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TASMANIAN ABALONE FISHERY ASSESSMENT 2023

Jaime McAllister and Craig Mundy

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Executive Summary

Total estimated landings for the 2023 Tasmanian abalone fishery were 672.5 t of blacklip and 91.3 t of greenlip (combined 763.8 t), from a total allowable commercial catch (TACC) of 773.5 t. From 2011 there have been annual reductions in TACC in at least one part of the Tasmanian abalone fishery from a medium term high of 2,660 t in 2010. These reductions addressed falling stock levels across all zones in the fishery and consequent reduction in long-term recruitment. Subsequently, these adjustments appear to have stabilised CPUE in many parts of the fishery and there are some early signs of recovery in some blocks.

The fishery was assessed using an Empirical Harvest Strategy (EHS) with standardised Catch per Unit Effort (SCPUE) data. The EHS used three catch rate based empirical performance measures to produce a Recommended Biological Catch (RBC), which forms the IMAS advice on TACC.

An overview of trends in 2023 and TACC actions taken by the Minister for the 2024 fishing year are summarised below for each fishing zone:

- **Eastern Zone** Catch rates in the five primary blocks (13, 14, 20, 21, 29) supporting the Eastern Zone TACC recorded catch rate declines however remained above catch rate targets in 2023. Research surveys conducted in those blocks closed to fishing in 2022 (16, 22, 23, 24, 27, sub-block 28A) showed stable legal-sized abalone abundance, but a reduction in sub-legal abalone. Commercial catch sampling also recorded fewer abalone nearer to the LML and dominance of larger individuals in 2023. These patterns of declining sub-legal abalone abundance and increasing commercial catch size structure are consistent with reduced recruitment associated with generally reduced adult abundance and possibly from the effects of the 2016 Marine Heat Wave event. The Eastern Zone TACC continues to be highly reliant on Block 13 with more than 65% of the TACC harvested from this single Block. The recommended Eastern Zone TACC for 2024 increased by 3.5 t to 231 t (2% increase).
- **Western Zone** SCPUE (standardised CPUE) across the entire Western Zone remained stable in 2023, or marginally declined in some Sub-blocks. Both catch and CPUE have declined in the Western Zone since the early 2000's leading to sustained recruitment overfishing, however despite CPUE remaining below catch rate targets, they appeared to be stabilising. The recommended Western Zone TACC for 2024 was reduced by 17.5 t to 294 t (6% reduction).
- **Northern Zone** There continued to be encouraging signs in key parts of the Northern Zone, and signs of improvement in previously productive blocks (e.g. Blocks 5 and 6). The recommended Northern Zone TACC for 2024 increased by 3.5 t to 63 t (6% increase).
- **Bass Strait Zone** Overall the Bass Strait Zone is performing well and catch rates remain stable across most Blocks except Block 33. The recommended Bass Strait Zone TACC for 2024 was decreased from 84 t to 80.5 t (4% reduction).
- **Greenlip Zone** Assessing status of the greenlip fishery remains difficult due to reporting around mixed species fishing. Three of the four primary Greenlip regions showed stable CPUE, with the North-east region showing some declines in 2023. The recommended Greenlip Zone TACC for 2024 was reduced by 3.5 t to 87.5 t (4% reduction).

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Introduction

1.1 Overview

An assessment of the Tasmanian Abalone fishery is produced annually as part of the Sustainable Marine Research Collaboration Agreement between UTAS and Natural Resources and Environment (NRE). This fishery assessment document is based on daily catch and effort returns from fishers between 1992 to 2023. An Empirical Harvest Strategy is applied to standardised Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) data, to provide an objective independent Recommended Biological Catch (RBC). A chronology of management changes over the history of this commercial fishery is provided in Appendix E.

1.2 History of the Fishery

Commercial harvest of abalone from Tasmanian waters commenced sometime around the 1860s-1880s, mainly by early Chinese settlers in Tasmania who were able to sell product to miners in Tasmania and Victoria. However, it wasn't until the 1960's that commercial fishing rapidly expanded with annual catches in the order of 2000 t being landed by the end of that decade. The fishery has predominantly focused on blacklip abalone (*Haliotis rubra*), with greenlip abalone (*H. laevigata*) typically accounting for around 5% of the total wild harvest in Tasmania. Digitised or hard copies of regulations and catch returns are not available for the fishery prior to 1975, and complete digital records exist from 1975 onwards (fig. 1.1). Between 1975 and 1984 abalone catches were reported by the skipper of the fishing vessel as estimated weights on a monthly basis. Between 1985 and 1992, catches were reported as landed weights per landing by the diver, again on monthly returns. Estimated weights by block are unavailable for this period, because catches taken from several blocks in one trip may be reported as caught from only one of those blocks. Since 1992, abalone fishers were required to complete and submit daily reports of the landed weight and estimated catch weight in each block fished. The sum of estimated weights by zone is usually within 3% of the sum of landed weights by zone, but between 1992 and 1995 was up to 10% less.

1.3 Management Plan

A draft Abalone Management Plan and Policy documents were prepared in the late 1990's and revised in 2000. A new Tasmanian Harvest Strategy was completed in 2018, and approved by the Minister for Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment and has been used to guide the management of the Tasmanian abalone fishery since 2019. An independent review of the Tasmanian Abalone Harvest Strategy was conducted in 2021 by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and a revised version is due for release in 2024. An operational document for the fishery is published prior to the commencement of each fishing year, detailing size limits, quota

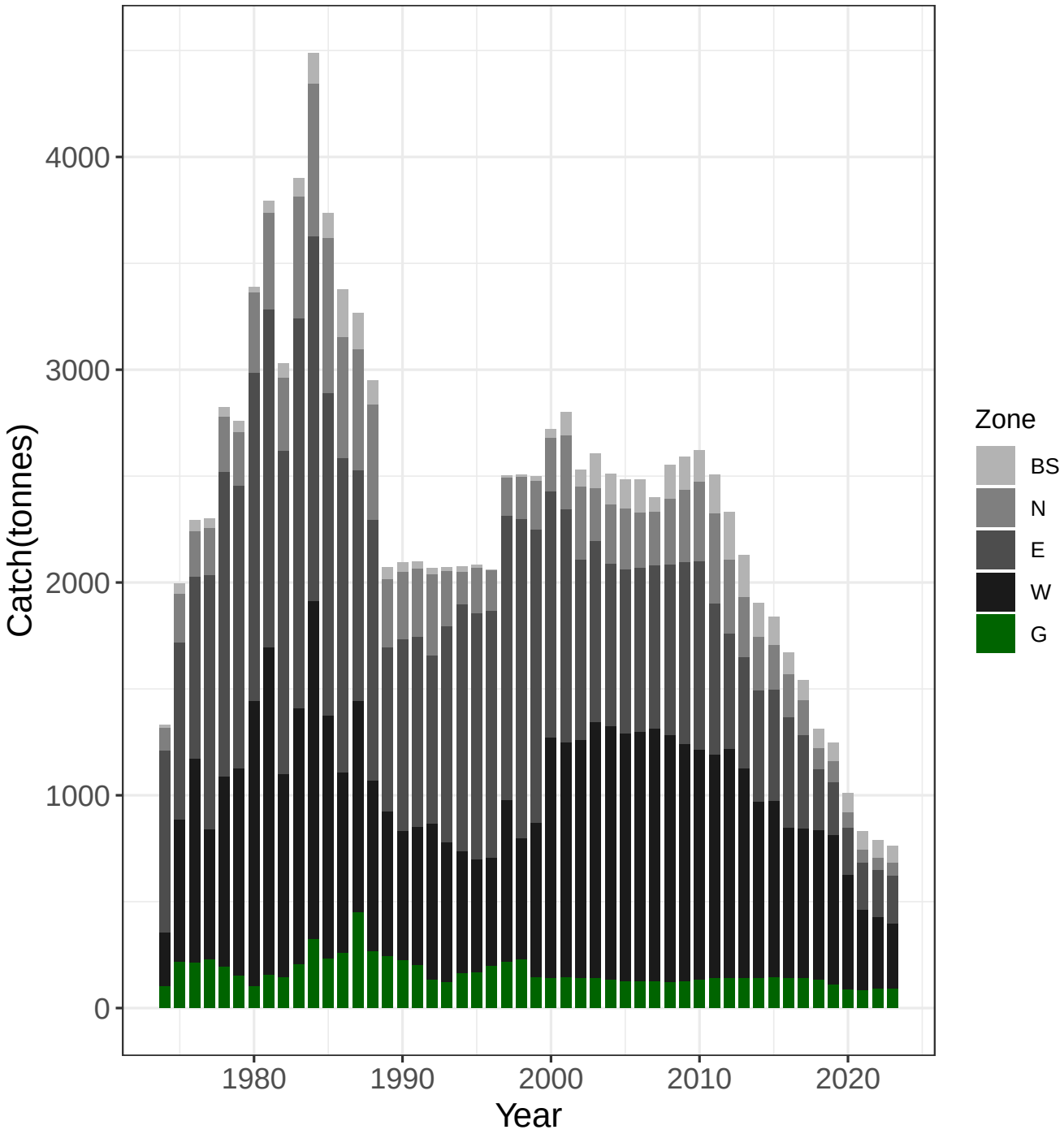

Figure 1.1: *Annual blacklip abalone (Haliotis rubra) and greenlip abalone (H. laevigata) from 1974 to 2023. Bars colour coded by current zonation system.*

for each zone, spatial management arrangements and any other operational rules that govern the commercial harvest of abalone in Tasmania.

1.4 Non-commercial catch

A survey of recreational abalone fishing is conducted by IMAS biannually. The most recent survey of recreational abalone fishing catch was undertaken for the 2019-20 season and estimated that 12.6 t of blacklip and greenlip abalone, equivalent to 1.0% of the total Tasmanian commercial abalone catch, was taken by recreational fishers (Lyle et al., 2021). The number of recreational abalone diving licenses issued by NRE for the year ended 2021 increased to 11,179.

Abalone are caught in Tasmanian waters as part of cultural fishing activities by Indigenous people. This catch is not quantified but is believed to be negligible. Commercial catch taken by Indigenous fishers is included within the commercial sections of this assessment.

Catch is also taken under permits for special events and research purposes. Illegal fishing is known to occur but no estimates of IUU catch are available.

1.5 Abalone Biology

1.5.1 Reproduction and Dispersal

The commercially harvested abalone species in Tasmanian (blacklip abalone *Haliotis rubra* and greenlip abalone *H. laevigata*) are dioecious broadcast spawners with complex reproductive patterns, at least in Tasmania. Gravid animals can be found year round, with little strong evidence of a peak reproductive season. Larvae are lecithotrophic and while considered to be pelagic, the embryos are negatively buoyant for the first 24 hours before. The larval phase of *H. rubra* is relatively short (5 to 15 days), and dependent on water temperature (McShane, 1992). Manipulative field experiments with blacklip abalone suggested that local recruitment was highly dependent (Prince et al., 1987) on local abundance. Molecular studies were able to confirm that localised recruitment (approximately 100m) in blacklip abalone was a consequence of limited larval dispersal (Temby et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2009). These field and molecular studies are both suggestive of potential for a strong local stock/recruitment relationship, yet this has never been established as a general phenomena. Greenlip abalone in Tasmania generally occur in more simple habitats, with low profile reef and seagrass, and are commonly found on the reef/sand edge in areas with high tidal flows. Molecular studies of connectivity for greenlip abalone (Miller et al., 2014) suggest that connectivity among adjacent populations is also limited, but population structure is two orders of magnitude larger than found for blacklip abalone. Miller et al. (2014) confirmed the distribution and connectivity of this species does conform to a meta-population structure with populations linked over tens of Kilometres.

1.5.2 Movement and Diet

Movement of adult blacklip and greenlip abalone is limited, with most animals resident within small sections of reef (10's of metres) for months. Movements of individuals do occur over small spatial and temporal scales, but do not result in emigration from sites. Both species tend to remain on a recognisable home sites or 'scar', and feed predominantly on drift algae, but may also consume attached kelp (C. Mundy, personal observation). Both Tasmanian abalone species are known to consume algae from red, green and brown groups, though dietary preference and availability have been poorly studied in Tasmania. Guest et al. (2008) used isotope and fatty acid signatures to examine dietary habits of blacklip abalone on both East and West coasts of Tasmania, and found that brown algae formed the major portion of abalone diet, but that bacteria and diatoms are also feature in abalone diets, most likely from break down of detritus/drift algae.

1.5.3 Growth and Mortality

Research on individual growth of both blacklip and greenlip abalone has been conducted for more than three decades, yet robust descriptions of growth remain elusive. The two primary methods utilised were ageing by shell rings and growth increments by tag-recapture. Growth rings in the shell spire have been largely discarded as imprecise and the assumption of that growth rings are laid annually has not been well substantiated. Whereas growth increments based on recaptures after 12 month appear to routinely underestimate growth, and, recaptures are typically low and often too low to make meaningful conclusions about growth (Haddon et al., 2008; Helidoniotis and Haddon, 2013, 2012). Within Tasmania there is some evidence that the shape of the growth curve changes with latitude (Haddon et al., 2008), further complicating our understanding of growth and the calculations that depend on an accurate model of abalone growth. Where adequate data sets are available, the inverse logistic growth model (Haddon et al., 2008) appears to be most appropriate for describing abalone growth.

Annual growth increments of pre-reproductive blacklip abalone range between 20 mm and 30 mm annually (Haddon et al., 2008). A reduction in average annual growth increments coincides with onset of reproductive maturity, which occurs at approximately age five. The onset of emergence from the cryptic phase also coincides with the onset of reproductive maturation, although more variable. Full emergence from crypsis in the majority of Tasmanian blacklip abalone fisheries occurs at a shell length greater than the Legal Minimum Length. This behavioural trait differs from observations in mainland blacklip abalone fisheries, and, limits the usefulness of fishery-independent surveys of pre-recruit abundance.

Maximum size of Blacklip and greenlip abalone in Tasmania exceed 200 mm in shell length, and longevity is thought to be in the order of 40 to 50 years. Natural mortality appears to be very low, with few significant predators of the adult phase. Predation on the juvenile phase is unknown, but assumed to be higher than on post-emergent abalone. The longevity of both blacklip and greenlip abalone means that stock are not lost with conservative management decisions.

1.6 Ecosystem Interactions

1.6.1 Climate change related effects

There have been clear changes in subtidal reef habitats on the East coast of Tasmania over the past four decades, with the southward retreat of *Macrocystis pyrifira* beds and the southward expansion of *Centrostephanus rodgersii* two easily observed examples. The majority of destructive grazing by *C. rodgersii* is deeper than the typical depth range exploited by abalone fishers (Johnson et al., 2011), but there are localised direct impacts on abalone populations in sheltered reef systems north of Maria Island. Destructive grazing of *C. rodgersii* in the Kent Group (north of Flinders Island) has been tracked over the past 30 years, and pre-dated the expansion of this species on the mainland coast of Tasmania (Johnson et al., 2005).

The frequency and intensity of Marine Heat Waves (MHW) has recently been documented for Tasmania's east coast (Oliver et al. 2017b). The East coast has experienced several minor and two major marine heat wave events over the past two decades (2009/2010 and 2015/2016). These MHW's to result in low level mortality of wild abalone in late summer, over most of the Tasmanian East coast (Bicheno south to the Actaeon region), although the magnitude of the extent of the MHWs on exploitable biomass remains unquantified. No mortalities were observed on the West or North coasts. There is possibly a third minor and localised event in the summer of 2000/2001, although no reports of mortalities of wild abalone were recorded from that period. There is no research and no understanding as to whether these changes have also affected coastal productivity in a way that might effect abalone population dynamics. In contrast to the East Coast, there are no reports from abalone fishers of dramatic ecosystem changes on the north, south or west coasts or from King and Flinders Islands.

In 2023, a heatwave event was forecast to occur over the summer of 2023/24 along the East Coast of Tasmania triggering a research program to collect tissue samples to examine potential physiological consequences and sub-lethal effects of the MHW event. Several strong to severe events were detected at various locations prior to 31st December 2023, however, there were no evidence of mass mortalities.

1.6.2 Effects of removal of abalone on habitat

Associated with harvesting of abalone stocks, there have been persistent reports from divers of changes to reef habitat. These changes appeared to follow extensive depletion of abalone populations by fishing, suggesting a level of interdependency between abalone and habitat. Perceived changes include a reduction in coverage of crustose coralline algae and its subsequent replacement by sediment, other encrusting organisms and algae, and potential flow on effects to juvenile abalone recruitment (McShane and Smith, 1991; Shepherd and Turner, 1985). Globally, over-harvesting of herbivores is recognised as one of the main factors contributing to changes in marine systems (Burkepile and Hay, 2006). However, it appears unlikely that this broad concept applies to abalone fisheries. A review of ecological impacts of fishing found little evidence of ecological impacts of harvesting abalone (Jenkins, 2004), and concluded that abalone harvesting was relatively 'benign'. A field study exploring links between abalone abundance, fishing pressure and key habitat characteristics Valentine et al. (2010) found little evidence to support the assertion or perception that removal of abalone from subtidal reefs leads to environmental change. Manipulation of abalone densities also found little evidence to suggest direct effects of abalone on local benthic communities (Strain and Johnson, 2010), other than on encrusted red algae (ERA) (Strain and Johnson, 2012). An investigation of the degree of association between abalone and ERA (*Hildenbrandia spp* and *Peysonellia spp*) found that abalone were more frequently associated with these species than expected by chance, but it was not clear whether these species recruit to the substrate beneath abalone home-sites, or whether abalone choose home-sites where there these species are present (Valentine and Mundy unpublished data).

Since the mid 1980's Tasmanian abalone fishing vessels have fished live (i.e. not anchored), such that anchor damage is negligible in this fishery.

1.6.3 Bycatch and other species interactions

There is no bycatch associated with this fishery. All abalone are hand-harvested by divers operating on low pressure surface supply (hookah). The small vessel size used by most abalone fishers, and the shallow water and proximity to the exposed coast also limits negative impacts on other mobile fauna.

A poorly understood aspect of abalone fishing on ecosystems is whether there is a potential for a competitive release effect on other coexisting grazing species. Anecdotal information from abalone fishers in other states suggests significant depletion of abalone populations allows more rapid expansion and dominance by the long-spined sea urchin *Centrostephanus rodgersii*. Experimental manipulations of interactions between *H. rubra* and *C. rodgersii* are not conclusive (Strain and Johnson, 2009), and limited by the artificial environment in which the experiments were conducted.

1.6.4 Trophic effects

There are few significant predators of emergent *Haliotis rubra* in Tasmania, and most predation events are opportunistic or target weakened individuals. Reduced grazing pressure by removal of significant biomass of this macro-invertebrate grazer is unlikely to lead to habitat change (Valentine et al., 2010), as there is an oversupply of kelps across the fishery, which is subject to seasonal storms generating drift algae. Much of the food consumed by abalone is likely to be drift algae rather than attached growing plants.

Chapter 2

Methods

2.1 Catch and Effort Data - fisher returns

The primary data used in this assessment are sourced from fishery-dependent catch and effort log-book data. A research program has been in place at the IMAS Taroona laboratories to collect biological data on growth rate and reproductive maturation for several decades. There is however no strategic collection of fishery-independent abundance data or a time-series of fishery independent data on population size structure. The system for capturing Catch and Effort returns from fishers, and the requirements for reporting have changed several times since the inception of the fishery. Data from the early phase of the fishery is not available, and the working time series commences in 1974. From 1974 to 1991 the data are contained in archived extracts in electronic form from an original reporting system. Noting that this early data was at some point transcribed to digital format as computer systems and databases were not available in the 1970's and were unlikely to be mainstream in Government departments and agencies until at least the mid 1980's. A new production database was implemented in 1992, with an entirely new relational database structure. The 1992 production database was re-developed and replaced in 1997 with some structural changes. A further complication arises in 2000 with the introduction of defined management zones (Eastern Blacklip Zone , Western Blacklip Zone, and Greenlip Zone) each with their own TACC, and with the introduction of finer scale reporting sub-blocks. Further spatial partitioning of the blacklip fishery occurred in 2001 (Northern Blacklip Zone), 2003 (Bass Strait Blacklip Zone), 2009 and 2013 (Central Western Blacklip Zone), and 2018 (Central Western, Northern and Bass Strait Zones). Several of the Zone boundaries were created at sub-block boundaries rather than block boundaries, which creates challenges for linking historic block level trends to current sub-blocks which are now split by zones.

2.1.1 Catch and Effort Reporting requirements

In the Tasmanian Abalone Fishery catch, effort and location are reported daily. As database structures are upgraded and operational rules are modified over time, this triggers changes in the data, including frequency of returns, whether the diver or the skipper was required to submit the returns, and the spatial scale of reporting. Since 1992 the diver has been required to submit catch dockets for every fishing day within a short mandatory return period, usually 48 hours. Up to and including 2000 catch and effort was reported by Block with 57 reporting blocks encompassing the coast of mainland Tasmania and offshore islands, and from 2001 the majority of reporting Blocks were split into between two and five sub-blocks. Currently, fishers are required to report estimated weight of catch and effort in each sub-block for each day of fishing, with a hard copy of the docket submitted within 48 hours.

2.1.2 Data extraction and filtering

A mirror of the DPIPWE Oracle catch and effort database containing data from $\sim$ 1998 is maintained by IMAS, inside its secure server farm. The UTAS Oracle server also contains historic tables for data between 1985 and 1992, a static schema containing data from 1992 to 1997, and a dynamic schema containing data post 1997, with updates provided weekly. The catch, effort, vessel and fisher identity details are extracted via three views created in the IMAS mirror, and maintained by IMAS. Data are retrieved from the IMAS Oracle catch and effort database views via R statistical software R-Core-Team (2017) using the `RODBC` package (Ripley and Lapsley, 2015) for direct connection to databases. All filtering, error traps and subsequent analysis of the fishery-dependent data are undertaken within R. The first stage automates data extraction, filtering and removal of erroneous records, identification of doubling up (team dive) events, and preparation of mixed species effort values resulting in a working data set. The second data analysis stage, prepares data for and runs the CPUE standardisation, executes the empirical Harvest Strategy and produces a range of summary plots for the Abalone Fisheries Resource Advisory group meetings and this Assessment document.

2.1.3 Quality Assurance

The catch and effort database contains a very small proportion of detectable erroneous records. The nature of the detectable errors are incorrect effort or catch values leading to impossible catch rates (e.g. > 500 Kg/Hr; no effort. A small number of dockets are duplicated, and the duplicate removed. A number of catch records (equivalent to approximately 200 tonnes) from the 1992 and 1993 fishing years had NULL values in the estimated weight field. As CPUE is calculated using daily diver effort and estimated weight, these records have previously been excluded from catch rate analyses. In 2019, an analysis of these records identified that the majority (>90%) were single day, single Block fishing events, and for these records the landed weight could be substituted for estimated weight for the purposes of catch and effort analyses. From 2020, these records are utilised in the assessment of trends from 1992 - to present, and included in summary figures and tables.

Catch and effort data prior to 1992 are not used in the Empirical Harvest Strategy due to concerns over the accuracy of record keeping. There are no concerns over the accuracy of landed daily catch, however we are aware that at times daily effort was reported from memory, and may be subject to recall error.

2.1.4 Standardisation

Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE: Kg/Hr) were standardised prior to use in the Harvest Strategy. Standardisation was completed using the `rforcpue` R package (Haddon 2020) with the following base model;

CPUE = Year + Diver + Month + DoubleUps

All four variables are categorical and specified as Fixed Effects. The Doubleups variable identifies fishing events where two divers fish from same boat, usually on hookah with a T-piece. Geometric mean CPUE presented are always bias-corrected (BC), and standardised means are always displayed with 95% confidence limit error bars.

2.1.5 Treatment of mixed species fishing data

Mixed species (blacklip and greenlip) fishing occurs across a number of reporting blocks, but accounts for relatively little of the overall blacklip catch. Divers primarily target one species and take the other as a by-catch, but there are some locations where one species is targeted in the morning and the other targeted in the afternoon. Calculation of catch per unit effort (CPUE) is non-trivial when mixed species fishing occurs as several permutations of fishing practices are confounded with permutations in the way catch is reported.

For this assessment, the following adjustments were made to the effort component for calculating CPUE when mixed species fishing occurred (greenlip and blacklip abalone are landed on the same day by one diver);

- Where the target species accounts for less than 10% of the daily total catch, those records are excluded from the CPUE calculations for the target species.
- Where the bycatch is greater than 10% of the daily total catch, a new continuous variable containing the proportion of daily catch is added to the CPUE standardisation as an independent covariate.
- All records are retained for catch totals.

2.2 Catch sampling - factory measuring of length-frequency

Collection of length-frequency data from samples of landed commercial abalone catches (catch sampling) was patchy up to 1998 with no data collection occurring within large blocks of years. From 1998, a trial photographic catch sampling program was implemented, with divers submitting photographic samples of their catches with details of the location from where the catch was taken. The photographic program was terminated in 2000 due to inconsistencies in the photographs and a declining participation.

Between 2000 and 2008, diver's catches from around the State were routinely sampled by IMAS research staff at abalone processing factories. For each catch sampled, a tray or crate of abalone was selected at random and the first 100 abalone from that sample measured. Most samples were obtained from catches landed from the south east and east coasts. The reason for this focus was the challenge of identifying source locations of abalone landed within multi-day, multi-diver, multi-block fishing trips to the west coast and northern remote islands. Catches from the north and west coasts have also been sampled, at a lower frequency. The majority of samples obtained are from the blacklip fishery, but a small amount of samples from the greenlip fishery have been sampled although with patchy spatial coverage. Since 2008, market measuring has been undertaken by several of the major processors who together process over 50% of the Tasmanian blacklip catch. Processor staff measure samples of 100 abalone from catches using electronic measuring boards. Length measurements were obtained using the same IMAS supplied electronic measuring board and protocol used by IMAS staff described above. From 2015 the catch sampling program declined due to difficulties in maintaining voluntary participation in the program. The sampling program was re-invigorated in 2020, and the number of samples acquired is steadily increasing.

Length measurements obtained from commercial catches used in this report were filtered for measuring board errors. Records were excluded when measured length was less than < 5 mm below the LML or > 220 mm. Records were also excluded where catch samples could not be allocated to a single block (i.e. where multiple Blocks were recorded on a docket). Weight summary data have been filtered to include only weights <2000 g, and summary plots have only been produced where > 5 catch samples with weights were available. Weight grading categories are defined as: small $\leq$600 g; medium 600-800 g; large $\geq$800 g. Detailed catch composition data are only presented for Blocks where > 5 catch samples were available.

2.3 Harvest Strategy

An Empirical Harvest Strategy (EHS) has been developed for the Tasmanian Abalone Fishery with the primary inputs being fishery-dependent catch rate data. This HS is based on a Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) framework, in the form of a simple weighted-sum approach. The EHS has been reviewed (Buxton et al., 2015), and subjected to testing via Management Strategy Evaluation (Haddon and Mundy, 2016; Mundy et al., 2018). This EHS identifies aspirational targets for the fishery and attempts to manage the fishery towards that target. The EHS is conditioned and run at the scale

of individual reporting Blocks to arrive at a combined score, followed by a Control Rule to assign a recommended management action based on the combined score. Impacts of CPUE changes are taken into account when reviewing any changes in recommended biological catch suggested by the empirical Harvest Strategy.

2.3.1 Selection of Performance Measures

Over the past decade annual reviews of abalone fishery performance was through an expert driven, weight of evidence approach, considering magnitude of catch rates, trends in catch rates and spatial structure in the distribution of effort. The EHS formalises the previously subjective process, by developing Reference Points (RP) for three Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE) performance measures (PM) previously evaluated in graphical form. In this assessment, the three performance measures used were:

1. Target CPUE –the current CPUE scored against a target CPUE defined by Block
2. Gradient4 –gradient of change in CPUE over the past four years including year to date.
3. Gradient1 –gradient of change in CPUE in the past 12 months (current year over the previous year).

2.3.2 Performance Measure scoring functions

The scoring functions incorporate targets and limits that are analogous to classical target and limit reference points. A scoring function is established for each PM, with the value of the PM (e.g. Target CPUE) scoring between 0 and 10. For all PMs the target is always a score of 5, with 0 implying the worst under-performance and 10 the highest over-performance. The reference period for determining the upper and lower bounds (0 and 10) for the scoring functions was restricted to catch and effort data between 1992 and the year preceding the current year i.e. for the 2023 assessment year, the reference period is 1992 –2022. Prior to 1992 there were substantial differences in the reporting and return of catch dockets, such that the practice of recording daily effort prior to 1992 is not considered sufficient for assessment purposes (see section section 2.1.1). The observed range of each PM was determined over the reference period, and then that range was extended by 10% in either direction. The rationale for extending the observed range is that within the reference period, fishing pressure has not led to biological collapse of populations, thus using the actual range observed would risk creating an overly conservative Harvest Strategy.

Scoring functions for CPUE Performance Measures

1. Target CPUE The objective of the Target CPUE PM is to maintain CPUE at or above a target value (i.e. 5 or greater on the PM scoring function). Following initial presentations of the MCDA Harvest Strategy at the June 2014 FRAG meeting, and at a subsequent workshop research/industry workshop (19/06/2014) it was agreed that an empirical process would be used to determine CPUE targets for each reporting block, based on mean annual CPUE back to 1985. Statistical standardisation of data is not possible beyond 1992, therefore the Reference Period commences from 1992 when data quality is more certain. A range of options for establishing appropriate CPUE targets were proposed included median annual CPUE (50^{th} quantile), and more precautionary targets such as the 55^{th}, 65^{th} and 75^{th} quantile of the annual CPUE. As the time series of data used to determine the CPUE target excludes the period of low CPUE during the late 1980's and early 1990's, a mildly precautionary approach using the 55^{th} percentile was adopted.

   The Target CPUE was determined for each statutory block, and scoring function (fig. 2.1) implemented according to the magnitude of the CPUE Target (see section 2.3.2, orange arrow). Where the current standardised CPUE is below the target CPUE, a low score is achieved (red

arrow), and when the current CPUE exceeds the CPUE Target a high score is achieved (green arrow).

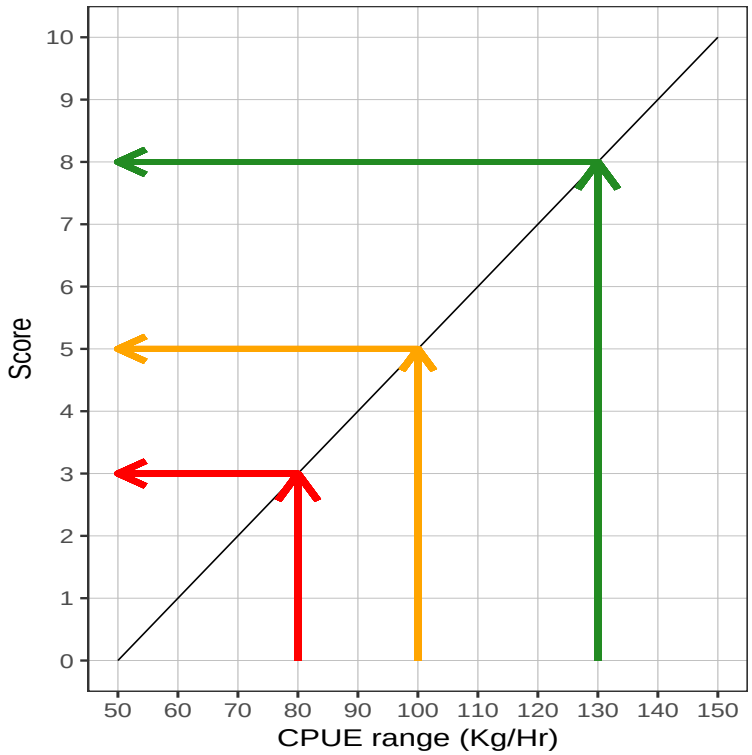

Figure 2.1: *Illustration of the translation of an observed CPUE relative to a defined Target CPUE into an MCDA score. Two instances are shown, the $CE_{b,T}$ are 80Kg/Hr (red) and 130 Kg/Hr (green). The target CPUE 100Kg/Hr wit ha score of 5 is shown in orange.*

2. Gradient 4 CPUE The objective of this scoring function is to recommend positive increases in the TACC if the gradient of CPUE over a four year period is increasing (provisionally $n = 4$) and conversely it recommends decreases in the TACC if that gradient is negative (fig. 2.2). The assumption is that where TACC is constant or decreasing, and a negative CPUE gradient is observed, the harvest level is likely to exceed recruitment to the fishery. As CPUE is a relative measure for particular spatial assessment units, so the changes in CPUE through time need to be converted to proportional changes through time otherwise areas of different productivity would be treated differently.

   $CE_{b,y}$ is the CPUE in block b in year y, and $pCE_{b,y:z}$ is the proportional change of CPUE in year y relative to year z. If w years are used as the comparative period then $z = y_0 - w - 1$, and $x = 0..w - 1$, where y_0 is the current year. Thus if w is four years,

$$pCE_{b,y-x:z} = CE_{b,y-x}/CE_{b,z} \tag{2.1}$$

   The performance measure is the gradient of the linear regression between the $pCE_{b,y}$ and the sequence $1..w$:

$$pCE_{b,y} = const + grad \times y \tag{2.2}$$

   With limits imposed such that the score is constrained between 0 – 10. If these limits are reached often or never reached, then the range of potential changes ($-a - a$) would need to be modified. For this assessment, the range of observed slopes over the reference period for each individual block is extended by 10%, with $-a$ and a set as the lower and upper extent of the extended range. As for the CPUE Target example, where the current CPUE gradient is below the target of zero a low score is achieved (red arrow), and when the current CPUE gradient exceeds the Target a high score is achieved (green arrow).

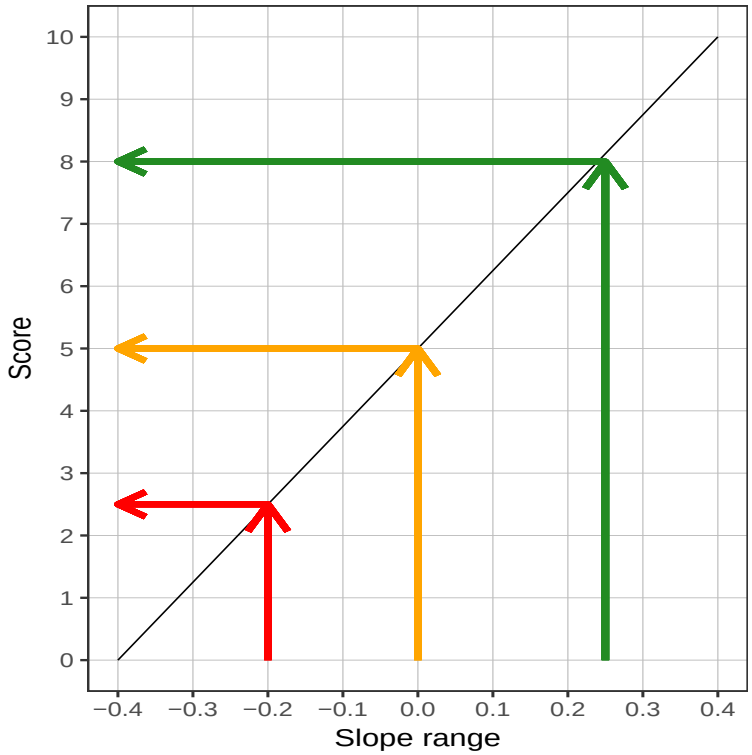

Figure 2.2: *Illustration of the translation of CPUE gradient across a four year period into a score.*

3. Gradient1 CPUE The objective of this scoring function is to highlight occasions when performance of the fishery is changing rapidly. Thus where rapid increases in CPUE between the current year and the previous year are observed, it acts in addition to the Gradient 4 PM to recommend increases in TACC, and conversely recommend decreases in the TACC if there are recent rapid decreases in CPUE. The scoring function process for Gradient 1 is the same as for Gradient 4 (fig. 2.2)

   $CE_{b,y}$ is the CPUE in block b in year y and this is used to calculate the performance measure Gradient 1:

$$Gradient1 = \left(\frac{CE_{b,y}}{CE_{b,y-1}} - 1\right) \tag{2.3}$$

2.3.3 Performance Measure Weighting and Combined Score

A level of importance is assigned to each PM in the Harvest Strategy, by applying a weighting variable. The PM weights can be varied according to the preferred strategy, to emphasis or dampen the contribution of the PMs. For example in a rebuilding phase a higher weight is given to the CPUE Target PM, whereas once the fishery has reached the CPUE Target, this variable can be down-weighted, and emphasis placed on the Gradient 4 PM to maintain continuity. The final combined index of performance is then a sum of the PM score x PM weight, for all PMs (table 2.1).

Table 2.1: *Harvest Strategy performance measures and weights for this assessment.*

	TARGET CPUE	GRADIENT 4	GRADIENT 1
PM SCORE	a	b	c
PM WEIGHT	0.65	0.25	0.10
PM TOTAL	a x 0.65	b x 0.25	c x 0.10
COMPOSITE INDEX SCORE	Σ((a x 0.65) + (b x 0.25) + (c x 0.15))		

2.3.4 Control Rule for TACC Adjustment

A control rule system is applied to the composite score to determine the action to be taken. The control rule system proposed is based on a similar system suggested by Dichmont and Brown (2010). If the composite index score is between 5 and 6, there is no change in TACC for a given spatial assessment unit (e.g. Block). A TACC reduction is required if the composite index score is less than 5, and a TACC increase may be taken if the score is greater than 6 (table 2.2).

Where the Harvest Control Rule results in a TACC decrease, the Control Rule specifies the minimum reduction required given the Composite Score, whereas for TACC increases, the Control Rule specifies the maximum increase. Prospective TACC increases could optionally not be taken if arguments can be rationalised to support the status quo (e.g. market dynamics). The logic here is that for long-lived species such as commercially exploited haliotids where adult mortality is relatively low, from a biological stand point there is little to be lost in delaying a TACC increase by 12 months.

Table 2.2: *Harvest Control Rule applied to the combined performance management score*

Composite Score	< 1.0	1.0 –2.0	2.0 –3.0	3.0 –4.0	4.0 –5.0	5.0 –6.0	6.0 –7.0	7.0 –8.0	8.0 –9.0	> 9.0
TACC Adjust	−75%	−25%	−20%	−15%	−10%	NC	5%	10%	15%	20%

Consideration of individual scoring systems, weighting coefficients, the control rules and any constraints are on-going through a series of formal workshops with experienced fishers. This Harvest Strategy has been tested by Management Strategy Evaluation (Haddon et al., 2014; Haddon and Mundy, 2016) and found to be effective. Ongoing testing and exploration of the properties of the Performance Measures used here and any new Indicators, determination of Reference Points and revision of Control Rules is essential.

2.3.5 Spatial scale at which Harvest Strategy is applied

Each reporting Block (= spatial assessment unit) within a fishing zone has a different long term productivity and catch rate, thus the harvest strategy is applied to each Block. The zone-wide TACC is determined by summing the recommended catch to be taken from each Block. The question arises about which Block catch should be modified to determine the projected Block catch for the following year. In practice, the TACC decision made in year$_t$ for the fishing year$_{t+1}$ must be made in October of year$_t$. Thus the final catch and CPUE for a given block is not known at the time of the decision, and the CPUE analysis must be conducted on either partial year data (January – September), or the full years data from the previous year (i.e year$_{t-1}$). When the fishery is declining or rebuilding rapidly, there is a valid argument to utilise all available data especially the data obtained in the year to date. However, where there is insufficient fishing activity by the time of the TACC determination, a combination of previous year data and fishing to date (if available) is required to support a decision. To determine the catch value for each Block, the Harvest Control Rule based on the combined score is applied to the allocated catch for year$_t$ (defined during the assessment in year$_{t-1}$).

2.3.6 Phase plot summary of fishery status through time

A benefit of applying an empirical Harvest Strategy using performance measures with defined reference points, is the capacity to use internationally accepted tools for summarising fishery status such as the 'Kobe Plot'. For an empirical HS with no direct estimates of biomass (B) or fishing mortality (F), we must use proxies for B and F. Currently there is no accepted biomass proxy in abalone fisheries. Here we use the zone-wide catch-weighted mean Target CPUE PM score as a proxy for B, and the zone-wide catch-weighted mean Gradient 4 PM score as a proxy for F. The zone-wide proxy score is calculated by taking the catch-weighted arithmetic mean of the individual block proxy scores. A

B proxy score of one is defined as the limit reference point (LRP), and a B value of 5 is defined as the threshold reference point (TRP). A negative F proxy score gives evidence that fishing mortality is increasing and the magnitude of the gradient provides some information on the magnitude of fishing mortality. In order to use this proxy to emulate a normal Kobe Plot, five is subtracted from the Gradient–4 PM score to provide a score range of −5 to +5, where the LRP is zero. The combination of a negative 4-year gradient and near-record low CPUE Target score represents a cautious proxy for the true recruitment overfished reference point. No reporting blocks have collapsed within the reference period, providing a degree of certainty that the LRP is conservative, which is supported by MSE testing of the Empirical Harvest Strategy. Catch rate based proxies for B should not be considered as a direct measure of actual B, rather, we believe catch rates are a measure of the parity between the TACC and the available exploitable biomass.

2.4 Fishery Independent Research Surveys

2.4.1 Tasmanian Eastern Abalone Fishery: Timed Swim Surveys

Since 2020, areas of the Tasmanian Eastern Abalone Fishery (Blocks 16, 22, 23, 24, 27 and Subblock 28A) have been closed to commercial harvest of abalone in an effort to rebuild the fishery following significant stock declines since the mid-2000s. However, in the absence of commercial fishing and associated catch and effort data, the primary tool used for assessing stock status was no longer available. Subsequently, it was agreed that these Blocks would be surveyed by IMAS under a no-take plan, with assistance from industry, to monitor stock status and the geographic extent of recovery following the closure.

In each year since the closure (2020-2023), IMAS have been conducting a dive survey program whereby all emergent abalone encountered within a 10-minute timed swim are non-invasively counted and measured. The program has involved surveying up to 60 sites in each Block which are chosen based on commercial abalone dive GPS logger and catch history data. Of the original 60 sites surveyed in 2020, 15 within each Block have been used as reference sites and re-visited each year, whereas the remaining 45 sites in those years are randomly chosen based on the GPS and catch history data. Abalone are measured in-situ by two paired divers with a measuring slate with 20 mm increments and classified as legal (>140 mm) or sub-legal (<140 mm). A end survey protocol is triggered if no abalone are recorded after 5-minutes both divers. Abalone abundance per 10 minutes (abalone 10 min^{-1}) for each Block is determined by taking the average number of abalone counted between individual paired divers at each site. These surveys have enabled extensive geographic collection of abundance and size structure information across Blocks that would normally be unfeasible using traditional fixed transect based survey techniques.

Chapter 3

Fishery Dependent Catch and Effort Data

3.1 Eastern Zone

3.1.1 Zone Overview

Catch from the Eastern Zone blocks peaked at 1500 t in 1998, and has oscillated downwards thereafter with evidence of a cyclic pattern of depletion and recovery in CPUE (fig. 3.1). Declines in CPUE appear to precede declines in catch (fig. 3.1). In 2023, five Blocks and one Sub-Block in the Eastern Zone were closed to commercial fishing (16, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28a) for the fourth consecutive year based on results from fishery independent surveys using the Timed Swim method conducted in 2020, 2021 and 2022. The allocated catch target was below or at the 25th percentile of annual catch (1992 - 2023) for every block in the Eastern Zone (fig. 3.3). Block 13 accounted for 69% of the 2023 Eastern Zone catch (fig. 3.3), and while harvest levels from Block 13 have declined over time, the contribution from this block to the overall Eastern Zone TAC in 2010 was only 38%. In relative terms, the northern Blocks in the Eastern Zone have declined more rapidly and to a greater extent than Blocks south of Cape Pillar.

