

2025/26 BSAI crab catch and fishery performance

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Crab Plan Team Meeting
September 14-17, 2026
Seattle, WA



Directed fishery observer coverage

Mandatory catcher-vessel coverage requirements, per **5 AAC 39.645**.

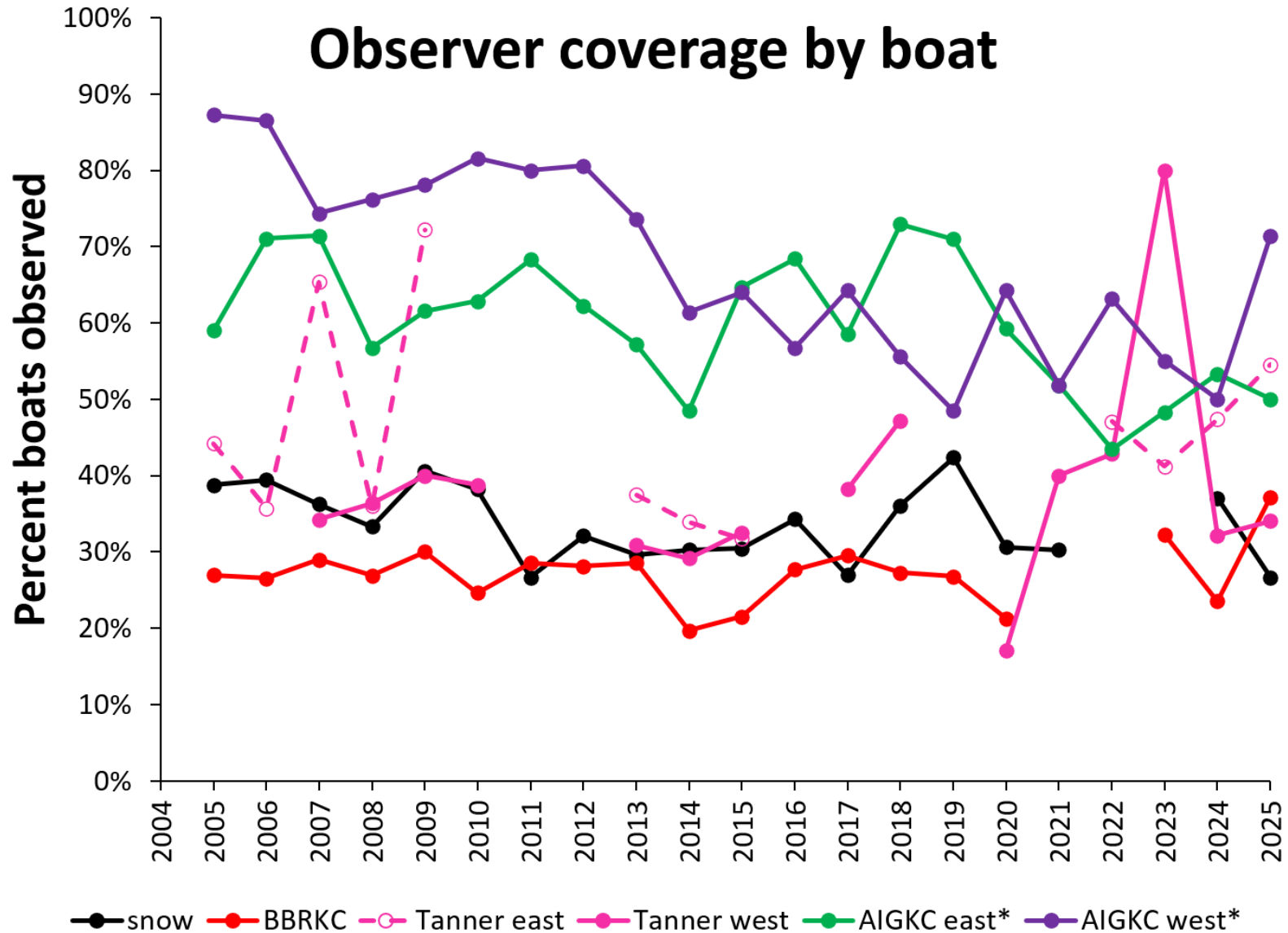
All vessels processing crab must carry observers.

Fishery	Coverage
Bering Sea snow crab	30-100% (a)
Bristol Bay red king crab	20% (a)
Bering Sea Tanner crab	30-100% (a)
Pribilof District red king crab	100%
Pribilof District blue king crab	100%
Saint Matthew Island blue king crab	100%
Norton Sound red king crab	Discretionary
Aleutian Islands golden king crab	50% (b)
Pribilof District golden king crab	100%
Adak red king crab	100%

^a Vessels required to carry observers are randomly selected.

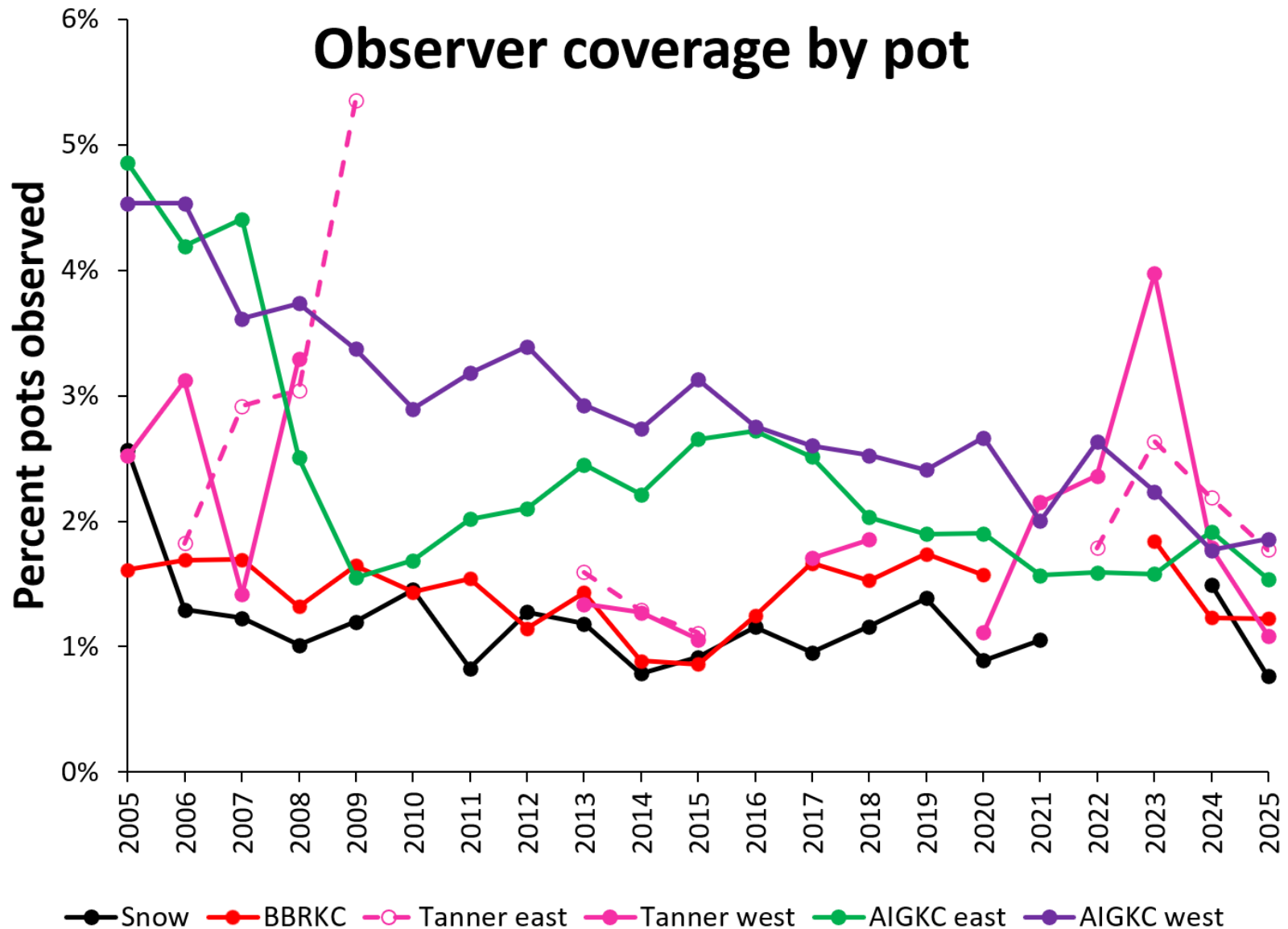
^b All catcher vessels must carry an observer during harvest of 50% of total landed catch weight in each three-month trimester of nine-month season Aug 1 – Oct 31; Nov 1 – Jan 31; Feb 1 – April 30.

Directed fishery observer coverage



*AIGKC calculated by trip because of trimester regulation

Directed fishery observer coverage



Groundfish Vessels in Full vs Partial Coverage

- **Full Coverage (1 or 2 observers if at sea or EM at sea plus observer shoreside)**
 - Catcher/Processors (limited exceptions for small non-trawl CPs)
 - Motherships
 - Catcher vessels participating in LAPP programs that have transferable PSC allocations
 - Shoreside Processors receiving or processing BSAI pollock
 - Electronic monitoring (EM) for pelagic trawl pollock
- **Partial Coverage (observer or EM)**
 - Catcher vessels fishing groundfish
 - Catcher vessels fishing IFQ/CDQ halibut/sablefish
 - Limited number of non-trawl CP exceptions
- **No Coverage**
 - Vessels < 40 ft.
 - Jig catcher vessels
 - No FFP (can only fish inside 3 miles)
 - State Guideline Harvest Level fisheries

Source: [2026 Annual Deployment Plan for Observers and Electronic Monitoring in the Groundfish and Halibut Fisheries off Alaska](#)



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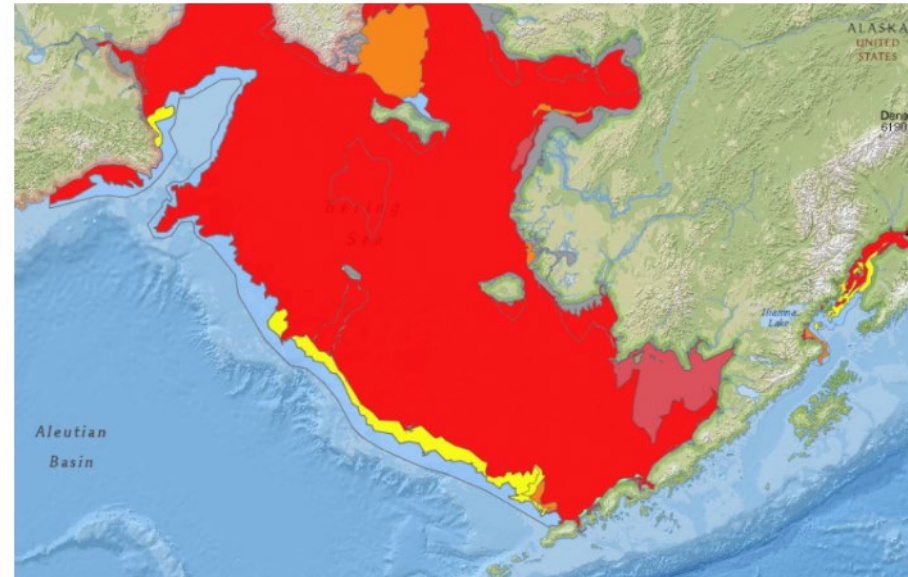
Observer/EM Coverage Rates for Groundfish Fisheries

Table 1. Summary of total trips, selection rates (rounded to the nearest whole number), and the number of trips expected to be monitored in each sampling stratum in 2026.

Component	Pool	Stratum	Selection Rate (%)	Number of Trips Expected to be Monitored	Monitoring Location & Purpose
Partial Coverage	Observer Trip Selection	Fixed-gear BSAI	29	74	At-sea discard & PSC estimation/biological sampling
		Trawl BSAI	53	15	Pollock trawl deliveries monitored dockside for salmon on selected trips
	EM Fixed-gear Trip Selection	EM Fixed-gear BSAI	39	41	At-sea for discard & PSC
	No-selection	No-selection	0	0	n/a
Full Coverage	Full Coverage (BSAI & GOA)	Full Coverage (BSAI & GOA)	100	1,012	At-sea for discard & PSC estimation/biological sampling
					Pollock trawl deliveries monitored dockside for salmon
	EM Trawl BSAI	EM Trawl BSAI	100	1,856	At-sea EM compliance monitoring Dockside salmon & halibut PSC accounting/biological sampling

Crab Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries

- Data Source:
 - AKFIN database
 - Observer/Electronic Monitoring (full and partial coverage)
 - Estimated weight (kg) of crab mortality
- Fixed Gear = pot, hook-and-line, and jig
 - 50% estimated crab mortality
- Trawl Gear = non-pelagic and pelagic
 - 80% estimated crab mortality
- Crab Fishing Year (July 1 – June 30)
 - Calendar year for Pribilof Island GKC and Norton Sound RKC



NWS Alaska Sea Ice Program

Sea ice extent in the Bering Sea on March 31, 2026 is shown in a color coded map provided by the National Weather Service's Alaska Sea Ice Program - <https://www.weather.gov/afci/ice>.

Large sea ice event in Bering Sea changed fishing behavior for winter/spring 2026



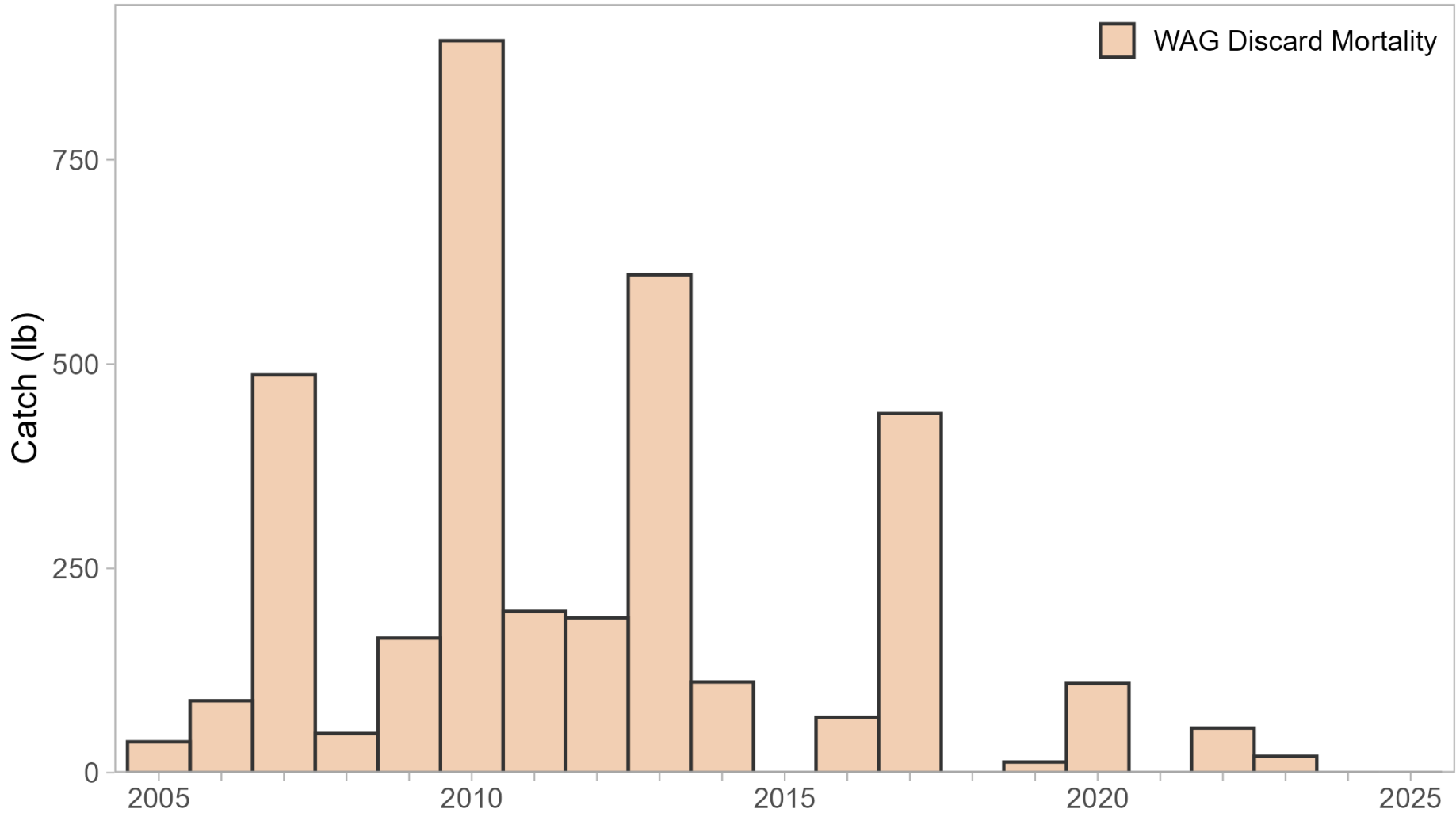
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WAIRKC

Western Aleutian Islands RKC 2025/26

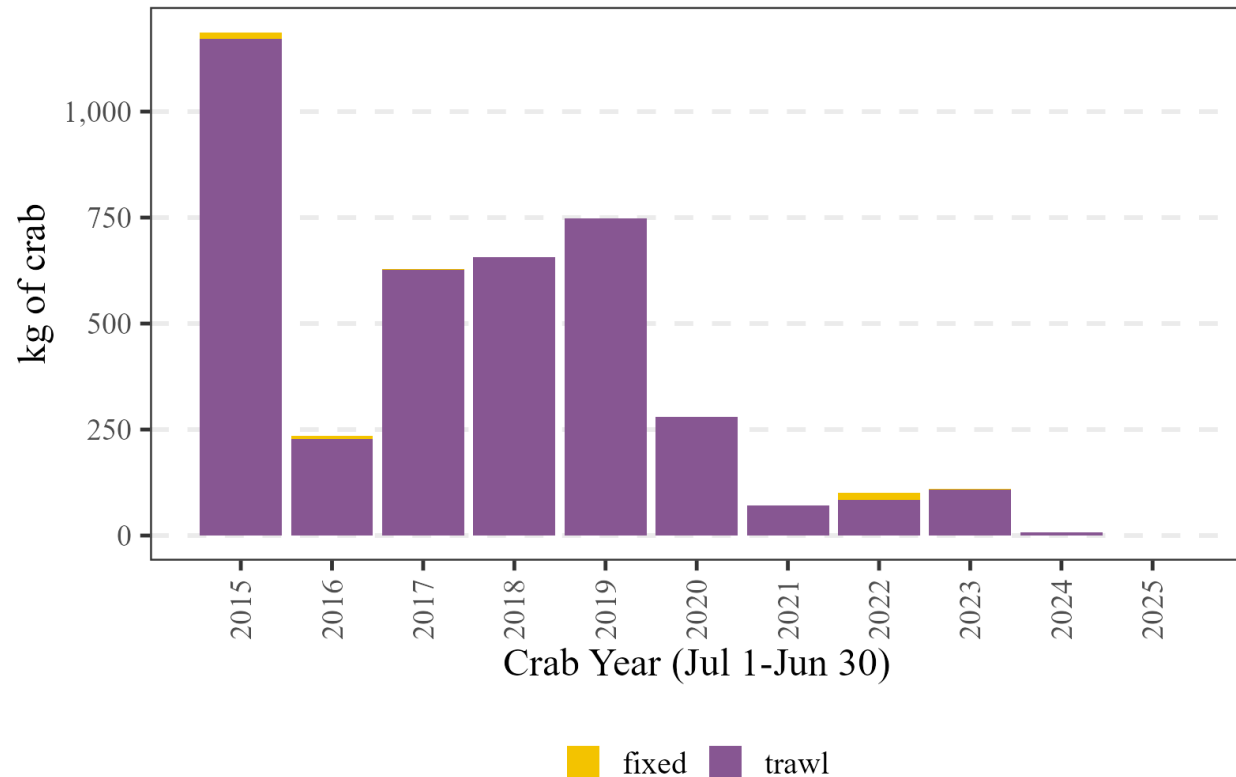
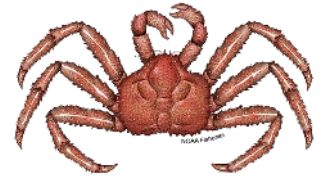
Directed Fishery Closed

WAG GKC Discard Mortality = 0 lb



- Minimal fixed gear fishing in this area.
- Minimal fixed gear observer coverage.
- State Pacific Cod fishery in area, however, no observer/EM coverage in State groundfish fisheries

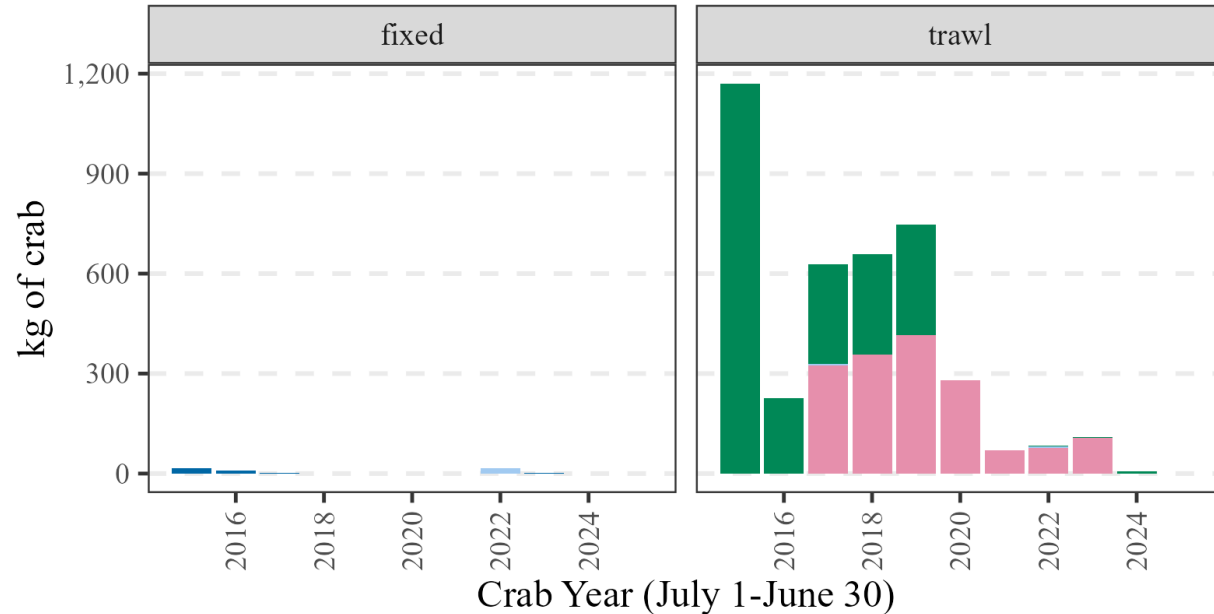
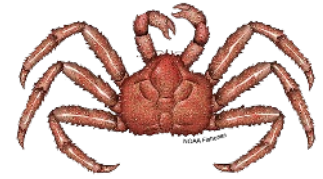
Aleutian Islands RKC Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries



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- A80 targeting both Atka mackerel and rockfish in recent years.
- Post-pandemic fishing patterns changed due to market conditions
- Tier 5 RKC stock and low biomass

Aleutian Islands RKC Incidental Catch by Trip Target



■ Arrowtooth/Kamchatka Flounder
 ■ Atka Mackerel
 ■ Other Species
■ Pacific Cod
 ■ Rockfish

*Other species includes: pollock, halibut, & sablefish



BBRKC

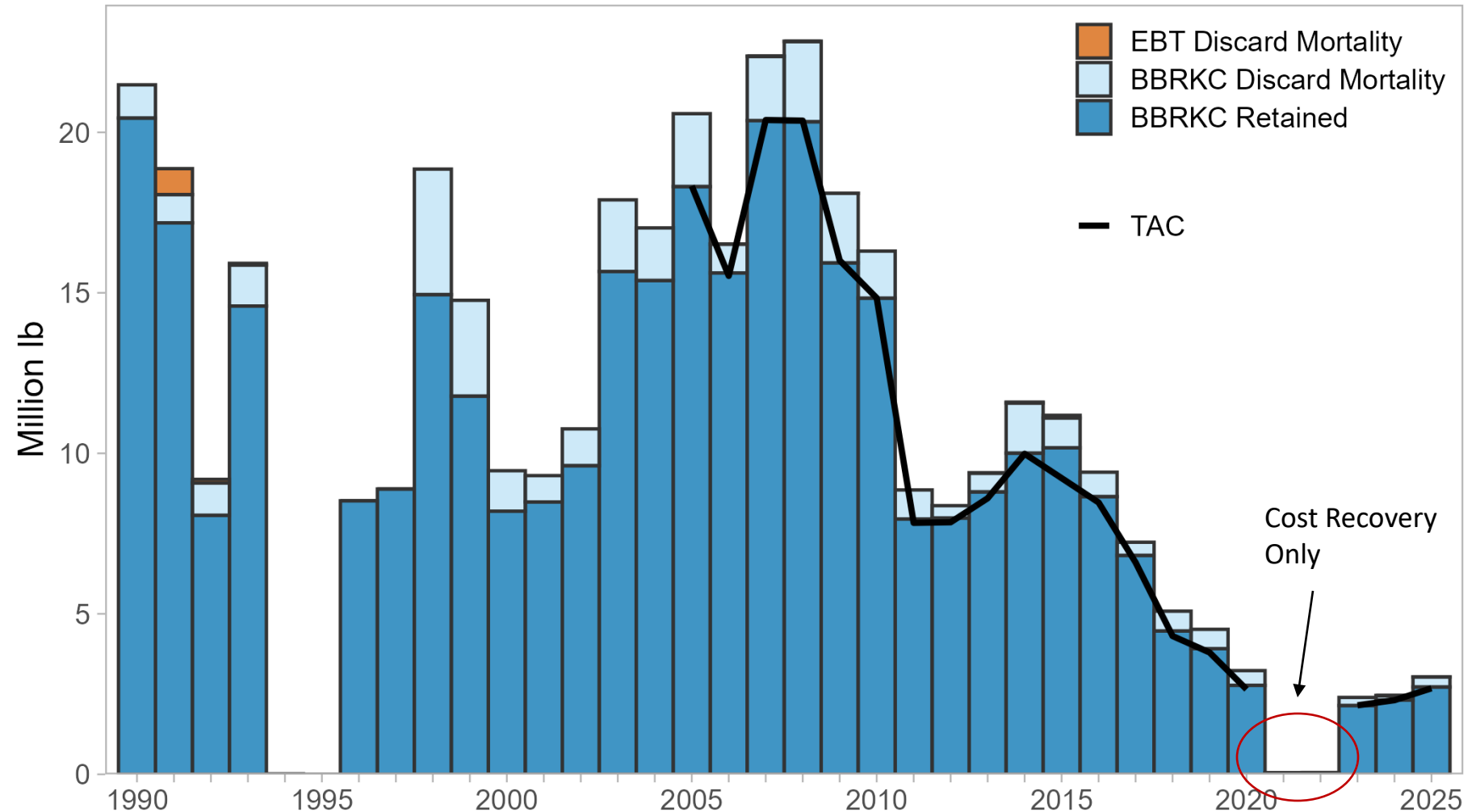
BBRKC 2025/26

TAC = 2.68 mil lb

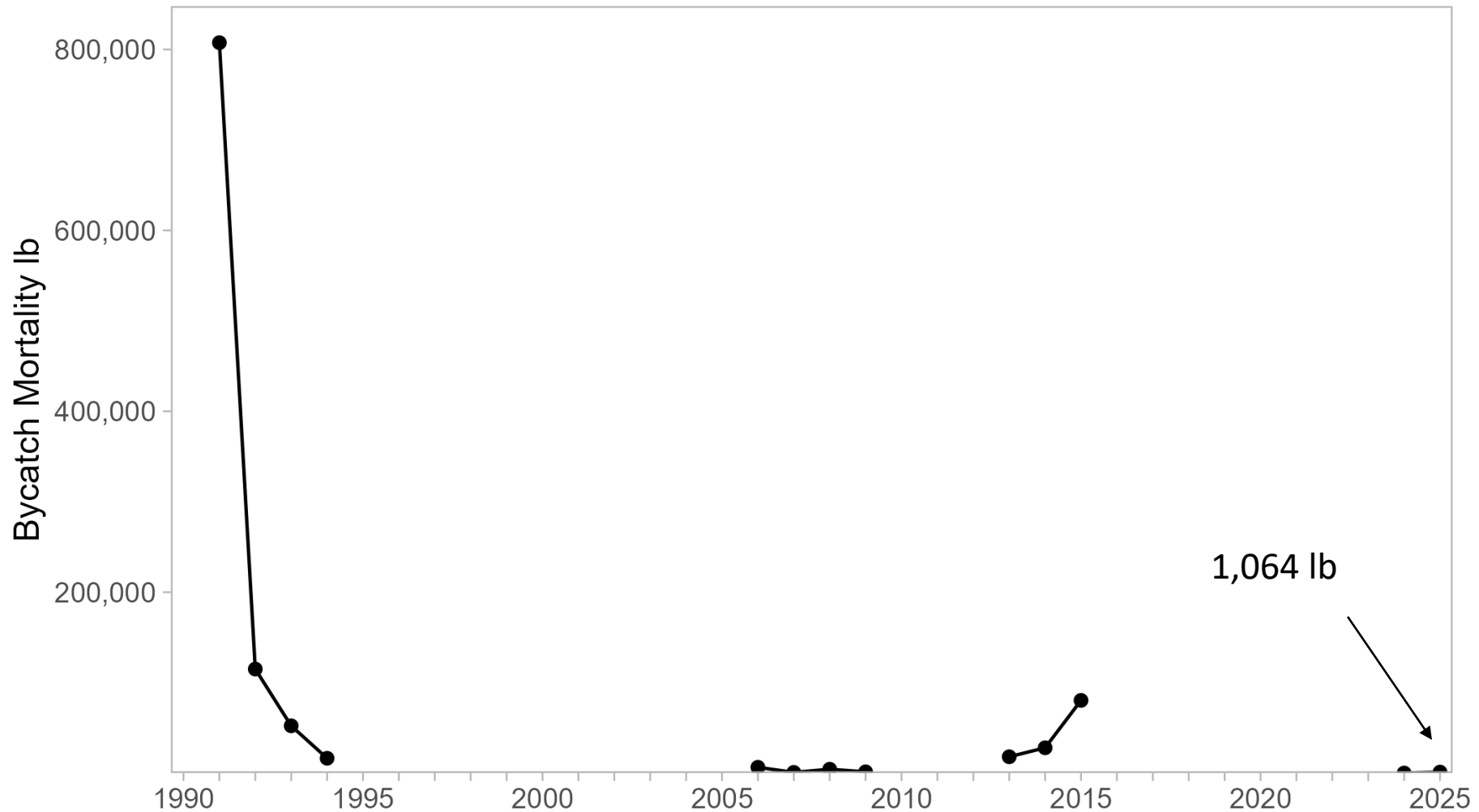
Retained = 2.721 mil lb

Directed Discard Mortality = 312,696 lb

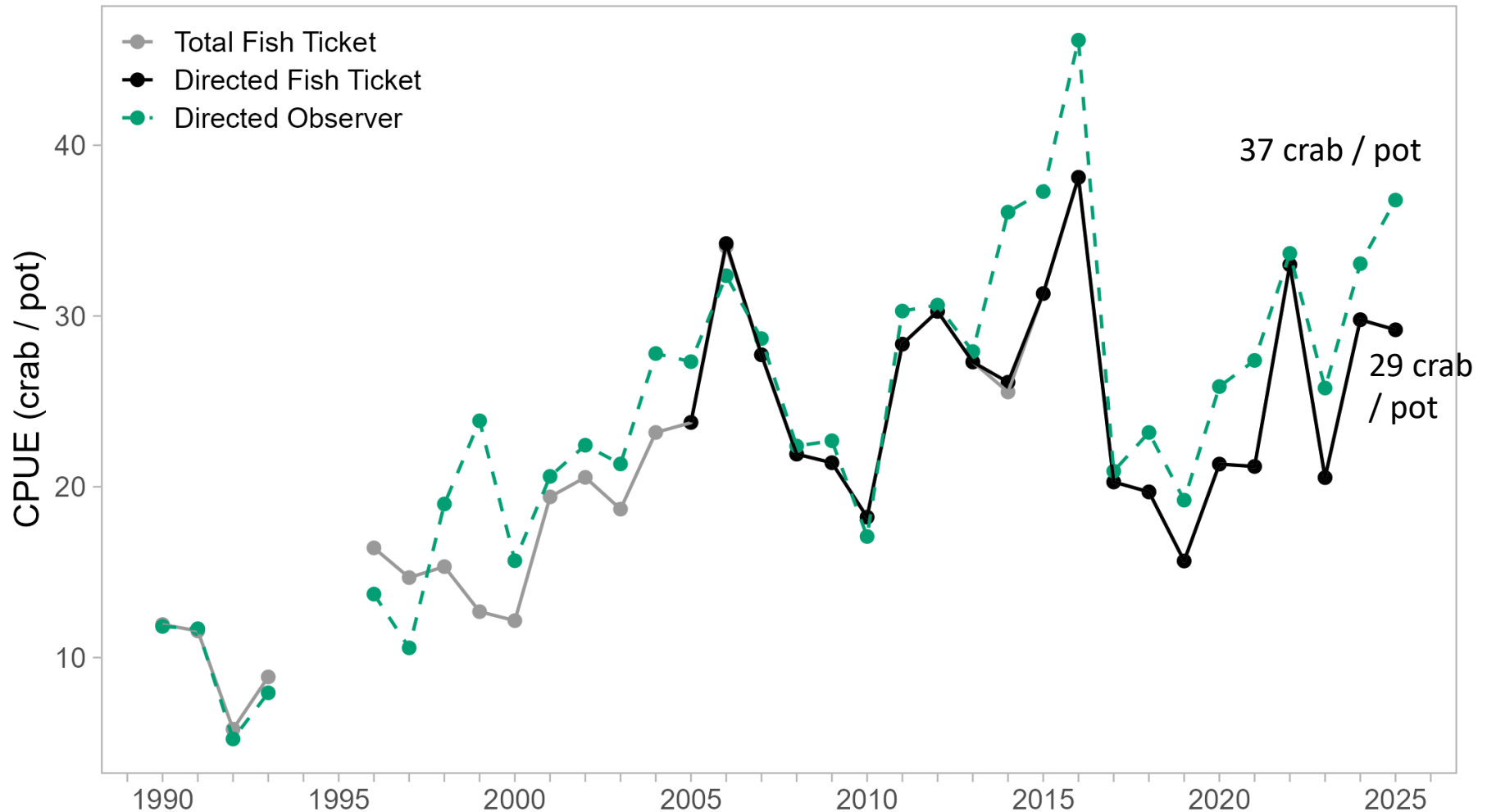
EBT (Tanner East) Discard Mortality = 1,064 lb



