American plaice (*Hippoglossoides platessoides*)

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TOR 1: Estimate catch from all sources including landings and discards

- 1 commercial fleet
- No recreational fishery
- Added:
  - WAA & fleet age composition 2018-2025
  - Total catch
    - Revised CAMS estimates 2022-2023
    - New data 2024-2025

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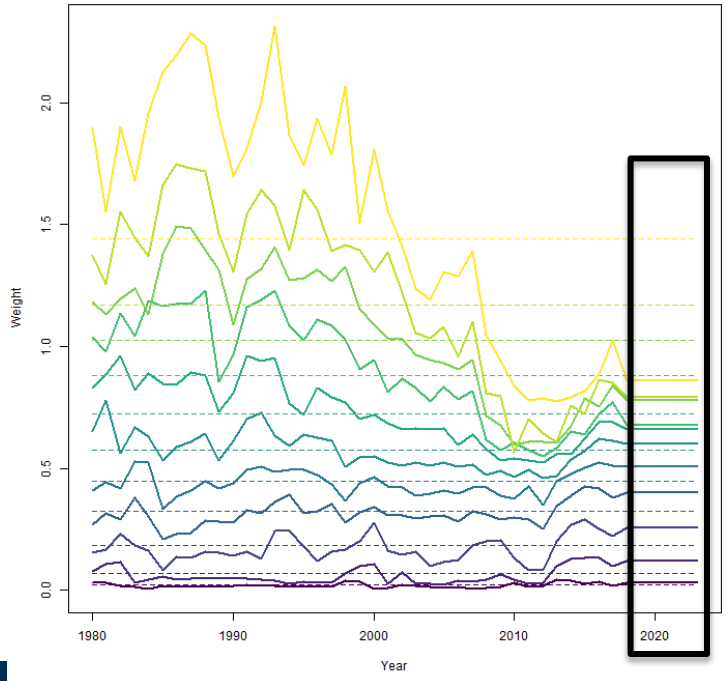
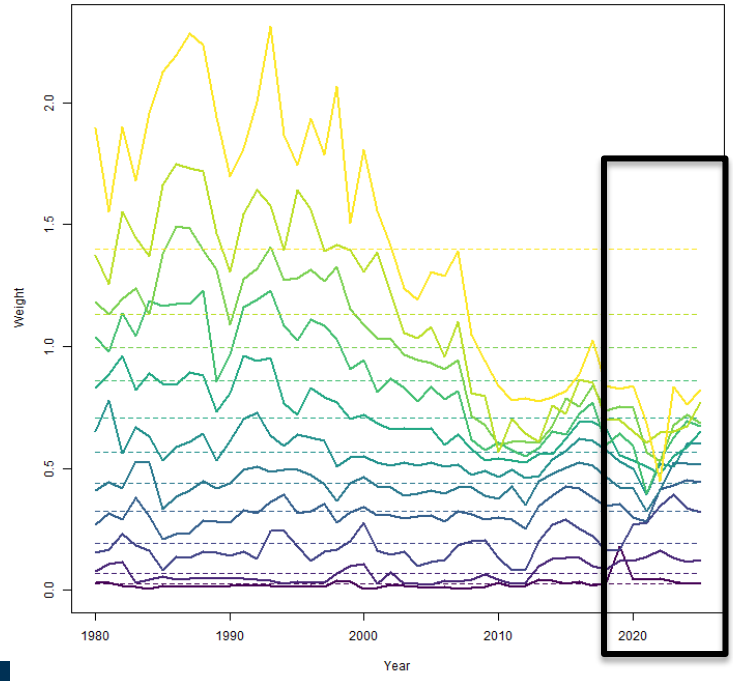
Weight-at-age

