

9.3 SKJ - Skipjack

The last stock assessment for eastern and western Atlantic skipjack were conducted in 2022 through a process that included a data preparatory meeting, held online from 21-25 February 2022 (Anon., 2022a), and a stock assessment meeting, held online from 23-27 May 2022 (Anon., 2022b). Additionally, informal intersessional meetings of the Group were held in April and July (Anon., 2022c) to prepare and finalize the stock assessment results. This report covers the most recent information on the status of the eastern and western skipjack stocks. The 2022 assessment was able to provide quantitative estimates of management reference points and projections of stock status for both skipjack stocks, something that was never achieved before by the Committee.

These new assessments for the eastern and western Atlantic skipjack stocks used fishery data from 1950-2020 and 1952-2020, respectively, and indices of relative abundance used in the assessments were calculated through 2020. In both cases, Surplus Production models and Statistically Integrated models were used.

For a complete and detailed description of the assessment and the state of knowledge and status of the eastern and western Atlantic skipjack tuna stocks, readers should consult the Report of the 2022 Skipjack Tuna Data Preparatory Meeting (Anon., 2022a) and the Report of the 2022 Skipjack Stock Assessment Meeting (Anon., 2022b).

SKJ-1. Biology

Skipjack tuna is a cosmopolitan species found in schools distributed mainly in tropical and subtropical waters of the three oceans. This tropical tuna is the predominant species aggregated around FOBs (including FADs) where it is caught, commonly associated with juveniles of yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna and with other species of epipelagic fauna. This species exploited sizes range from 30 cm to 62 cm FL for SKJ-W (SKJ-Table 2) and 30 cm to 80 cm FL for SKJ-W (SKJ-Table 3).

Skipjack tuna breed opportunistically throughout the year over broad areas of the Atlantic Ocean. Both stocks show synchronized spawning behavior when in a school. Moreover, the skipjack's reproductive potential is considered high because it reaches sexual maturity around one year of age and spawns in warm waters above 25° C which represents a large ocean area. More specifically, the eastern skipjack stock, spawns over a wide area on either side of the equator, from the Gulf of Guinea to 20°-30° W. There are two known spawning areas for the western skipjack stock, one off the Brazil margin delimited by the parallel of 20° S and the southern limit of the Brazil current, and another area in the North of the Atlantic Ocean, located in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean.

Movement patterns based on AOTTP tagging data demonstrated some connectivity between the Azores and Gulf of Guinea areas for the eastern stock, which had not been observed in the ICCAT historical tagging data. Although in general, the AOTTP tagging data shows minimal exchange between the eastern and western skipjack stocks, the separation between the two stocks is less clear for those tags released by the AOTTP close to the boundaries of the stock (5° S; 35° W) (SKJ-Figure 2). This pattern sparked concerns in the current way catches are assigned to a stock when fleets are fishing near and/or across this boundary area. More studies on the potential migration across stock boundaries are needed. These include analysis of returned AOTTP skipjack tags, or potential future releases of conventional tagged fish in places where movement details remain unknown (e.g., Venezuela to the Equator and northern migrations of the western stock). Such studies could improve our understanding of these movements and of potential levels of mixing across the current stock boundaries.

Length at 50% maturity remains estimated at 42 cm, approximately 9.5 months old, and the size of full maturity at 55 cm. Both reproduction parameters remain the same as those used in the last stock assessment.

Considerable uncertainty remains around the growth parameters for the skipjack tuna. To deal with this uncertainty, a distribution of potential growth curves was developed considering available estimated growth parameters compiled from scientific literature, and the resulting growth parameters are shown in the Report of the 2022 Skipjack Stock Assessment Meeting (Anon., 2022b). Natural mortality at age was estimated assuming the Lorenzen function and maximum age of 6 years.

All these uncertainties reported on growth, natural mortality, and stock structure could have important implications for the stock assessment of the eastern and western skipjack stocks. Research should aim to continue to reduce these uncertainties.

SKJ-2. Fishery indicators

Skipjack tuna stocks have been historically exploited by two major gears (purse seine on the eastern stock and baitboat on the western stock) and by many countries throughout their range. Longline fisheries remove a comparatively small portion of the total removals (**SKJ-Figures 1, 5 and 6**).

The numerous changes that have occurred in the skipjack fisheries, mainly since the early 1990s (e.g., the progressive use of FOBs and the geographical expansion of the fishing areas by surface fleets), have brought about an increase in skipjack catchability and the proportion of biomass exploited. The nominal catches for the eastern stock had shown a generally increasing trend since the 1960s (**SKJ-Figure 4**). The total catches increase from 1,171 metric tons in 1960 to about 283,000 metric tons in 2018. Since 2018 the total catches decreased to 206,953 t in 2021. The preliminary catch reported for 2022 have increased by 31% (271,371 t) (**SKJ-Table 1**). This recent increase is observed for most of gears, in particular eastern Atlantic purse seine.

The Group estimated the current fishing capacity of all large-scale purse seiners (defined as vessels with $\geq 335 \text{ m}^3$ of fish hold-volume) targeting tropical tunas in the Atlantic, using a combination of data sources including the ICCAT authorized vessel records, ISSF records on purse seiners, and AIS data. The Group estimated that at least 67 - and possibly 72 - large-scale purse seiners were operating in the Convention area as of the first half of 2022. The 2022 capacity estimate (67-72) for large-scale purse seiner was similar to the estimate of capacity made by the SCRS in 2020 (68-72 vessels) and lower than the capacity estimate in 2021 (74-80), indicating that at least some vessels moved out of the ICCAT area during the last year. The Committee was informed by national scientists of the reductions in the operations of the baitboat fleet in recent years (since 2020), in part due to the implementation of a Marine Protected Area (Decree No. 2020-1133 on the creation of the Marine Protected Areas of Kaalolaal Blouffogny and Gorée (Senegal)) limiting access to live bait for the fishery.

The western skipjack landings have shown a slight decrease since 1982, and this has intensified in the most recent period of the time series (2013-2020) (**SKJ-W Figure 6**). The maximum total catch for this stock was observed in 1985 (40,272 t), and the lowest catch since 1985 was reached in 2020 (18,903 t). This trend can be explained by the reductions in the baitboat catches, which decreased from 26,941 t on average for the period 2011 - 2015 to less than 15,400 t (on average) in the most recent period of the time series (2016-2021). On the contrary, handline catches have increased in recent years, reaching more than an annual average of 2,960 t in the period between 2016-2021, a significant increase over the 301 t average for the period 2011-2015 (**SKJ-Table 1**). Data provided in Task 1 Fleet showed a reduction in the number of vessels operating within the Brazilian baitboat fleet (from 54 baitboat vessels operating in 2015 to 30 vessels in 2020). This reductions in the number of baitboat vessels may be driving much of the decrease in catches of this stock observed in the recent period, as the Brazilian fleet catches the majority of skipjack in the West side of the Atlantic. Finally, preliminary catches reported for 2022 show an increase of 1,335 t (from 20,048 t in 2021 to 21,383 t in 2022). This increase concerns catch of the others surface gears, with the exception of PS and BB (**SKJ-Figure 6**).

Estimates of “faux poisson” catches for the purse seine fleets targeting tropical tunas in the eastern Atlantic were provided by the majority of the CPCs as indicated in **SKJ-Table 1**. For the 2022 stock assessment, the Group estimated “faux poisson” catches based on a methodology presented and adopted by the Group at the data preparatory meeting and were included under the “NEI_mixed flags” code for the stock assessment.

As indicated before, another important fishery indicator was the westward expansion of the eastern purse seine FOB fisheries with an increase in catches in the equatorial area. In the last decade surface fleet fisheries have reported catches on both sides of the skipjack stock boundary of the equatorial area (**SKJ-Figures 1 and 3**). Recent research has shown some similarities between the skipjack size ranges among the catches reported by the EU and Ghana PS-FOB when they are operating on either side of the boundary (40-50 cm SFL, **SKJ-Figure 7** and **SKJ-Figure 8**). Such fish caught by these two fleets tend to be smaller than those caught by purse seiners in the West stock area, mainly by Venezuela PS non-FOB fisheries (45-60 cm). It is possible that the stock boundary area is a mixed area including individuals of both stocks. Any increases in effort of purse seine vessels fishing on FOBs in this area could increase removals from the western skipjack stock.

Mean weight time-series by major fishery for both eastern and western skipjack stocks were estimated using the most recent information available on T1NC, T2SZ and T2CS (Task 2 catch-at-size estimated/reported by ICCAT CPCs). For the eastern and western skipjack stocks, the estimated mean weights have oscillated throughout the time series (1969-2020), **SKJ-Figure 9**, **SKJ-Figure 10**. The estimated mean weight of eastern skipjack is about 2.1 kg for 1969-2020. The western skipjack average weight is 3.4 kg, indicating that fish caught on eastern stock are smaller than the ones in the western stock.

Three relative indices of abundance were included in the stock assessment of the eastern skipjack, the Canary historical baitboat index (1980-2013), the EU PS FAD index (2010-2020), and the EU Echosounder buoy (2010-2020) index. The EU PS FAD index is new for this stock, derived from sets made by vessels fishing on FADs with operational buoys not owned by the vessel making the set. The Canary baitboat index showed a generally stable trend. For the recent period, the EU PS FAD index showed a slight decreasing trend over the time series, while the EU echosounder buoy index showed a sharp decline at the beginning of the series and a sharp increase at the end of the series (**SKJ-Figure 11**). For the western skipjack, five relative abundance indices were included in the stock assessment model: Brazilian baitboat historical (1981-1999) and recent (2000-2020), Brazilian handline (2010-2016), US-longline (1993-2020), and Venezuelan purse seiner (1987-2020) indices. The indices for recent years showed a slight decrease trend since the mid-2010s (**SKJ-Figure 12**).

SKJ-3. State of the stocks

The 2022 Skipjack Stock Assessment Meeting ([Anon., 2022b](#)) was conducted using similar assessment models/methods to those used in the assessments of other tropical tuna species, including yellowfin and bigeye tuna. Stock status evaluations for both stocks of Atlantic skipjack tuna used in 2022 included several modelling approaches, ranging from non-equilibrium (MPB) and Bayesian state-space (JABBA) production models to integrated statistical assessment models (Stock Synthesis). Different model formulations considering plausible representations of the dynamics of the skipjack stocks were used to characterize the stock status and the uncertainties in stock status evaluations.

Eastern skipjack stock

A full stock assessment was conducted for the eastern skipjack tuna stock in 2022, applying production models (JABBA) and one integrated statistical assessment model (Stock Synthesis) to the available catch data through 2020. The Group decided to combine the results of JABBA and Stock Synthesis, with equal weighting, to estimate stock status and develop management advice to capture all major uncertainties in the population dynamics. The uncertainty grids were comprised of combinations of CPUE selection ((i) Canary BB index + EU PS FADs index, and; (ii) Canary BB index + Echosounder buoy index), steepness h (0.7, 0.8, or 0.9), and growth (25, 50 or 75th regression quantiles) for both Stock Synthesis and JABBA.

SKJ-Figure 13 shows the historic trends of the relative fishing mortality (F/F_{MSY}) and relative biomass (B/B_{MSY}) from the different assessment model runs for eastern skipjack. The combined results of the assessment, based on the median of the entire uncertainty grid, show that in 2020 the East Atlantic skipjack tuna stock was not overfished (median $B_{2020}/B_{MSY} = 1.60$) and was not undergoing overfishing (median $F_{2020}/F_{MSY} = 0.63$). The median MSY was estimated as 216,617 t from the uncertainty grid of the deterministic runs. Probabilities of the stock being in each quadrant of the Kobe plot (**SKJ-Figure 14**) are 78% in the green (not overfished, not subject to overfishing), 4% in the orange (subject to overfishing but not overfished), 1% in the yellow (overfished but not subject to overfishing) and 16% in the red (overfished and subject to overfishing). In summary, the results indicated a stock status of not overfished (83% probability), with no overfishing (80% probability).

