

Black Sea Bass Data Update for 2023

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Reported 2022 landings in the commercial fishery were 2,425 mt, an increase of 12% from 2021 (2,162 mt) and 83% of the 2022 commercial quota (2,934 mt). Estimated 2022 discards in the commercial fishery were 631 mt, an increase of 29% from 2021 (489 mt). Estimated 2022 landings in the recreational fishery were 3,693 mt, a decrease of 32% from 2021 (5,435 mt) and 121% of the 2022 recreational harvest limit (3,055 mt). Estimated 2022 discards in the recreational fishery were 1,627 mt, an increase of 1% from 2021 (1,605 mt). Consequently, total combined commercial and recreational catches were 8,376 mt for 2022.

Relative abundance derived from the NEFSC spring bottom trawl survey has generally increased since 2015 (note that the 2020 index is based on an incomplete survey), though the mean number-per-tow decreased slightly from 2021 to 2022 (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).

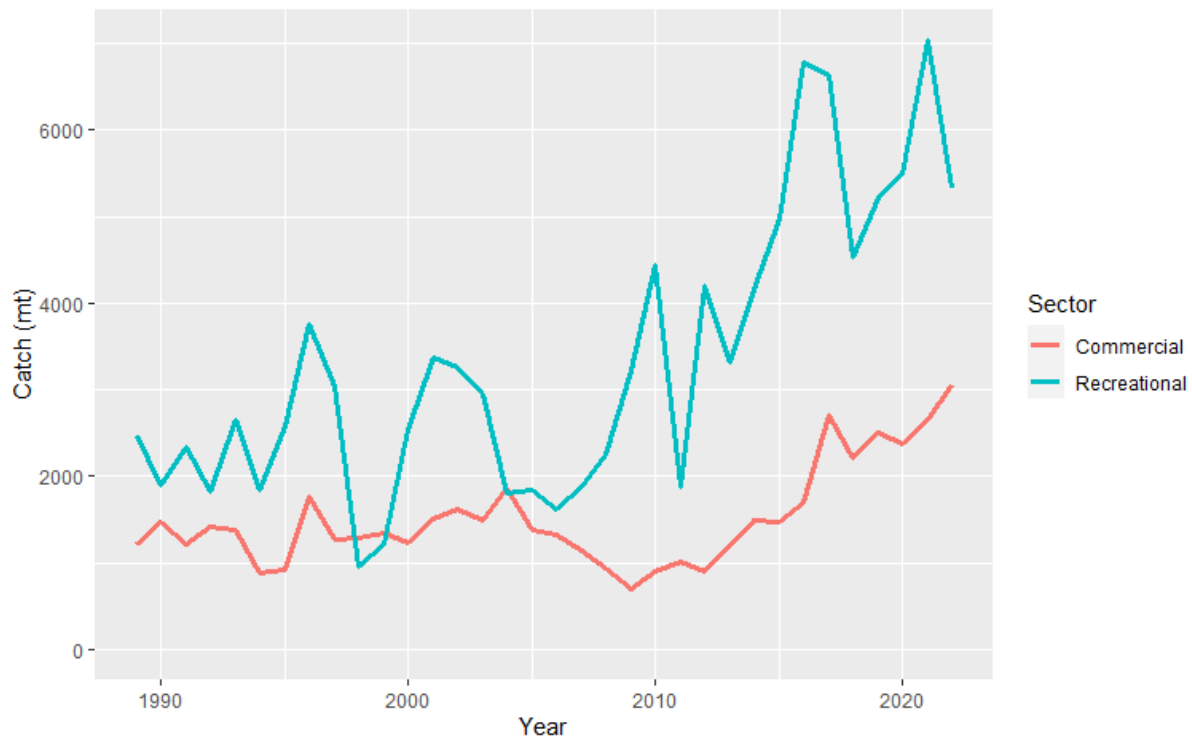
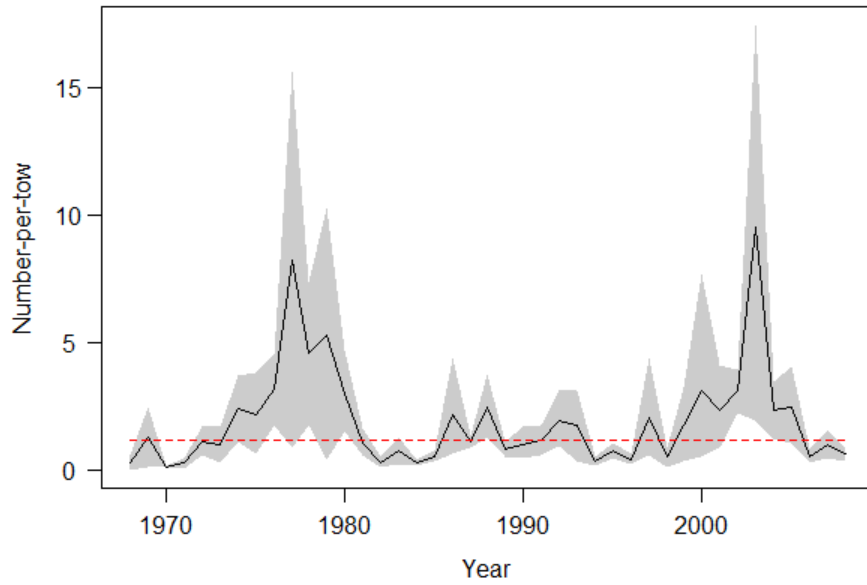