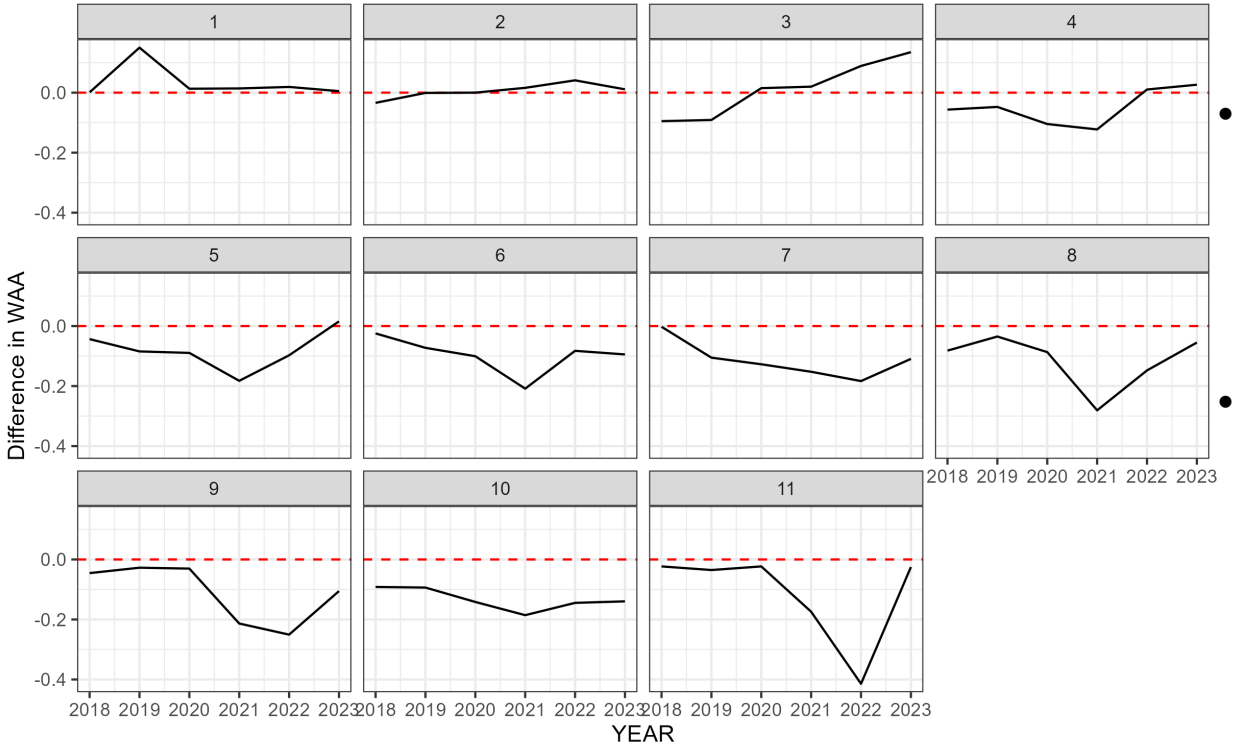
MT 2024



MT 2026



Weight-at-age: 2018-2023



- Ages 1-3 similar assumptions
  - Most of the population by numbers
- Ages 4+ lower than 2024 MT assumption
  - Scales SSB downward

