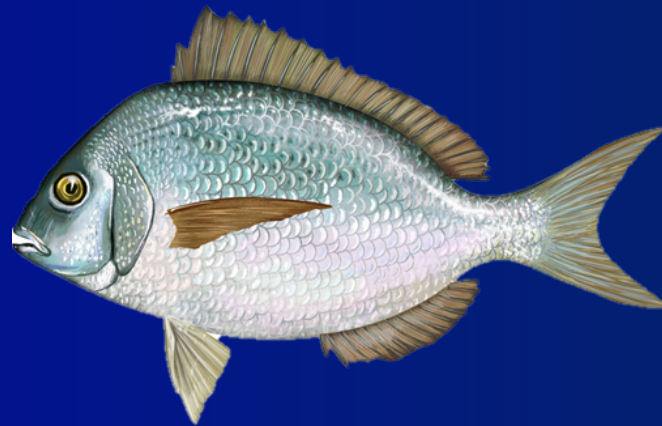




MID-ATLANTIC | FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

Scup Discard Report



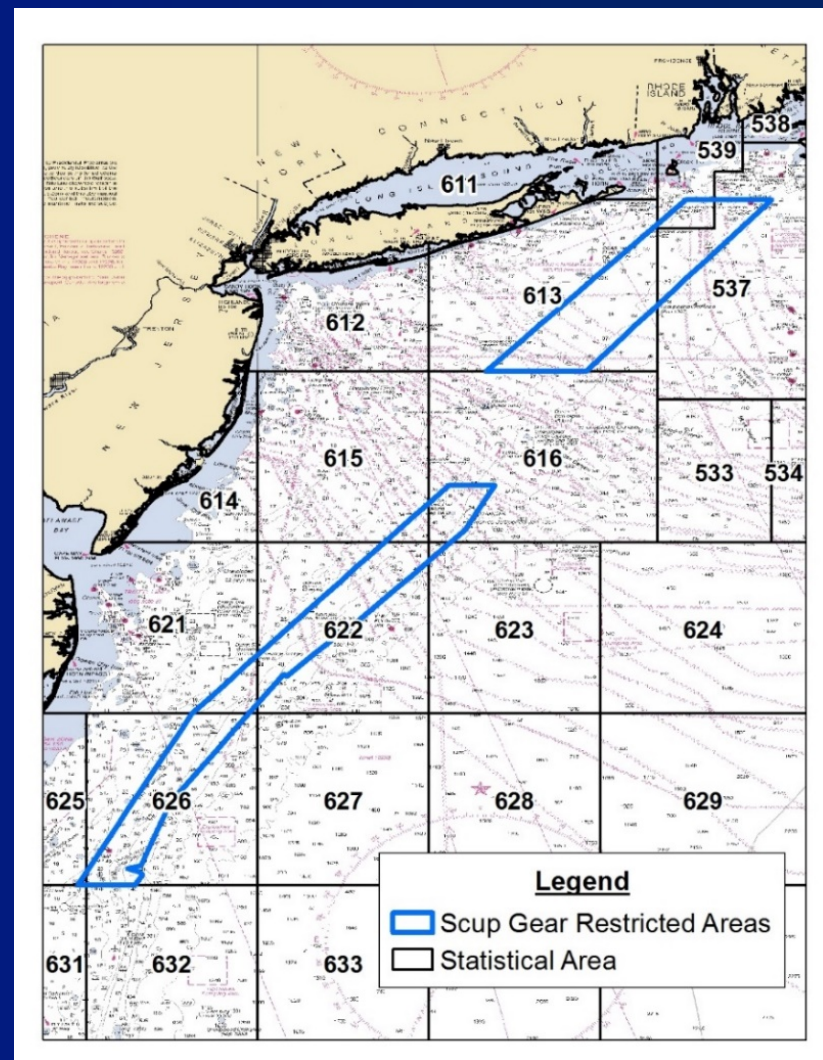
Council and Board Meeting
August 11, 2020

Background

- Methods from 2015 benchmark stock assessment
- Discards estimated by calendar quarter, statistical area, and three mesh categories:
 - Large: 5" or greater
 - Small: in between 2.125" and 5"
 - Squid: 2.125" or less
- Estimated discards are calculated using observer, VTR, and dealer data

Gear Restricted Areas (GRAs)