Noteworthy, the estimated stock biomass of the combined results as shown in the Kobe plot (**SKJ-Figure 14**) and summary table, there is large uncertainty in biomass estimates reflected in the long tails of the biomass distribution relative to B_{MSY} (95% confidence interval of 0.5 to 5.79 B/B_{MSY}). This large range of uncertainty in stock status estimates has implications on the estimated probabilities for each constant catch scenario in the projections that have been used to develop management advice (**SKJ-Tables 4 and 5**).

In the projection results from the Stock Synthesis and JABBA models, some iterations of high catches were predicted with exceptionally small biomass, which results in extremely high fishing mortality. Especially Stock Synthesis and JABBA runs with the Acoustic Buoy index removed projected low biomass within 3-4 years once the stock is harvested at high constant catches. **SKJ-Table 5** and **SKJ-Figure 15** show the joint stochastic projections for both quantities (B/B_{MSY} and F/F_{MSY}). The probability of biomass being less than 10% or 20% of the biomass that supports MSY was calculated for each projection year and catch scenario (**SKJ-Table 4**). Assuming a constant catch at MSY level, the probability of the stock being below 20% of the B_{MSY} at 2028 was about 17% and the probability of being below 10% of the B_{MSY} was about 14%.

Western skipjack stock

The assessment of the western skipjack stock was conducted using a Bayesian state-space production model (JABBA) and an integrated statistical assessment model (Stock Synthesis). Given that the stock status estimated from the JABBA model agreed with the estimated stock status using Stock Synthesis, the Group decided to use the results of the surplus production model as a comparative perception of the western skipjack stock status, but not for the development of management advice. Therefore, the final stock status and management advice presented in this Executive Summary are based on the combined results from the 9 distinct Stock Synthesis runs derived from the uncertainty grid proposed for the western skipjack stock. A more detailed description of the assessment can be seen in the Report of the 2022 Skipjack Stock Assessment Meeting ([Anon., 2022b](#)).

SKJ-Figure 16 shows the historical trends of the relative fishing mortality (F/F_{MSY}) and relative biomass (B/B_{MSY}) from the different assessment model platforms for the western skipjack. Based on the combined results used to the develop management advice (9 Stock Synthesis deterministic runs), the median estimate of SSB_{2020}/SSB_{MSY} is 1.60, and the median estimated for F_{2020}/F_{MSY} is 0.41. The combined results of all runs indicates that the western skipjack stock is estimated to be in healthy condition with 91% probability of being in the green quadrant, and that the stock is not overfished nor undergoing overfishing (**SKJ-Figure 17**). There was a relatively low estimated probability that the stock is either overfished (yellow quadrant; 6.2%) or both overfished and undergoing overfishing (red quadrant; 2.9%).

The catch advice is provided in the form of Kobe 2 Strategy Matrices including probabilities that overfishing is not occurring ($F \leq F_{MSY}$), stock is not overfished ($SSB \geq SSB_{MSY}$) and the joint probability of being in the green quadrant of the Kobe plot (i.e., $F \leq F_{MSY}$ and $SSB \geq SSB_{MSY}$) (**SKJ-Table 7**). Future constant catches of 20,000 t, close to the current catch (19,951 t in 2021) are expected to maintain the stock in the green quadrant. The median MSY across the 9 grid runs was 35,277 t. Future constant catches of this level are expected to maintain the stock in the green quadrant ($F \leq F_{MSY}$ and $SSB \geq SSB_{MSY}$) with about 70% probability by 2028. Probabilities of the stock biomass being below 20% and 10% of B_{MSY} are presented in **SKJ-Table 6**. The probability of the stock biomass being below 20% or 10% of B_{MSY} was less than 1% until 2028 assuming a future constant catch at the level of MSY. The projections for both quantities (F/F_{MSY} and SSB/SSB_{MSY}) are presented in **SKJ-Table 7** and **SKJ-Figure 18**.

SKJ-4. Effect of current regulations

The current regulations for tropical tunas, in [Rec. 22-01](#), only entered into force in June 2023, and the impacts on the SKJ stock and fisheries are not yet evident in the available scientific data. However, the previous Recommendation, [Rec. 21-01](#), included several measures that impacted fishing for the eastern stock, including the first Atlantic-wide, temporal closure on fishing for schools associated with FADs, limits to the number of FADs that can be actively managed by individual purse seiners, changes in FAD design, and others. In addition, taking into consideration the multi-species nature of tropical tuna fisheries, the TAC and catch limits adopted for other tropical tuna stocks, mainly bigeye tuna, may also explain the drop in skipjack catches in recent years. Before this closure, the Commission had adopted various FAD spatio-temporal closures ([Rec. 98-01](#), [Rec. 99-01](#), [Rec. 14-01](#), and [Rec. 16-01](#)).

The effect of the temporal FAD closure was evaluated by examining catch of each tropical tuna species, by month and by fleet, in 2020 with comparison to a reference period in the 1990s, to account for years in which no closure was in place. There is preliminary evidence that tropical tuna catch was lower during the closure than during the same months in the reference period, and the annual 2020 catch was lower than in 2019. Preliminary catch estimates for skipjack in 2021 are also lower than the catches recorded in 2020. After reviewing this information, the Committee concluded that Atlantic-wide, temporal closures on fishing on FAD-associated schools may lead to reduced catch of eastern skipjack. This conclusion is further discussed in section 19 (Responses to the Commission) of this report.

Although the measures in [Rec. 19-02](#) also applied to the western stock, no fleets were targeting western skipjack using FADs, so the impact of [Rec. 19-02](#) on the western stock and fisheries was likely to be minimal.

SKJ-5. Management recommendations

Eastern skipjack stock

The stock status of eastern Atlantic skipjack tuna in 2020 was estimated with a high probability (78%) to be in a sustainable condition (green quadrant), with that stock not overfished or subjected to overfishing. According to the Kobe 2 Strategy Matrix (K2SM), a future constant catch using the median MSY of 216,617 t will have about 55% probability of maintaining the stock in the green quadrant of the Kobe plot through 2028. Assuming a constant catch at MSY¹, the probability of the stock biomass being below 20% of B_{MSY} in 2028 was about 17%, and the probability of stock biomass being below 10% in 2028 was about 14%. Moreover, provisional catches for 2022 are substantially higher than the MSY estimated in the last stock assessment.

The Commission should also be aware that fishing effort for skipjack also impacts other species that are caught in combination with skipjack particularly in the purse seine FOB fisheries (particularly juveniles of yellowfin and bigeye tuna).

Western skipjack stock

The status of the western Atlantic skipjack stock in 2020 was estimated with a high probability (91%) to be in healthy condition and is not overfished nor undergoing overfishing. According to the Kobe II Strategy Matrix (K2SM), a future constant catch using the median MSY of 35,277 t will have about 70% probability of maintaining the stock in the green quadrant of the Kobe plot by 2028. Assuming a constant catch at MSY, the probabilities of the stock biomass being below 20% or 10% of the B_{MSY} until 2028 are less than 1%.

The SCRS will present results of the candidate management procedures (CMPs) of the western Atlantic skipjack tuna management strategy evaluation (MSE) to the Commission for their consideration for MP adoption in line with the MSE Road Map, which is contained in item 19.36.

¹ Projections are conducted with the MSY estimated for each model of the uncertainty grid.

ATLANTIC SKIPJACK SUMMARY

	<i>Eastern Atlantic</i>	<i>Western Atlantic</i>
Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) ¹	216,617 t (172,735 – 284,658 t)	35,277 t (28,444 – 46,340 t)
Yield for 2020 at the Stock Assessment	217,874 t	18,183 t
Current yield for 2022	271,371 t	21,383 t
Relative Biomass (B_{2020}/B_{MSY}) ²	1.60 (0.50 – 5.79)	1.60 (0.90 – 2.87)
Relative Fishing Mortality (F_{2020}/F_{MSY}) ²	0.63 (0.18 – 2.35)	0.41 (0.19 – 0.89)

Stock Status (2020)

Overfished:	No	No
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Overfishing:	No	No
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¹ Median and 95% confidence interval estimated from the joint uncertainty grid.

² Median and 95% confidence interval based on 90,000 iterations of the multivariate lognormal (MVLN) approximation for Stock Synthesis and 90,000 Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) iterations for JABBA.

SKJ-Table 1. Estimated catches (t) of skipjack tuna (Katsuwonus pelamis) by area; gear and flag.

Table with columns for years 1993-2022 and rows for various categories: TOTAL, ATE, ATW, Landings, Landings(FP), Discards, and Landings (with sub-rows for CP and various flags/areas).

SKJ-Table 2. CAS (catch-at-size) matrix estimated for SKJ-E (eastern stock) in thousands of fish caught, by year and 2 cm size classes.

Table with columns for Year (1969-2020) and Li (2cm) (20-90) containing numerical data. Includes a TOTAL row at the bottom.

SKJ-Table 3. CAS (catch-at-size) matrix estimated for SKJ-W (western stock) in thousands of fish caught, by year and 2 cm size classes.