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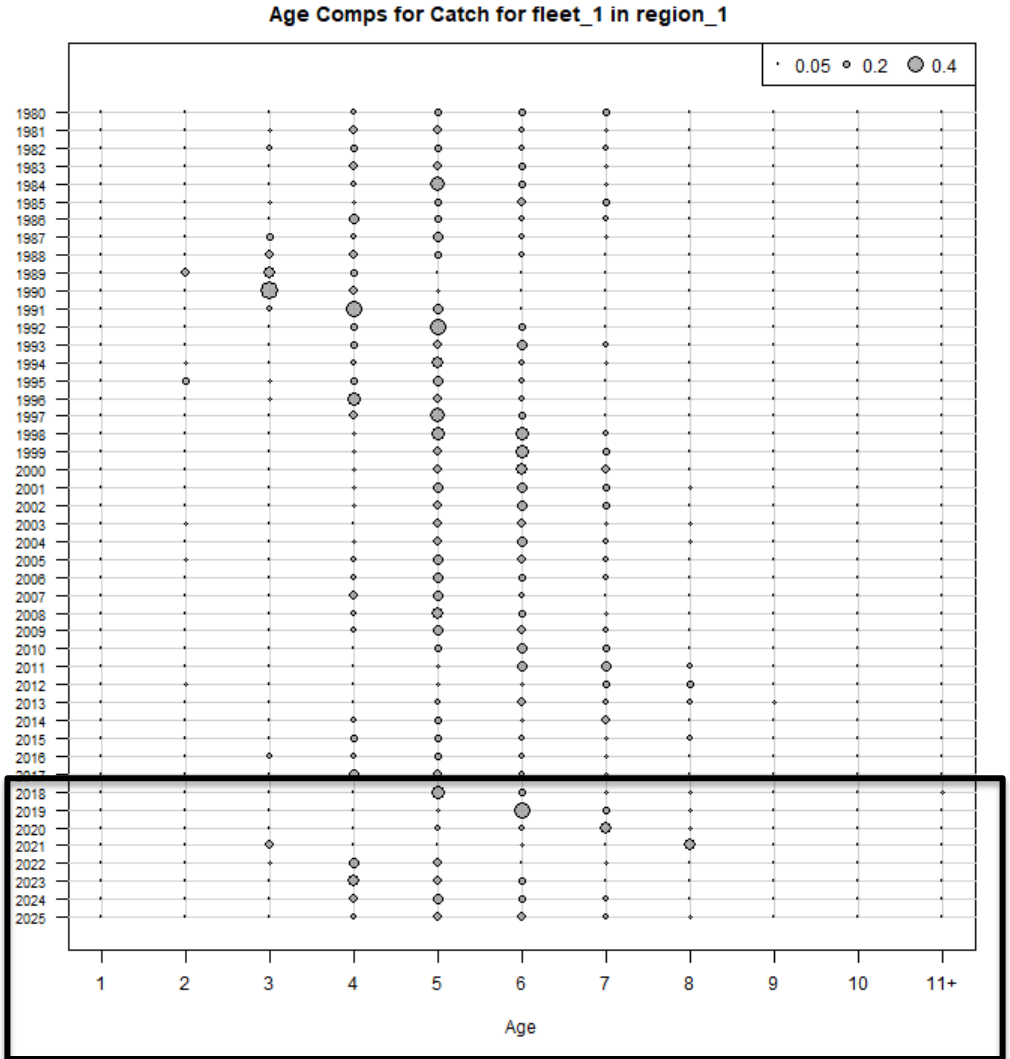
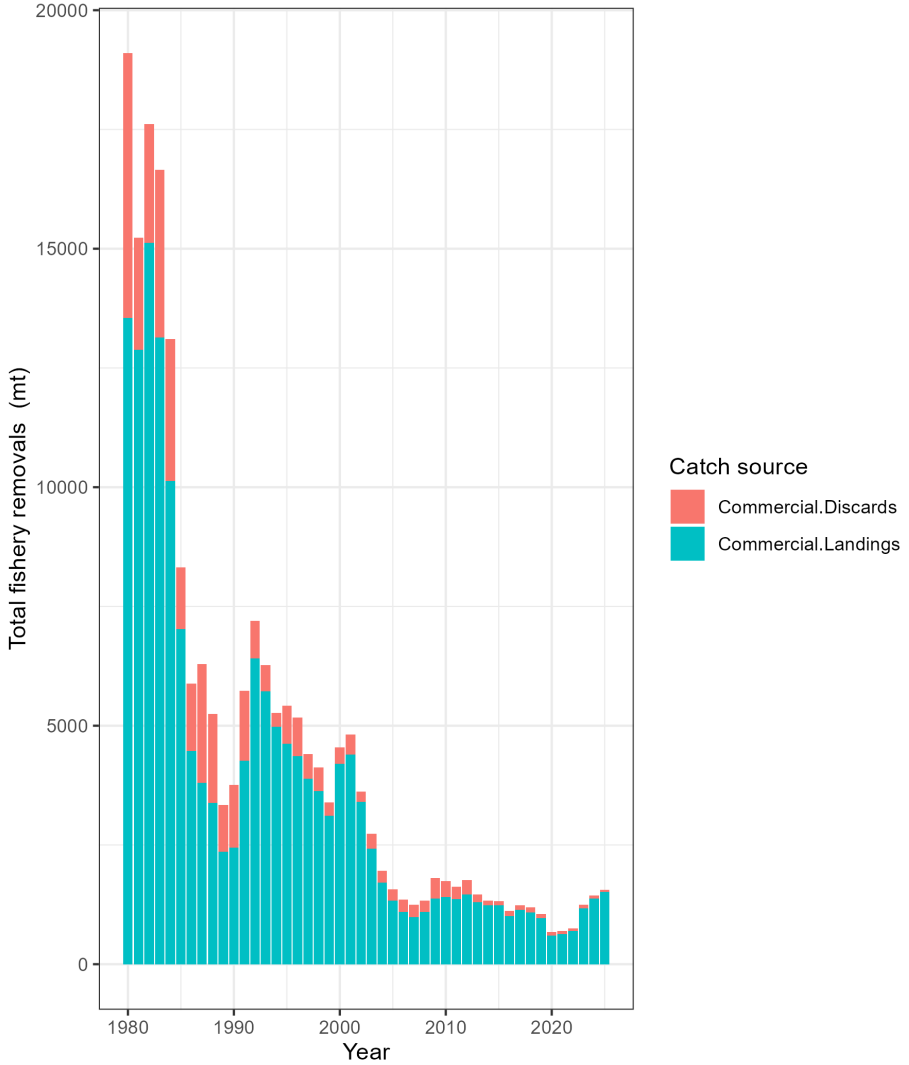
Fleet age composition