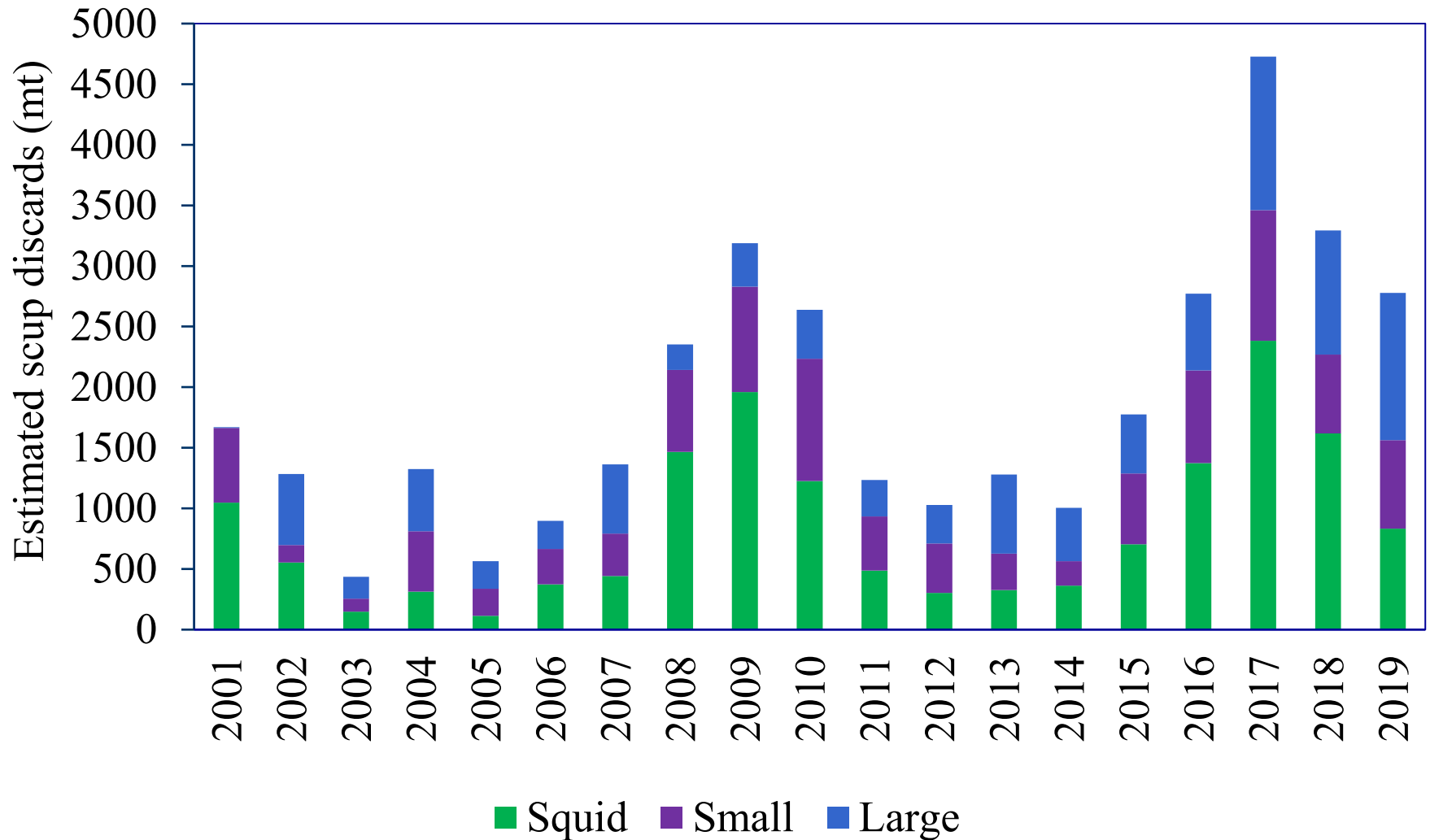
- Reduce bycatch of juvenile scup in small mesh fisheries
- Southern GRA: Jan. 1- Mar. 15
- Northern GRA: Nov. 1 – Dec. 31



