

Black Sea Bass Data Update for 2022

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Reported 2021 landings in the commercial fishery were 2,211 mt, an increase of 14% from 2020 (1,945 mt) and 80% of the 2021 commercial quota (2,764 mt). Estimated 2021 landings in the recreational fishery were 5,436 mt, an increase of 32% from 2020 (4,110 mt) and 189% of the 2021 recreational harvest limit (2,877 mt). Total commercial and recreational landings in 2021 were 7,646 mt, an increase of 26% from 2020 (6,055 mt) (Figure 1).

Relative abundance derived from the NEFSC spring bottom trawl survey has steadily increased since 2015 (note that the 2020 index is based on an incomplete survey) (Figure 2). The large 2011 cohort was apparent in the 2013 aggregate index as well as age compositions from 2012-2017 (Figure 3). Age composition data also show above average 2015, 2016 and 2019 cohorts (Figure 3).

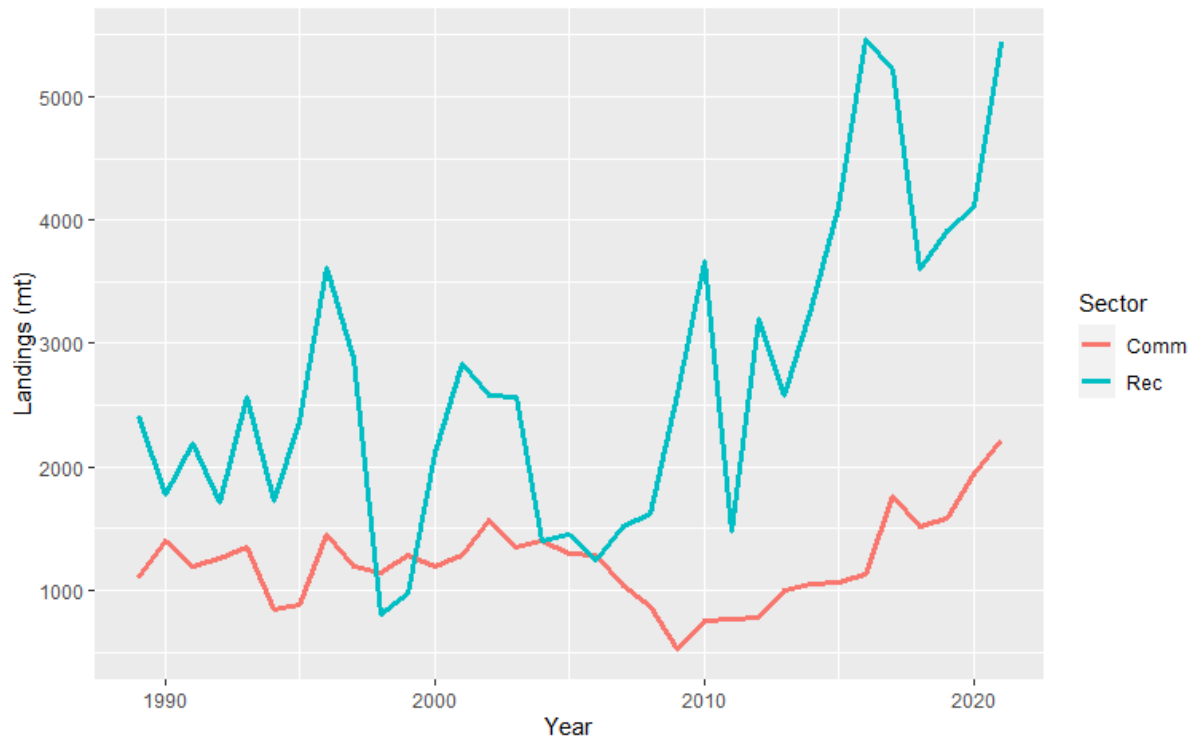
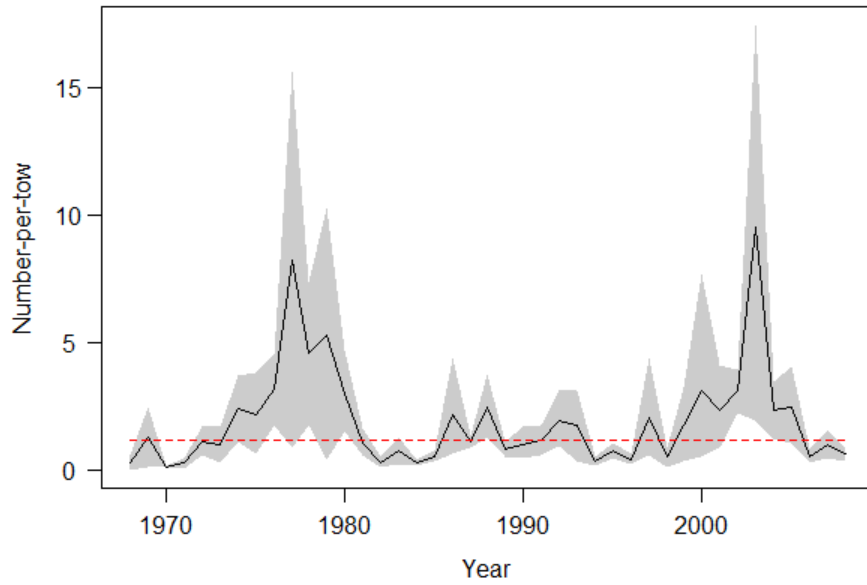