Total catch



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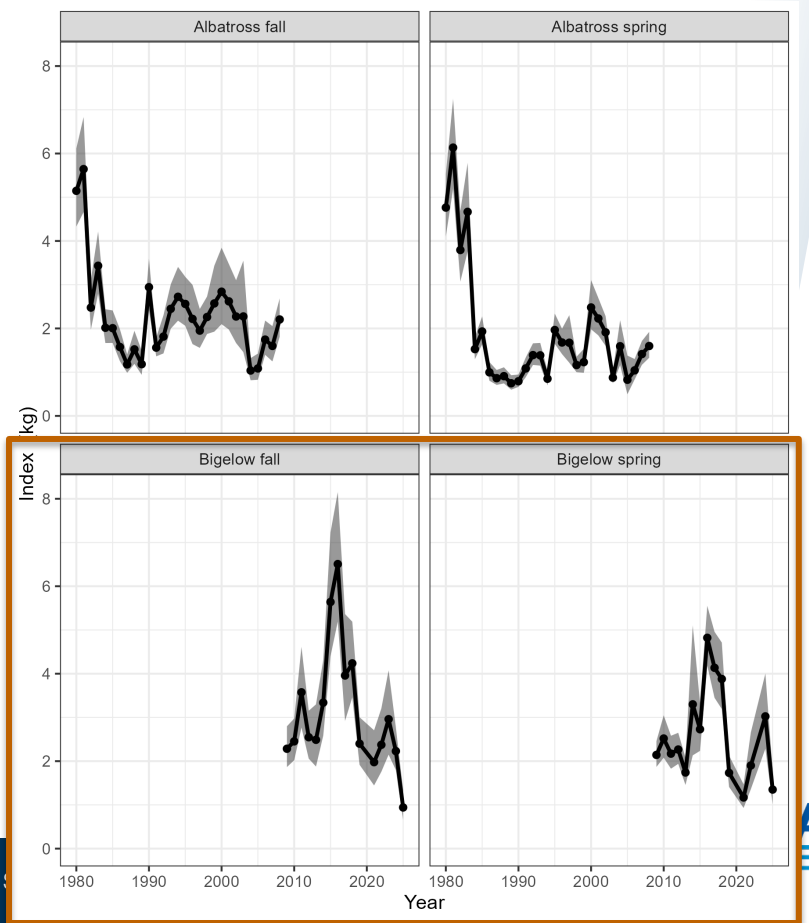
TOR 2: Evaluate indices used in the assessment

- 4 survey indices
  - Albatross spring & fall (1980-2008)
  - Bigelow spring & fall (2009+)
- Added:
  - Bigelow indices and age composition 2024-2025
    - Spatial coverage of 2025 fall survey sufficient for use



TOR 3:

Estimate annual fishing mortality, recruitment and stock biomass with uncertainty, perform retrospective analysis, compare bridge runs and other model explorations to the updated model proposed for this peer review.

- Bridge run 1 – update WHAM software
- Bridge run 2 – add fleet WAA and age composition 2018-2023
- MT run 1 – update all data through 2025
- MT run 2 – revise survey selectivity estimation settings
- MT run 3 – Candidate model, change setting so lognormal adjustment turned off