Bycatch Mortality in Tanner East 166

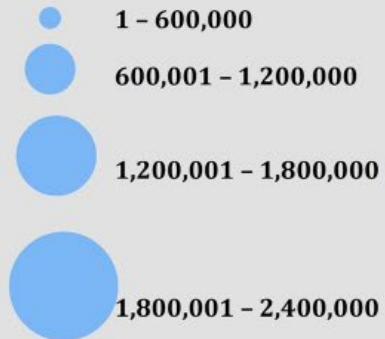


Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE)

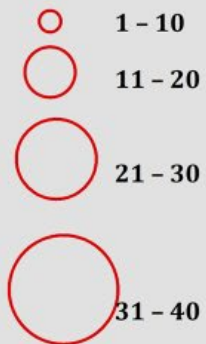


Bristol Bay Red King Crab 2025/26 Directed Fishery

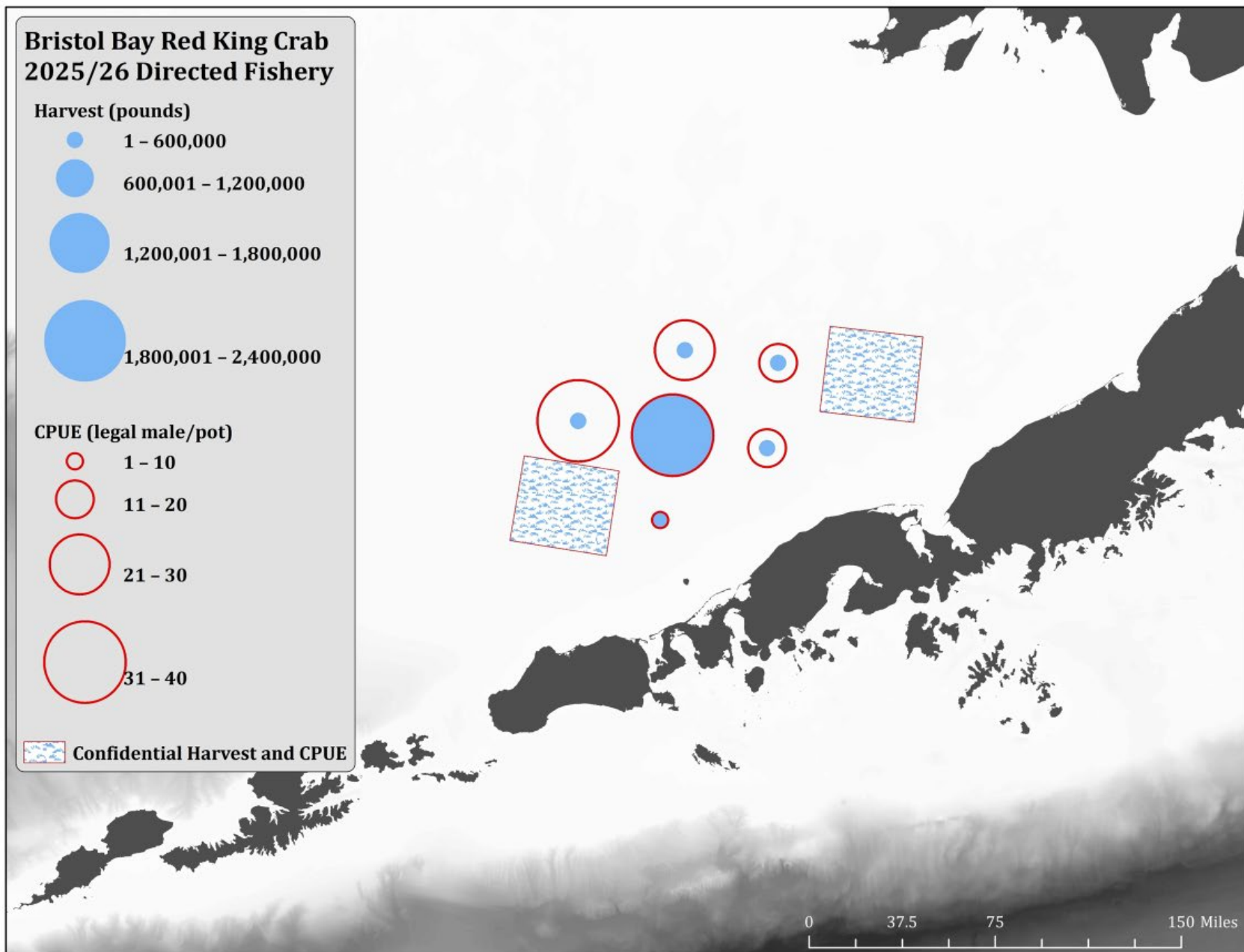
Harvest (pounds)

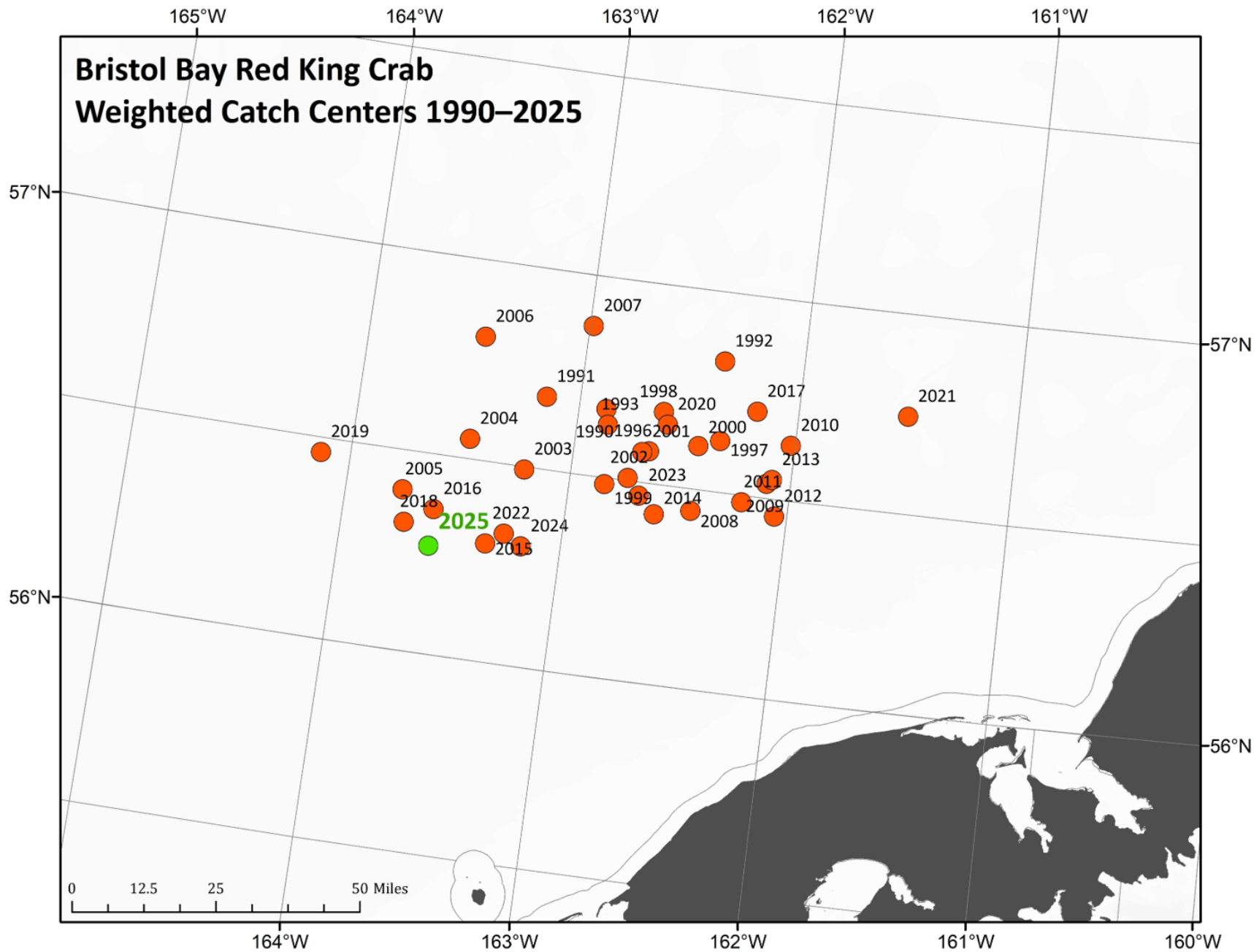


CPUE (legal male/pot)

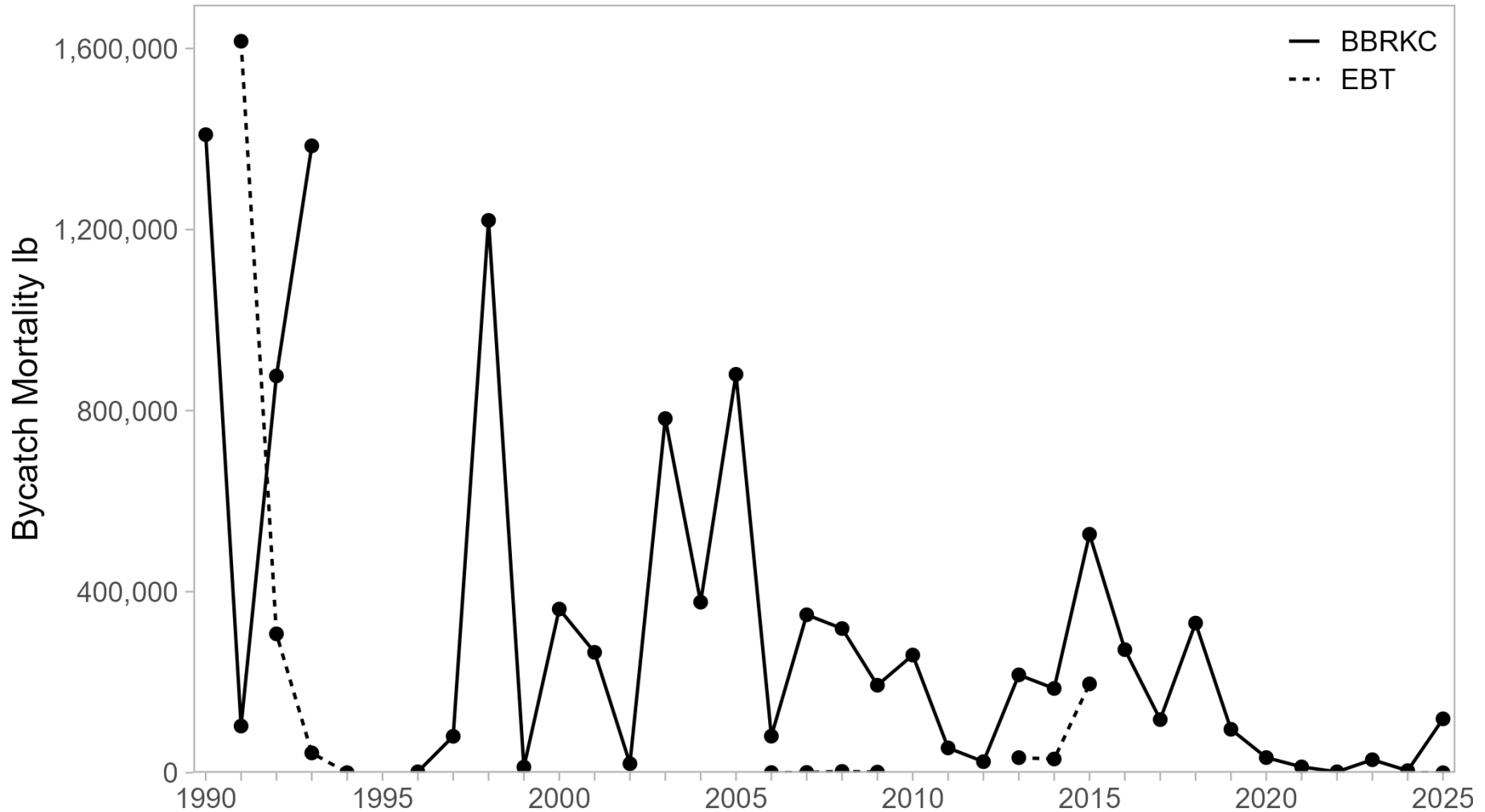


 Confidential Harvest and CPUE





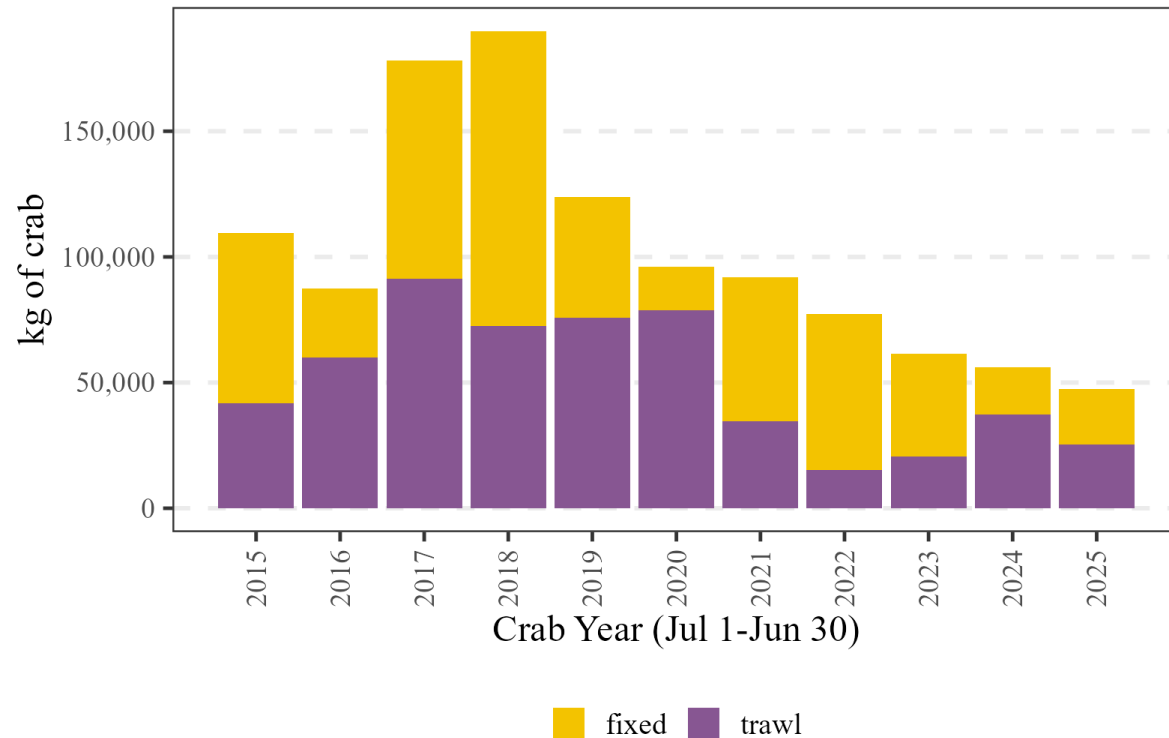
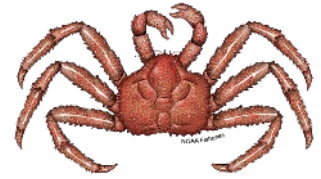
Female Bycatch Mortality



- Most fixed gear bycatch is in the Pacific cod pot fishery with decreases in bycatch occurring in recent years

Bristol Bay RKC

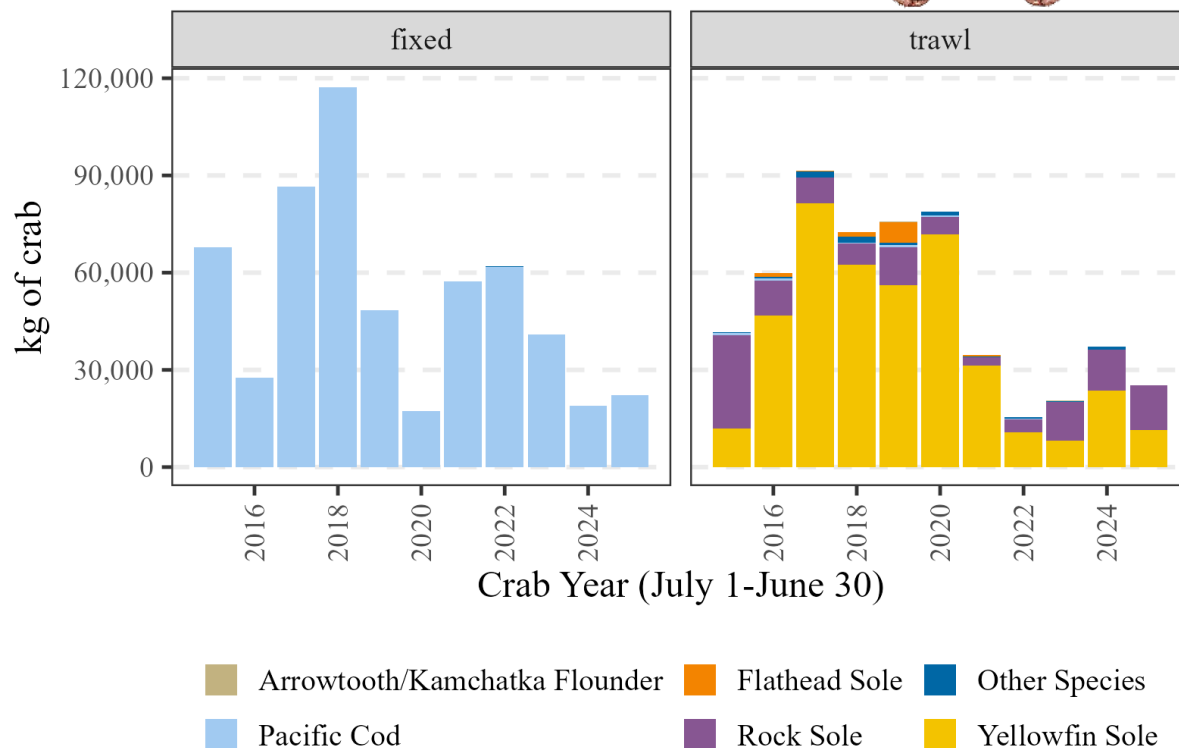
Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries



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- Rock and yellowfin sole are often targeted during the same fishing trip.
- RKC savings subarea closed to nonpelagic trawl in the 2022 and 2023 calendar years.
- Bycatch of BBRKC in trawl gear typically occurs throughout the year.

Bristol Bay RKC Incidental Catch by Trip Target

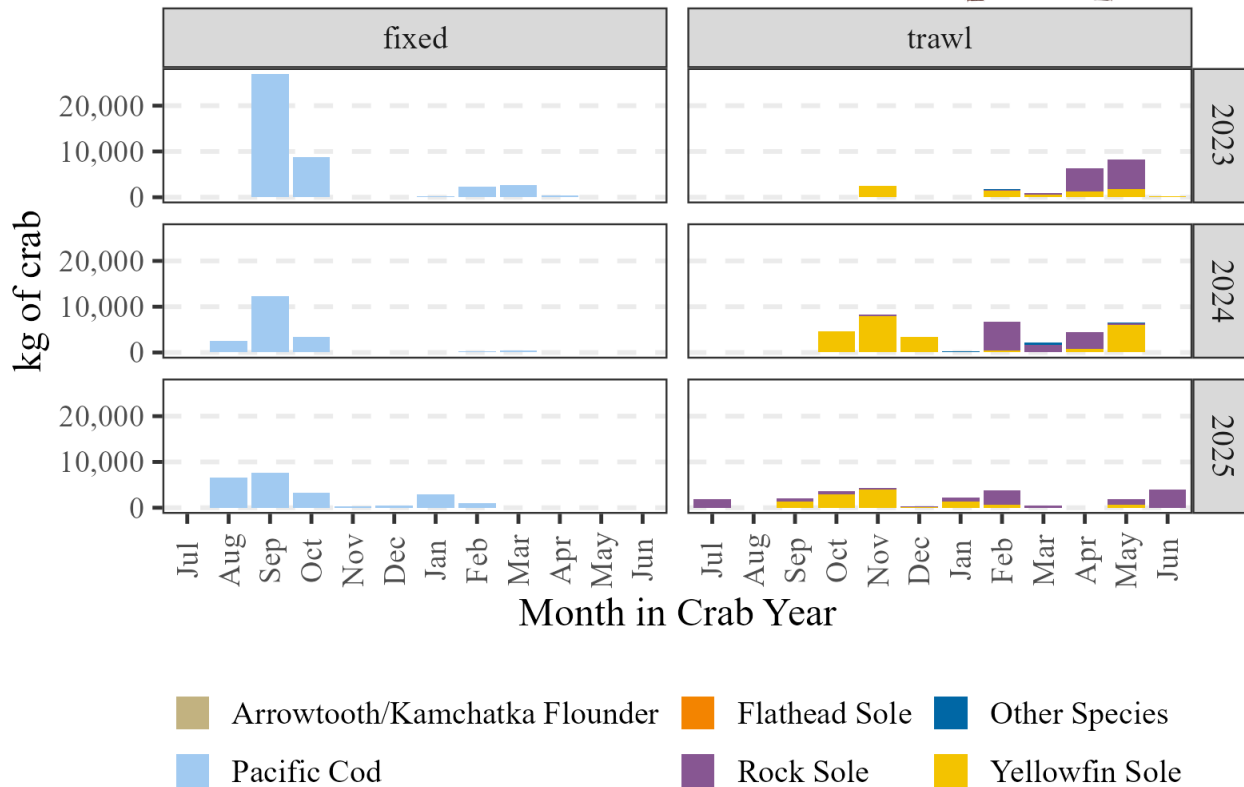


*Other species includes: Atka mackerel, Greenland turbot, other flatfish, plaice, pollock, halibut, rockfish & sablefish

- In most years more RKC bycatch in the Pacific cod pot fisheries occur in the fall.
- Minimal Pacific cod pot fishing occurred in Jan/Feb 2024 due to poor markets which resulted in minimal RKC bycatch.
- Increase in rock sole target due to changing market conditions

Bristol Bay RKC

Incidental Catch by Month and Trip Target



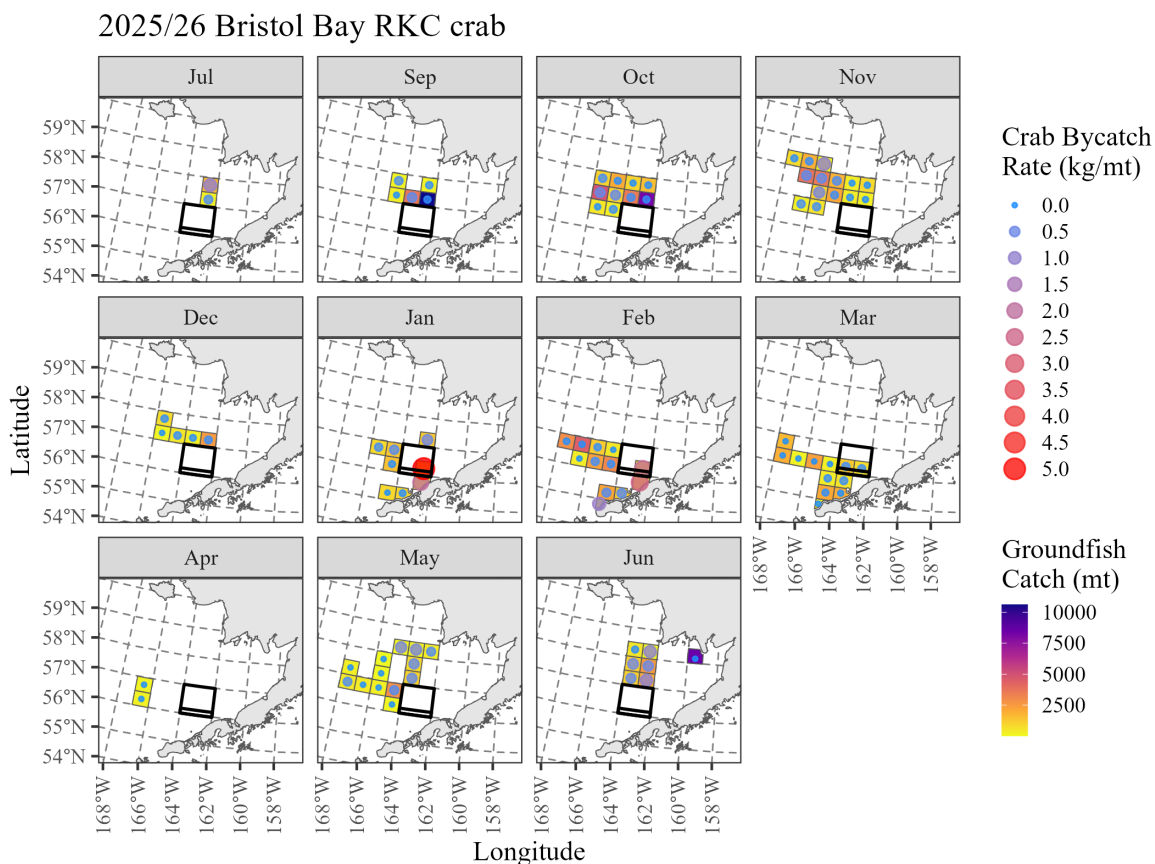
*Other species includes: Atka mackerel, Greenland turbot, other flatfish, plaice, pollock, halibut, rockfish & sablefish



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2025/26 Average Rate (kg crab/mt of Groundfish) in the Flathead, Rock, and Yellowfin Soles NPT Fisheries by ADF&G Statistical Area and Months

- Data mapped to stat-area and dots are center of boxes
- Confidential fishing areas excluded
- *August confidential
- Sea ice extent shifted groundfish catch south and west of RKCSA compared to 2024/2025



A close-up photograph of a large pile of snow crabs. The crabs are densely packed, with their long, jointed legs and reddish-brown carapaces filling the frame. The lighting is somewhat dim, giving the scene a slightly muted, naturalistic feel. A black rectangular box is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the text "Snow crab".

Snow crab

Snow Crab (BSSC) 2025/26

TAC = 9.3 mil lb

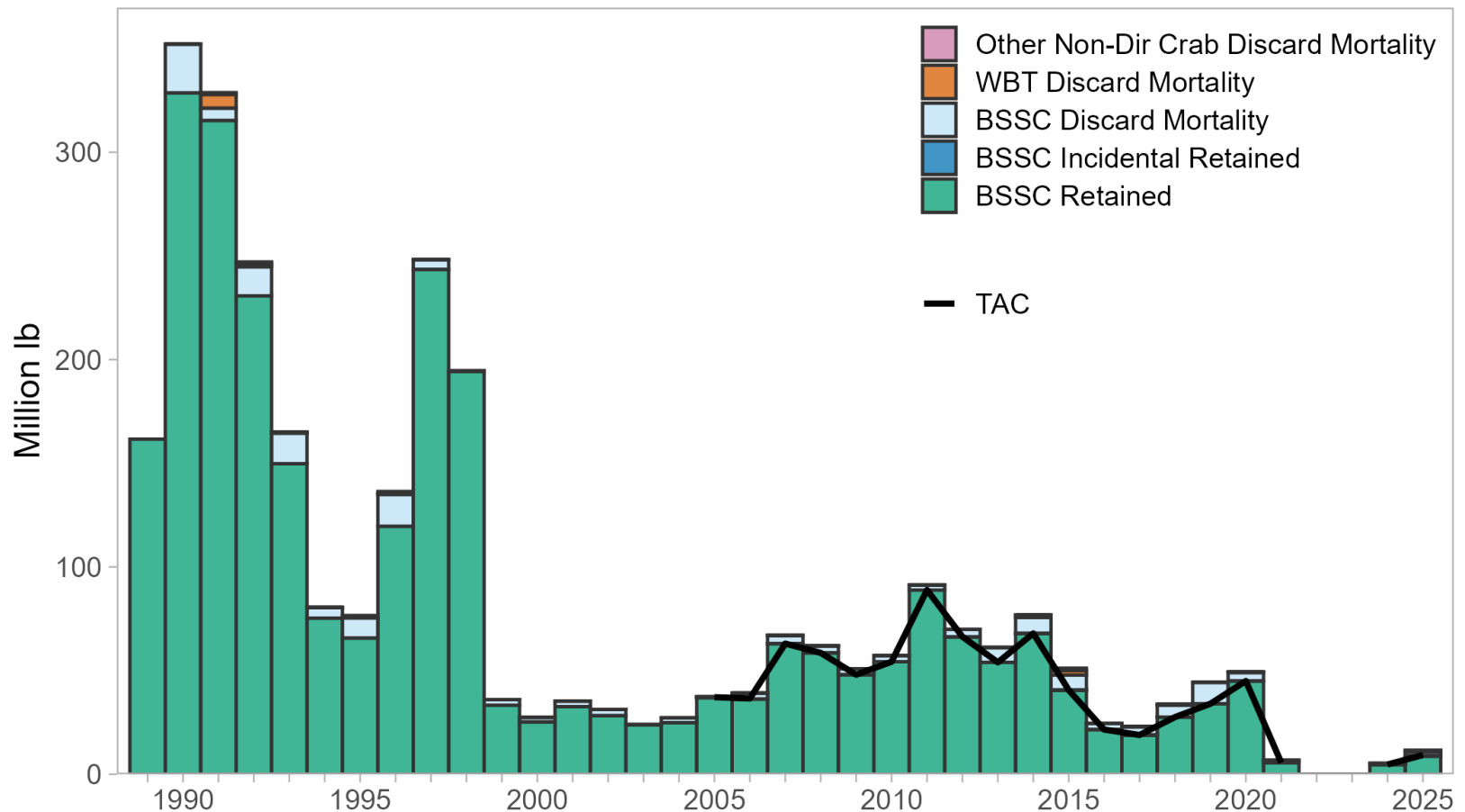
Directed Retained = 8.710 mil lb

Incidental Retained = 0.385 mil lb

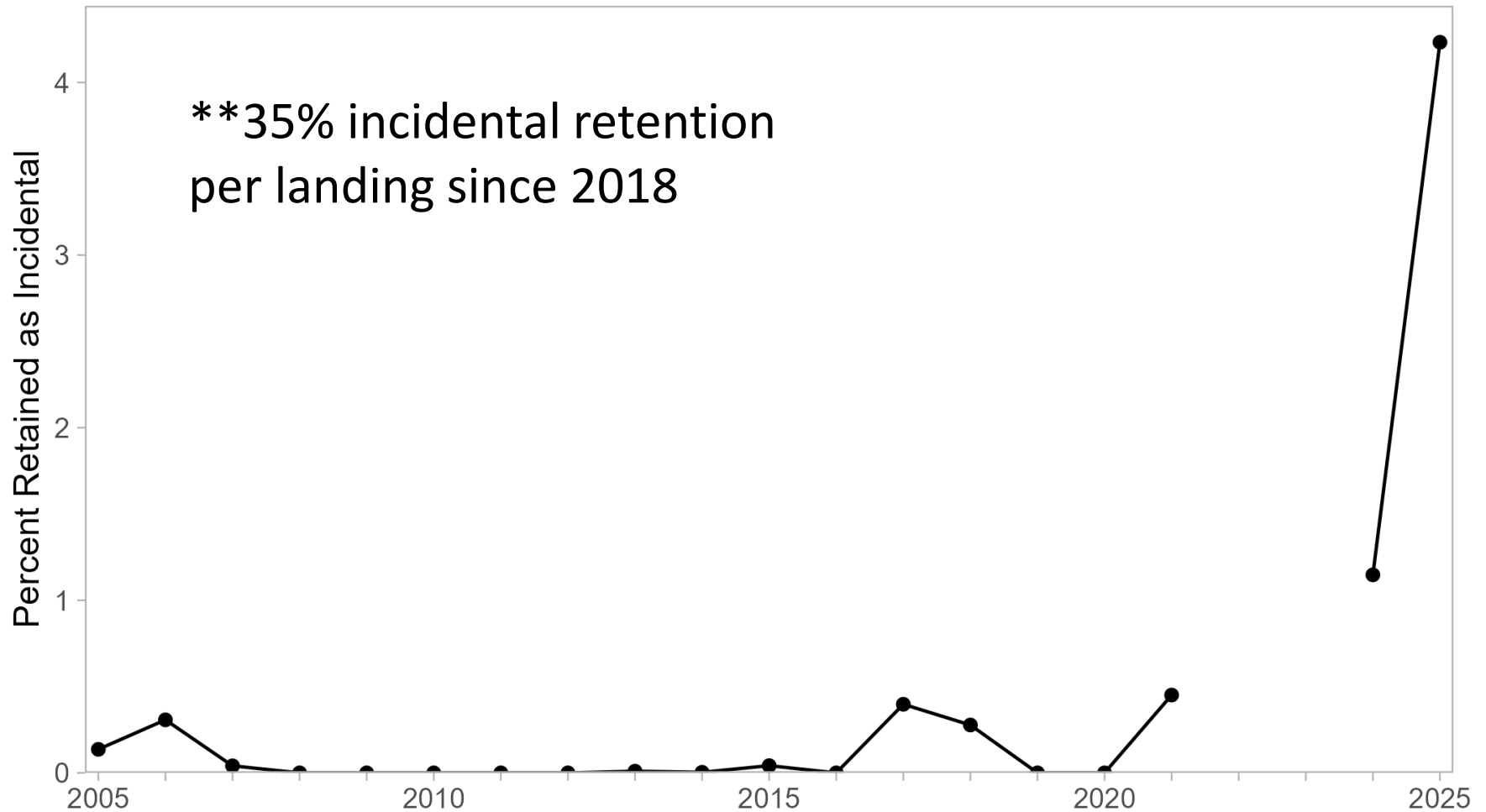
Directed Discard Mortality = 1.781 mil lb