Li (2cm)	Year																																																					
	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
26	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
28	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	3	0	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	14	33	0	4	2	2	1	2	
30	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	4	1	8	1	2	1	1	12	15	3	1	2	1	4	0	17	10	2	1	2	0	2	0	2	0	4	0	2	10	6	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	36	0	1	16	10	8	4	4
32	5	7	6	6	6	7	7	8	7	10	5	14	1	1	1	2	15	33	4	4	4	2	13	1	56	31	4	2	3	1	3	8	11	2	4	16	9	0	9	1	10	5	2	0	12	1	4	39	24	59	30	11		
34	5	7	6	6	6	7	26	30	27	16	11	18	2	1	3	10	14	24	5	5	6	3	30	22	127	35	11	8	11	5	11	29	52	8	10	34	16	0	23	3	23	13	6	0	15	33	29	109	87	62	48	48		
36	7	10	9	8	9	13	39	45	40	23	22	23	4	3	17	29	74	62	16	15	35	33	49	77	305	58	32	27	34	10	27	32	86	16	12	24	34	2	39	12	40	28	21	11	8	1	14	300	271	242	214	207		
38	23	34	30	30	30	46	66	70	64	44	49	44	8	6	27	57	59	121	75	36	76	48	129	68	512	148	79	65	75	48	75	92	144	29	30	47	45	9	78	13	69	47	30	12	10	136	74	453	435	398	378	350		
40	25	38	34	36	35	78	107	117	106	83	84	91	30	34	56	166	694	305	105	63	86	67	202	121	586	281	114	152	174	119	147	144	294	45	84	67	102	30	94	25	76	70	35	26	187	75	141	244	335	248	160	149		
42	33	50	45	49	47	116	110	110	104	113	95	186	119	342	385	706	1047	383	93	108	121	101	393	221	687	326	146	173	167	140	125	150	350	74	175	128	247	105	133	190	160	278	242	309	93	150	185	265	571	295	226	165		
44	50	75	67	75	73	161	161	147	140	160	127	273	211	556	600	1016	1100	407	311	229	235	147	518	357	894	512	204	208	187	177	132	201	425	103	319	382	458	338	223	362	288	479	475	596	295	61	512	396	843	439	350	277		
46	59	87	78	81	89	175	159	149	140	210	153	266	231	253	373	547	945	551	385	389	419	357	764	530	855	716	283	320	302	296	185	187	413	188	473	901	634	477	316	442	615	634	735	742	524	994	571	636	988	1769	592	489		
48	55	82	72	72	89	166	152	154	148	219	154	274	300	289	380	475	1041	710	648	647	583	756	1070	707	793	837	434	510	466	400	344	312	577	329	567	1228	909	899	411	908	847	850	1035	996	507	1622	842	894	1096	1097	894	694		
50	54	79	69	68	93	129	127	130	123	198	188	241	461	436	588	582	1637	922	729	919	958	1258	1204	741	833	981	531	579	732	522	517	519	801	526	614	1316	1337	1207	696	979	963	900	1163	995	2050	2410	486	1004	1061	1140	975	816		
52	43	56	48	52	63	84	107	120	95	165	131	192	792	847	877	986	1448	1111	701	929	1183	1473	1291	821	885	1020	621	690	1000	826	697	735	935	689	675	904	1486	1306	775	704	1053	807	1154	981	3063	1783	494	972	980	1025	918	783		
54	30	39	32	34	43	61	83	87	69	139	106	197	710	1025	933	1122	1437	1288	795	778	1129	1437	1214	863	1213	914	607	739	1180	963	821	895	1013	725	740	809	1426	1327	587	501	898	686	1026	919	1536	807	439	616	632	834	711	486		
56	29	36	27	27	31	41	64	72	58	116	119	215	684	932	811	824	1300	1323	854	743	952	1067	1093	851	991	899	566	775	1206	935	898	959	952	714	745	726	1091	955	478	391	758	570	841	784	667	420	429	758	689	599	616	562		
58	31	34	22	25	27	30	41	56	49	98	123	278	467	676	643	638	1054	1003	792	682	830	565	855	790	898	798	626	850	1063	1004	985	1066	817	620	684	568	543	723	418	388	611	484	692	701	843	341	550	663	661	603	601	562		
60	37	41	27	31	37	33	43	62	52	76	113	289	496	550	529	527	681	691	528	509	424	287	588	595	553	647	538	743	782	880	861	916	551	407	457	471	334	356	404	302	493	396	547	584	526	107	389	218	205	200	184	256		
62	21	25	16	16	27	19	19	26	25	55	85	241	400	580	491	592	390	369	251	326	265	187	373	399	362	420	436	584	509	569	556	602	449	321	371	372	175	188	368	217	322	277	375	416	287	203	446	116	100	79	70	108		
64	21	24	17	18	25	21	16	23	20	51	73	187	313	461	359	422	184	168	155	189	121	68	182	282	271	219	256	340	292	297	291	321	327	230	256	265	107	102	405	113	147	123	170	190	20	68	215	64	46	67	37	48		
66	11	10	6	9	10	7	12	22	18	49	46	136	253	420	354	419	95	86	103	97	83	49	119	159	97	86	114	157	193	194	190	208	268	196	214	109	39	49	322	123	113	129	145	168	2	69	156	35	11	9	5	35		
68	8	11	7	7	10	9	5	6	7	38	34	89	121	280	269	255	54	42	90	40	51	19	49	127	41	43	64	85	99	103	104	104	197	136	149	37	19	11	270	136	78	150	151	186	1	38	96	19	9	9	3	12		
70	16	23	21	19	24	27	8	5	5	26	21	64	83	211	229	238	33	34	51	19	56	9	19	81	66	35	57	73	41	47	46	41	57	48	47	17	21	0	146	117	47	128	121	157	0	2	22	14	5	5	1	27		
72	10	15	14	12	17	17	5	3	3	13	12	25	50	79	102	79	30	21	53	16	14	5	31	85	18	28	49	54	13	10	12	10	50	40	41	14	19	0	75	56	27	72	61	76	1	0	22	12	3	3	3	24		
74	2	4	4	3	6	6	4	2	2	7	7	16	36	26	48	22	11	10	29	19	14	13	15	39	21	27	26	26	11	9	7	31	25	26	7	8	6	50	70	10	76	65	91	19	5	24	4	3	3	1	0			
76	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	4	12	24	18	41	12	2	4	10	7	5	5	15	34	30	13	12	8	4	5	2	3	25	16	16	8	4	9	31	41	10	46	38	52	1	1	3	4	2	5	1	22			
78	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	6	7	3	10	6	16	7	2	2	3	15	11	13	38	8	10	16	13	8	5	5	5	2	2	2	6	5	7	5	27	1	29	24	34	20	0	12	1	1	54	28	0	0		
80	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	8	0	0	1	4	5	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	5	3	4	1	3	5	0	0	0	0	4	3	6																		

SKJ-Table 4. SKJ-E. The probability of stock biomass being below 10% or 20% of B_{MSY} during the projection period for a given catch level and is based on 180,000 iterations of the MVLN and MCMC statistical analyses developed from the Stock Synthesis and JABBA model runs (2 model platforms x 3 steepness options x 3 growth/M options x 2 index combinations).

Probability of $B < 10\% * B_{MSY}$						
TAC (kt)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
100	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
110	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%
120	5%	6%	6%	7%	7%	7%
130	5%	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%
140	5%	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%
150	5%	6%	7%	7%	8%	8%
160	5%	7%	7%	8%	8%	8%
170	5%	7%	7%	8%	8%	9%
180	5%	7%	8%	8%	9%	9%
190	5%	7%	8%	9%	9%	10%
200	5%	7%	8%	9%	10%	10%
210	5%	7%	9%	10%	11%	12%
220	5%	7%	9%	10%	12%	14%
230	5%	7%	9%	11%	14%	15%
240	5%	8%	10%	13%	15%	17%
250	5%	8%	10%	14%	17%	20%
260	5%	8%	11%	15%	19%	23%
270	5%	8%	13%	17%	21%	31%
280	5%	9%	14%	18%	27%	48%
290	5%	9%	15%	21%	41%	51%
300	5%	10%	16%	27%	49%	54%

Probability of $B < 20\% * B_{MSY}$						
TAC (kt)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
100	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
110	6%	6%	6%	7%	7%	7%
120	6%	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%
130	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
140	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
150	6%	7%	7%	8%	8%	8%
160	6%	7%	7%	8%	8%	8%
170	6%	7%	8%	8%	8%	9%
180	6%	7%	8%	9%	9%	9%
190	6%	7%	8%	9%	10%	10%
200	6%	7%	9%	9%	10%	11%
210	6%	8%	9%	10%	11%	14%
220	6%	8%	9%	11%	14%	17%
230	6%	8%	10%	13%	17%	20%
240	6%	8%	11%	16%	19%	22%
250	6%	9%	13%	18%	22%	26%
260	6%	9%	15%	20%	25%	32%
270	6%	10%	17%	22%	29%	43%
280	6%	11%	18%	25%	38%	61%
290	6%	12%	20%	30%	54%	64%
300	6%	13%	22%	38%	61%	67%

SKJ-Table 5. SKJ-E. Joint probabilities of the eastern Atlantic skipjack stock being below F_{MSY} (overfishing not occurring), above B_{MSY} (not overfished) and above B_{MSY} and below F_{MSY} (green zone) in a given year for a given catch level (thousand t), based on 90,000 iterations of the MVLN approximation for Stock Synthesis and 90,000 MCMC iterations for JABBA.

Probability $F \leq F_{MSY}$						
TAC (kt)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
100	91%	92%	93%	93%	93%	94%
110	90%	92%	92%	93%	93%	93%
120	89%	91%	92%	92%	93%	93%
130	88%	90%	91%	92%	92%	92%
140	87%	89%	90%	91%	91%	92%
150	85%	87%	88%	89%	90%	90%
160	84%	85%	86%	87%	88%	88%
170	82%	84%	84%	85%	85%	86%
180	81%	81%	82%	82%	82%	82%
190	79%	79%	79%	78%	77%	76%
200	77%	76%	75%	73%	71%	70%
210	75%	73%	71%	68%	65%	63%
220	73%	70%	67%	63%	59%	57%
230	71%	67%	62%	57%	53%	50%
240	69%	63%	57%	51%	46%	42%
250	67%	60%	52%	45%	39%	35%
260	65%	56%	47%	38%	32%	27%
270	63%	52%	42%	33%	26%	20%
280	60%	48%	36%	27%	20%	14%
290	58%	44%	31%	21%	14%	10%
300	56%	40%	26%	16%	10%	7%

Probability $SSB > = SSB_{MSY}$ or $B > = B_{MSY}$						
TAC (kt)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
100	82%	88%	91%	92%	93%	93%
110	82%	88%	90%	92%	92%	93%
120	82%	87%	90%	91%	92%	92%
130	82%	87%	89%	91%	92%	92%
140	81%	86%	88%	90%	91%	91%
150	81%	85%	87%	89%	90%	90%
160	81%	84%	86%	87%	88%	89%
170	80%	83%	84%	85%	86%	87%
180	80%	81%	82%	82%	82%	83%
190	79%	80%	80%	79%	78%	77%
200	79%	78%	77%	74%	72%	70%
210	78%	76%	73%	70%	66%	63%
220	77%	74%	69%	64%	60%	58%
230	77%	72%	65%	59%	55%	52%
240	76%	69%	61%	54%	49%	45%
250	75%	66%	57%	49%	43%	37%
260	74%	63%	53%	44%	36%	29%
270	73%	61%	48%	38%	29%	19%
280	72%	57%	44%	32%	20%	12%
290	71%	54%	39%	24%	12%	9%
300	70%	51%	34%	17%	9%	7%

Probability $F \leq F_{MSY}$ and $SSB > = SSB_{MSY}$ or $B > = B_{MSY}$						
TAC (kt)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
100	82%	88%	91%	92%	93%	93%
110	82%	88%	90%	92%	92%	93%
120	81%	87%	90%	91%	92%	92%
130	81%	86%	89%	90%	91%	92%
140	81%	85%	88%	89%	90%	91%
150	80%	84%	86%	88%	89%	90%
160	79%	83%	84%	86%	87%	88%
170	79%	81%	83%	84%	84%	85%
180	78%	79%	80%	80%	81%	81%
190	77%	77%	77%	77%	76%	75%
200	76%	75%	74%	72%	70%	68%
210	75%	72%	70%	67%	63%	61%
220	73%	70%	65%	61%	57%	55%
230	71%	66%	60%	55%	51%	48%
240	69%	63%	55%	49%	45%	41%
250	67%	59%	50%	43%	38%	33%
260	65%	54%	45%	37%	31%	25%
270	62%	50%	40%	32%	24%	17%
280	60%	46%	34%	26%	17%	10%
290	58%	41%	30%	19%	10%	8%
300	55%	38%	25%	13%	7%	6%

SKJ-Table 6. SKJ-W. The probability of stock biomass being below 10% or 20% of B_{MSY} during the projection period for a given catch level and is based on 200,000 iterations of the MVLN approximation for the Stock Synthesis.

Probability of $B < 10\% * B_{MSY}$						
TAC (1000s mt)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
16	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
18	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
20	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
22	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
24	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
26	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
28	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
30	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
32	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
33	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
34	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
35	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
36	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
38	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
40	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Probability of $B < 20\% * B_{MSY}$						
TAC (1000s mt)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
16	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
18	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
20	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
22	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
24	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
26	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
28	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
30	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
32	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
33	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
34	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
35	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
36	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
38	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
40	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%

SKJ-Table 7. SKJ-W. Estimated probabilities of the western Atlantic skipjack stock being below F_{MSY} (overfishing not occurring), above B_{MSY} (not overfished) and above B_{MSY} and below F_{MSY} (green zone) in a given year for a given catch level (thousand t), based on 200,000 iterations of the MVLN approximation.