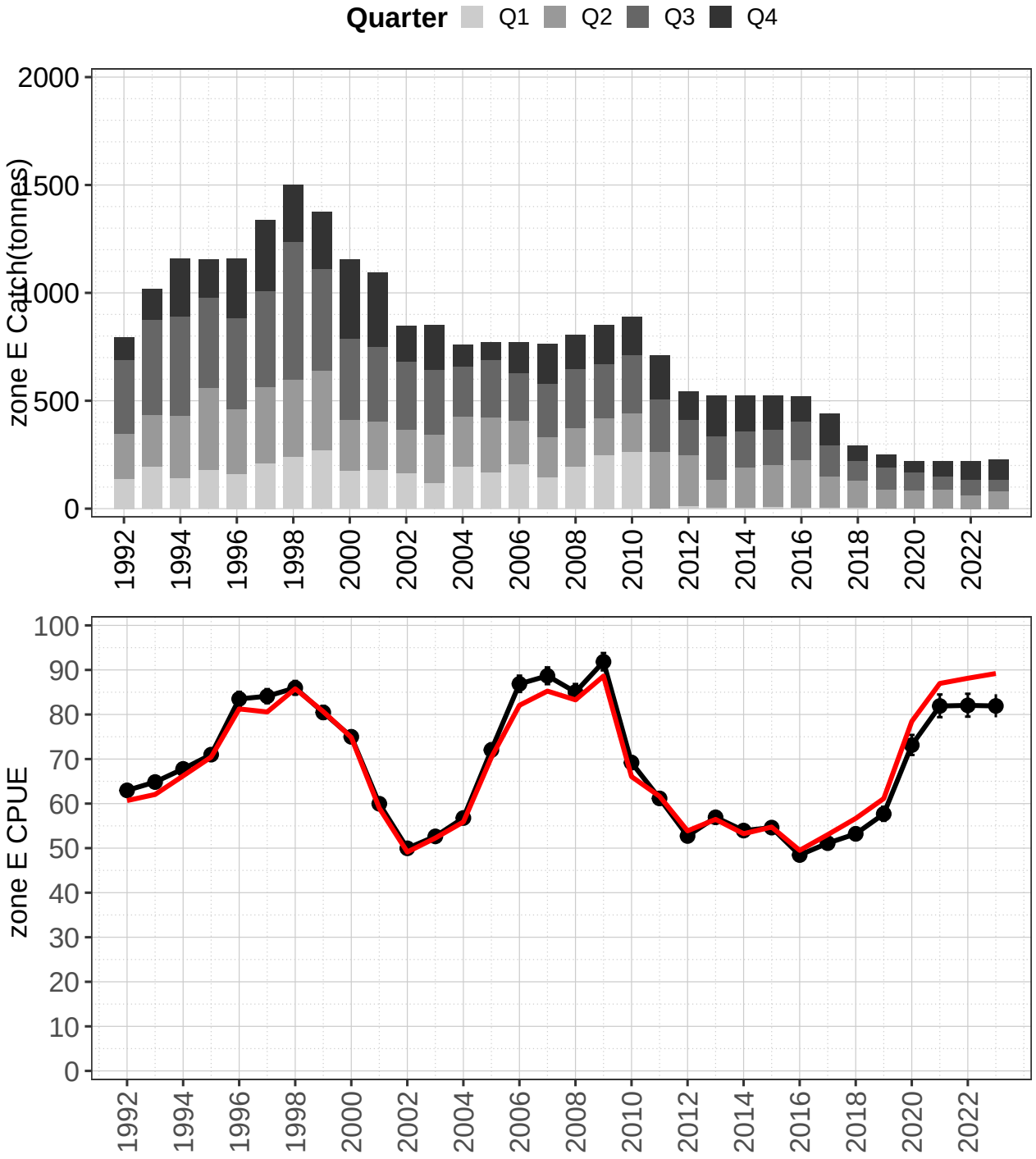

Figure 3.1: *Zone-wide catch and catch rate for Eastern Zone blacklip abalone, 1992–2023. Upper plot: catch (t) by quarter pooled across blocks currently classified as Eastern Zone. Lower Plot: standardised CPUE (black line) and geometric mean CPUE (red line).*

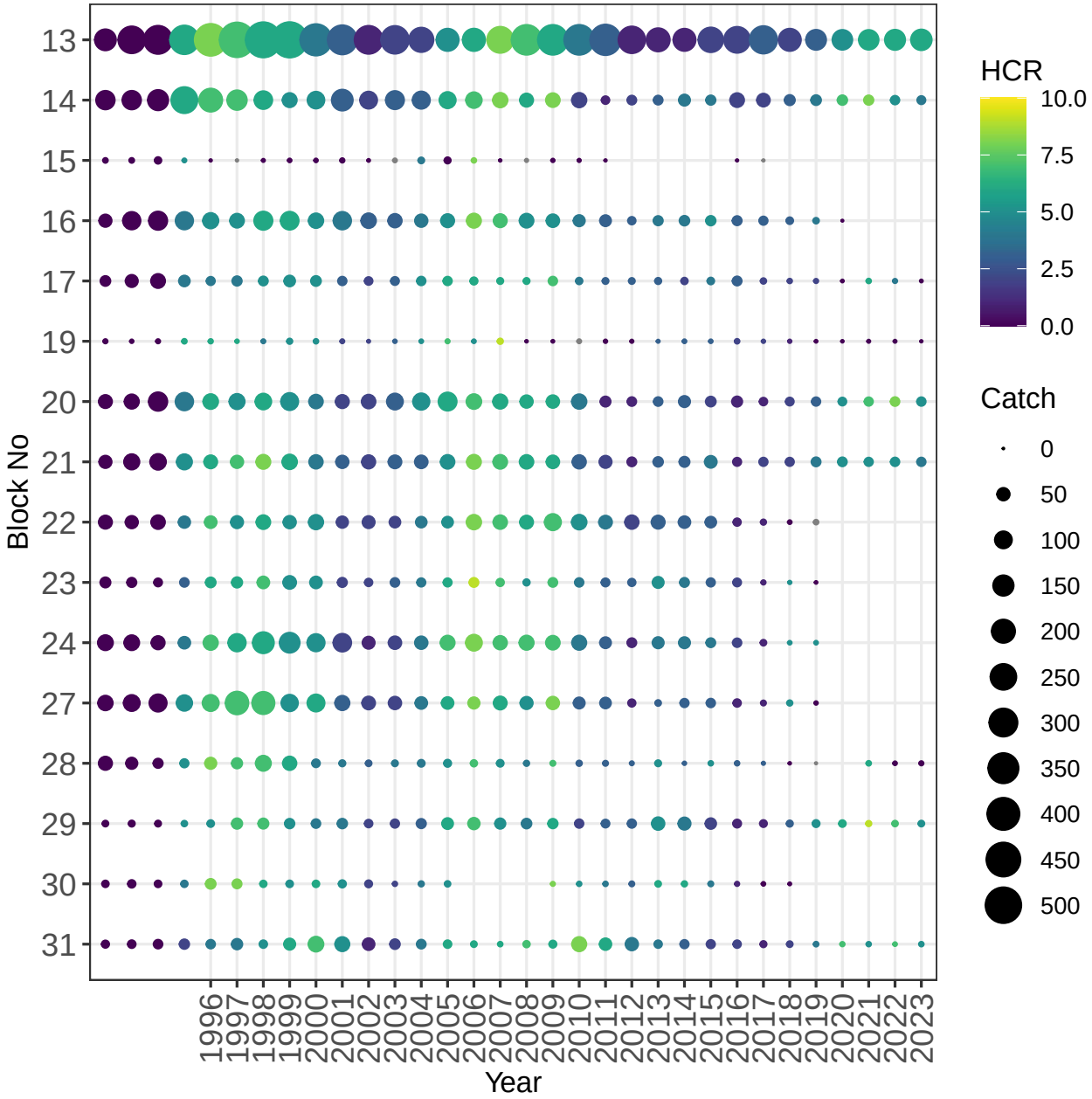

Figure 3.2: *Bubble plot of harvest strategy combined score (bubble colour) and catch (bubble size) for Eastern Zone blacklip abalone.*

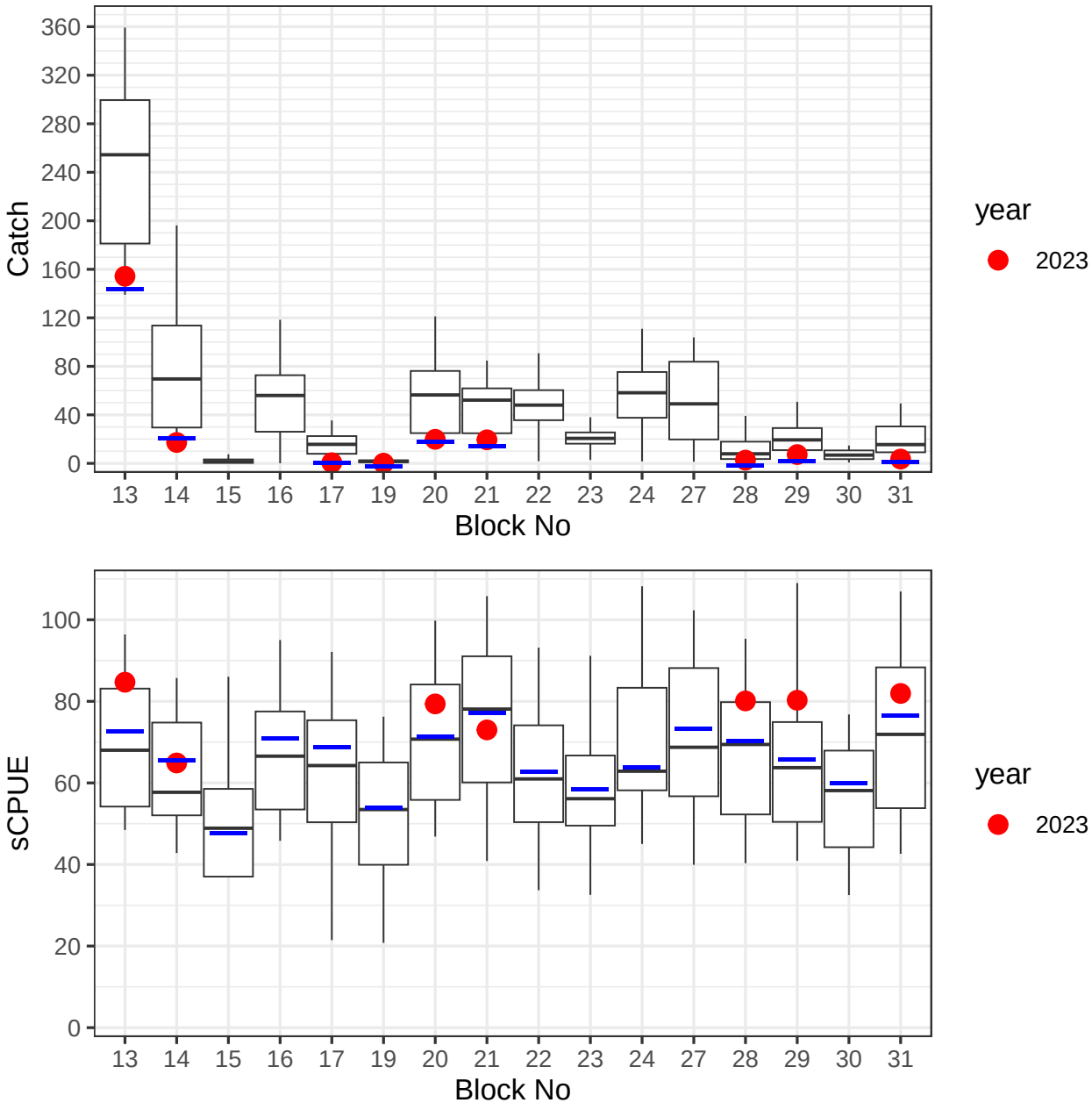

Figure 3.3: *Boxplot of catch and standardised CPUE by statistical block for the Eastern Zone blacklip abalone fishery.* ***Upper Panel****: Boxplot of annual catch. Blue line indicates catch target allocated for 2023. Red dot indicates catch taken in 2023.* ***Lower Panel****: Boxplot of annual standardised CPUE. Blue line indicates the CPUE target reference point. Red square indicates sCPUE in 2023.*

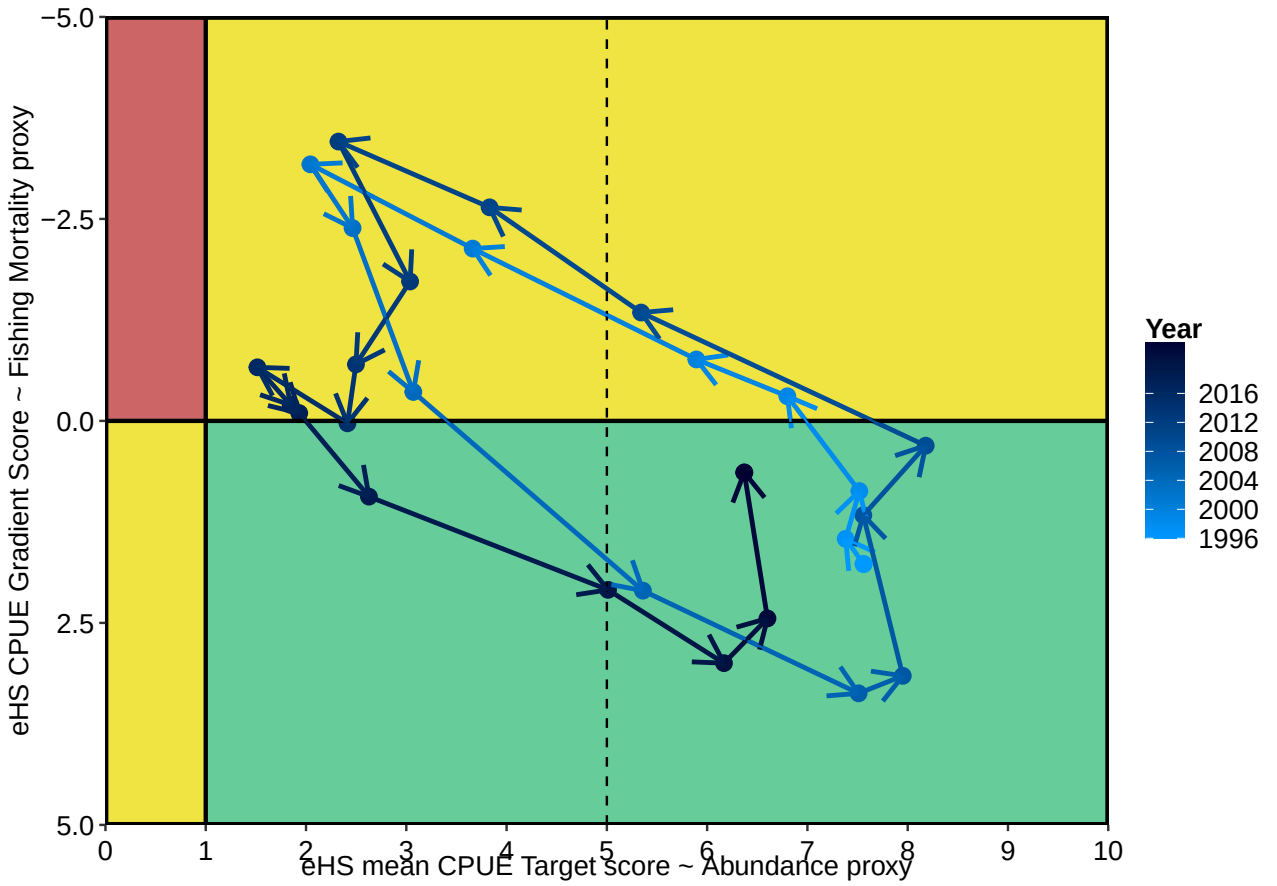

Figure 3.4: *Phase plot of fishing mortality and abundance proxies for Eastern Zone blacklip abalone , 1996–2023. The Gradient 4 PM (y-axis) is used as a proxy for fishing mortality, and the Target CPUE PM is used as a proxy for abundance. Zone score is calculated as a catch-weighted mean of individual block scores.*

3.1.2 Fishery Trends by Statistical Block

Blacklip: Block 13 - Actaeon's (Whale Head to Actaeon Island)

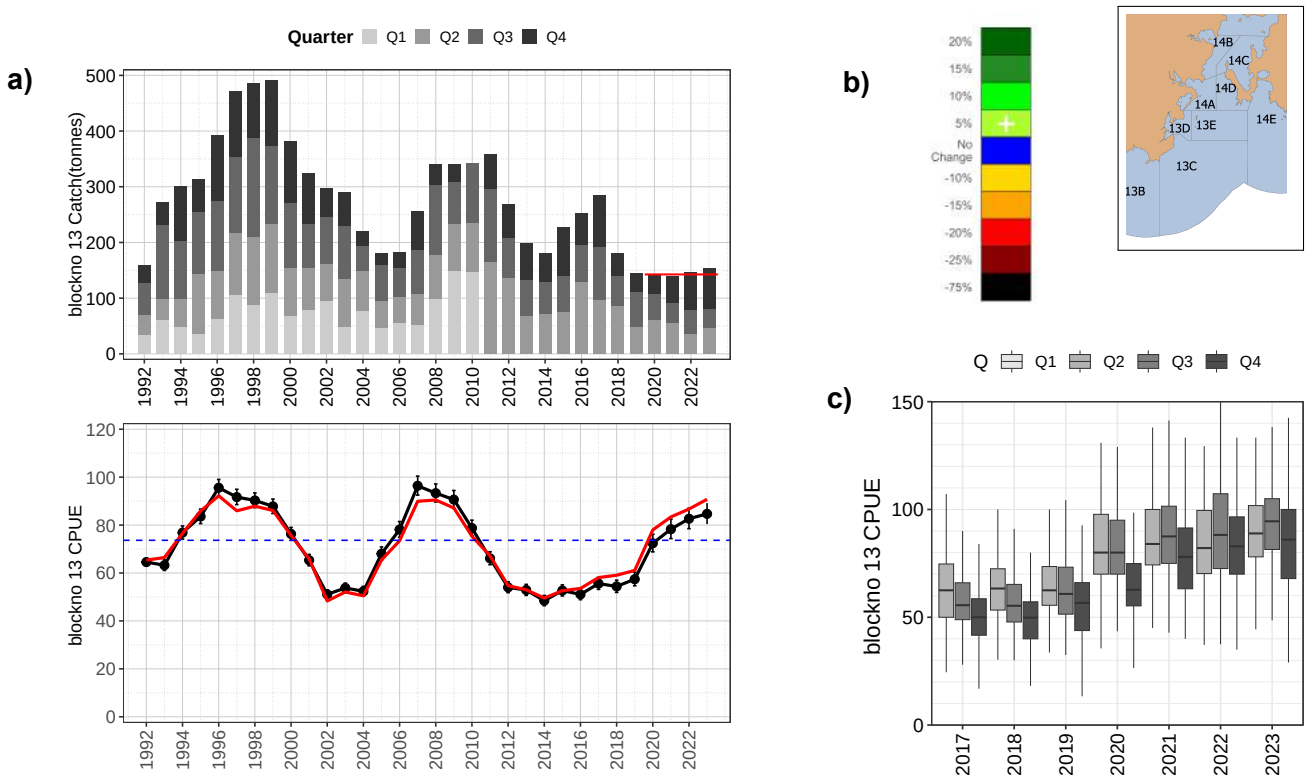

Figure 3.5: *Block 13 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 14 - Lower Channel and South Bruny

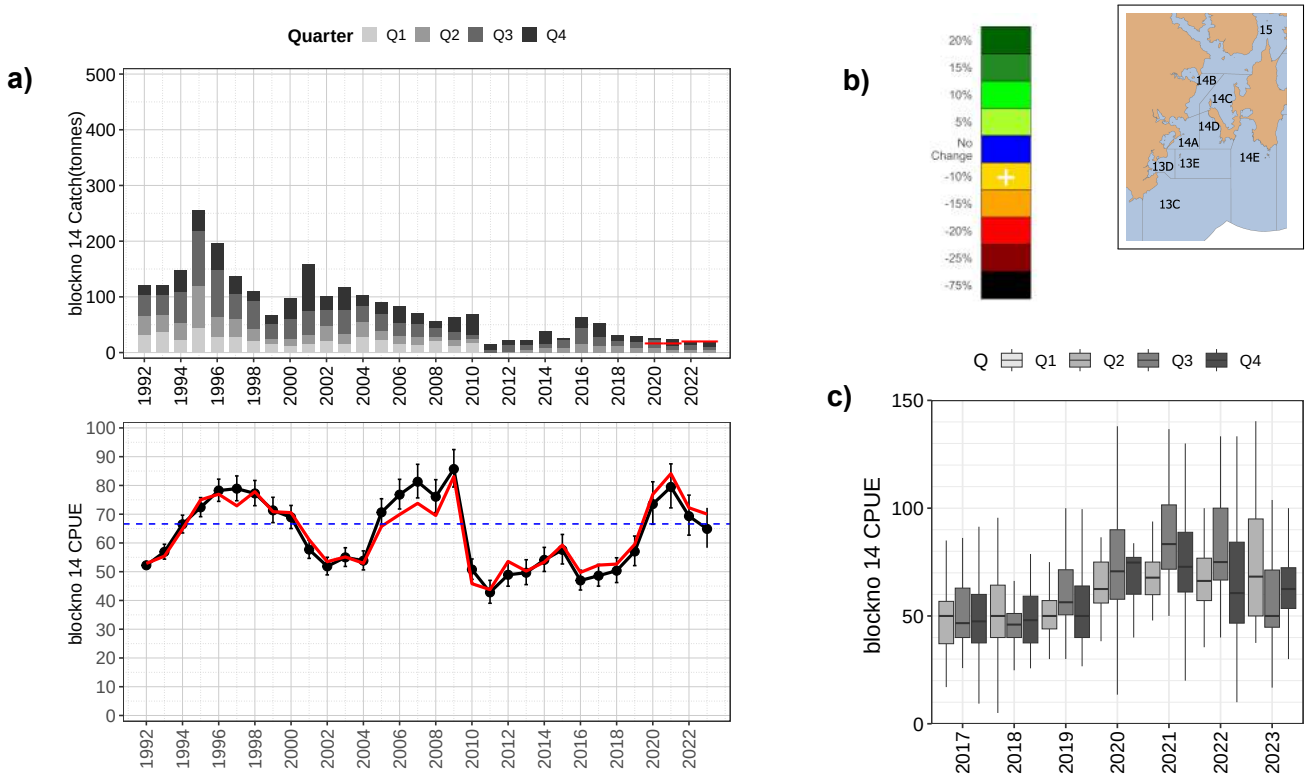

Figure 3.6: *Block 14 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 16 - Bruny Island (Boreel Head to Dennes Point)

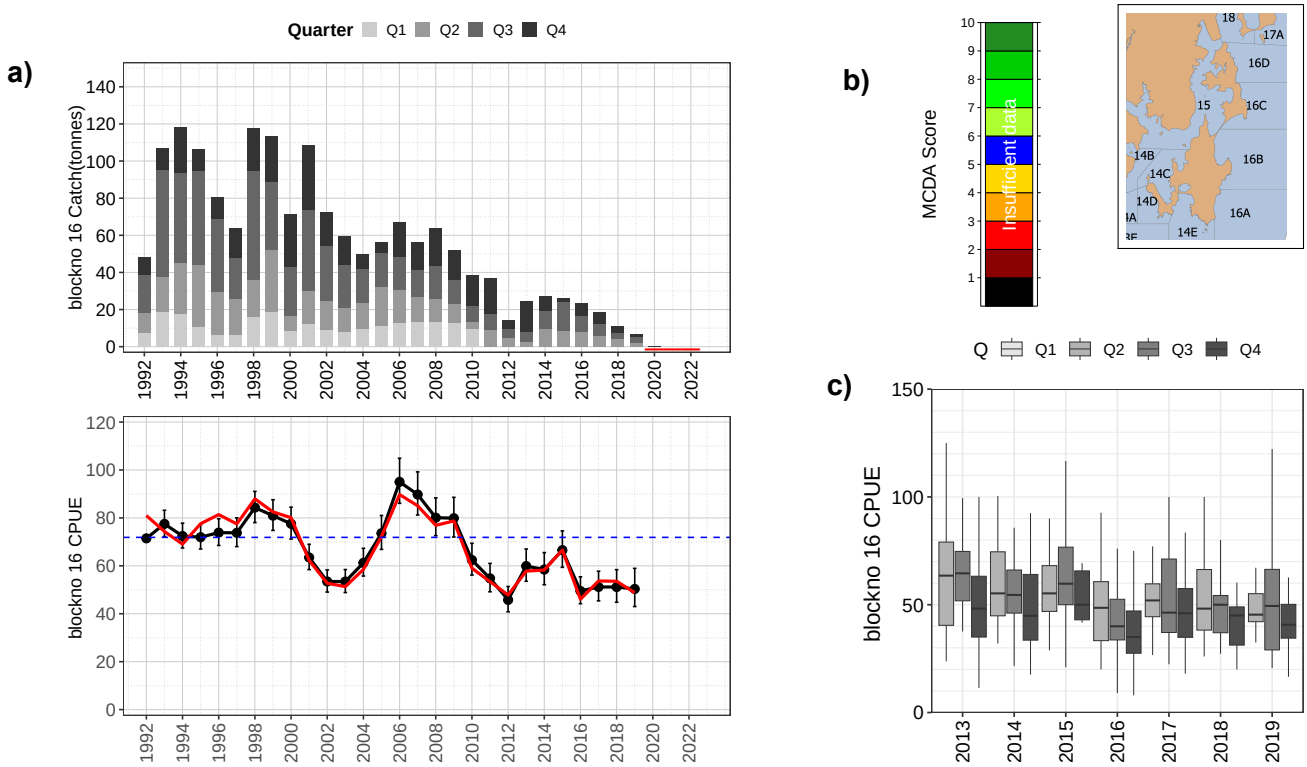

Figure 3.7: *Block 16 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 17 - Storm Bay

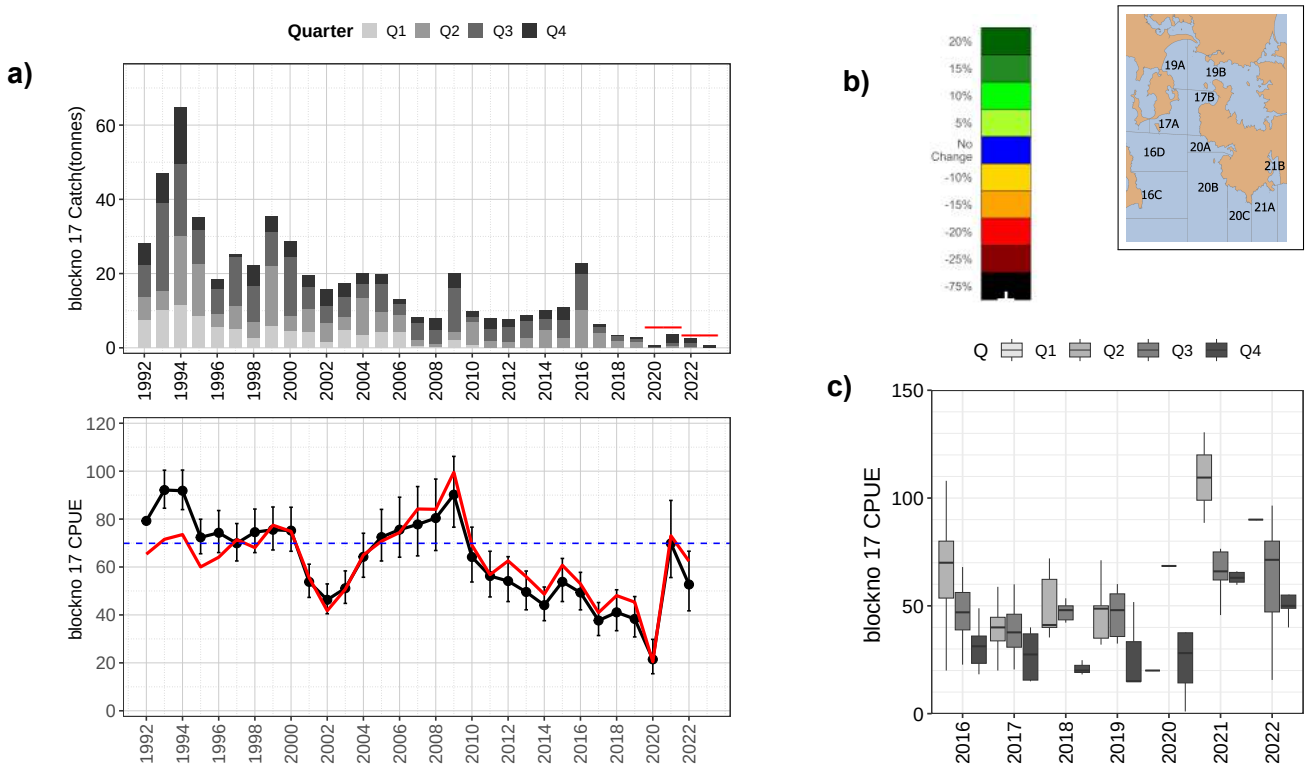

Figure 3.8: *Block 17 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 19 - Fredrick Henry Bay

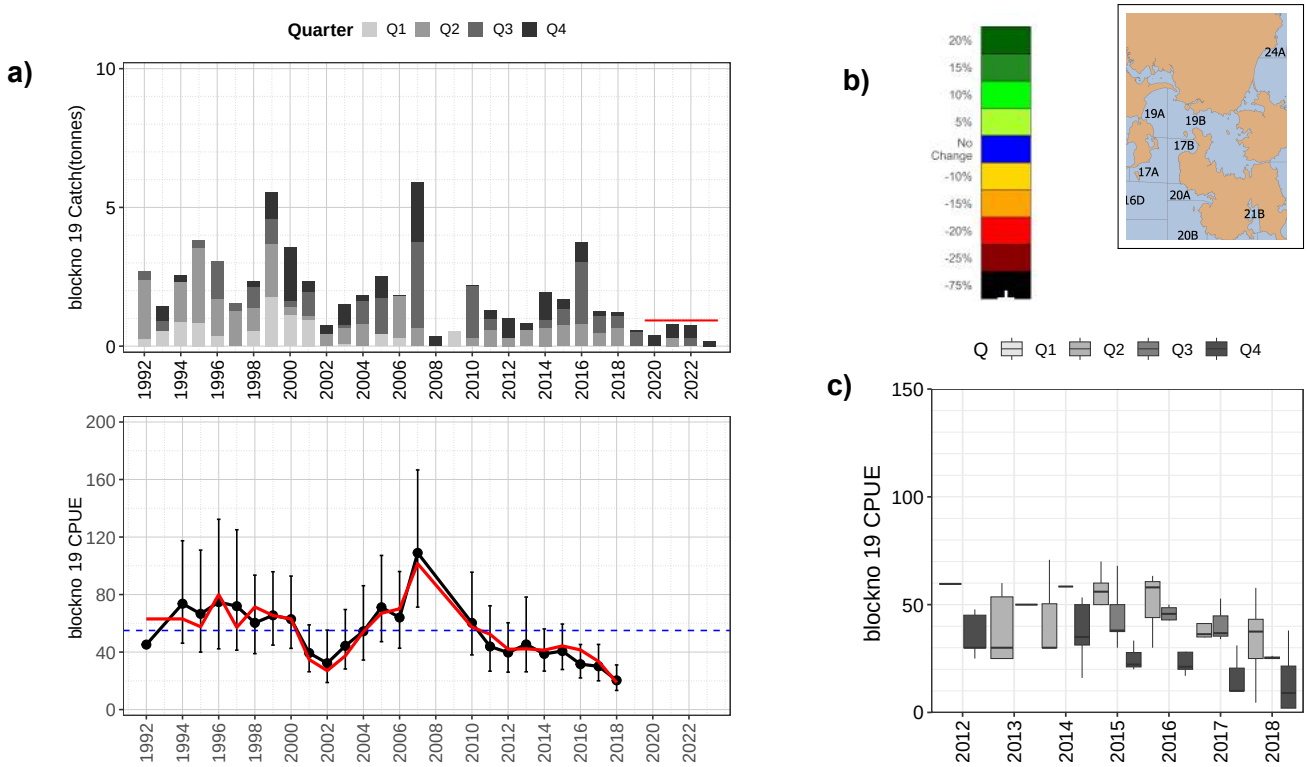

Figure 3.9: *Block 19 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 20 - Storm Bay (Outer North Head to Cape Raoul)

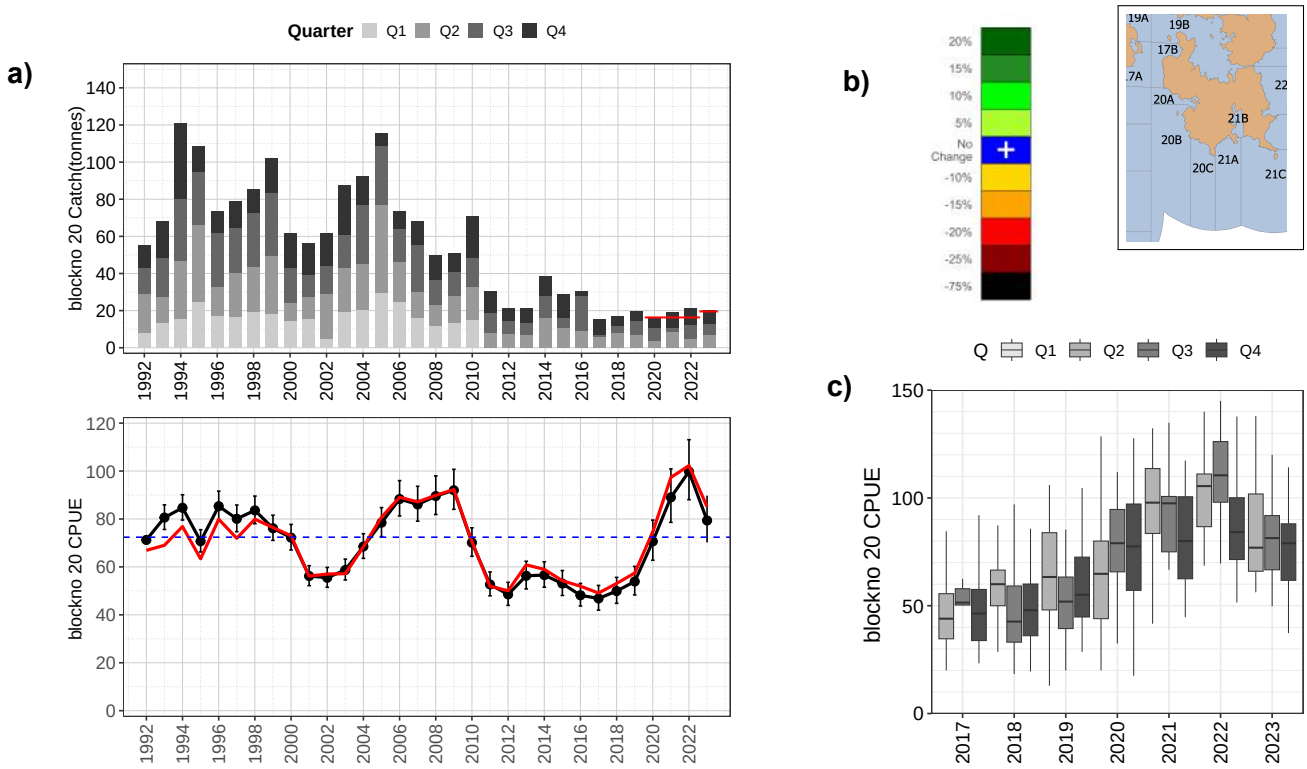

Figure 3.10: *Block 20 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 21 - Cape Raoul to Cape Pillar

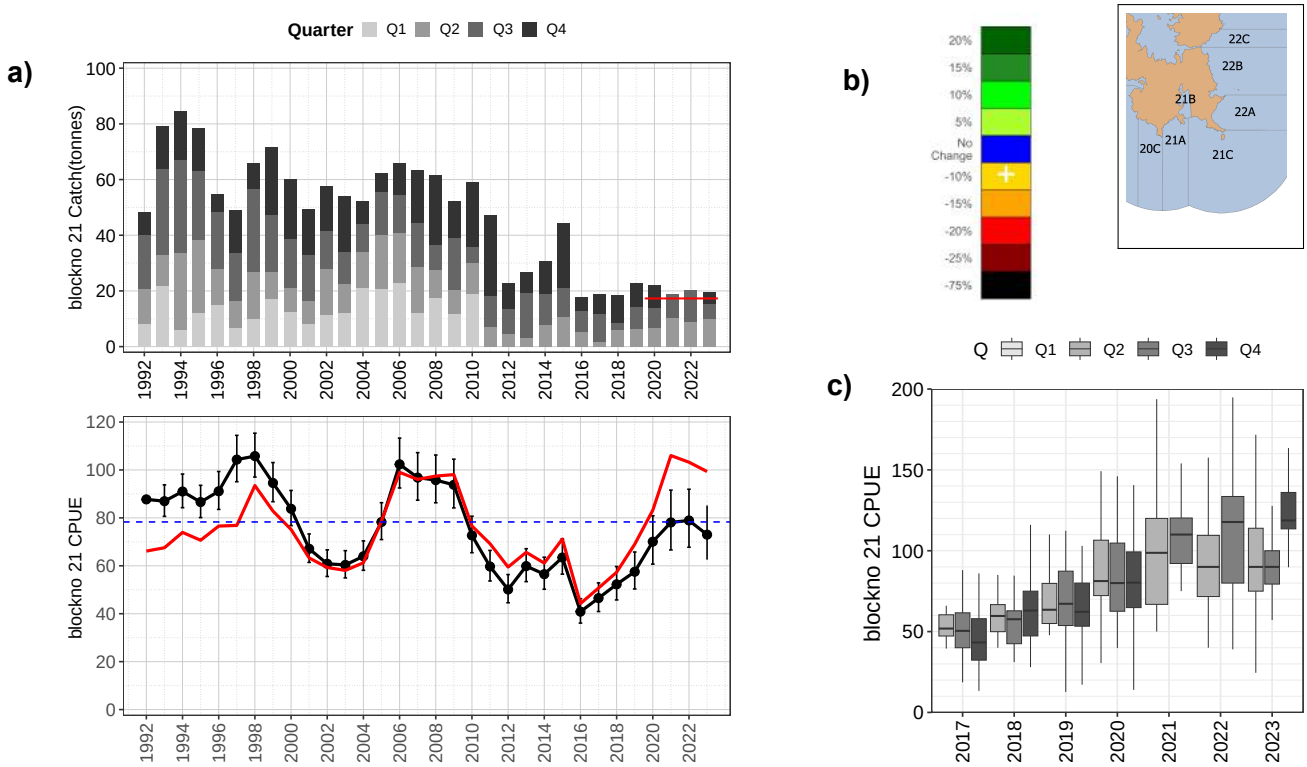

Figure 3.11: *Block 21 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 22 - Cape Pillar to Deep Glen Bay

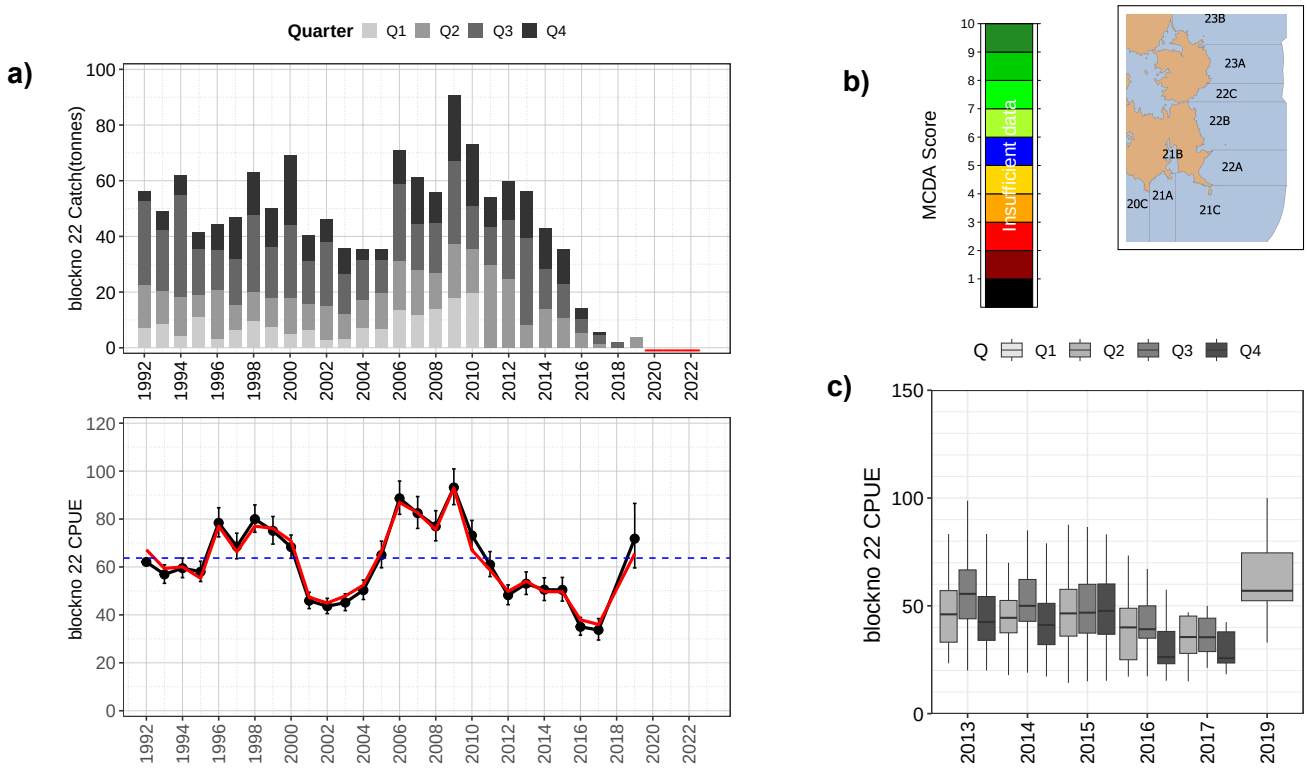

Figure 3.12: *Block 22 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 23 - Deep Glen Bay to Marion Bay

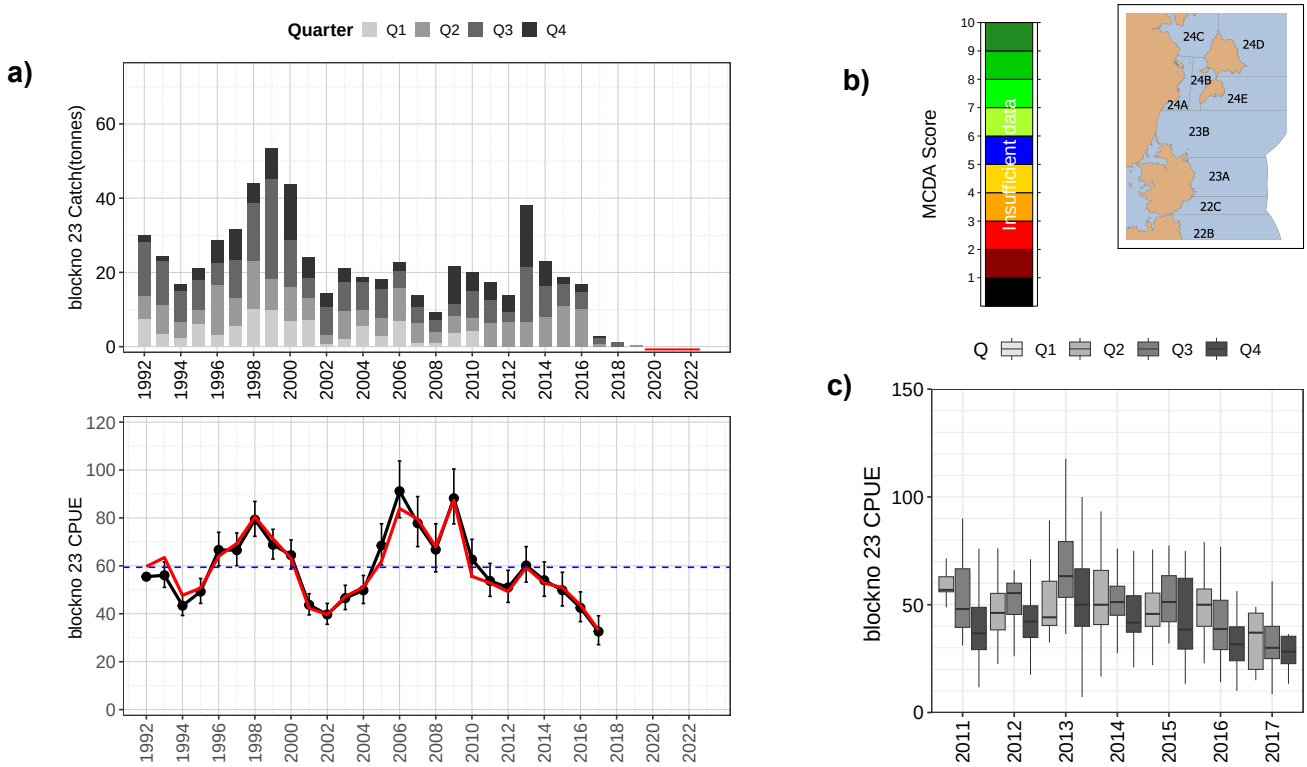

Figure 3.13: *Block 23 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 24 - Maria Island (Marion Bay to Cape Bougainville)

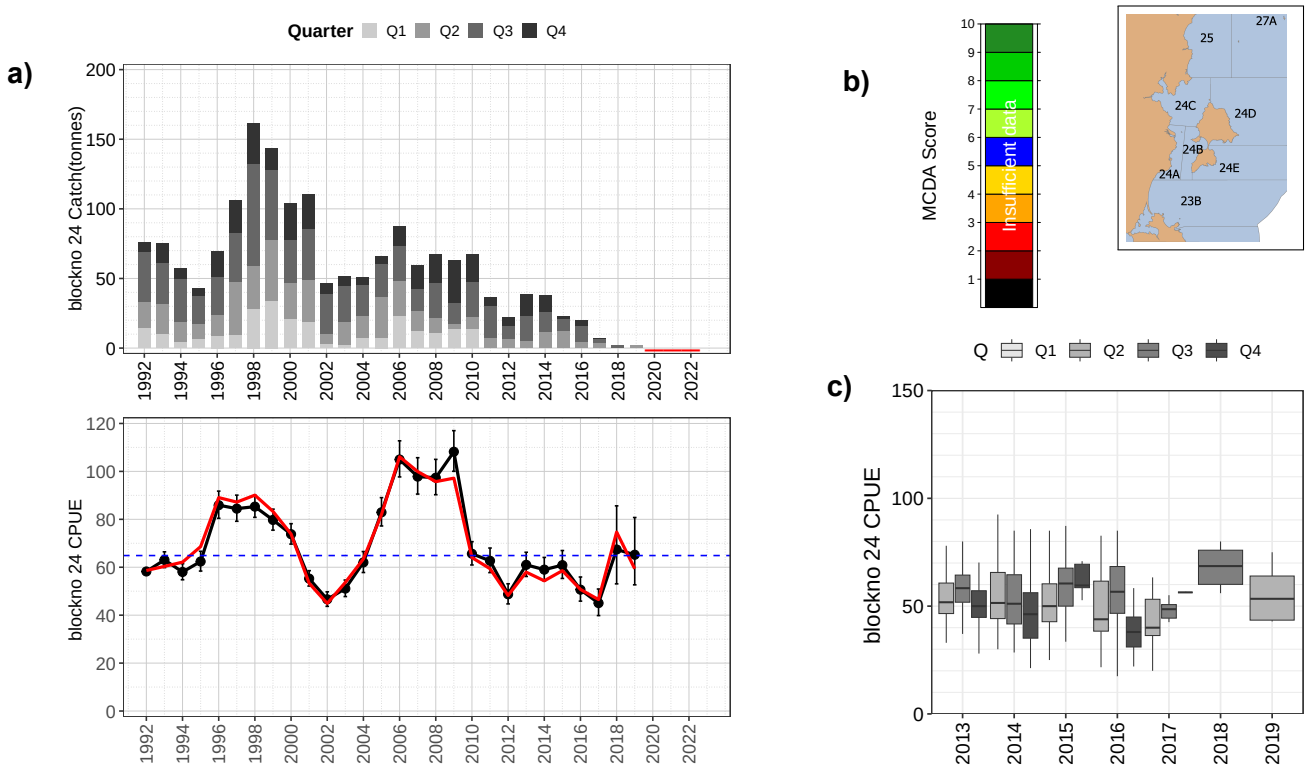

Figure 3.14: *Block 24 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 27 - Freycinet (South Shouten Island to Friendly Beaches)

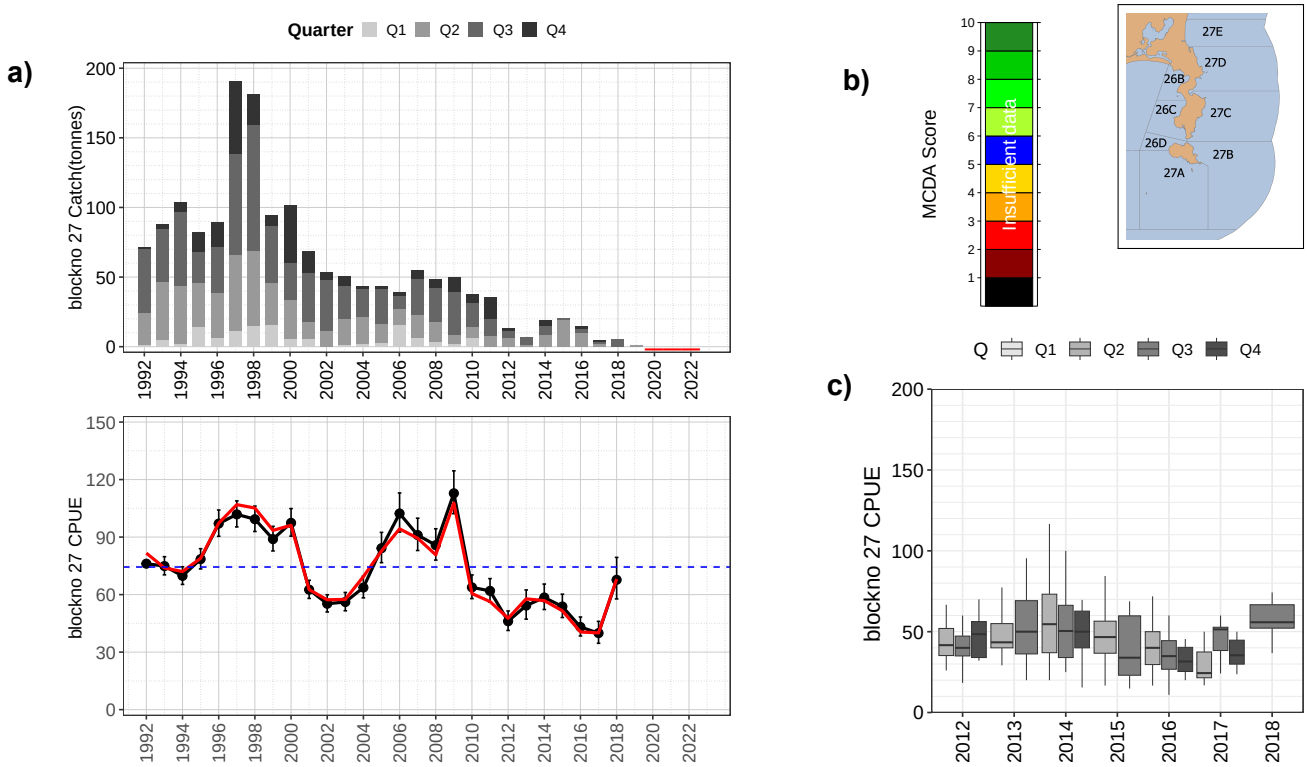

Figure 3.15: *Block 27 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 28 - Friendly Beaches to Bicheno