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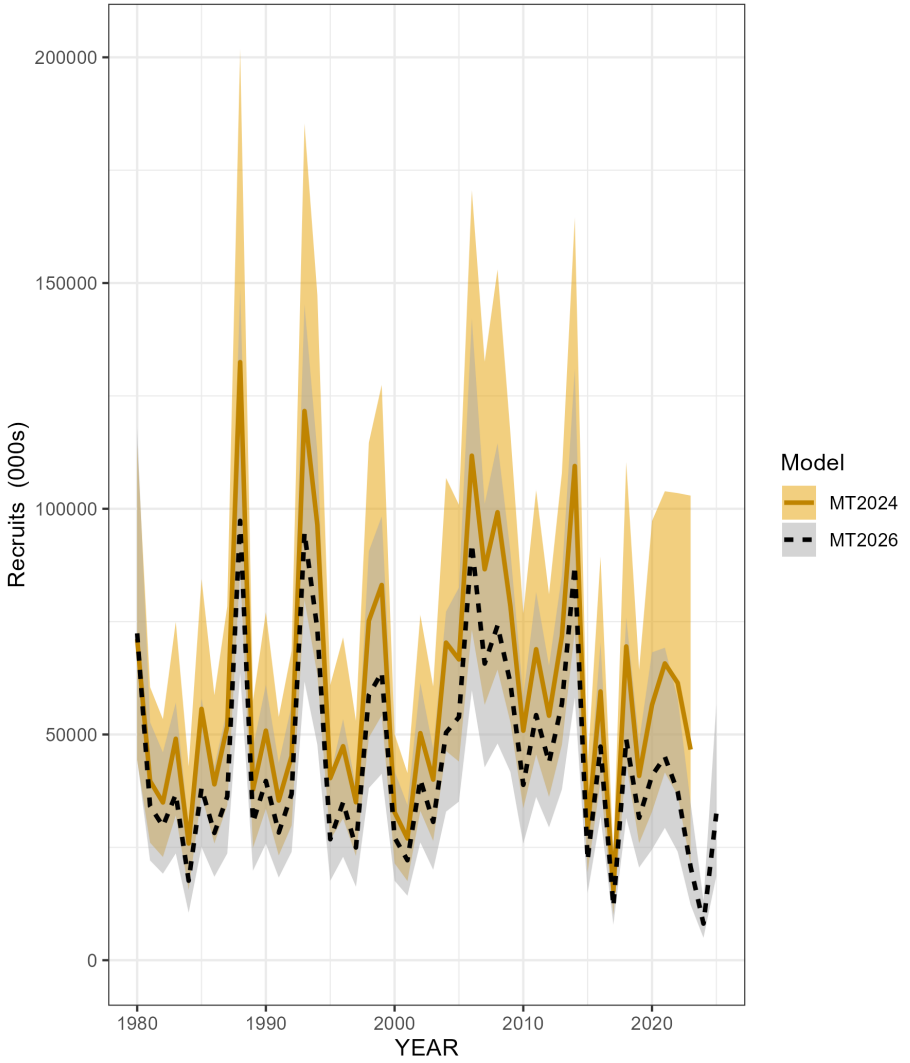
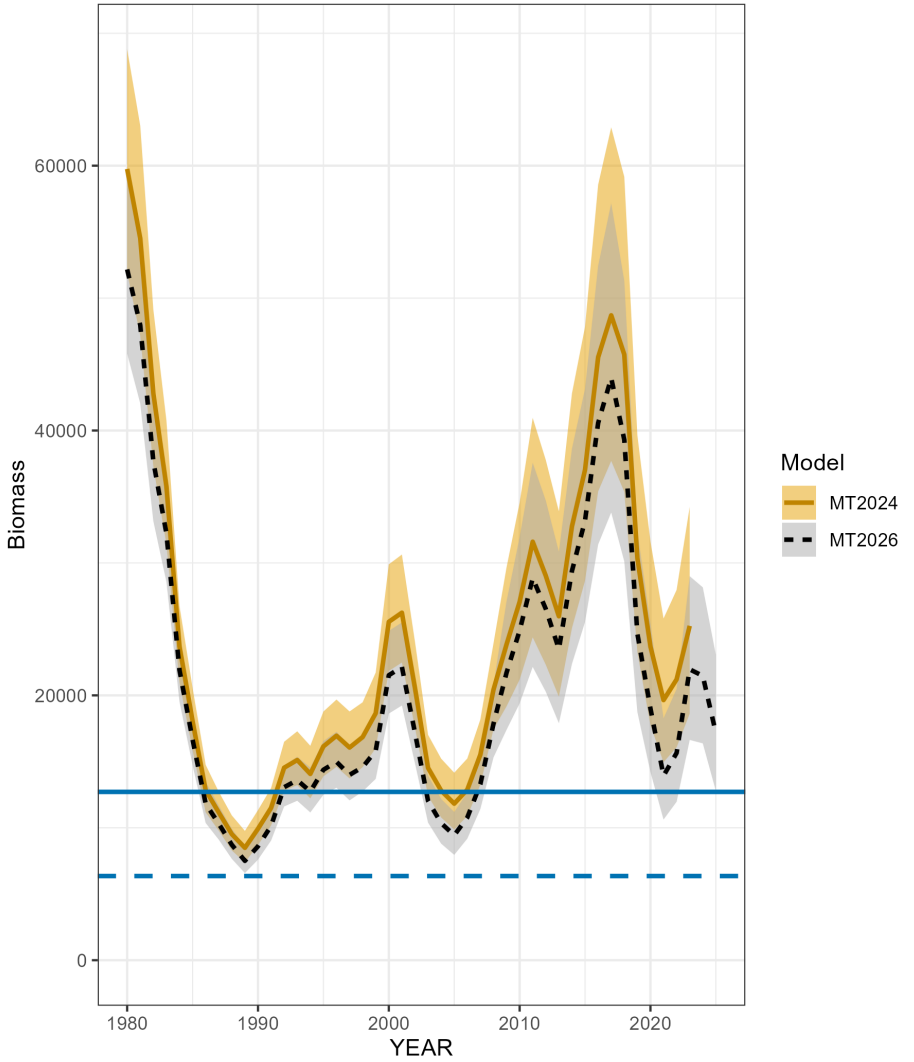
Recruitment

- Compared to recent years 2024 & 2025:
  - Had more favorable temperatures for recruitment (colder)
  - Showed decline in SSB
  - 2024 had the lowest recruitment on record