WBT (Tanner West) Discard Mortality = 0.719 mil lb

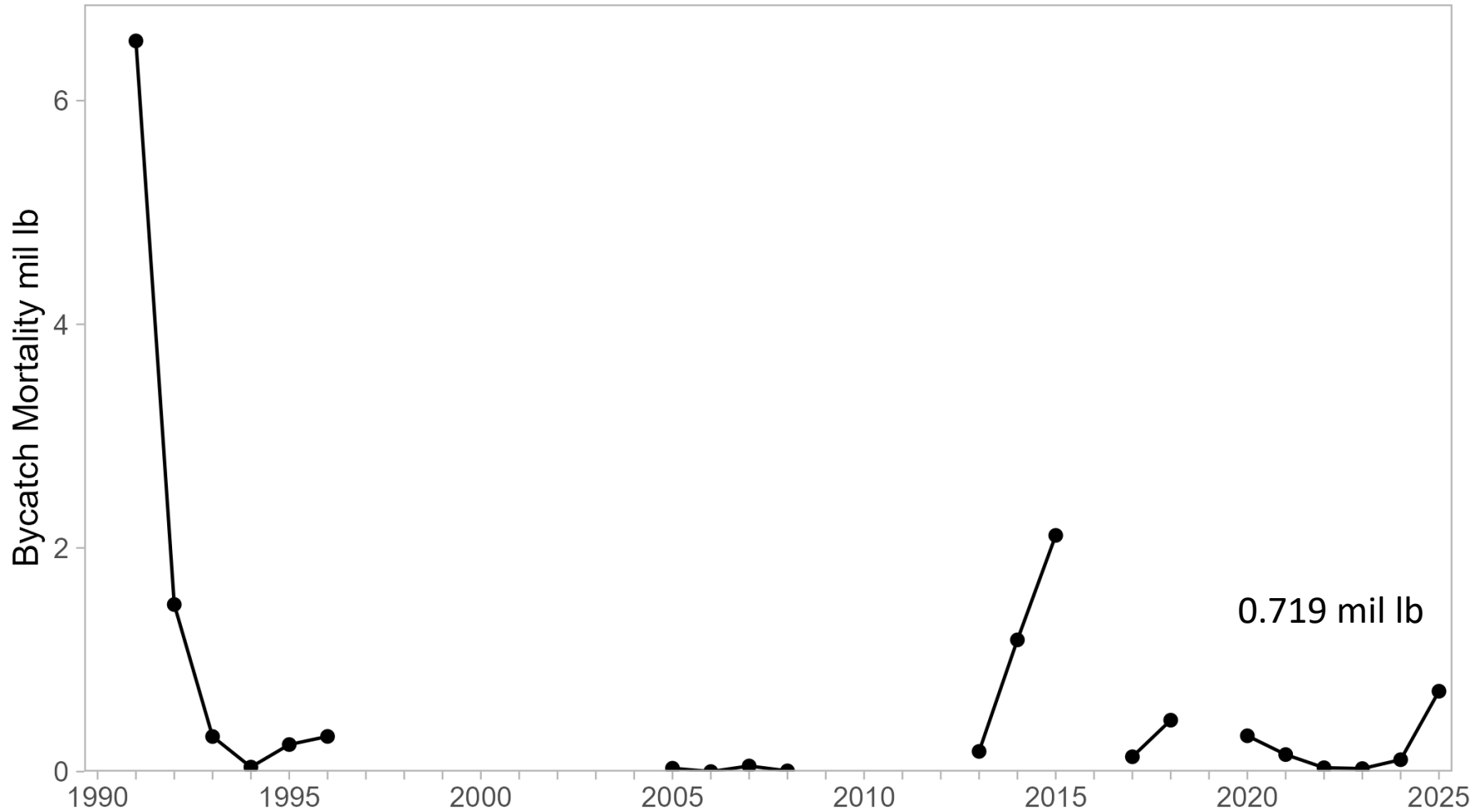
Other Non-Directed Crab Discard Mortality = 1,518 lb



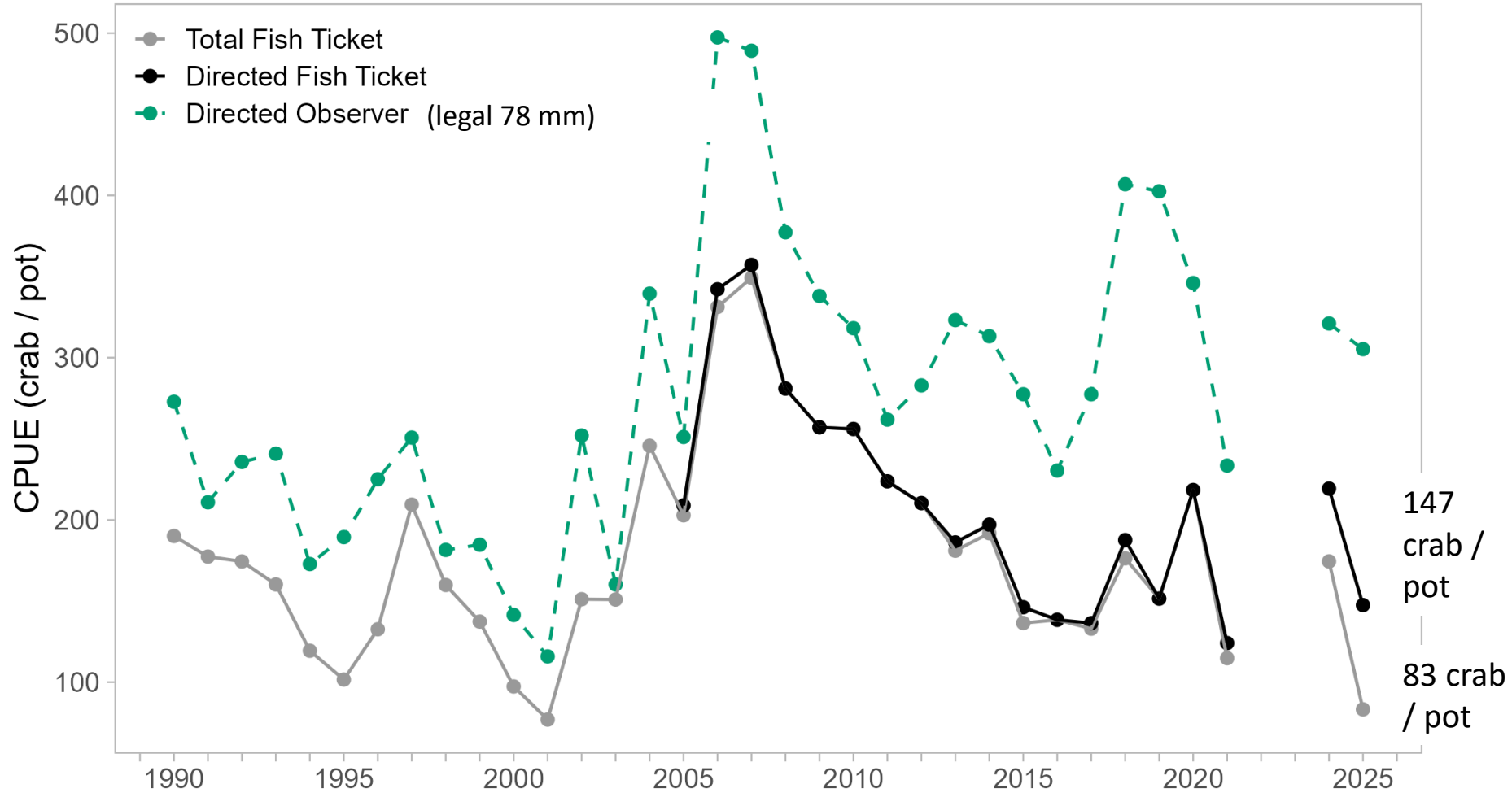
BSSC Incidental Retained Catch



Bycatch Mortality in W166 Tanner

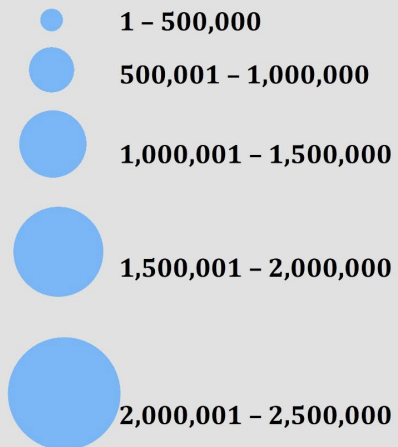


Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE)

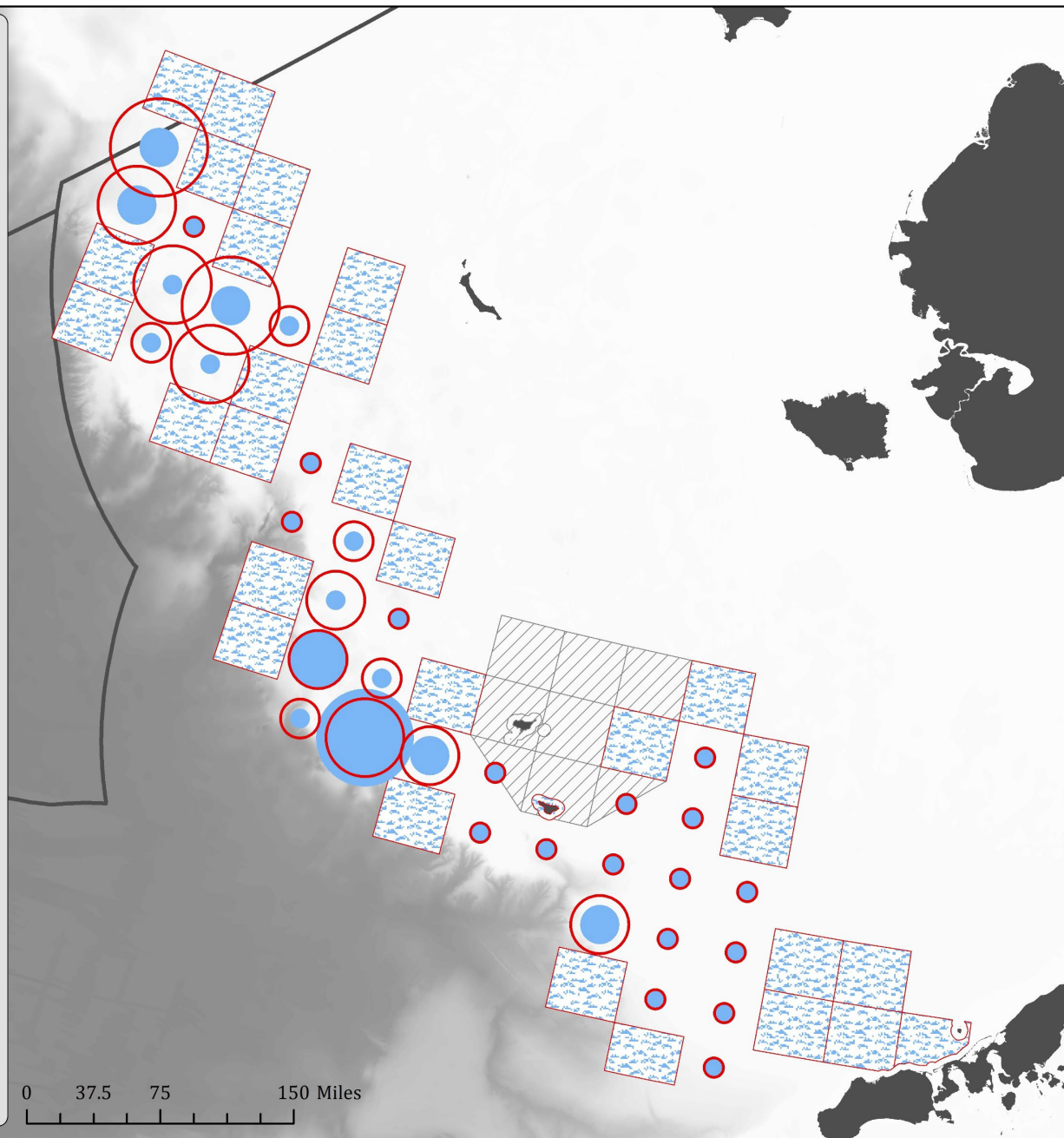
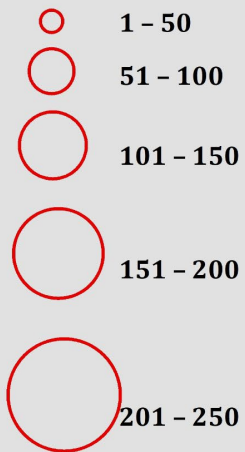


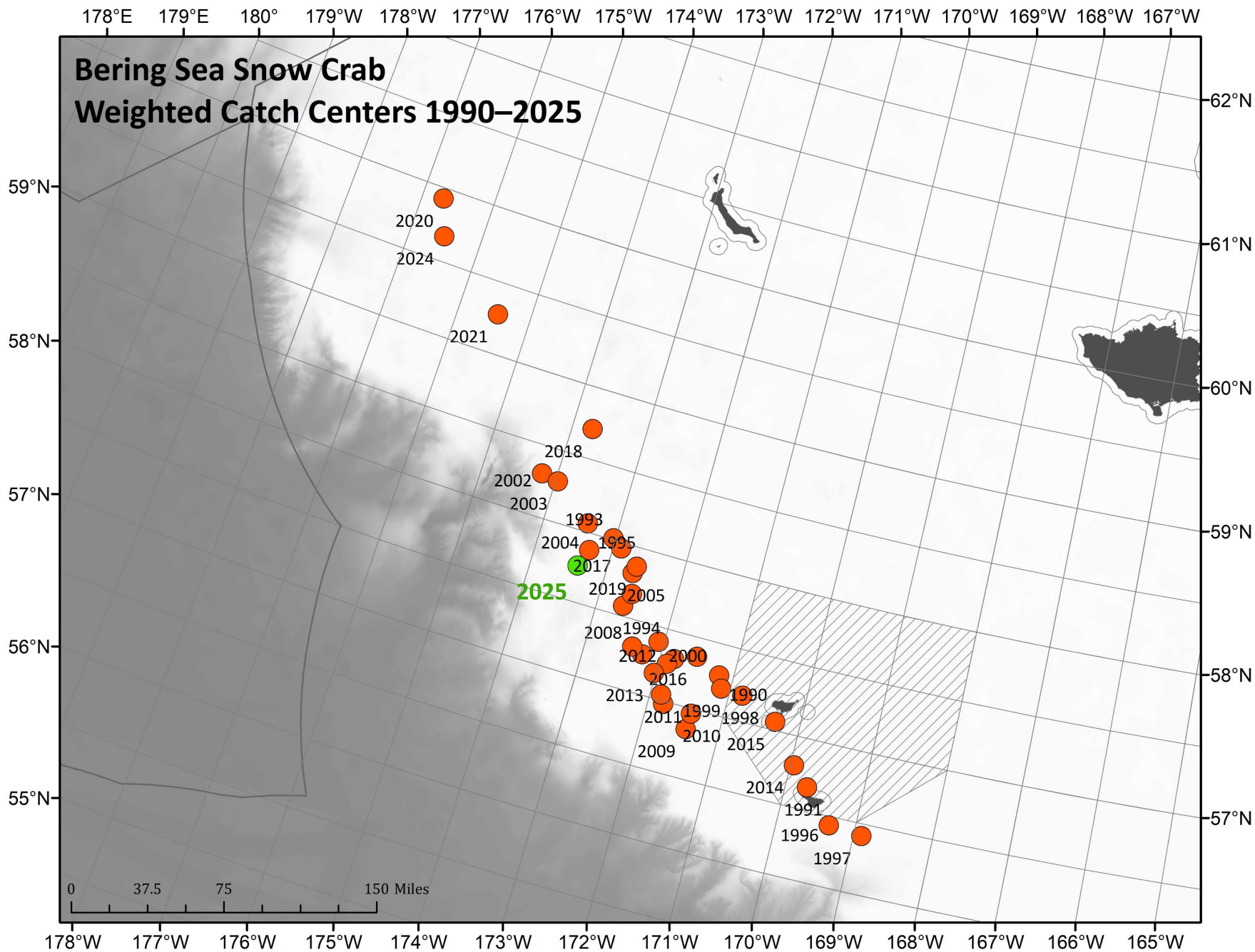
Bering Sea Snow Crab 2025/26 Directed Fishery

Harvest (pounds)

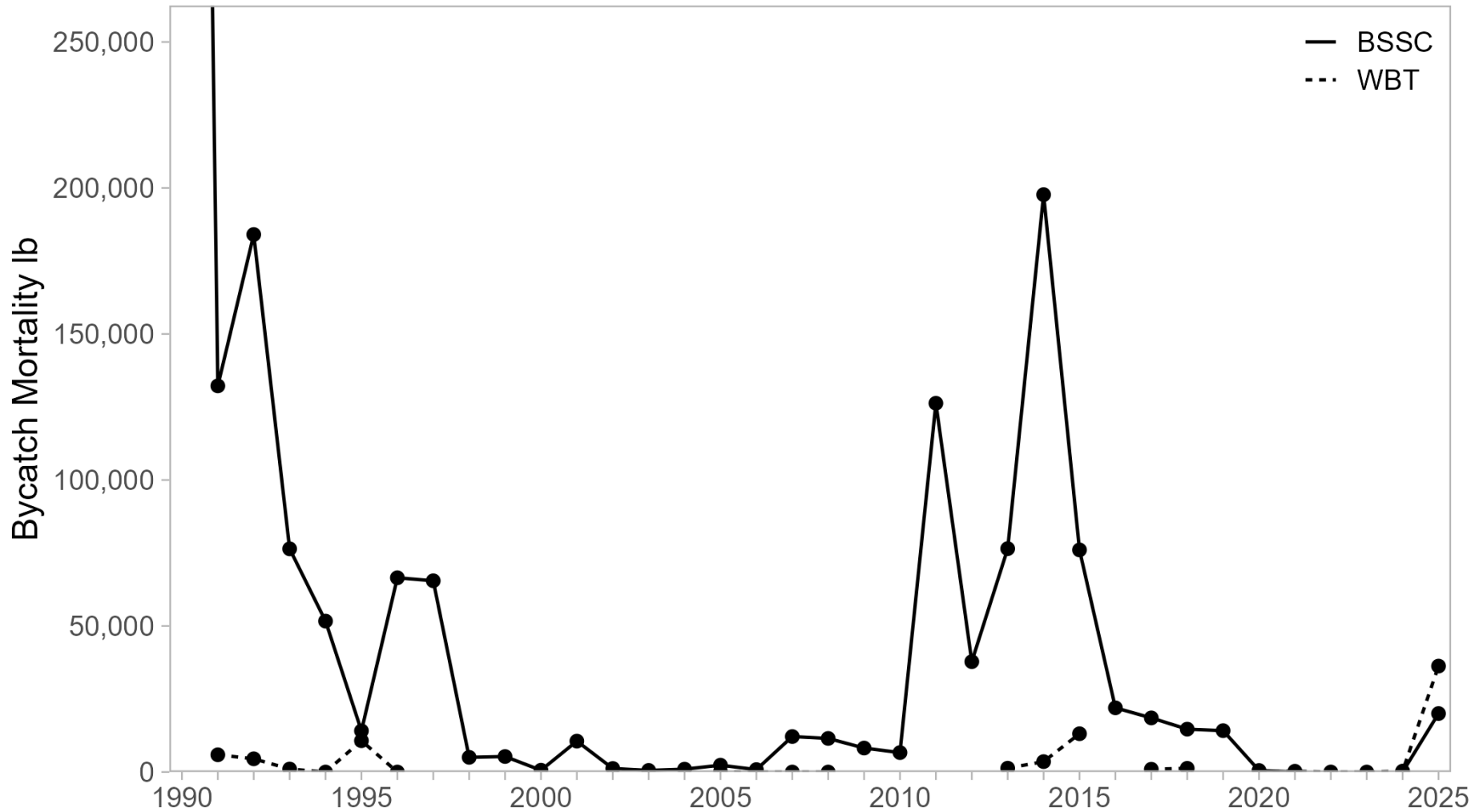


CPUE (4-inch male/pot)





Female Bycatch Mortality

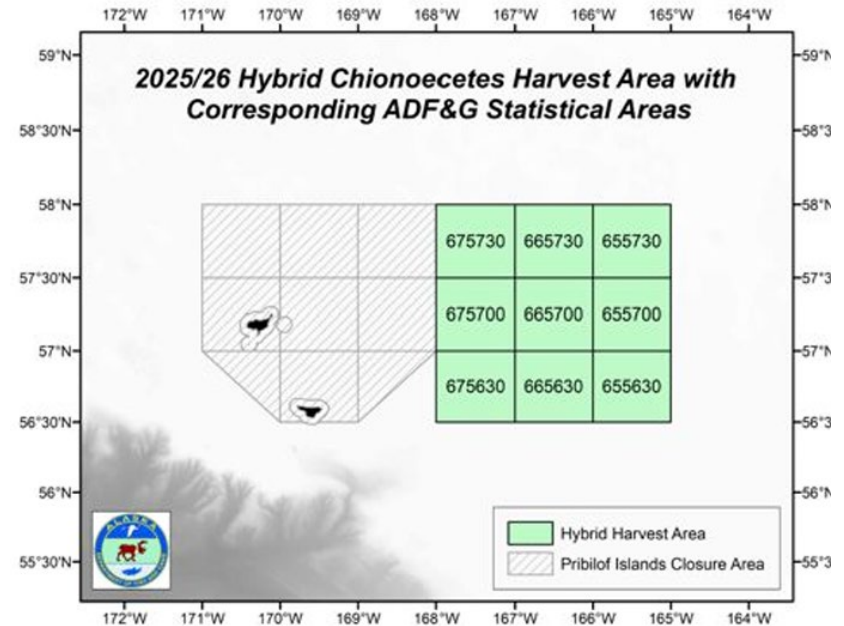


Hybrids

BSSC TAC = 9.3 mil lb

- Base = 8.3 mil lb
- Hybrid opportunity = 1 mil lb

Encouraged extra 1 mil lb to be targeted in area of high hybrid abundance (based on 2025 survey)



Regulatory species ID:

Bairdi (Tanner crab)



Opilio (snow crab)



Everything that's not Bairdi, including **vast majority of hybrids**

Chionoecetes Crab Quick Reference Guide

The legal definitions of Tanner (*C. bairdi*) and snow (*C. opilio*) crab are in regulation 5 AAC 35.521.

A *Chionoecetes* crab with both eyes completely red in color AND with the margin of the upper mouth (also referred to as the upper teeth or epistomal margin) notched at two points with angular V-shaped cuts forming an "M" shape is, by legal definition, a Tanner crab; all others are legally snow crab.

TANNER CRAB - *C. bairdi*

Upper Mouth or Epistomal Margin

These are M-shaped.

Eye Color

These eyes are completely red.

SNOW CRAB - *C. opilio*

Upper Mouth or Epistomal Margin

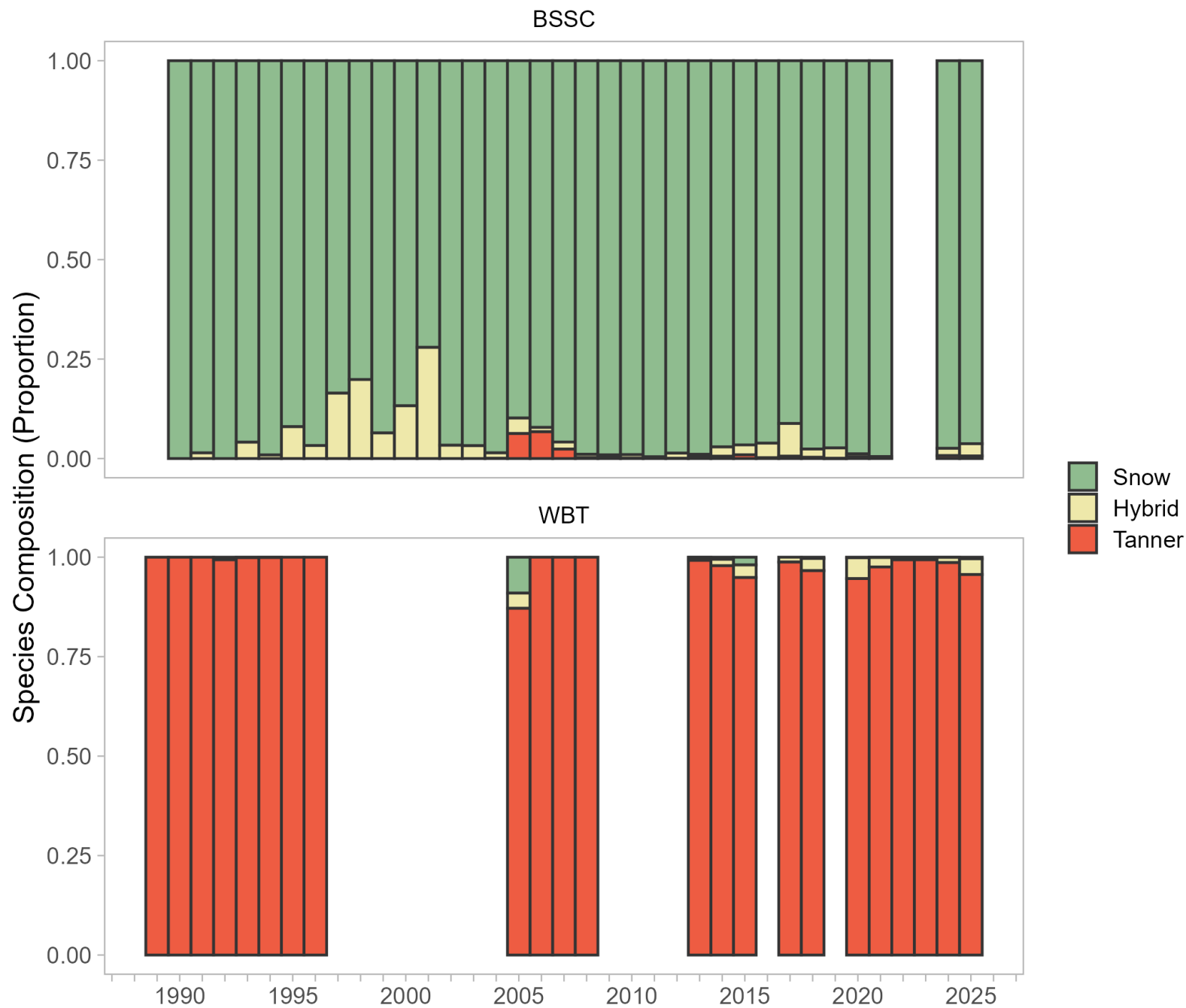
These are NOT M-shaped.

Eye Color

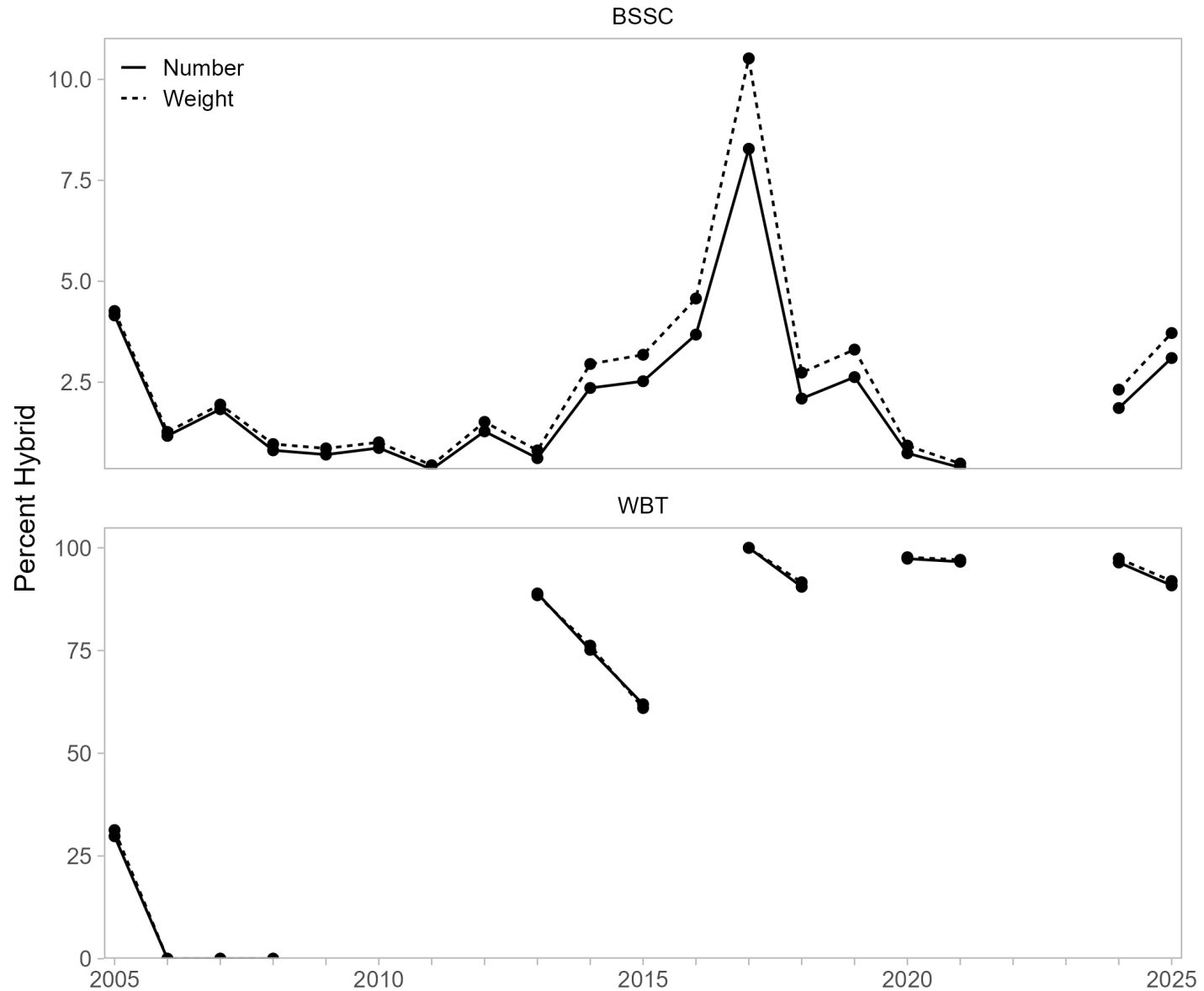
These eyes are NOT completely red.

This guide is not intended to provide definitive biological identification, but instead allow for consistent application of the regulations.