Figure 1. Black Sea Bass total fishery landings for 1989-2021.

a)



b)

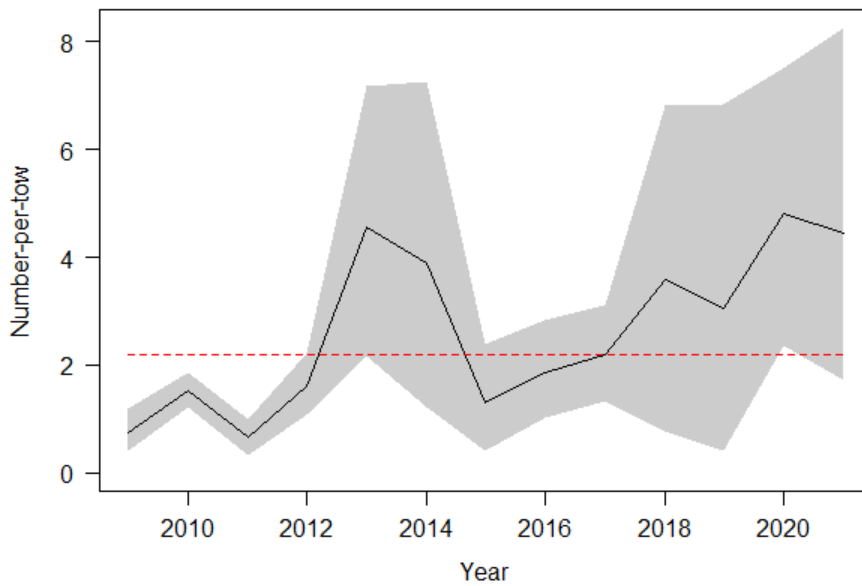


Figure 2. Black sea bass relative abundance (stratified mean number-per-tow \pm 90% CI) derived from the NEFSC spring bottom trawl survey for the SV Albatross IV years of 1968-2008 (a) and the H. B. Bigelow years of 2009-2021 (b). The 2020 index is based on an incomplete survey. The red dotted line represents the median number-per-tow of each time series.

a)