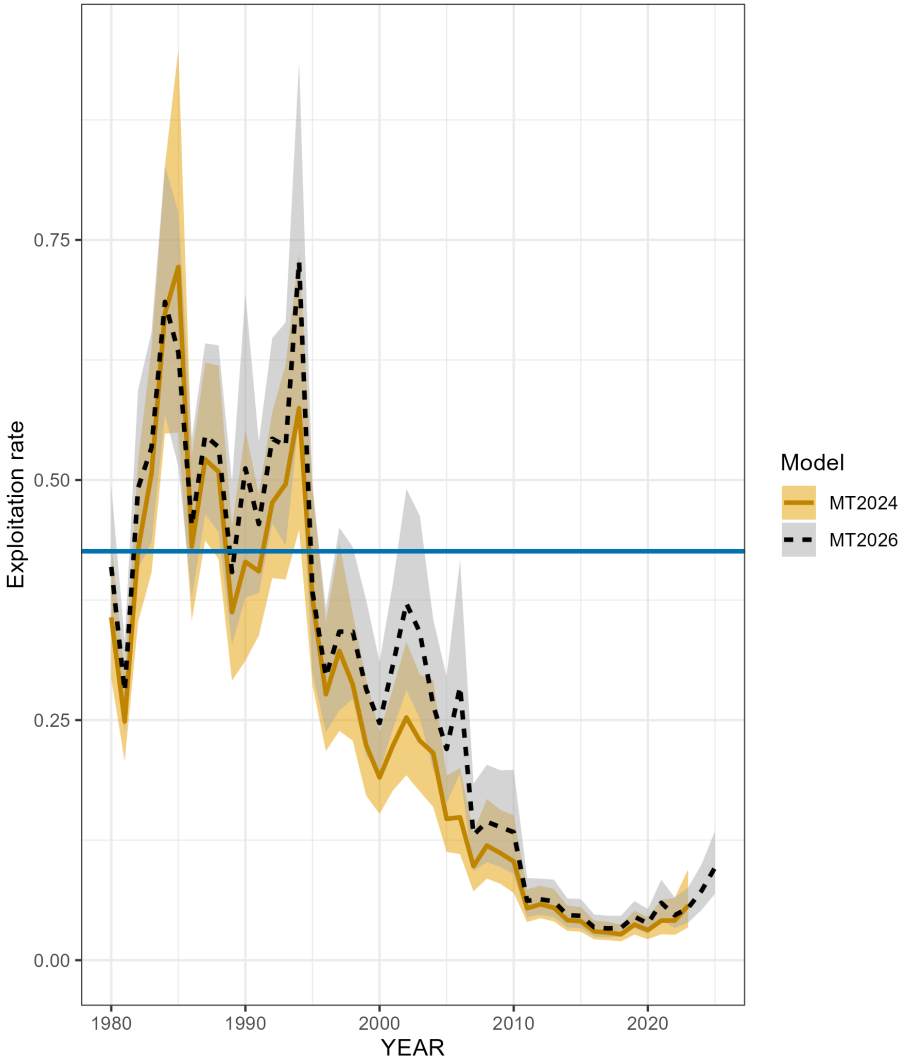


SSB estimates

- Change in scaling impacted by WAA updates in terminal years (Bridge 2) & removal of lognormal adjustment across the series (MT 3)



Fishing mortality by fleet



TOR 4: Biological Reference Points

Re-estimate or update the BRPs as defined by the management track level and recommend stock status. Provide qualitative descriptions of stock status based on simple indicators/metrics.

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TOR 4: Biological Reference Points

Methods:

- 5 year terminal average for weight-at-age, maturity-at-age and selectivity
- Time series mean recruitment
- F40% used as proxy for Fmsy

BRP	2026 estimate
Fmsy proxy	0.43 (0.37 – 0.49)
SSBmsy proxy (mt)	12711 (10267 – 15737)
MSY proxy (mt)	4700 (3792 – 5826)

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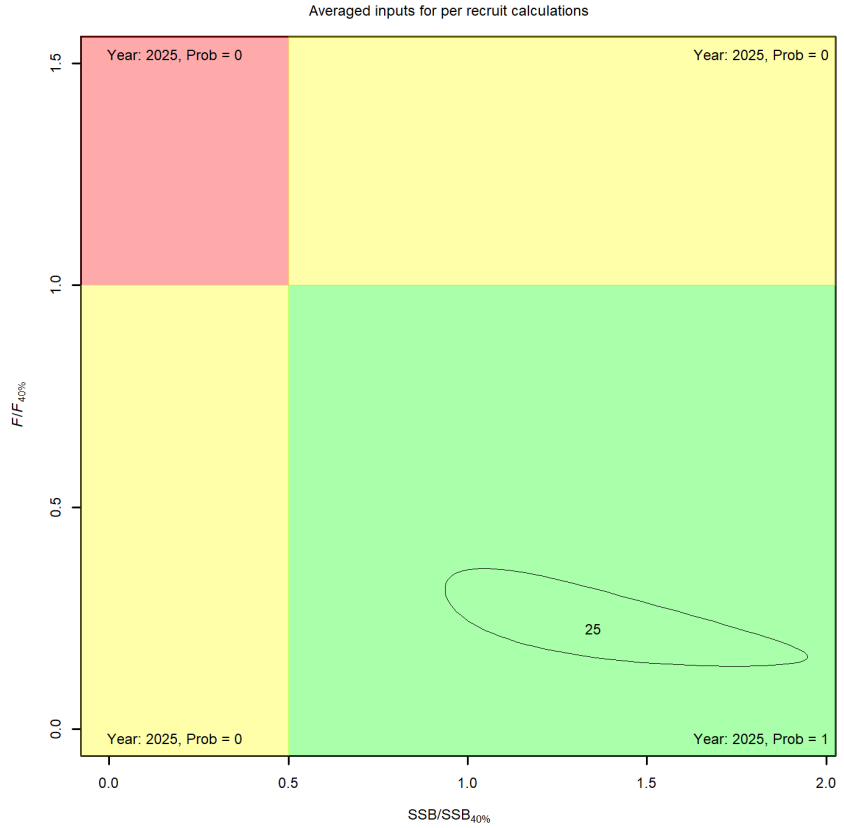
Stock status