(Rev. 09/2016)



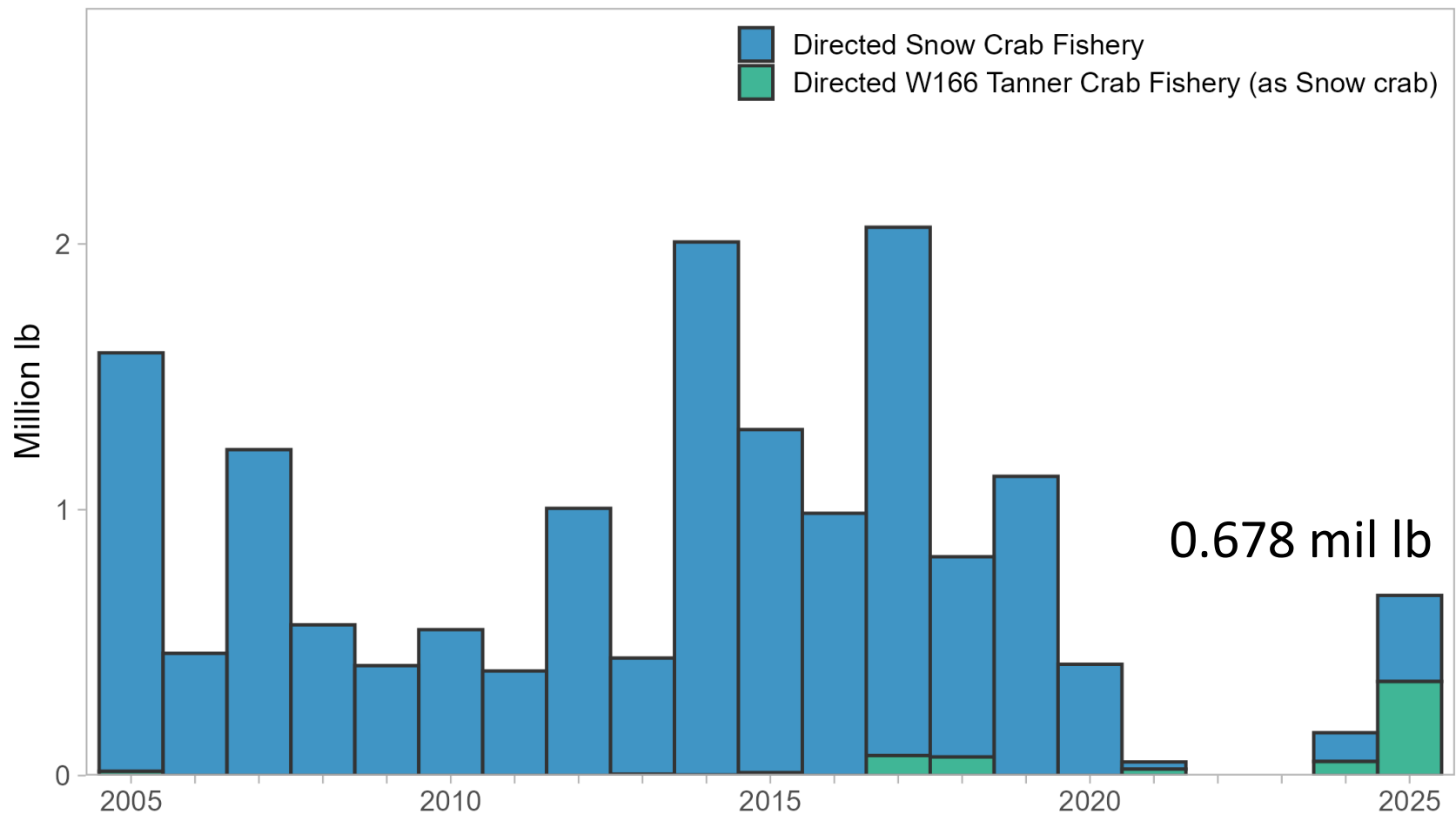
'Non-Tanner' (Snow + Hybrid)



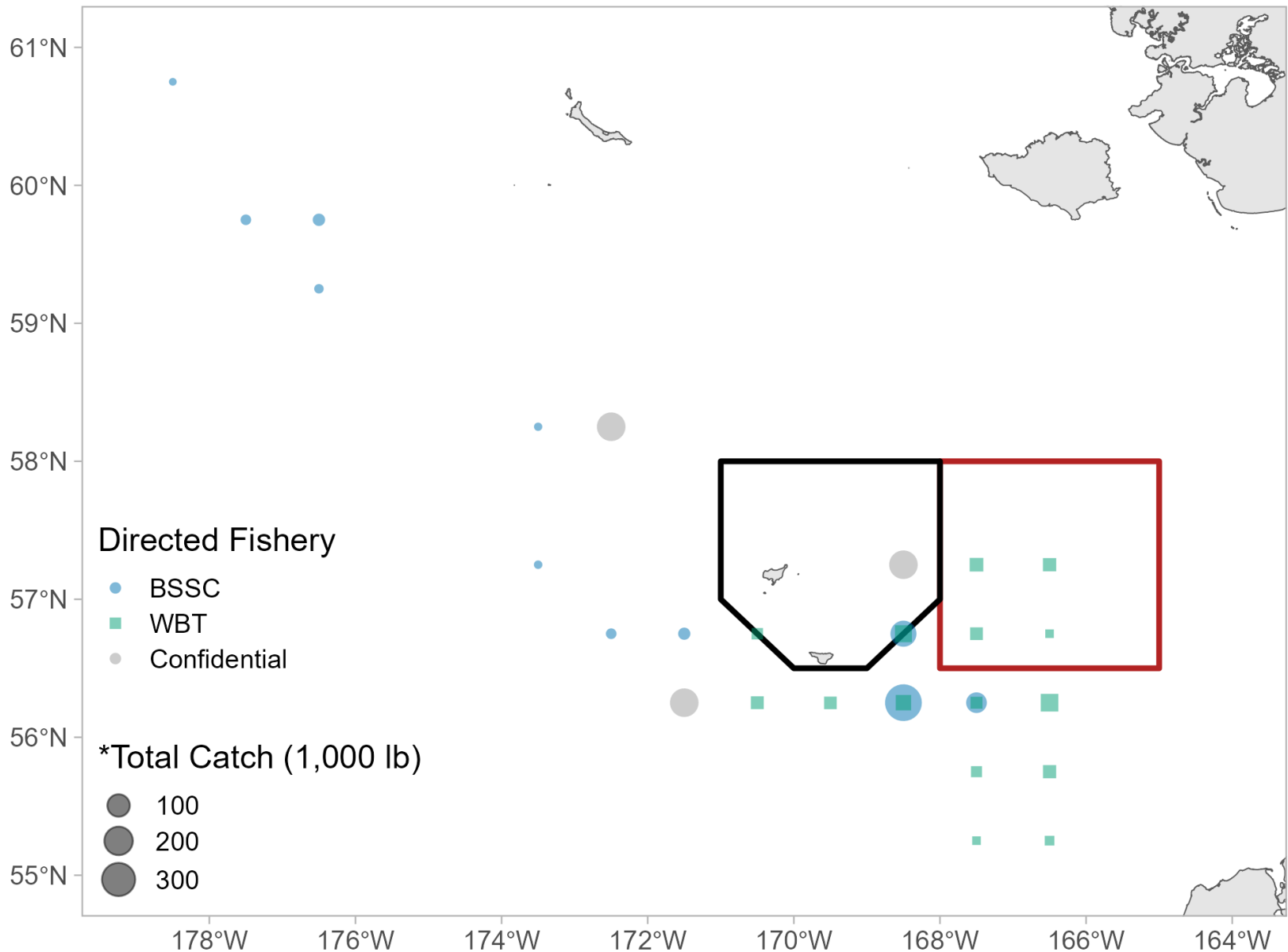
Estimated Hybrid Retained Catch

Simplifying assumption:

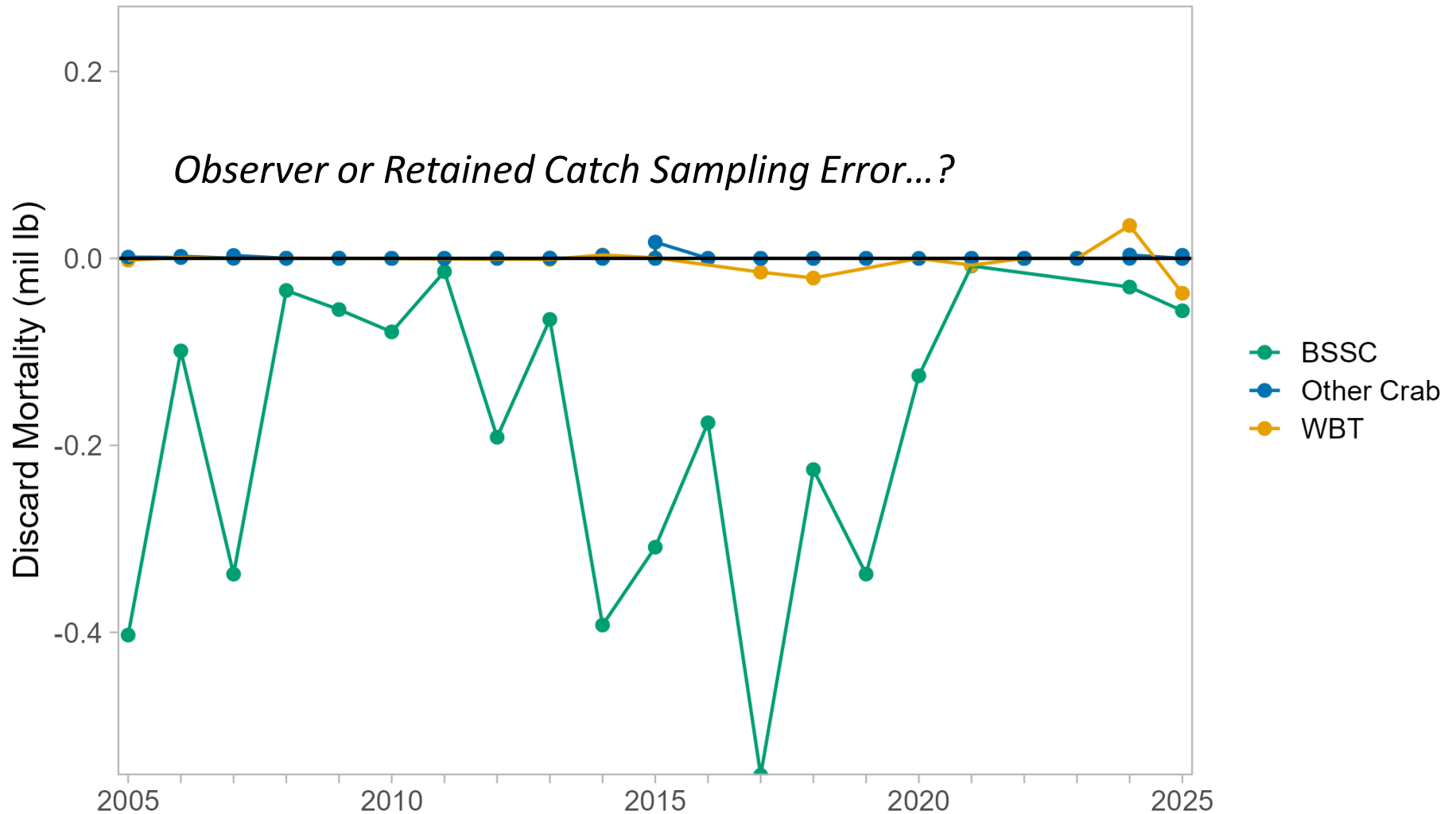
- **ALL** biological ID hybrids are retained as snow crab (i.e., do not meet regulatory ID of Tanner crab)



Observer Hybrid Encounters

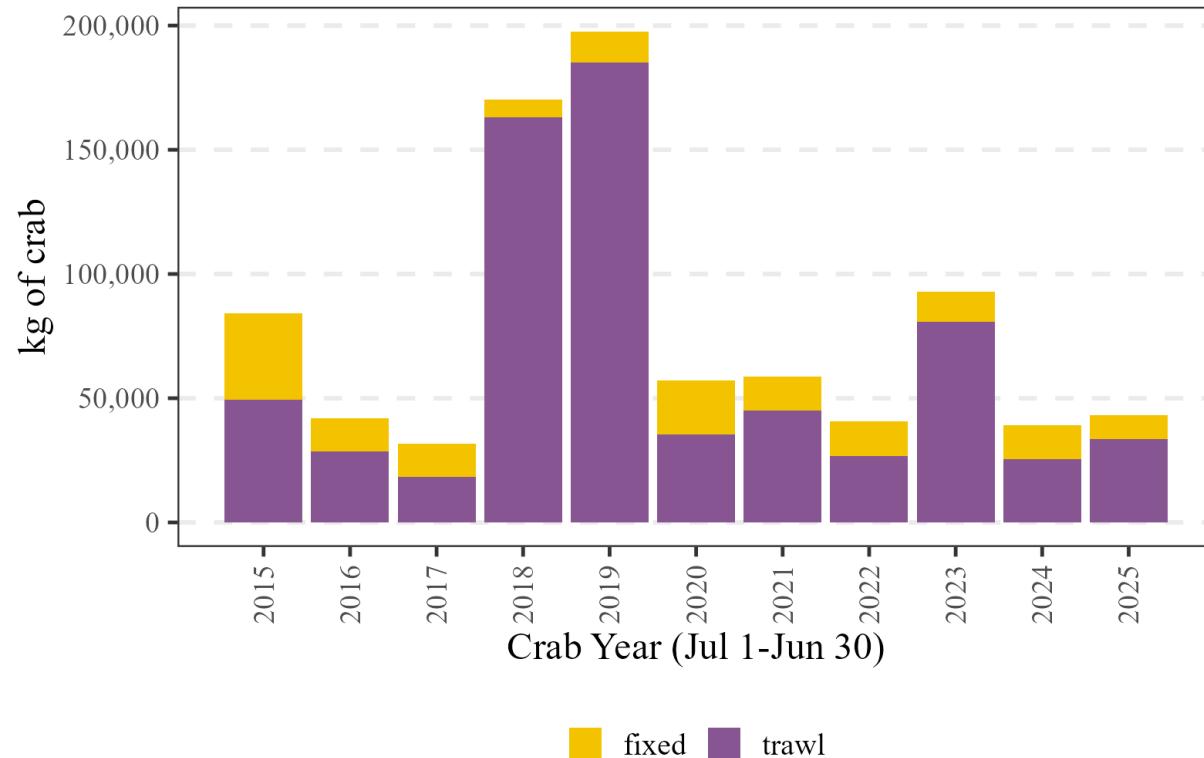
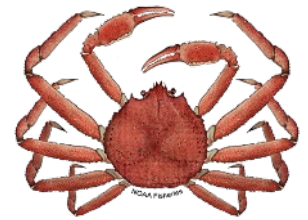


Estimated Hybrid Discard Mortality



- Pot and hook-and-line Pacific cod fishing accounts for most BSS bycatch in the fixed gear category.
- Hook-and-line Pacific cod fishing is spread out throughout the stock area.
- Pot Pacific cod fishing is concentrated on the north side of Unimak Island to Port Moller.

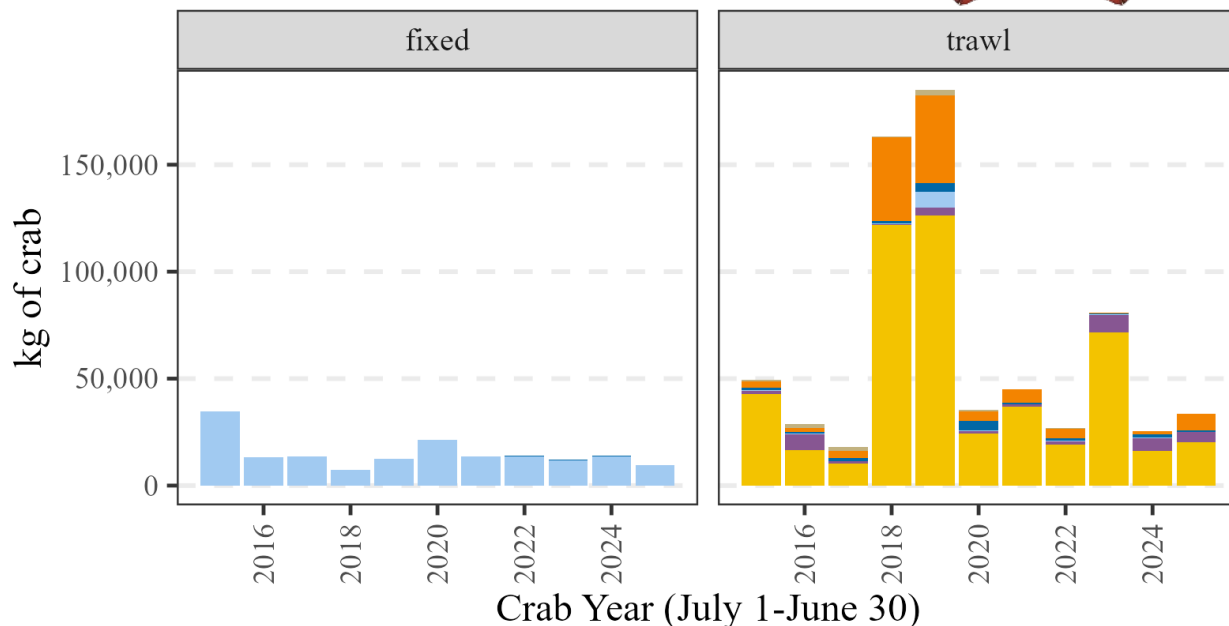
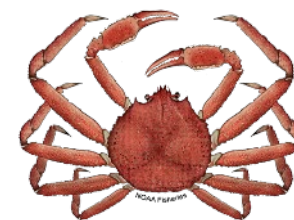
Bering Sea snow crab
Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries



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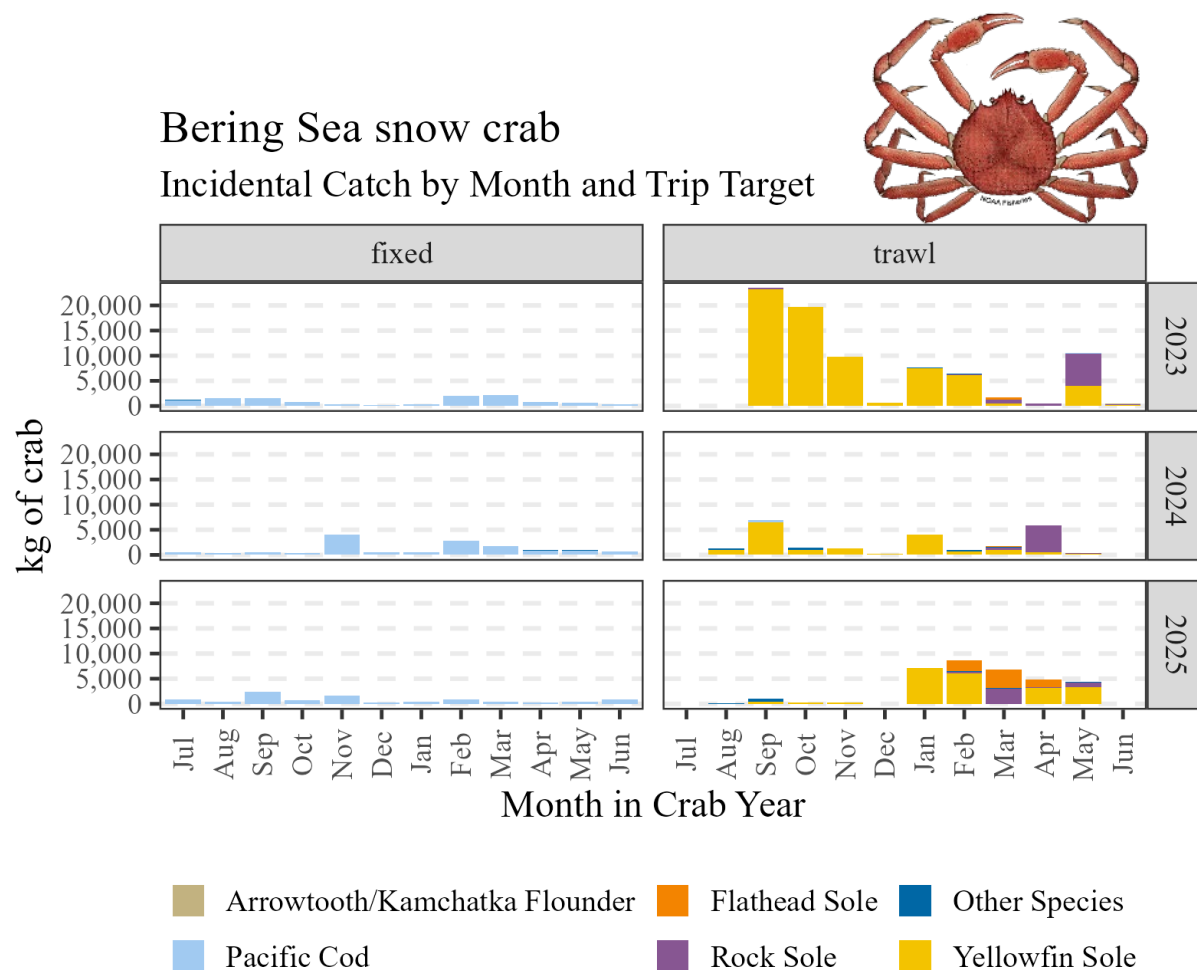
- 2018/19 and 2019/20 increased BSS bycatch in the yellowfin fishery was due mainly to increased yellowfin sole fishing in the area above the Pribilof Islands.

Bering Sea snow crab Incidental Catch by Trip Target



*Other species includes: Atka mackerel, Greenland turbot, other flatfish, plaice, pollock, halibut, rockfish, & sablefish

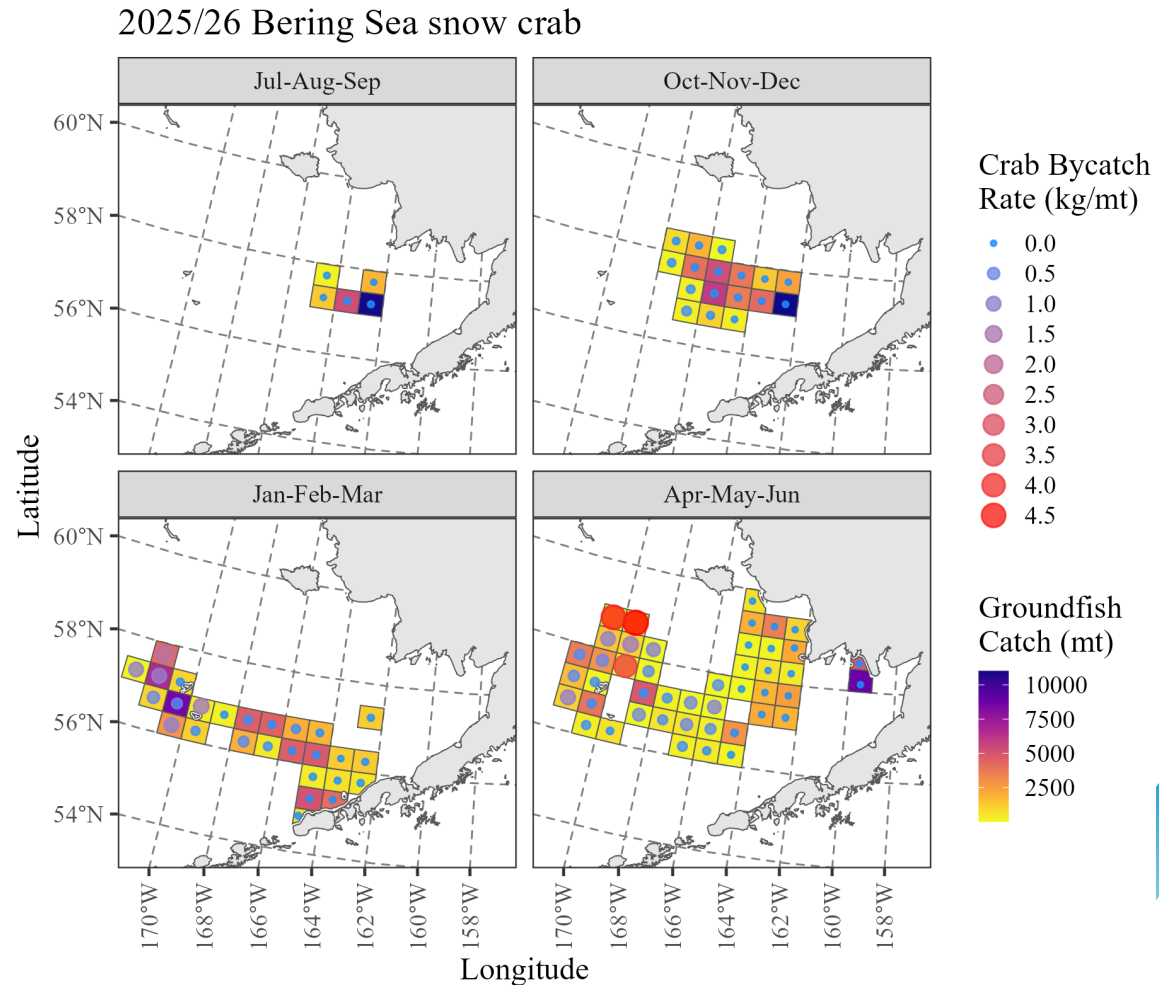
- Bycatch of BSS in trawl gear typically occurs throughout the crab year.
- Majority of yellowfin sole harvest shifted to winter/spring

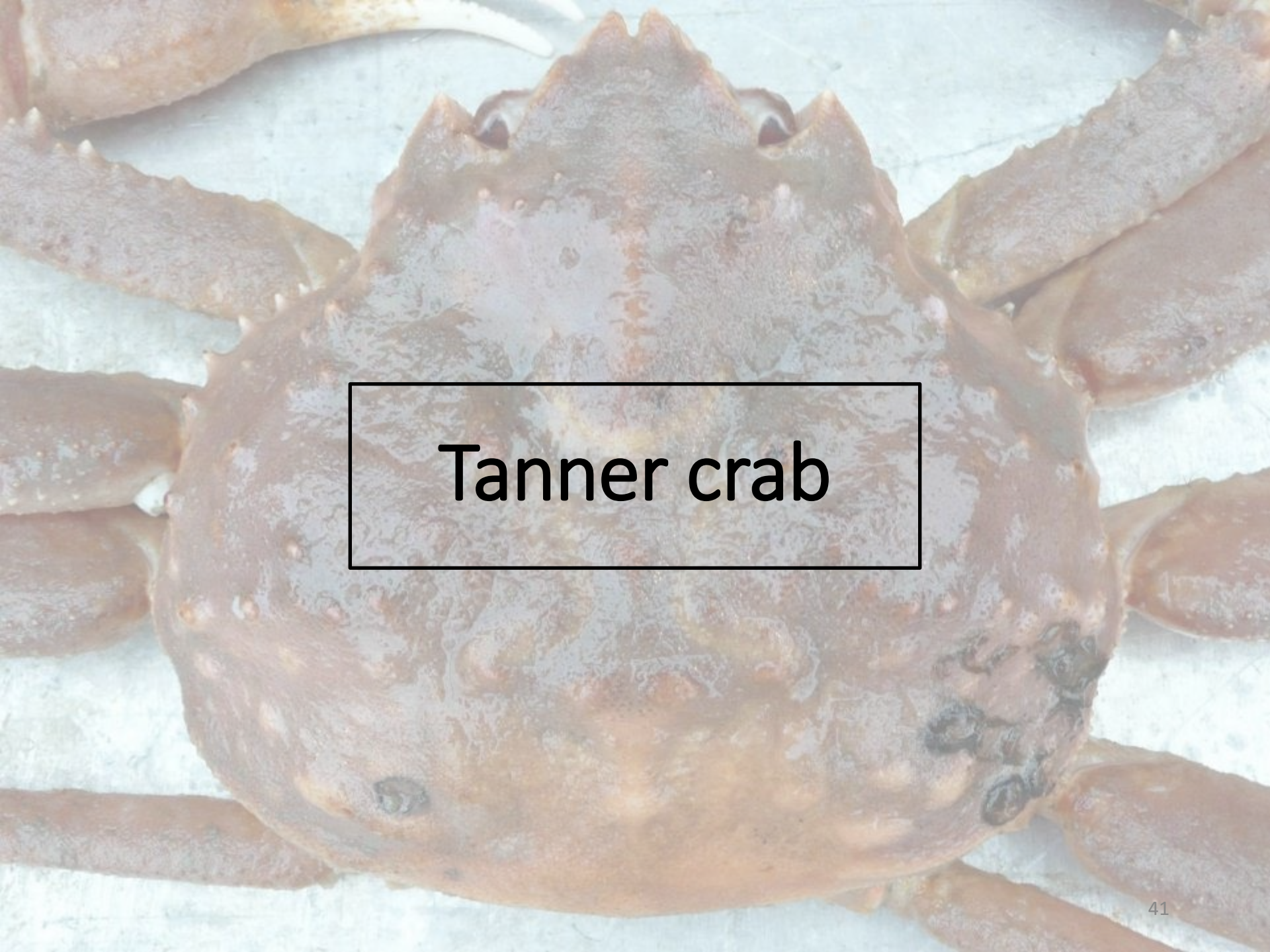


*Other species includes: Atka mackerel, Greenland turbot, other flatfish, plaice, pollock, halibut, rockfish, & sablefish

2025/26 Average Rate (kg crab/mt of Groundfish) in the Flathead, Rock, and Yellowfin Soles NPT Fisheries by ADF&G Statistical Area and Months

- Data mapped to stat-area and dots are center of boxes
- Confidential fishing areas excluded





Tanner crab

W166 Tanner (WBT) 2025/26

TAC = 10.12 mil lb

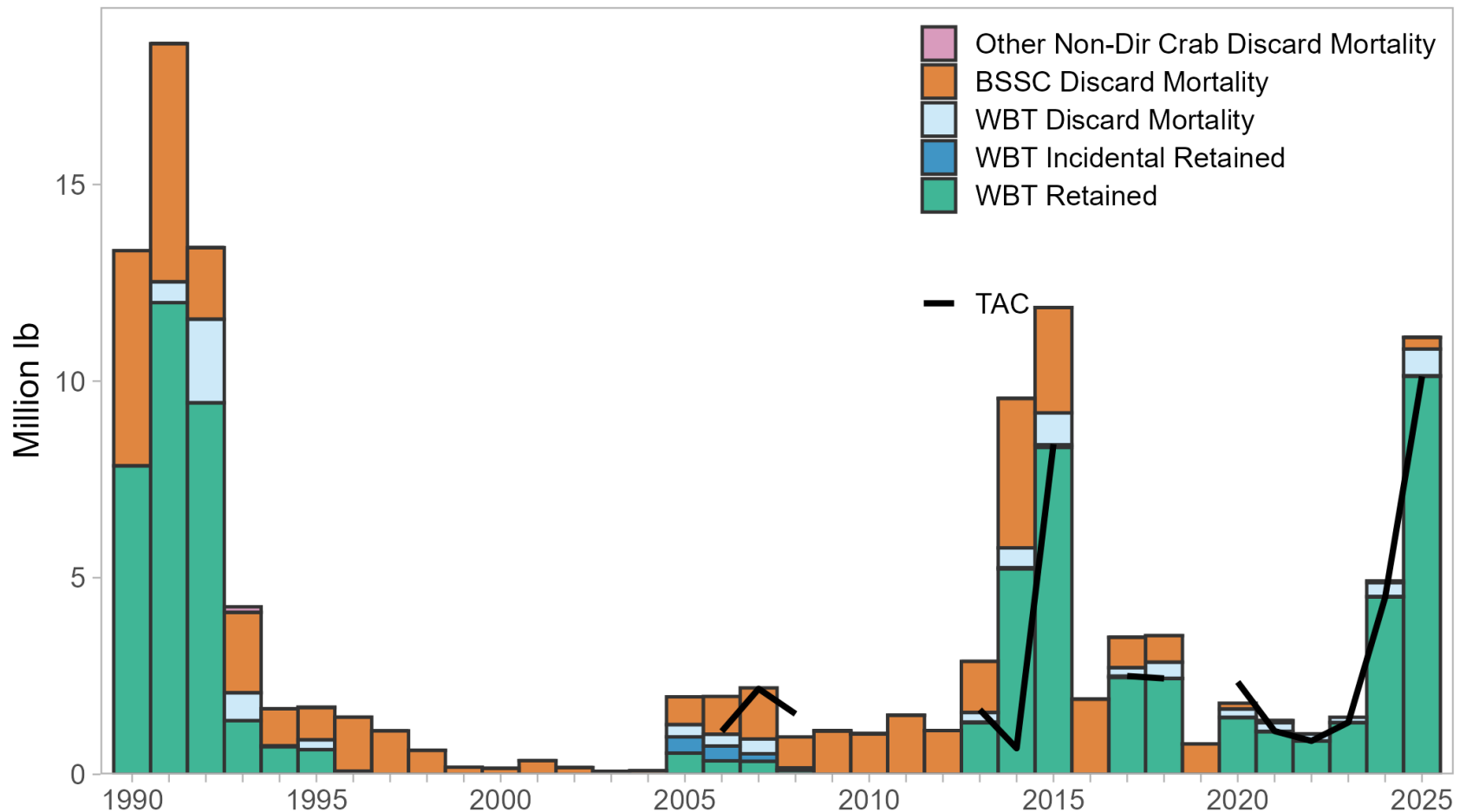
Directed Retained = 10.122 mil lb

Incidental Retained = 0.017 mil lb

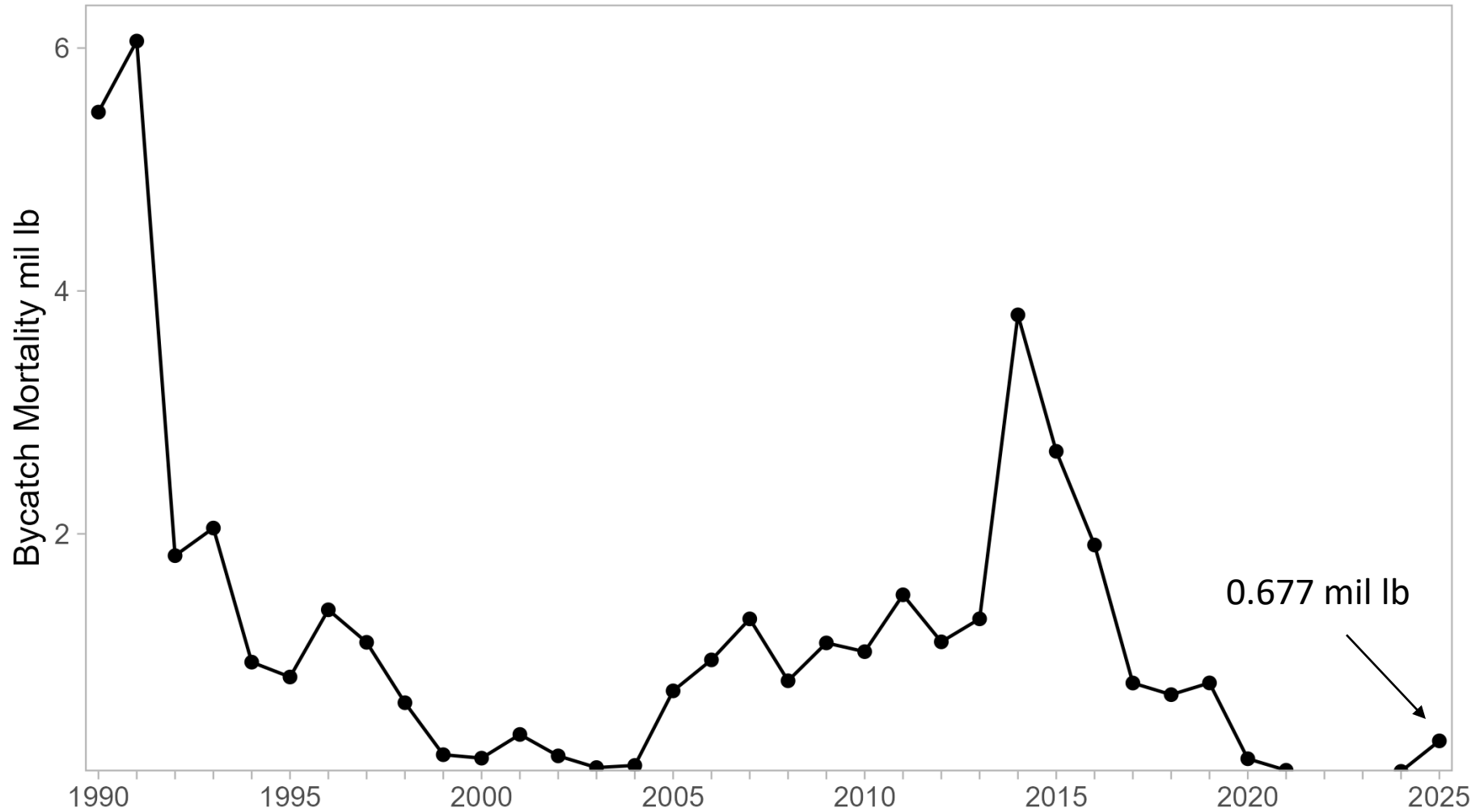
Directed Discard Mortality = 0.295 mil lb