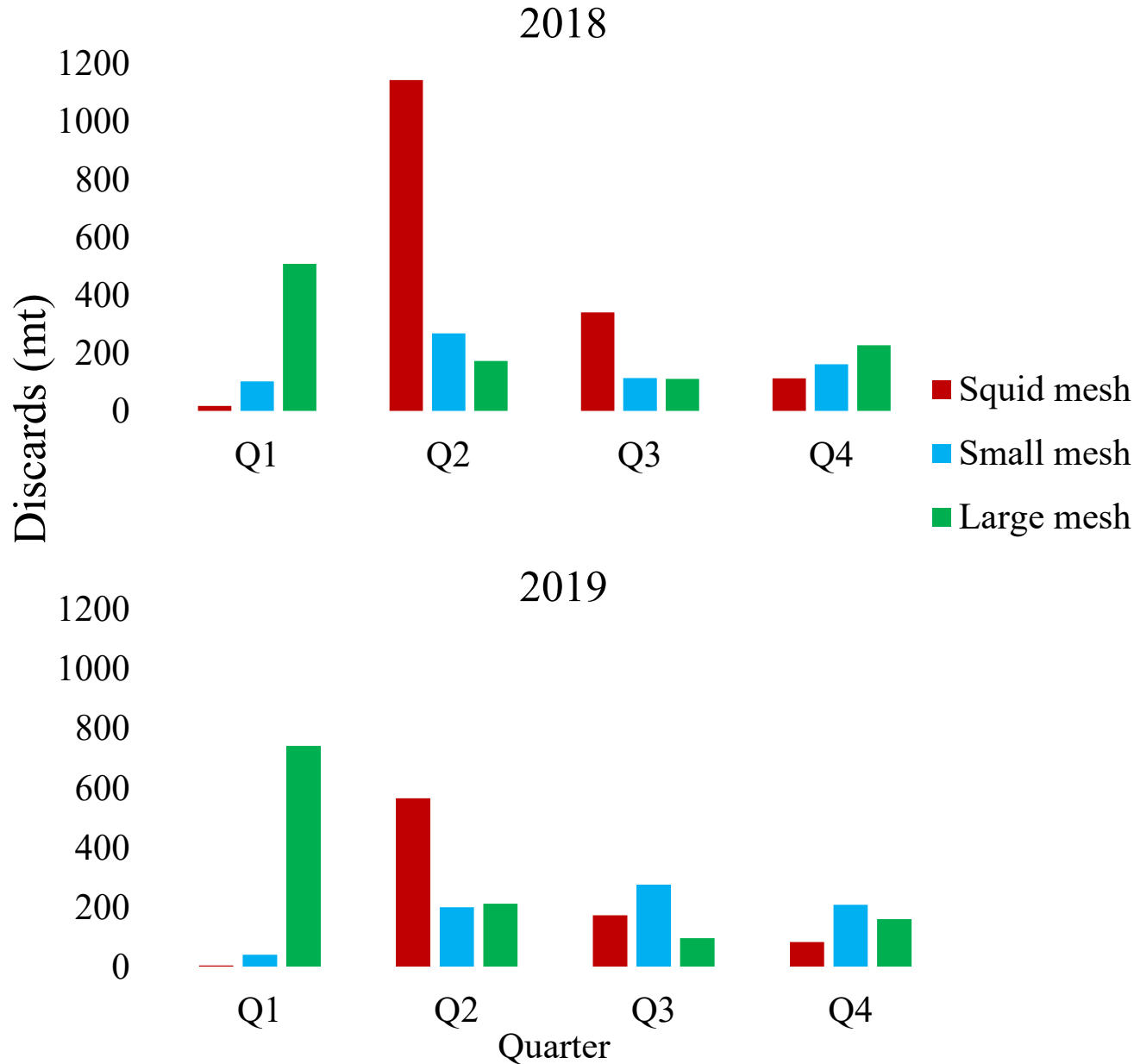
Highlights of Report

- Discards are still high but dropped in 2019 compared with 2018 and 2017
- Discards are variable by mesh size, quarter, and statistical area
- Average scup discards were lower after GRA implementation
- Decline in recruitment and increase in 2019 incidental possession limit may have contributed to the decrease in discards in 2019
 - Discards may continue to decline due to the low recruitment from 2016-2018