Probability $F \leq F_{MSY}$

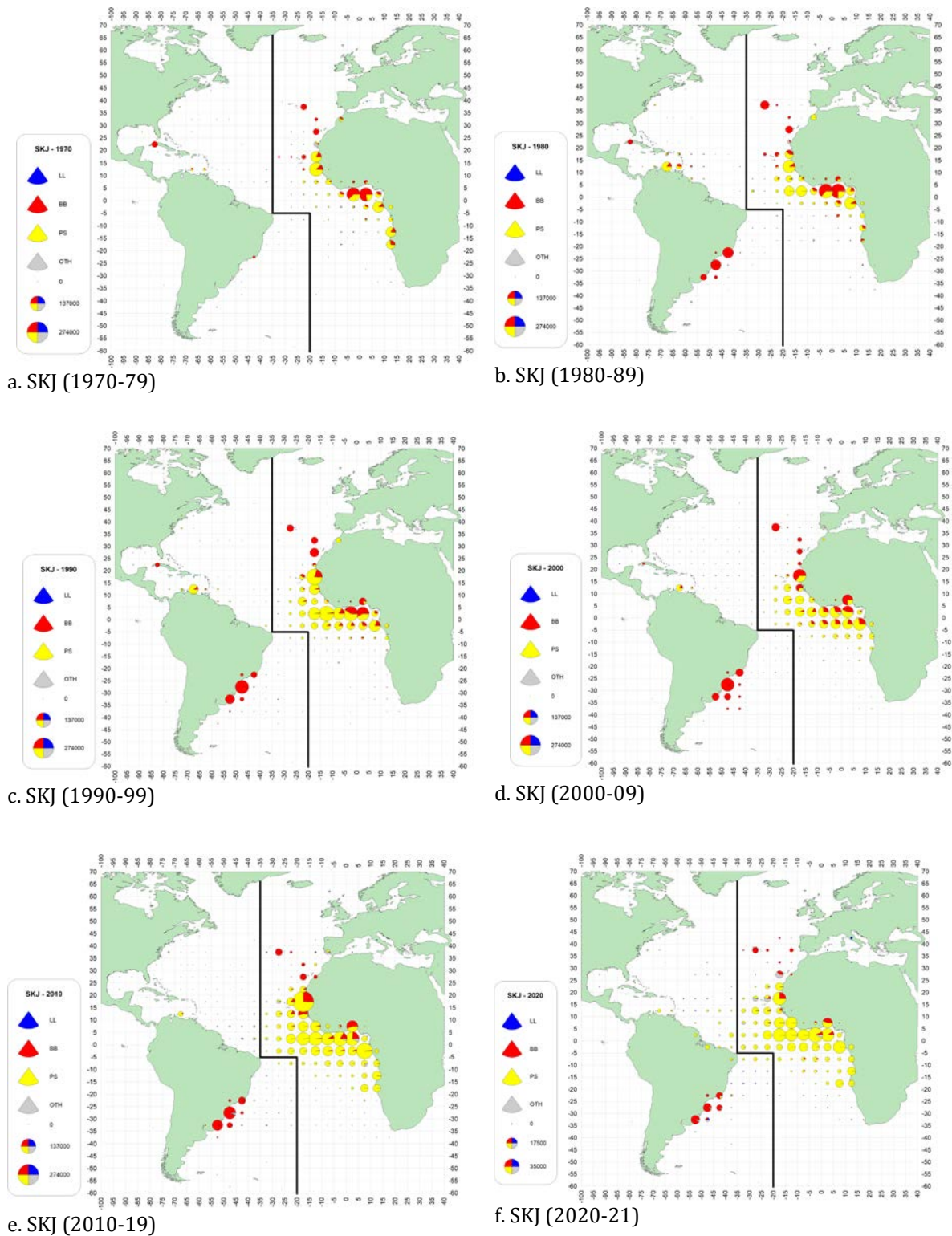
TAC (1000s mt)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
16	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
18	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
20	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
22	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
24	99%	99%	99%	100%	100%	100%
26	98%	98%	98%	99%	99%	99%
28	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
30	96%	95%	94%	93%	93%	92%
32	94%	92%	91%	89%	87%	85%
33	93%	91%	88%	86%	83%	80%
34	92%	89%	86%	82%	79%	75%
35	91%	87%	83%	78%	74%	70%
36	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%
38	88%	81%	74%	67%	61%	56%
40	85%	76%	67%	59%	53%	48%

Probability $SSB \geq SSB_{MSY}$

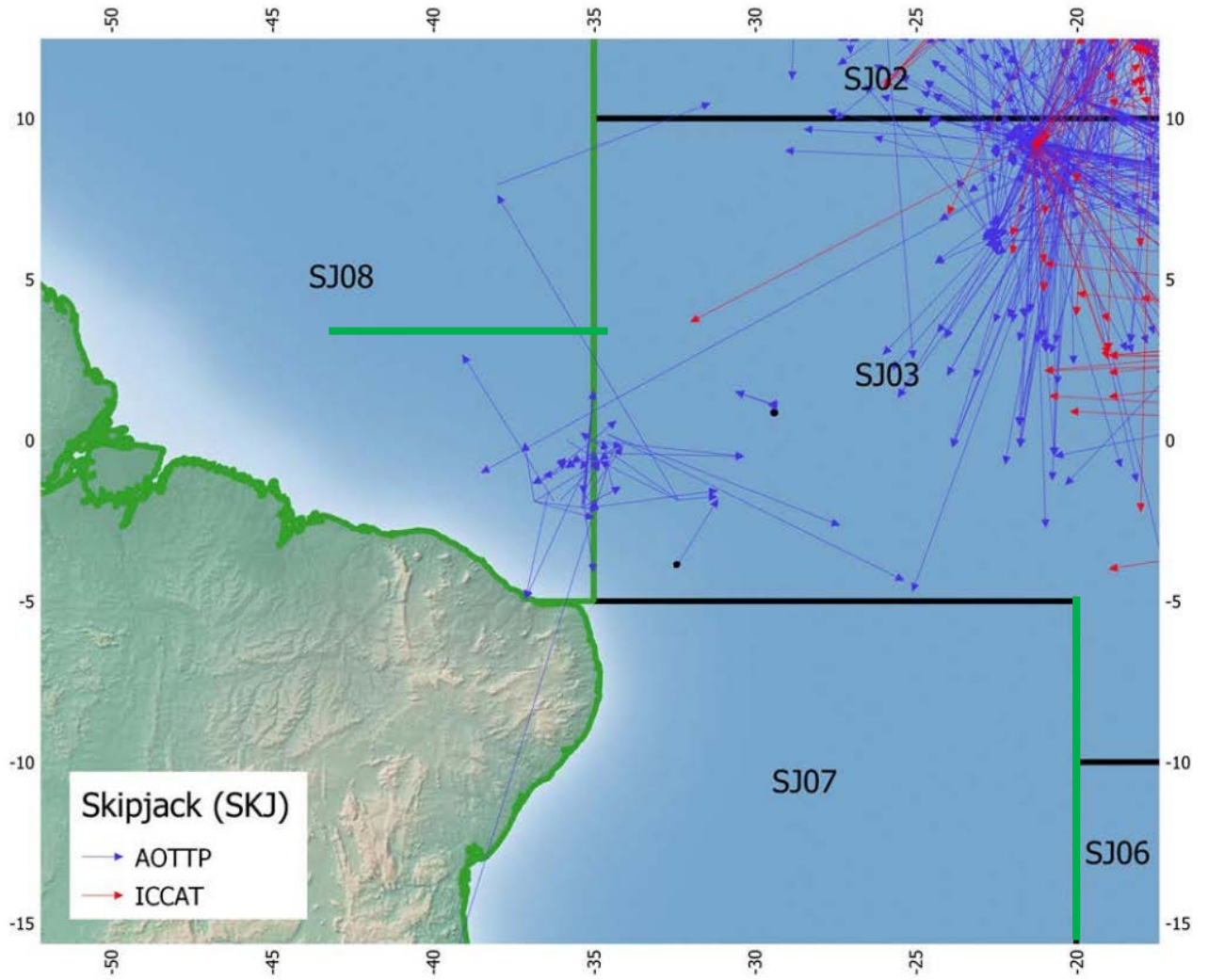
TAC (1000s mt)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
16	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
18	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
20	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
22	99%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
24	99%	99%	99%	100%	100%	100%
26	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%
28	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
30	98%	97%	96%	96%	95%	94%
32	97%	96%	94%	92%	90%	88%
33	97%	95%	93%	90%	87%	84%
34	96%	94%	91%	87%	83%	79%
35	96%	93%	89%	84%	79%	74%
36	96%	92%	87%	81%	75%	69%
38	95%	89%	82%	73%	66%	60%
40	94%	86%	76%	66%	59%	53%

Probability $F \leq F_{MSY}$ and $SSB \geq SSB_{MSY}$

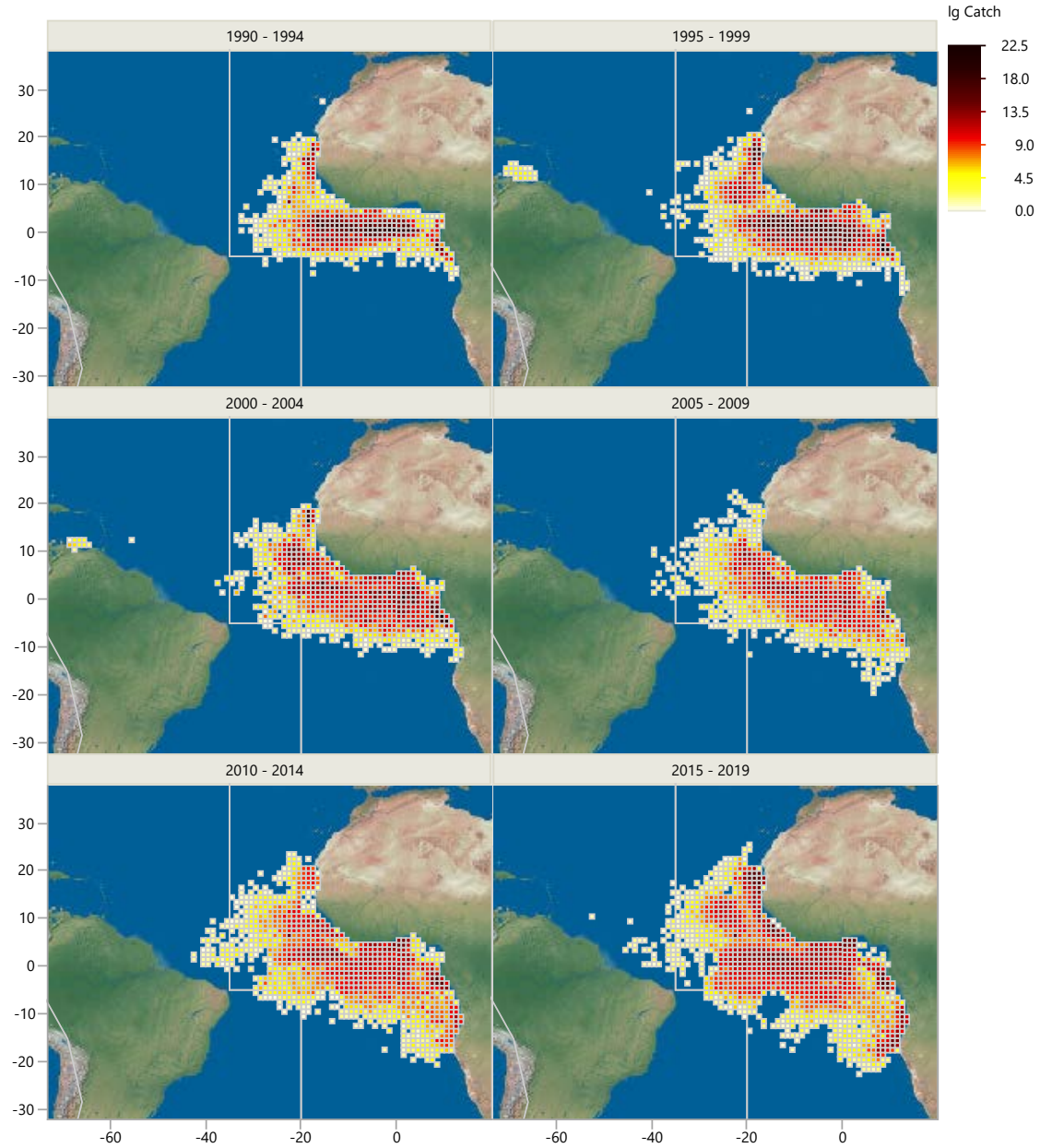
TAC (1000s mt)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
16	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
18	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
20	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
22	99%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
24	99%	99%	99%	99%	100%	100%
26	98%	98%	98%	99%	99%	99%
28	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
30	96%	95%	94%	93%	93%	92%
32	94%	92%	91%	89%	87%	85%
33	93%	91%	88%	86%	83%	80%
34	92%	89%	86%	82%	79%	75%
35	91%	87%	83%	78%	74%	70%
36	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%
38	88%	81%	74%	67%	61%	56%
40	85%	76%	67%	59%	53%	48%