BSSC (Snow crab) Discard Mortality = 0.677 mil lb

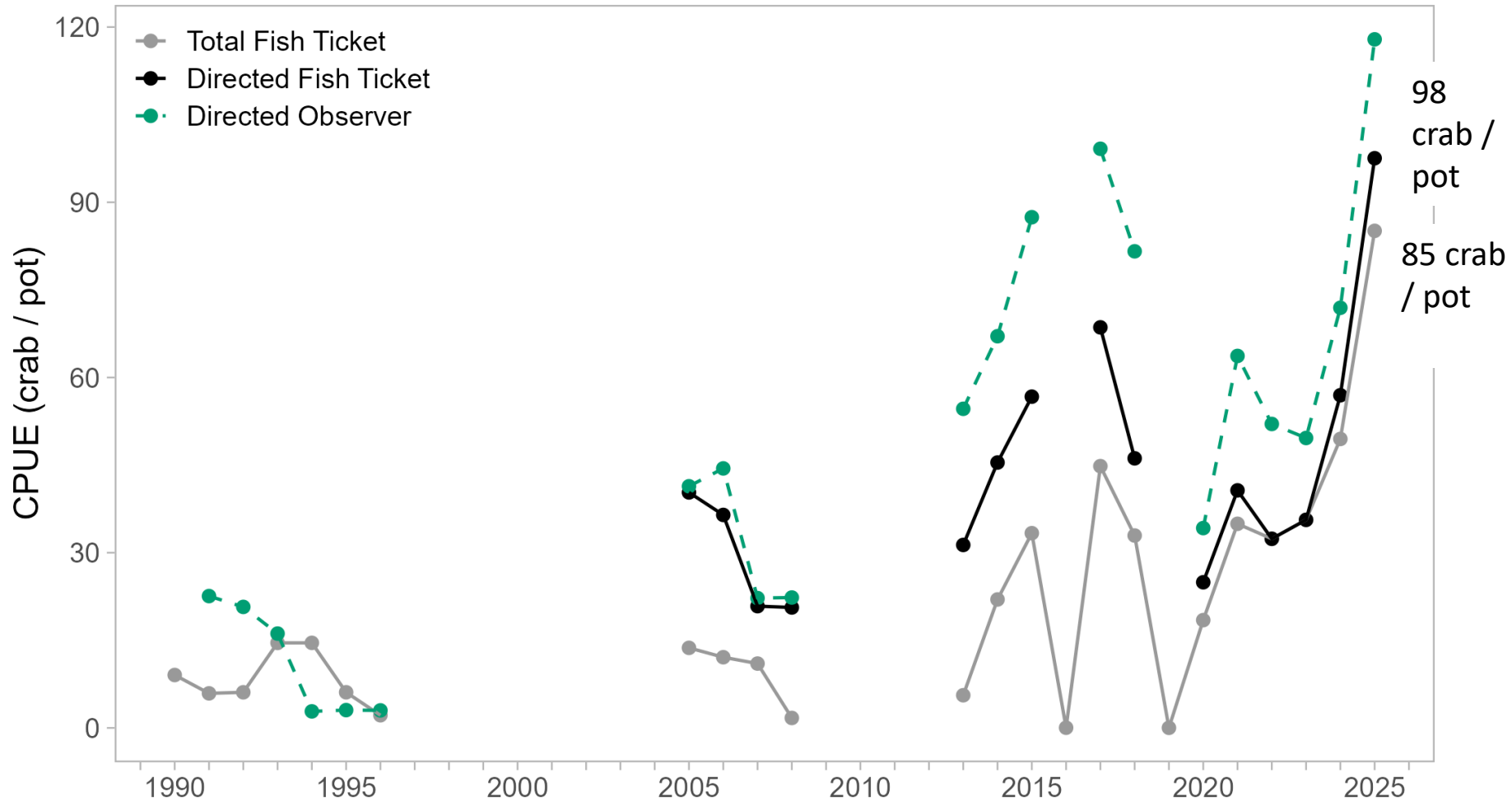
Other Non-Directed Crab Discard Mortality = 11.9 lb



Bycatch Mortality in BSSC



Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE)



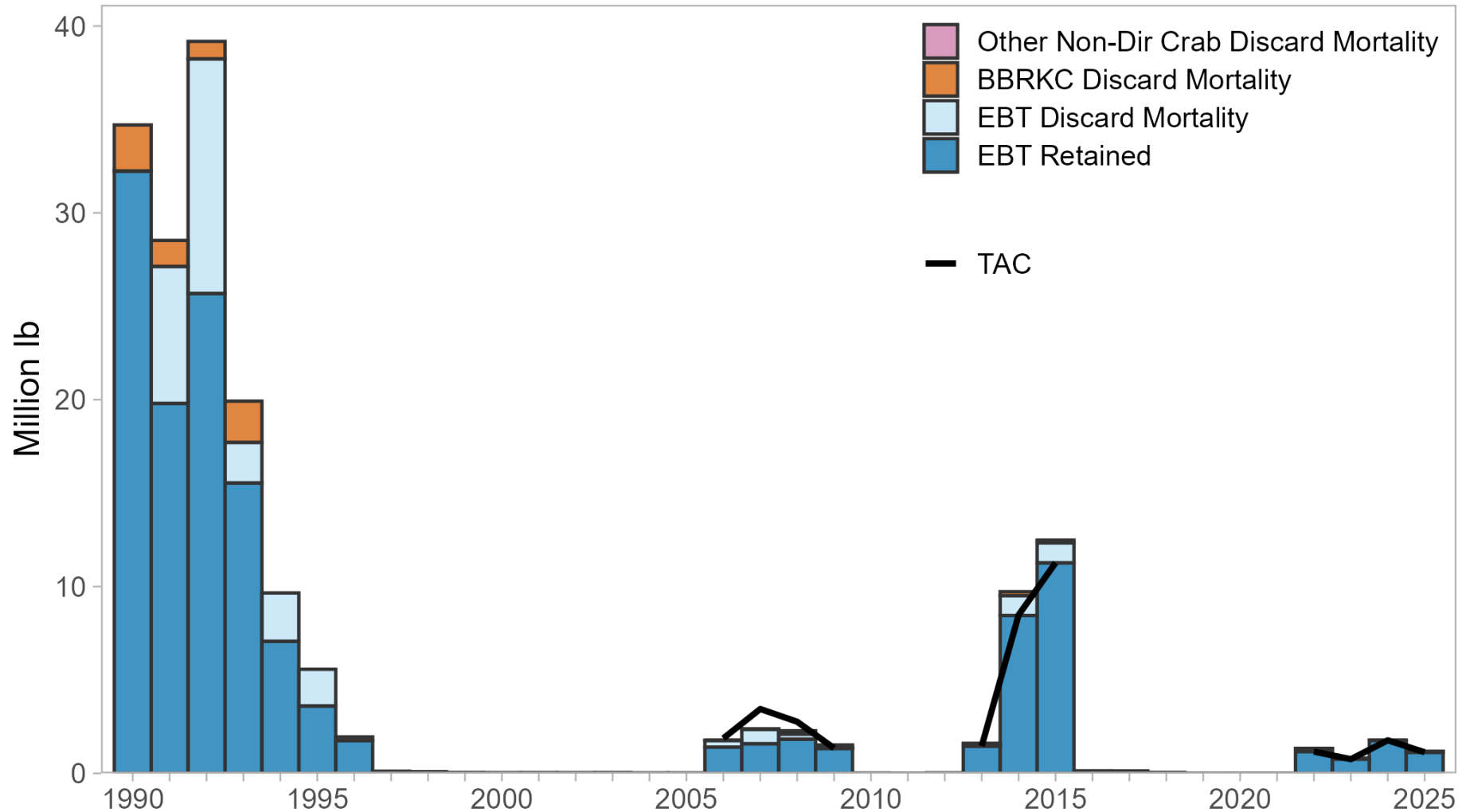
E166 Tanner (EBT) 2025/26

TAC = 1.13 mil lb

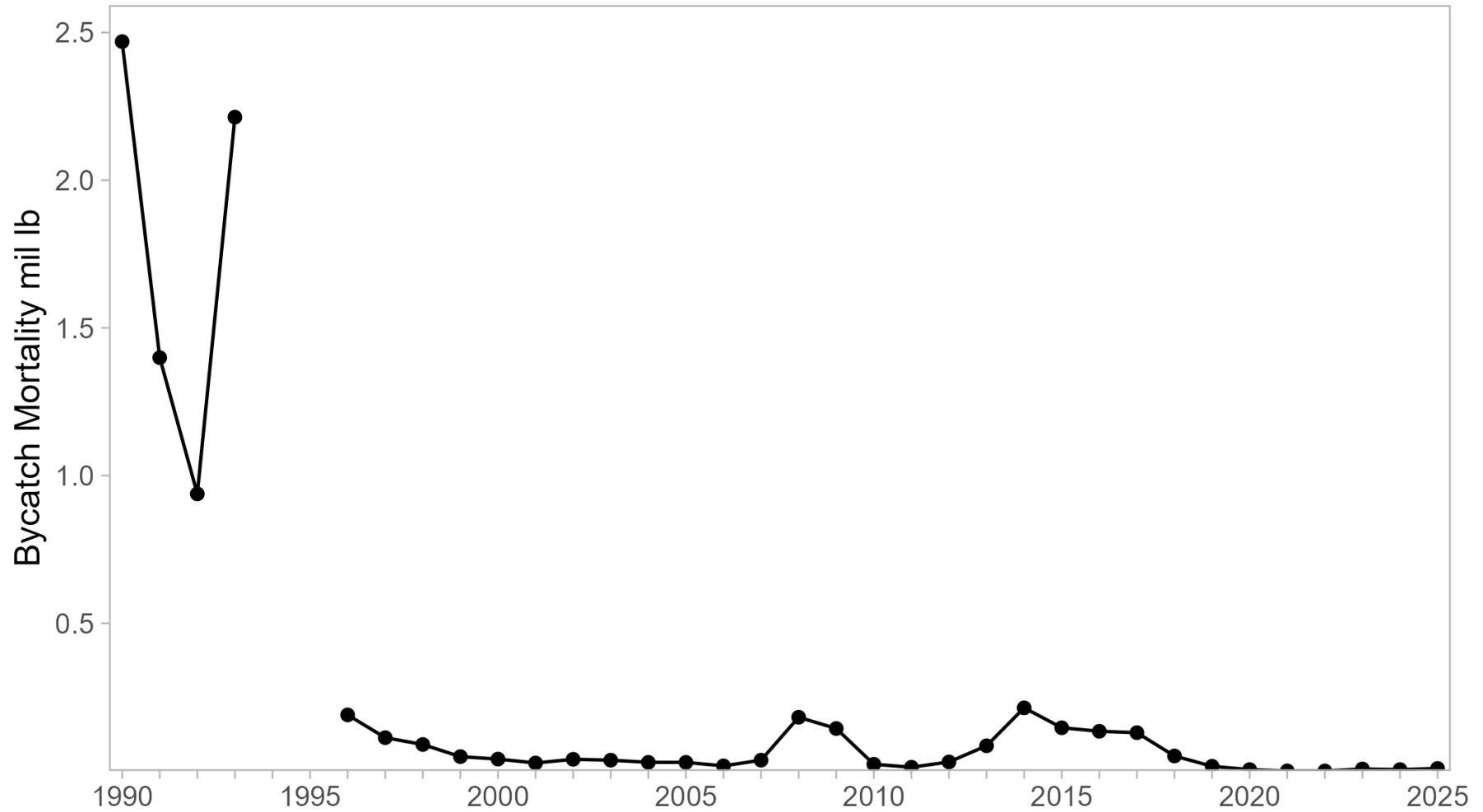
Retained = 1.124 mil lb

Directed Discard Mortality = 44,267 lb

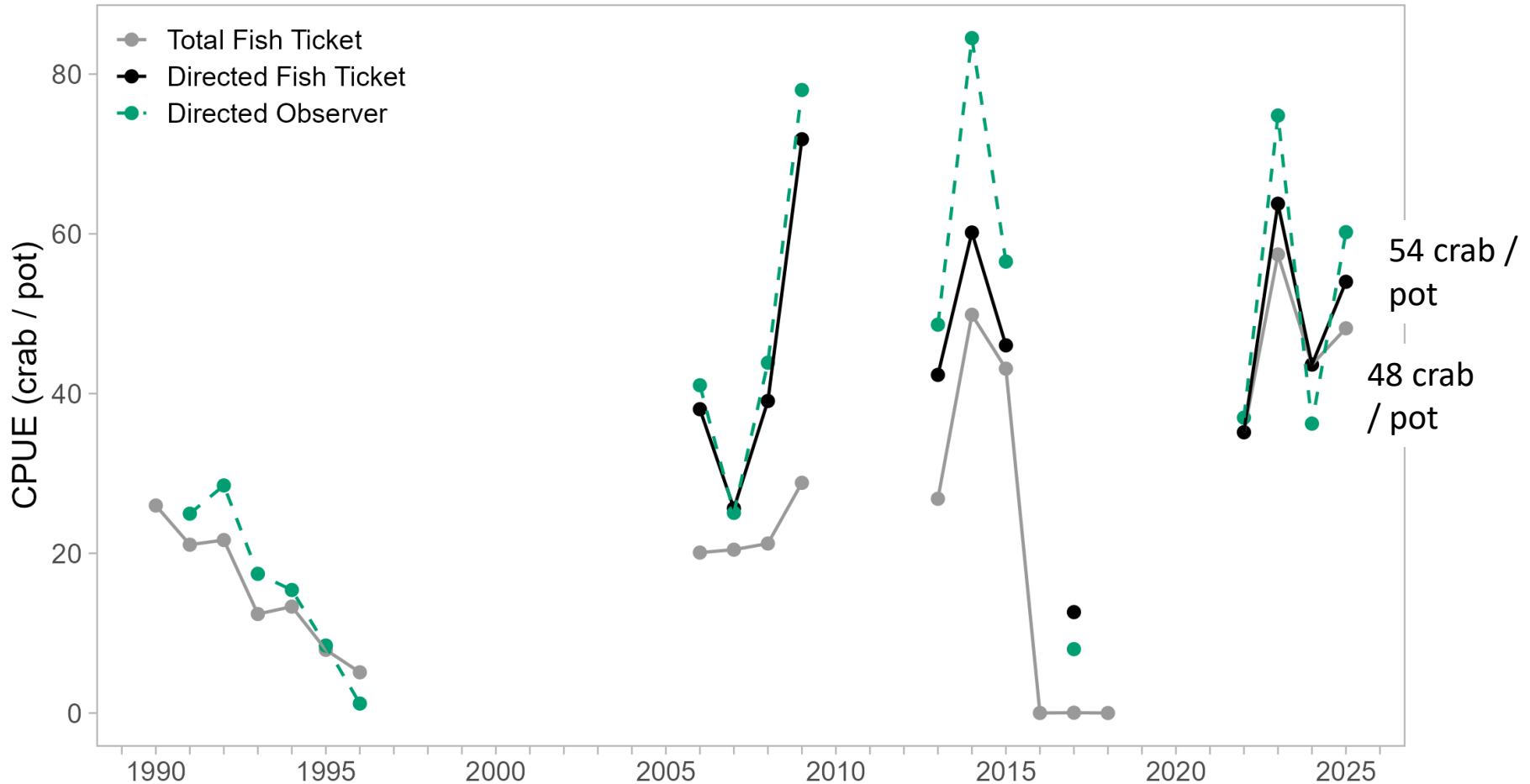
BBRKC Discard Mortality = 8,417 lb



Bycatch Mortality in BBRKC

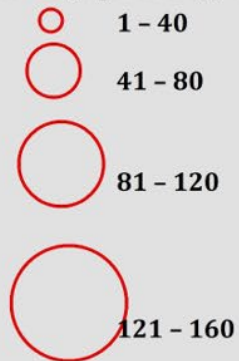


Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE)

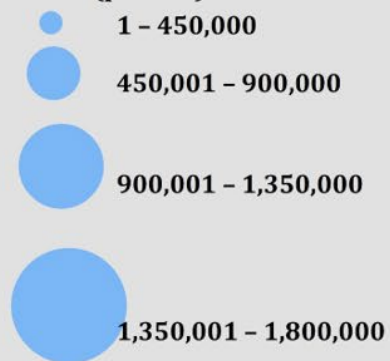


Bering Sea Tanner Crab 2025/26 Directed Fisheries East and West of 166° W. long.

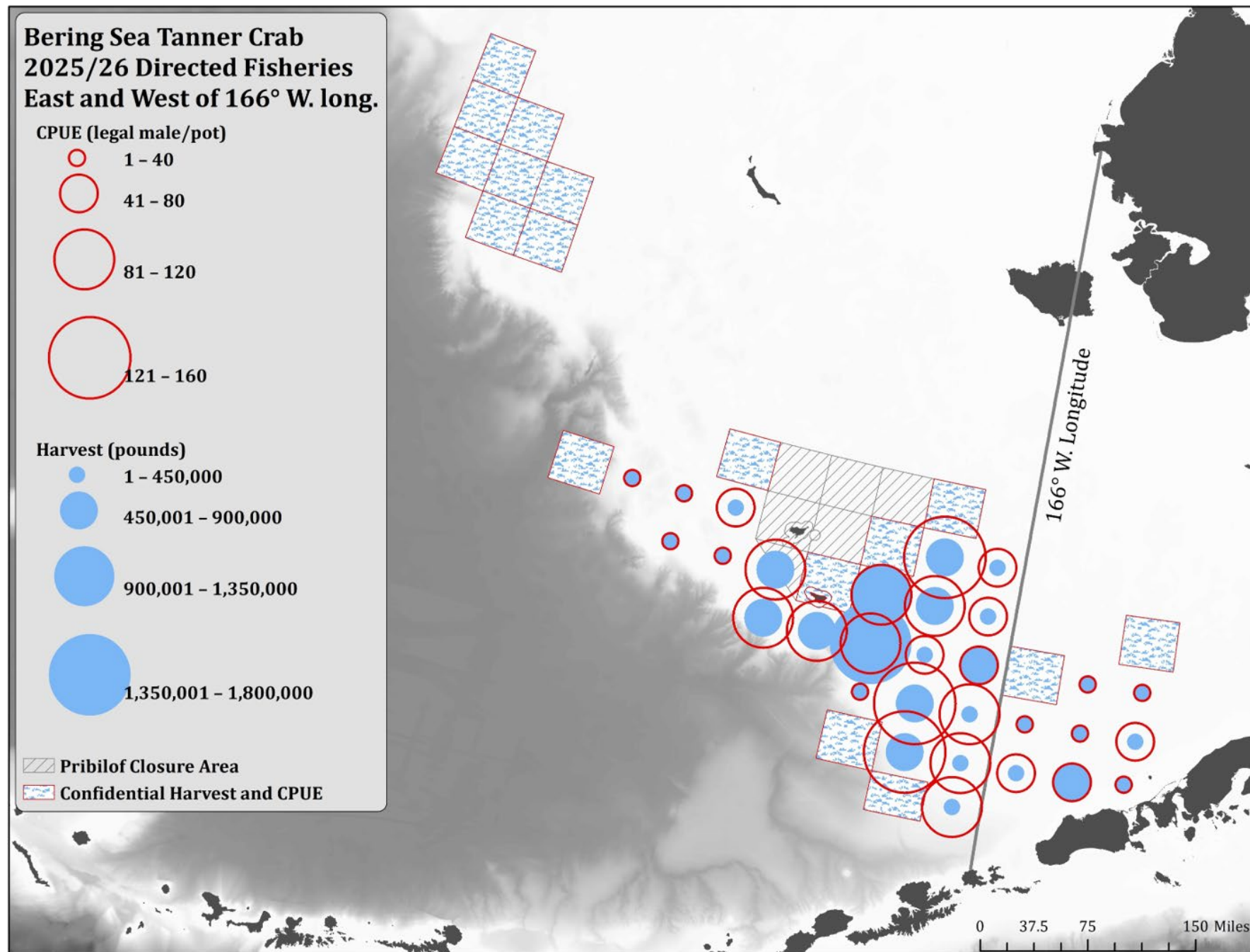
CPUE (legal male/pot)

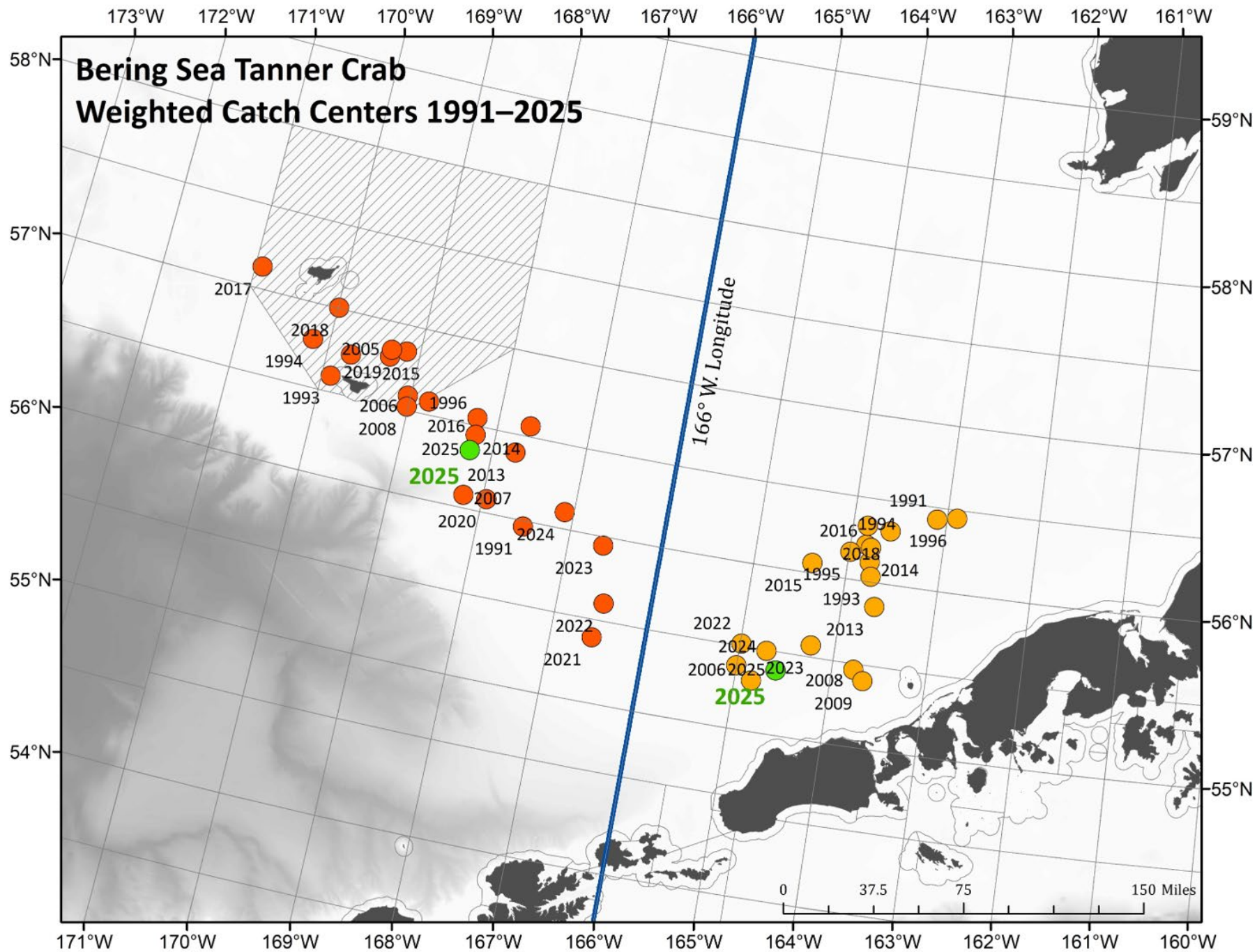


Harvest (pounds)