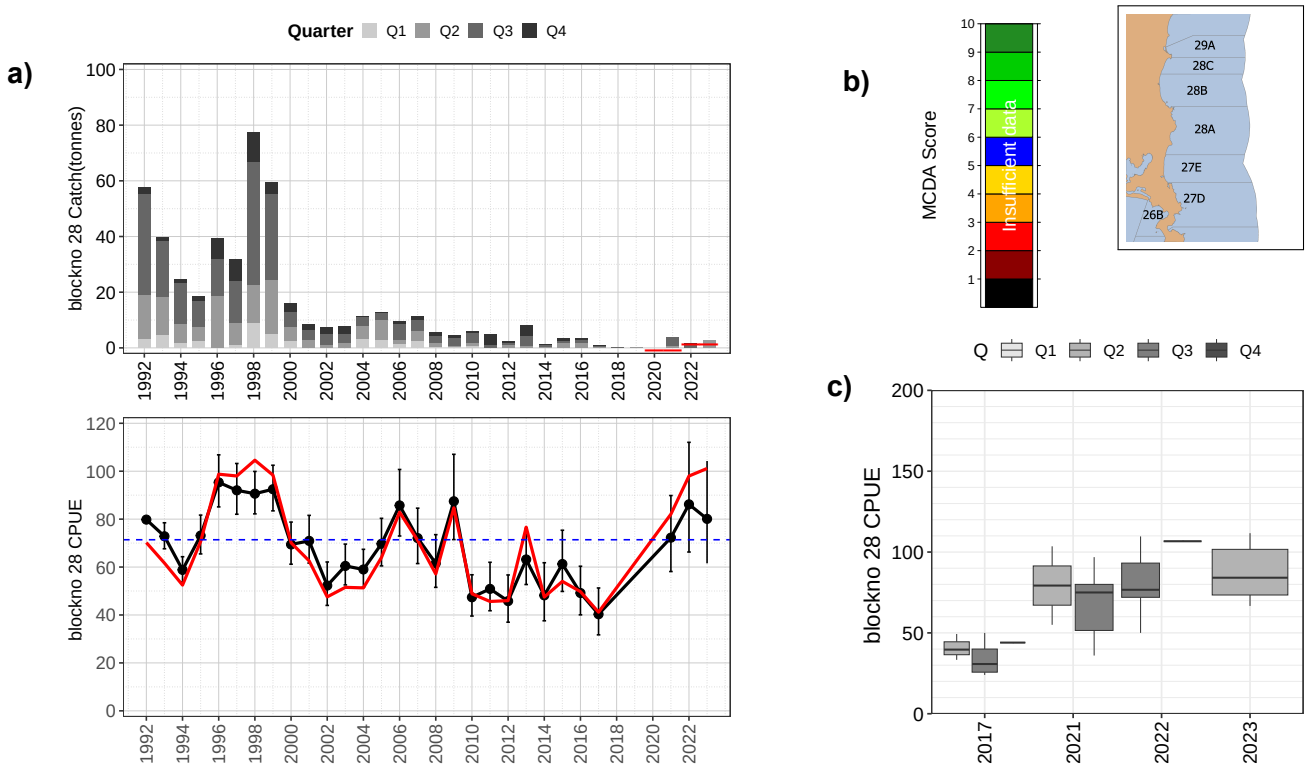

Figure 3.16: *Block 28 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 29 - Bicheno to St Helen's Point

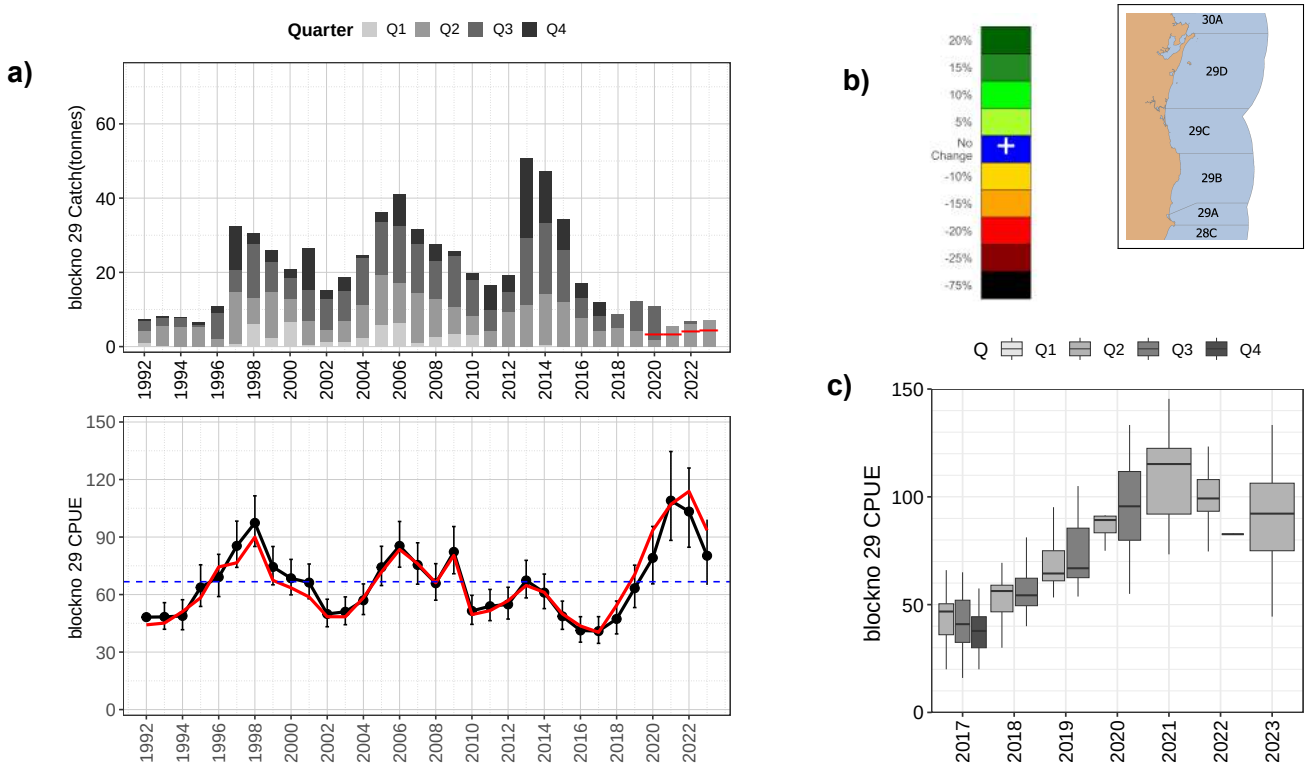

Figure 3.17: *Block 29 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 30 - St Helen's Point to Eddystone Point

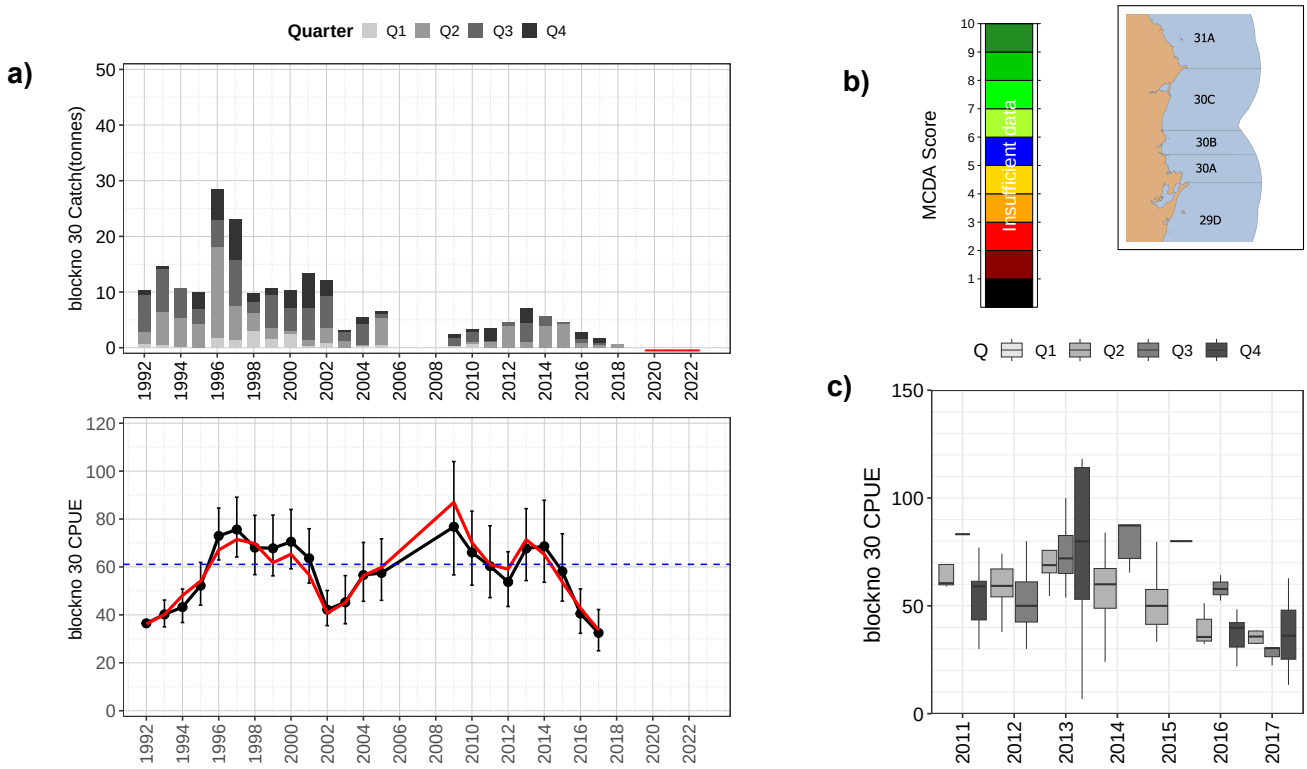

Figure 3.18: *Block 30 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 31 - Eddystone Point to Cape Naturaliste

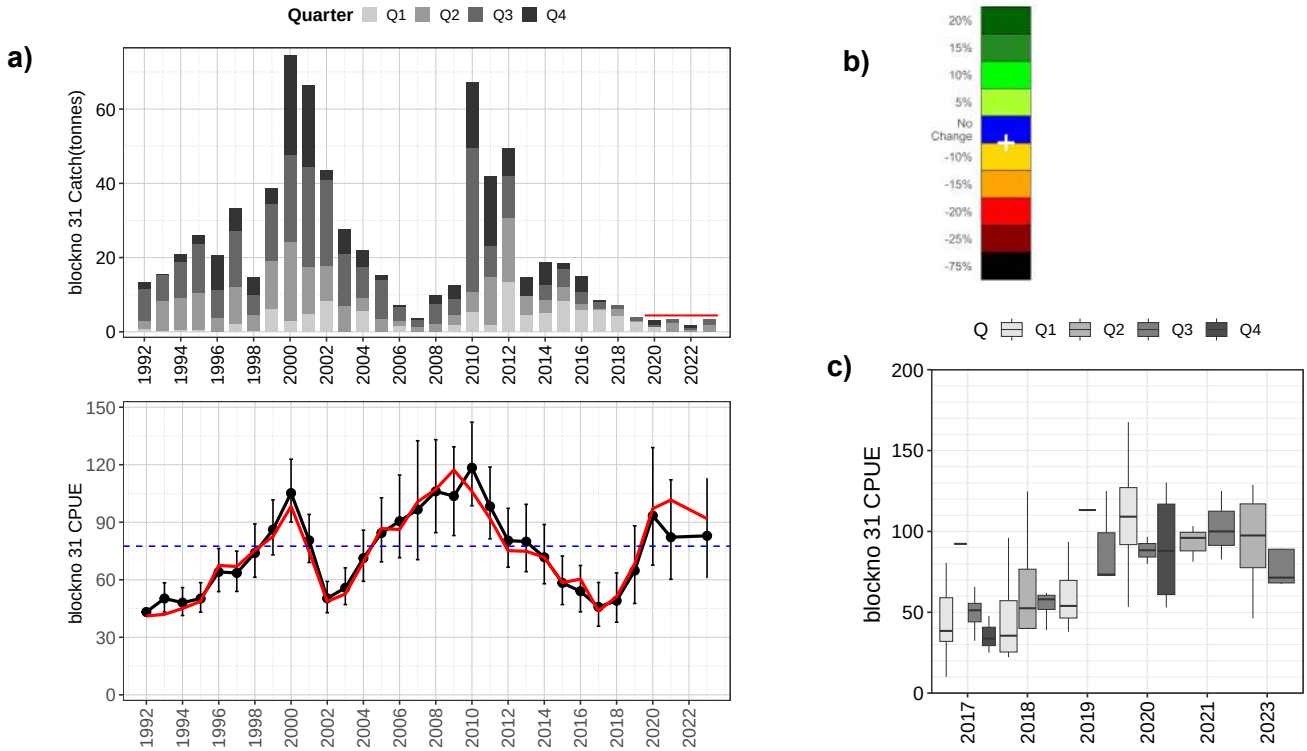

Figure 3.19: *Block 31 EZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Table 3.1: *Eastern Zone Catch, CPUE, Harvest Strategy scores and projected TACC for 2023. CPUE Targets are based on the 55th percentile of standardised annual mean CPUE, with a weighting of 65:25:10 on CPUE, Gradient 4 and Gradient 1 performance measures respectively.*

Block No	Catch 2022	Catch Targ	Catch YTD	CPUE YTD	Score CPUE	Score Grad4	Score Grad1	Score	HS adj	MCDA 2024
13	146.4	146.9	154.3	84.7	6.9	5.9	5.4	6.5	1.05	154.2
14	20.0	24.5	17.2	64.9	4.7	3.9	4.3	4.5	0.90	22.1
17	2.7	4.0	0.6					0.0		
19	0.7	1.0	0.2					0.0		
20	21.2	21.0	19.8	79.4	6.0	5.8	1.6	5.5	1.00	21.0
21	20.1	18.0	19.4	73.0	4.4	5.3	4.1	4.6	0.90	16.2
28	1.8	2.0	2.7	80.1	6.3			0.0		
29	6.7	5.1	7.2	80.3	6.4	4.9	2.5	5.6	1.00	5.1
31	1.9	5.0	3.6	81.9	5.5	4.9	2.5	5.0	1.00	5.0
Total	221.6	227.5	225.0							223.6

3.1.3 Eastern Zone Summary

In 2023 the zone wide catch weighted mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ was 81.4 Kg/Hr a marginal decrease from 2022 (mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ 83.2 Kg/Hr)(fig. 3.1). While Block 13 has always been a major contributor of catch, the Eastern zone TACC is now heavily reliant on catch from Block 13 (fig. 3.2), with more than 65% of the Eastern Zone TACC sourced from Block 13 which continues to show signs of improvement. Blocks 14, 20 and 21 are the other key contributors to the Eastern Zone TACC in 2023 (fig. 3.2), which in addition to Block 29 have been rebuilding over the past few years however demonstrated signs of decline in 2023. Over the past two decades the contribution of catch from the East coast blocks (16, 22, 23, 24, 27 and Sub-block 28A) between Cape Pillar and Bicheno to the overall zone catch declined, with a reduction in yield of more than 90% between 2000 and 2019 (fig. 3.2). These five Blocks (16, 22, 23, 24, 27) and Sub-block 28A were first closed in 2020 to commercial fishing to aid recovery and remained closed in 2023. In 2017, a significant catch overrun was permitted in Blocks 13 and 14 to relieve pressure on Storm Bay fishing blocks affected by the Marine Heat Wave (MHW) in 2016 (Oliver et al. 2017a) and the rapidly depleting fishing blocks north of Cape Pillar. A combination of subsequent catch restrictions in these two Blocks combined with the appearance of a strong recruitment into the fishery has enabled catch rates to recover quickly. Timed-swim surveys conducted in Winter and Spring identified increasing abundance of abalone larger than 140 mm, but declining abundance of abalone less than 140 mm. Concerns around declining abundance of sub-legal size classes underpinned recommendations for a fifth year (2024) of closures to the five Blocks (16, 22, 23, 24, 27) and Sub-block 28A of concern.

The zone-wide proxy for Biomass is 6.4 and above the LRP of 1 (section 2.3.6) and the zone-wide proxy for fishing mortality is 0.64 and above the TRP of 0 for sustainability (fig. 3.4). This zone wide status however, masks the highly depleted state of the fishery between Cape Pillar and Bicheno.

3.2 Western Zone

3.2.1 Zone Overview

For the period 1993–1999, the majority of what is now the Western Zone was under-fished (catch ranging from 500–750 t) in preference to the Eastern Zone where a higher beach price could be achieved. This led to a substantial accumulation of biomass and very high catch rates (1993 mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ 104.5 Kg/Hr; 1999 mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ 163.0 Kg/Hr). With the introduction of zones in 2000–2001 to manage the distribution of effort, the Western Zone TACC was elevated to 1260 t, and remained at this level through to 2008 with mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ declining to below 130 Kg/Hr. Through the mid 2000's selective fishing to deliver medium size abalone to the live market was suggested to be widespread. This took form in either targeting of sites known to have a smaller size structure, and avoiding areas which were non-preferred by the market, particularly the northern region of the Western Zone. Concerns about damaging effects on the resource, along with long-term declines in SCPUE were collectively addressed by partitioning the northern blocks of the Western Zone into a new Central West Zone, and implementation of spatial catch caps set annually for four broad geographic regions within this zone, to prevent excess catch being harvested due to economic pressures. The TACC in this management unit was reduced in 2009 to 924 t. In 2013 Blocks 7 and 8 were moved from the Central Western Zone back into the Western Zone and the TACC increased to 1001 t associated with the increased fishing area, but effectively retaining the same level of overall catch as in 2012. In 2013 mean SCPUE declined to 111.7 Kg/Hr, triggering a TACC reduction to 840 t for 2014 and 2015. By late 2015, mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ had declined to 91.9 Kg/Hr, necessitating further reductions in TACC for 2016 to 717 t, with this TACC retained for 2017, 2018 and 2019. Continued declines through 2019 and the formal introduction of the Harvest Strategy has resulted in significant TACC reductions since 2020.

While catch and catch rates in the Western Zone have declined gradually since 2000, there is no evidence of a cyclic pattern of depletion and recovery (fig. 3.20). The distribution of catch across blocks has been relatively stable (fig. 3.22), with the exception of Block 12 where catch remained largely unchanged over the past two decades, until 2020. Blocks 11 and 12 remain the highest producers of blacklip abalone in this zone.

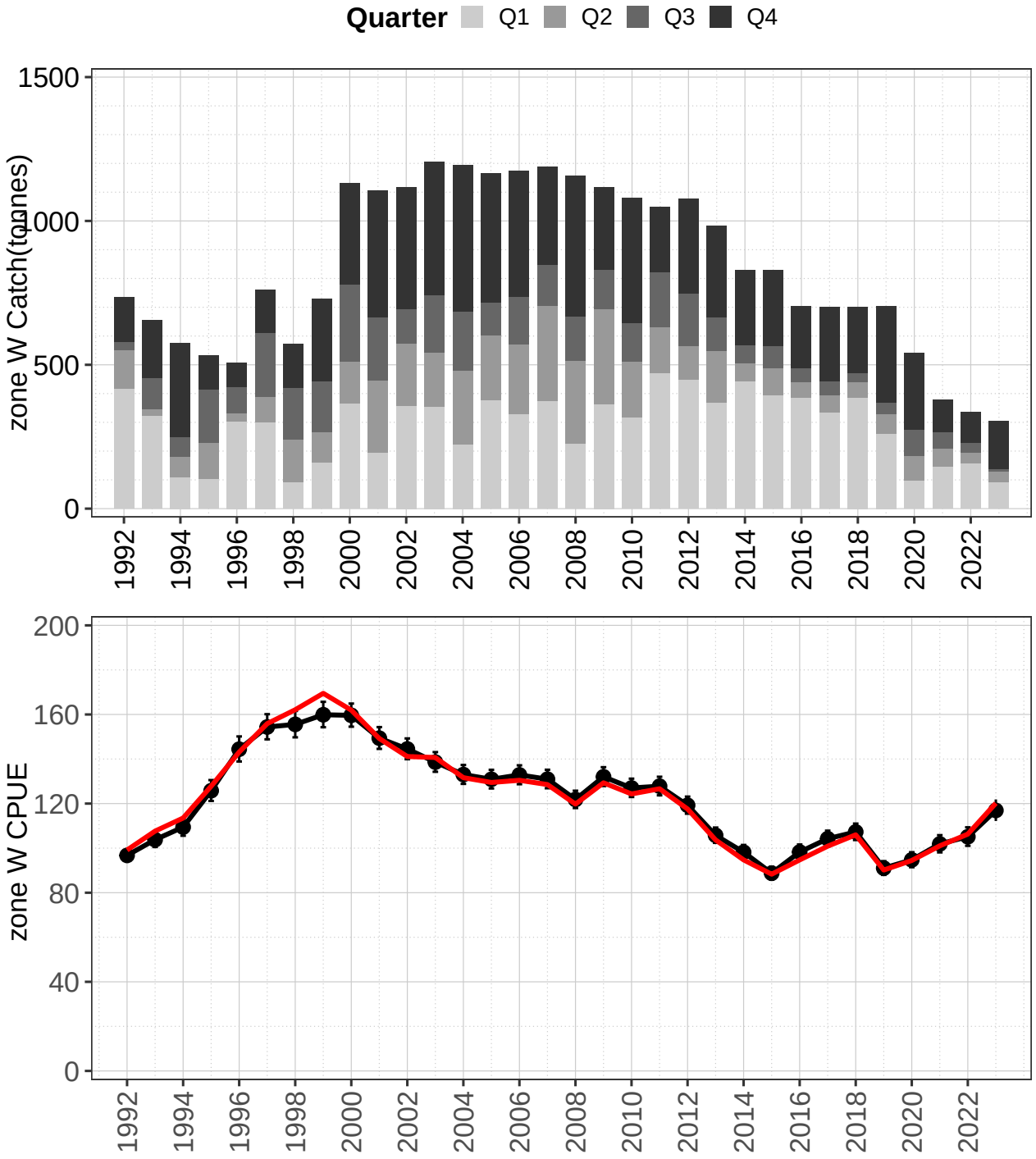

Figure 3.20: *Zone-wide catch and catch rate for Western Zone blacklip abalone, 1992–2023. Upper plot: catch (t) by quarter pooled across blocks currently classified as Western Zone. Lower Plot: standardised CPUE (black line) and geometric mean CPUE (red line).*

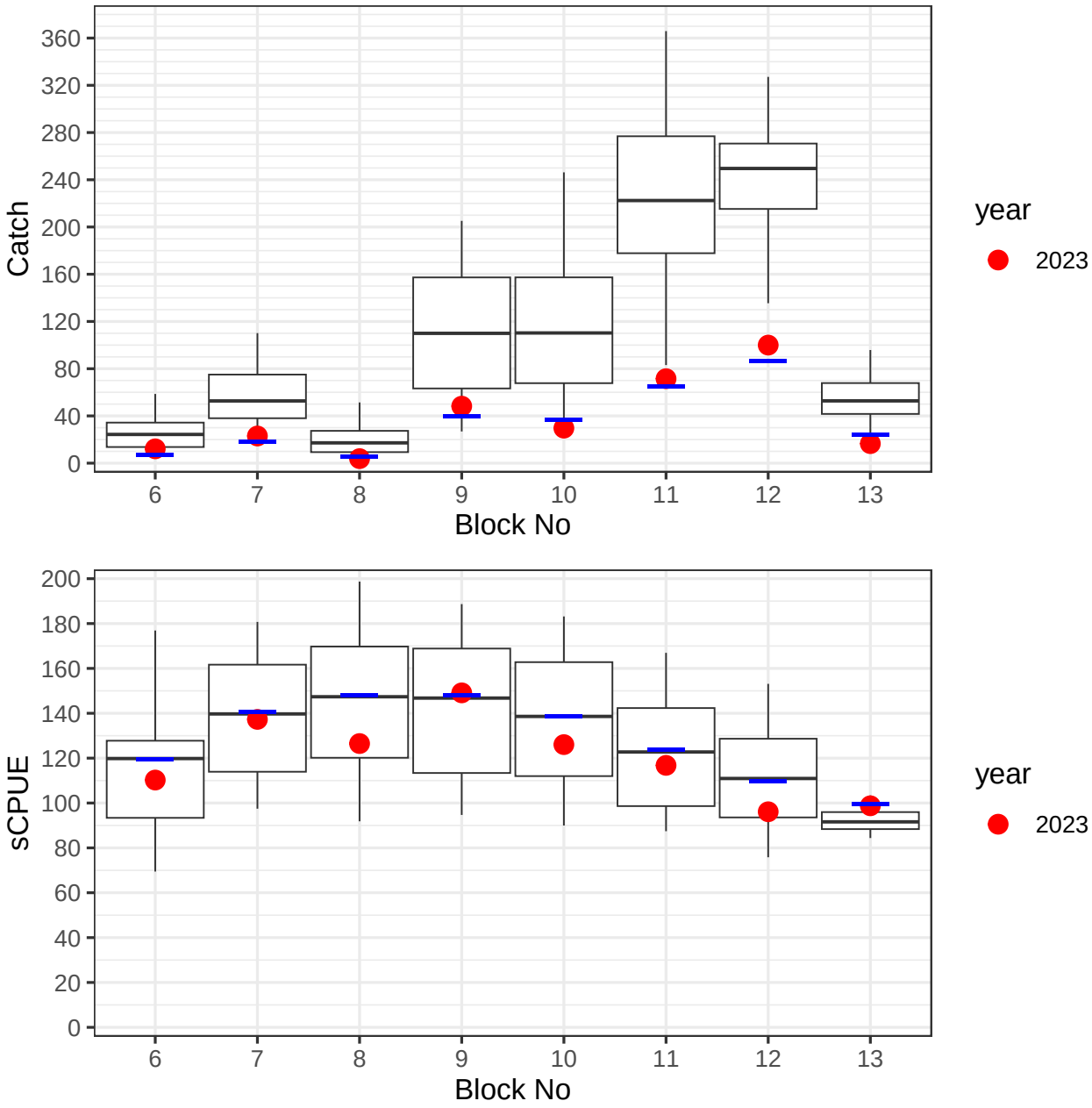

Figure 3.21: *Boxplot of catch and standardised CPUE by statistical block for the Western Zone blacklip abalone fishery.* ***Upper Panel****: Boxplot of annual catch. Blue line indicates catch target allocated for 2023. Red dot indicates catch taken in 2023.* ***Lower Panel****: Boxplot of annual standardised CPUE. Blue line indicates the CPUE target reference point. Red square indicates sCPUE in 2023.*

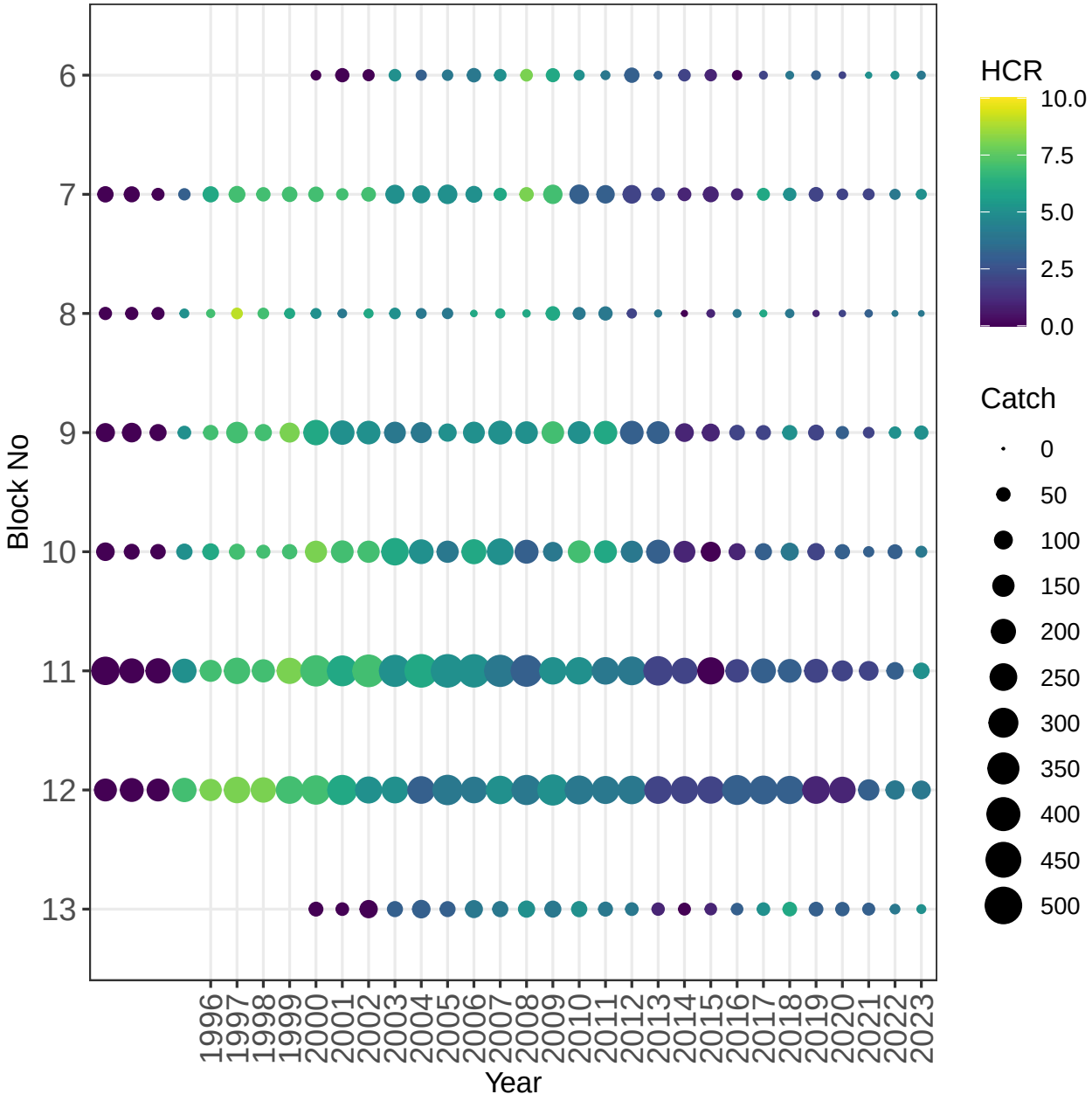

Figure 3.22: *Bubble plot of harvest strategy combined score (bubble colour) and catch (bubble size) for Western Zone blacklip abalone. Block 6 catch prior to 2000 included in Central Western Zone and Block 13 included in Eastern Zone*

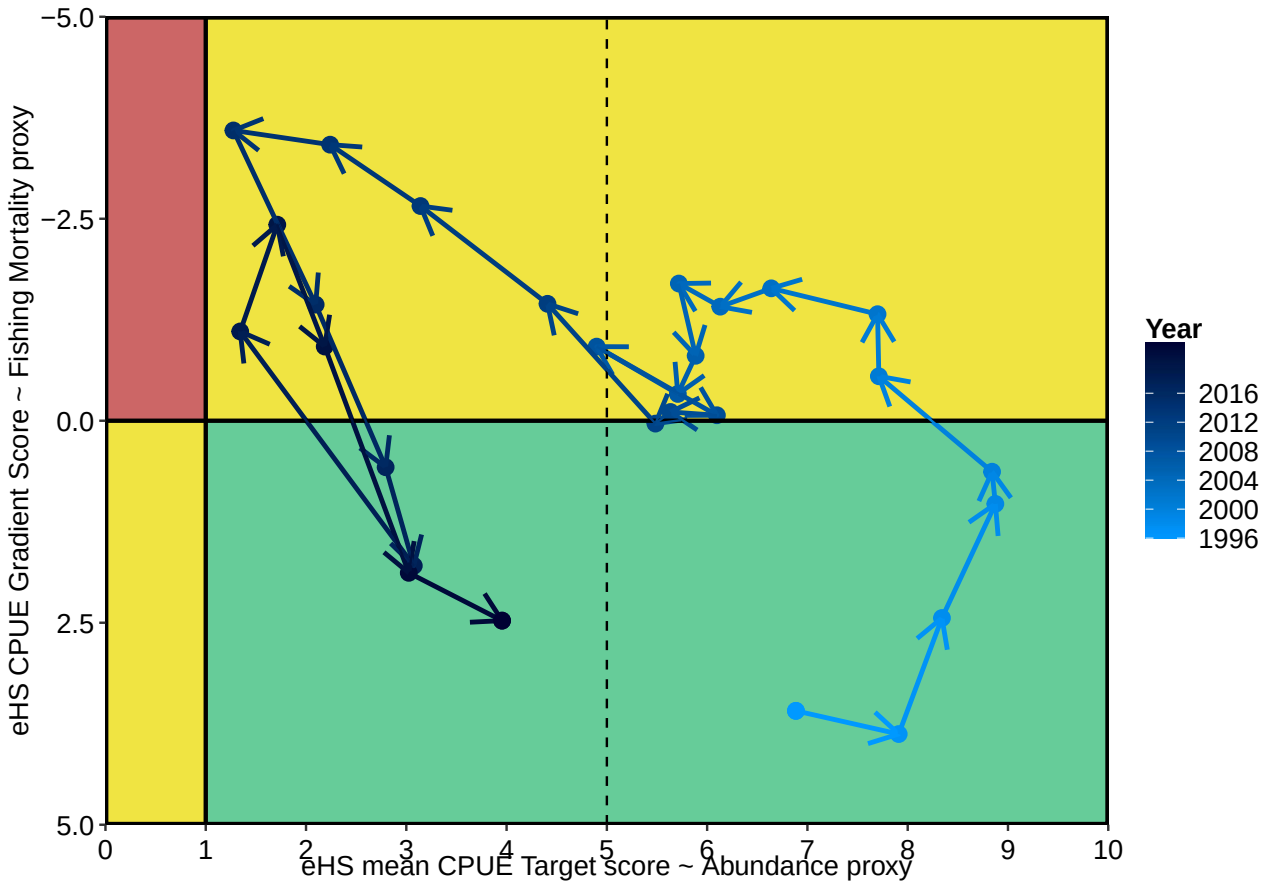

Figure 3.23: *Phase plot of fishing mortality and abundance proxies for Western Zone blacklip abalone , 1996–2023. The Gradient 4 PM (y-axis) is used as a proxy for fishing mortality, and the Target CPUE PM is used as a proxy for abundance. Zone score is calculated as a catch-weighted mean of individual block scores.*

3.2.2 Fishery Trends by Statistical Block

Blacklip: Block 6D - Wild Wave River to Italian River

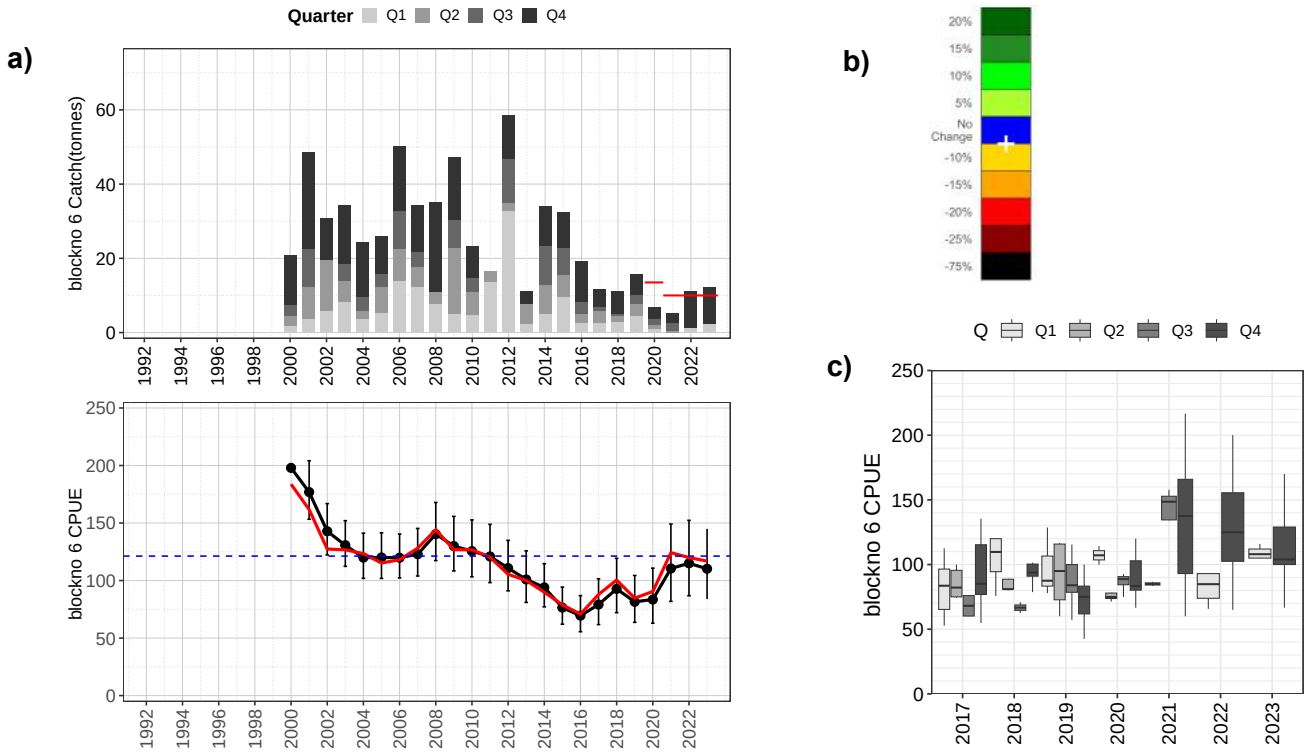

Figure 3.24: *Block 6D WZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 7 - Italian River to Granville Harbour

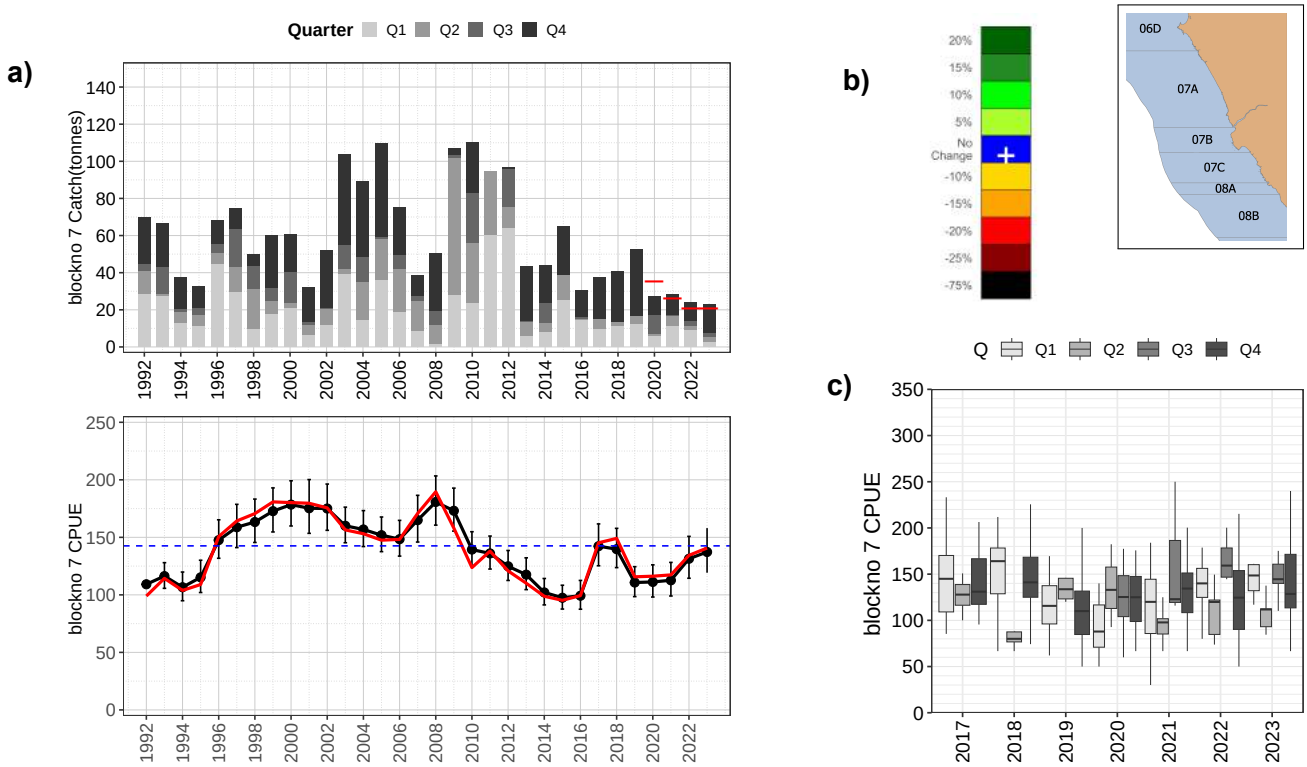

Figure 3.25: *Block 7 WZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 8 - Granville Harbour to Ocean Beach

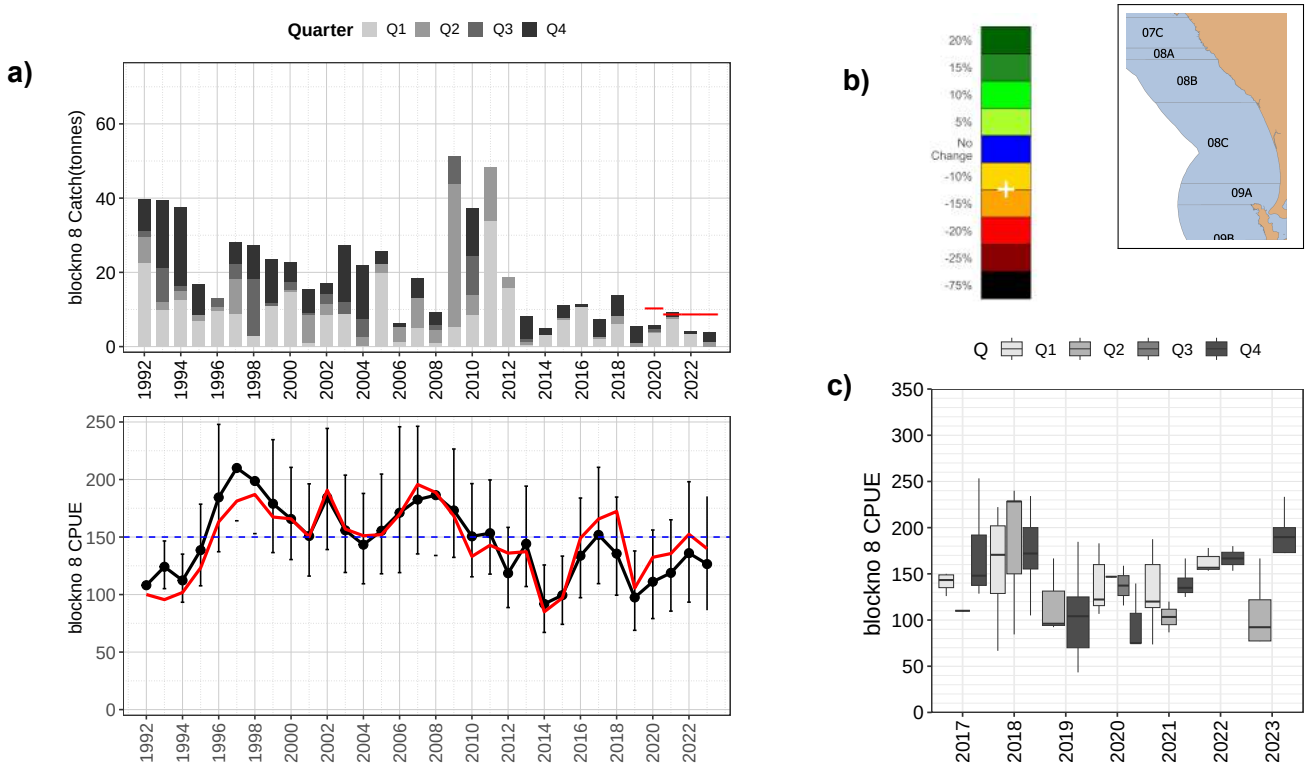

Figure 3.26: *Block 8 WZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 9 - Ocean Beach to Meerim Beach

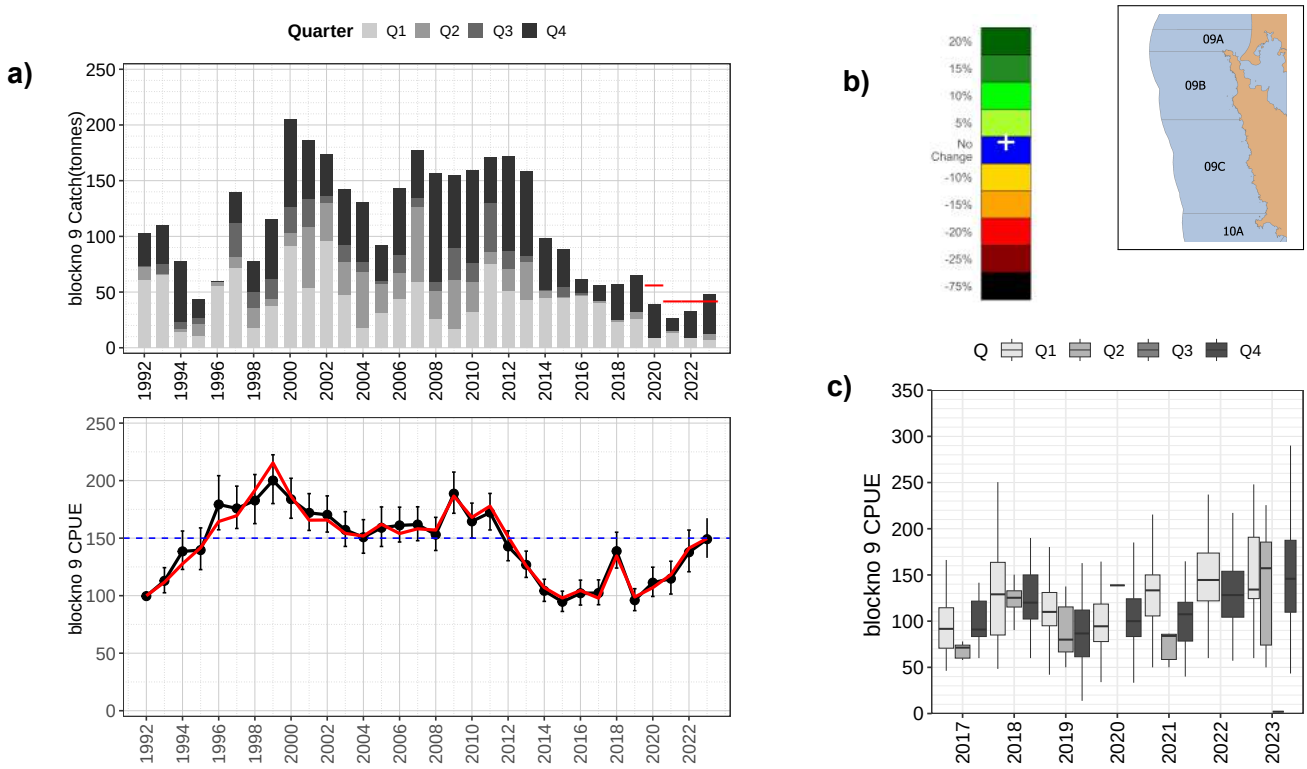

Figure 3.27: *Block 9 WZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 10 - Meerim Beach to Low Rocky Point

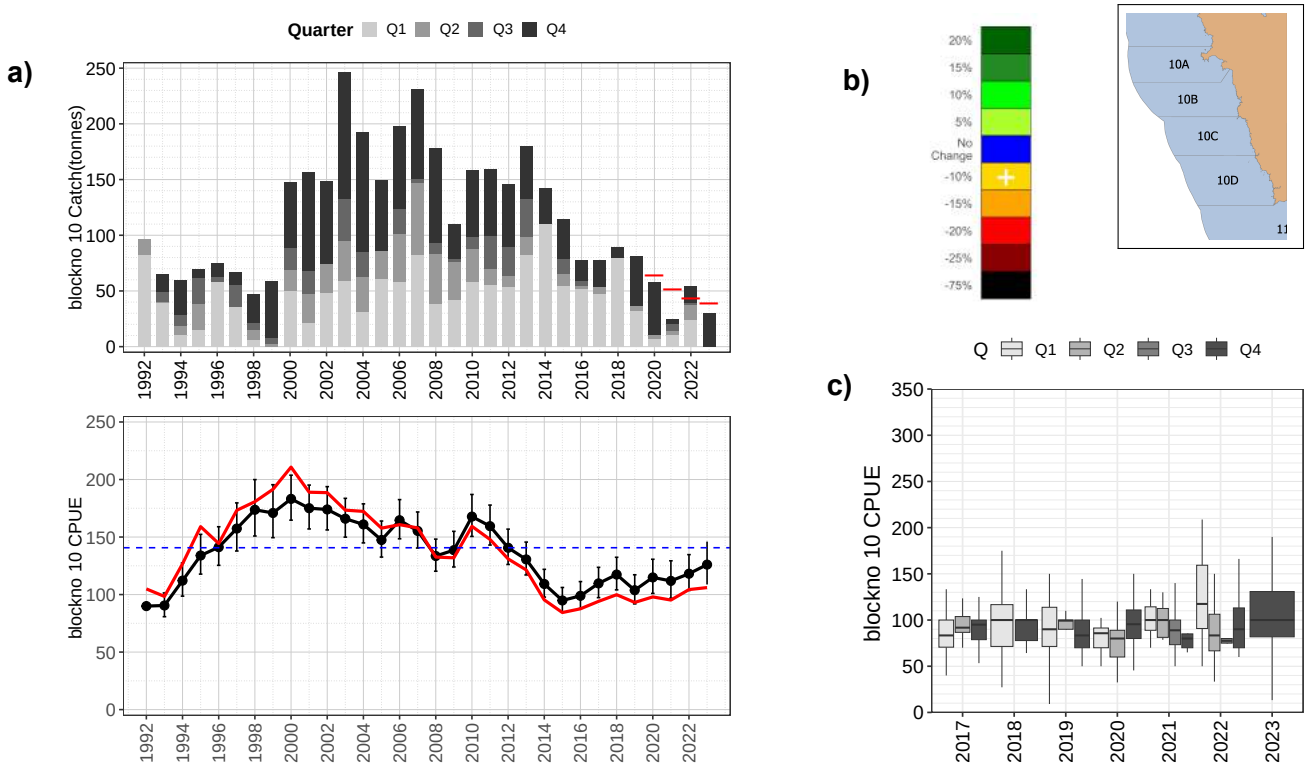

Figure 3.28: *Block 10 WZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55th p% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 11 - Low Rocky Point to Faults Bay