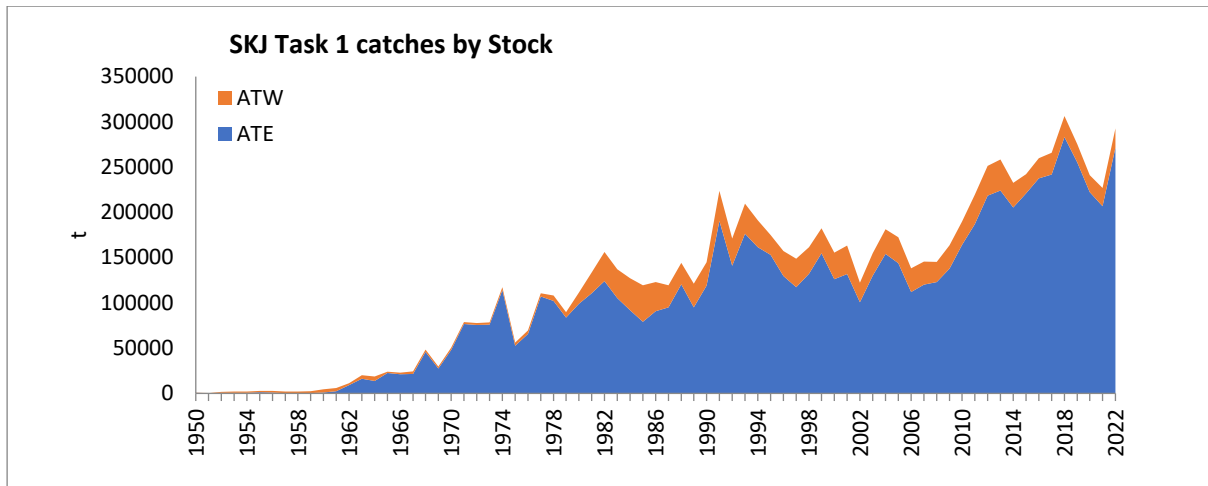
SKJ-Figure 1. [a-f]. Geographical distribution of the skipjack catch by major gears and decade. The maps are scaled to the maximum catch observed during 1970-2021 (last decade only covers 2 years).



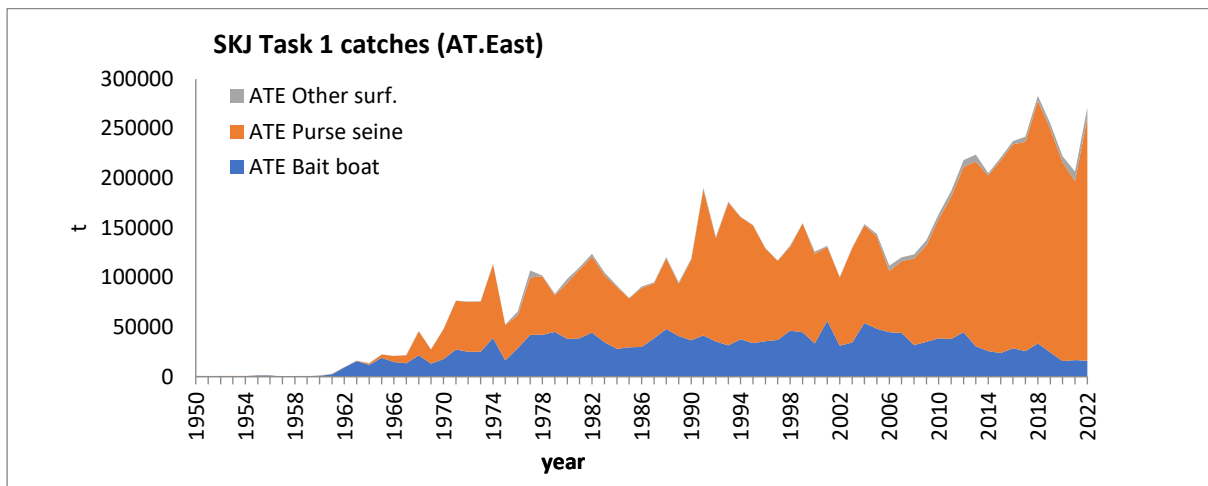
SKJ-Figure 2. A map of the AOTTP (blue lines) and ICCAT (red lines) tagged returns demonstrating the movement of fish in proximity to the eastern-western stock boundary. Area codes correspond to SKJ sample areas. Green line represents the East-West stock boundary.



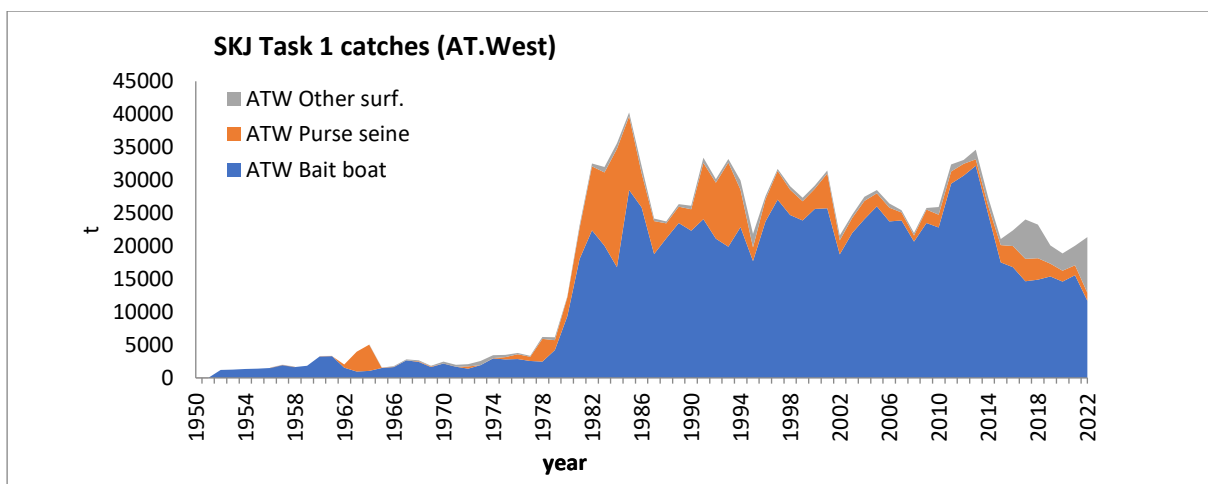
SKJ-Figure 3. Spatial distribution of the total SKJ catch (lg scale) from all PS-FAD fisheries by 1° x 1° of latitude - longitude and by lustrum (each box) 1990 - 2019. Line denotes the SKJ stocks boundary.



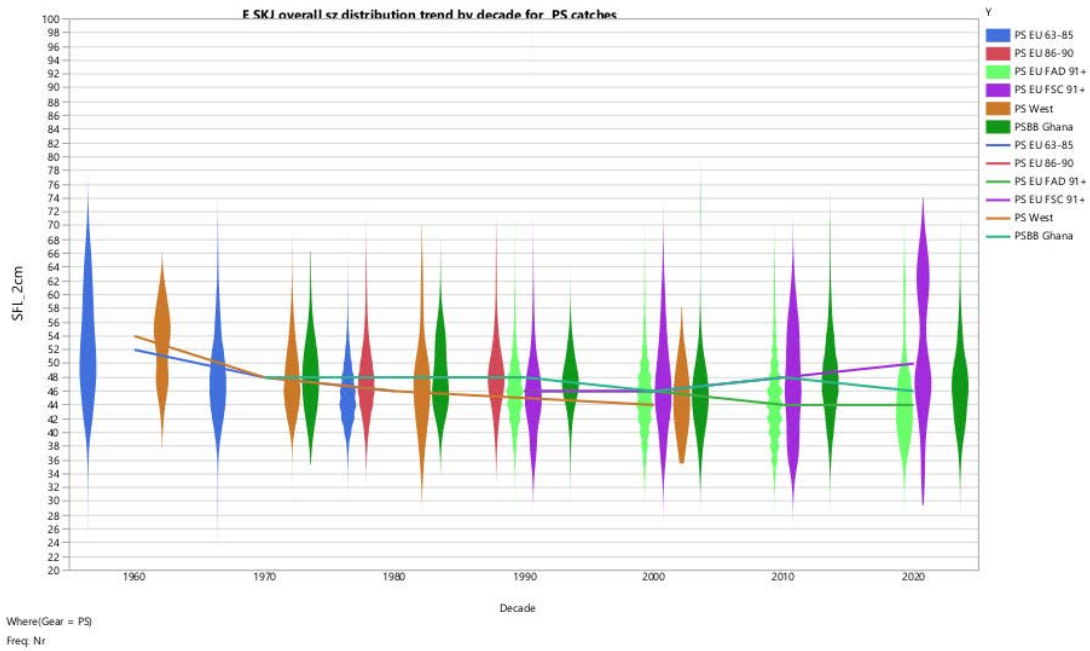
SKJ-Figure 4. Total skipjack catches (t) in the Atlantic and by stock (East and West) between 1950 and 2022. The 2022 figure is still preliminary.