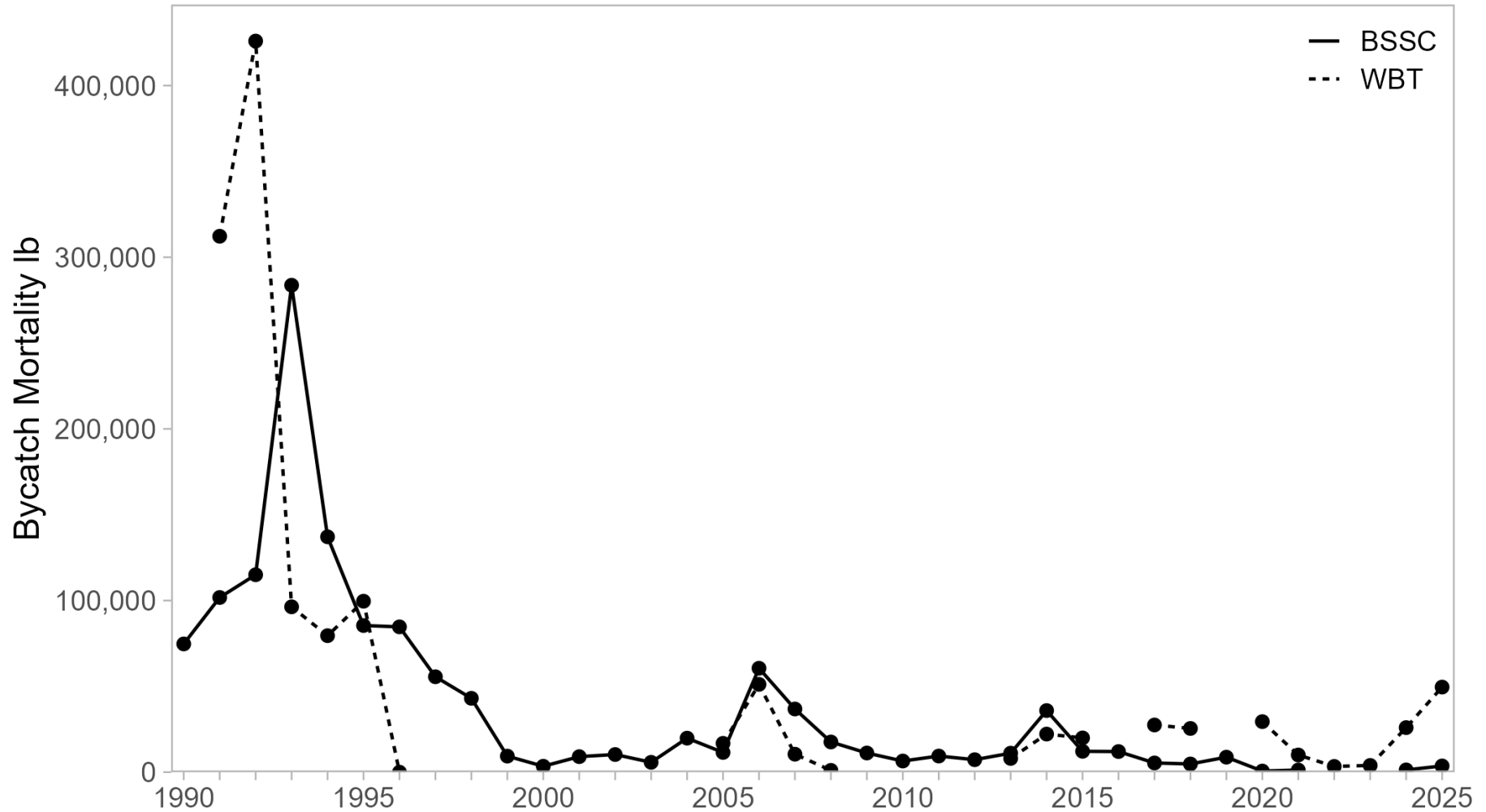


 Pribilof Closure Area
 Confidential Harvest and CPUE

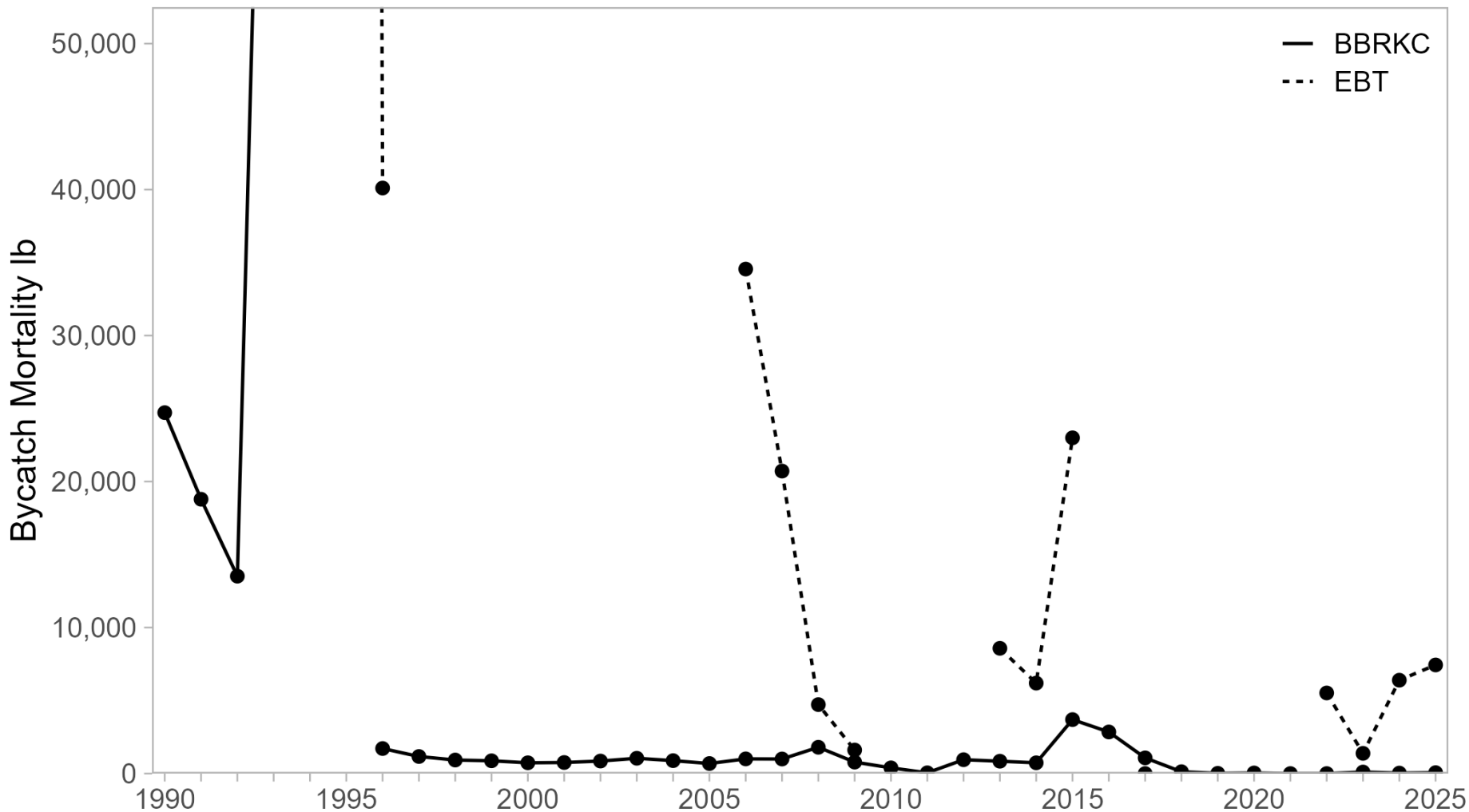


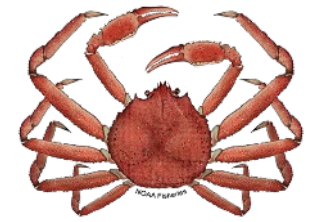


W166 Female Bycatch Mortality



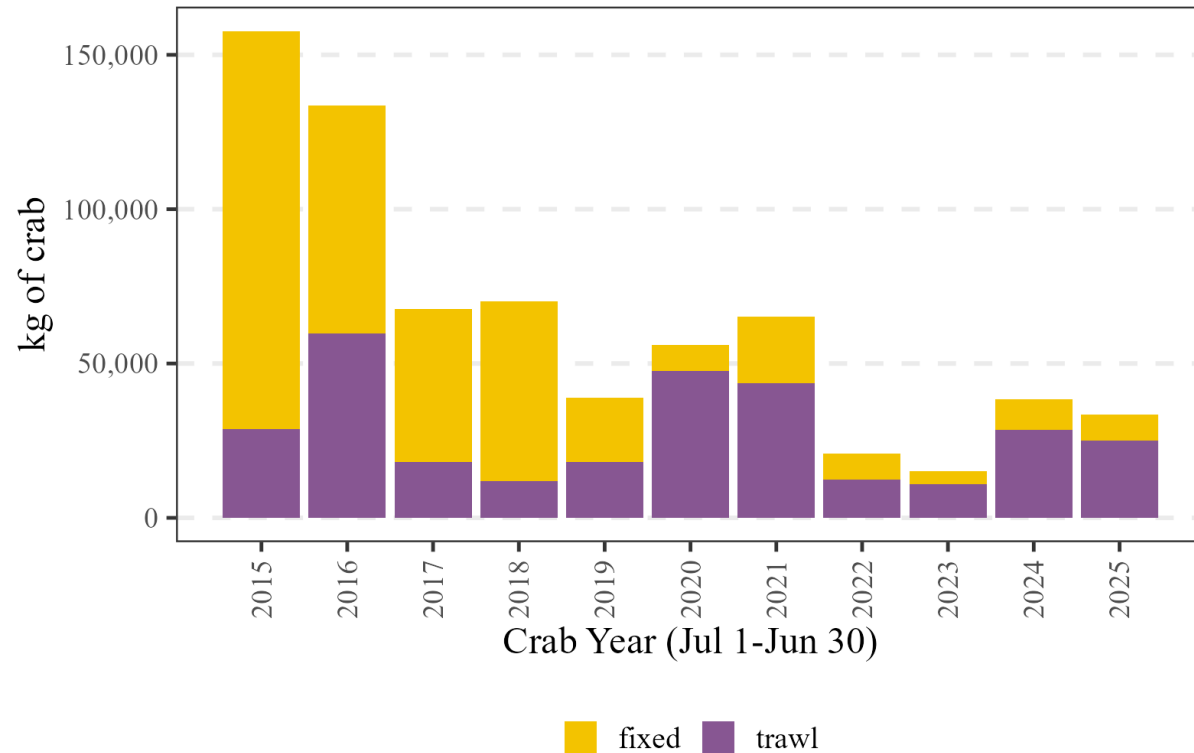
E 166 Female Bycatch Mortality





Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries

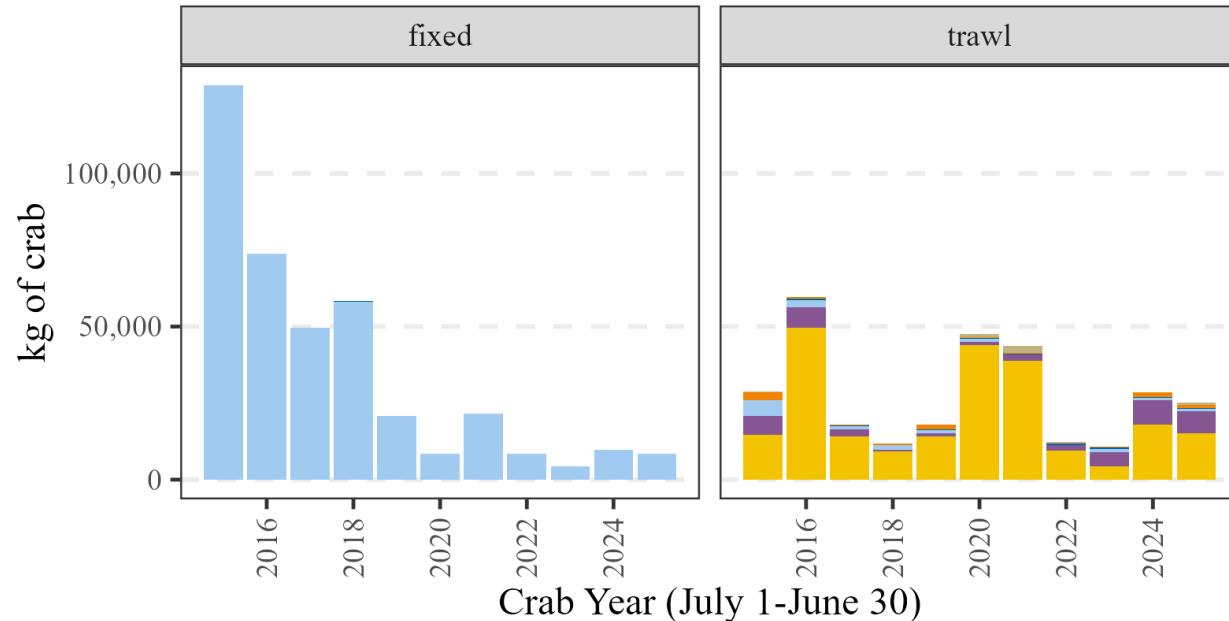
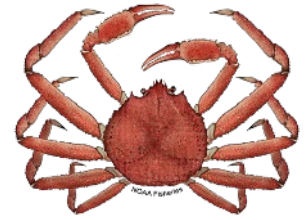
- Pacific cod fishing with pot gear accounts for most EBST bycatch in the fixed gear category.
- Pot Pacific cod fishing is concentrated on the north side of Unimak Island to Port Moller.
- East of 166° W longitude



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- Pacific cod fixed gear bycatch decreasing since 2015.
- Trawl bycatch primarily from yellowfin sole fishery.

Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab Incidental Catch by Trip Target

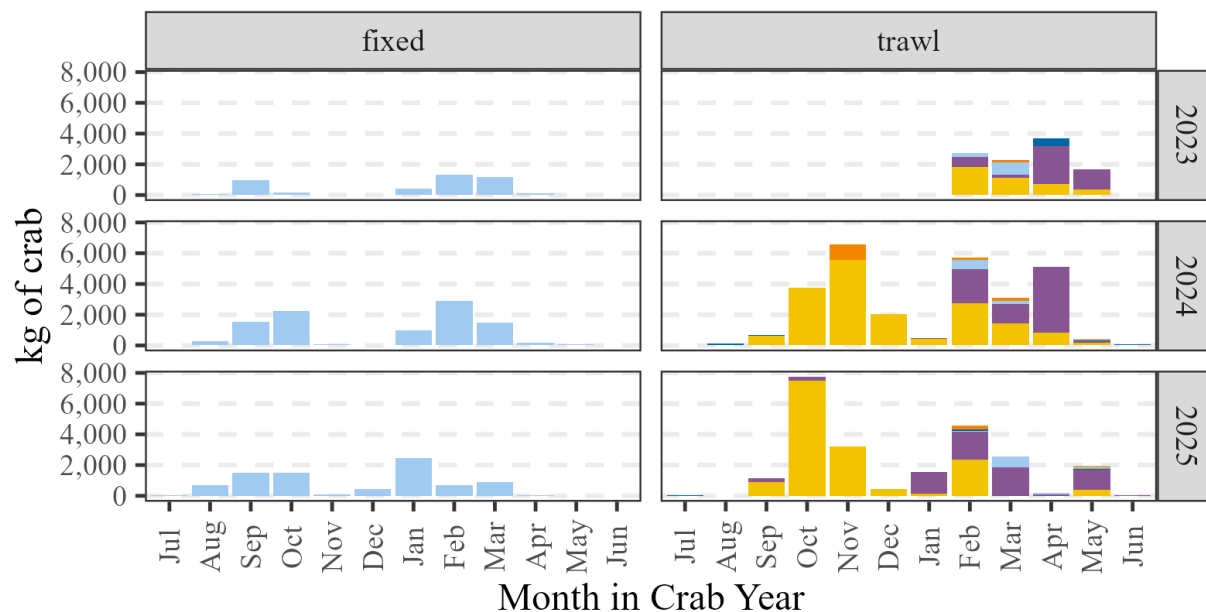
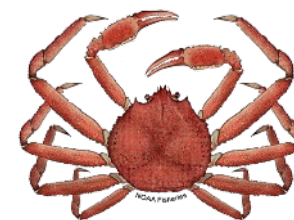


Arrowtooth/Kamchatka Flounder
 Flathead Sole
 Other Species
 Pacific Cod
 Rock Sole
 Yellowfin Sole

*Other species includes: Atka mackerel, Greenland turbot, other flatfish, plaice, pollock, halibut, rockfish, & sablefish

- In 2024/25 and 2025/26 bycatch was highest in Fall during yellowfin sole fishery and winter during rock sole fishery.

Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab Incidental Catch by Month and Trip Target

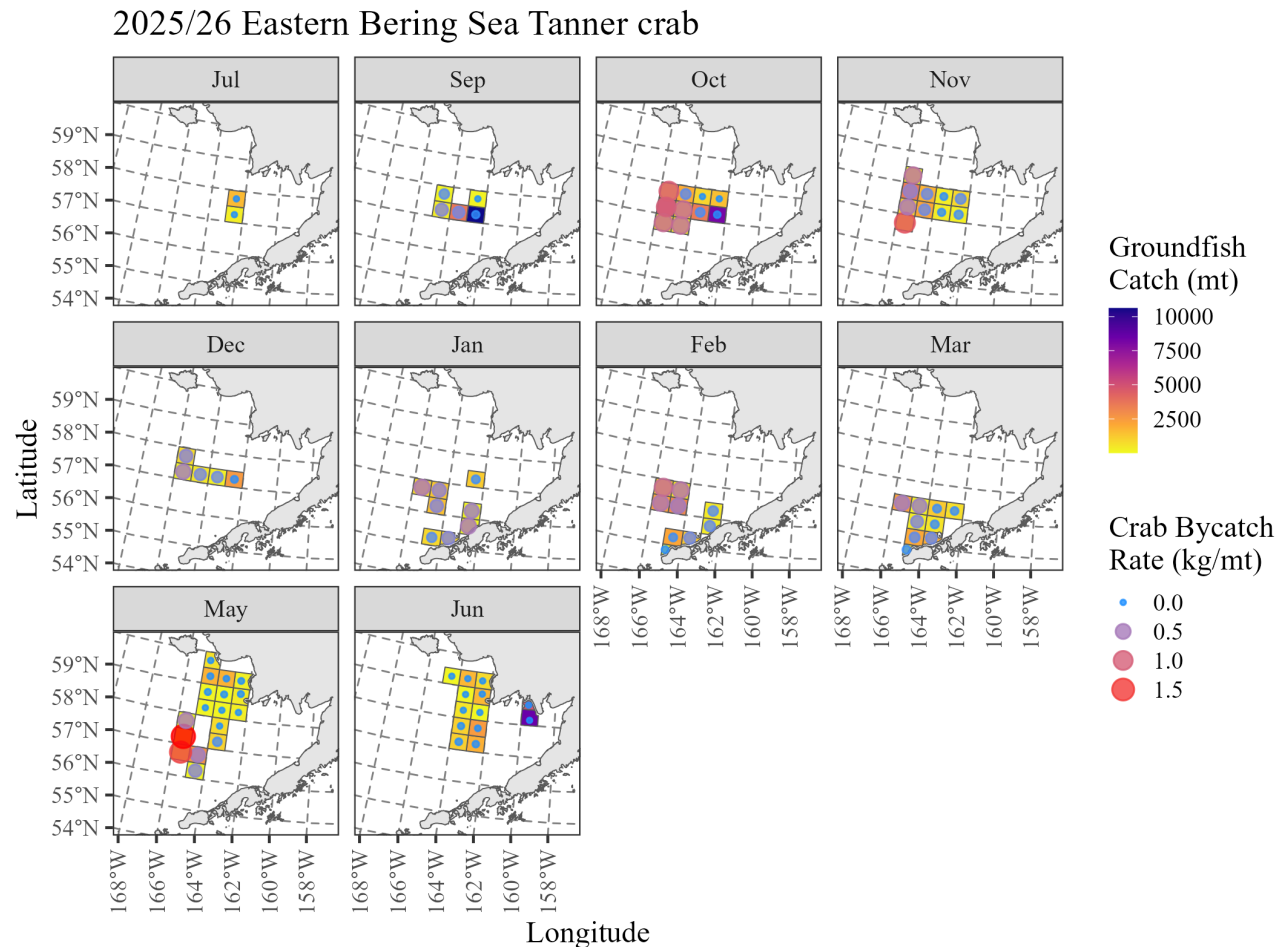


■ Arrowtooth/Kamchatka Flounder
 ■ Flathead Sole
 ■ Other Species
■ Pacific Cod
 ■ Rock Sole
 ■ Yellowfin Sole

*Other species includes: Atka mackerel, Greenland turbot, other flatfish, plaice, pollock, halibut, rockfish, & sablefish

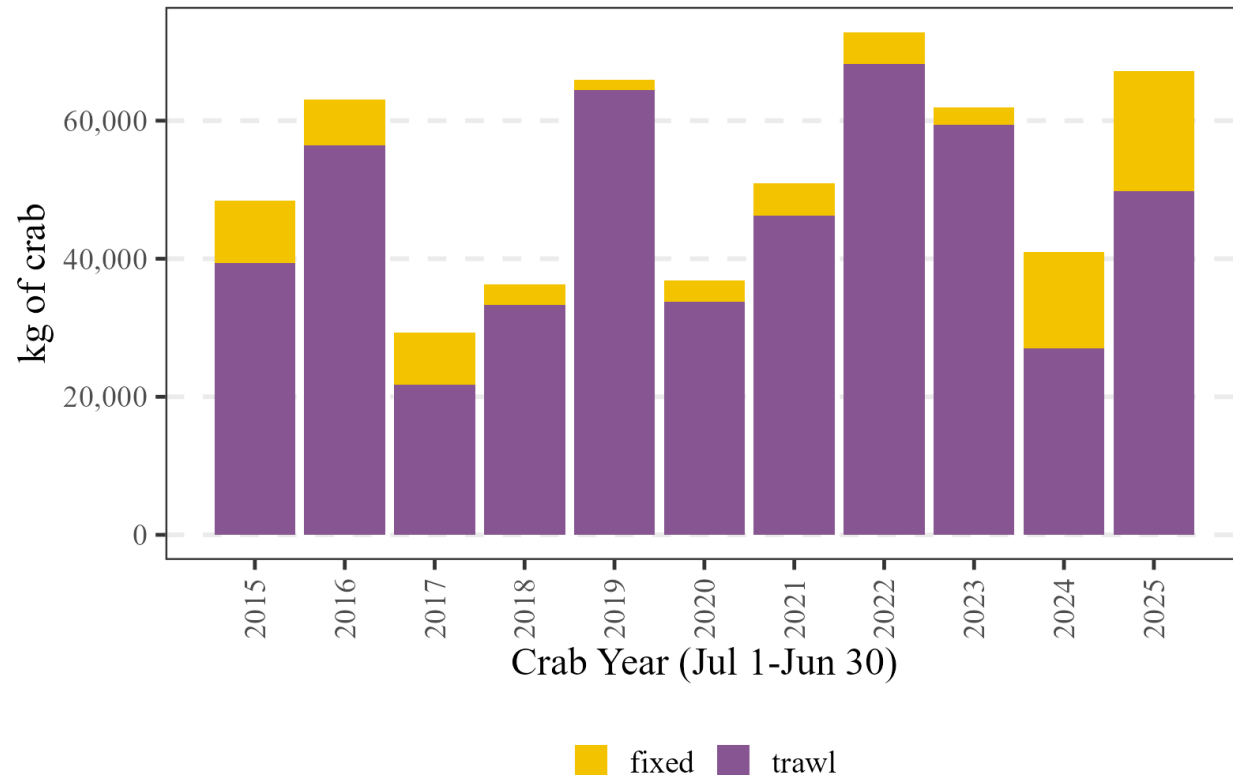
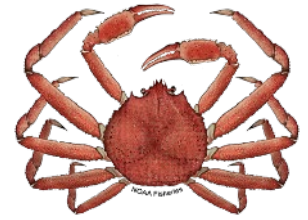
2025/26 Average Rate (kg crab/mt of Groundfish) in the Flathead, Rock, and Yellowfin Soles NPT Fisheries by ADF&G Statistical Area and Month

- Data mapped to stat-area and dots are center of boxes
- Confidential fishing areas excluded
- *August & April confidential



- WBST bycatch in fixed gear is mostly from hook-and-line and pot Pacific cod fisheries.
- Pot catcher vessels do not fish for groundfish in the WBST stock area as much as in the EBST stock area which results in less fixed gear bycatch in the Western area than the Eastern area.

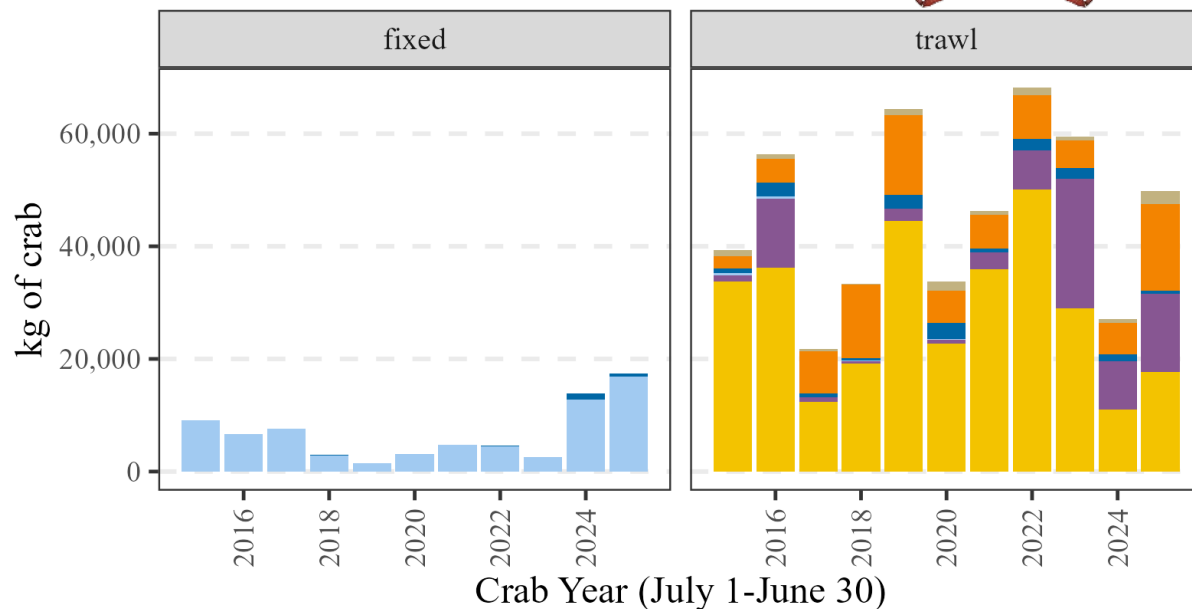
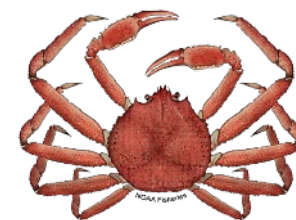
Western Bering Sea Tanner crab Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries



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- Bycatch of WBST in trawl gear typically occurs through the crab year.
- Majority of trawl bycatch from yellowfin/flathead/rock sole fisheries
- West of 166° W longitude

Western Bering Sea Tanner crab Incidental Catch by Trip Target

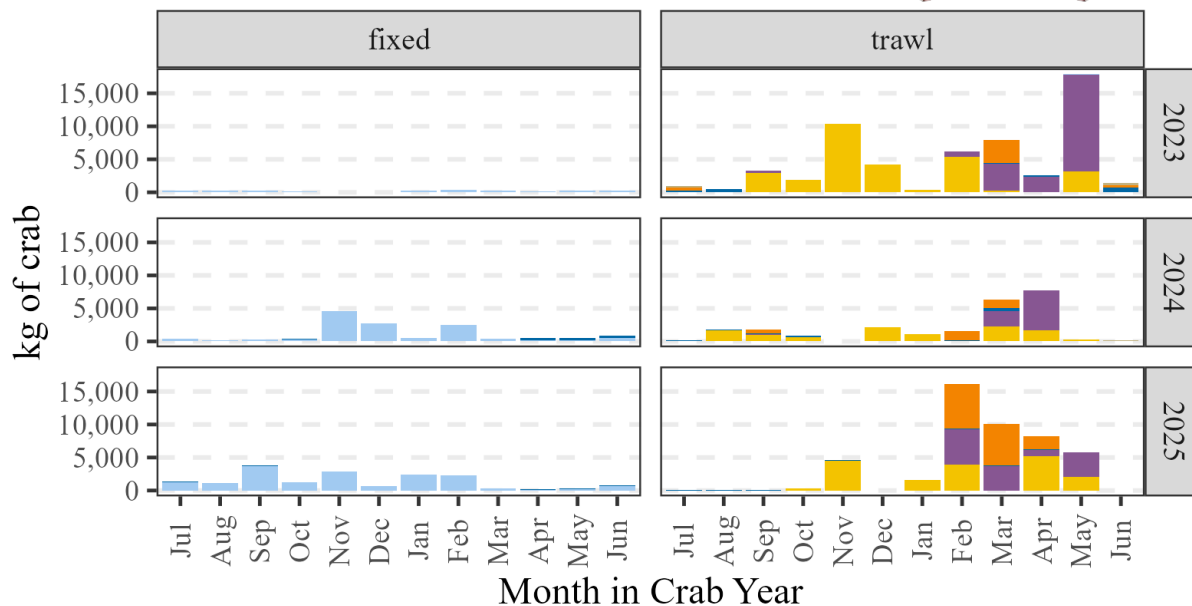
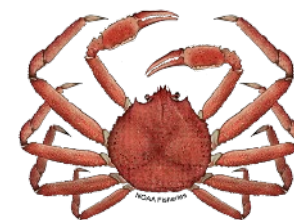


Arrowtooth/Kamchatka Flounder
 Flathead Sole
 Other Species
 Pacific Cod
 Rock Sole
 Yellowfin Sole

*Other species includes: Atka mackerel, Greenland turbot, other flatfish, plaice, pollock, halibut, rockfish, & sablefish

- In 2023/2024 bycatch was highest in Nov., Mar. and May.
- Rock sole increase driven by market conditions

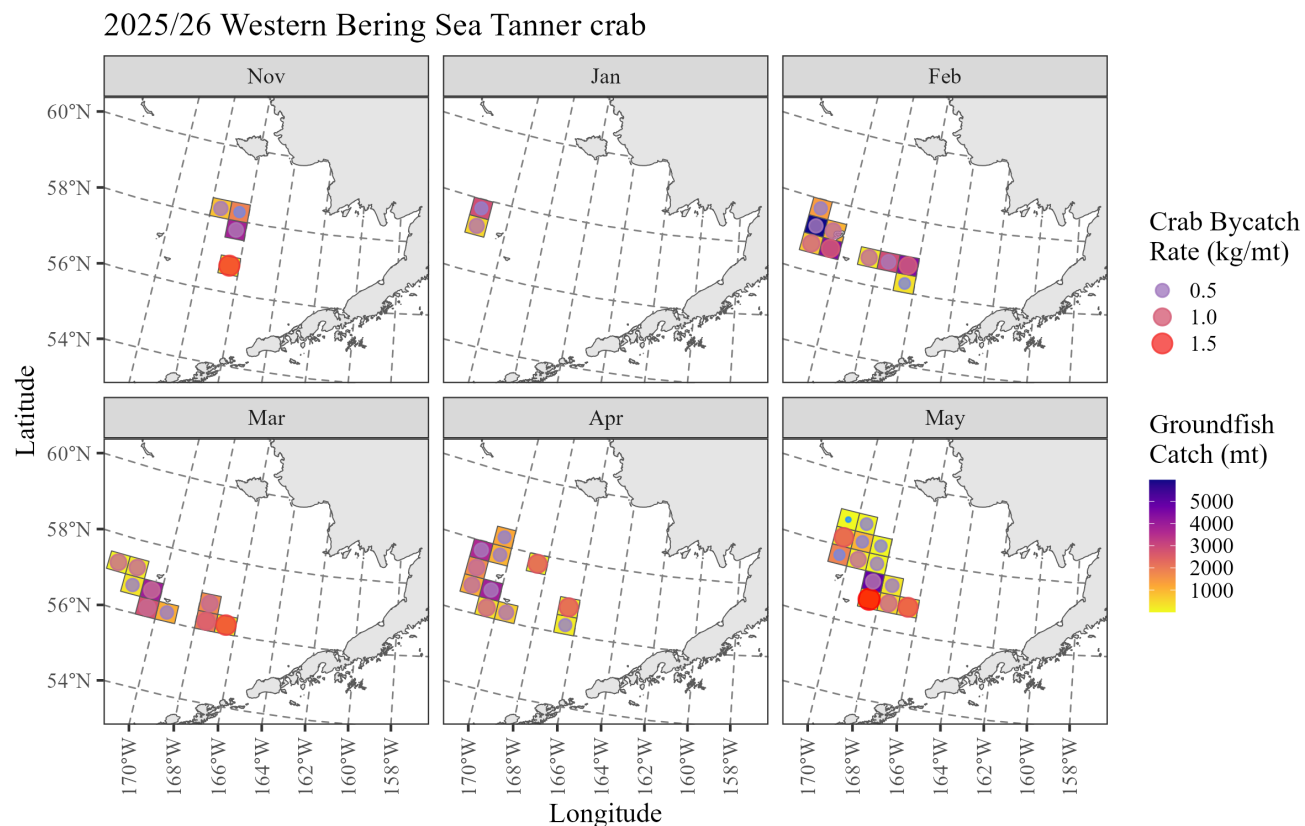
Western Bering Sea Tanner crab Incidental Catch by Month and Trip Target



*Other species includes: Atka mackerel, Greenland turbot, other flatfish, plaice, pollock, halibut, rockfish, & sablefish

2025/26 Average Rate (kg crab/mt of Groundfish) in the Flathead, Rock, and Yellowfin Soles NPT Fisheries by ADF&G Statistical Area and Months

- Data mapped to stat-area and dots are center of boxes
- Confidential fishing areas excluded
- *Months excluded due to confidentiality



The background of the slide is a dense, close-up photograph of numerous crabs, likely shore crabs, in shades of brown, tan, and reddish-orange. They are piled together, with their legs and textured carapaces visible. A semi-transparent rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the text 'AIGKC'.

AIGKC

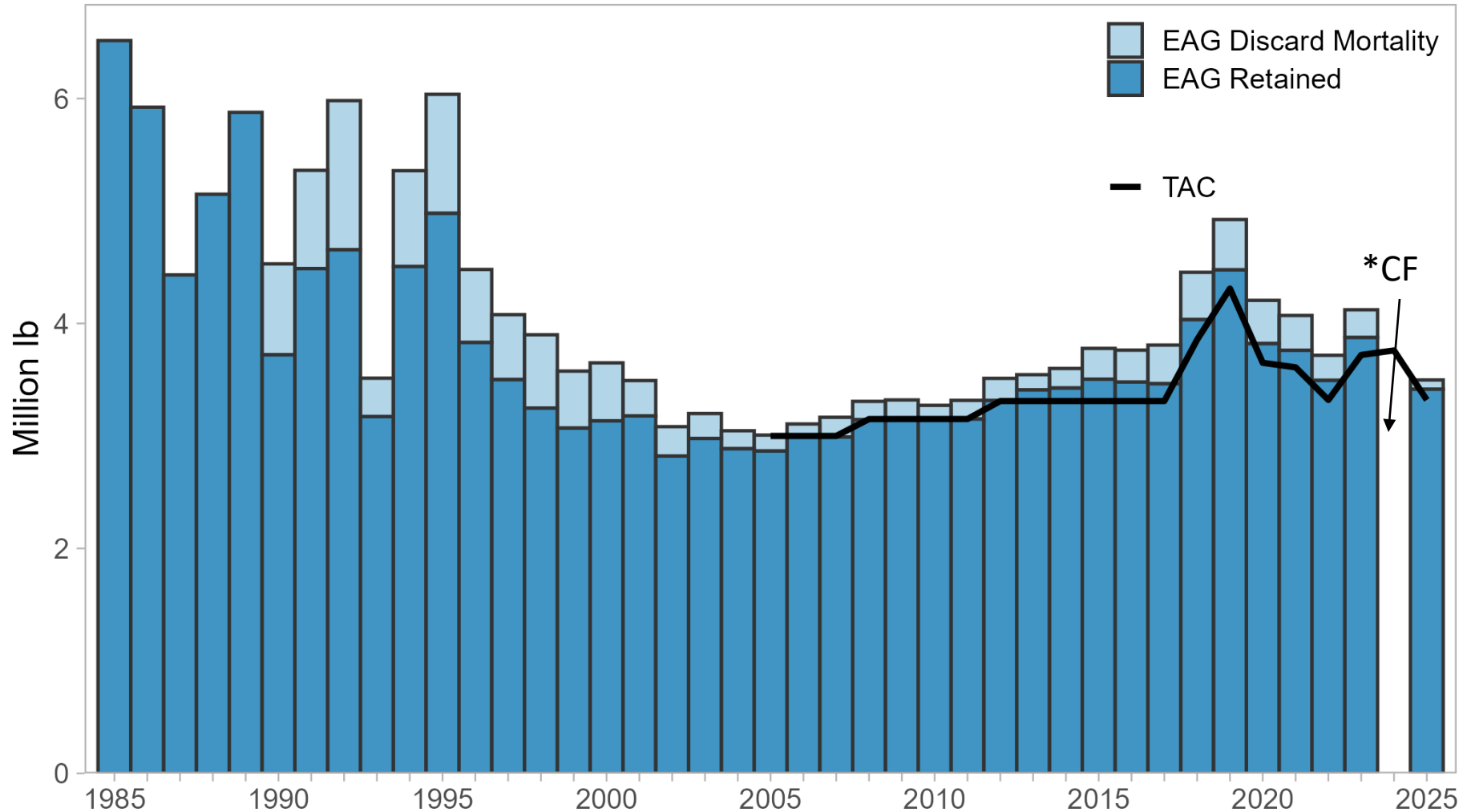
Eastern AIGKC (EAG)