Figure 1. Black Sea Bass total fishery landings for 1989-2022.

a)



b)

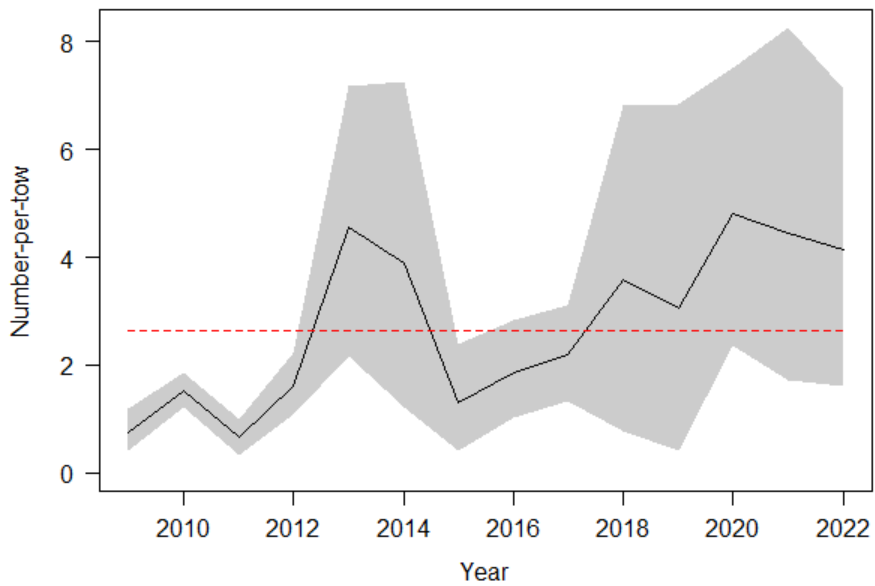


Figure 2. Black sea bass relative abundance (stratified mean number-per-tow \pm 90% CI) derived from the NEFSC spring bottom trawl survey for the SV Albatross IV years of 1968-2008 (a) and the H. B. Bigelow years of 2009-2022 (b). The 2020 index is based on an incomplete survey. The red dotted line represents the median number-per-tow of each time series.

a)

