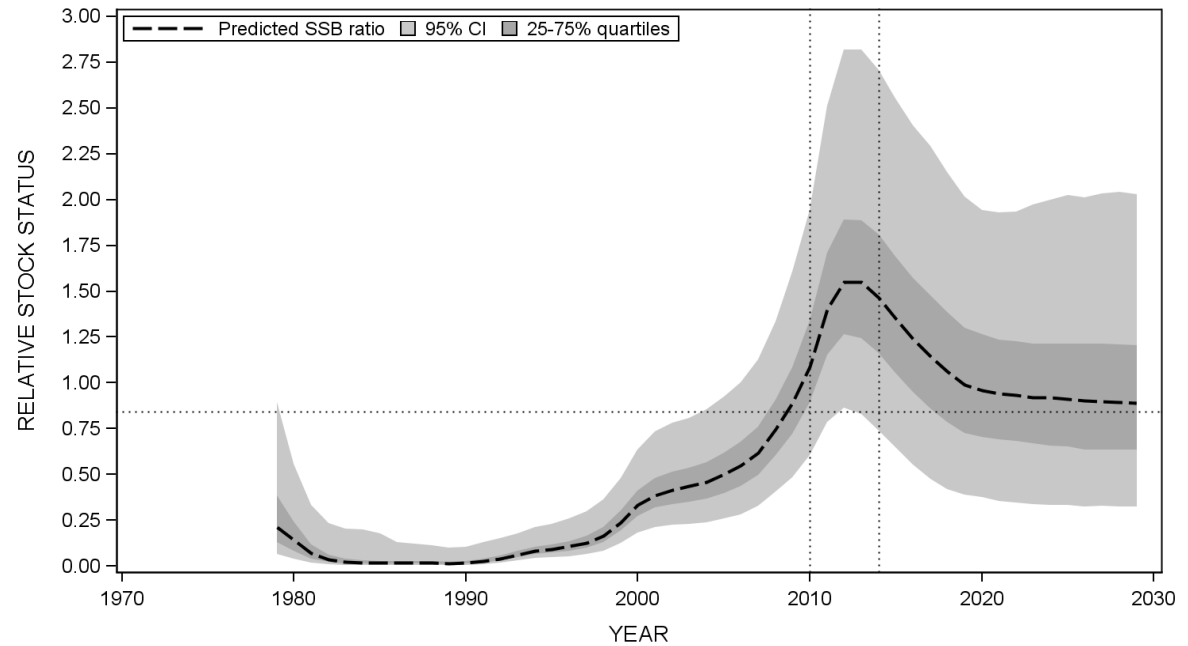


## Indices of abundance



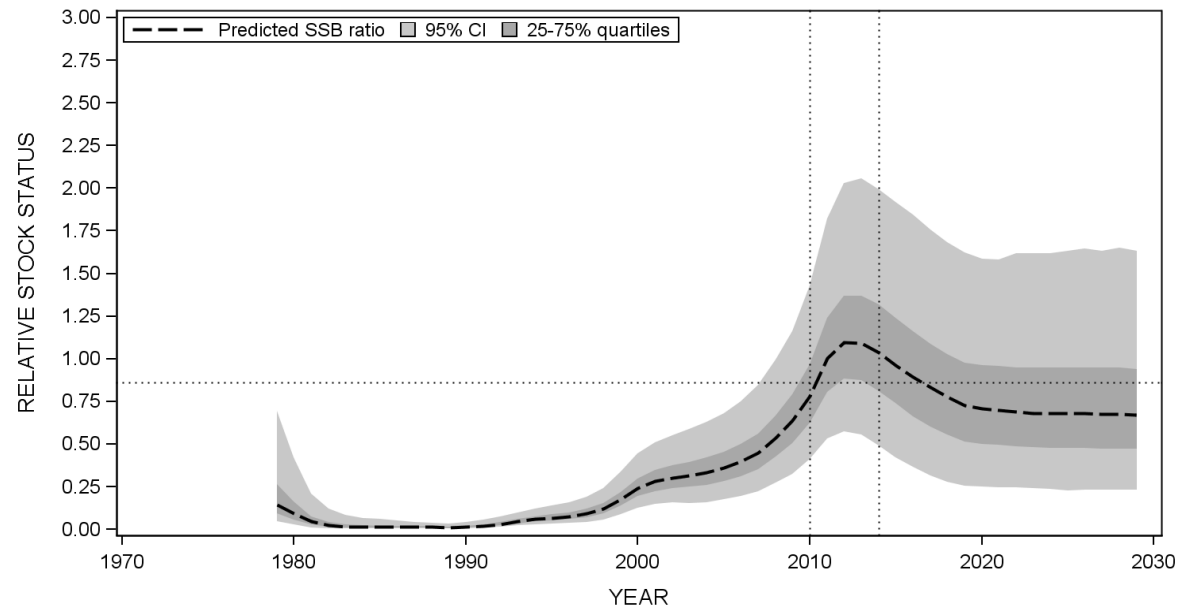
**M=0.18 per year**

Relative stock status under two different levels of natural mortality, “ $F_{\text{current}}$ ” for projections



**M=0.12 per year**

SSB2014/SSB50SPR



# Assessment efforts

- SEDAR 47 (2016)
  - Further revisions and updates to indices
  - Models: Catch-free and stochastic stock reduction analysis
  - Analyses rejected by Review Panel.
    - Did not feel the reconstruction of fishery removals was sufficiently vetted.
    - Did not accept the indices of abundance as presented.
    - Did not accept the proxies we used for age structure for fishery catches or indices.
    - Expressed concern that Data and Assessment Workshops were not held for this SEDAR.
    - Made recommendations for a designed fishery-independent survey which would provide more acceptable data to examine changes in population abundance and distribution for this species.