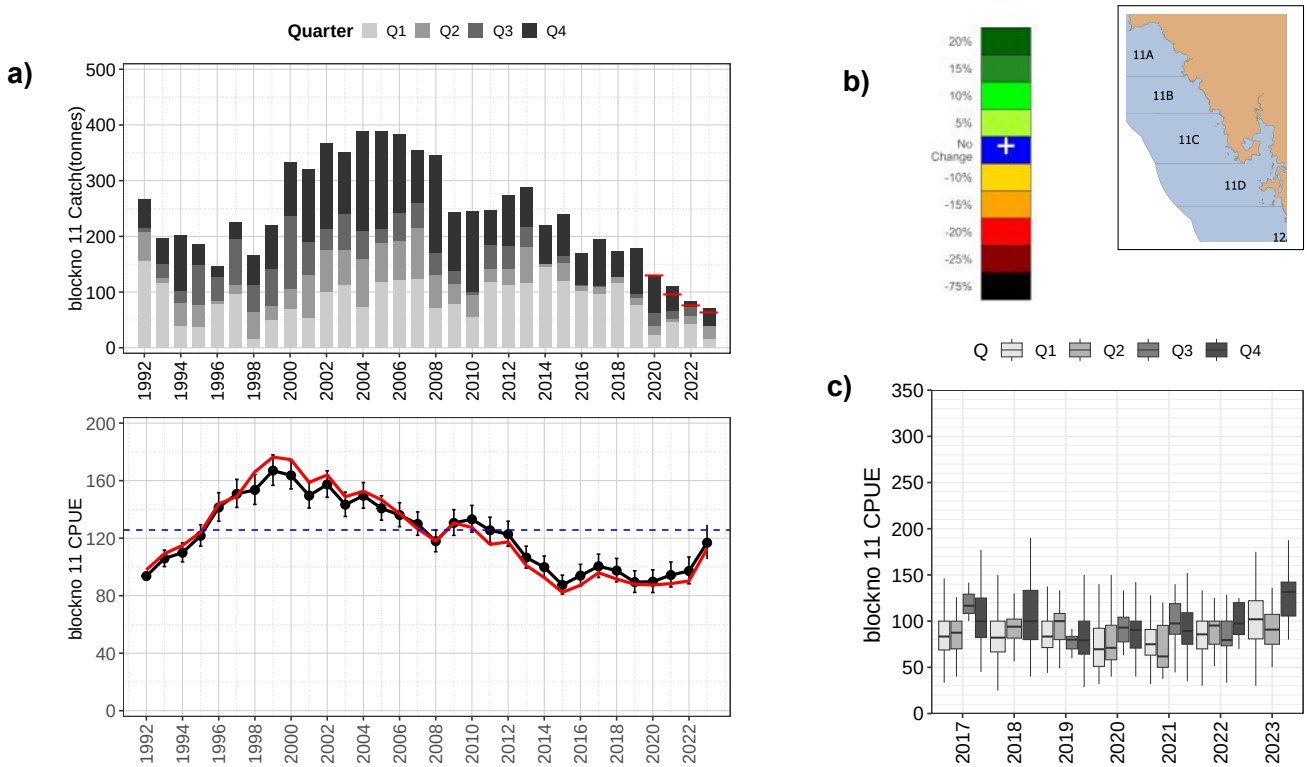

Figure 3.29: *Block 11 WZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55th p% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Sub-Block 12A

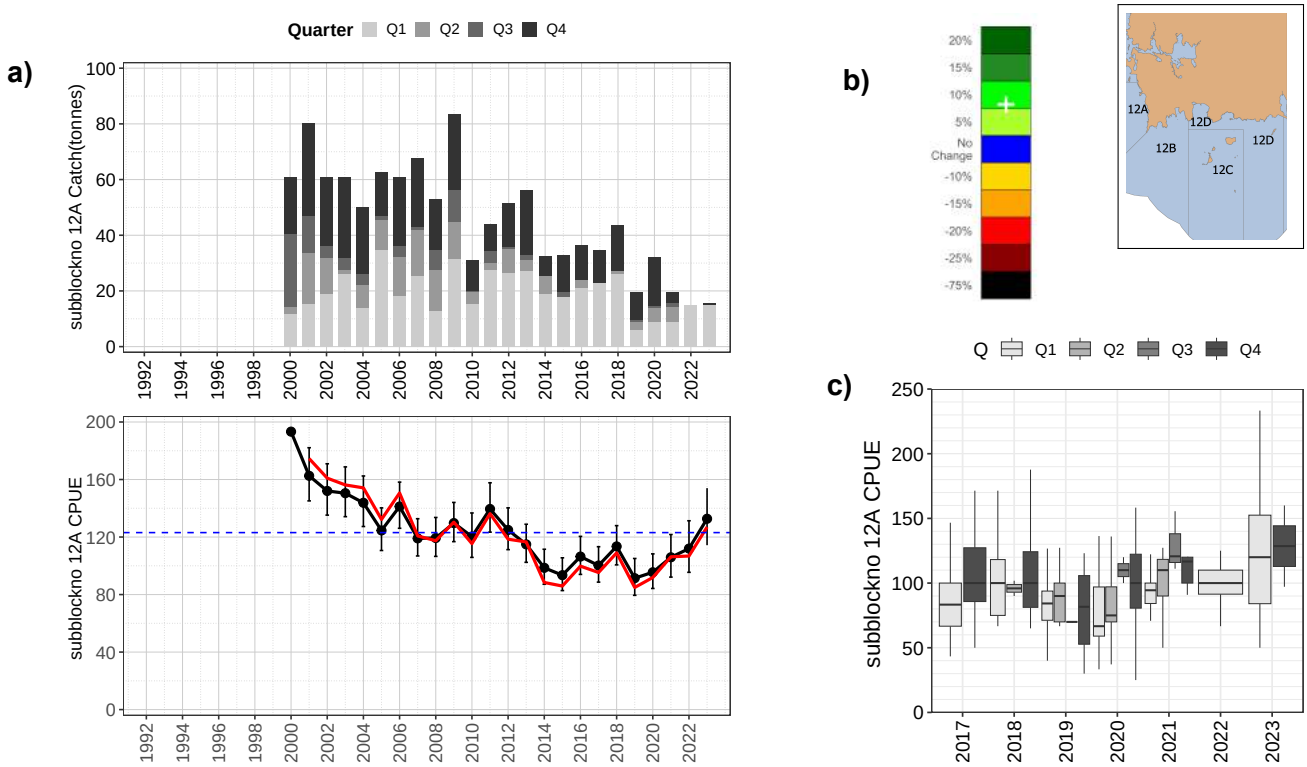

Figure 3.30: *Sub-Block 12A WZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Sub-Block 12B

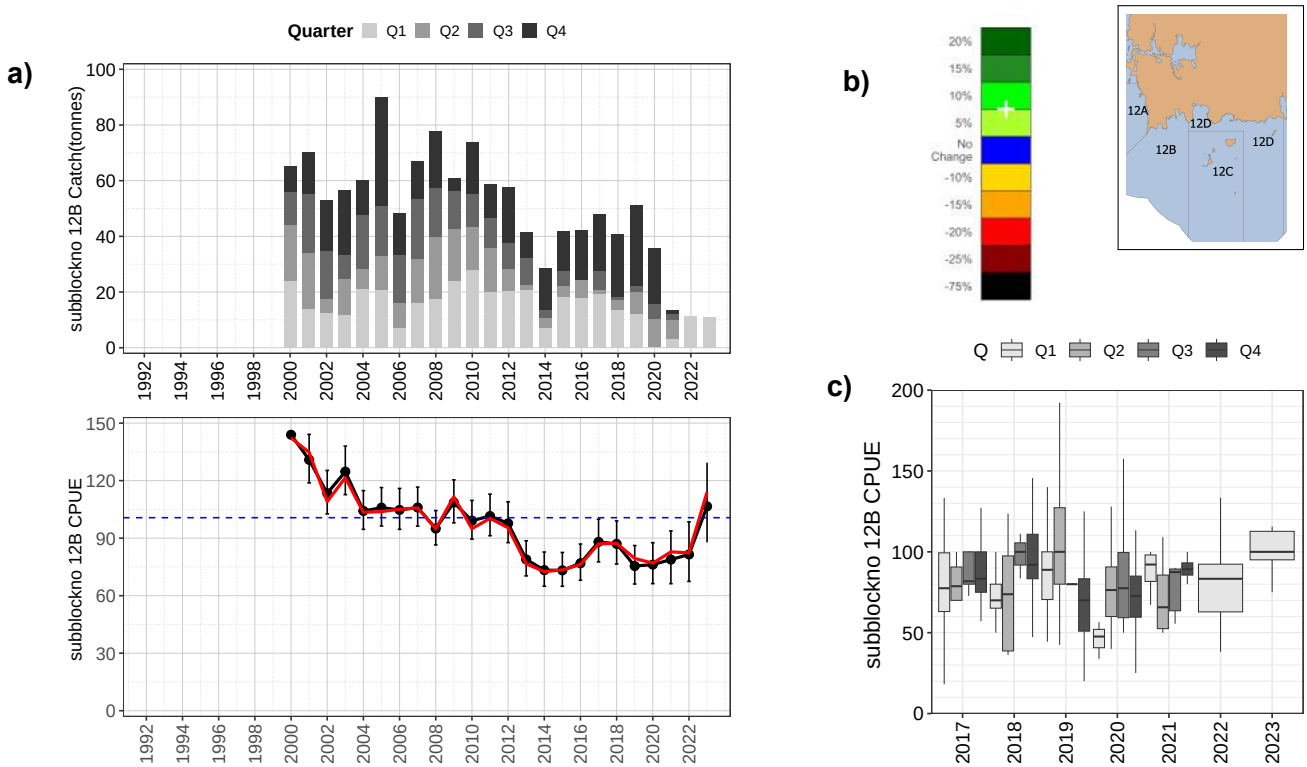

Figure 3.31: *Sub-Block 12B WZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Sub-Block 12C

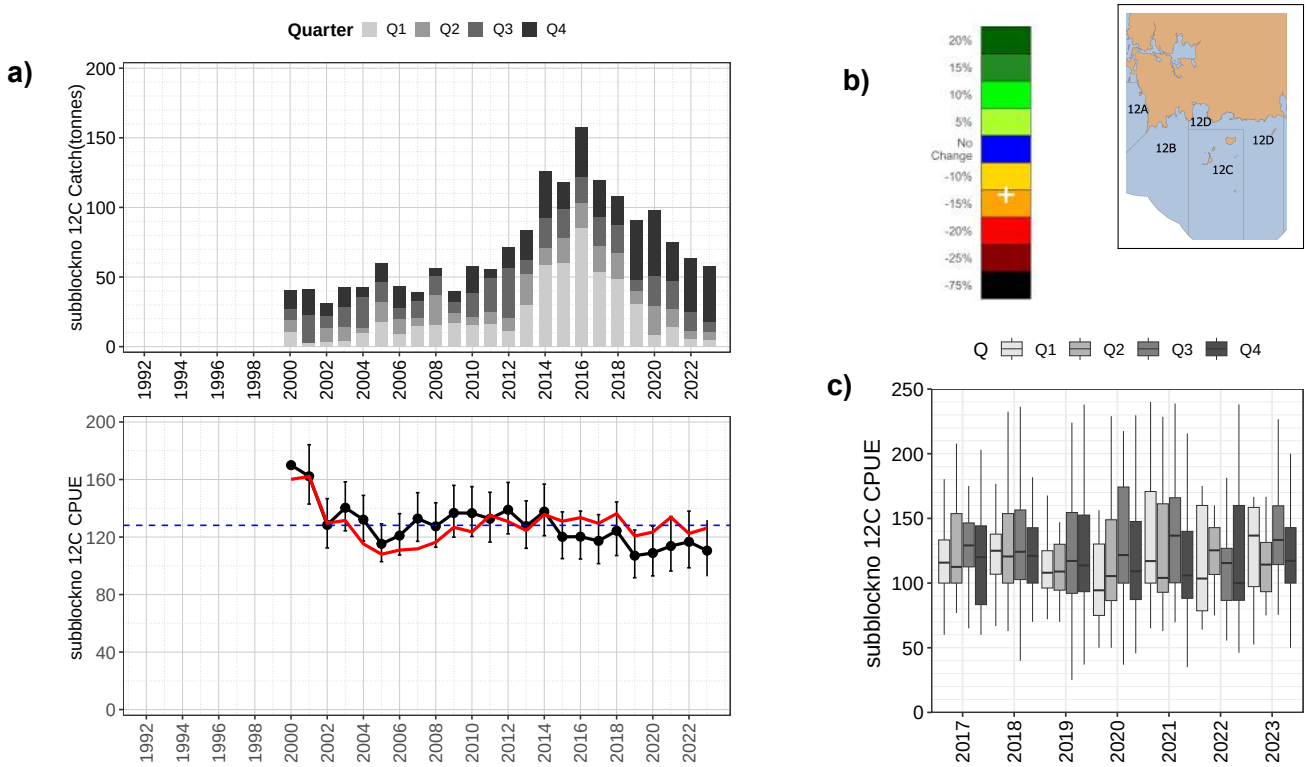

Figure 3.32: *Sub-Block 12C WZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Sub-Block 12D

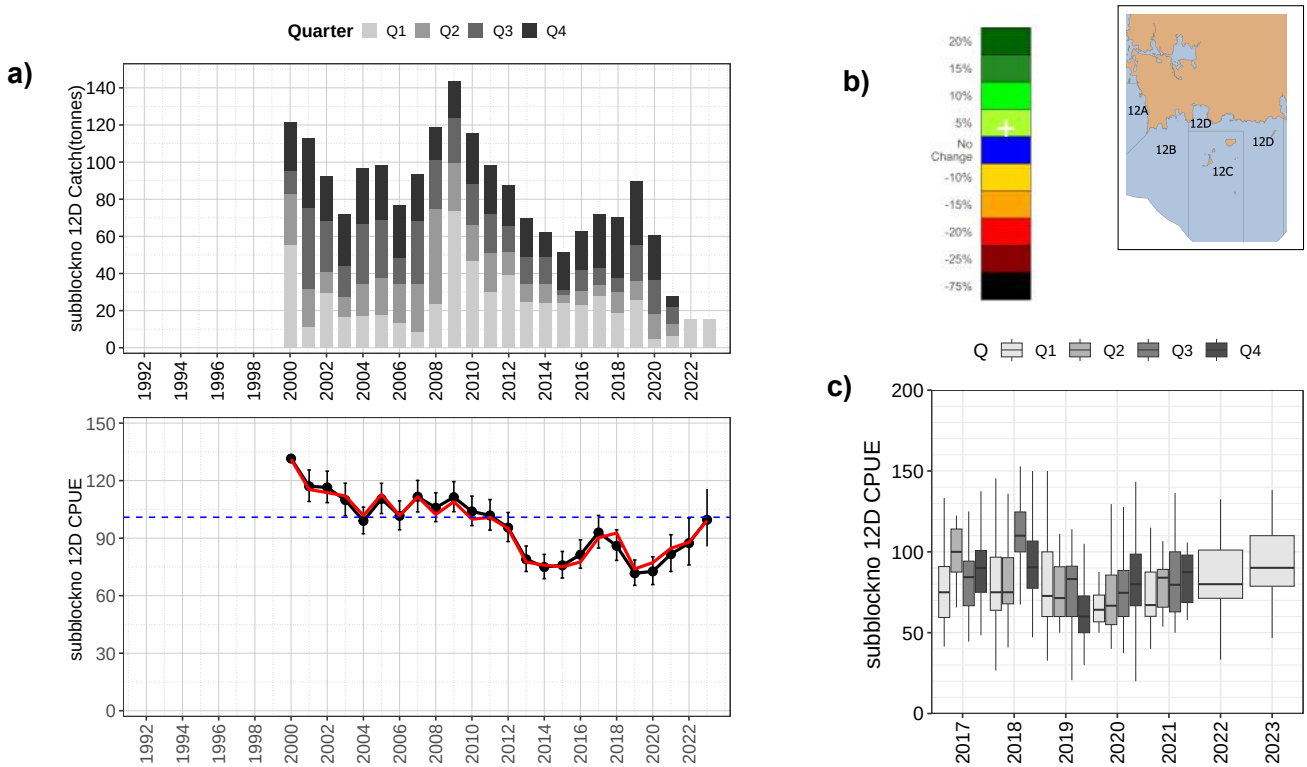

Figure 3.33: *Sub-Block 12D WZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 13A and B - Prion Beach to Whale Head

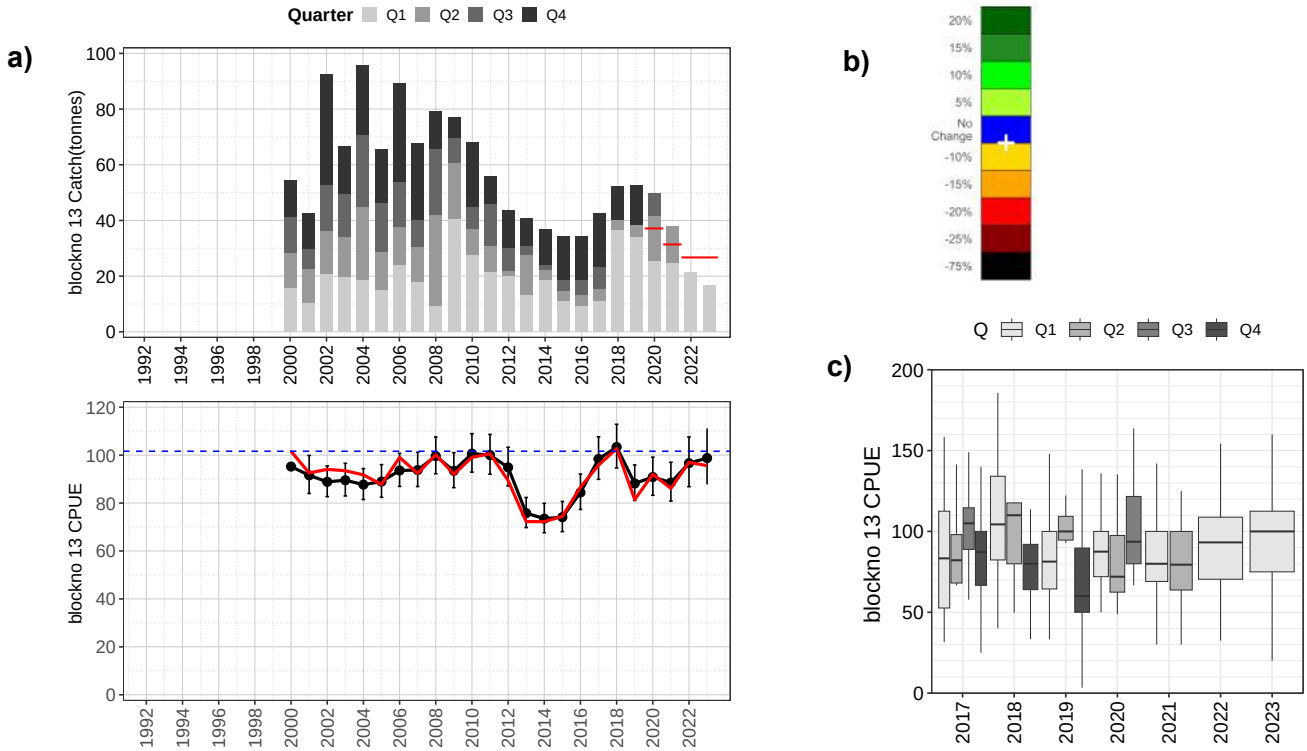

Figure 3.34: *Block 13A/B WZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Table 3.2: *Western Zone Catch, CPUE, Harvest Strategy scores and projected TACC for 2023. CPUE Targets are based on the 55th percentile of standardised annual mean CPUE, with a weighting of 65:25:10 on CPUE, Gradient 4 and Gradient 1 performance measures respectively. Note: Sub-block 12A, 12B, 12D and Block 13 were assessed collectively and separate to Sub-block 12C in 2023.*

Block No	Catch 2022	Catch Targ	Catch YTD	CPUE YTD	Score CPUE	Score Grad4	Score Grad1	Score	HS adj	MCDA 2024
6	11.2	10.5	12.1	110.2	4.1	7.8	4.1	5.0	0.90	9.4
7	23.9	22.0	23.0	137.3	4.5	7.1	5.4	5.3	1.00	22.0
8	4.1	9.3	3.8	126.5	3.3	5.8	4.2	4.0	0.90	8.3
9	32.9	43.6	48.3	149.1	4.9	8.0	6.0	5.8	1.00	43.6
10	54.3	40.7	29.6	126.0	3.7	5.8	6.3	4.5	0.90	36.6
11	83.1	68.3	71.5	116.8	4.1	8.1	10.0	5.7	1.00	68.3
12	104.9	90.2	100.0	96.1	3.3	7.6	5.9	4.6	0.90	81.2
12A			15.6	125.9	5.9	9.3	9.9	7.1	1.10	14.9
12B			11.0	109.4	5.7	9.3	10.0	7.0	1.10	9.5
12C			58.1	127.0	3.3	5.2	3.8	3.8	0.85	57.2
12D			15.2	95.8	4.8	9.2	8.6	6.3	1.05	13.8
13	21.4	27.5	16.5	98.8	4.5	6.1	5.5	5.0	1.00	27.5
Total	335.8	312.2	304.9							297.1

3.2.3 Western Zone Summary

The zone-wide mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ improved through 2017 and 2018 (109.6 Kg/Hr), but declined substantially in 2019 (fig. 3.20) to 91.4 Kg/Hr and $SCPUE_{cw}$ declined further in 2020 to 90, despite substantial TACC reductions. Since 2020, zone-wide mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ appears to have stabilised and in 2023 was 116.5 Kg/Hr, the third consecutive year an improvement in zone-wide mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ has been observed. SCPUE for all Blocks in 2023 were above the 25th percentile, however only Blocks 7, 9 and 13 are at or above the median SCPUE for the period 1992 –2023. Although SCPUE appears to be stabilising, all major producing blocks in this zone (10, 11, 12) continue to show relatively slow rates of recovery despite substantial reductions in TACC. Sub-blocks 6D abd 12C in particular continue to show no major improvement and in 2023 experienced a minor decline in SCPUE. The multi-decade downward trend in CPUE in most Blocks combined with reducing TACC suggests catch reductions have been inadequate to counter the long term declines in recruitment.

The zone-wide proxy for Biomass improved in 2023 to 4.0 and is above the LRP of 1.0. Similarly the proxy for fishing mortality has improved from 2022 and is now 2.5 and above the TRP of 0 for sustainability (fig. 3.23).

3.3 Northern Zone

3.3.1 Zone Overview

In 2018, several major changes to zone boundaries were made in order to partition zones into areas with similar size limits and where market price was largely equal. The first change was to extend the southern boundary of the Northern Zone on the West coast to include Sub Blocks 6A, 6B and 6C, and abolish the Central West Zone. The second change was to Extend the western boundary of the Bass Strait Zone further west to incorporate Block 48 and Sub Blocks 49A, 49B and 49C (Hunter, Three Hummock and Robbins Islands). Albatross Islands and other offshore islands west of Hunter Island were retained in the Northern Zone. The Legal Minimum Length was increased in Block 5 and 49D from 127 mm to 129 mm in 2018. In 2020 the LML in the 129 mm areas was increased to 132 mm, providing a continuous band of coastline from Wild Wave River to Albatross Island at 132 mm LML. Regional catch and catch rates have varied between 2000 and 2023 (fig. 3.35) as a function of changing market preference and adaptive management including effort redistribution and changes in LML. The majority of abalone landed from this zone are traditionally unsuited to the live market, and are processed for canned or frozen markets. However there are populations in faster growing localities that can be suitable for the live market.

In 2008, the first of two industry driven experimental fisheries to improve fish quality commenced in Block 5 with a reduction in LML from 132mm –127 mm and a 50 t increase in catch, and a second industry driven experimental fishery commenced in Block 49 in 2011, pushing the Northern Zone TACC to a peak of 402.5 t. These two Blocks, along with Block 3 on King Island produce the majority of blacklip abalone for the Northern Zone (fig. 3.37). This experimental depletion initiative was not successful, and has had significant longer term negative impacts on biomass. Standardised CPUE (SCPUE) varies across different geographic regions within the Northern Zone, but $SCPUE_{cw}$ for the zone in 2023 declined marginally to 77.5 Kg/hr from 79.5 Kg/Hr in 2022.

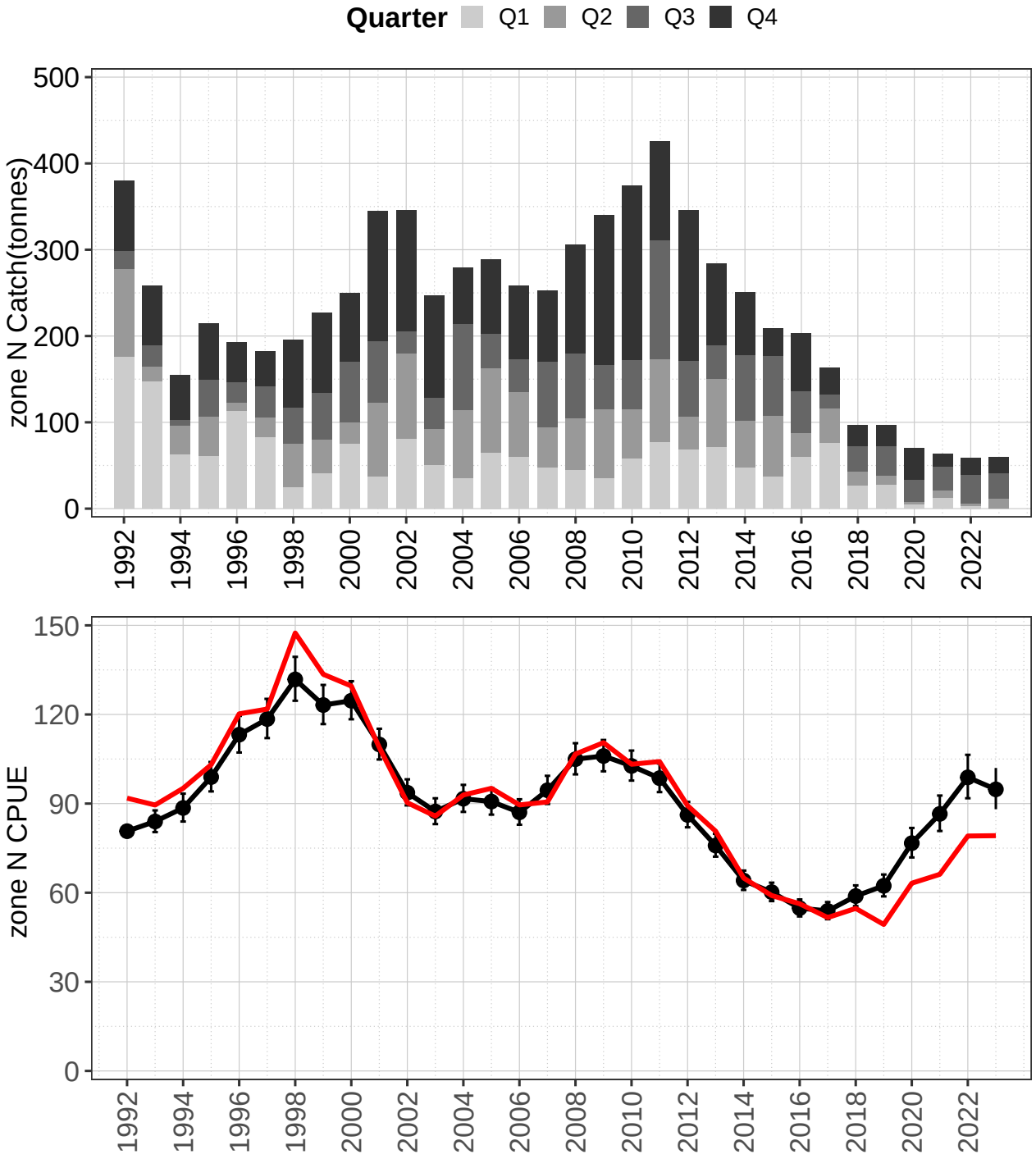

Figure 3.35: *Zone-wide catch and catch rate for Northern Zone blacklip abalone, 1992–2023. Upper plot: catch (t) by quarter pooled across blocks currently classified as Northern Zone. Lower Plot: standardised CPUE (black line) and geometric mean CPUE (red line).*

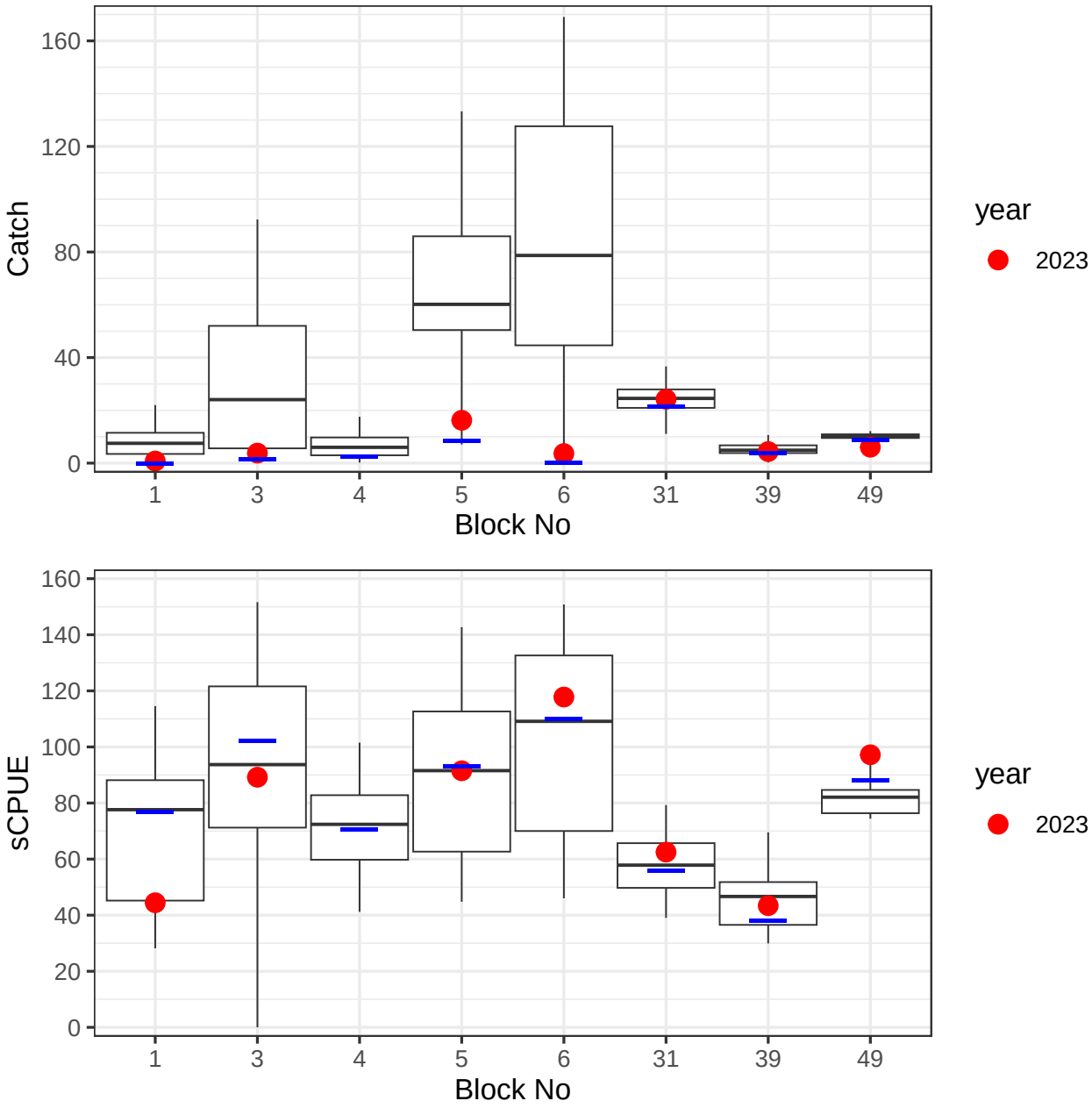

Figure 3.36: *Boxplot of catch and standardised CPUE by statistical block for the Northern Zone blacklip abalone fishery.* ***Upper Panel****: Boxplot of annual catch. Blue line indicates catch target allocated for 2023. Red dot indicates catch taken in 2023.* ***Lower Panel****: Boxplot of annual standardised CPUE. Blue line indicates the CPUE target reference point. Red square indicates sCPUE in 2023.*

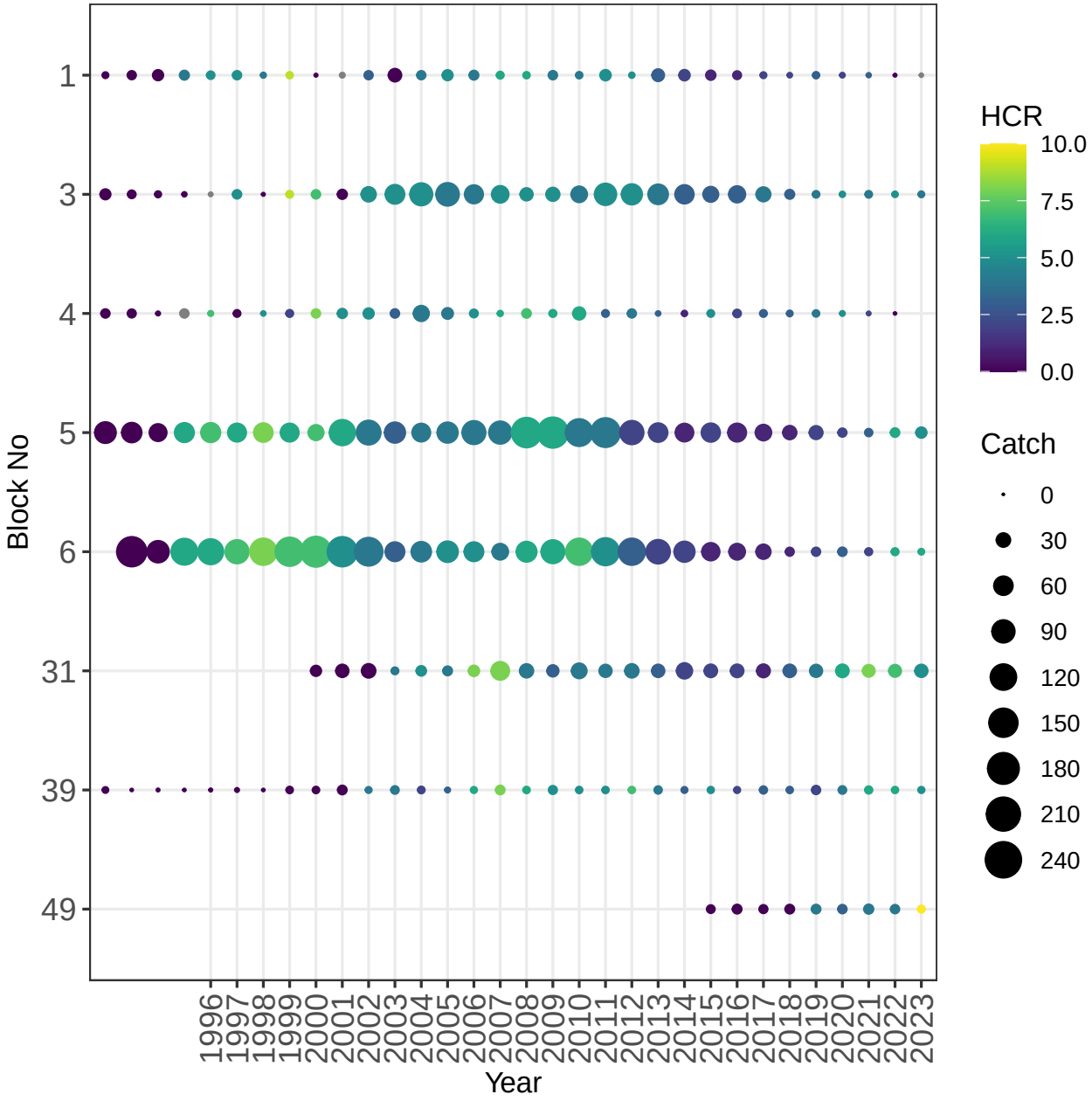

Figure 3.37: *Bubble plot of harvest strategy combined score (bubble colour) and catch (bubble size) for Northern Zone blacklip abalone. Block 31 catch prior to 2000 included in Eastern Zone*

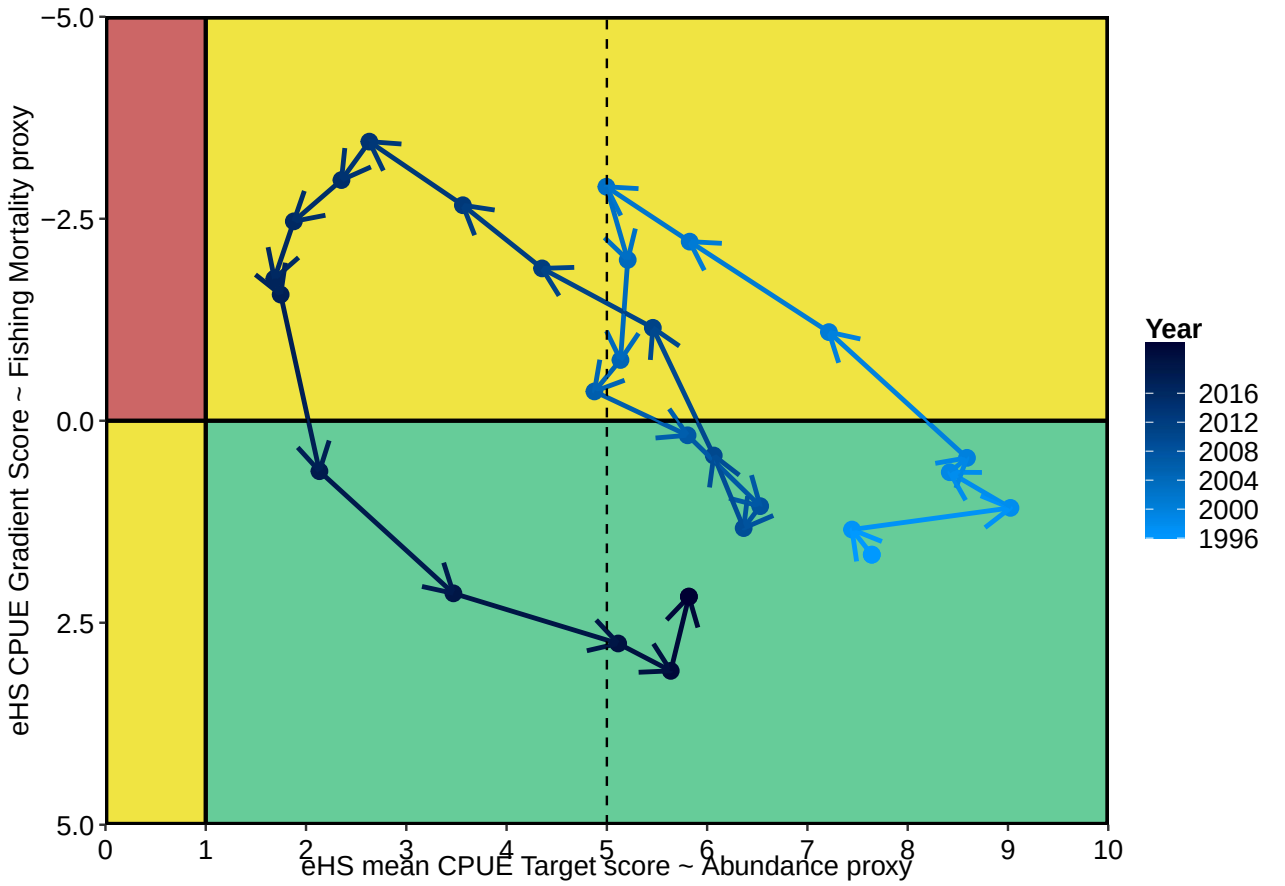

Figure 3.38: *Phase plot of fishing mortality and abundance proxies for Northern Zone blacklip abalone , 1996–2023. The Gradient 4 PM (y-axis) is used as a proxy for fishing mortality, and the Target CPUE PM is used as a proxy for abundance. Zone score is calculated as a catch-weighted mean of individual block scores.*

3.3.2 Fishery Trends by Statistical Block

Blacklip: Block 31B - Cape Naturaliste to Little Musselroe Bay

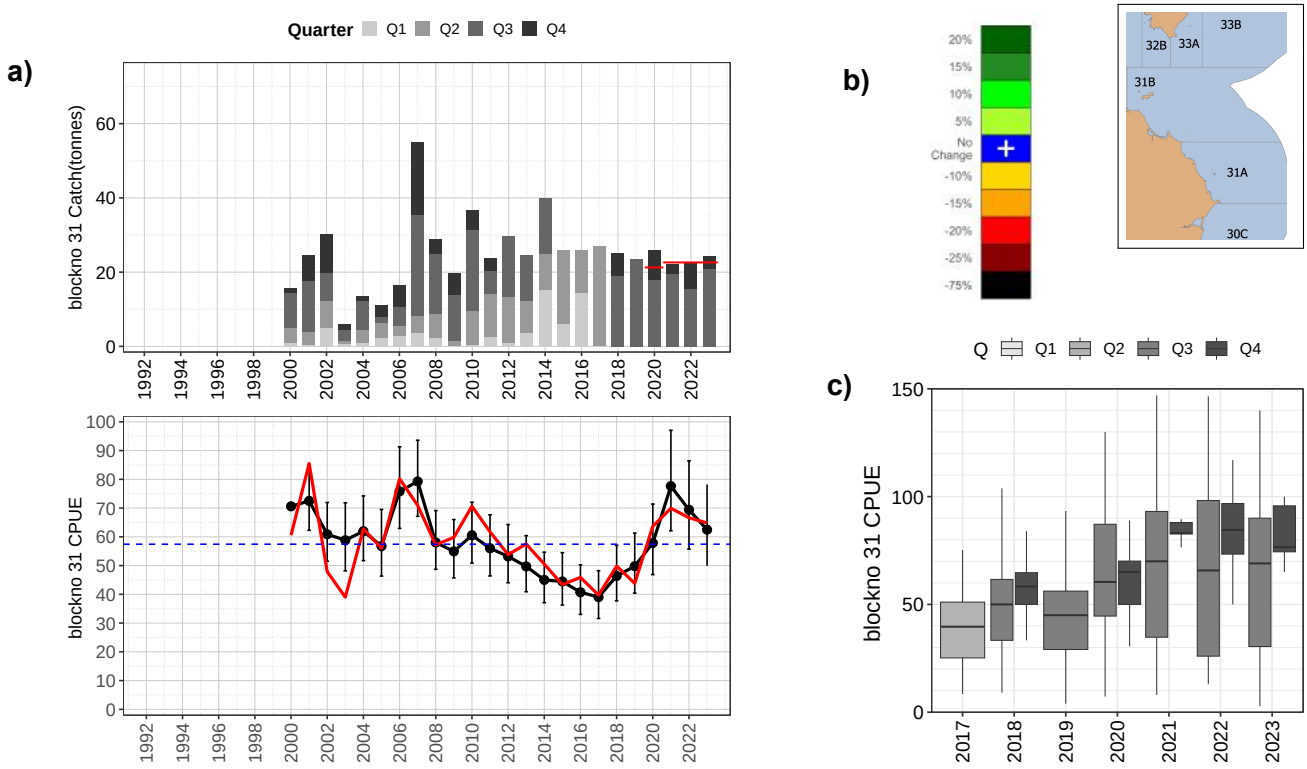

Figure 3.39: *Block 31B NZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 39 - Little Musselrose Bay to Tomahawk Beach

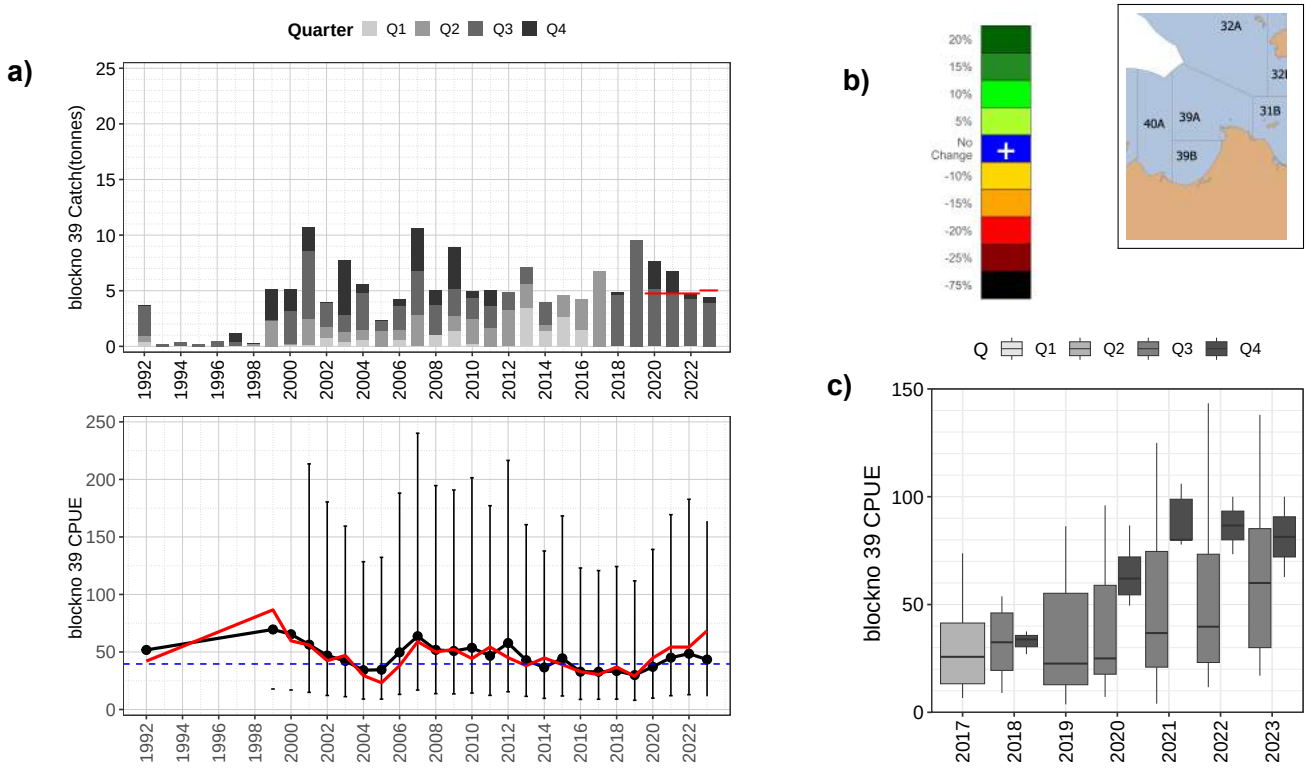

Figure 3.40: *Block 39 NZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 49 - Islands west of Hunter Island