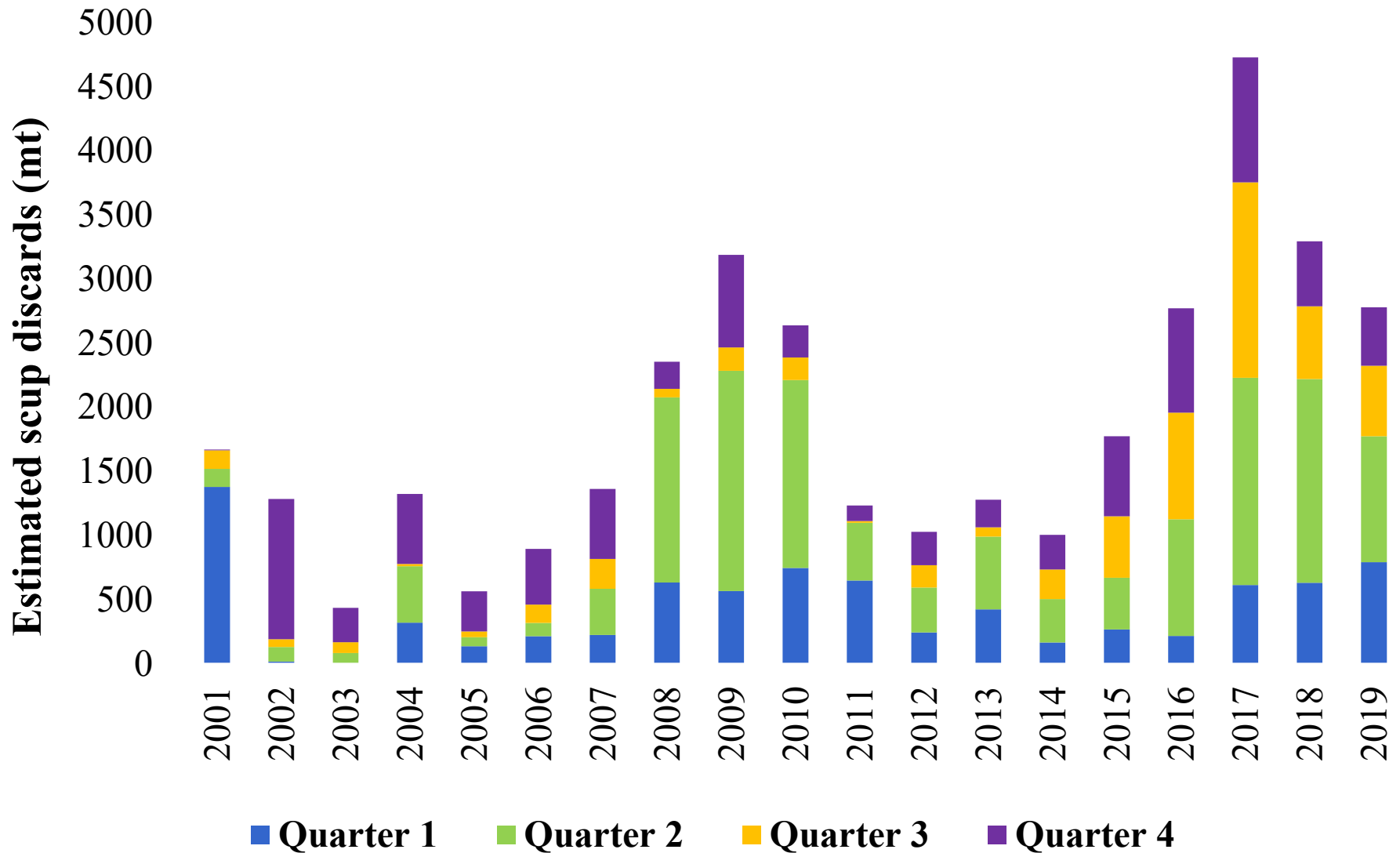
Discards By Mesh



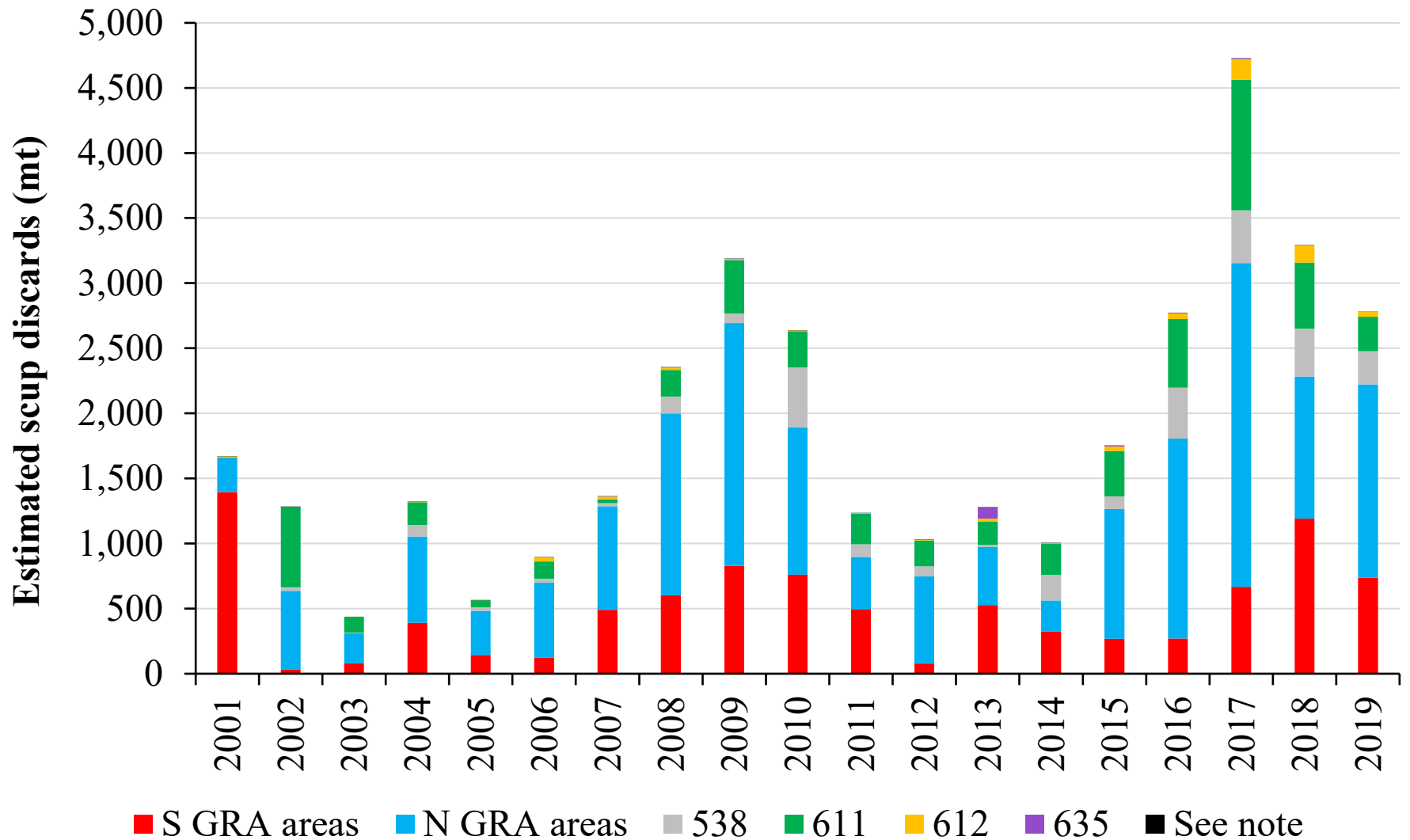
Discards by Quarter



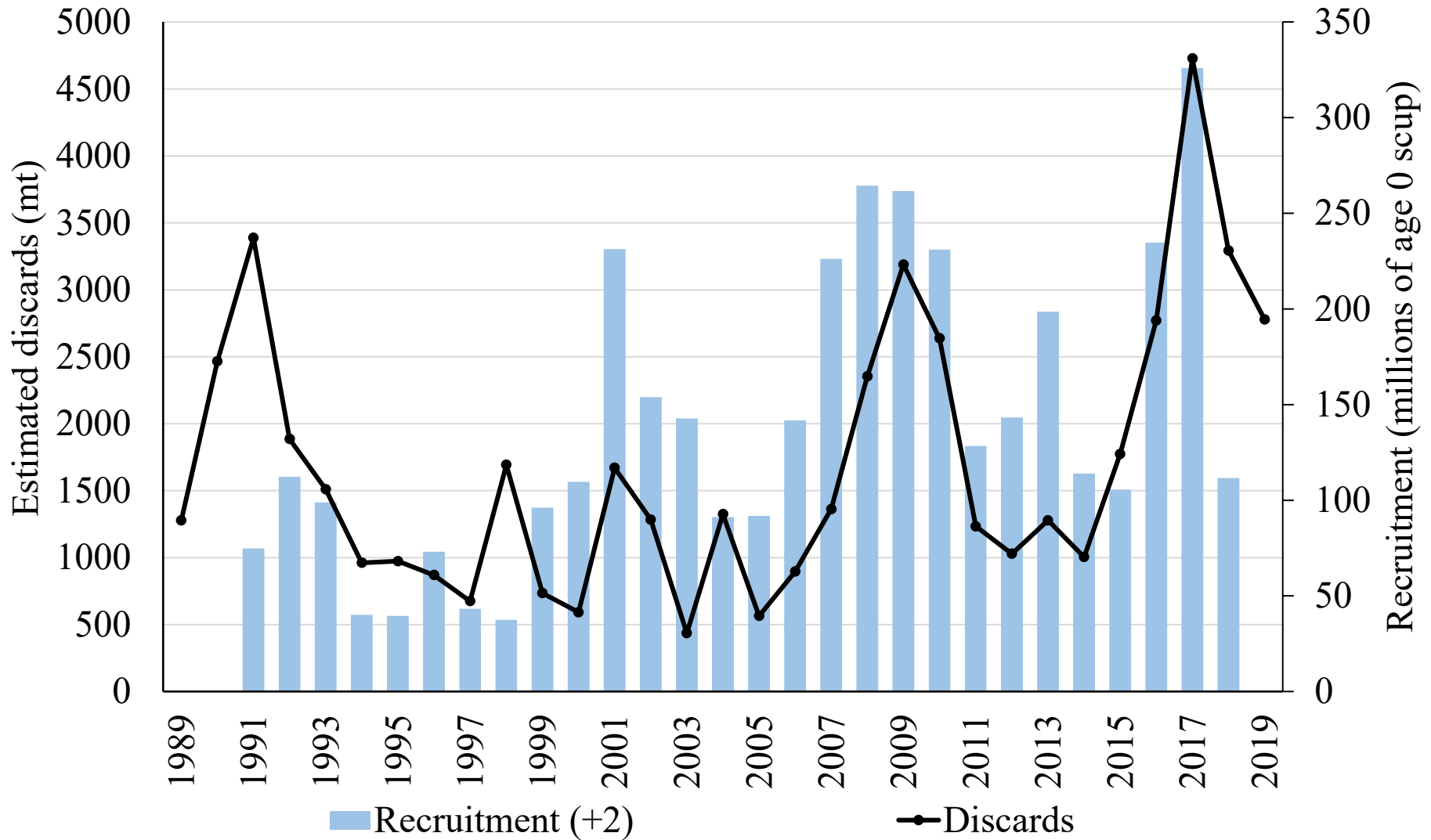
Discards by Quarter