- No change in stock status since MT 2024
- Stock is not overfished (135% of SSB msy proxy)
- Overfishing is not occurring (23% of Fmsy proxy)
- No retrospective adjustment required



TOR 5: Conduct short-term projections

Used standard WHAM projection methods:

- Recent 5 year average of weight-at-age, maturity-at-age and selectivity
- Bridge year (2026) catch provided by Groundfish PDT
- Fishing projected at Fmsy proxy for 2027-2031
- No retrospective adjustments were required

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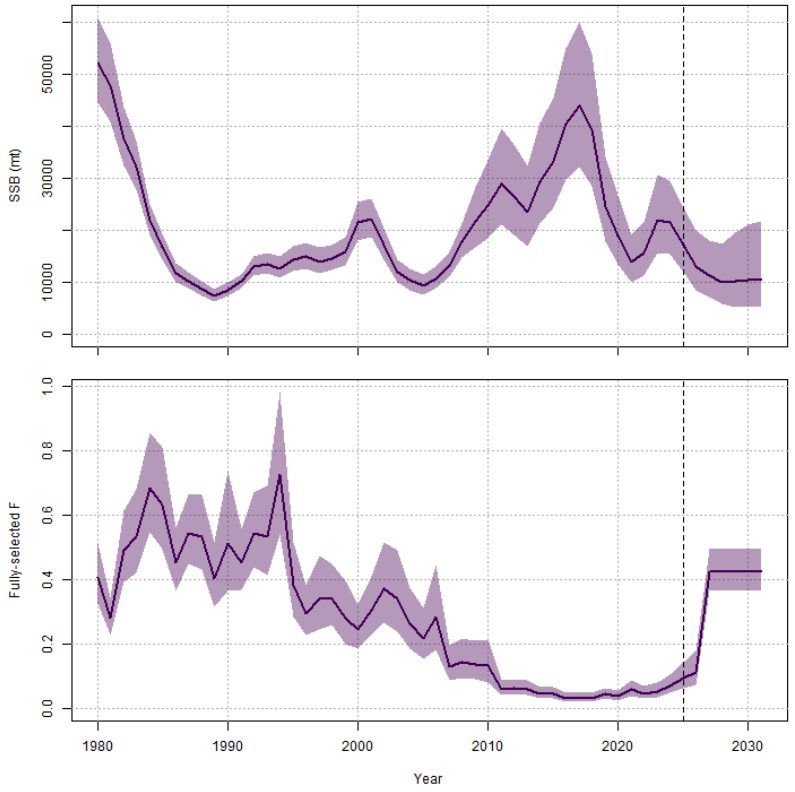
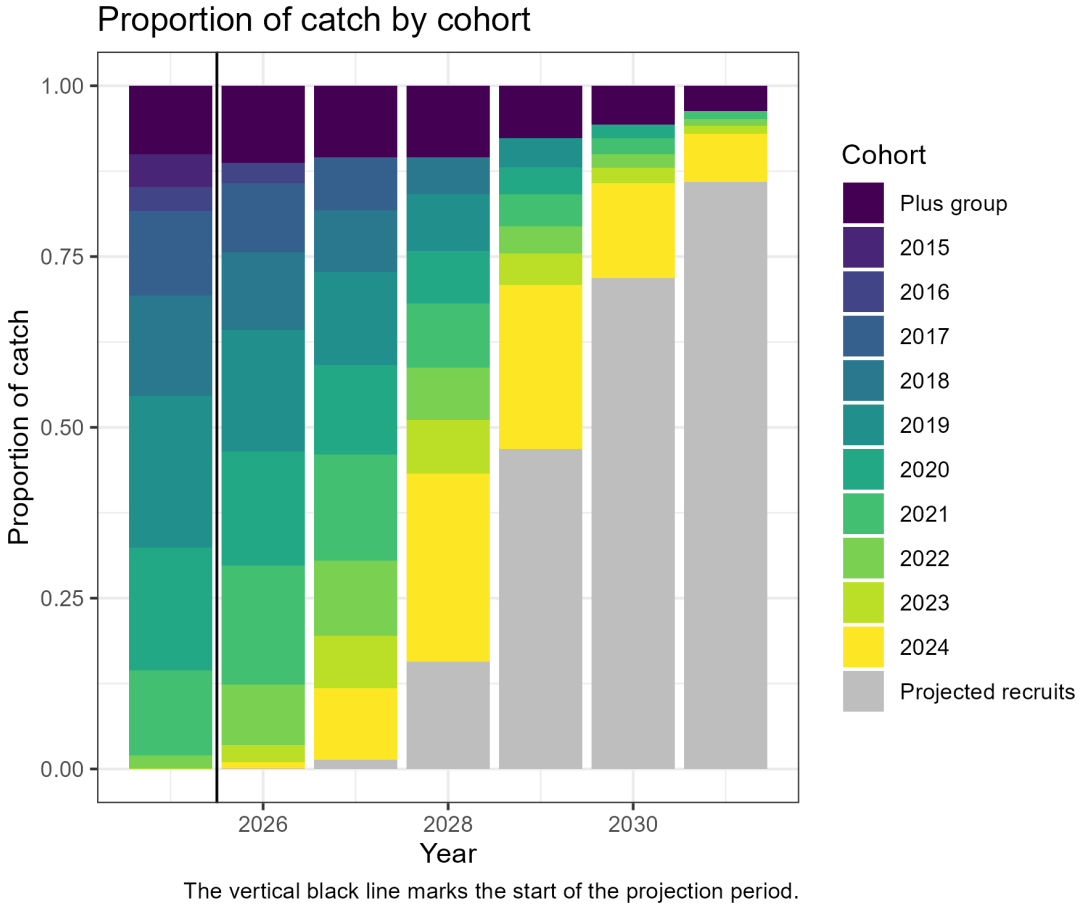
Short-term projections