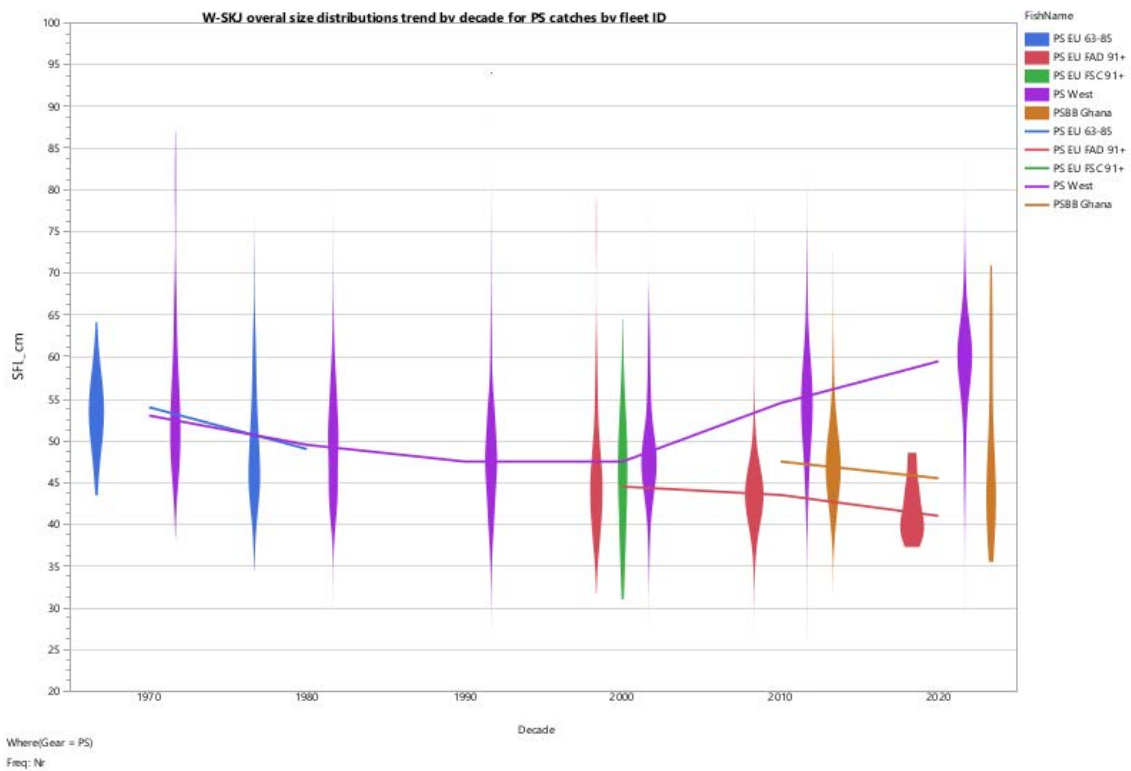
SKJ-Figure 5. Skipjack catches in the eastern Atlantic, by gear (1950-2022). The values for 2022 are preliminary.



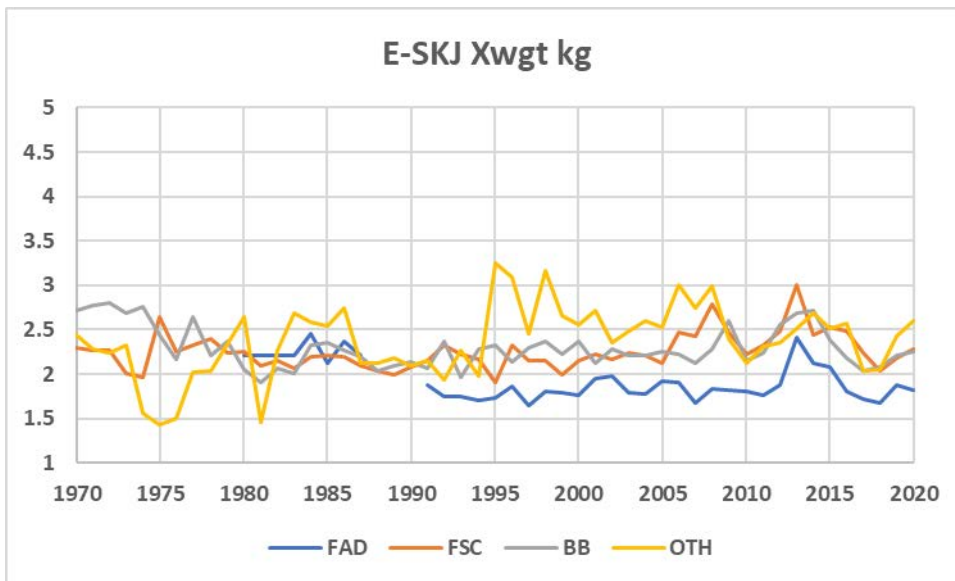
SKJ-Figure 6. Skipjack catches in the western Atlantic, by gear (1950-2022). The values for 2022 are preliminary.



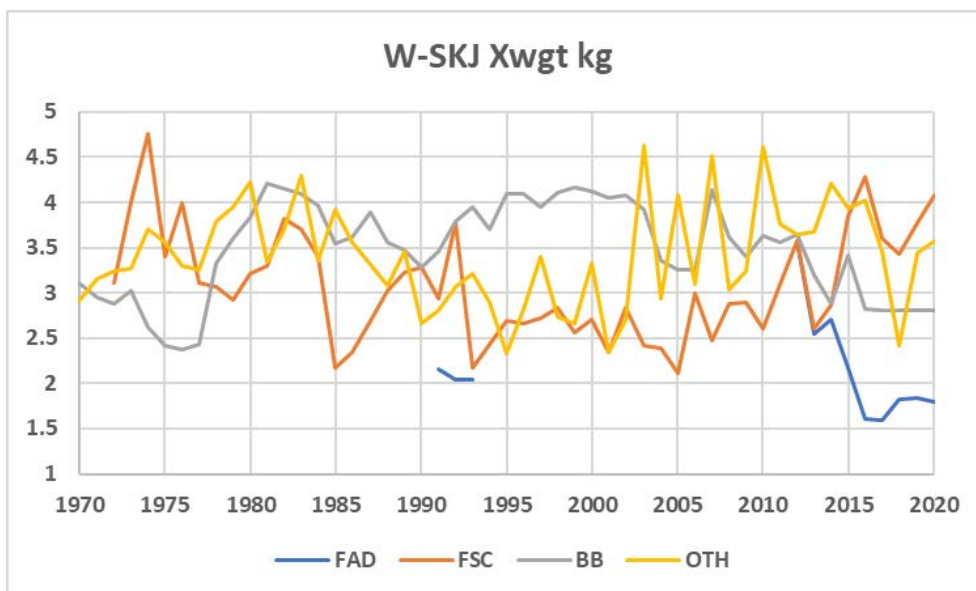
SKJ-Figure 7. SKJ-E. Overall size distribution of catch by decade for the PS fisheries by fleet ID, lines indicate the median of the distribution.



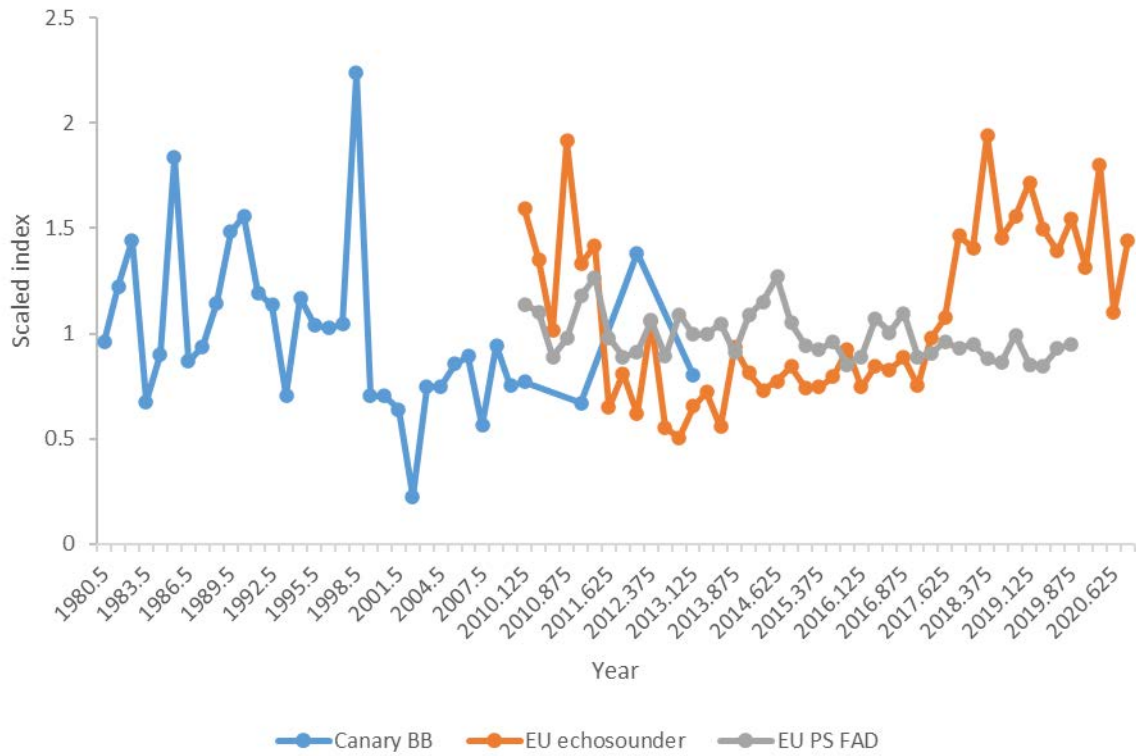
SKJ-Figure 8. SKJ-W. Size distributions by fleet ID from the PS fisheries, lines indicate the median of the distributions.



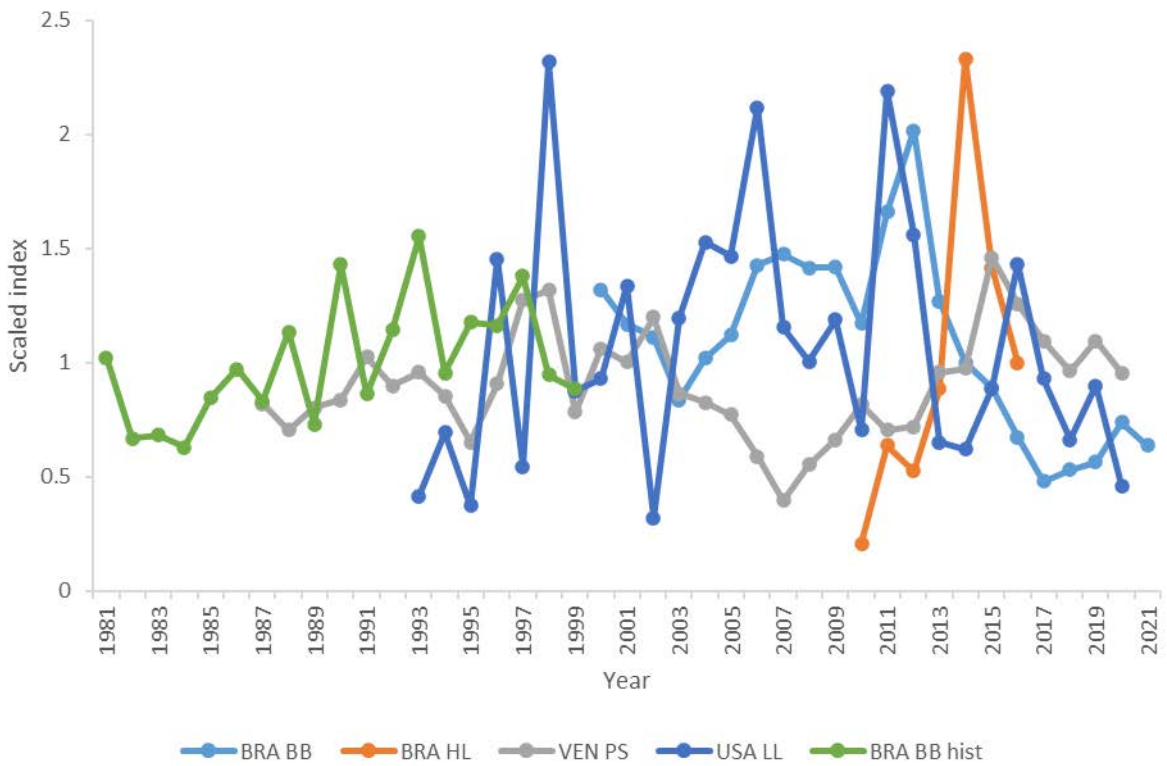
SKJ-Figure 9. SKJ-E. Mean weights (kg) estimated from the overall CAS estimations updated by Secretariat including Fishing mode free-schools (FSC), FOB (FAD), baitboat (BB), and other gears (OTH).