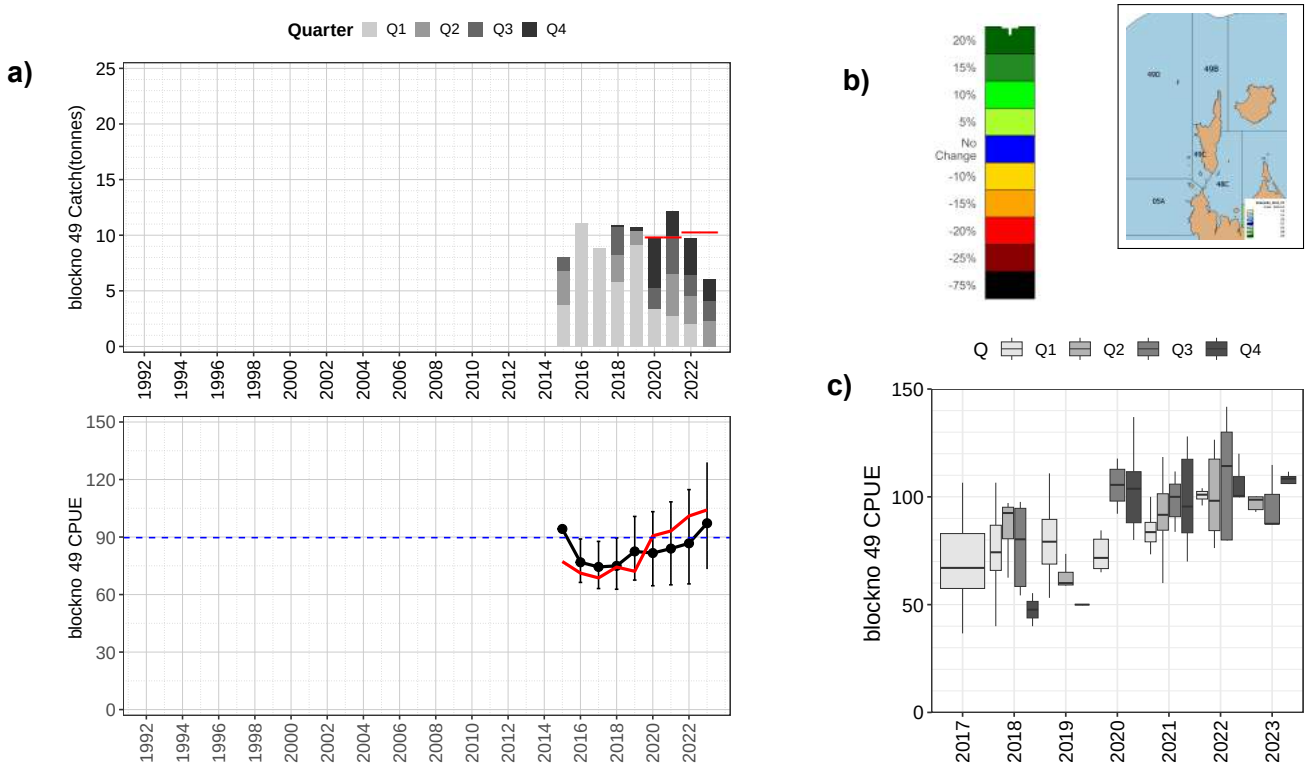

Figure 3.41: *Block 49 NZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 5A-C - Woolnorth to Arthur River

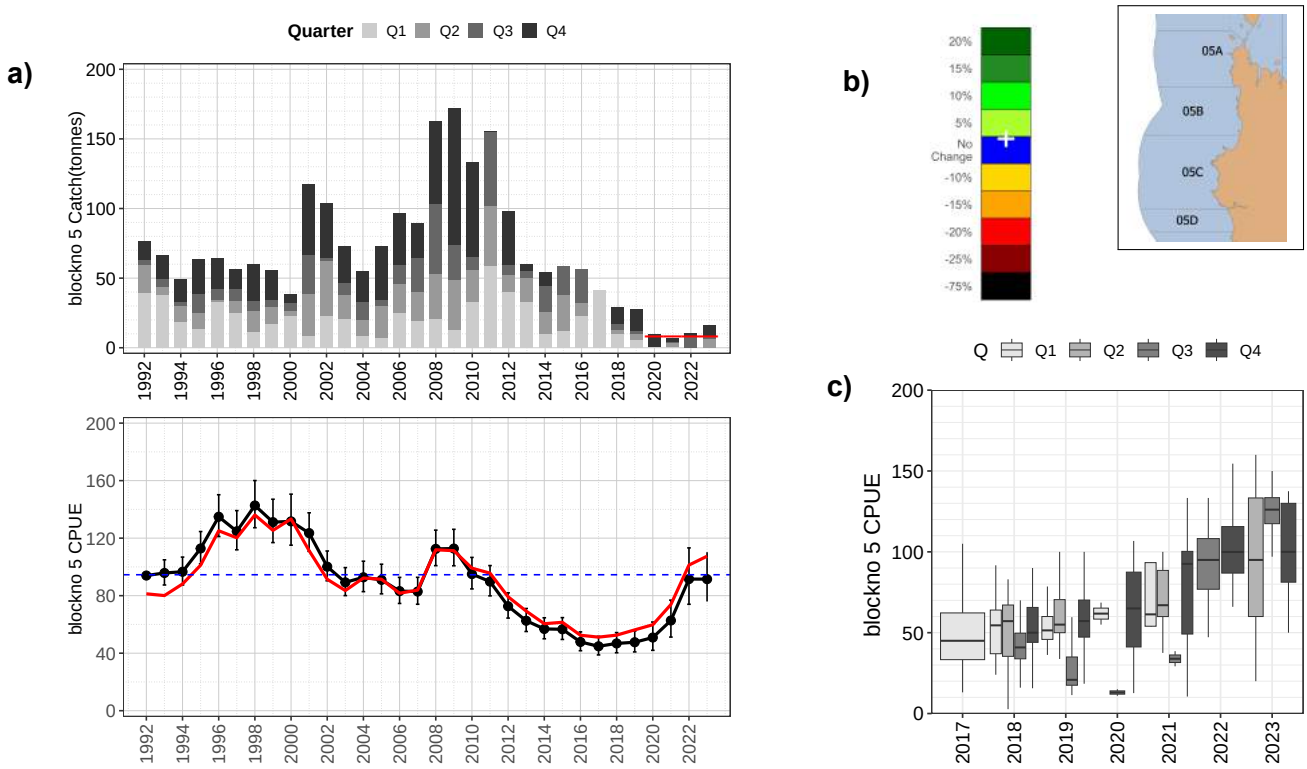

Figure 3.42: *Block 5 NZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 6A-C - Sundown Point to Wild Wave River

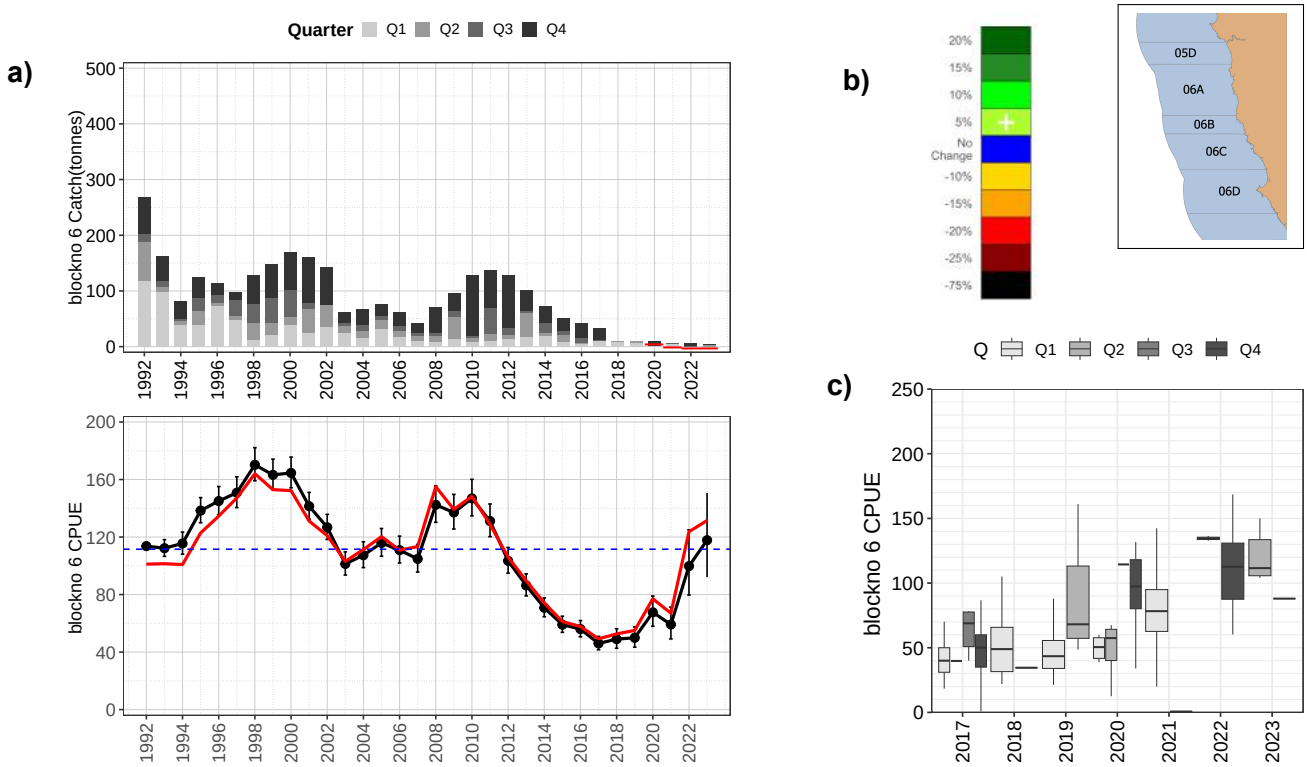

Figure 3.43: *Block 6A/C NZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 1 - Cape Wickham to KI airport

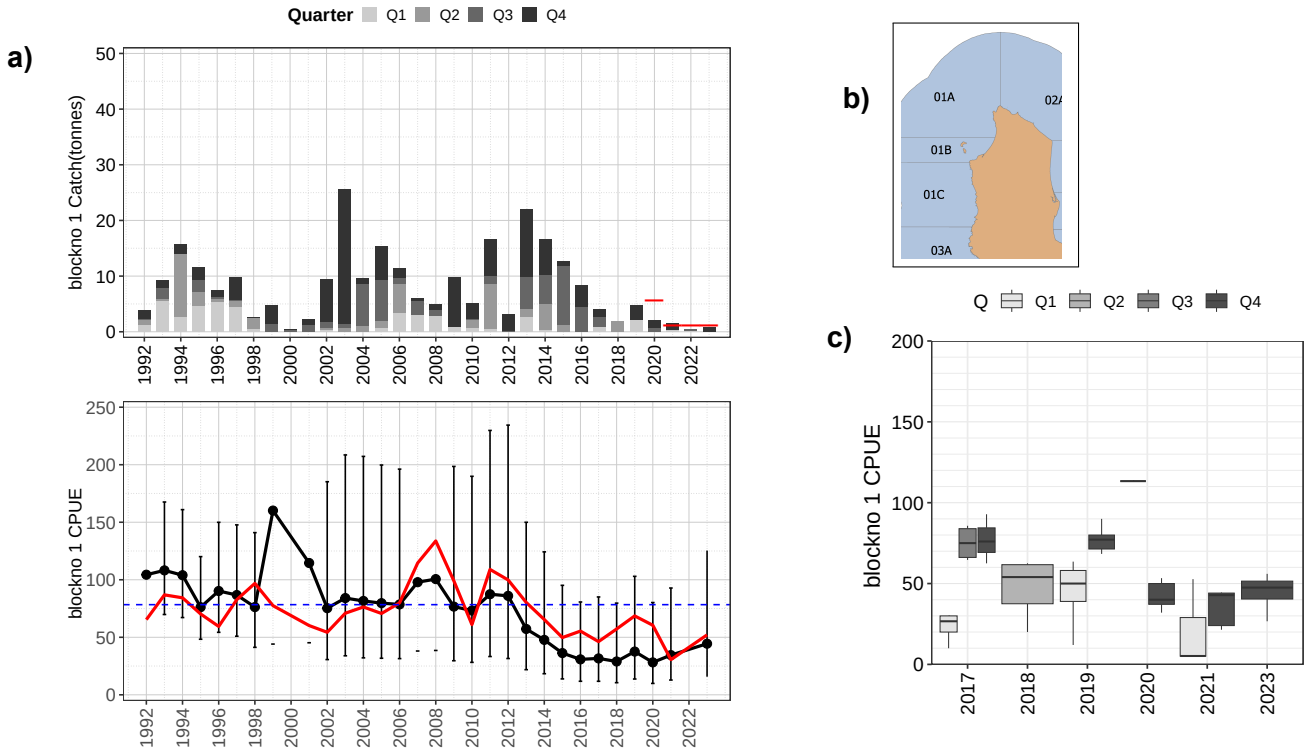

Figure 3.44: *Block 1 NZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 2 - Cape Wickham to Sea Elephant Bay

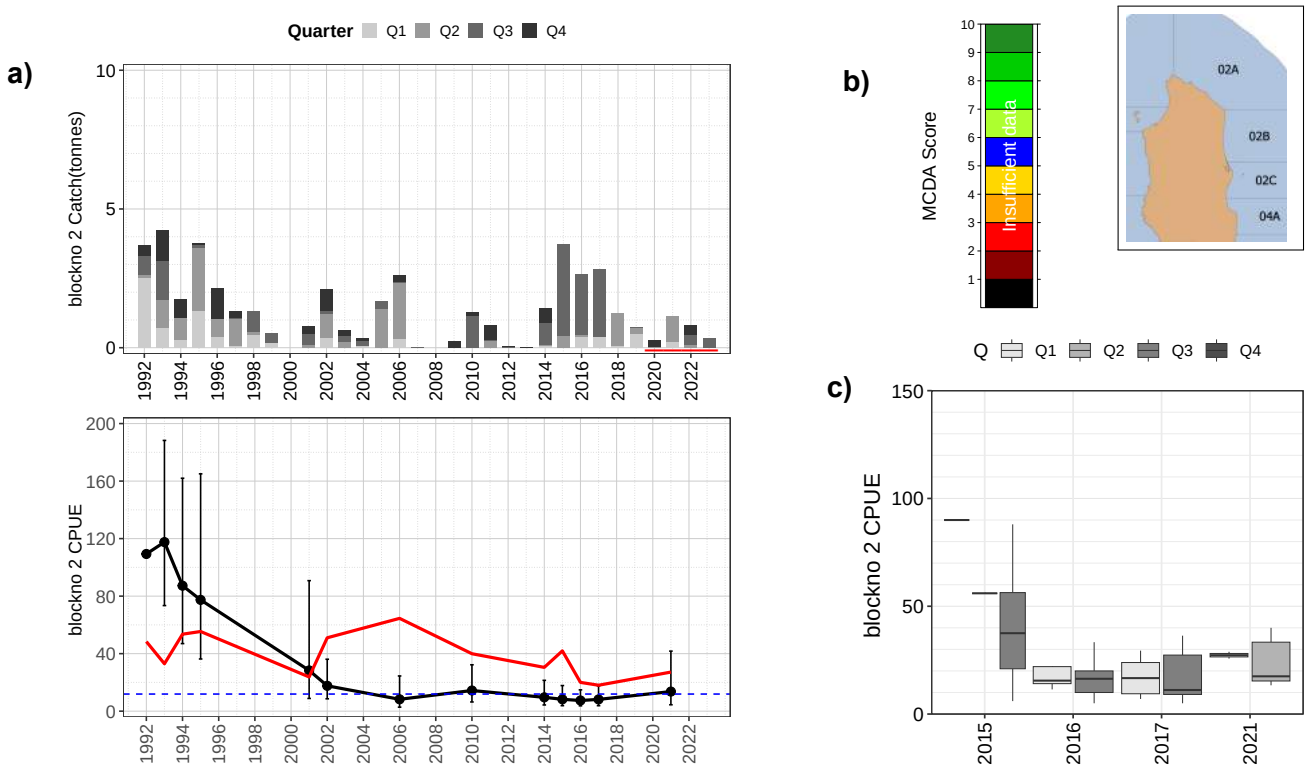

Figure 3.45: *Block 2 NZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 3 - KI airport to Middle Point

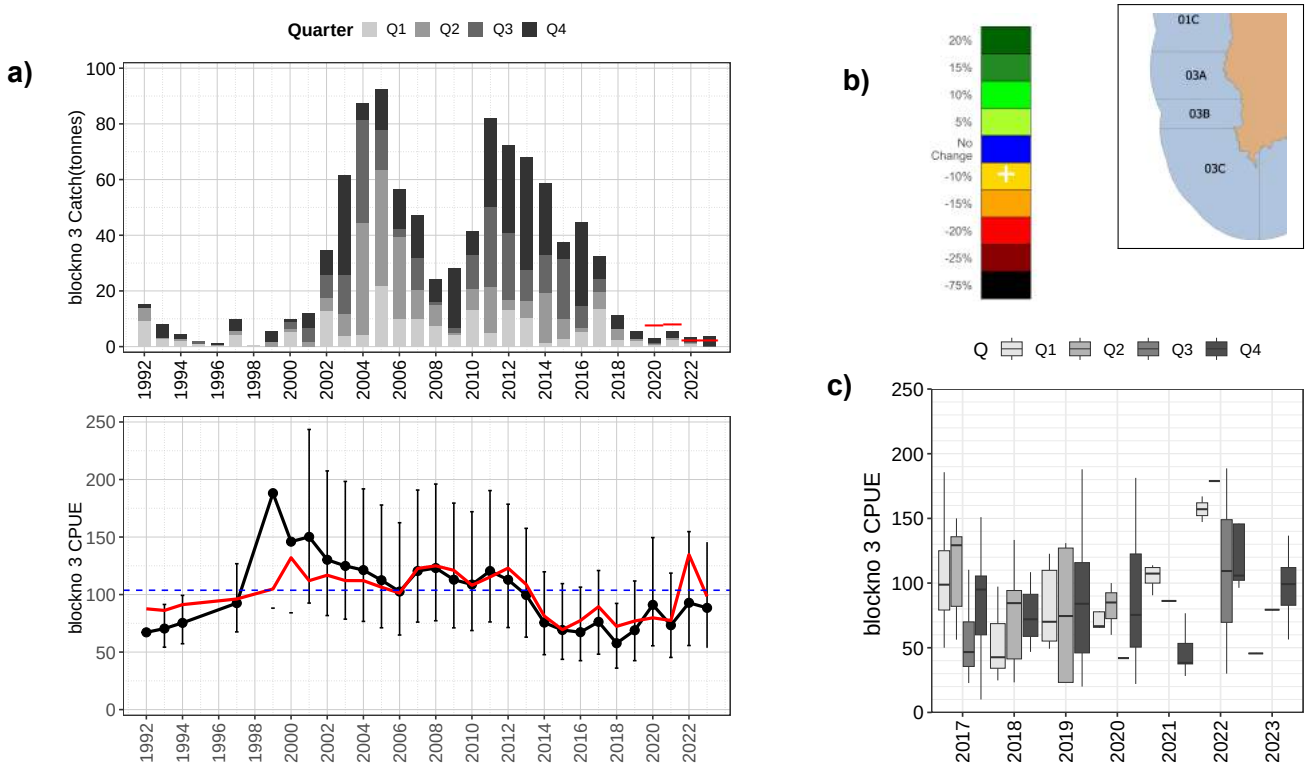

Figure 3.46: *Block 3 NZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 4 - Middle Point to Sea Elephant Bay

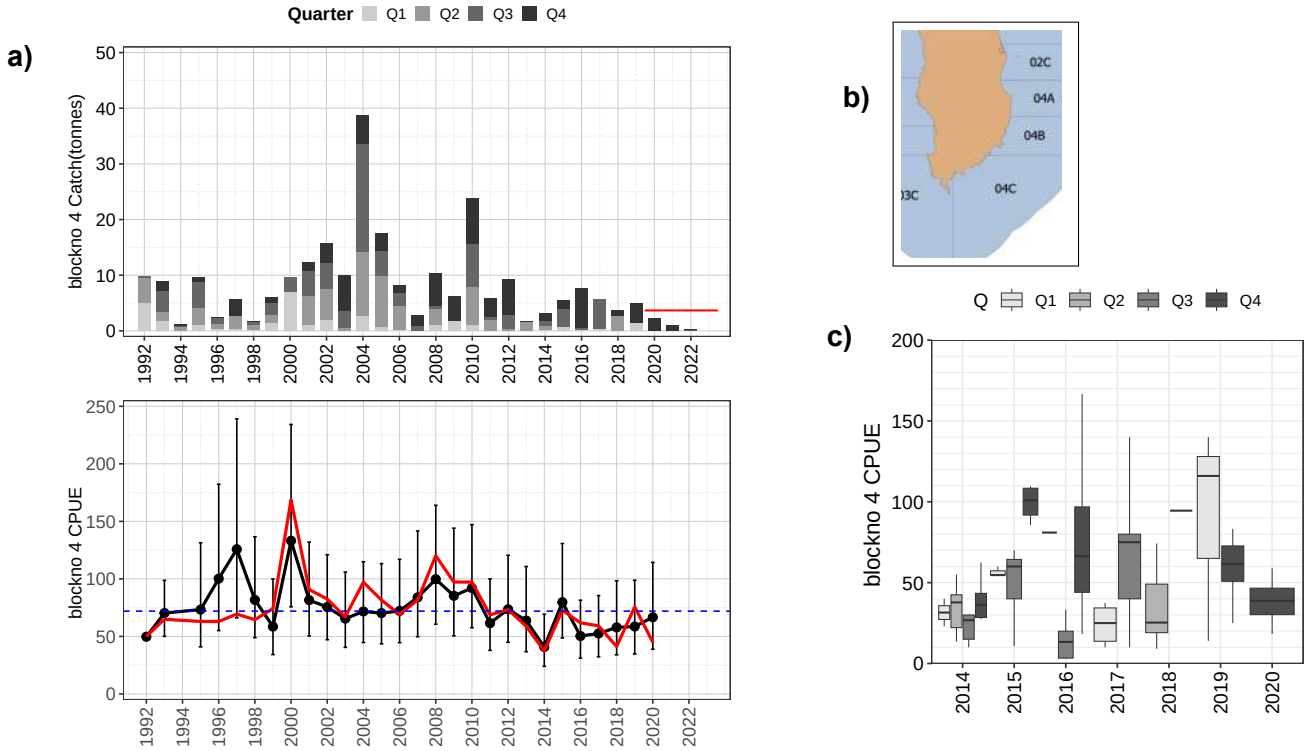

Figure 3.47: *Block 4 NZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Table 3.3: *Northern Zone Catch, CPUE, Harvest Strategy scores and projected TACC for 2023. CPUE Targets are based on the 55th percentile of standardised annual mean CPUE, with a weighting of 65:25:10 on CPUE, Gradient 4 and Gradient 1 performance measures respectively.*

Block No	Catch 2022	Catch Targ	Catch YTD	CPUE YTD	Score CPUE	Score Grad4	Score Grad1	Score	HS adj	MCDA 2024
1	0.4	1.5	0.8	44.4	2.4	9.0				
2	0.8	0.0	0.3							
3	3.4	3.0	3.8	89.2	4.4	5.1	4.4	4.6	0.90	2.7
4	0.2	4.0	0.0							
5	10.5	10.0	16.2	91.5	4.7	9.4	5.0	5.9	1.00	10.0
6	6.3	1.7	3.6	117.8	5.4	9.3	6.3	6.5	1.05	1.8
31	22.5	23.1	24.2	62.5	5.9	5.2	3.5	5.5	1.00	23.1
39	4.7	5.2	4.4	43.4	5.5	5.9	3.4	5.4	1.00	5.2
49	9.8	10.5	6.0	97.2	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0		
Total	58.6	59.1	59.5							42.8

3.3.3 Northern Zone Summary

The changes in the zone boundaries require trends to be considered with some caution. Re-assigning the current 2018 zone boundaries to the historic catch and effort data provides some context. The mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ in 2007 prior to the industry experiments was 93.0 Kg/hr at a TACC of 243 t, compared with a mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ of 77.5 Kg/Hr in 2023 at a TACC of 59.1 t. The rate of decline in SCPUE between 2010 and 2016 was rapid and extensive despite consecutive TACC reductions. For both Blocks 5 and 6, there were very minor improvements in $SCPUE_{cw}$ from 2018 to 2021, and in 2023 $SCPUE_{cw}$ remained stable in Block 5 but has continued to increase in Block 6. However, as there were relatively few fishing events in 2023, the Block level $SCPUE_{cw}$ apply to the areas fished, and it would be unwise to assume these positive catch rates are indicative of all sections of Block 5 and 6.

In 2023, the zone-wide proxy for Biomass remained stable at 5.8 and remains above the LRP of 1.0, while the proxy for fishing mortality declined marginally to 2.2 but remains above the TRP of 0.0 for sustainability. This stability is important improvement for a region that was substantially over-fished over the past decade, though more work remains to be done in some areas.

3.4 Bass Strait Zone

3.4.1 Zone Overview

The Bass Strait Zone was created in 2003 to enable access to abalone populations across the Bass Strait Islands and areas of the Furneaux group where the Legal Minimum Length of 127 mm was over-protective of slowing growing populations. Since the creation of this zone in 2003, catch and standardised CPUE (SCPUE) have been relatively stable (fig. 3.48). The Bass Strait Zone was closed in 2007 due to concerns around the possible risk of transferring AVG from Victoria to Tasmania, and re-opened in 2008. In 2016, the TACC for the Bass Strait Zone was increased from 70 t to 77 t based on an industry argument that the Bass Strait Islands had been lightly fished for the previous few years. In 2018, the western boundary of the Bass Strait Zone was extended further west to incorporate Block 48 and Sub Blocks 49A, 49B and 49C (Hunter, Three Hummock and Robbins Islands). SCPUE in all major Bass Strait Blocks exceeded the median SCPUE for the period 2003 –2023 (fig. 3.49), with Block 49 showing four consecutive years of improvement.

The Bass Strait Zone fishery is reliant on relatively few productive Blocks, with less than 15% of the reef area fished supporting 50% of the catch in most years (fig. 3.50). The distribution of catch has shifted over the past ten years, largely associated with the reduction in LML commencing in 2010 in Blocks 38 (Babel Island) and 33 (Clarke Island) (fig. 3.50). The approximately four-fold increases in annual catch in Blocks 33 and 38 associated with the Legal Minimum Length (LML) reduction must be assumed to be reducing stock levels, and consequently average recruitment to the fishery would be expected to decline. As it takes around 7 to 8 years to grow into the fishery from biological recruitment, we expect pre-LML reduction based recruits to have supported the fishery until around 2018. From 2018, recruitment into the fishery has most likely been largely reliant on spawning stock levels post LML change, and may be at risk of over-exploitation, with an increasingly smaller population size structure. In addition to the expected decline in recruitment, destructive grazing by the long-spined sea urchin was first reported to the Fishery Research Advisory Group (FRAG) in 2017 and appears to be extending into shallower depths.

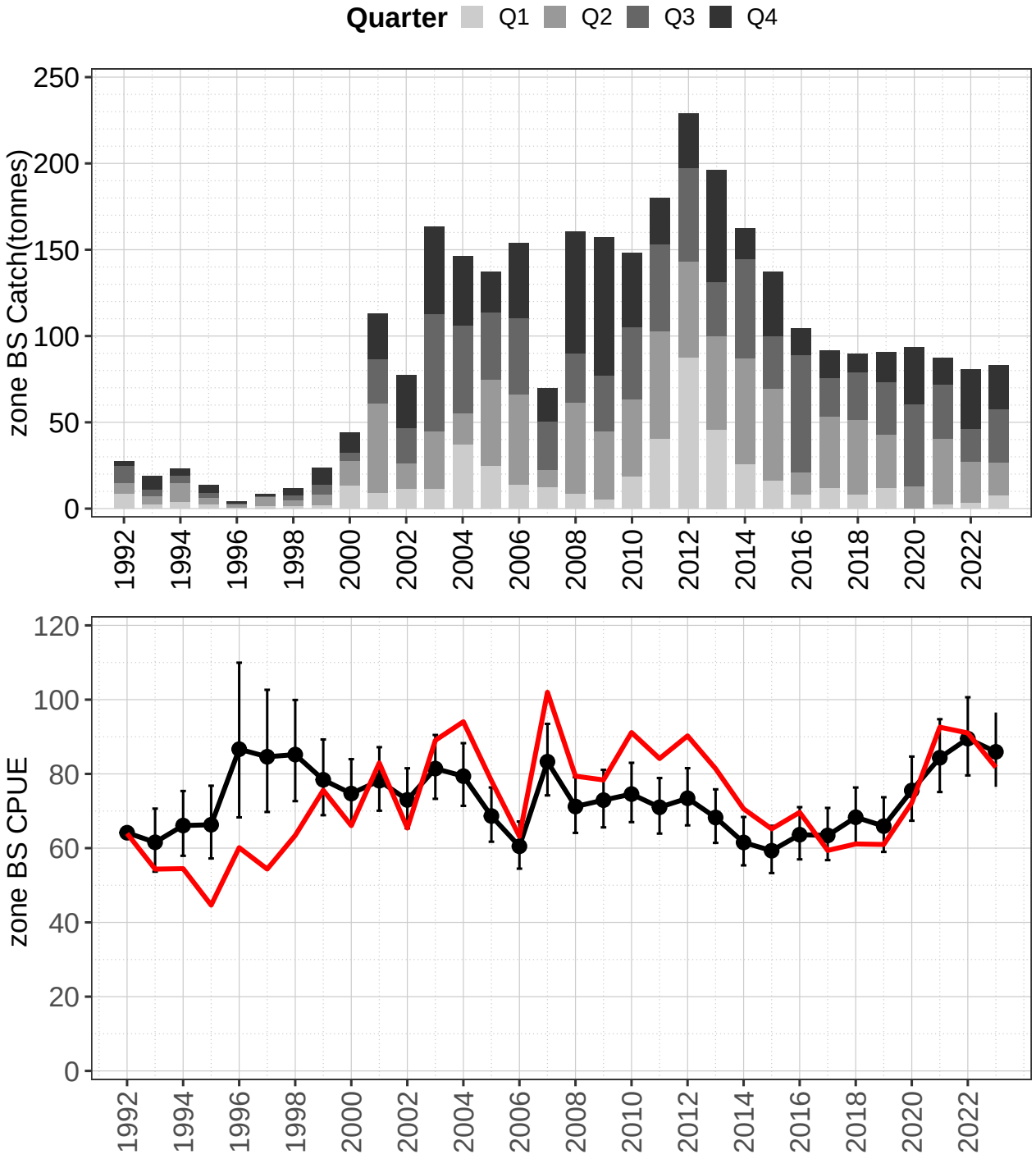

Figure 3.48: *Zone-wide catch and catch rate for Bass Strait Zone blacklip abalone, 1992–2023. Upper plot: catch (t) by quarter pooled across blocks currently classified as Bass Strait Zone. Lower Plot: standardised CPUE (black line) and geometric mean CPUE (red line).*

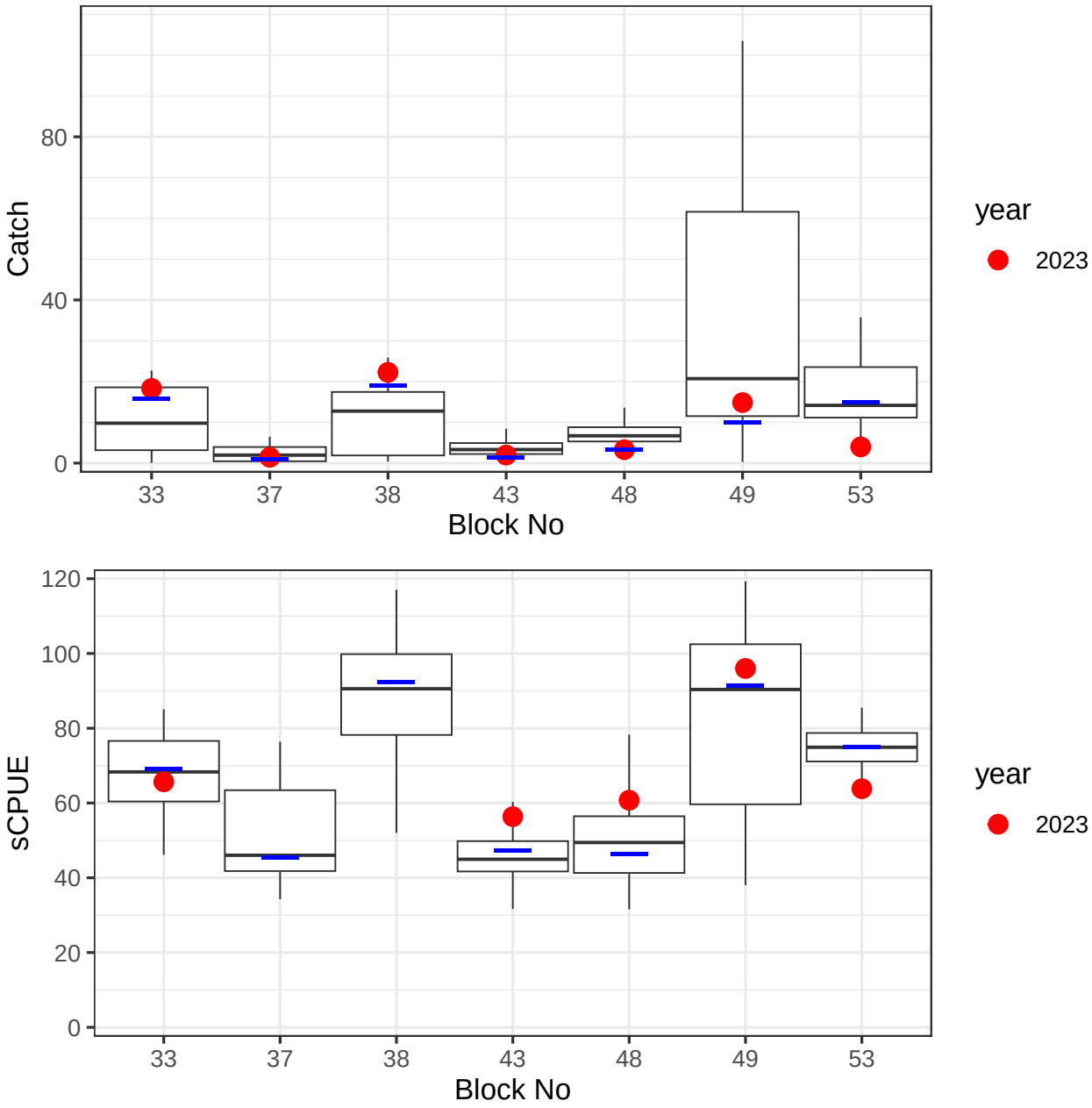

Figure 3.49: *Boxplot of catch and standardised CPUE by statistical block for the Bass Strait Zone blacklip abalone fishery.* ***Upper Panel****: Boxplot of annual catch. Blue line indicates catch target allocated for 2023. Red dot indicates catch taken in 2023.* ***Lower Panel****: Boxplot of annual standardised CPUE. Blue line indicates the CPUE target reference point. Red square indicates sCPUE in 2023.*

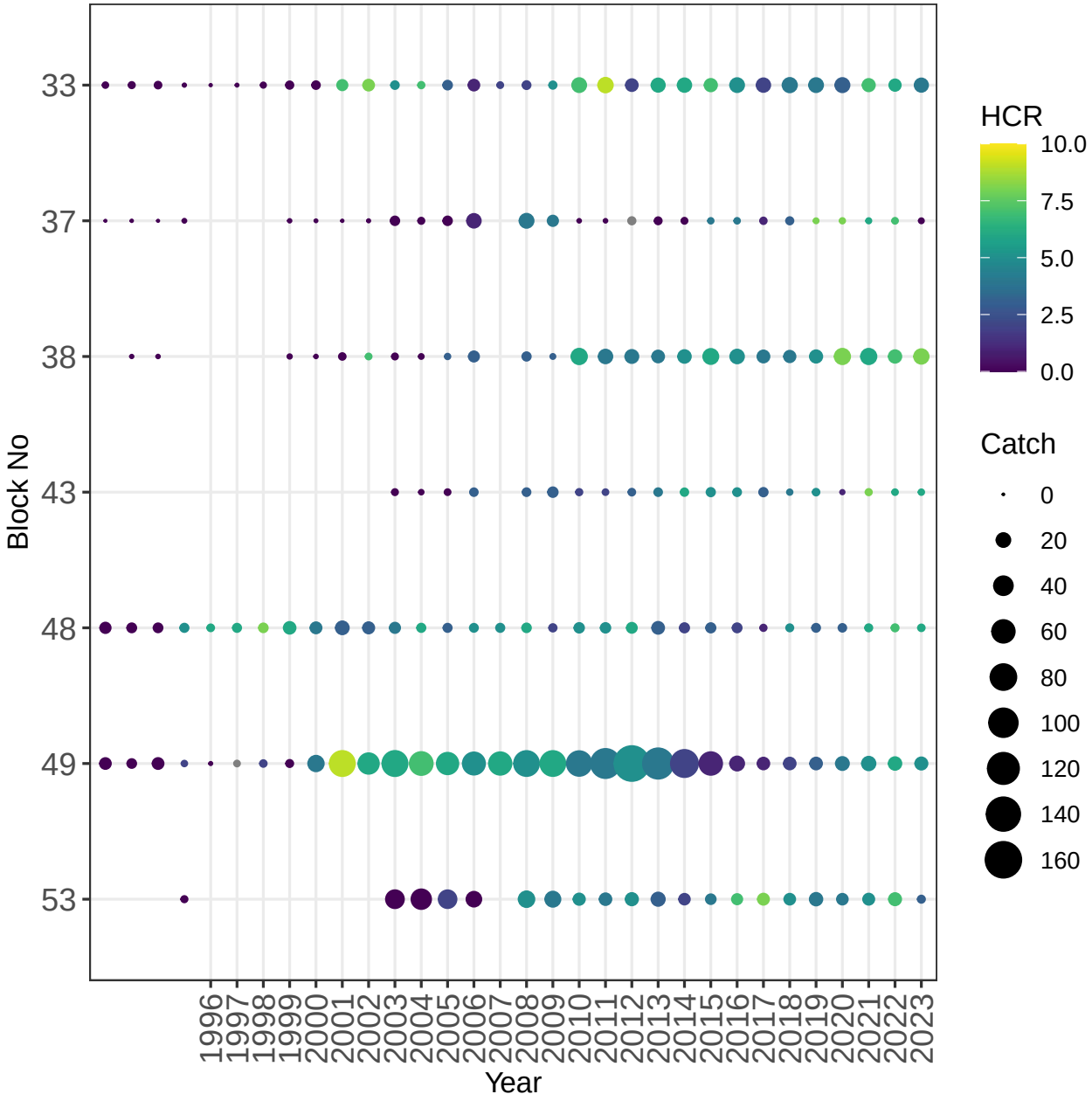

Figure 3.50: *Bubble plot of harvest strategy combined score (bubble colour) and catch (bubble size) for Bass Strait Zone blacklip abalone.*

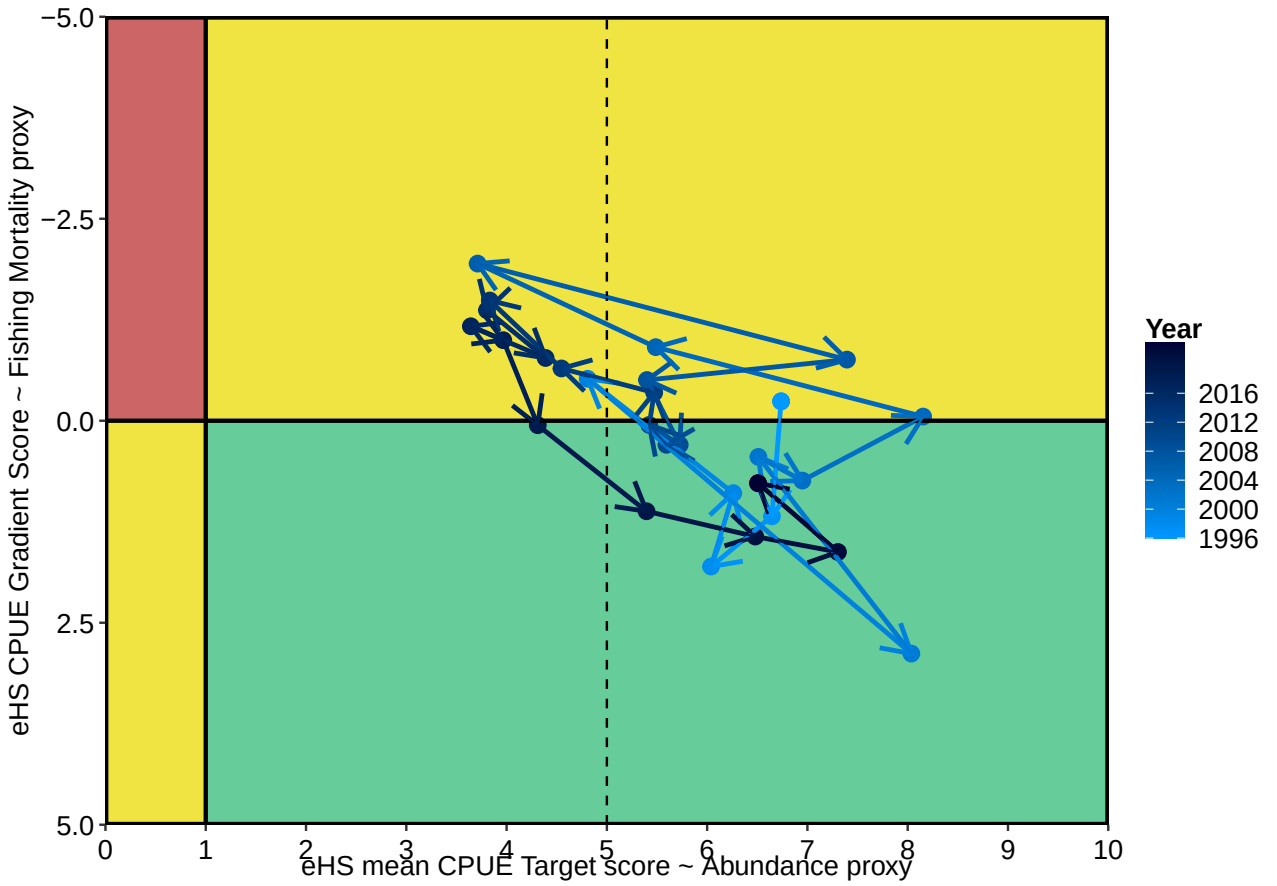

Figure 3.51: *Phase plot of fishing mortality and abundance proxies for Bass Strait Zone blacklip abalone , 1996–2023. The Gradient 4 PM (y-axis) is used as a proxy for fishing mortality, and the Target CPUE PM is used as a proxy for abundance. Zone score is calculated as a catch-weighted mean of individual block scores.*

3.4.2 Fishery Trends by Statistical Block

Blacklip: Block 48 - Kingston Point to Woolnorth

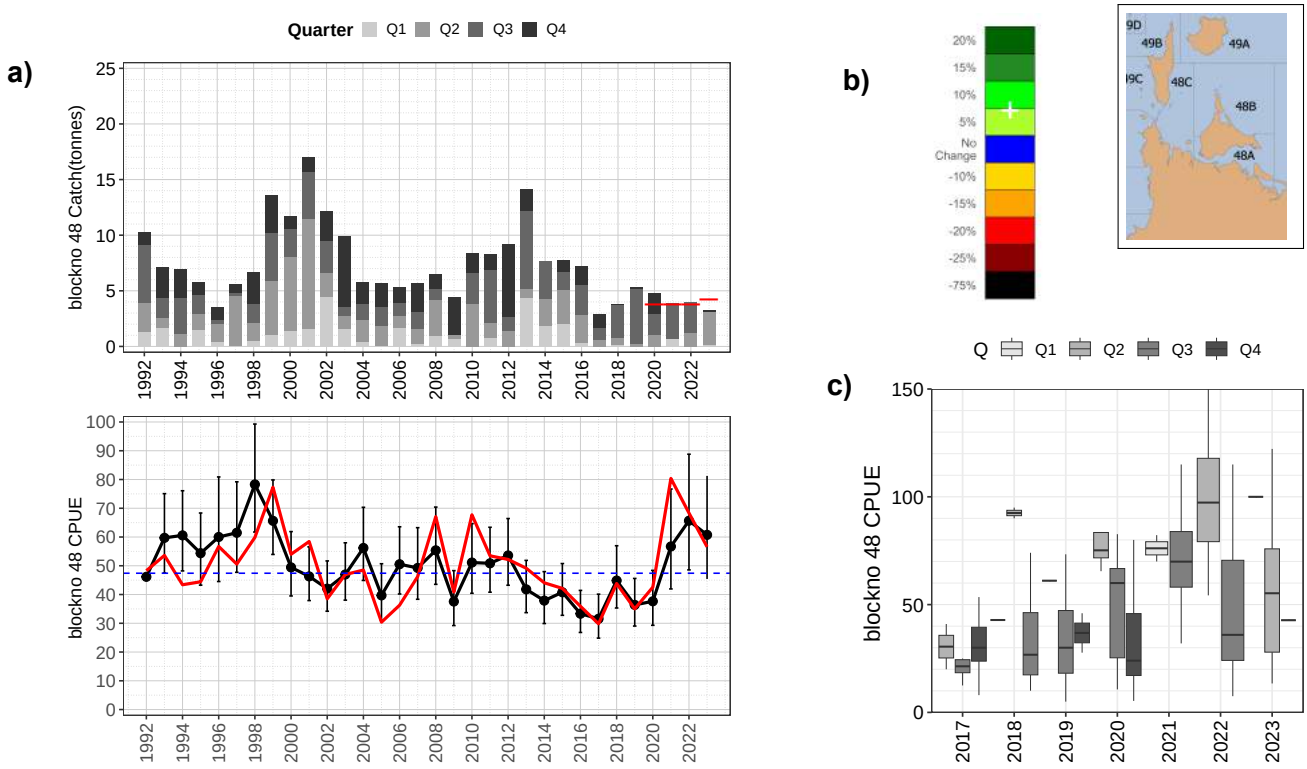

Figure 3.52: *Block 48 BSZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 49 - Hunter Island

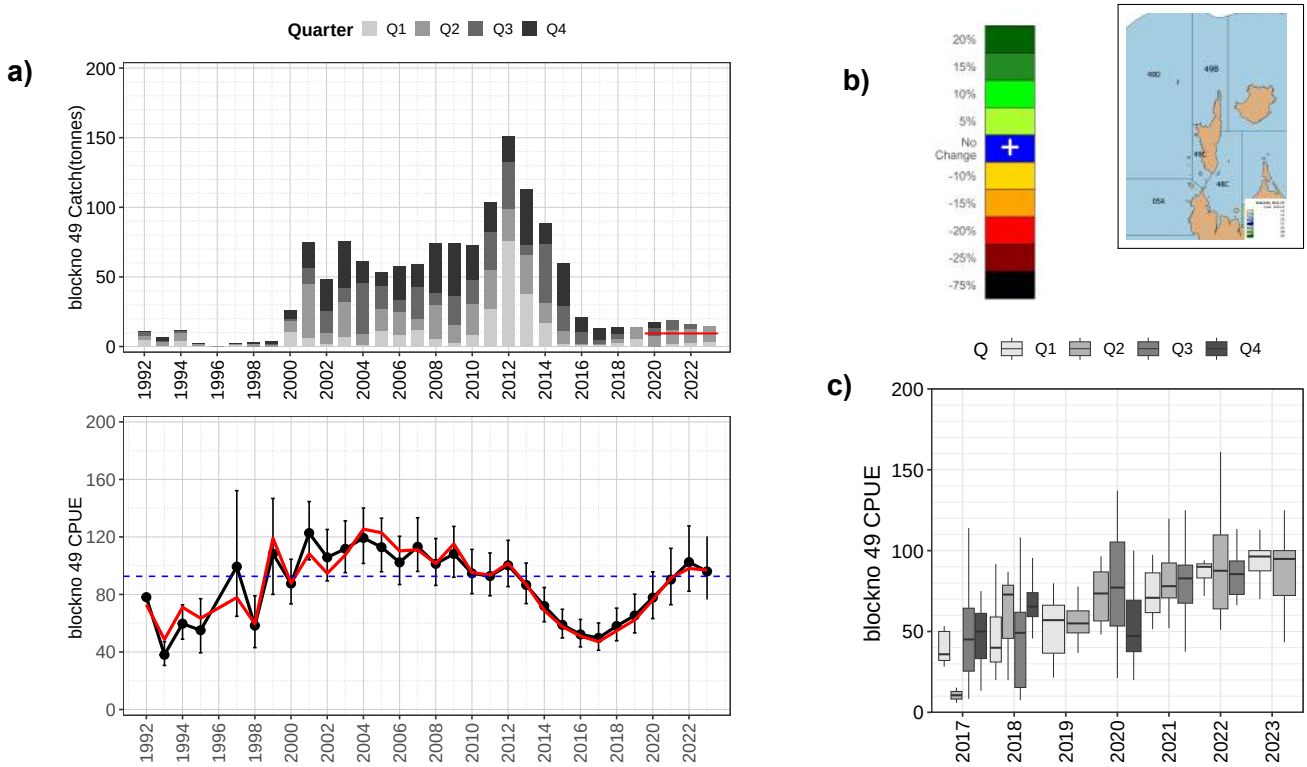

Figure 3.53: *Block 49 BSZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 32 - Western Clarke Island and Armstrong Passage