	Year	Catch (mt)	SSB (mt)	Ffull
Interim (bridge year)	2026	1442	13154 (9212-18784)	0.115
Projection	2027	4219	11354 (7656-16839)	0.426
	2028	3638	10123 (6438-15916)	0.426
	2029	3691	10168 (5868-17619)	0.426
	2030	3830	10426 (5783-18796)	0.426
	2031	3916	10619 (5830-19342)	0.426



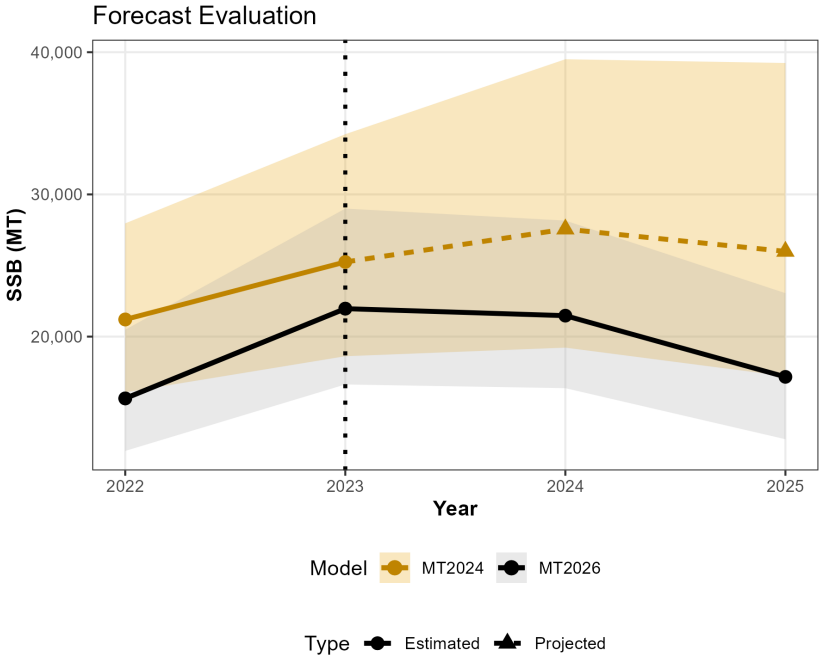
Short-term projections

- By 2029 ~ 50% of the catch is based on projected recruits
- Projected age 4+ fish expected to contribute substantially to commercial catch



Short-term projections

- Projections most consistent with estimates in first year
  - 2024 estimate (black point) falls within projection CI (orange shading)
  - High degree of overlap in CI
- Added uncertainty due to:
  - Changes in scaling attributed to different model configuration
  - Higher contribution of model-projected recruits over time



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TOR 6: Research

Respond to any review panel comments or SSC concerns from the most recent prior assessment

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Research recommendations

- Re-estimate commercial age composition for 2018+
  - Completed, provided bridge run with data through 2023 to match MT 2024 timeframe and through 2025 for MT 2026 model runs
  - Minimal impact on model fit and diagnostics since placeholder WAA assumptions MT 2024 representative for ages 1-3 but higher for ages 4+ which resulted in slight change in scale for SSB results in most years

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Research recommendations

- Exploration of archived observer otolith samples for characterizing age composition of discards
  - No progress
- Investigation of approaches to compare models with and without environmental covariates
  - No progress – could help address recruitment uncertainty in future
- Investigation of alternative estimates of natural mortality
  - No progress
- Investigate seasonal movement patterns by age
  - No progress

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Questions?



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