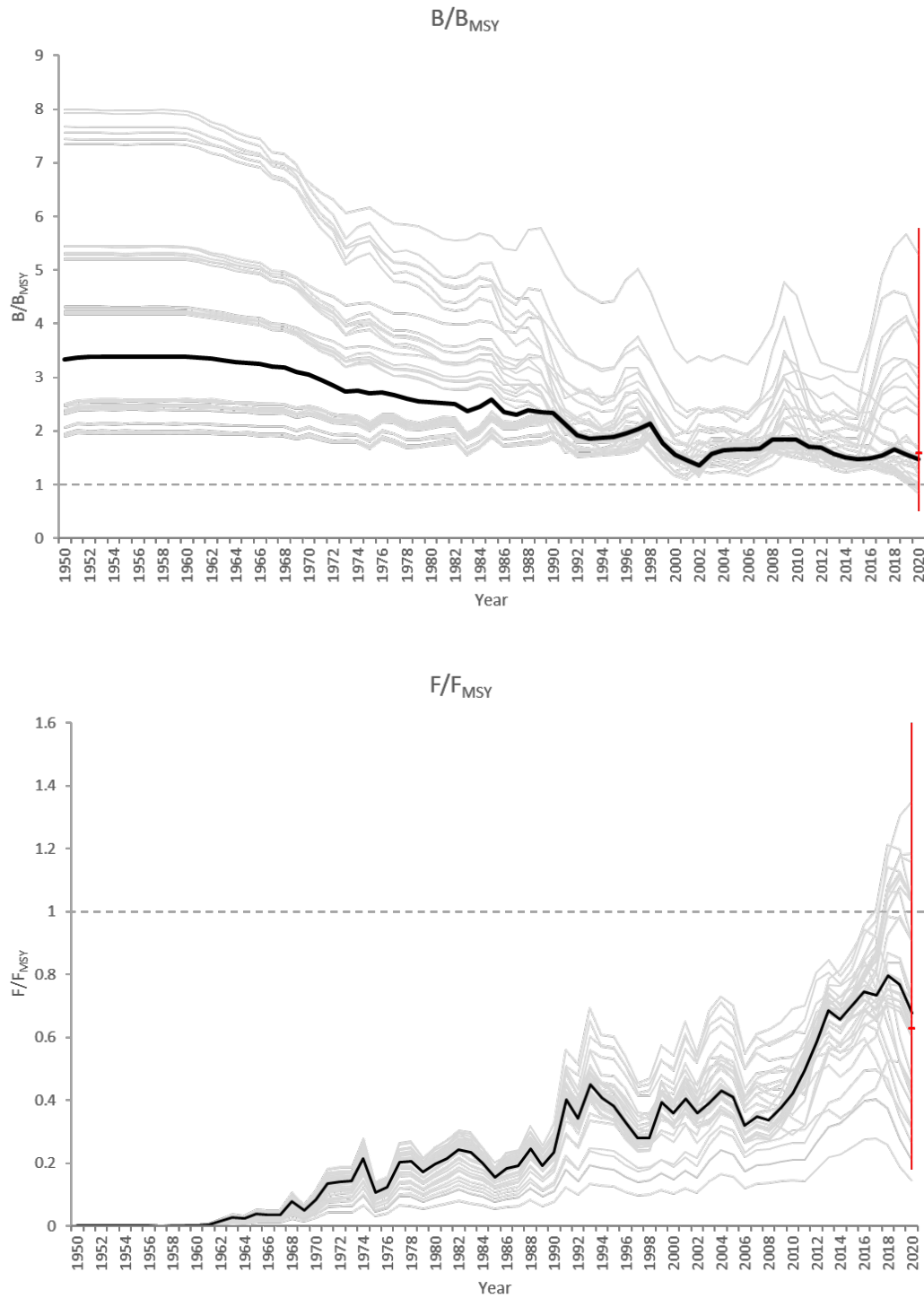
SKJ-Figure 10. SKJ-W. Mean weights (kg) estimated from the overall CAS estimations updated by Secretariat including Fishing mode free-schools (FSC), FOB (FAD), baitboat (BB), and other gears (OTH).



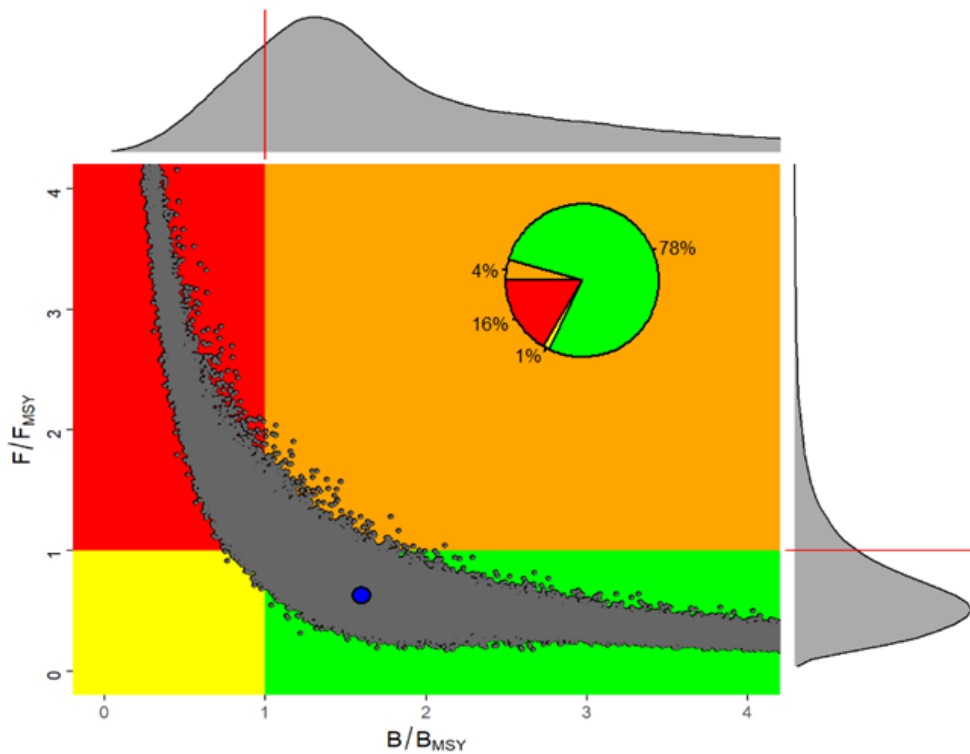
SKJ-Figure 11. SKJ-E. Relative abundance indices included in the final stock assessment models, Stock Synthesis and JABBA, for the eastern skipjack stock. Years in the x axis are non-integers because the model runs at quarterly time steps.



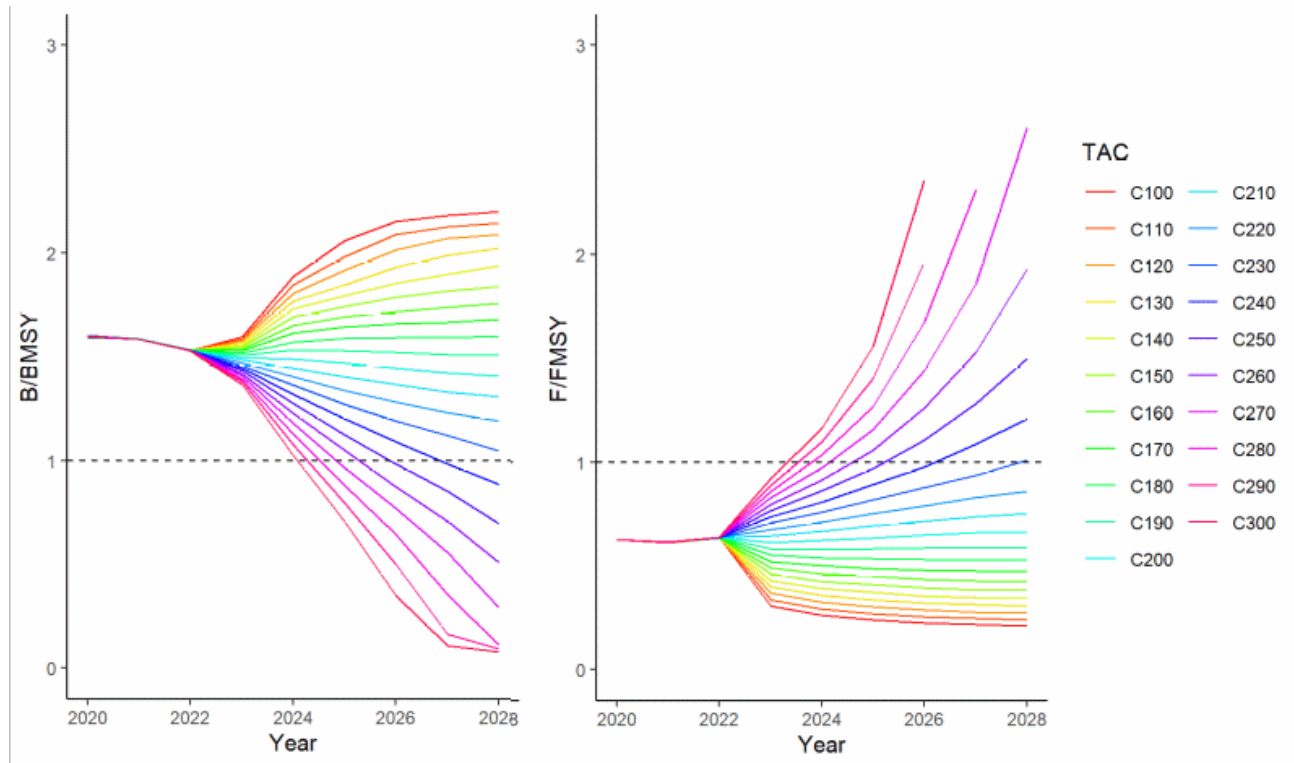
SKJ-Figure 12. SKJ-W. Relative abundance indices included in the final stock assessment model, Stock Synthesis, for the western skipjack stock.