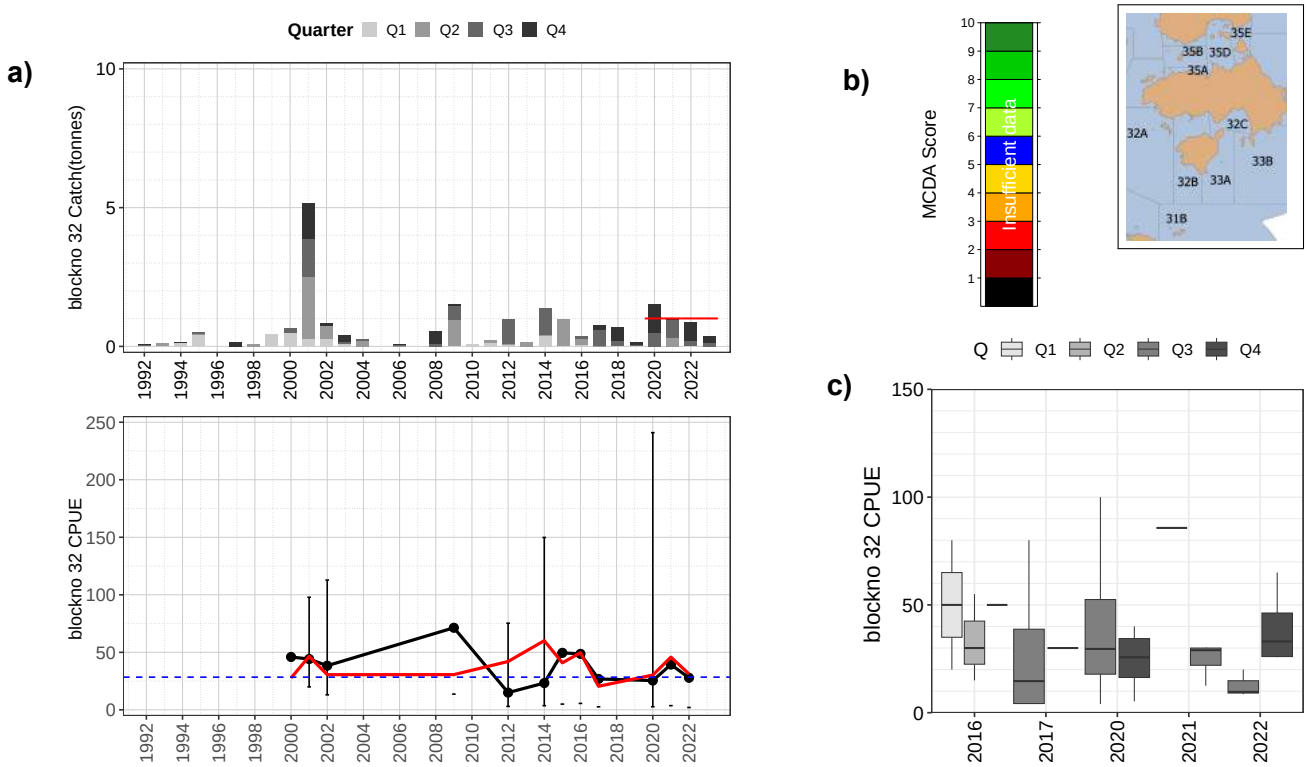

Figure 3.54: *Block 32 BSZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 33 - SE Clarke Island and Cape Barren Islands

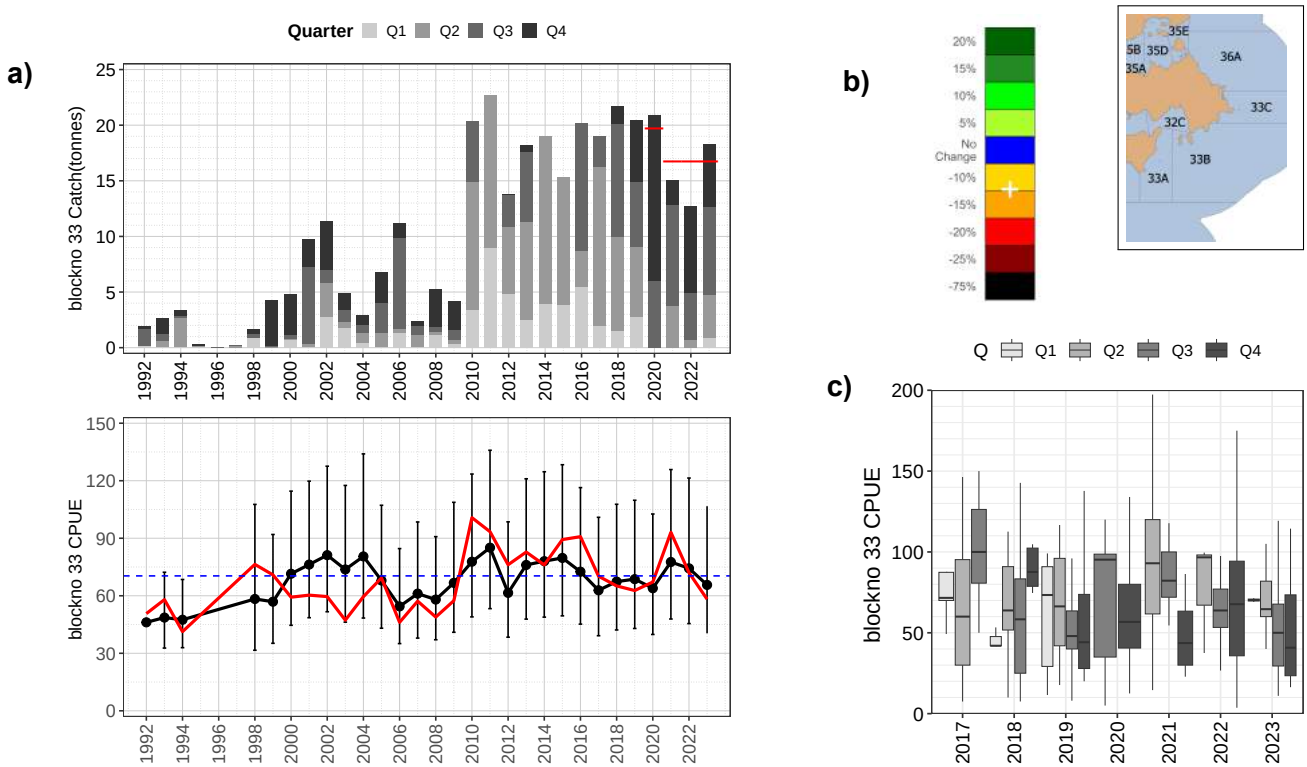

Figure 3.55: *Block 33 BSZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 37 - NW Flinders Island

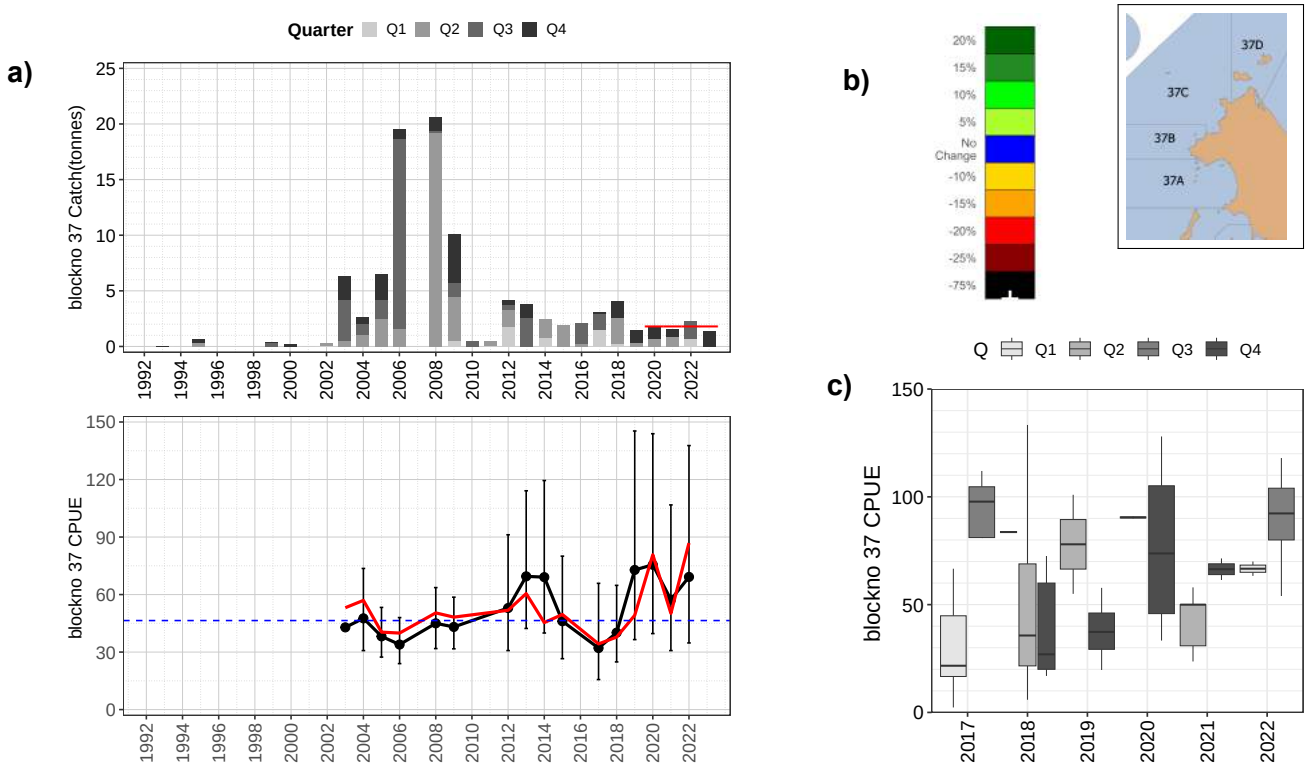

Figure 3.56: *Block 37 BSZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55th p% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 38 - NE Flinders Island inc. Babel Island

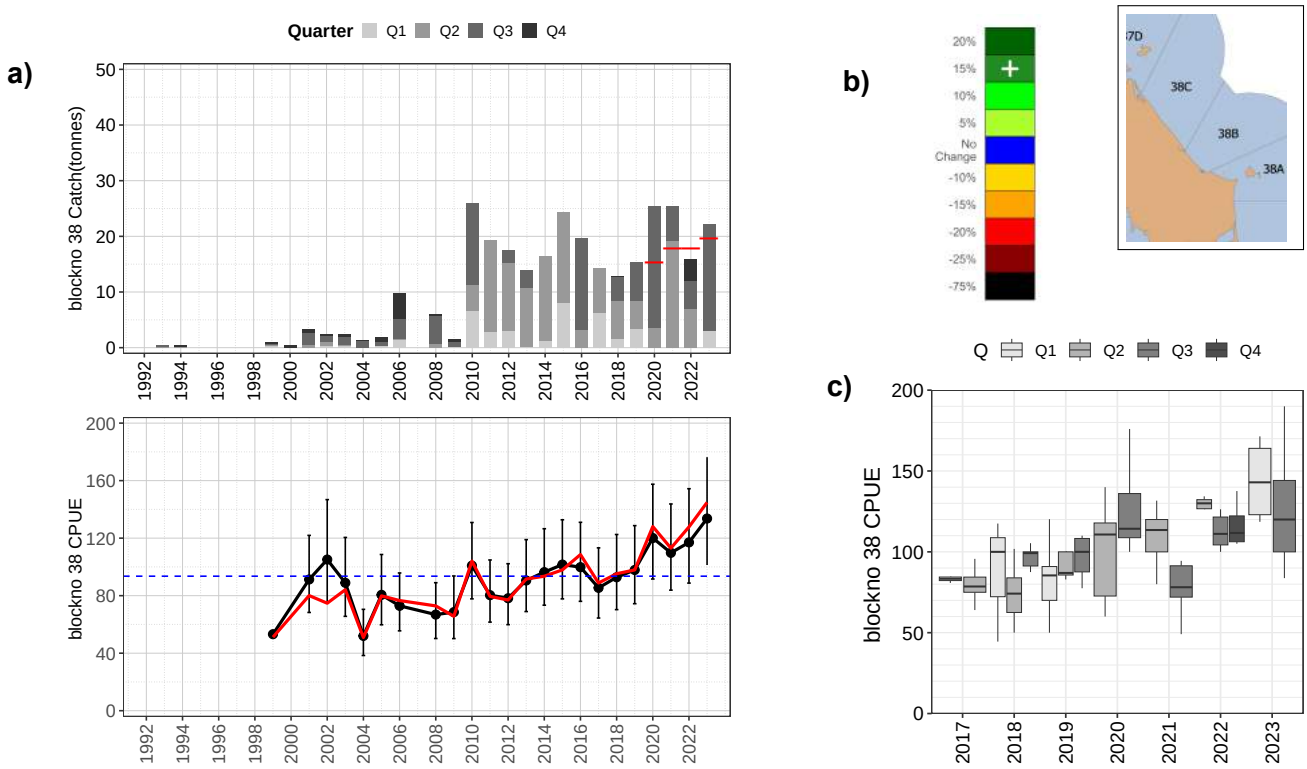

Figure 3.57: *Block 38 BSZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55th p% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 41 - Waterhouse Beach to Fanny's Bay

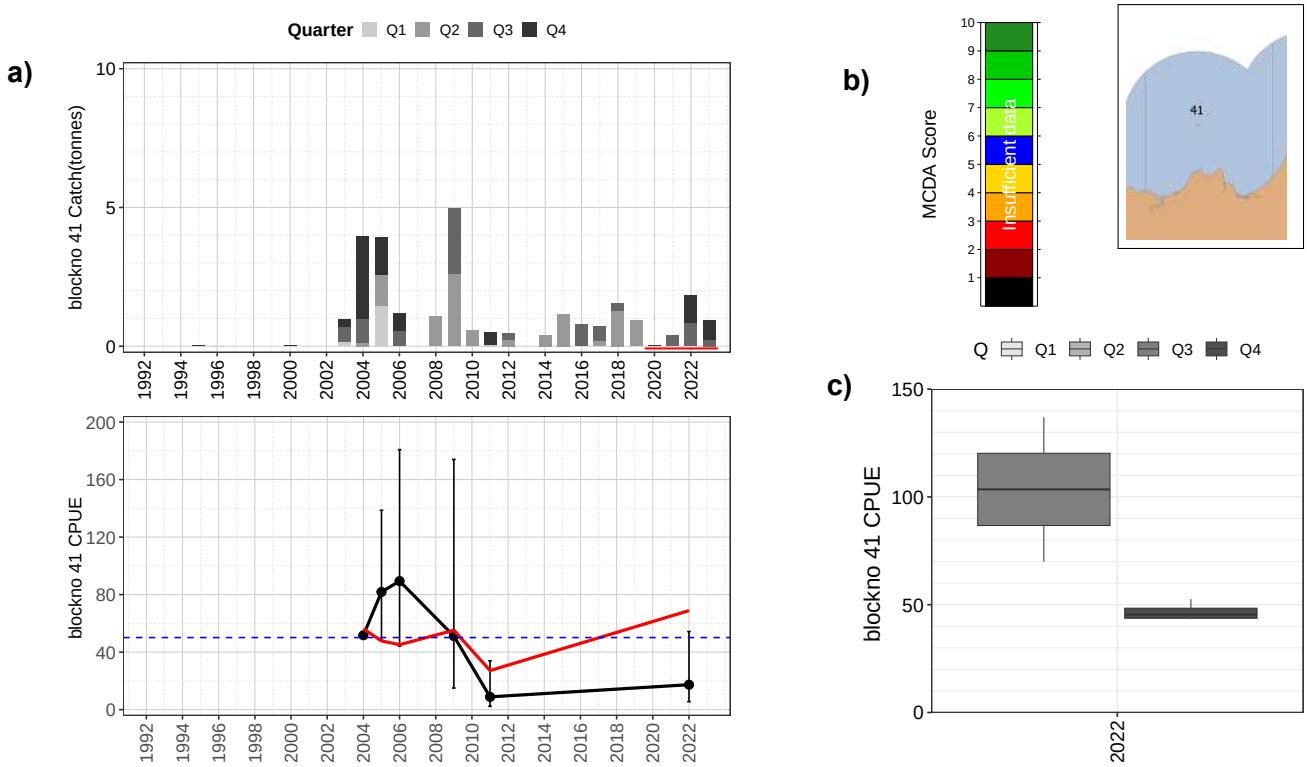

Figure 3.58: *Block 41 BSZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 43 - Three Mile Bluff to Northdown Beach

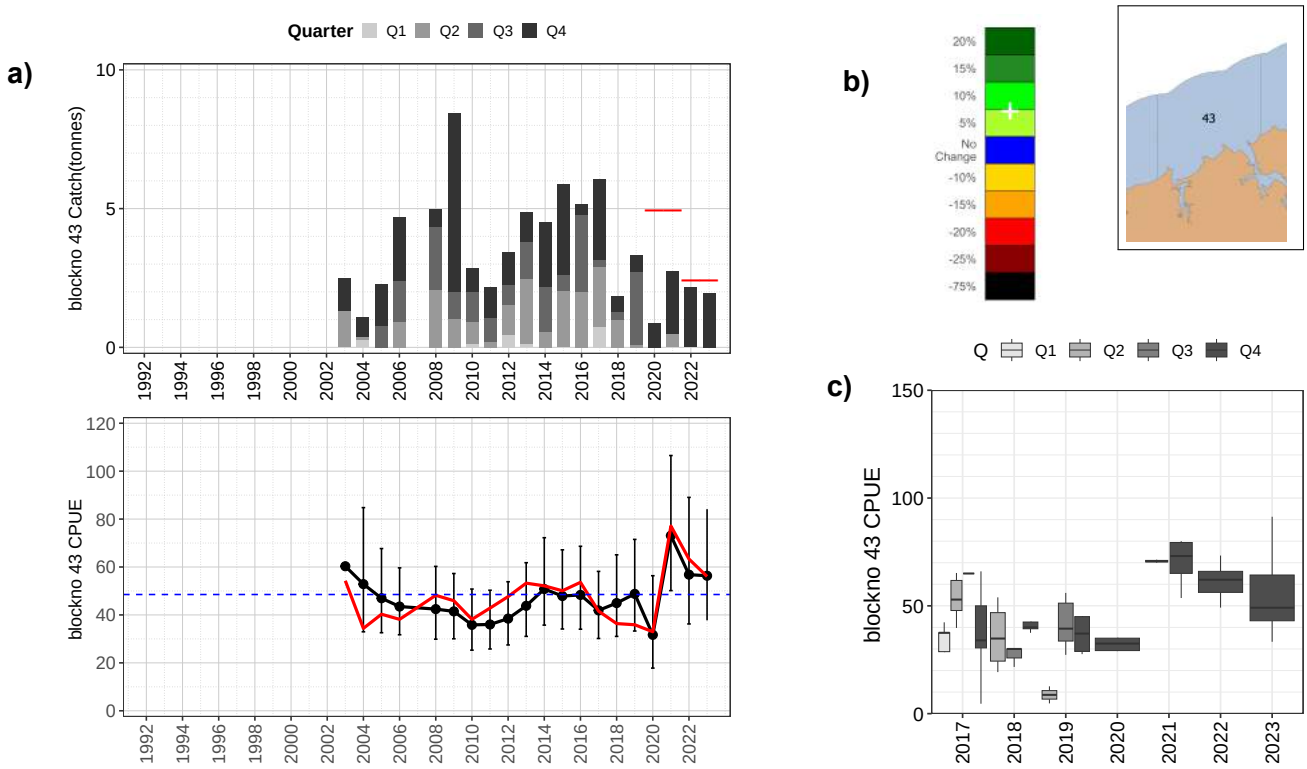

Figure 3.59: *Block 43 BSZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 45 - Heybridge to Chambers Bay

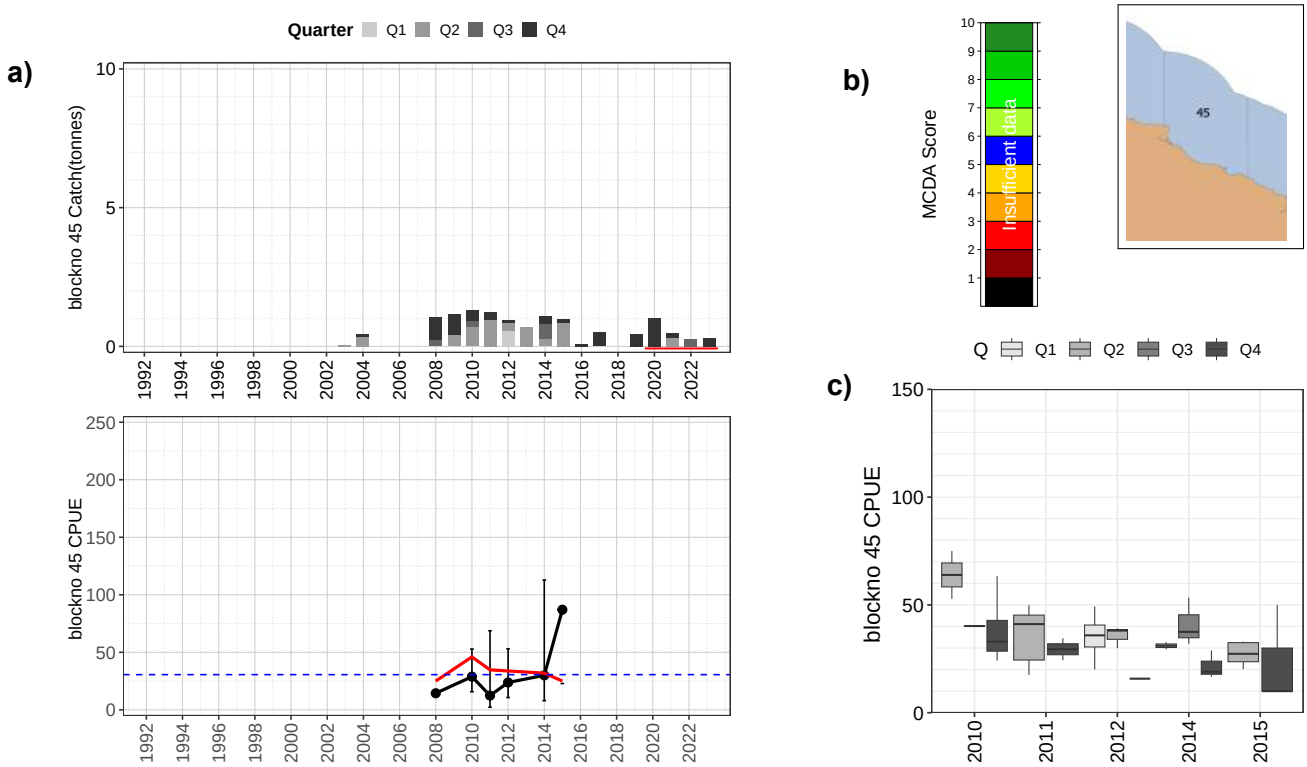

Figure 3.60: *Block 45 BSZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 51 - Kent Group

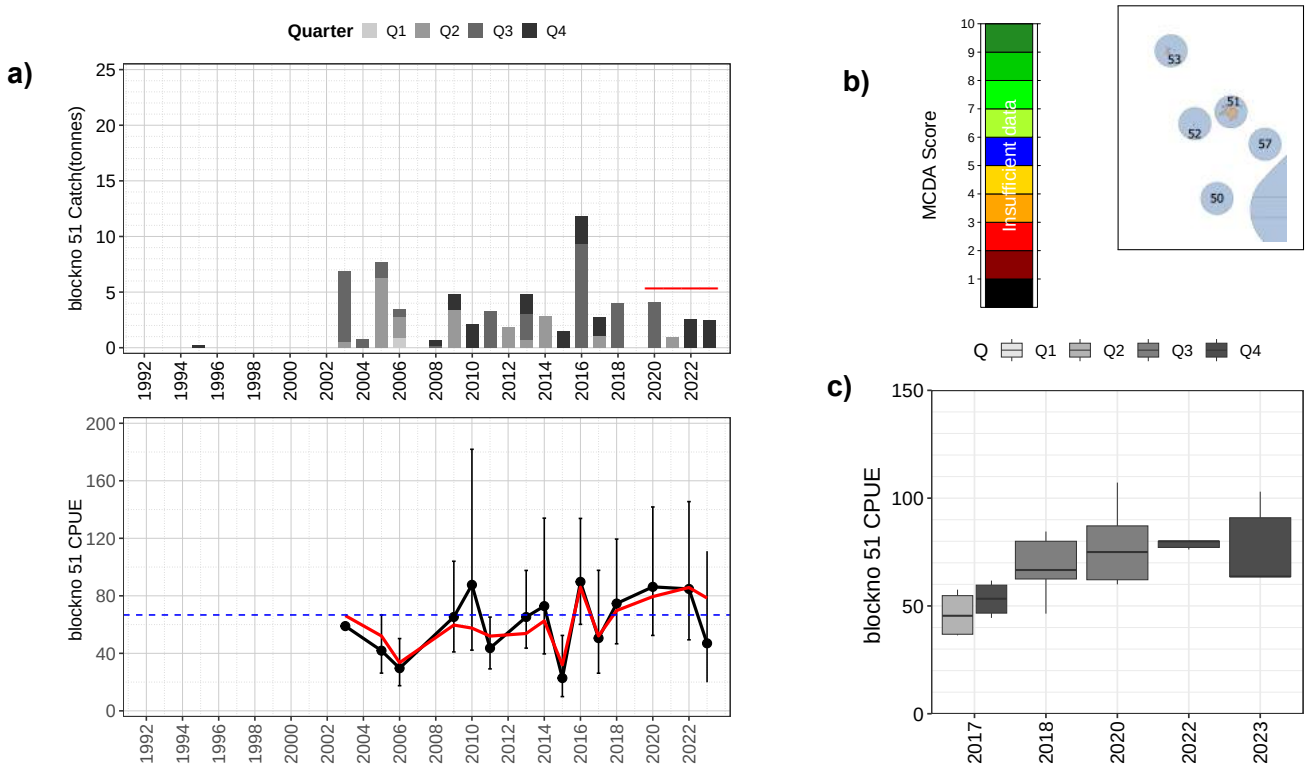

Figure 3.61: *Block 51 BSZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 53 - Hogan Group

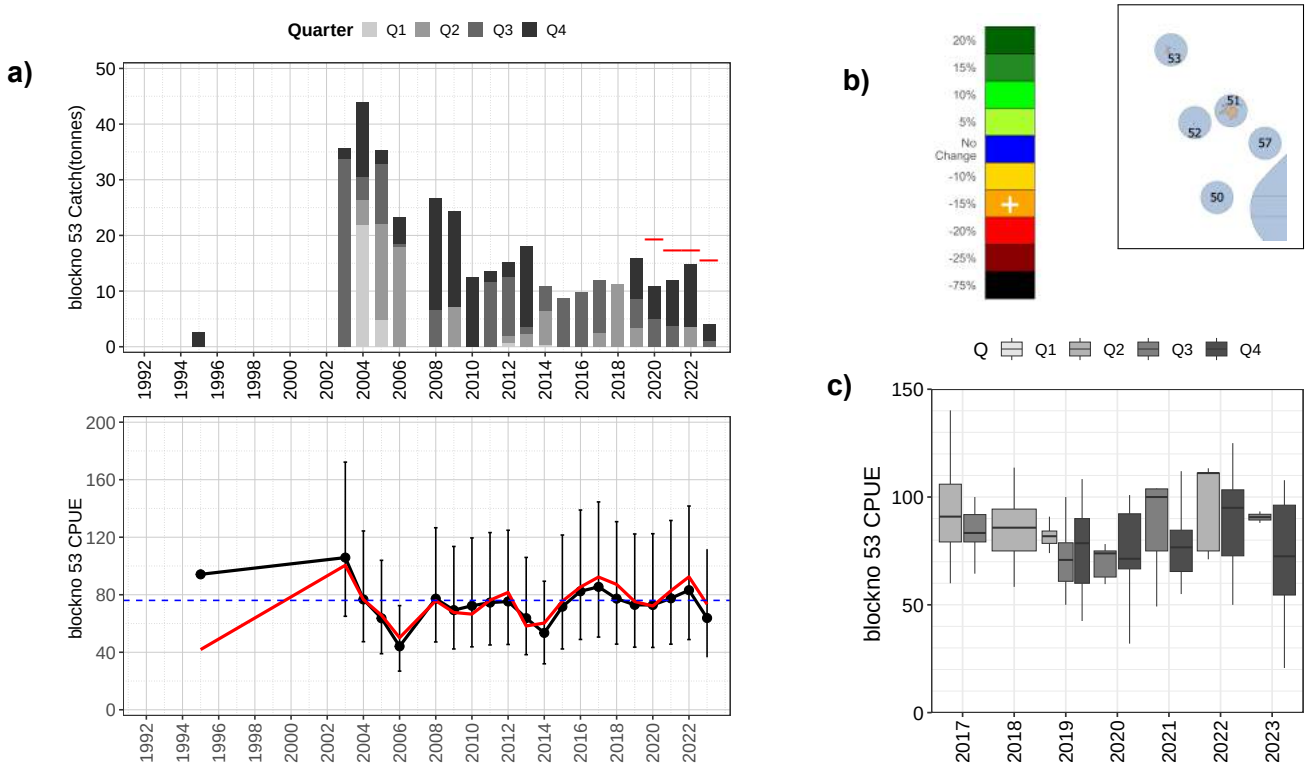

Figure 3.62: *Block 53 BSZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Blacklip: Block 54 - East Moncoeur Island

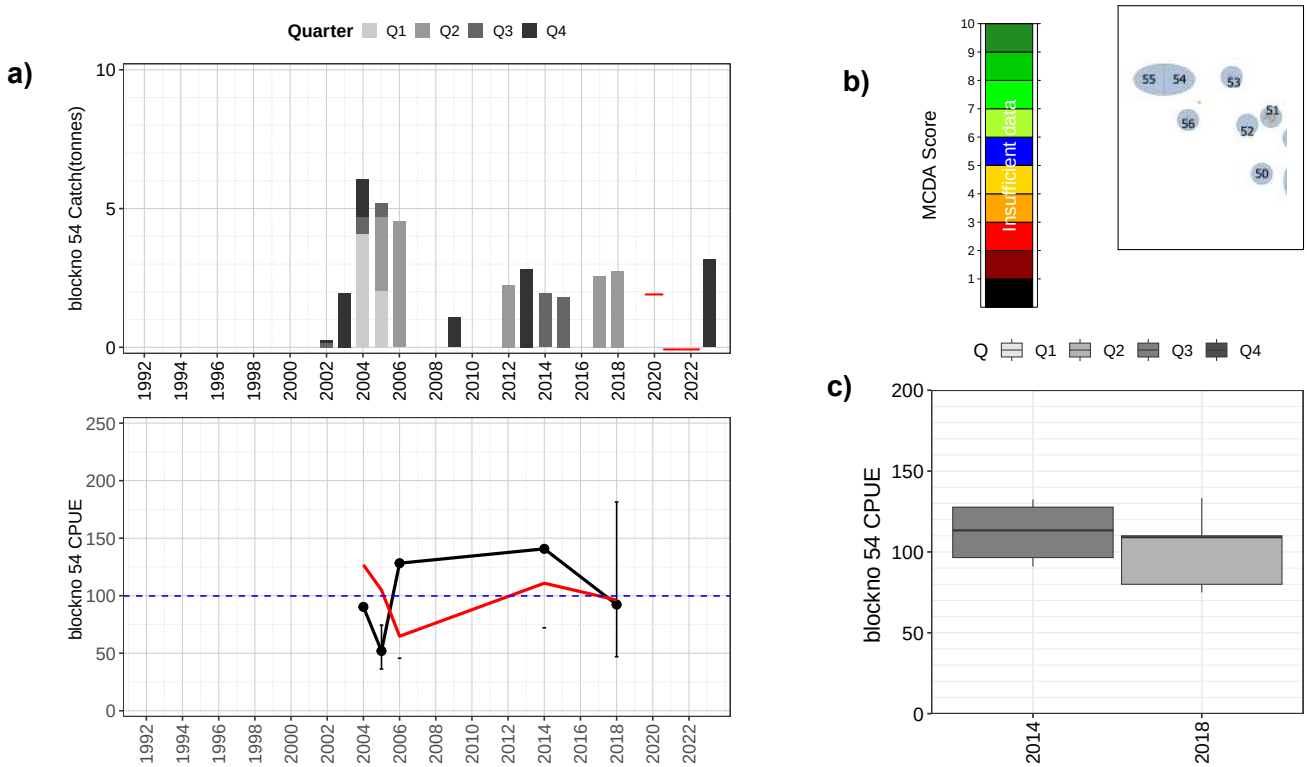

Figure 3.63: *Block 54 BSZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Table 3.4: *Bass Strait Zone Catch, CPUE, Harvest Strategy scores and projected TACC for 2023. CPUE Targets are based on the 55th percentile of standardised annual mean CPUE, with a weighting of 65:25:10 on CPUE, Gradient 4 and Gradient 1 performance measures respectively.*

Block No	Catch 2022	Catch Targ	Catch YTD	CPUE YTD	Score CPUE	Score Grad4	Score Grad1	Score	HS adj	MCDA 2024
32	0.9	1.1	0.4							
33	12.7	16.9	18.3	65.7	3.8	5.1	3.3	4.1	0.90	15.2
34	0.7	0.0	0.0							
35	1.1	0.0	1.1							
36	0.9	2.0	2.5							
37	2.3	2.0	1.4					0.0		
38	15.9	20.0	22.2	133.6	10.0	5.5	6.1	8.5	1.15	23.0
41	1.8	0.0	0.9							
42	0.3	0.0	1.1							
43	2.2	2.5	2.0	56.4	6.2	9.7	4.9	6.9	1.05	2.6
44	0.3	1.0	0.3							
45	0.3	0.0	0.3							
47		0.0	0.0							
48	3.9	4.4	3.3	60.7	6.8	8.3	4.1	6.9	1.05	4.6
49	16.1	11.0	14.8	96.0	5.5	6.3	4.4	5.6	1.00	11.0
51	2.6	5.5	2.5							
53	14.8	16.0	4.0	63.8	3.3	4.4	2.2	3.5	0.85	13.6
54			3.2							
55	1.4									
56	2.6		4.6							
Total	80.7	82.4	83.0							70.0

3.4.3 Bass Strait Zone Summary

The zone-wide catch weighted block mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ increased marginally to 95.4 Kg/Hr in 2023 from 91.9 Kg/Hr and continues to remain above the $SCPUE_{cw}$ of 88.2 Kg/Hr when the Legal Minimum Length was reduced for blocks 33 and 38 in 2010 (chapter C). Although minor declines in SCPUE were apparent in Blocks 48 and 49 in 2023, SCPUE remains above the CPUE target and catch has remained relatively unchanged, suggesting the fishery is approaching some level of stability in SCPUE following the industry driven fish downs commencing in 2010.

The zone-wide proxy for abundance declined marginally to 6.5 in 2023 and remains well above the LRP of 1.0. The zone-wide proxy for fishing mortality also declined to 0.8 in 2023 but remained above the TRP of 0.0 for sustainability (fig. 3.51).

3.5 Greenlip Zone

3.5.1 Zone Overview

In the two years prior to the introduction of separate greenlip and blacklip zones in 2000, the greenlip catch escalated quickly. The TACC for the Tasmanian greenlip abalone fishery was stable at around 140 t between 2000 and 2017 (fig. 3.64), with only minor variation in the proportion of the TACC harvested from each of the four primary regions (King Island, North West, North East and Furneaux) (fig. 3.66). However, $SCPUE_{cw}$ has declined since 2010 with limited management action, to a large part due to the difficulty in calculating CPUE in mixed blacklip and greenlip fishing areas. Commencing in 2014 there were sharp changes in the seasonality of greenlip fishing, with higher levels of catch taken in the warm summer months of January - March, when condition of greenlip abalone is considered to be poor (fig. 3.64). A range of measures were attempted to control the timing and concentration of effort, including a reverse-cap in 2018. While management action has been successful in re-directing effort to the cooler months, significant pulse fishing has occurred in the North-East greenlip catch region, with the region cap reached in four to ten days in recent years, with up to 48 divers contributing to the catch in that short period. This intense pulse fishing has been a feature of the North-east Greeenlip region for the past five years.

The zone-wide catch-weighted region mean $SCPUE_{cw}$ remained stable at 61.9 Kg/Hr in 2023.

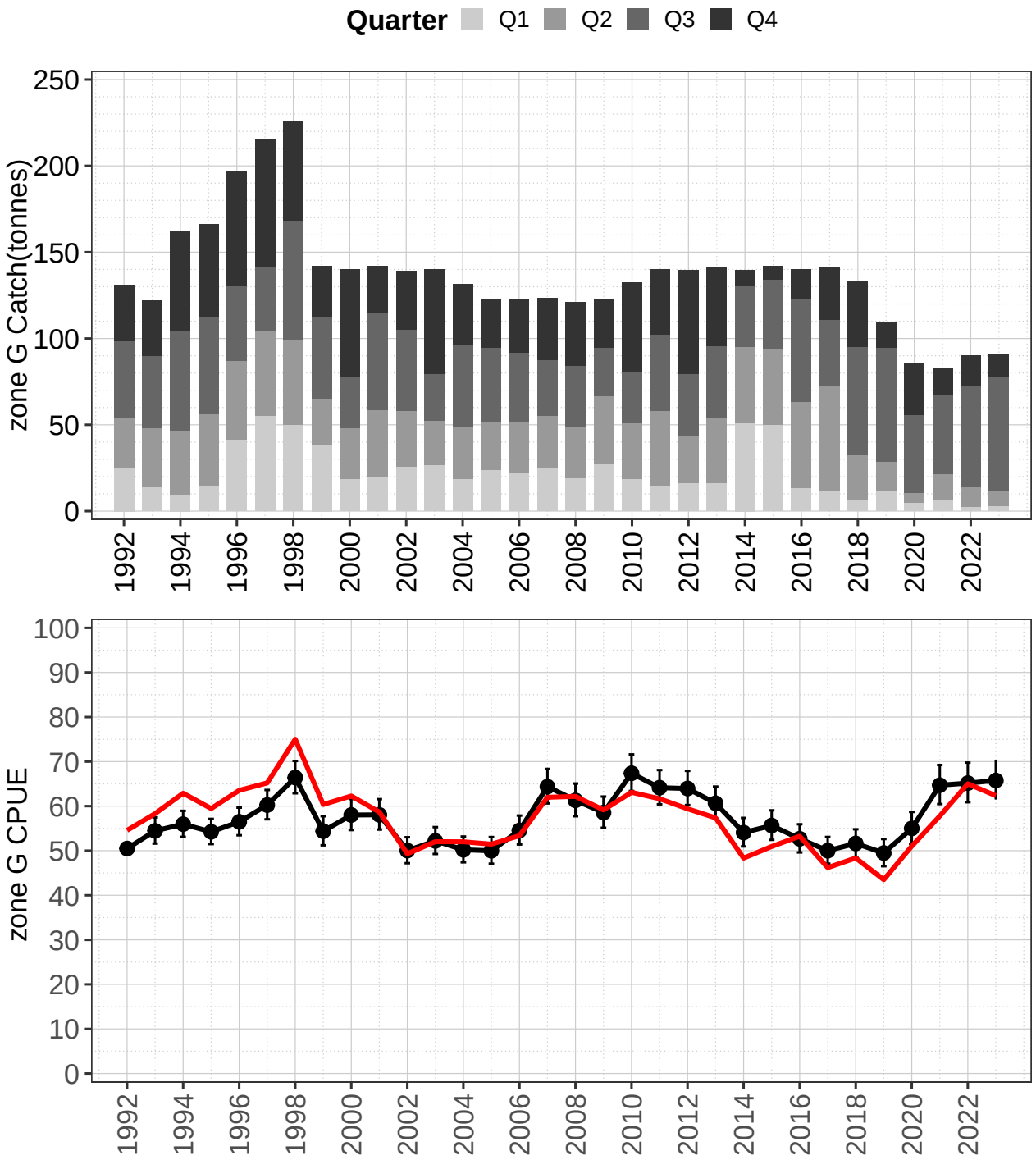

Figure 3.64: *Zone-wide catch and catch rate for greenlip abalone, 1992–2023. Upper plot: catch (t) by quarter pooled across blocks. Lower Plot: standardised CPUE (black line) and geometric mean CPUE (red line).*

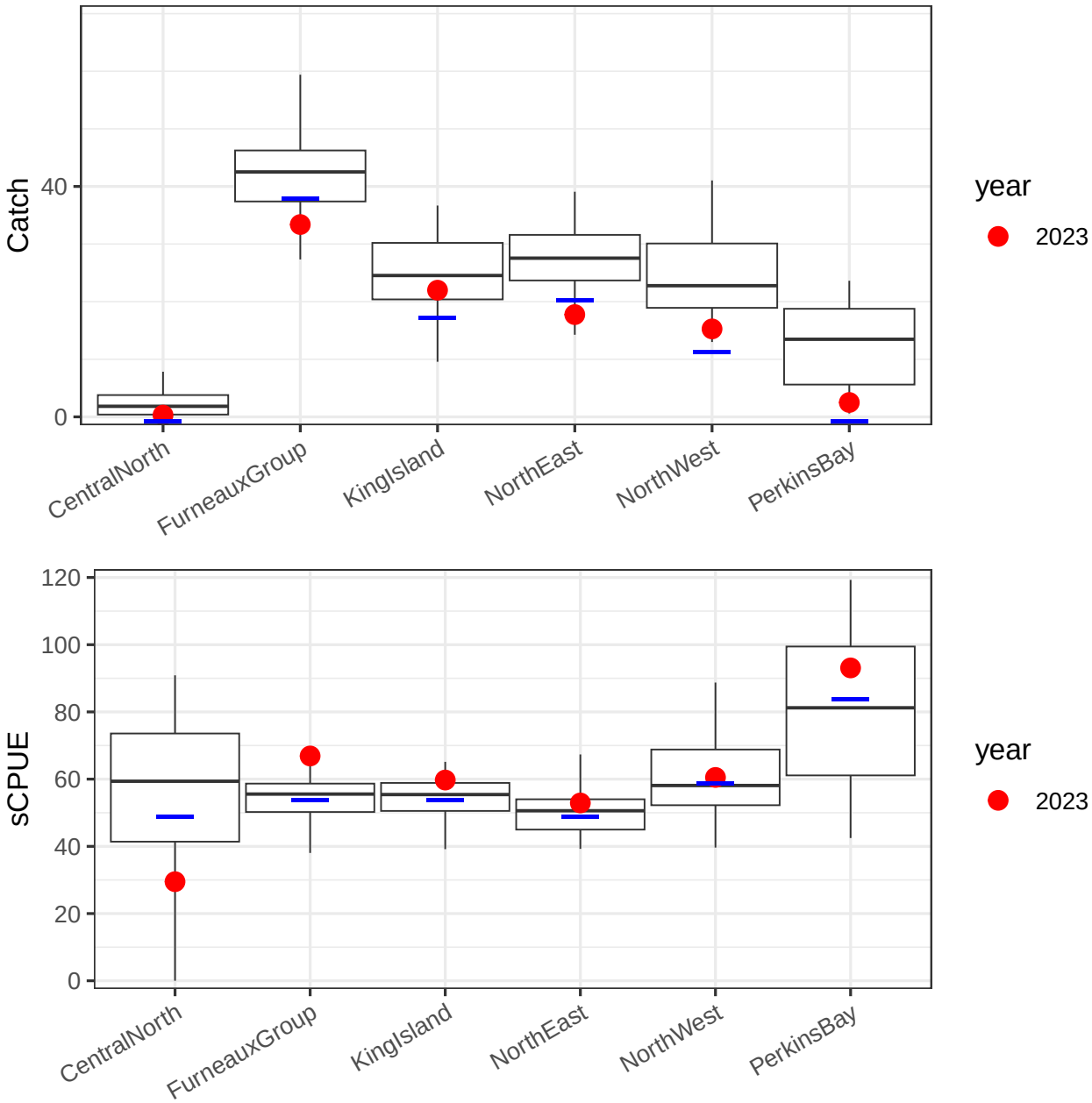

Figure 3.65: *Boxplot of catch and standardised CPUE by statistical block for the Greenlip Zone abalone fishery.* ***Upper Panel****: Boxplot of annual catch. Blue line indicates catch target allocated for 2023. Red dot indicates catch taken in 2023.* ***Lower Panel****: Boxplot of annual standardised CPUE. Blue line indicates the CPUE target reference point. Red square indicates sCPUE in 2023.*

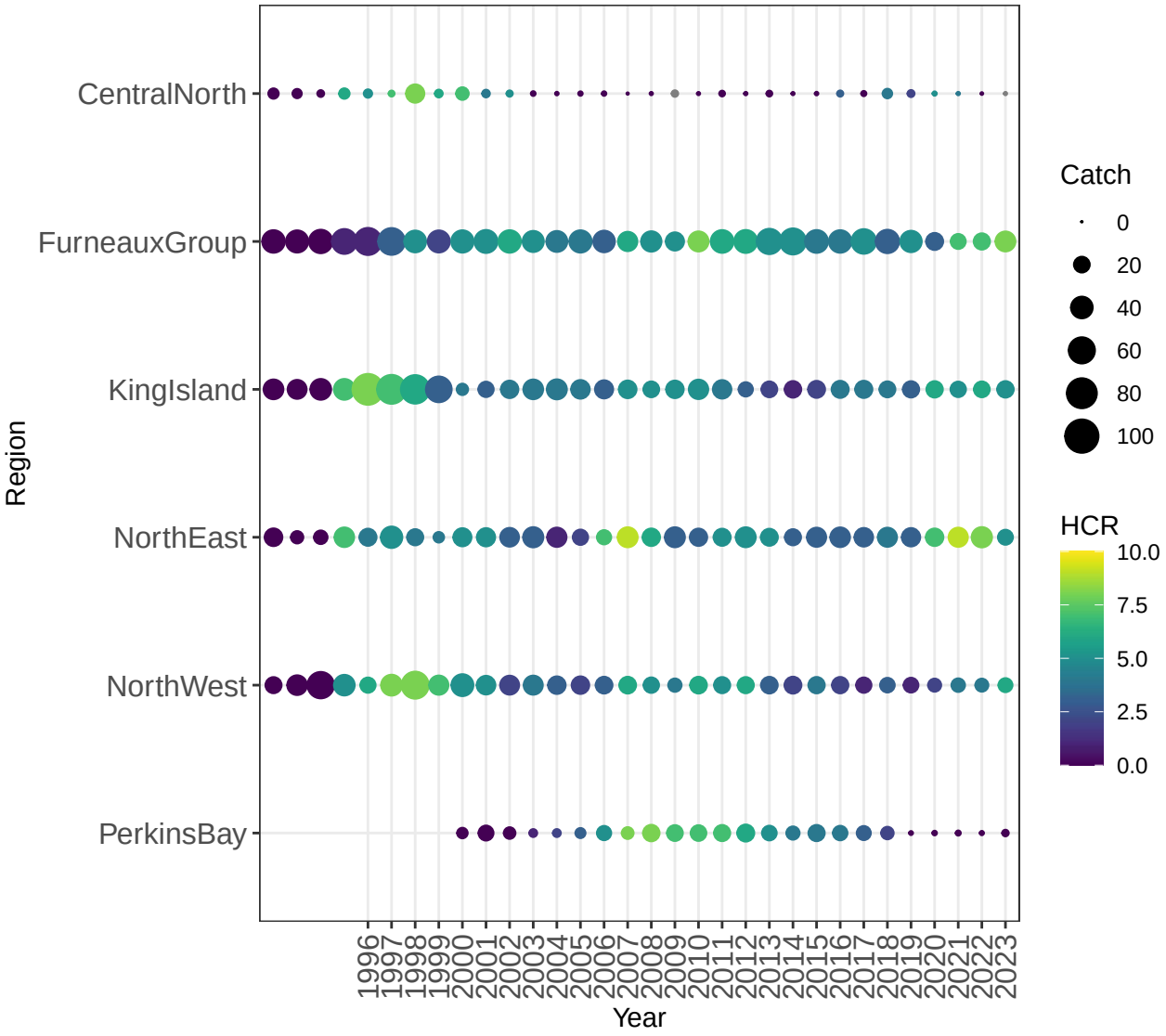

Figure 3.66: *Bubble plot of harvest strategy combined score (bubble colour) and catch (bubble size) for greenlip abalone.*