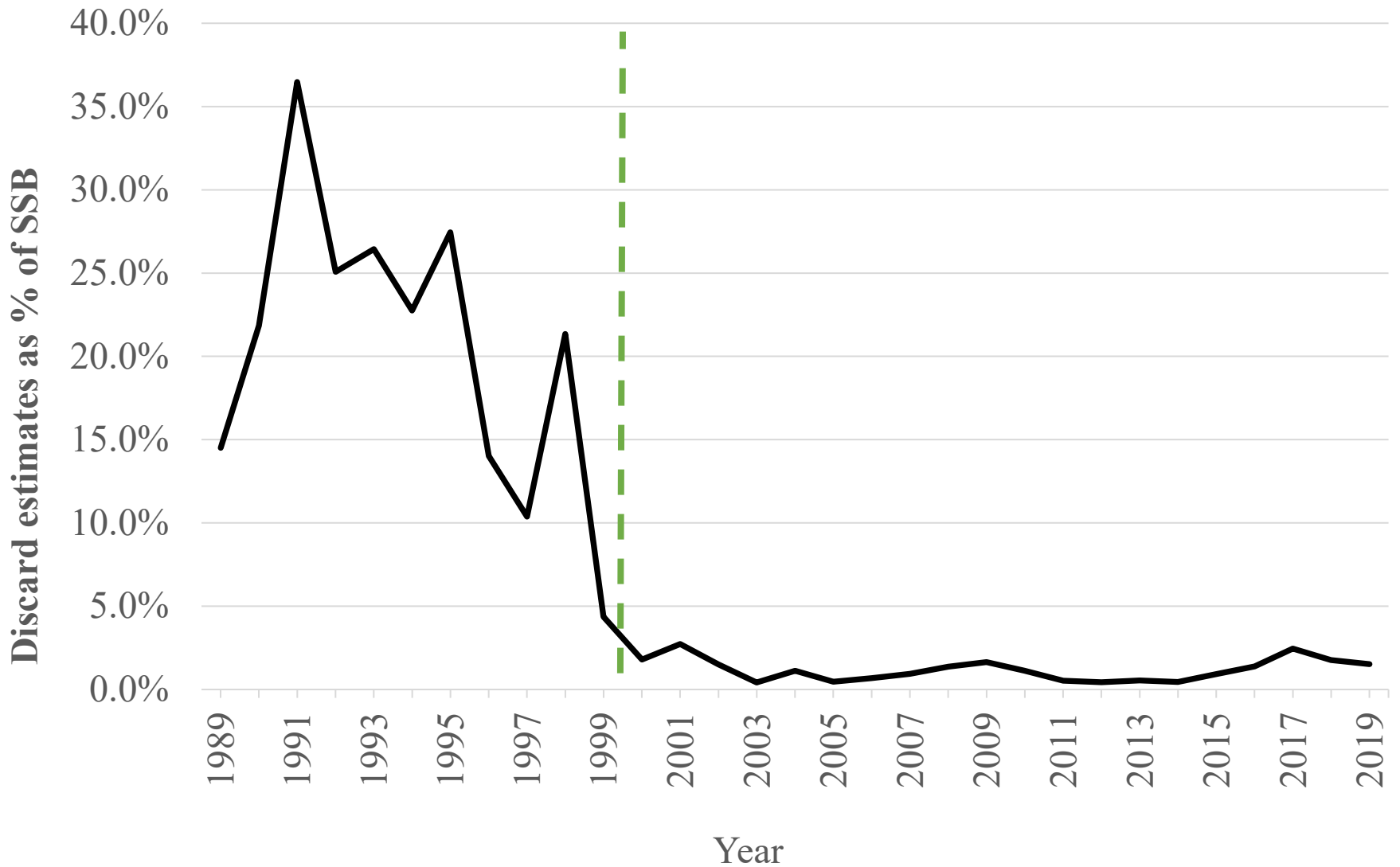
Discards by Area



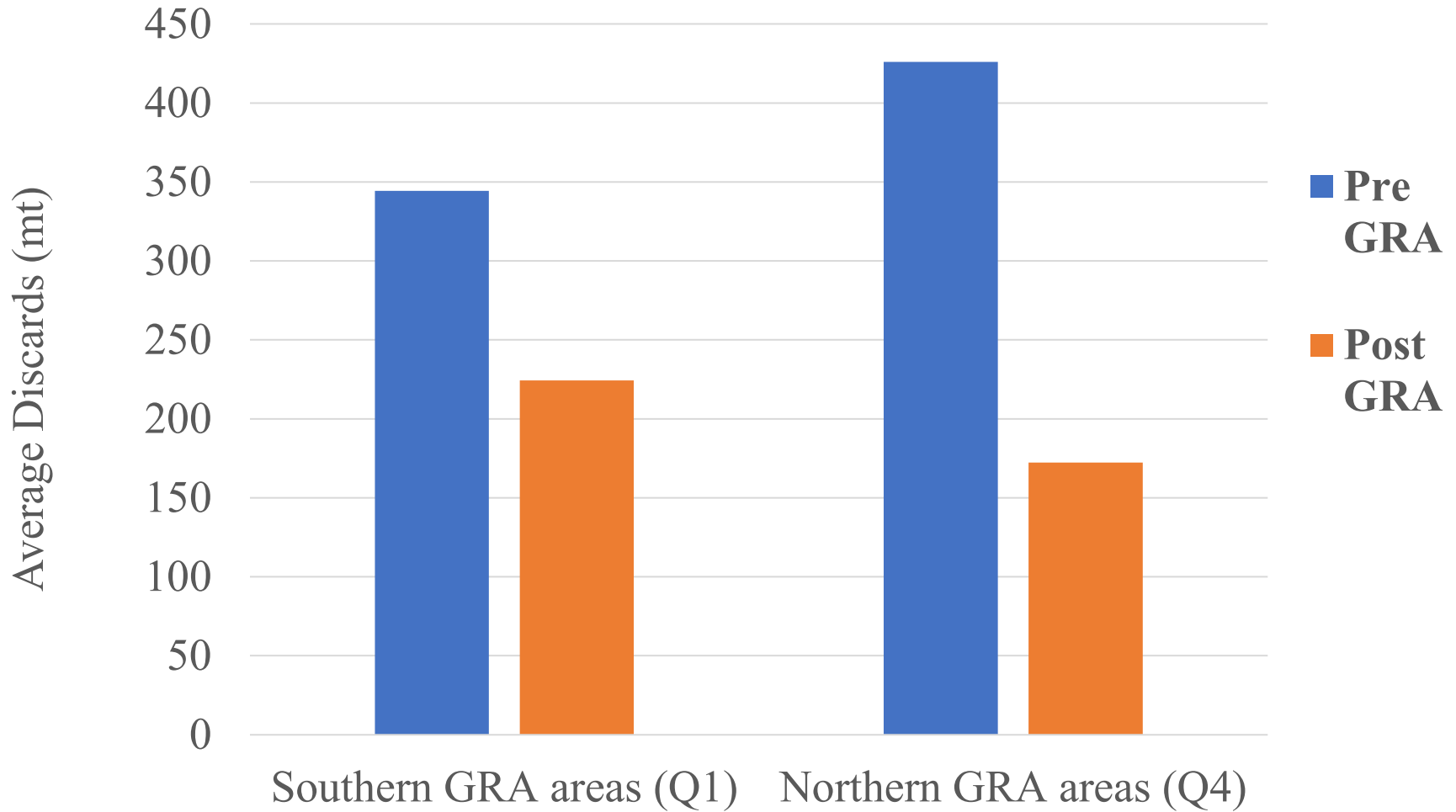
Discards and Recruitment



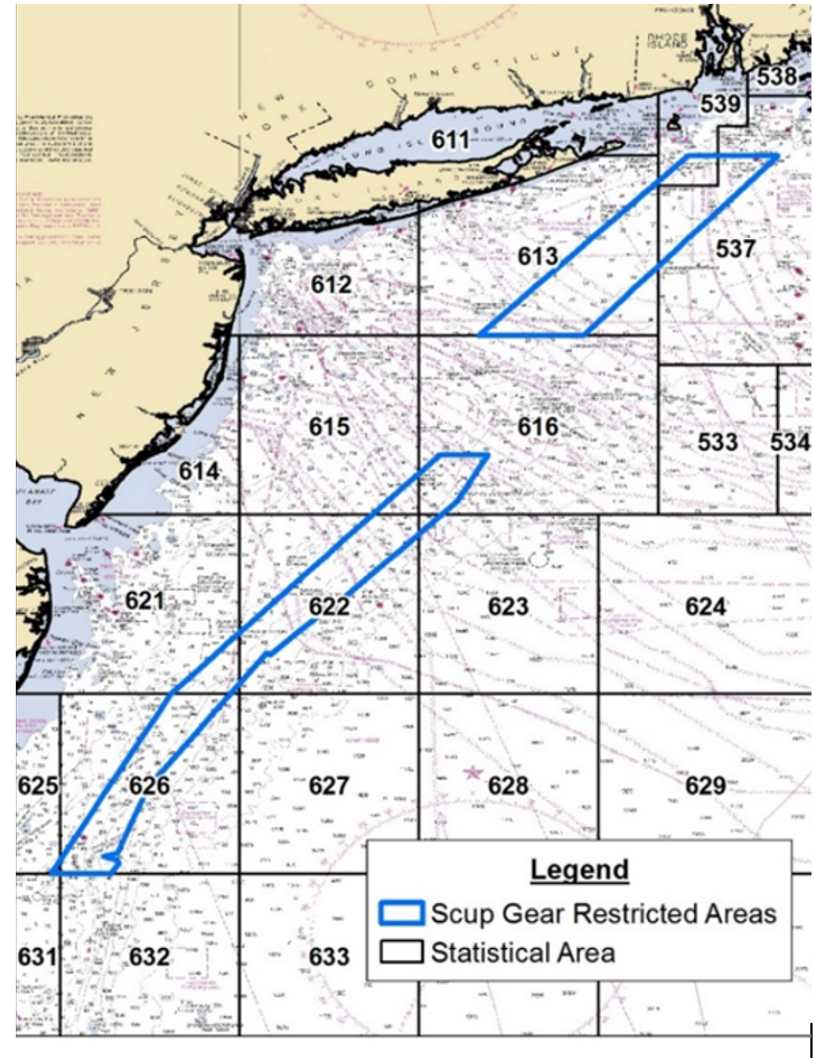