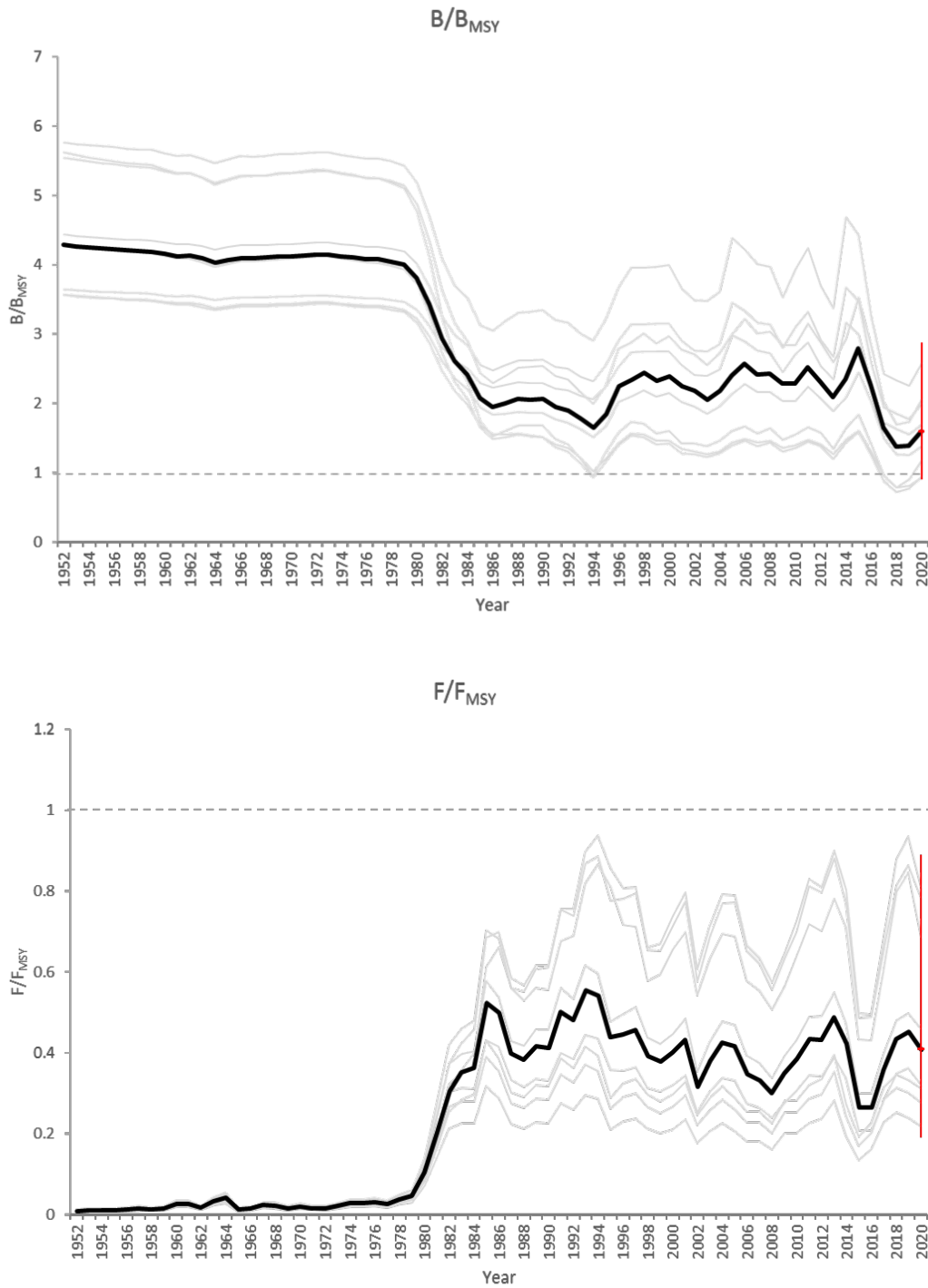
SKJ-Figure 13. SKJ-E. Relative abundance (B/B_{MSY}) (top) and fishing mortality (F/F_{MSY}) (bottom) historic median trends for the eastern skipjack stock estimated by each model from the uncertainty grid, solid line represent the median of the trends plotted, and the vertical red line in 2020, the 95% confidence bound of the stochastic combined results.



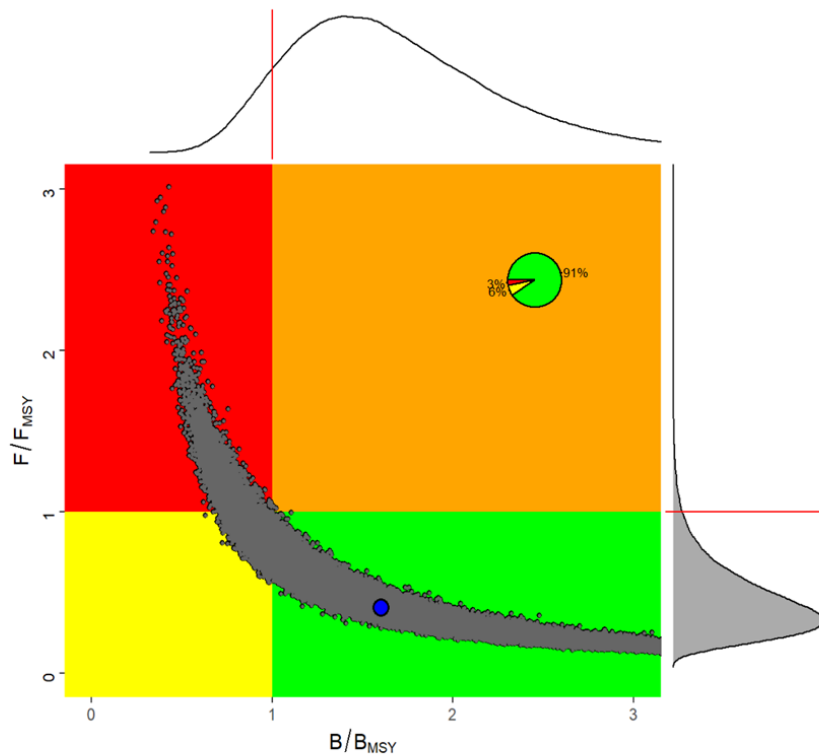
SKJ-Figure 14. SKJ-E. Joint Kobe phase plot for the 18 Stock Synthesis uncertainty grid runs and 18 JABBA uncertainty grid runs for the eastern Atlantic skipjack stock. For each run the benchmarks are calculated from the year-specific selectivity and fleet allocations, and based on 90,000 MVLN iterations for Stock Synthesis and 90,000 MCMC iterations for JABBA. The blue point shows the median of 180,000 iterations for SSB_{2020}/SSB_{MSY} or B_{2020}/B_{MSY} and F_{2020}/F_{MSY} for the entire set of runs in the grid. Grey points represent the 2020 estimates of relative fishing mortality and relative spawning stock biomass for 2020 for each of the 180,000 iterations. The upper graph represents the smoothed frequency distribution of SSB_{2020}/SSB_{MSY} or B_{2020}/B_{MSY} estimates for 2020. The right graph represents the smoothed frequency distribution of F_{2020}/F_{MSY} estimates for 2020. The inserted pie graph represents the percentage of each 2020 estimate that fall in each quadrant of the Kobe plot. All SSB for Stock Synthesis showed the values at the end of years.



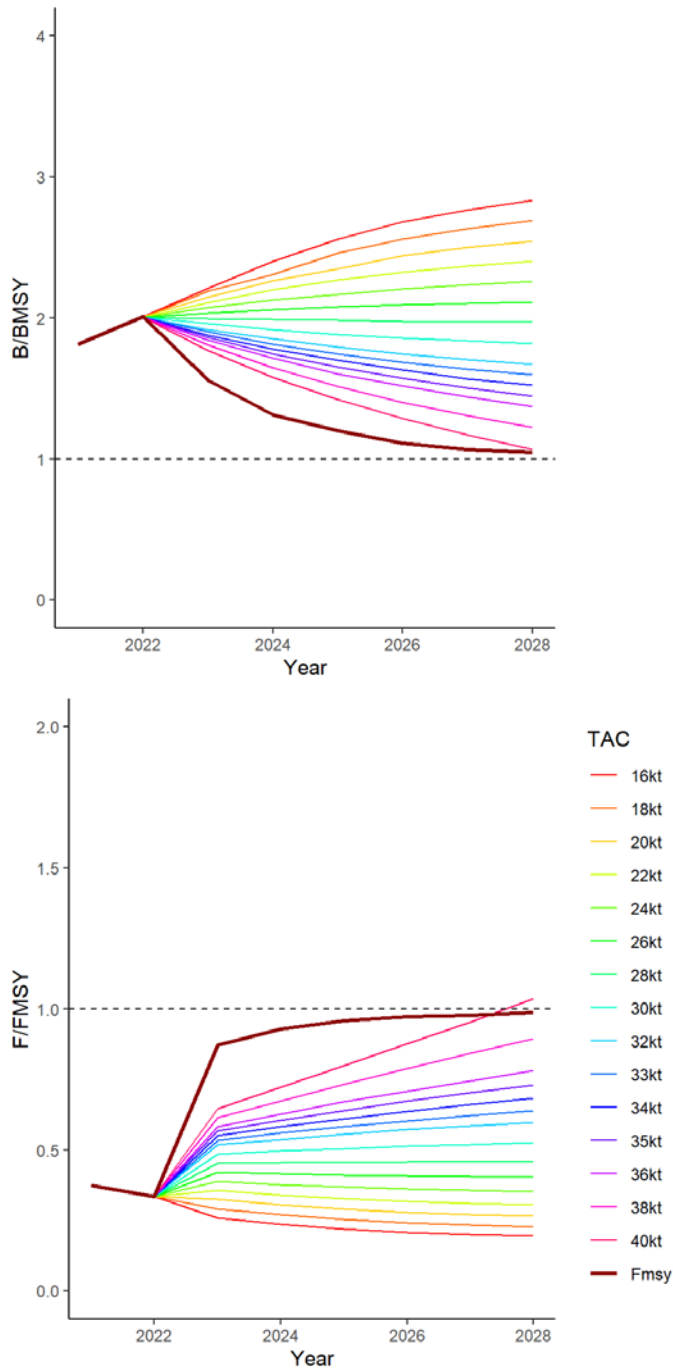
SKJ-Figure 15. SKJ-E. Joint stochastic projections of B/B_{MSY} and F/F_{MSY} for the 18 Stock Synthesis and the 18 JABBA uncertainty grid runs at 100-300 thousand t constant TACs for the eastern Atlantic skipjack stocks. The lines are the median of 180,000 iterations.



SKJ-Figure 16. SKJ-W. Relative abundance (B/B_{MSY}) (top) and fishing mortality (F/F_{MSY}) (bottom) historical median trends for the western skipjack stock estimated by each model from the uncertainty grid, solid line represents the median of the trends plotted, and the vertical red line in 2020, the 95% confidence bound of the stochastic combined results.



SKJ-Figure 17. SKJ-W. Kobe phase plot for the 9 Stock Synthesis uncertainty grid runs for the western Atlantic skipjack stock. For each run the benchmarks are calculated from the year-specific selectivity and fleet allocations and based on 200,000 MVLN iterations. The blue point shows the median of 200,000 iterations for SSB_{2020}/SSB_{MSY} and F_{2020}/F_{MSY} for the entire set of runs in the grid. Black line with black symbols represents the historical evolution of the median of all runs. Grey points represent the 2020 estimates of relative fishing mortality and relative spawning stock biomass for 2020 for each of the 200,000 iterations. The upper graph represents the smoothed frequency distribution of SSB/SSB_{MSY} estimates for 2020. The right graph represents the smoothed frequency distribution of F/F_{MSY} estimates for 2020. The inserted pie graph represents the percentage of each 2020 estimate that fall in each quadrant of the Kobe plot. All SSB showed the values at the end of years.



SKJ-Figure 18. SKJ-W. Stochastic MVLN projections of SSB/SSB_{MSY} and F/F_{MSY} for the 9 Stock Synthesis uncertainty grid runs at 16-40 thousand t constant TACs and constant F_{MSY} for the western Atlantic skipjack stocks. The lines are the median of 200,000 iterations.