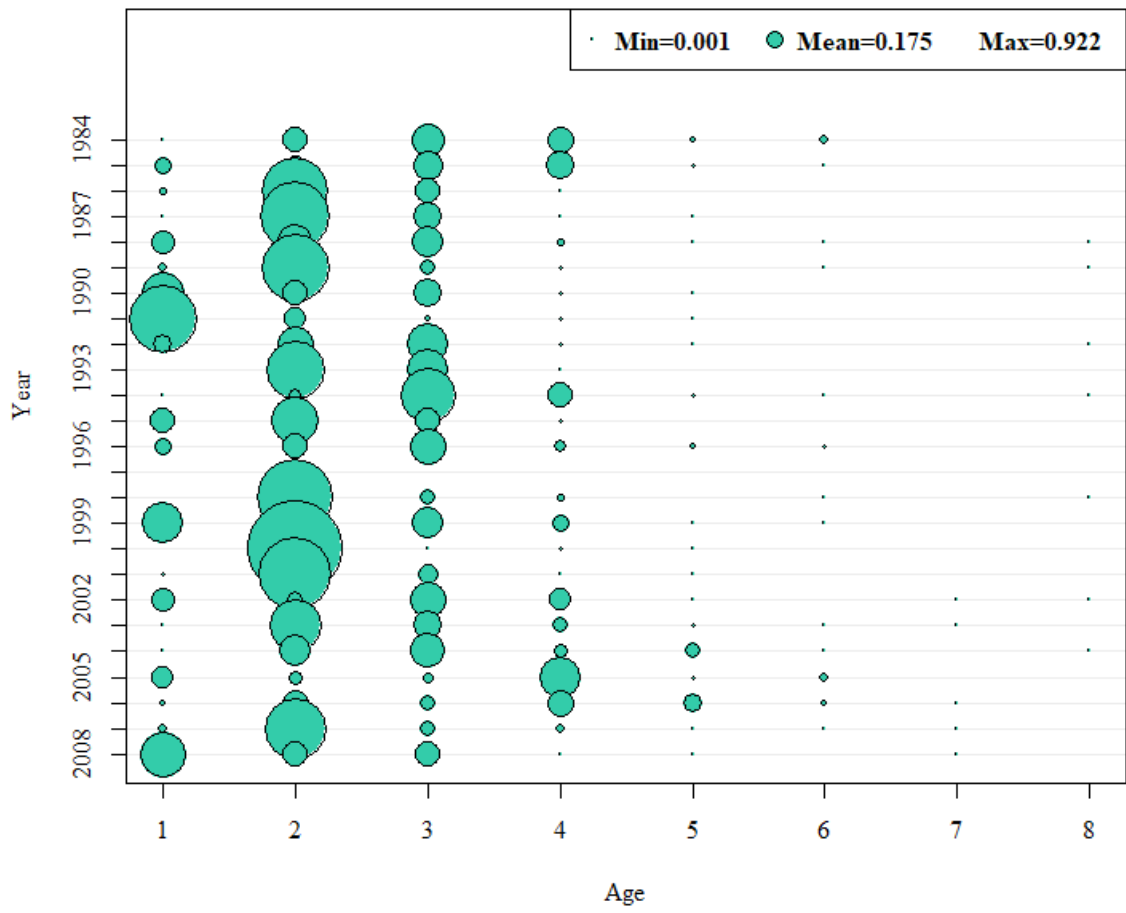


Figure 3: Black sea bass age composition (proportion-at-age) from the NEFSC spring bottom trawl survey for the Albatross IV years of 1984-2008 (a) and the H. B. Bigelow years of 2009-2021 (b).

b)

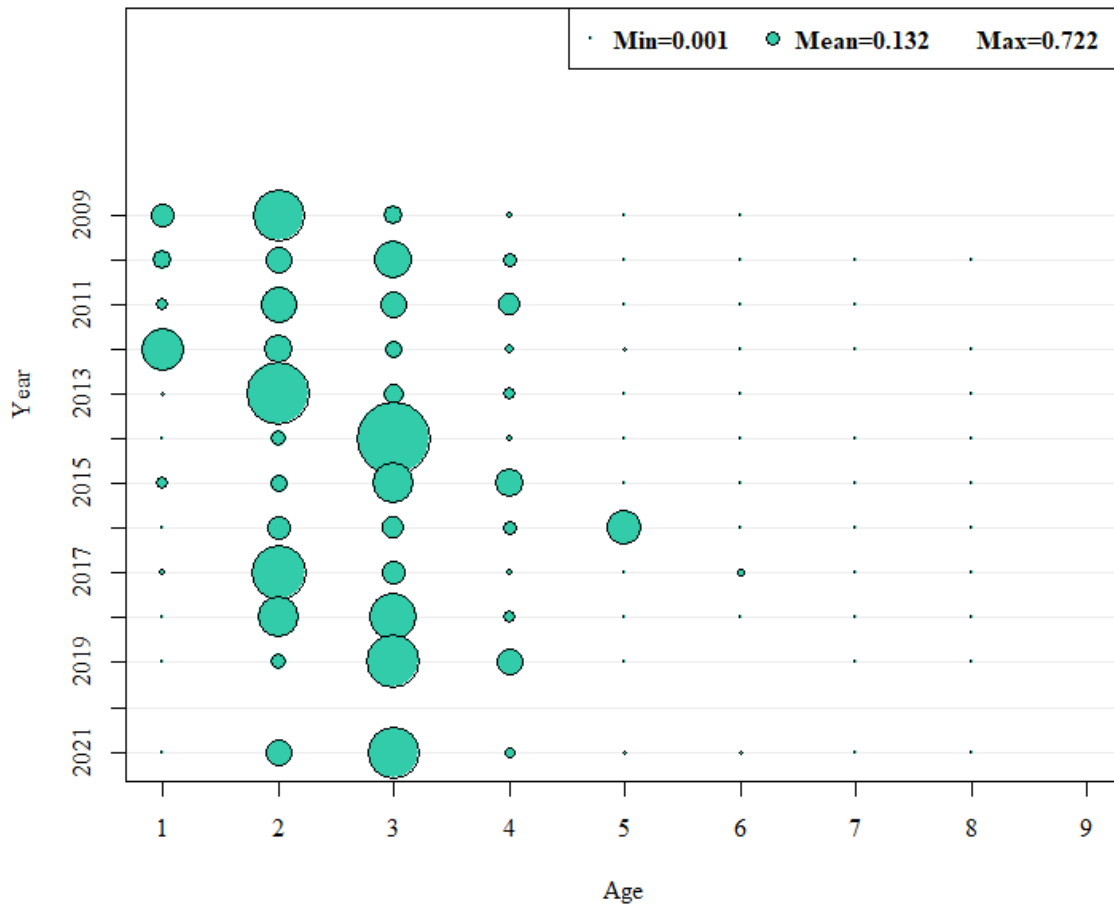


Figure 3, contd.: Black sea bass age composition (proportion-at-age) from the NEFSC spring bottom trawl survey for the Albatross IV years of 1984-2008 (a) and the H. B. Bigelow years of 2009-2021 (b).