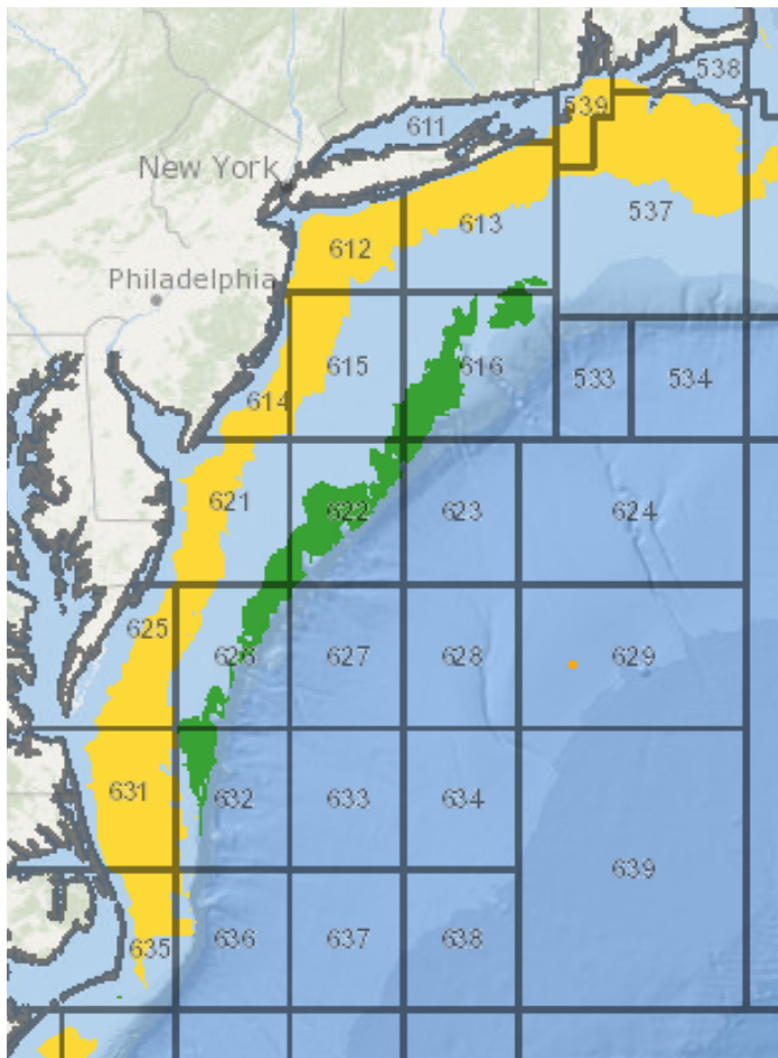
Discards, Biomass, GRAs



Discards Before and after GRAs



Scup Biomass 1970s-2010s



Monitoring Committee Feedback

- No management action, continue to monitor
- Proactively plan actions to prevent big discard events when a strong year class is coming?
 - Challenging to respond that quickly
 - Variable when/where high discards occur
 - Not reduce the coverage of the GRAs or the minimum size any further
 - Gear related solutions

Questions/ Discussion

- No action needed



Photo: <https://wholey.com/>