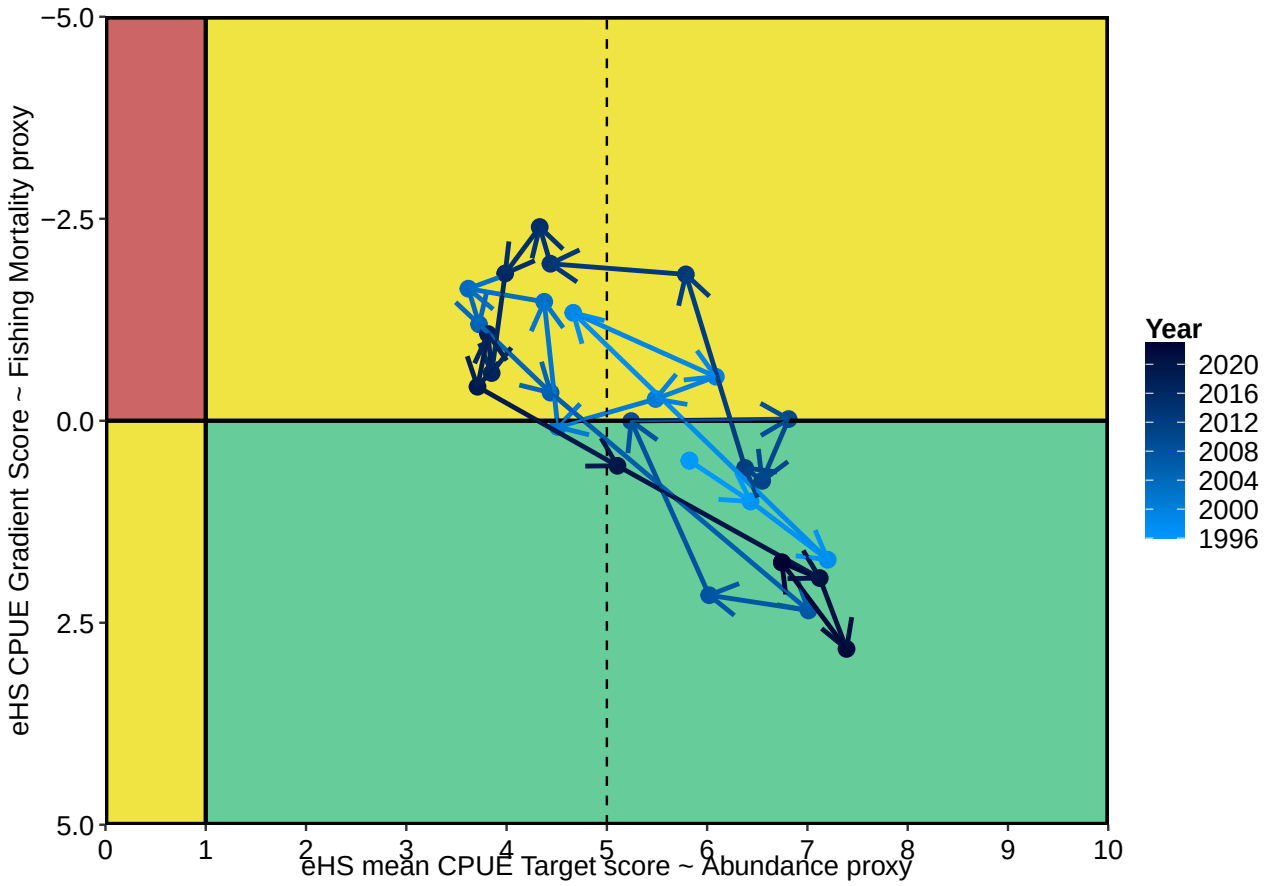

Figure 3.67: *Phase plot of fishing mortality and abundance proxies for greenlip abalone, 1996–2023. The Gradient 4 PM (y-axis) is used as a proxy for fishing mortality, and the Target CPUE PM is used as a proxy for abundance. Zone score is calculated as a catch-weighted mean of individual regional scores.*

3.5.2 Fishery Trends by Region

Greenlip: King Island

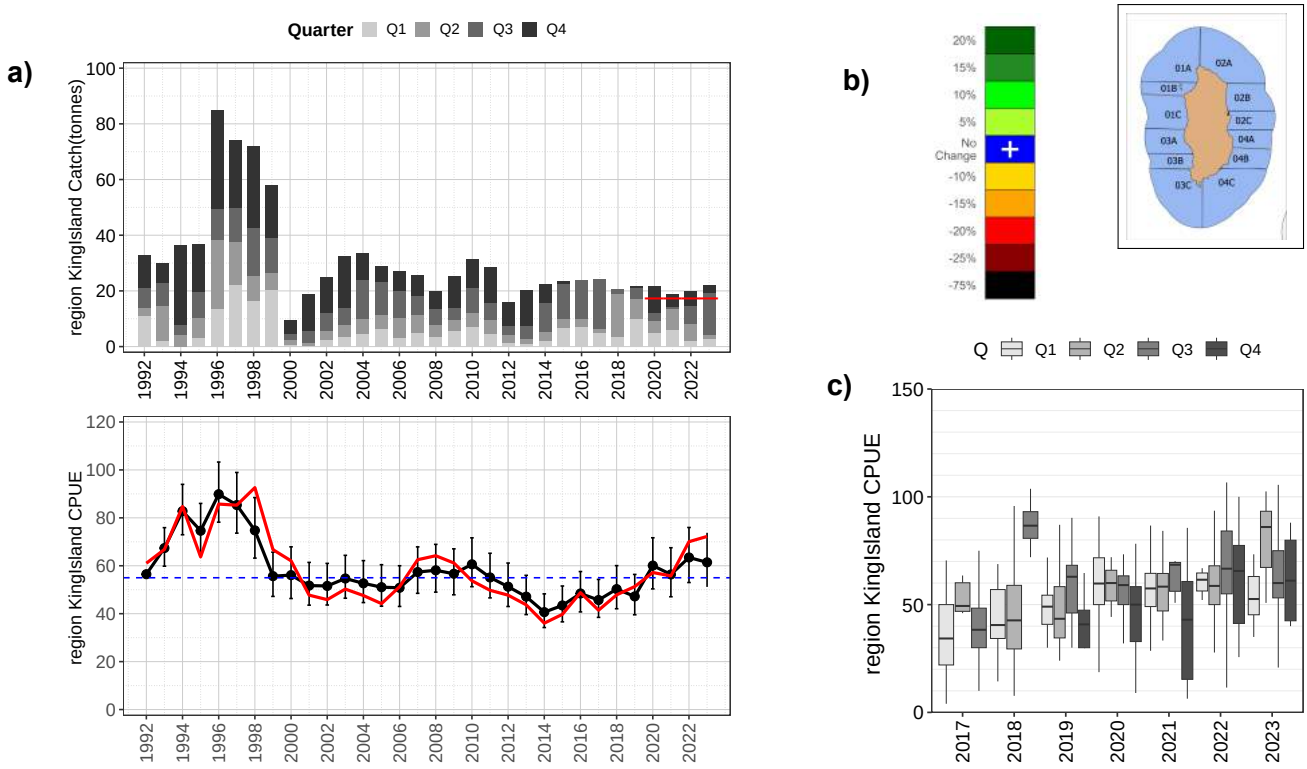

Figure 3.68: *King Island GZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Greenlip: North West

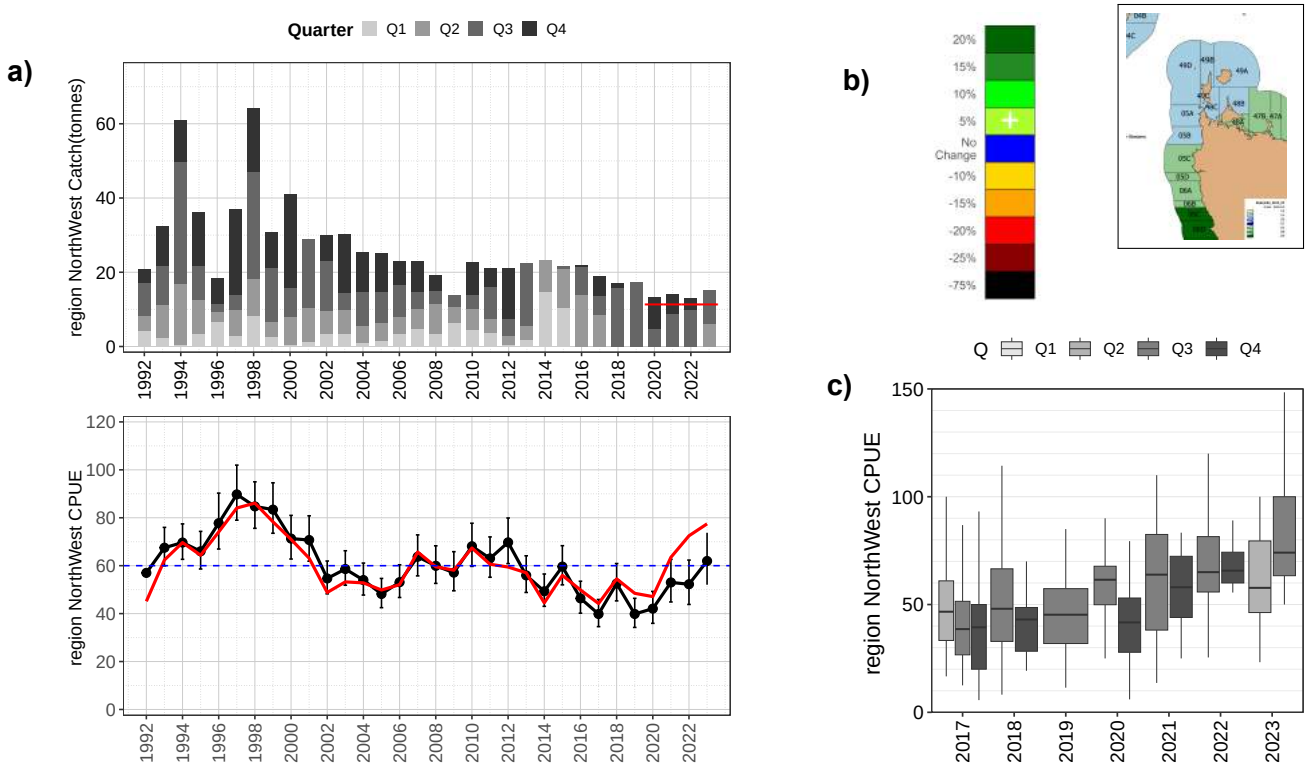

Figure 3.69: *North West GZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Greenlip: Perkins Bay

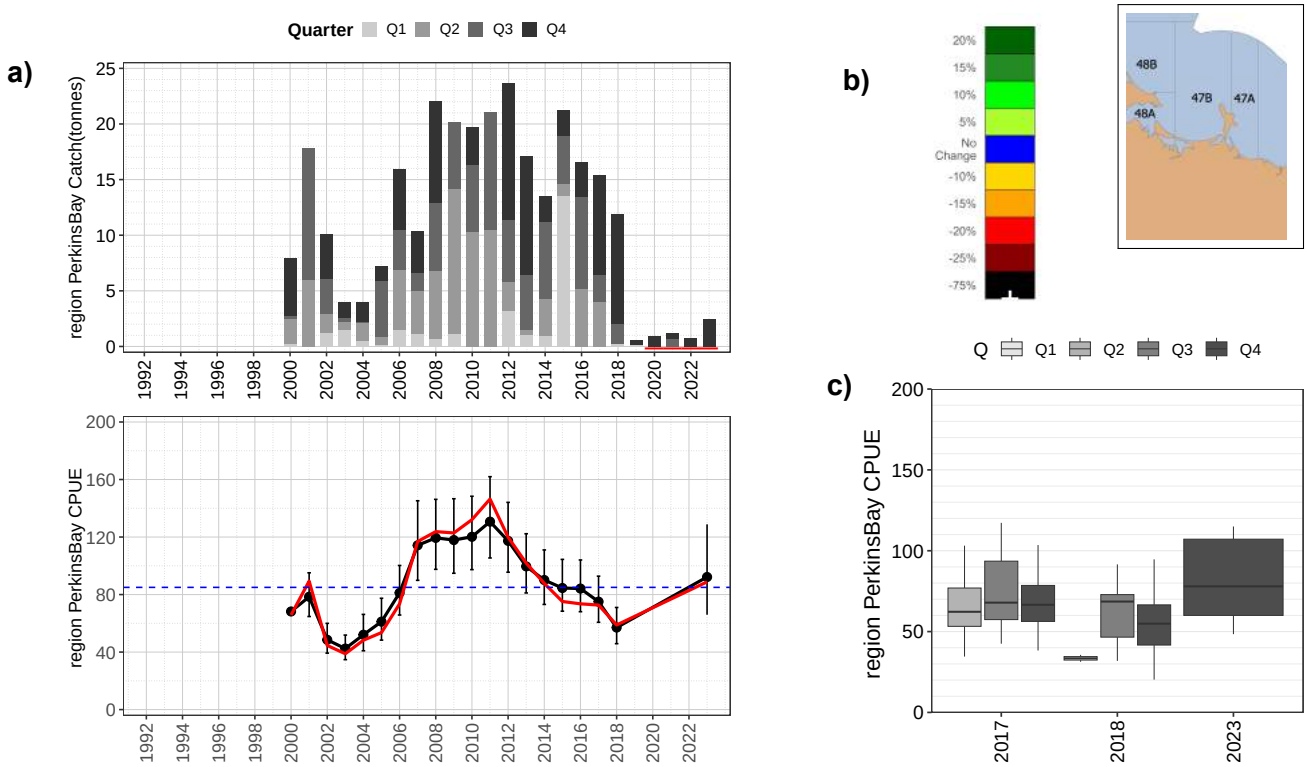

Figure 3.70: *Perkins Bay GZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Greenlip: Central North Coast

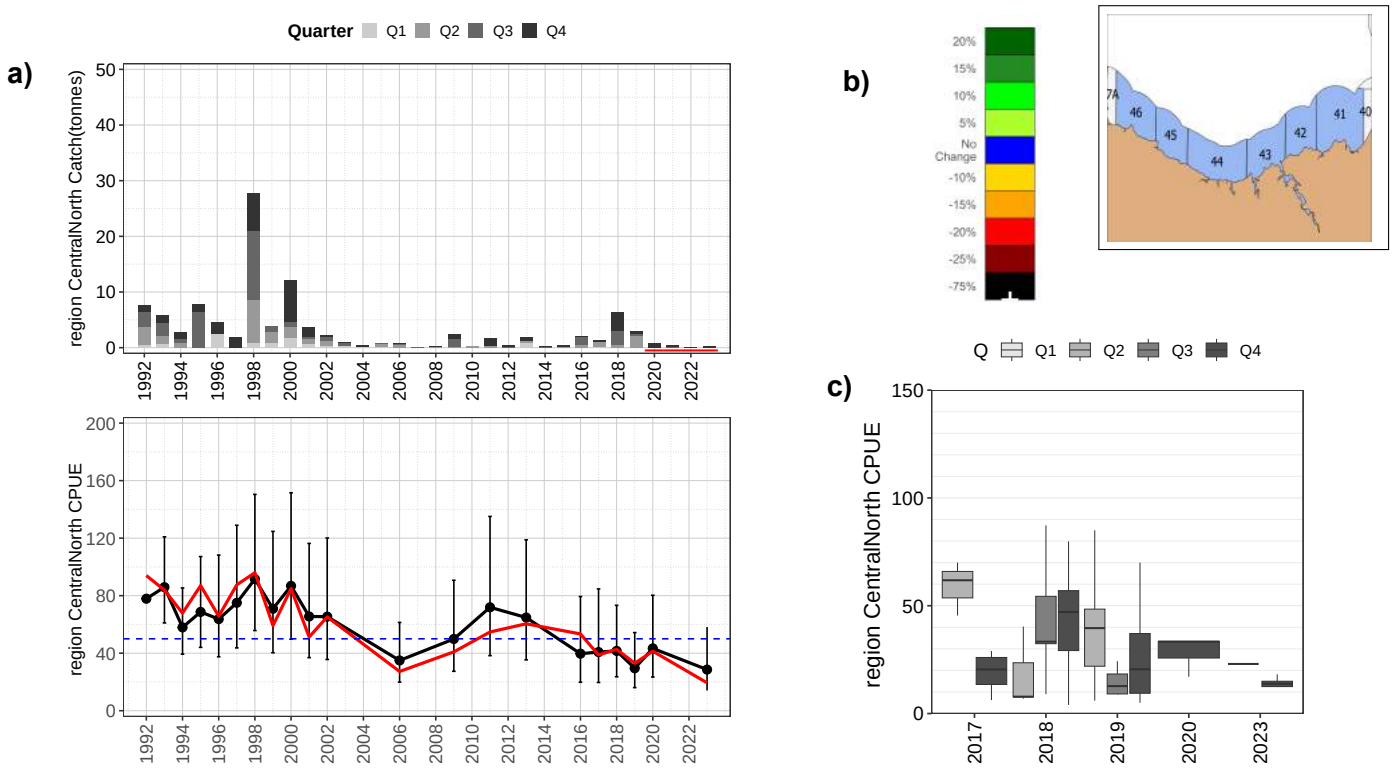

Figure 3.71: *Central North GZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Greenlip: North East

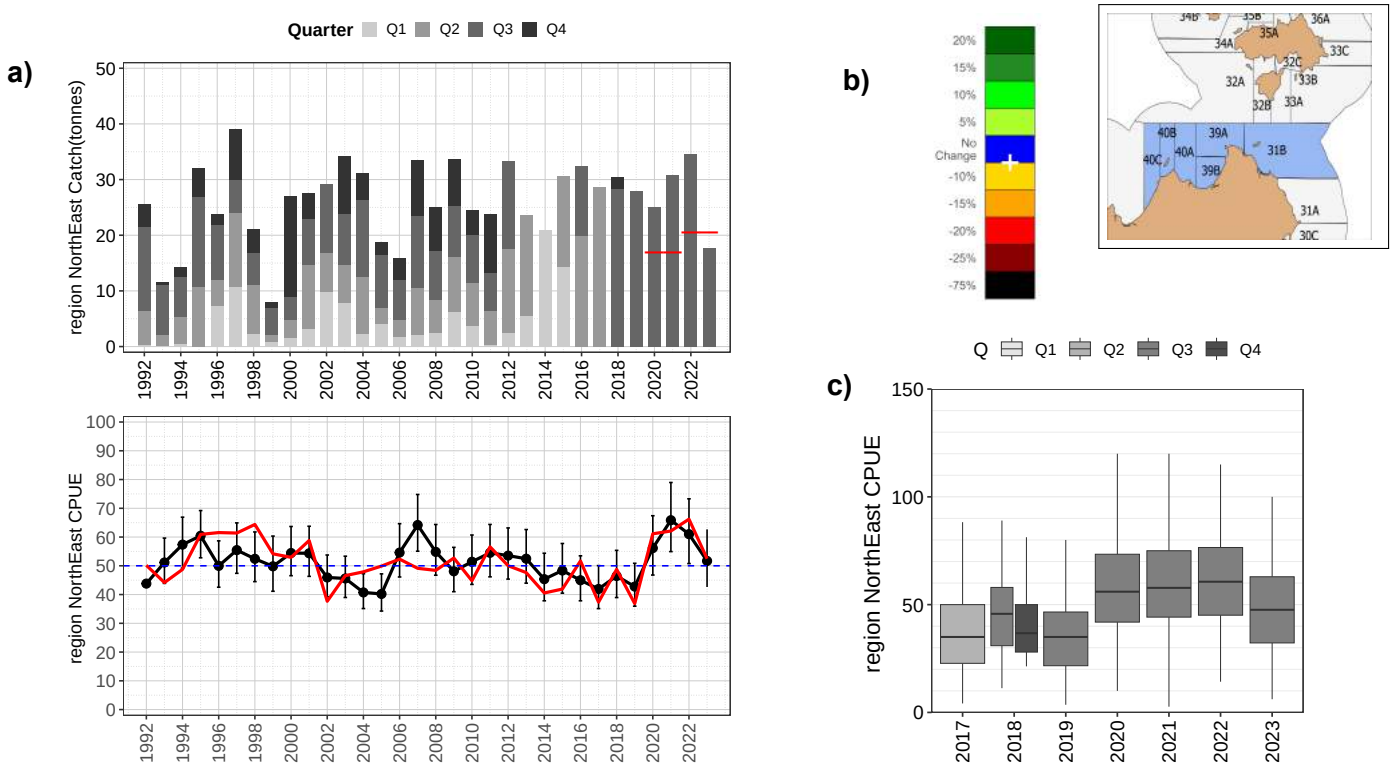

Figure 3.72: *North East GZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Greenlip: Furneaux Group

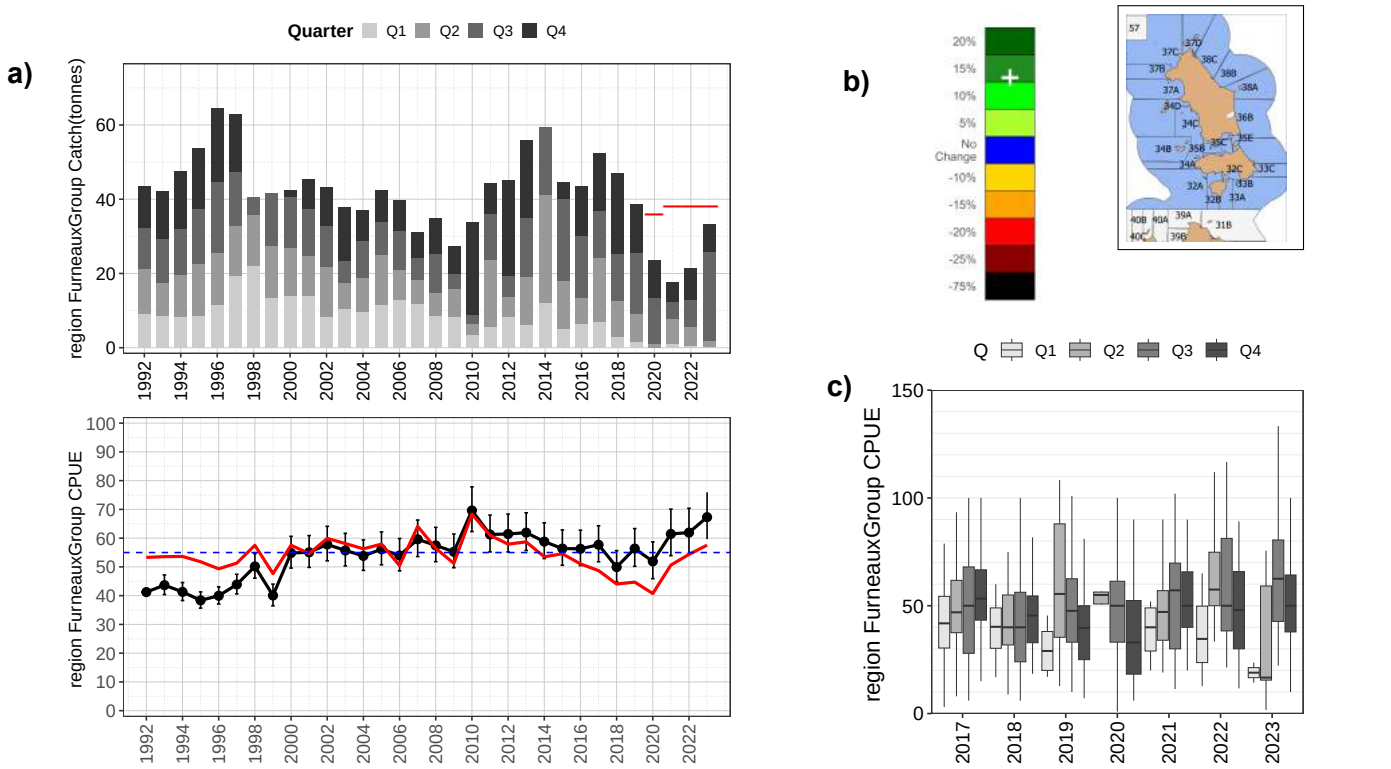

Figure 3.73: *Furneaux Group GZ: a) Catch per quarter (bars) standardised CPUE (black) and un-standardised CPUE (red) CPUE Target (55thp% (blue); b) HS outcome; c) CPUE boxplot by quarter*

Table 3.5: *Greenlip Zone Catch, CPUE, Harvest Strategy scores and projected TACC for 2023. CPUE Targets are based on the 55th percentile of standardised annual mean CPUE, with a weighting of 65:25:10 on CPUE, Gradient 4 and Gradient 1 performance measures respectively.*

Region	Catch 2022	Catch Targ	Catch YTD	CPUE YTD	Score CPUE	Score Grad4	Score Grad1	Score	HS adj	MCDA 2024
KI	20.1	18.0	22.0	59.7	5.6	5.6	4.4	5.5	1.00	18.0
NW	13.0	12.0	15.3	60.5	5.1	10.0	7.5	6.5	1.05	12.6
PB	0.7	0.0	2.5	93.1	5.7			0.0		
CN	0.1	0.0	0.3	29.5	3.2	1.6				
NE	34.7	20.9	17.8	52.9	6.1	3.7	1.6	5.0	1.00	20.9
FG	21.4	38.6	33.4	66.9	8.7	7.7	5.6	8.2	1.15	44.4
BS	0.1	0.0	0.1							
Total	90.1	89.5	91.3							95.9

3.5.3 Greenlip Zone Summary

Of the four major regions in the Greenlip fishery, the regional SCPUE is at or above the median SCPUE (1992 –2023) and above the CPUE Target in all regions except the Central North (fig. 3.65). The North-east catch was curtailed below the catch cap for the first time in five years by approximately 3 t following several management changes and industry initiatives, however continued to experience a downward trend in catch rate, and will require ongoing monitoring in 2024.

The zone-wide proxy for Biomass increased marginally to 6.7 in 2023, and remains above the LRP of 1.0. The zone-wide proxy for fishing mortality declined marginally to 1.8, but remains above the TRP of 0.0 for sustainability (fig. 3.67).

3.6 Commercial Catch Length-frequency

3.6.1 Overview

Commercial catch sampling was conducted at two processing factories and by three commercial abalone divers in 2023. Challenging market conditions meant catch landings were more unpredictable in 2023 and the frequency of catch sampling was lower compared to more recent years with only 82 catches and 9,354 individual abalone measured. Catches were measured from fishing activity in 13 reporting Blocks spread across all Zones (table 3.6). The majority of catches were sampled from Block 13 in the Eastern Zone and from Blocks 11 and 12 in the Western Zone (fig. 3.74). In addition, factories supplied with integrated platform scales also weighed 7,981 abalone providing weight grading metrics summarised in this report (table 3.6). Individual Block results are only presented where more than two catch samples were taken in 2023.

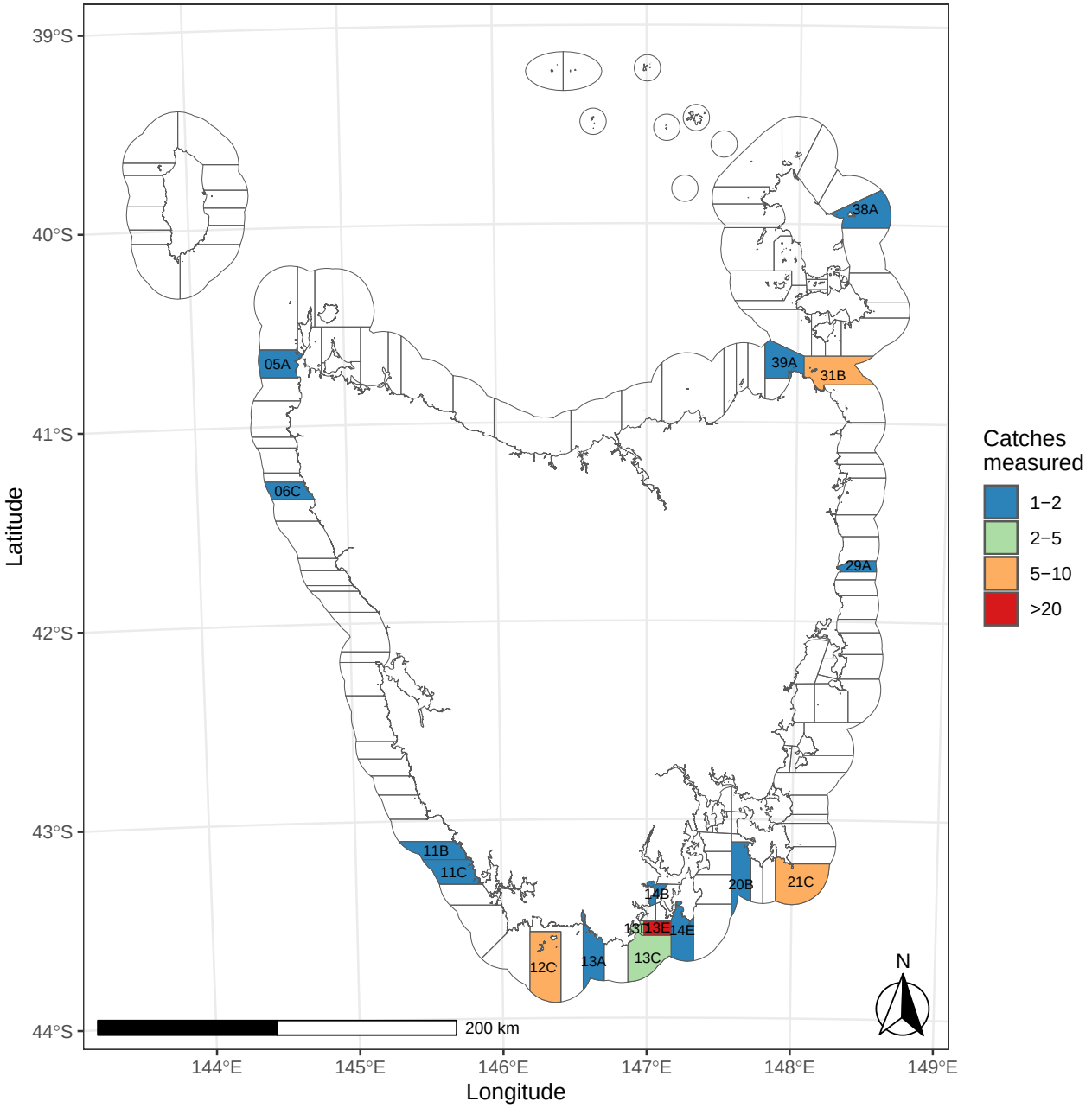

Figure 3.74: *Distribution and number of commercial abalone catches sampled for length-frequency data across reporting Blocks during 2023.*

Table 3.6: *Summary of commercial abalone catches sampled across reporting Blocks during 2023. LML = legal minimum length. LML5, LML10, LML15, and LML15 + = percentage of abalone measured within 5 mm, 10 mm, 15mm, and > 15mm of the LML, respectively.*

Zone	Block No	Catches measured	Abalone measured	Median SL mm	Max SL mm	LML mm	LML5 (%)	LML10 (%)	LML15 (%)	LML15+ (%)
BS	38	1	120	129.2	151.2	114	9	32	50	50
E	13	41	5203	146.8	200.2	140	32	60	76	17
E	14	2	200	152.5	203	140	18	38	59	41
E	20	2	199	148.7	173.5	140	27	54	75	24
E	21	7	731	154.8	189.8	140	11	29	49	49
E	29	1	100	153.6	174.5	140	12	36	62	38
N	31	9	899	140.2	179.6	127	7	32	57	41
N	39	1	100	139	168.8	127	20	43	68	32
N	5	1	7	141.3	155.9	132	14	57	86	14
N	6	1	100	137.2	153.9	132	42	77	87	8
W	11	7	700	159.2	214.5	145	10	29	54	46
W	12	8	896	157.2	190.8	145	16	40	60	39
W	13	1	99	164.6	184.7	145	8	22	34	65
Total		82	9354				226	549	817	464

3.6.2 Eastern Zone

Block 13 - Actaeons (Whale Head to Actaeon Island)

The majority of Eastern Zone catch sampling in 2023 were of fishing activity in Block 13E. Catches were generally dominated by small grade abalone tightly centred around 150 mm and very few individuals larger than 170 mm (fig. 3.75a). These size compositions are comparable to those seen in the later part of the 2000's, however a slight increase in size structure was observed relative to 2022 with fewer individuals observed between 140-145 mm (fig. 3.75a). The absence of fewer smaller individuals in catches is further supported by the continuation of approximately 40% of individuals measured falling within 5 mm of the Legal Minimum Length (LML), following the LML increase to 140 mm throughout the Eastern Zone in 2023 (figs. 3.75b and 3.75c). This shift towards a slightly larger size structure likely reflects the modal progression of recruits that were observed entering the fishery in 2022, however suggests that this region may have experienced some reduction in recruitment during 2023 with the absence of fewer smaller individuals which have typically dominated catches for the previous few years (fig. 3.75d).

Block 21 Cape Raoul

Catches from Block 21 were generally comprised of small to medium grade abalone centred around 150-155 mm (fig. 3.76a. Size compositions appear to have been gradually increasing since the mid 2010's, comprising fewer small individuals nearer to the LML suggesting recruitment in this region may have be more limited in more recent years and the fishery being reliant on mostly larger individuals (figs. 3.76b to 3.76d).

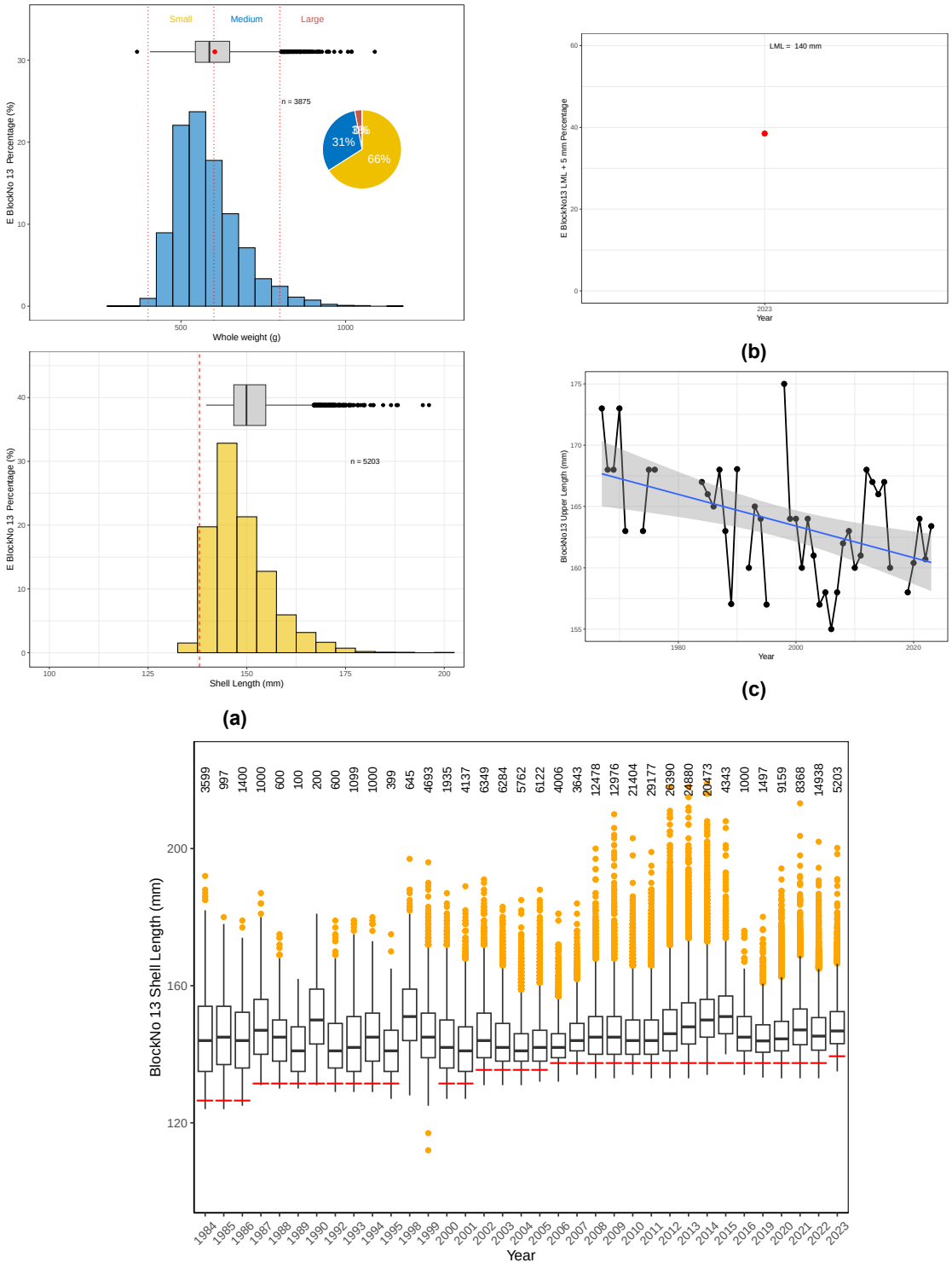

Figure 3.75: *Block 13 EZ: a) Weight (top) and length (bottom) frequency distributions recorded at processing factories in 2023. Horizontal box plots represent summary weight and length distributions. Pie plot represents percentage composition of weight grading (vertical dashed red lines) for abalone weighed; b) Proportion of commercial catch within 5 mm of current legal minimum length (LML); c) Upper 5th percentile of shell length frequency distributions; d) Boxplot of length frequency distributions between 1984 and 2023. Red line under each boxplot indicates LML for that year. Note: Red vertical dashed line represents a pause in sampling of more than one year prior to 2023. Number of abalone measured given above each boxplot.*

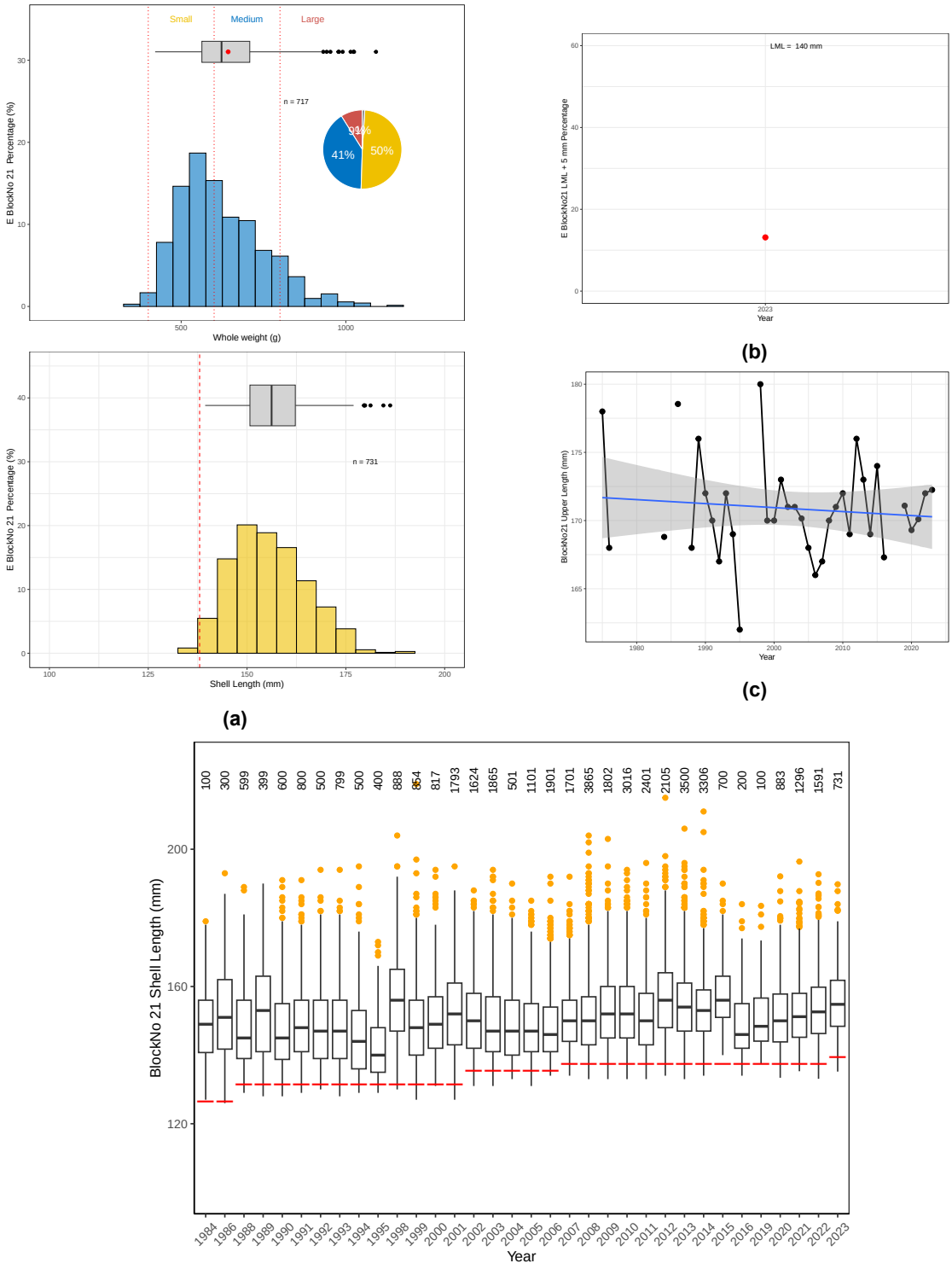

Figure 3.76: *Block 21 EZ: a) Weight (top) and length (bottom) frequency distributions recorded at processing factories in 2023. Horizontal box plots represent summary weight and length distributions. Pie plot represents percentage composition of weight grading (vertical dashed red lines) for abalone weighed; b) Proportion of commercial catch within 5 mm of current legal minimum length (LML); c) Upper 5th percentile of shell length frequency distributions; d) Boxplot of length frequency distributions between 1984 and 2023. Red line under each boxplot indicates LML for that year. Note: Red vertical dashed line represents a pause in sampling of more than one year prior to 2023. Number of abalone measured given above each boxplot.*

3.6.3 Western Zone

Block 11 - Low Rocky Point to Faults Bay

Catch samples from Block 11 remained relatively unchanged from 2022 and were typically dominated by medium grade abalone centred around 160 mm in 2023 (fig. 3.77a). Overall the size structure appears to have remained relatively stable in Block 11 since the early 2000s (fig. 3.77d).

Block 12 (Faults Bay to Prion Beach)

Catches from Block 12 again comprised the bulk of catch sampling from the Western Zone in 2023. Catches were dominated by medium grade abalone centred around 160 mm (fig. 3.78a). Size structure appears to have remained relatively unchanged from 2022 in Block 12 (fig. 3.78b). Overall size structure continues to be increasingly represented by larger individuals and fewer small individuals nearer the LML (fig. 3.78c).