2025/26

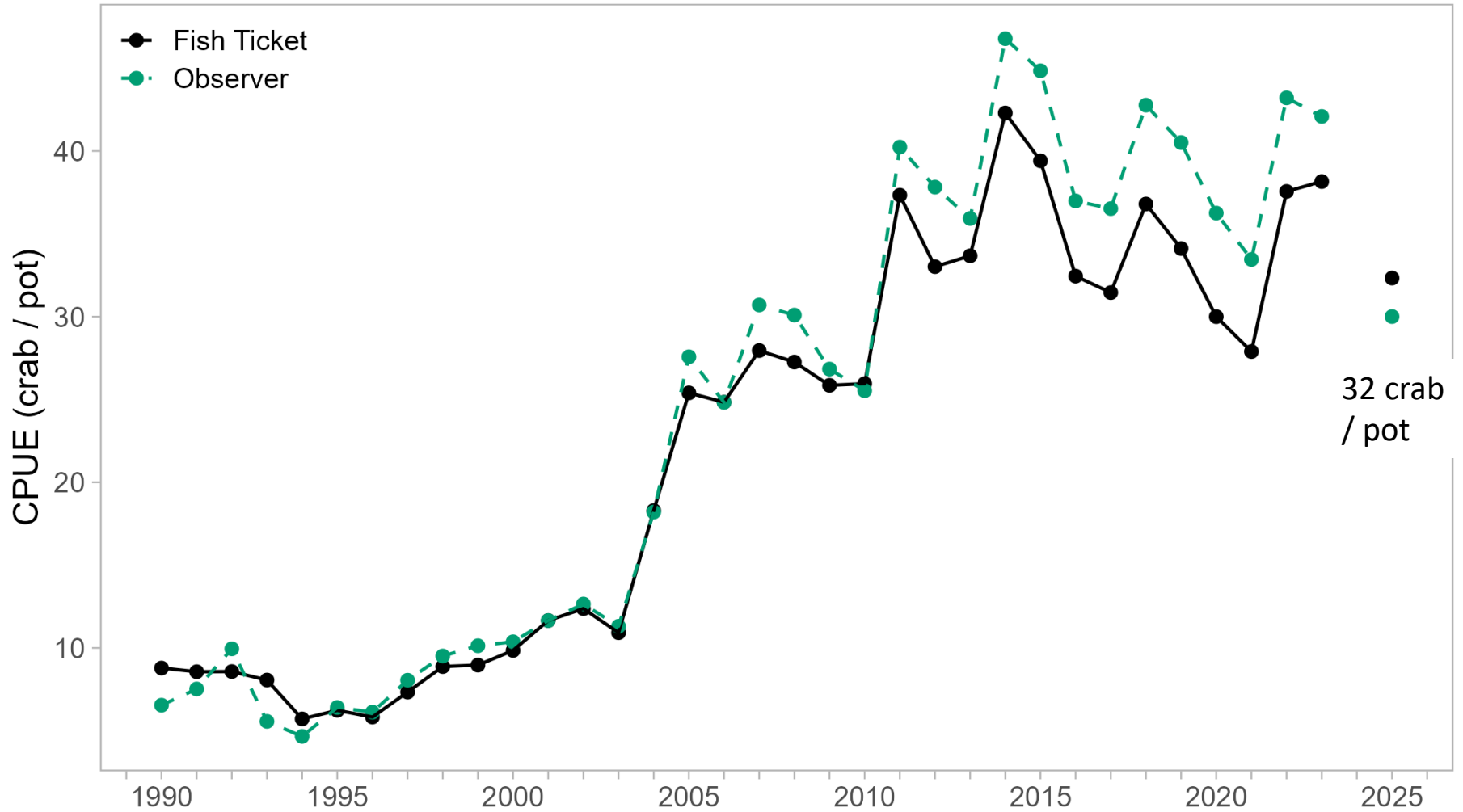
TAC = 3.32 mil lb

Retained = 3.42 mil lb

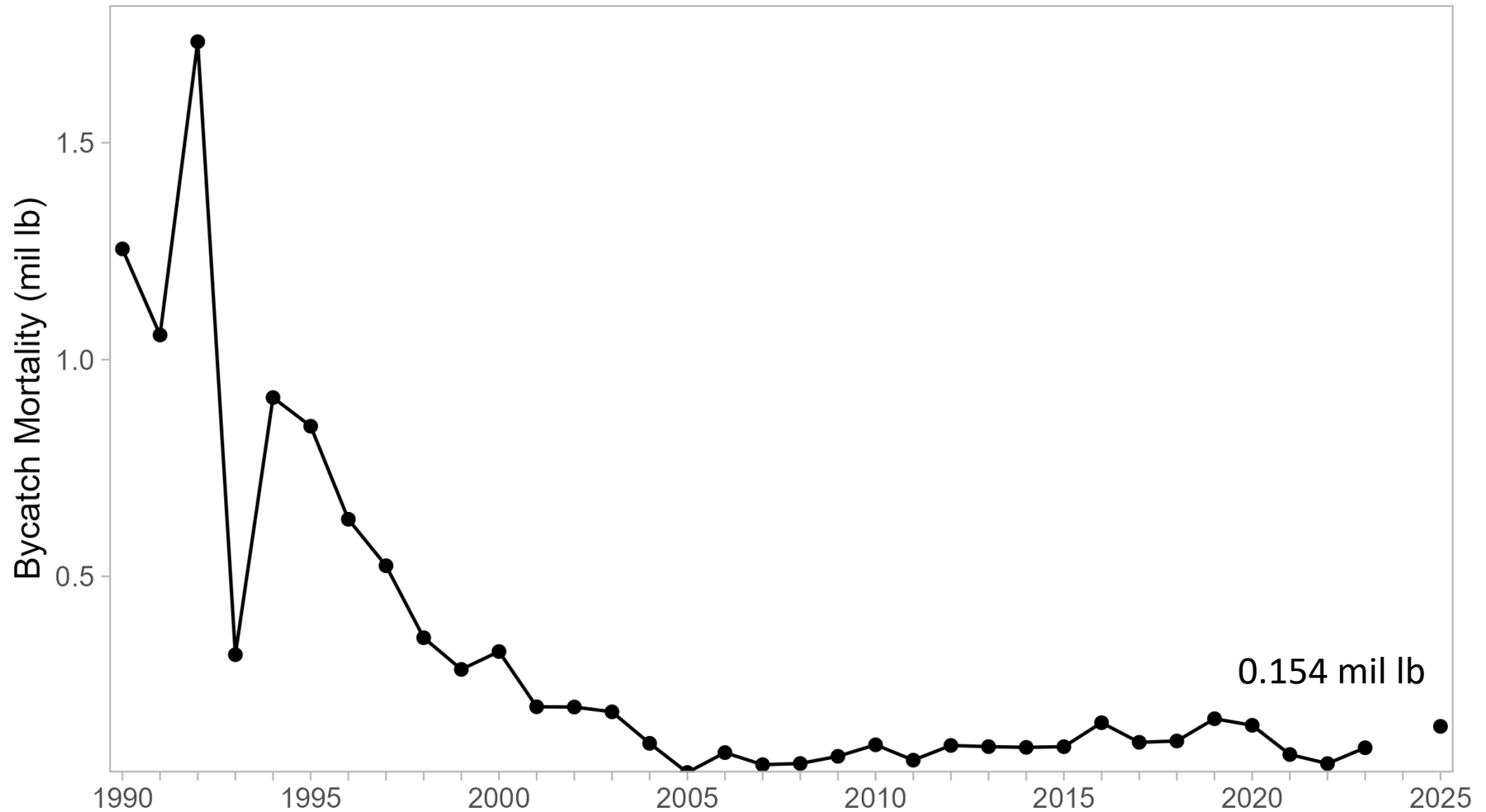
Directed Discard Mortality = 0.082 mil lb



Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE)



Female Bycatch Mortality



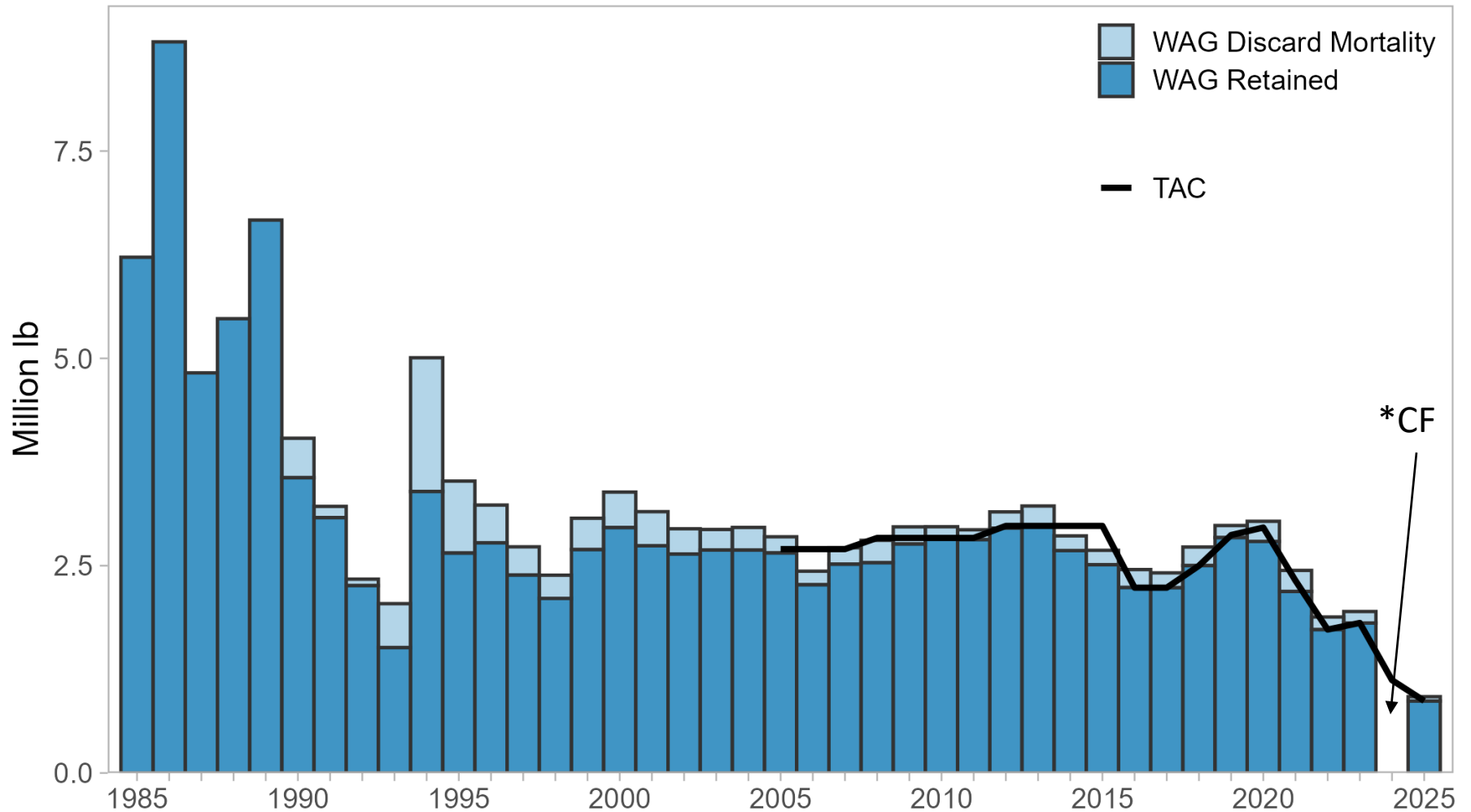
Western AIGKC (WAG)

2025/26

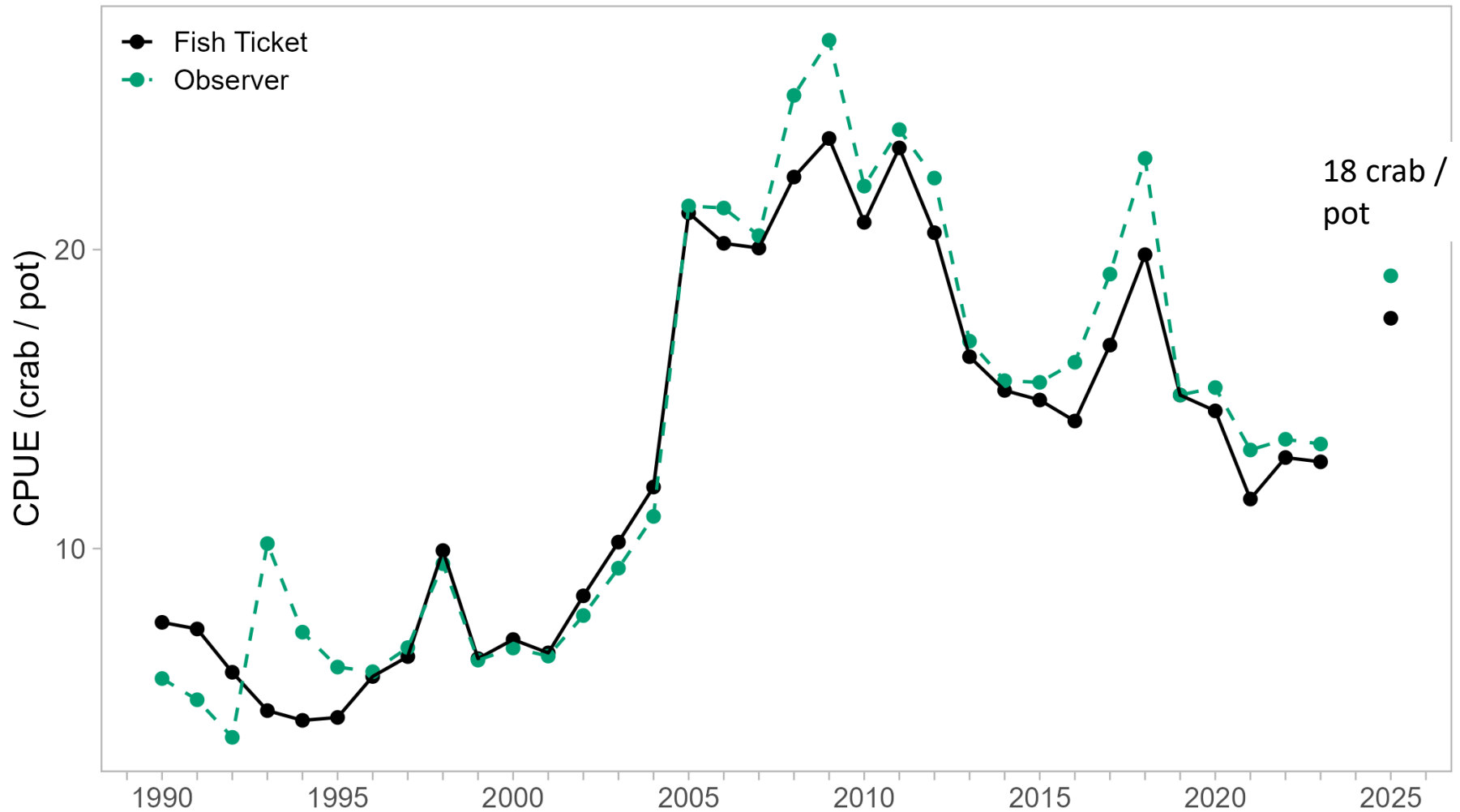
TAC = 0.870 mil lb

Retained = 0.868 mil lb

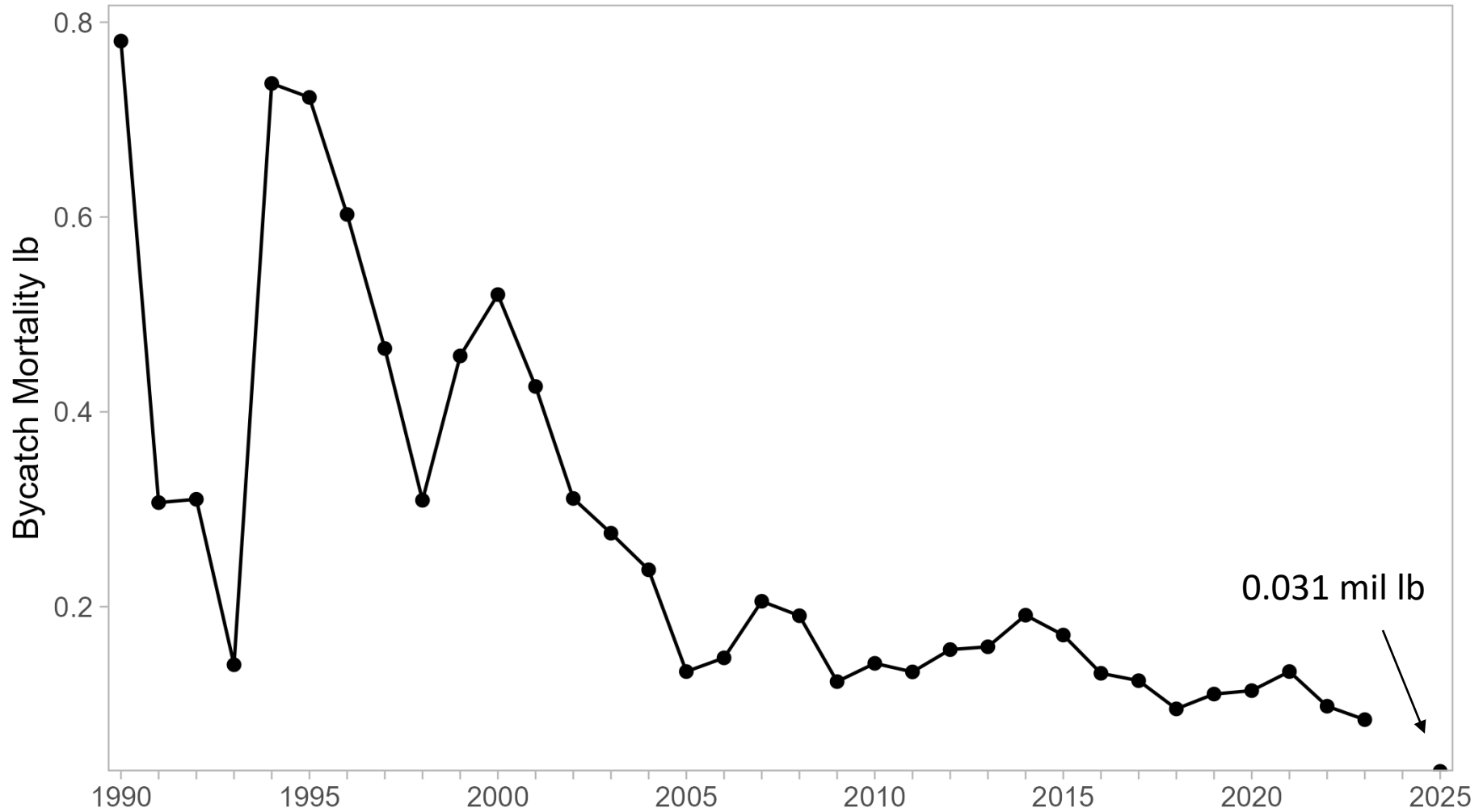
Directed Discard Mortality = 0.053 mil lb



Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE)

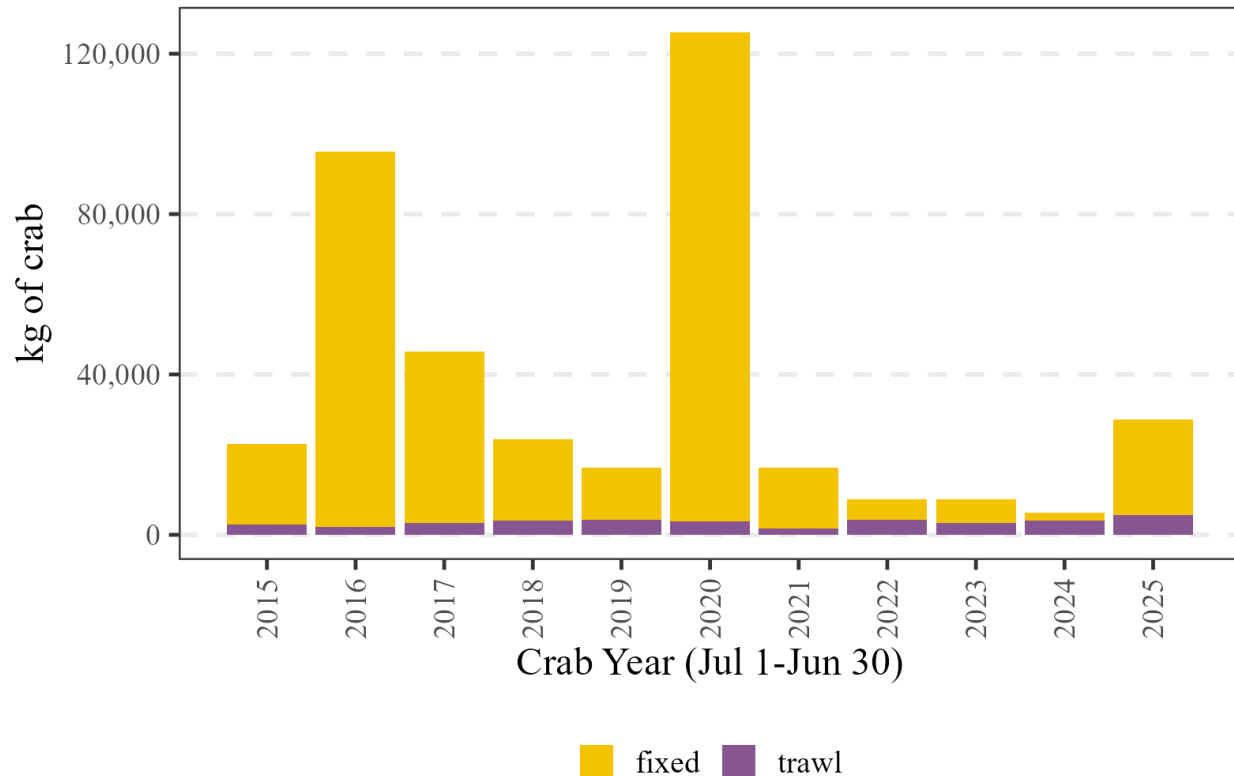


Female Bycatch Mortality



- The EAG stock area includes federal groundfish areas from the WGOA, BS, and AI.
- There is a Pacific cod State fishery for pot gear which can occur in the Eastern AI stock area and opens early in the year.

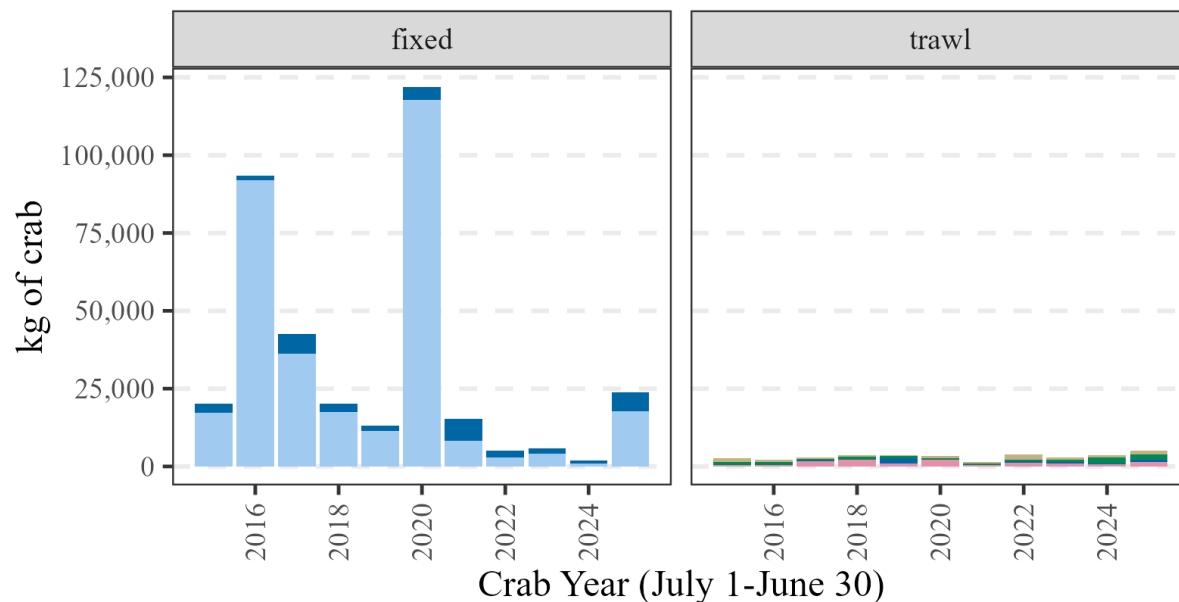
Eastern Aleutian Islands GKC Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries



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Eastern Aleutian Islands GKC Incidental Catch by Trip Target



- When there is no federal pot Pacific cod observer/EM coverage in the stock area the State pot vessels get an extrapolation rate based on all observed/EM groundfish targeted with pot gear in the stock area, including sablefish.

- Majority of bycatch in fixed gear Pacific cod is from extrapolations into the State's GHL fishery.

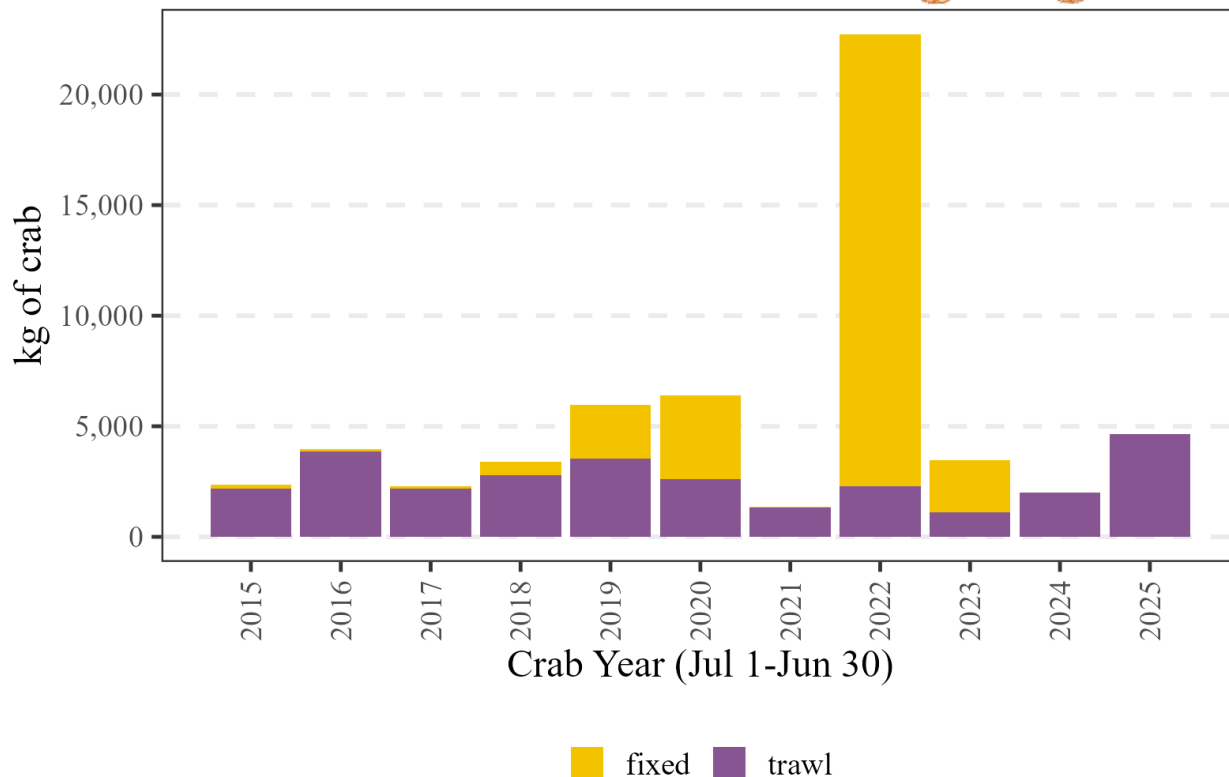
*Other species includes: Flathead sole, Greenland turbot, other flatfish, plaice, pollock, halibut, rockfish, & sablefish



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- Not much federal fixed gear fishing in this area.
- Not very much fixed gear observer coverage.
- High bycatch in pot gear in 2022 was due to extrapolations occurring from sablefish observed trips to State GHL Pacific cod fishery.

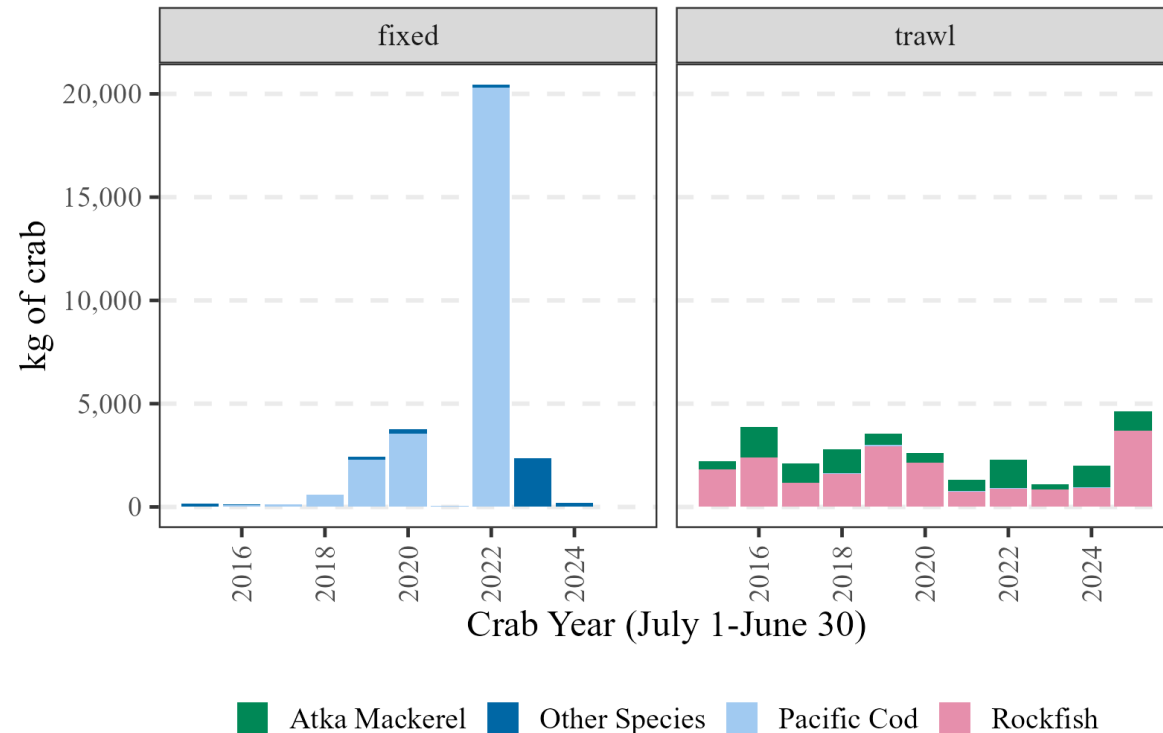
Western Aleutian Islands GKC Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries



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Western Aleutian Islands GKC Incidental Catch by Trip Target

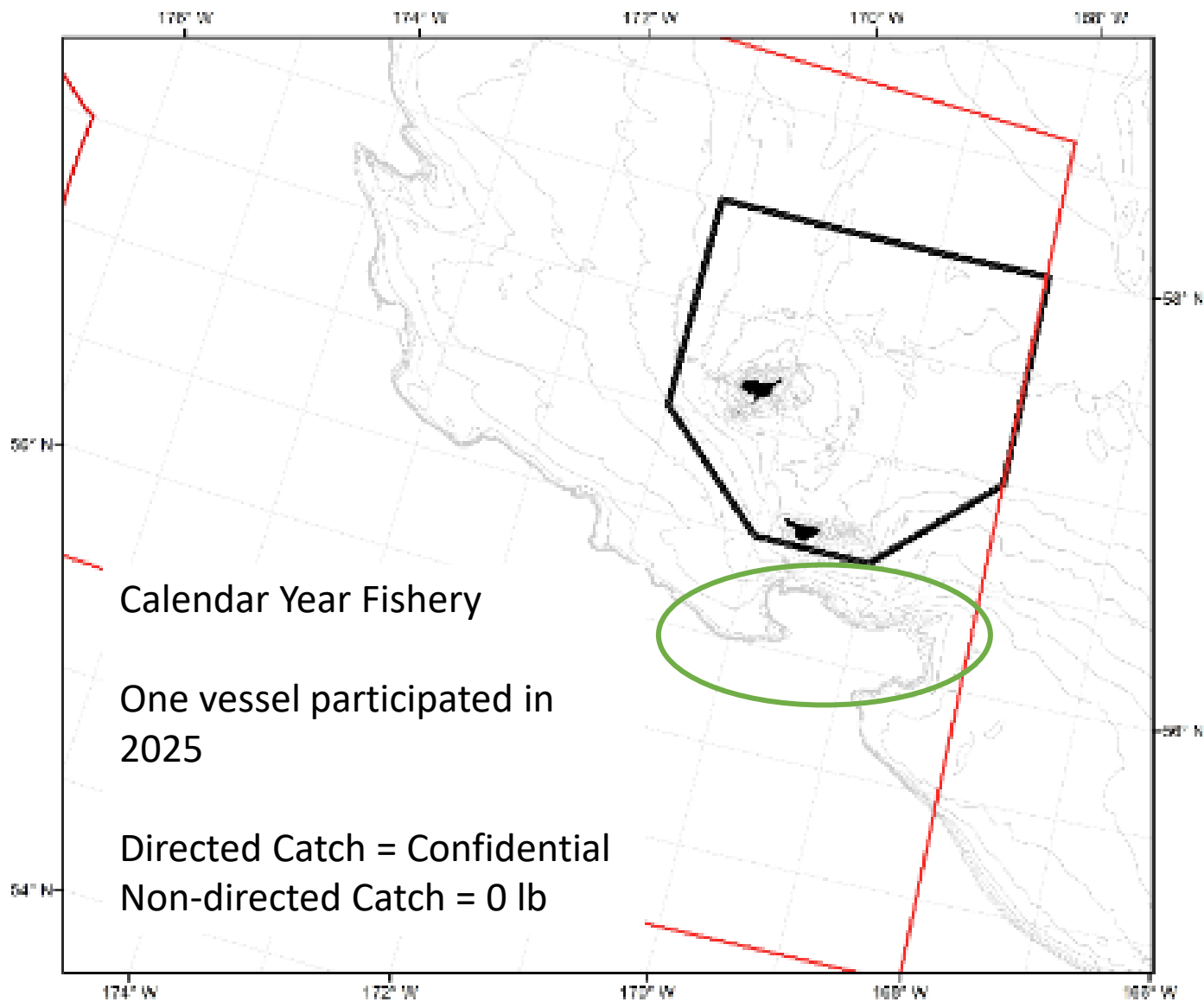


*Other species includes: Kamchatka flounder, pollock, halibut & sablefish

A large pile of spiny crabs, likely King crabs, is shown. The crabs are densely packed, with their long, spiny legs and textured carapaces visible. A white label is attached to the top right of the pile. The text "PIGKC" is overlaid in the center of the image.