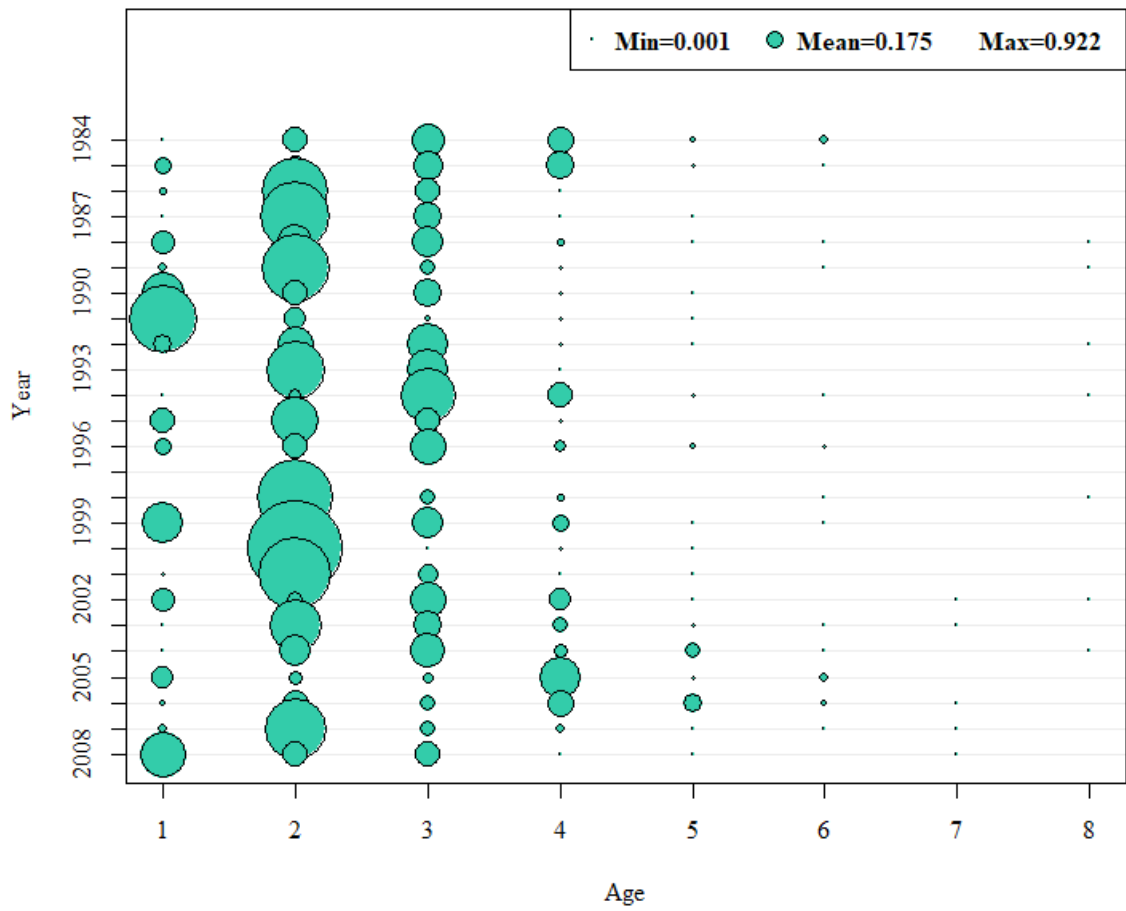


Figure 3: Black sea bass age composition (proportion-at-age) from the NEFSC spring bottom trawl survey for the Albatross IV years of 1984-2008 (a) and the H. B. Bigelow years of 2009-2022 (b).

b)

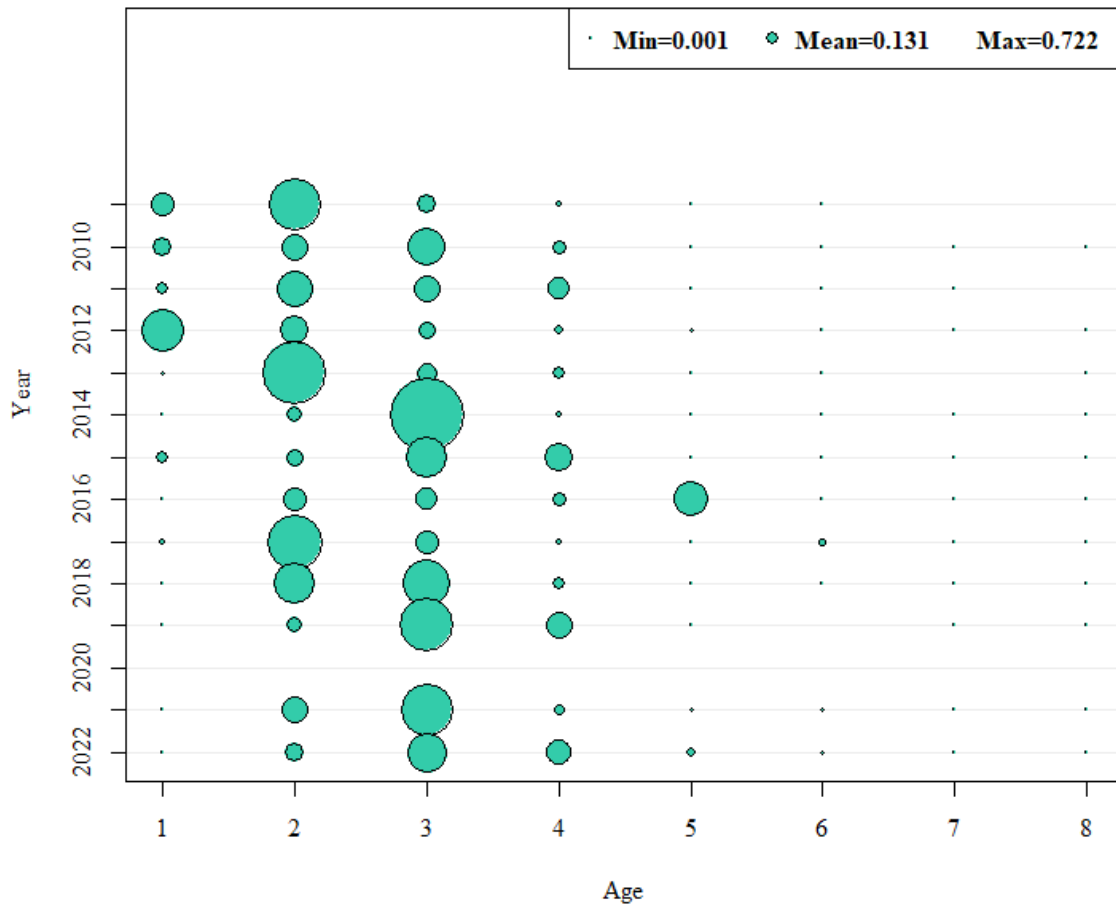


Figure 3, contd.: Black sea bass age composition (proportion-at-age) from the NEFSC spring bottom trawl survey for the Albatross IV years of 1984-2008 (a) and the H. B. Bigelow years of 2009-2022 (b).