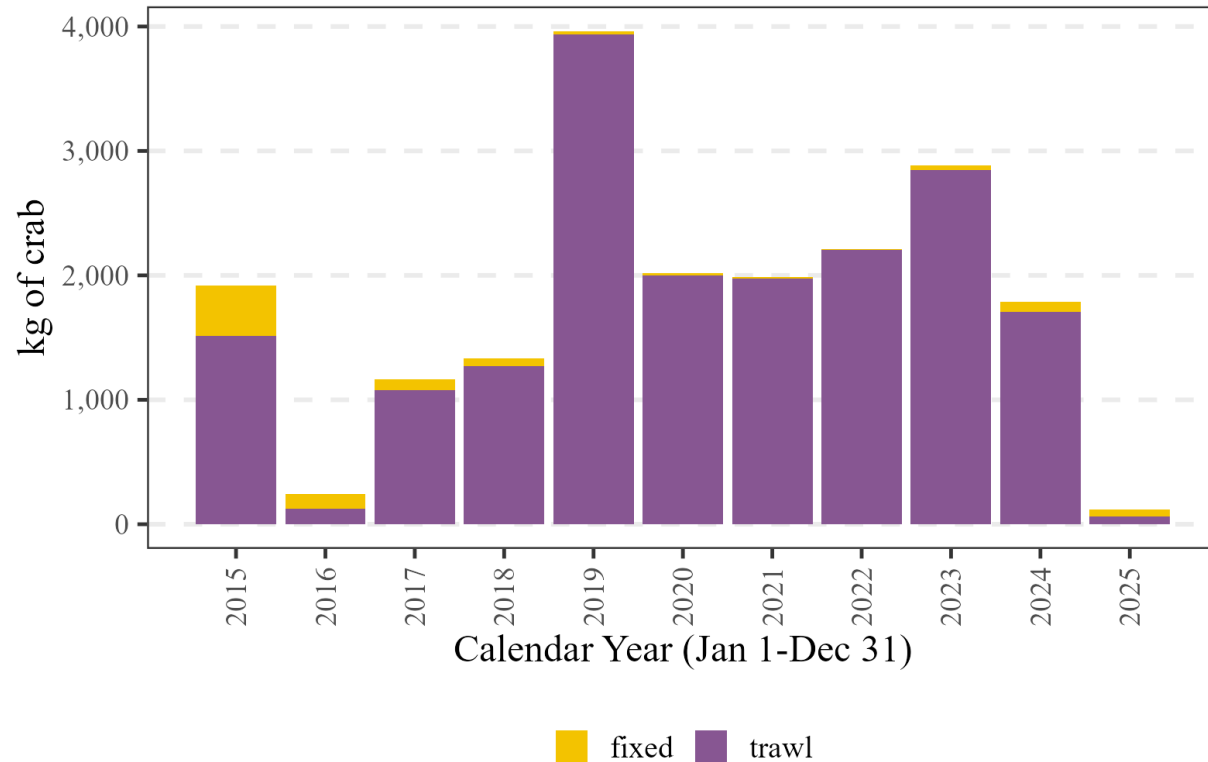
PIGKC

Pribilof Islands GKC (PIGKC)



- Most fixed gear GKC bycatch is from hook-and-line Pacific cod fishing
- In 2025, new regulations implemented allowing directed fishing for Greenland turbot with longline pots which may increase PIGKC bycatch, but fishery still in development
- Sea ice extent impacted fishing behavior

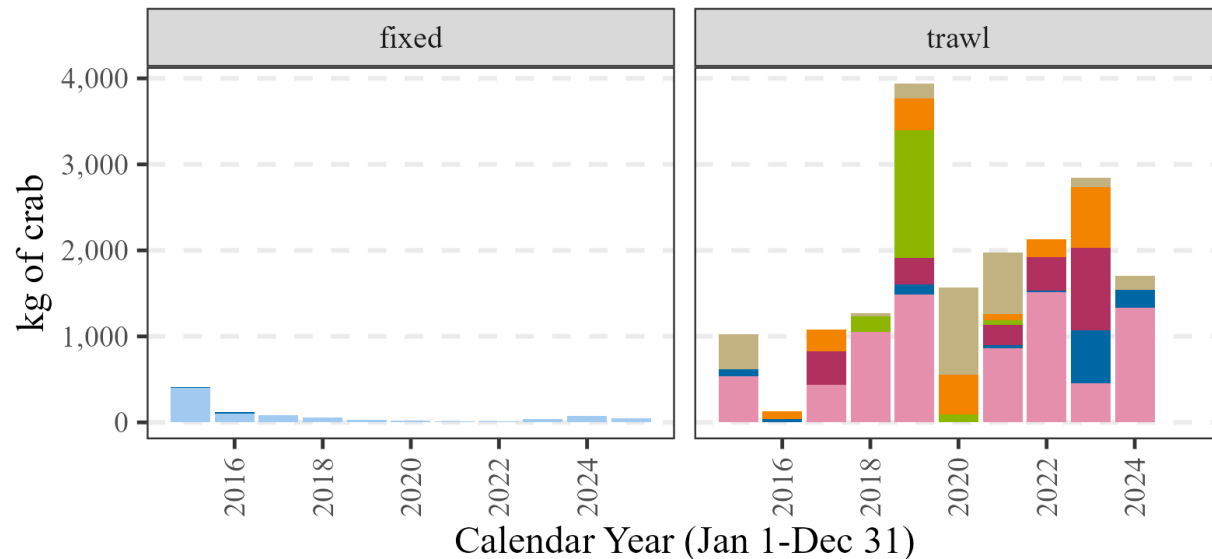
Pribilof Islands GKC Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries



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- Trawl fishery increased catch of Greenland turbot in 2019/2020
- Variety of trawl fishery targets.

Pribilof Islands GKC Incidental Catch by Trip Target



*Other species includes: Atka mackerel, plaice, pollock, halibut, rock sole, sablefish & yellowfin sole



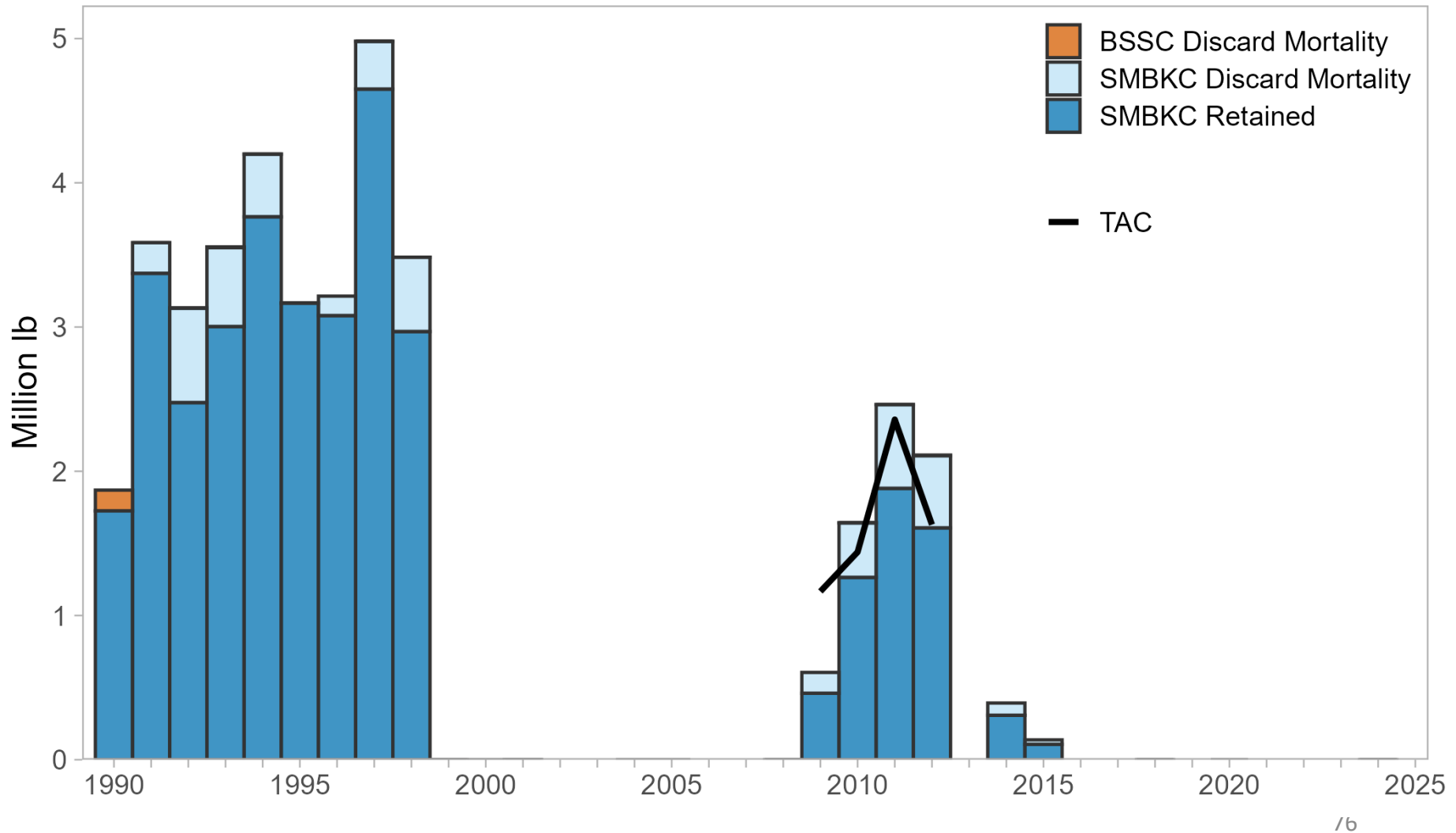
NOAA
FISHERIES

Other BSAI crab stocks

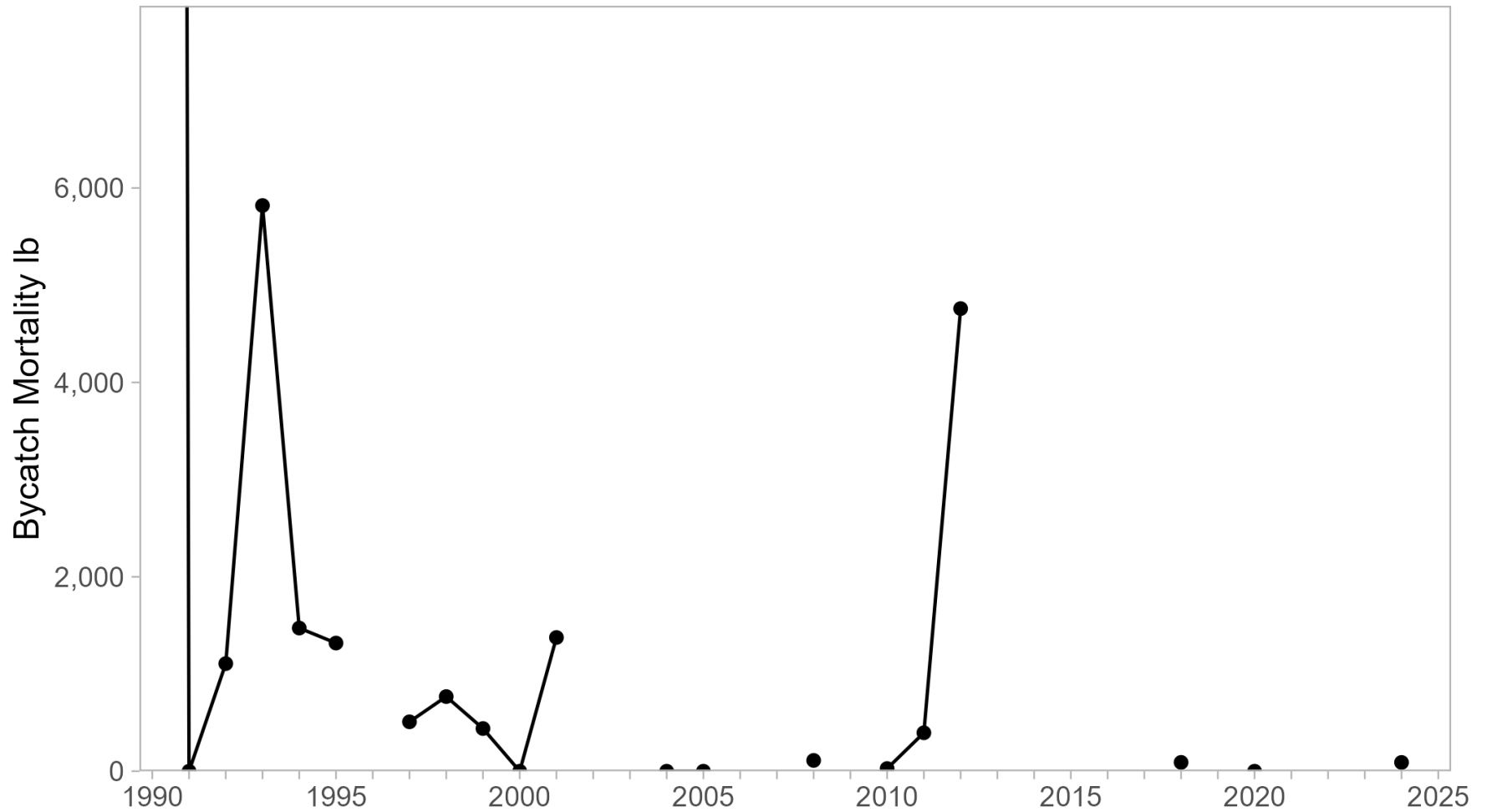
St Matthew BKC (SMBKC) 2025/26

Directed Fishery Closed

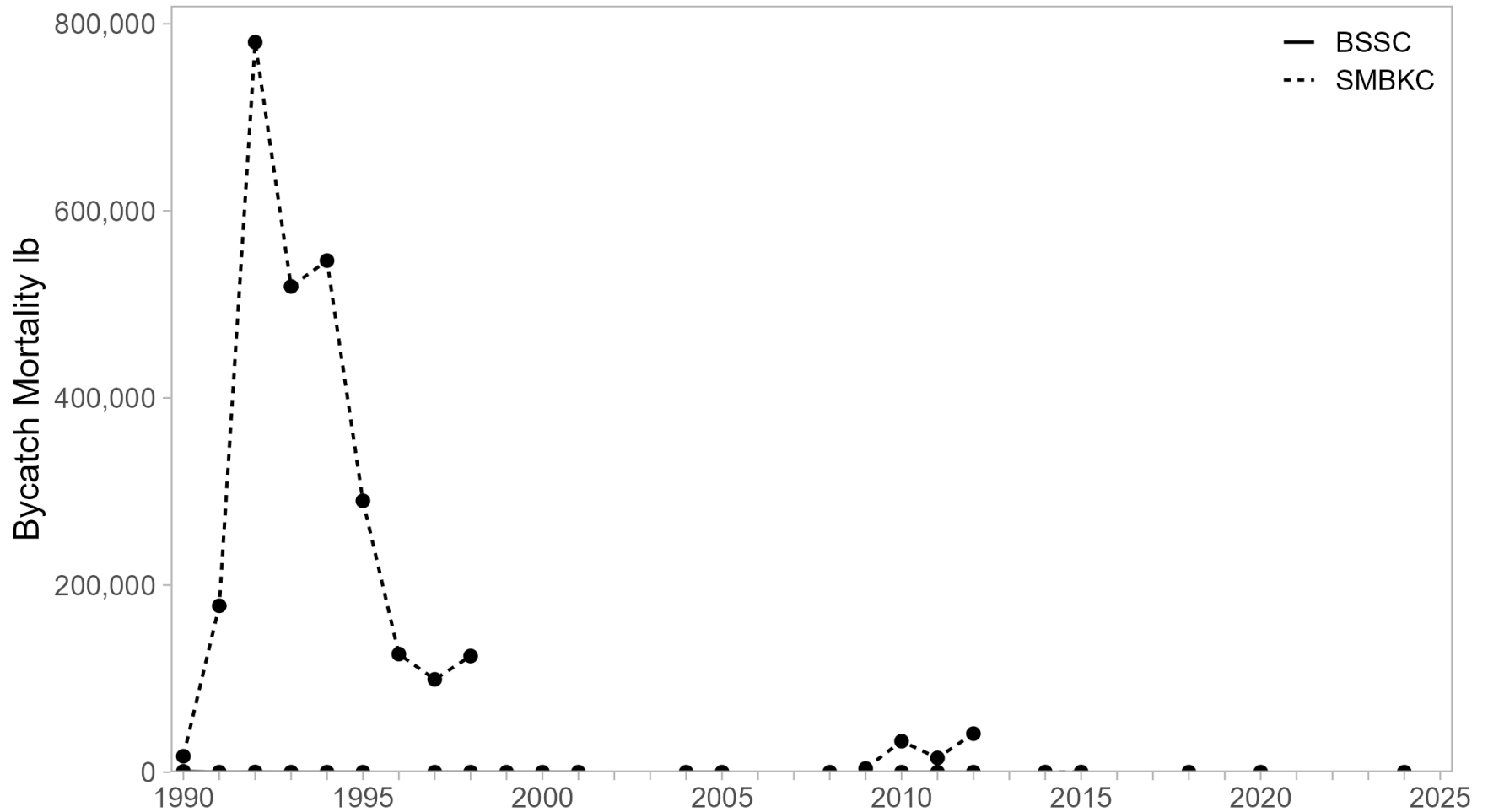
BSSC Discard Mortality = 0 lb



BSSC Bycatch Mortality

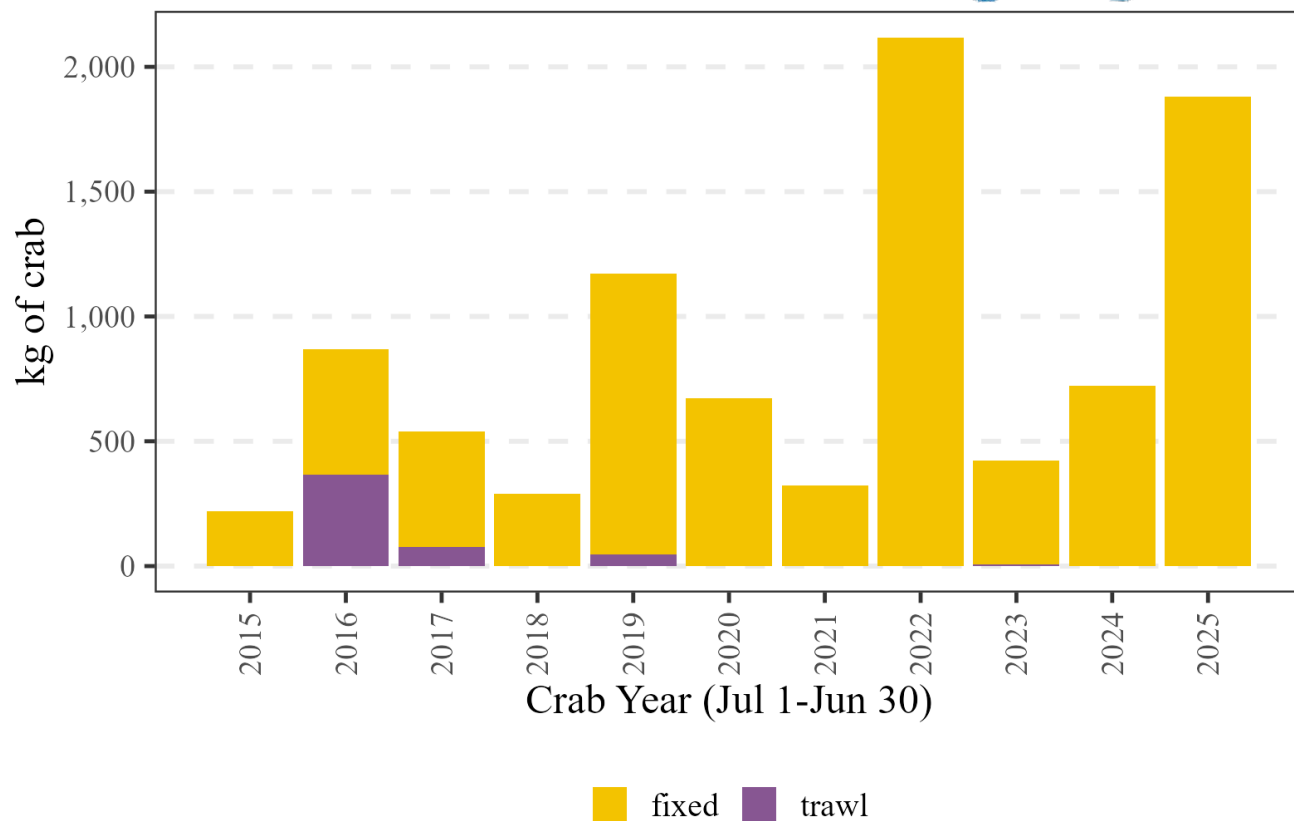


Female Bycatch Mortality



- Overfished stock.
- Very little trawling in this stock area due to trawl closure areas

St. Matthew BKC Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries

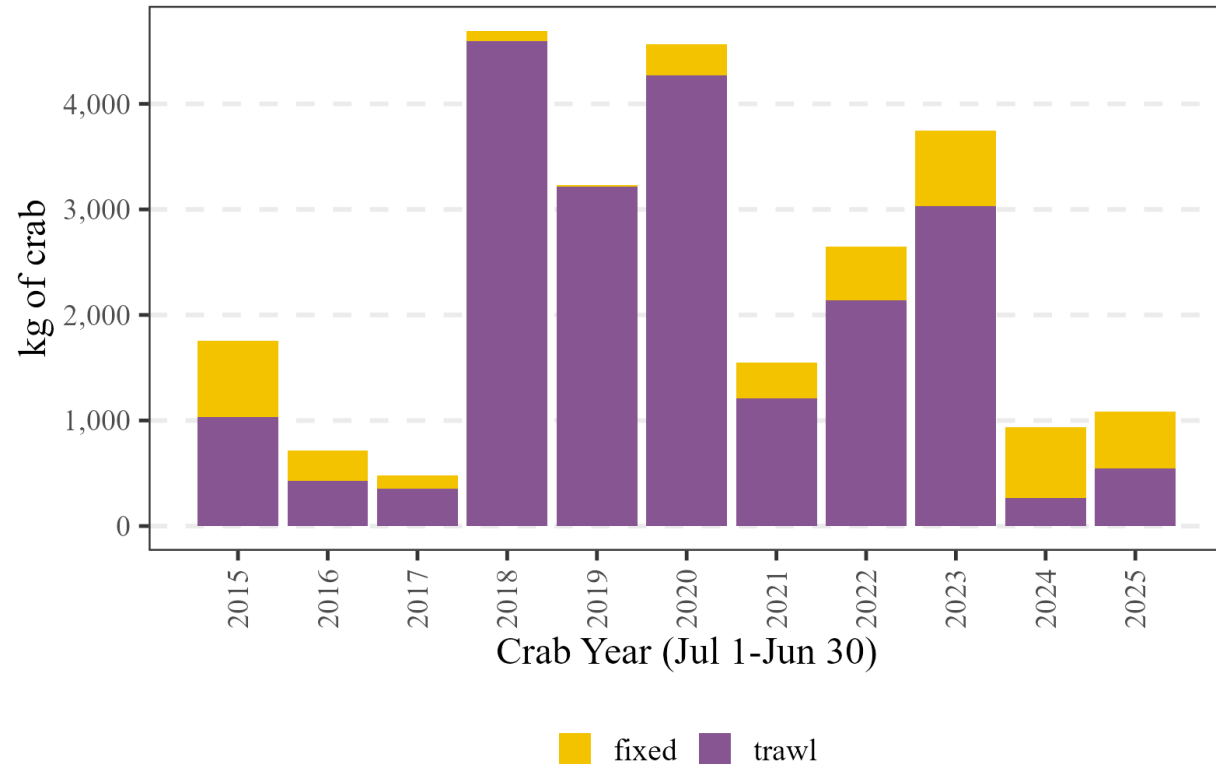
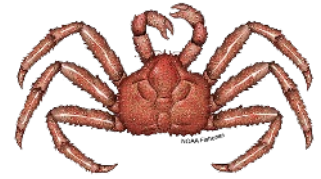


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- Pot and trawl gear are prohibited in the Pribilof Islands Habitat Conservation Zone which is in place to protect blue king crab.
- Most fixed gear fishing in this area is by CPs using hook-and-line gear targeting Pacific cod

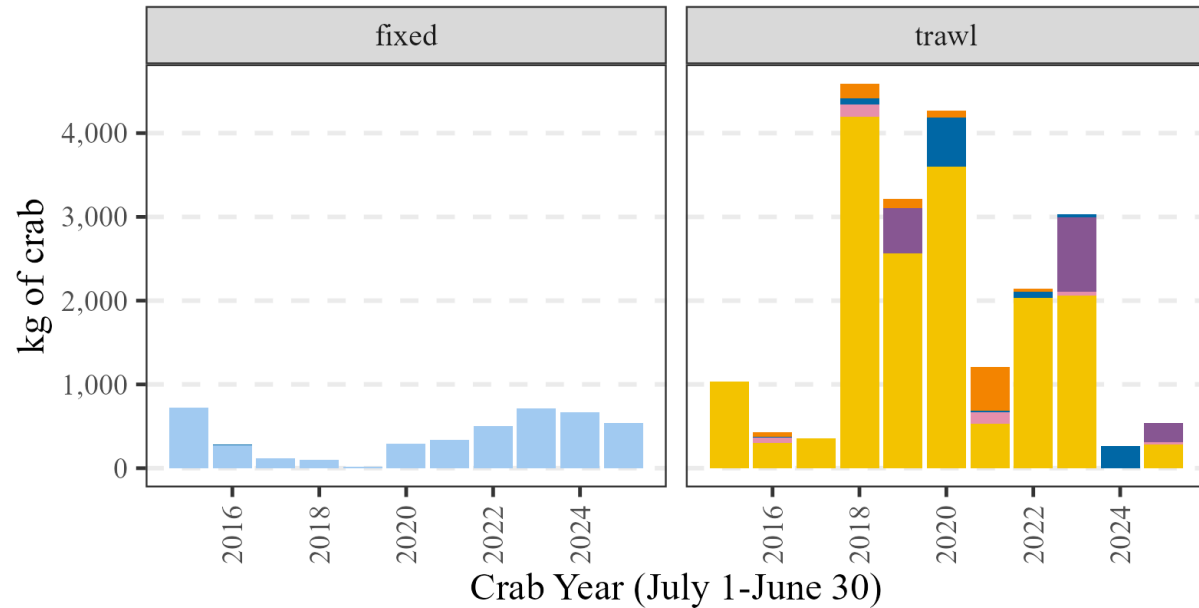
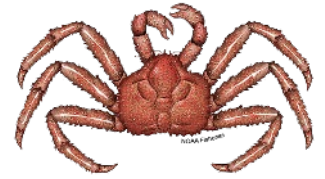
Pribilof Islands RKC Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries



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Pribilof Islands RKC Incidental Catch by Trip Target



Flathead Sole Other Species Pacific Cod
Rock Sole Rockfish Yellowfin Sole

*Other species includes: Arrowtooth flounder, Atka mackerel, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, plaice, pollock, halibut, & sablefish

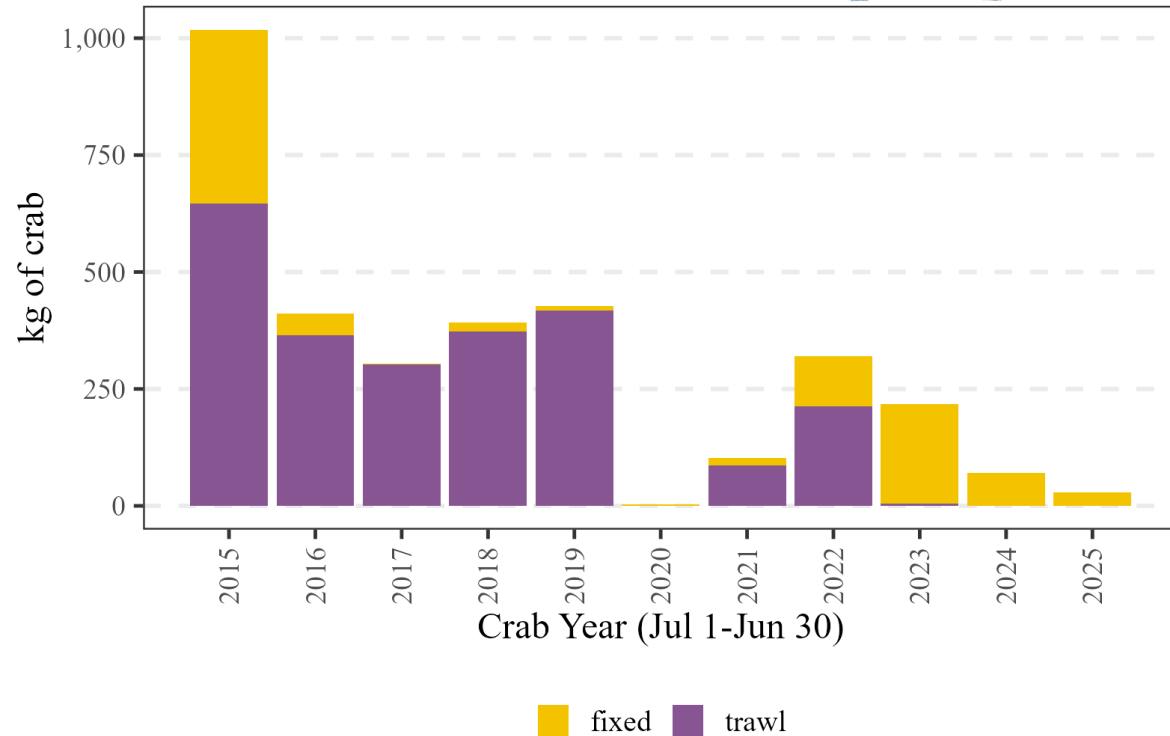
- Majority of bycatch is from yellowfin sole fishery.
- Sea ice extent changed fishing behavior



- Pot and trawl gear are prohibited in the Pribilof Islands Habitat Conservation Zone which is in place to protect blue king crab.
- Overfished stock
- Overfishing occurred in the 2015/16 crab year
- Sea ice extent changed fishing behavior

Pribilof Islands BKC

Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries

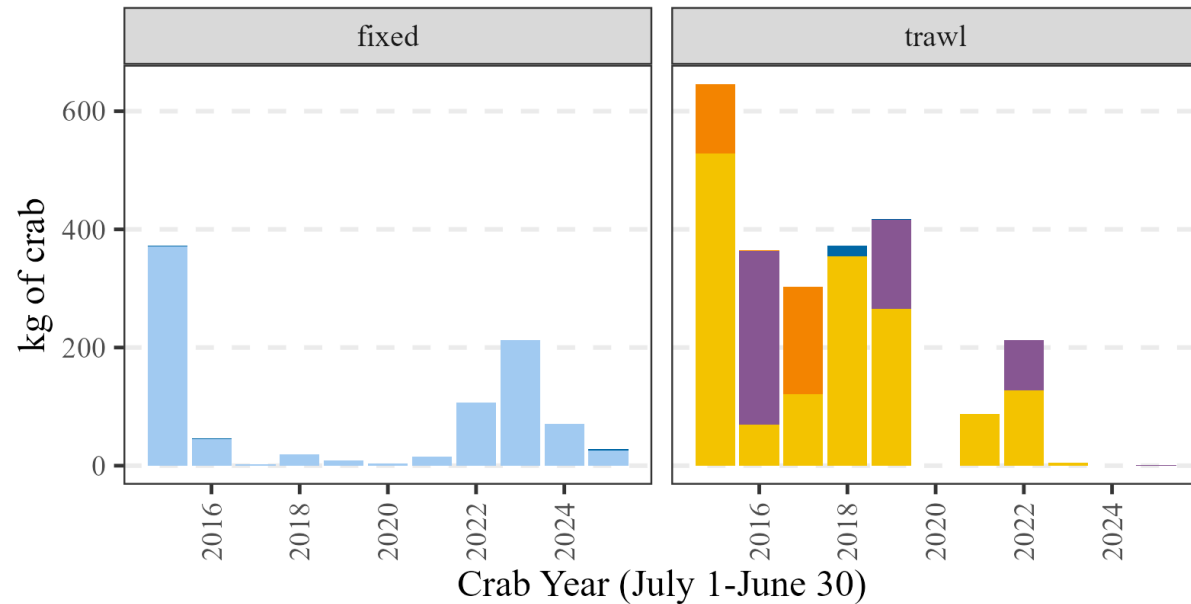


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FISHERIES



- Decline in trawl bycatch in 2023/24-2025/26 crab year.
- Sea ice extent influenced fishing behavior

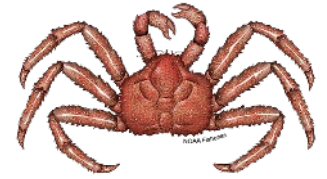
Pribilof Islands BKC Incidental Catch by Trip Target



■ Flathead Sole
 ■ Other Species
 ■ Pacific Cod
 ■ Rock Sole
 ■ Rockfish
 ■ Yellowfin Sole

*Other species includes: Arrowtooth flounder, Atka mackerel, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, plaice, pollock, halibut, & sablefish

Norton Sound Red King Crab Incidental Catch in Groundfish Fisheries



- 2009–2017: no RKC bycatch in NSRKC stock area
- 2018: 8 kg of RKC bycatch (mortality applied)
- 2019: 24 kg of RKC bycatch (mortality applied)
- 2020: 4 kg of RKC bycatch (mortality applied)
- In 2021–2026: less than 1 kg of RKC bycatch



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Thank you