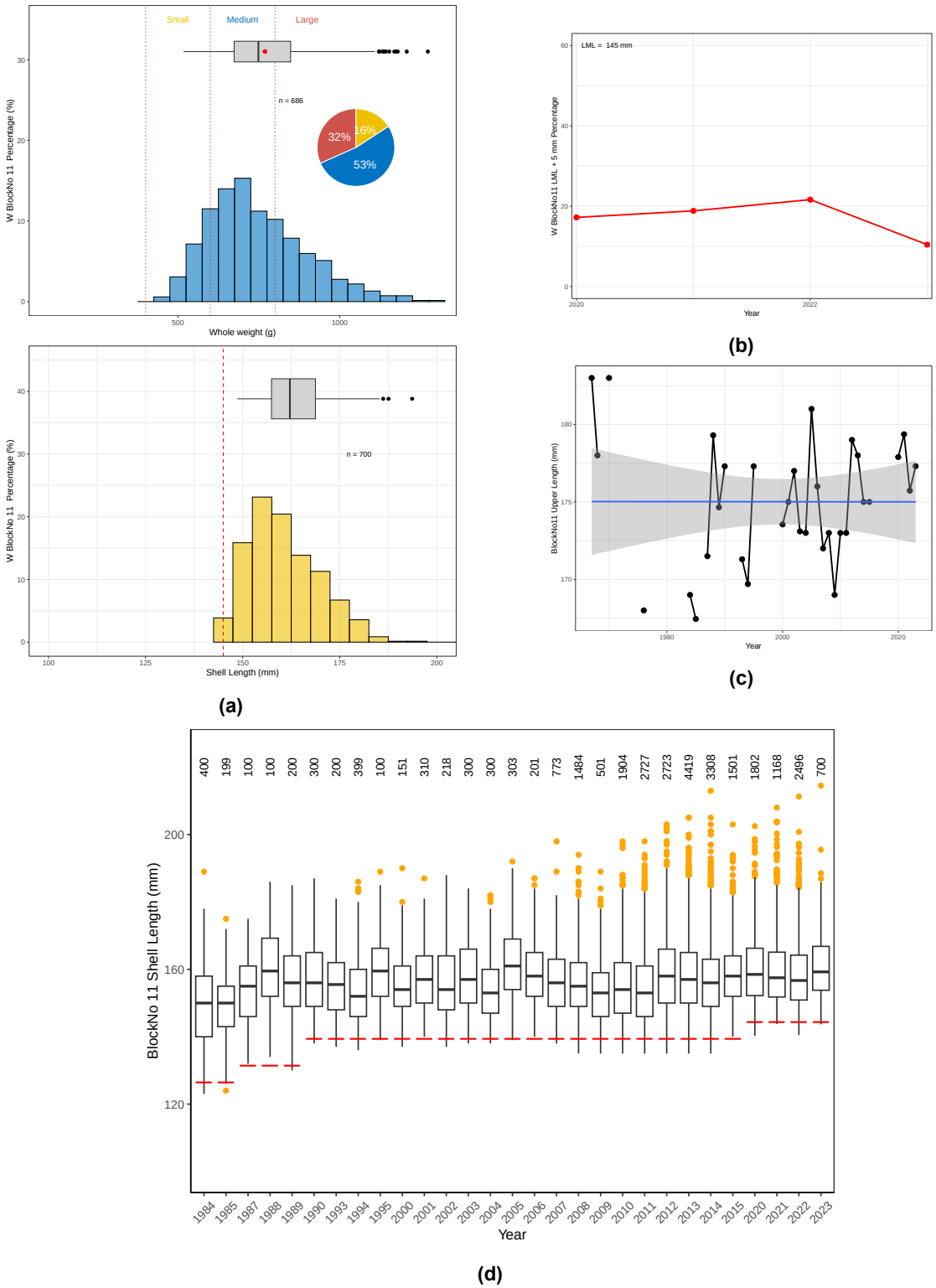

Figure 3.77: *Block 11 WZ: a) Weight (top) and length (bottom) frequency distributions recorded at processing factories in 2023. Horizontal box plots represent summary weight and length distributions. Pie plot represents percentage composition of weight grading (vertical dashed red lines) for abalone weighed; b) proportion of commercial catch within 5 mm of current legal minimum length (LML). Note: Dashed red line are catch proportions prior to LML change (vertical dashed red line) within 5 mm of current LML; c) Upper 5th percentile of shell length frequency distributions; d) Boxplot of length frequency distributions between 1984 and 2023. Red line under each boxplot indicates LML for that year. Note: Red vertical dashed line represents a pause in sampling of more than one year prior to 2023. Number of abalone measured given above each boxplot.*

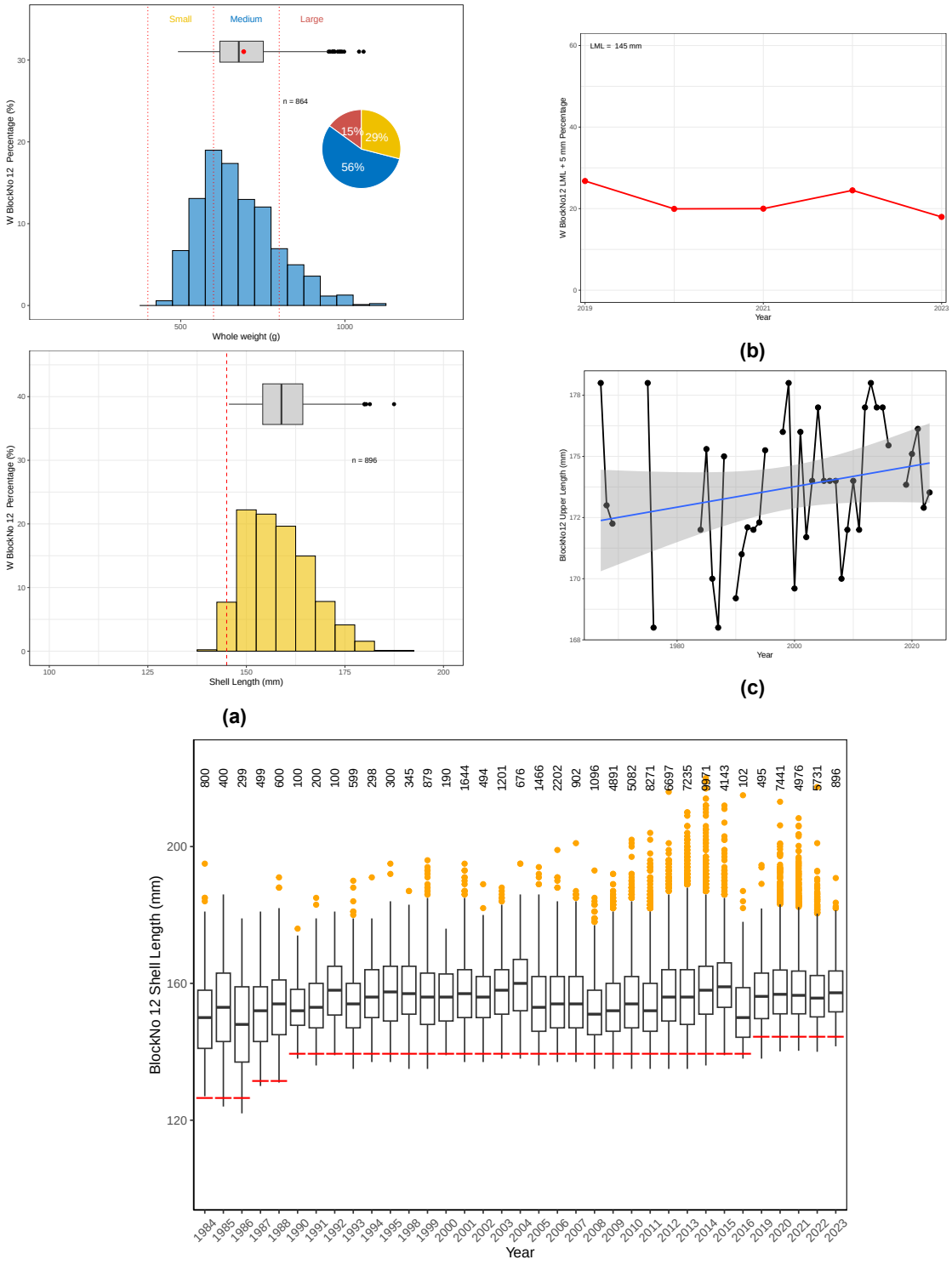

Figure 3.78: *Block 12 WZ: a) Weight (top) and length (bottom) frequency distributions recorded at processing factories in 2023. Horizontal box plots represent summary weight and length distributions. Pie plot represents percentage composition of weight grading (vertical dashed red lines) for abalone weighed; b) proportion of commercial catch within 5 mm of current legal minimum length (LML). Note: Dashed red line are catch proportions prior to LML change (vertical dashed red line) within 5 mm of current LML; c) Upper 5th percentile of shell length frequency distributions; d) Boxplot of length frequency distributions between 1984 and 2023. Red line under each boxplot indicates LML for that year. Note: Red vertical dashed line represents a pause in sampling of more than one year prior to 2023. Number of abalone measured given above each boxplot.*

3.6.4 Northern Zone

Block 31B (Cape Naturaliste)

The introduction of vessel-based measuring boards linked to commercial diver GPS units has enabled the expansion of sampling into areas traditionally under-represented in the catch sampling program such as Block 38B. Catches in Block 31B were dominated by individuals centred around 140-145 mm which appears consistent with the longer term but limited historical data for this region (figs. 3.79a and 3.79d). Although sample sizes are limited there are some evidence that catches in more recent years have become increasing larger with fewer individuals nearer to the LML (figs. 3.79b and 3.79c)

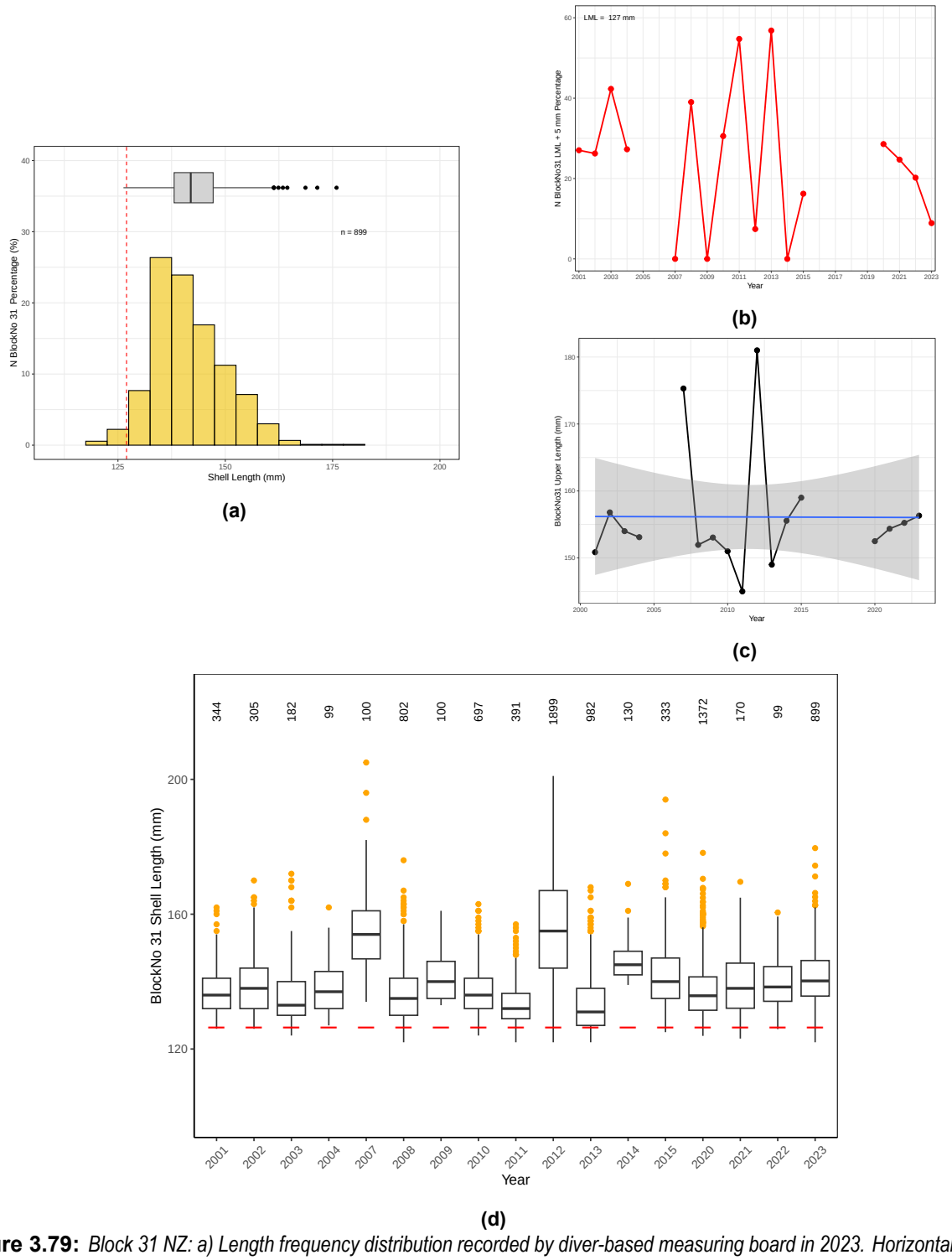

Figure 3.79: *Block 31 NZ: a) Length frequency distribution recorded by diver-based measuring board in 2023. Horizontal box plots represent summary length distribution. Vertical dashed red line represents LML; b) Proportion of commercial catch within 5 mm of current legal minimum length (LML); c) Upper 5th percentile of shell length frequency distributions; d) Boxplot of length frequency distributions between 1984 and 2023. Red line under each boxplot indicates LML for that year. Note: Red vertical dashed line represents a pause in sampling of more than one year prior to 2023. Number of abalone measured given above each boxplot.*

Chapter 4

Fishery Independent Research Results

4.1 Tasmanian Eastern Abalone Fishery: Timed Swim Surveys

Fishery-independent timed swim surveys were undertaken by IMAS for the fourth consecutive year during 2023 in assessing the stock status of closed Blocks in the Tasmanian Eastern Abalone Fishery. A total of 279 sites were surveyed over 26 field days. Abalone were recorded at most sites in 2023, only one site in Block 27 triggering the end of survey protocol where no abalone are observed by both divers in the first five minutes.

Overall, sub-legal (<140 mm) counts continuing to decline across most Blocks and are currently the lowest recorded since 2020 (fig. 4.1). Only Block 16 appears to be showing some signs of stability however has typically recorded the lowest sub-legal counts across Blocks and years. On average, sub-legal abundance declined by 26% across Blocks in 2023 compared to 2022.

Conversly legal (>140 mm) abundance remained relatively stable and unchanged in 2023 (3% average increase) compared to previous years except Block 23 which recorded a 10% decline in abundance (fig. 4.1).

Abalone abundance remains highly variable between sites and across Blocks (fig. 4.1). In Block 16, abundances for both size classes were some of the lowest recorded for all Blocks and typically highest through the mid sites between Dennes Point and Cape Queen Elizabeth (fig. 4.2). In Block 22 sub-legal abalone tended to be more abundant at northern sites north of Yellow Bluff compared to legal abalone which were more dominant in timed swims to the south around Cape Hauy (fig. 4.3). Abalone of both size classes in Block 23 were most abundant at sites around Visscher Island and generally low in abundance throughout remaining sites within the Block (fig. 4.4). Similarly, both size classes were evenly spread through most of Block 24 with the exception for some higher abundances of legal abalone recorded at sites near Mistaken Cape (fig. 4.5). Legal abalone were also generally evenly dispersed through Block 27 whereas sub-legal abalone tended to be in lower abundances at northern and southern sites and higher at sites near Wineglass Bay (fig. 4.6). Abalone abundance in Block 28 were the lowest of all Blocks with only one site near Cape Lodi recording a high abundance of legal abalone (fig. 4.7).

Reference sites (i.e. sites which are re-surveyed each year 2.4.1) also showed a similar pattern in abundance across Blocks and high variability in counts between sites (fig. 4.8). Declines in reference site sub-legal abundance were recorded across most Blocks with the exception of Block 27 and 28 which remained relatively stable. Similarly, legal abundance also remained relatively stable across Blocks but has marginally increased in Blocks 27 and 28.

Size composition across Blocks has generally been dominated by 120-140 mm and 140-160 mm size classes in the survey years since 2020 (fig. 4.9). However, there has been a progressive shift in size

structure in successive years with declining counts observed in size classes <140 mm and increasing counts for size classes >140 mm reflecting the overall pattern of sub-legal/legal abalone abundance observed across Blocks.

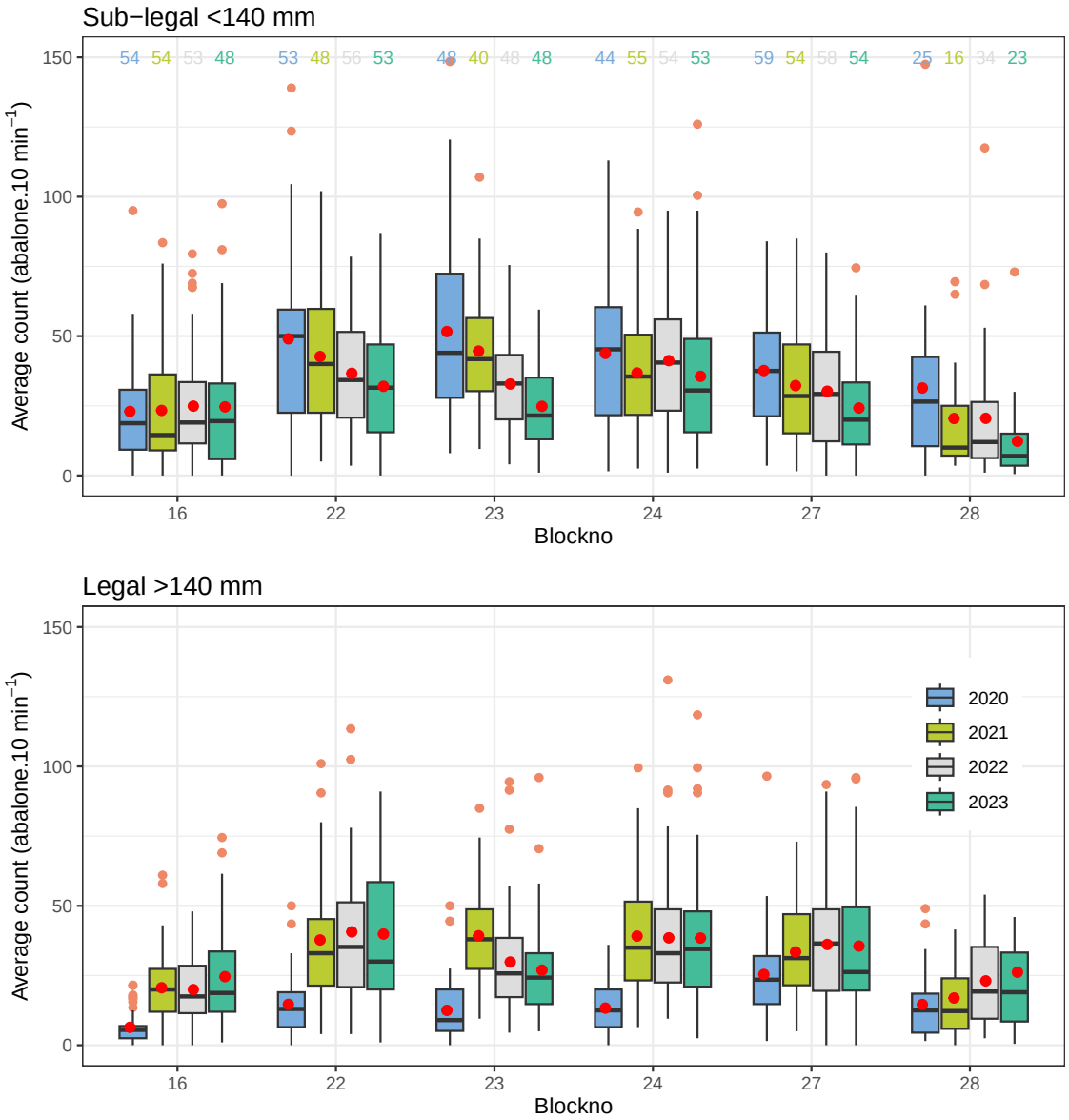

Figure 4.1: *Boxplot of the number of sub-legal (<140 mm) and legal-sized abalone (>140 mm) counted within 10 minutes between paired divers at each site within each Block for years 2020-2023. Red circle indicates the overall average in each year. Number of sites sampled in each year given above each boxplot.*

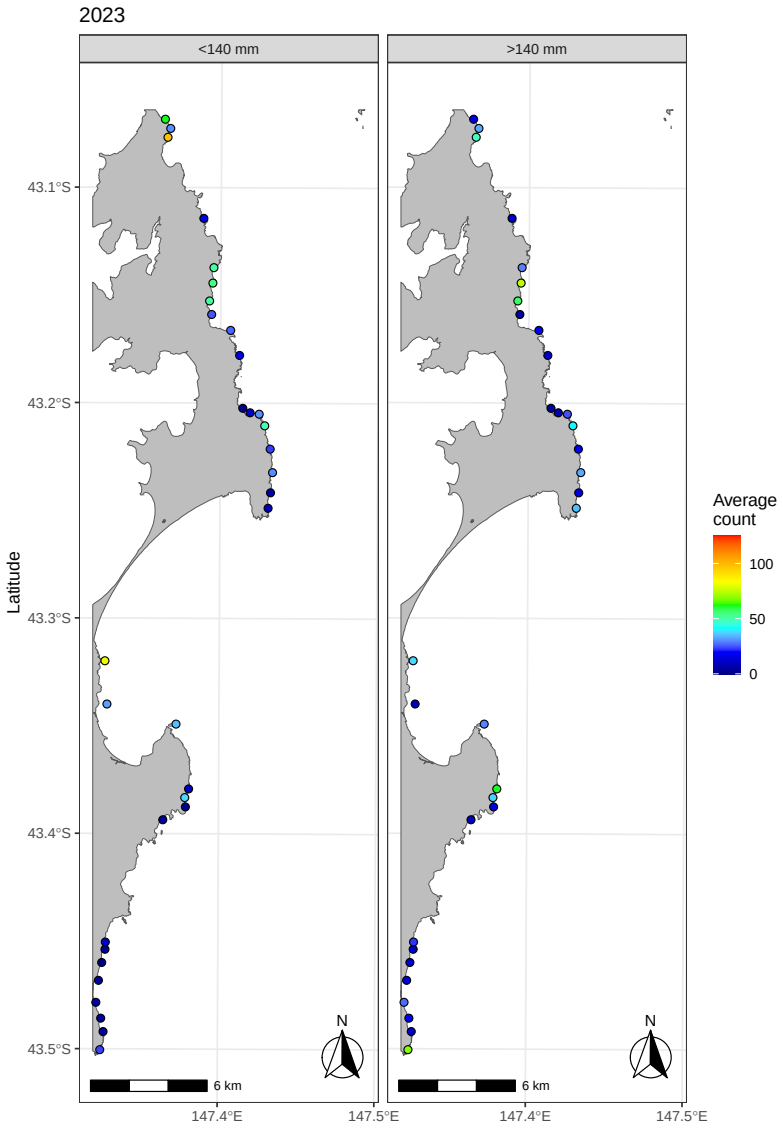

Figure 4.2: *Map of sites surveyed and average sub-legal (<140 mm) and legal (>140 mm) abalone abundance counted in Block 16 during 2023 between paired divers over the duration of a 10-minute timed swim survey.*

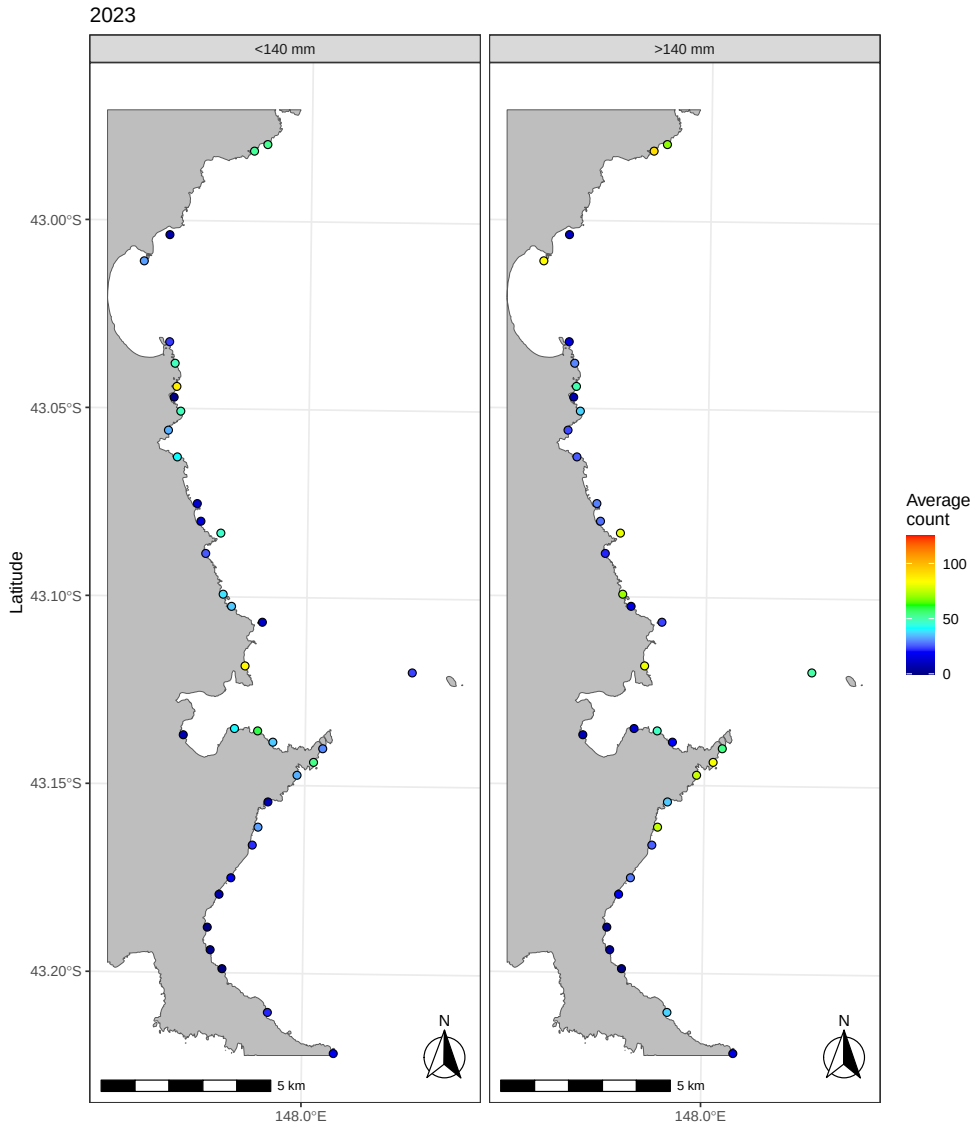

Figure 4.3: *Map of sites surveyed and average sub-legal (<140 mm) and legal (>140 mm) abalone abundance counted in Block 22 during 2023 between paired divers over the duration of a 10-minute timed swim survey.*

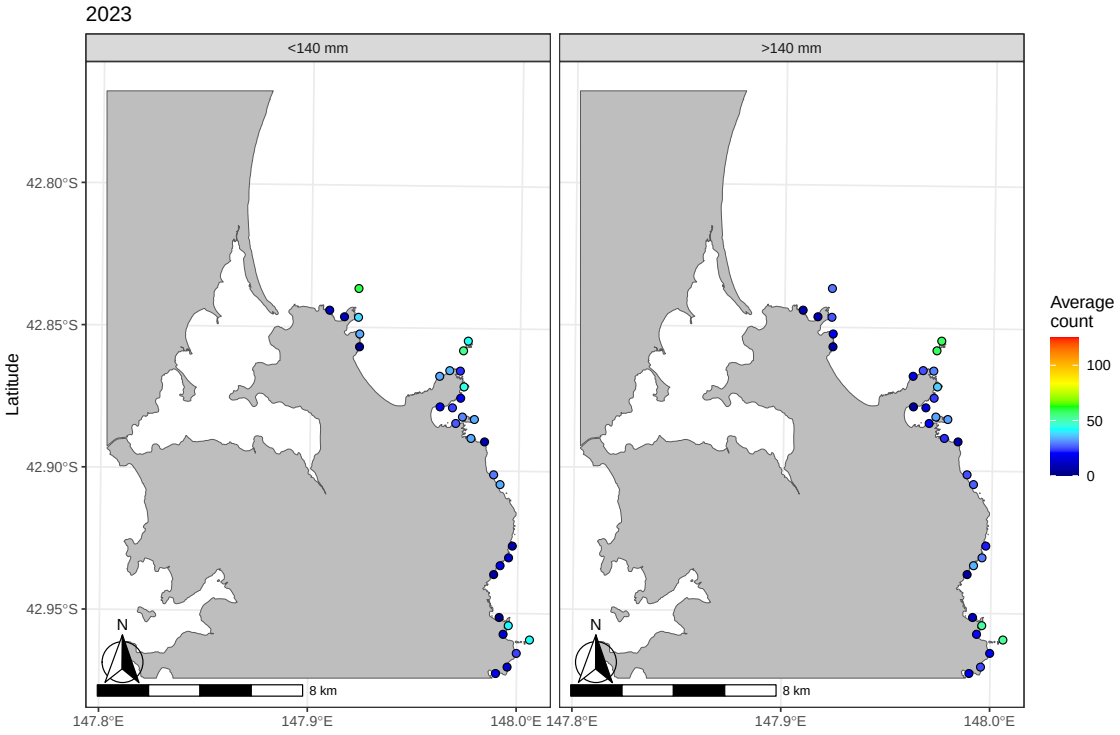

Figure 4.4: *Map of sites surveyed and average sub-legal (<140 mm) and legal (>140 mm) abalone abundance counted in Block 23 during 2023 between paired divers over the duration of a 10-minute timed swim survey.*

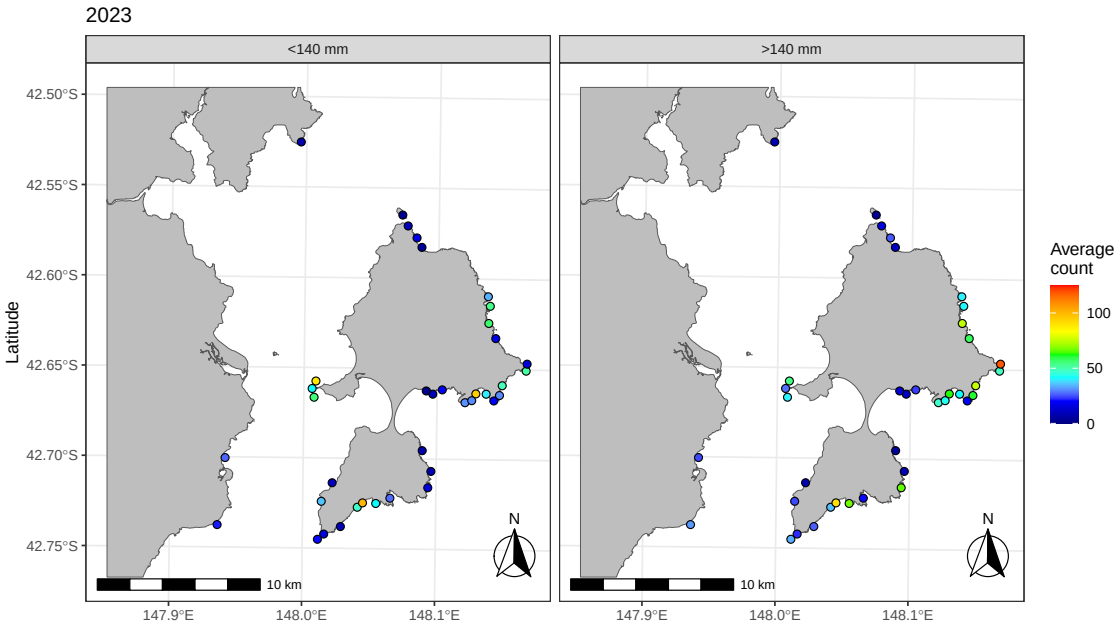

Figure 4.5: *Map of sites surveyed and average sub-legal (<140 mm) and legal (>140 mm) abalone abundance counted in Block 24 during 2023 between paired divers over the duration of a 10-minute timed swim survey.*

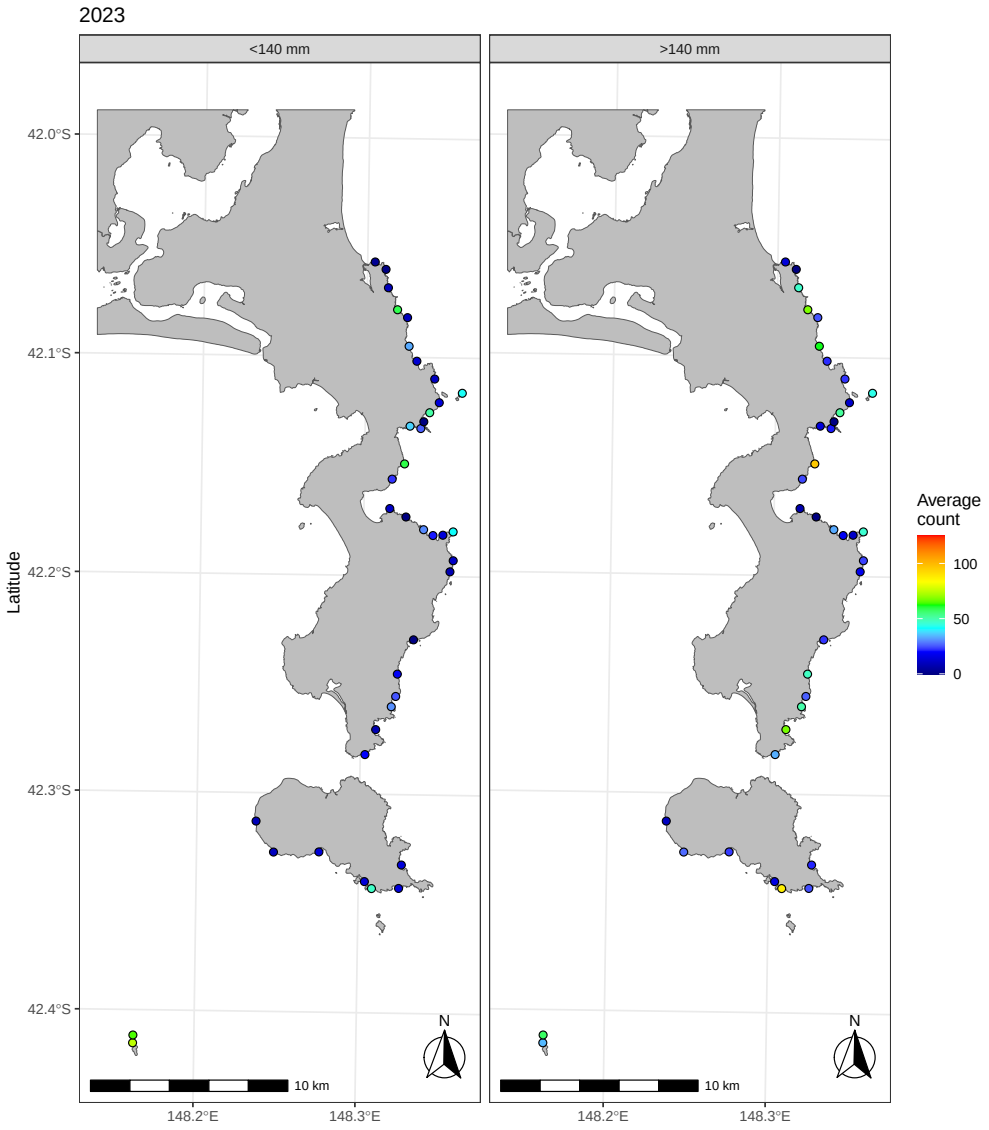

Figure 4.6: *Map of sites surveyed and average sub-legal (<140 mm) and legal (>140 mm) abalone abundance counted in Block 27 during 2023 between paired divers over the duration of a 10-minute timed swim survey.*

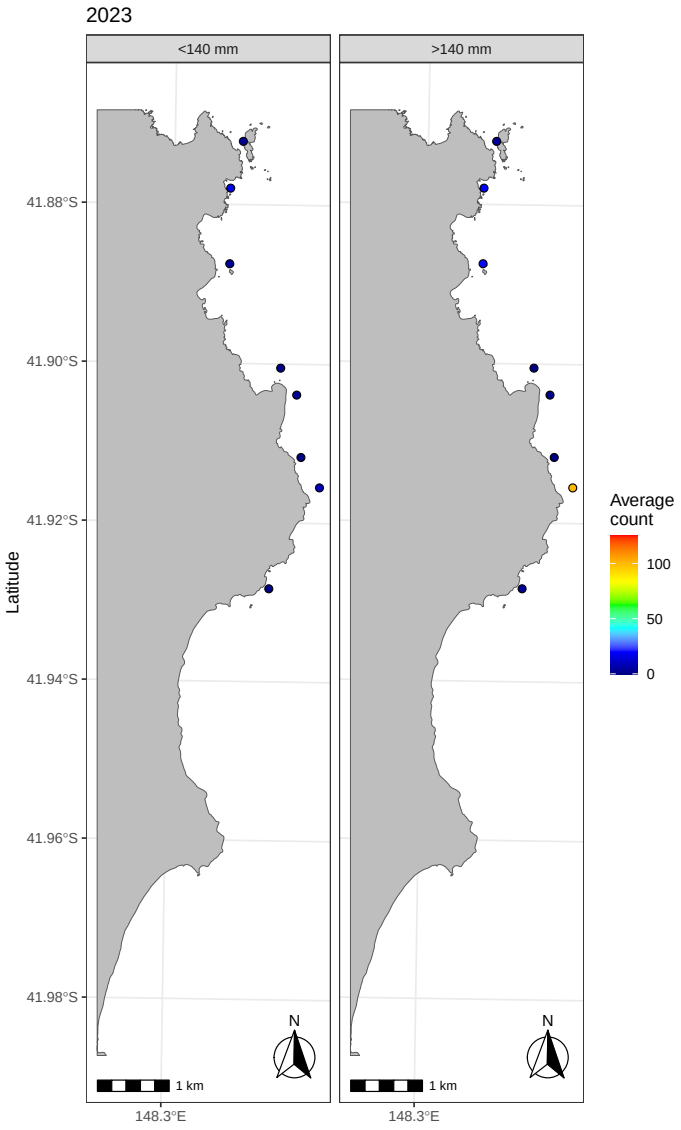

Figure 4.7: *Map of sites surveyed and average sub-legal (<140 mm) and legal (>140 mm) abalone abundance counted in Sub-block 28 during 2023 between paired divers over the duration of a 10-minute timed swim survey.*

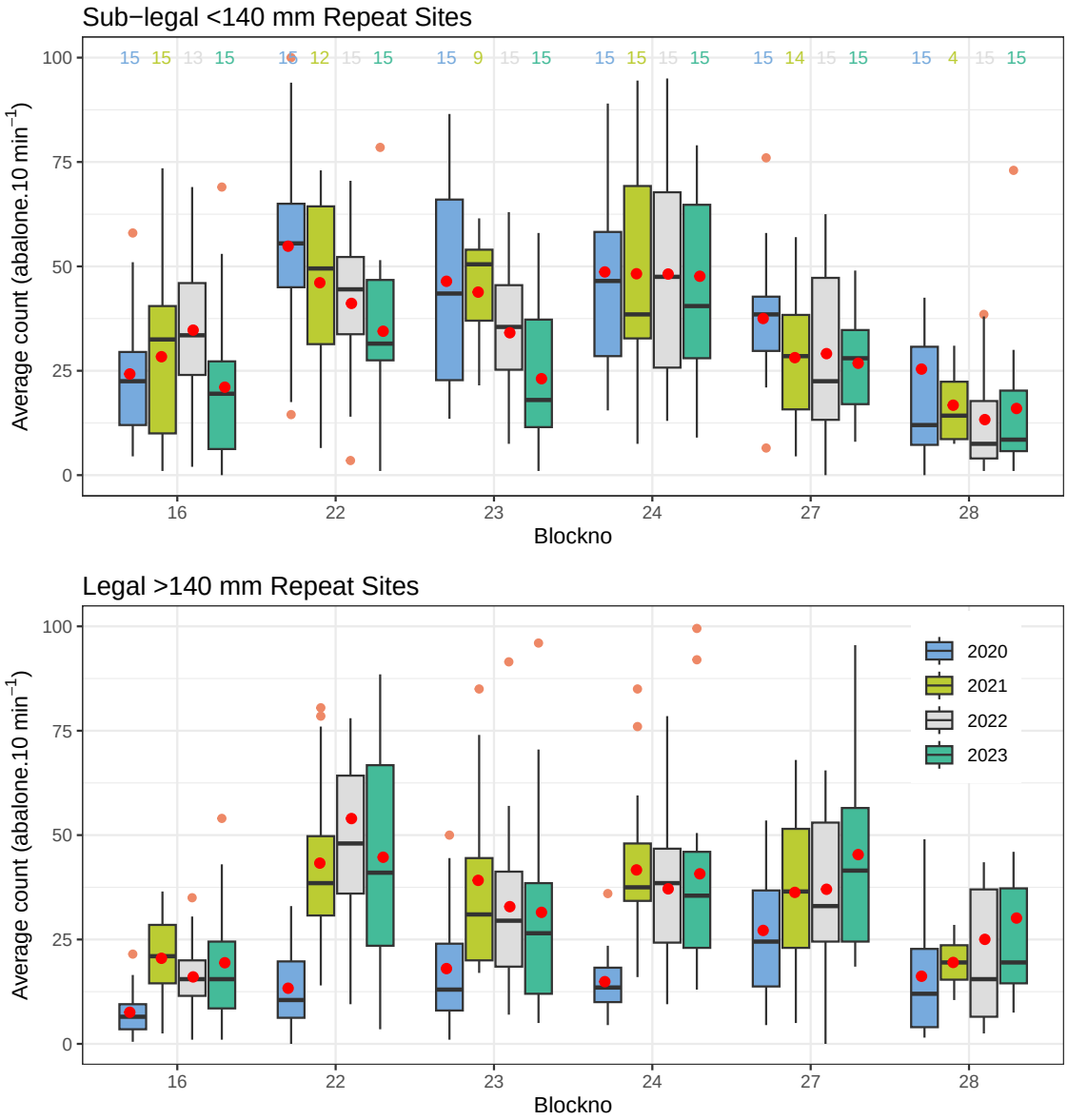

Figure 4.8: *Boxplot of the number of sub-legal (<140 mm) and legal-sized abalone (>140 mm) counted within 10 minutes between paired divers at each reference (repeat) site within each Block for years 2020-2023. Red circle indicates the overall average in each year. Number of sites sampled in each year given above each boxplot.*

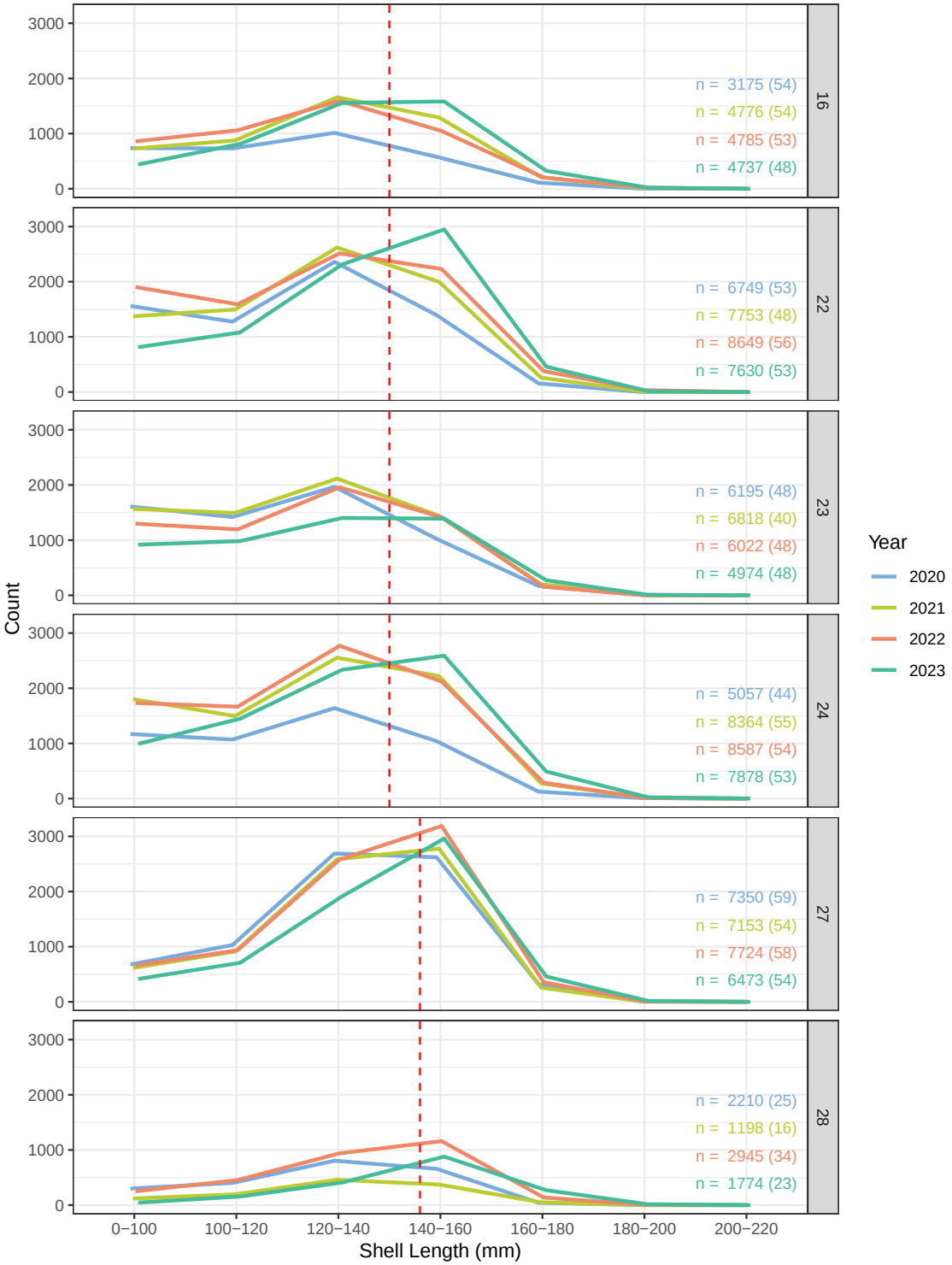

Figure 4.9: *Length frequency of abalone recorded within each Block for years 2020-2023. Red dashed line indicates legal minimum length (LML). n = total number of individual abalone recorded.*

Chapter 5

Discussion

The status of Tasmanian abalone stocks in 2023 varied markedly across zones, however there appears to be increasing stability in catch rates and improvements in many Blocks.

Catch rate declines were recorded across most of the primary Eastern Zone Blocks in 2023, with the exception of Block 13, however, in most cases remain above catch rate targets. These trends follow several consecutive years of improvement and nearing historic high CPUE levels in 2022. These declines also follow a shift in size structure of commerical landings in these areas towards larger abalone centred around 150 mm, and increasing abundance of legal-size (>140 mm) but declining sub-legal (<140 mm) abalone abundance recorded from the Fishery Independant timed swim survey program across closed Eastern Zone Blocks (16, 22, 23, 24, 27 and 28A). Collectively these trends in catch rates, abundance and size structure suggest this region of the fishery has likely experienced a recruitment gap in 2023 and is becoming increasing reliant on existing standing stocks. There are thoughts that this could be largely driven by a suppresion of abalone reproduction during the 2016 Marine Heat Wave (MHW) and sub-lethal effects on recruitment not obvious at the time. Given it takes 6-8 years for a new recruit to attain legal-size and enter the fishery, the timing would suggest this may be a plausable explaination.

Despite increasing size structure, Block 13 continues to show signs of improvement since the mid 2010's, nearing historic high catch rates, noting however current catch is significantly lower compared to the mid-2010's. Block 13 currently provides the majority of the Eastern Zone TACC, and the status of this block must be monitored closely particularly in the context of size structure trends and declining catch rates observed across the remainder of the Eastern Zone. In 2000, Block 13 provided 33% of the Eastern Zone TACC, in 2010 that had shifted to 38% and in 2023 Block 13 provided 69% of the Eastern Zone TACC. Precautionary action will need to be taken if there is any doubt as to the sustainability of the current catch level.

Fishery-Independent Timed Swim surveys in Eastern zone Blocks (16, 22, 23, 24, 27 and 28A) continue to show no clear signs of recruitment (i.e. Sub-legal abalone <140 mm) or recovery in 2023 despite being closed since 2020. Not suprisingly, legal abundance continues to remain stable or increasing slightly with progression of sub-legal cohorts and absence of commerical fishing mortality. However, sub-legal and legal abundance continues to be highly varibale and inconsistent across sites, with stretches of coastline having recorded low or no abalone present. Given the absence of increasing sub-legal and legal abundance across a majority of sites and limited evidence of multiple size classes particualry above the LML, a closure for the 2024 fishing year was considered appropriate to allow more time for rebuilding of stock biomass. Stock status in these closed Blocks will continue to be monitored again in 2024.

Parts of the Western Zone showed some improvement in 2023, however stock re-building continues to be considerably slower in Blocks 10, 11 and 12 where catch rates remain well below catch rate targets. Blocks 11 and 12 collectively accounted for approximately 50% of Western Zone TACC for 2023. Size structure inforamtion for the the Western Zone was limited in 2023 however appears to

have remained relatively unchanged to previous years, dominated by mostly larger individuals centred around 160 mm.

There were some signs of increasing catch rates in the Northern Zone which is an important improvement for a region that was substantially overfished until 2018, however it should be noted the TACC continues to sit at historic low levels in 2023 and more work remains to be done in some areas.

Most catch rates in the Bass Strait Zone remained stable in 2023 with signs of improvement across some parts of the fishery particualry Blocks 48 and 49 following high exploitation levels in 2010.

Catch rates in the Greenlip Zone remained mostly stable across all regions. The Northeast catch cap was under-caught for the first time in six years in 2023 by 3.1 t. Catch over-runs for the previous five years have been creating operational challenges for Management and subsequentyly triggered several management changes in 2023 for the Northeast which included:

1. Opening the fishery on the first weekday in July (July 3rd).
2. Increasing the LML to 150 mm.
3. Introducing a 24-hour closure notice period.

These management changes for the North-east greenlip region, coupled with an industry driven memoradium of understanding (MOU) between processers to limit daily catch processing appear to have been effective in managing the catch within the allocated TAC. The under-catch also appeared have the effect of re-distributing fishing effort towards the Furneaux Group and more was catch taken in 2023 from a region that has been under-fished for the previous five years due to the TAC being exceeded in primarily in the Northeast. Subsequently, some concern was expressed by the AFCG about the catch rate trend and true stock status given the under catch for the previous five years, opting for a more conservative reccomendation of maintaining the same TAC for 2024 (38.6 t).

More broadly, the lower catch caps across many Blocks has resulted in changes in the fleet dynamics of the fishery and the way fishers are accessing the resource which continues to create challenges for Management. This was evidenced by more catch caps being reached during 2023 relative to previous years (see appendix) and generally earlier in the year.

5.1 Future developments

5.1.1 CPUE standardisation

Use of statistical standardisation of CPUE has been in place since 2017. Currently that includes month, diver and doubling up as key factors. Where mixed species fishing has occurred on the same day, the assessed species as a proportion of the total daily catch is also included in the standardisation. Climate effects (temperature, swell) are also being explored in order to better estimate inter-annual variation in seasonal conditions, for example early commencement of autumnal winds or extended periods of warm sea temperatures. While the current approach to addressing mixed species fishing events, more work could be done in this space.

Improvement of the Harvest Strategy remains a priority, and in particular resolving the complications of using catch rates on mixed species fishing days for greenlip and blacklip. There also remains scope to identify true mixed species reefs from reefs where one species is always a minor component of the daily catch (bycatch).

5.1.2 Development of fleet based spatial indicators

The initial focus of the spatial indicator program has been on evaluating simple spatial indicators (KgLa/Ha, Lm/Hr, MaxDist) as alternative performance measures. Quantifying the proportion of the known fishable reef utilised in any one year, the reliance on key areas of the fishery, and the level of overlap in reef use among divers provide further opportunity to understand the inter-annual spatial

and temporal dynamics of the fishery. As with all indicators used to determine the TACC, the time line of the decision process necessitates decisions based on partial year trends (i.e. decisions must be made in October prior to the end of the fishing year in December). A critical characteristic of fleet based indicators is the capacity to be informative prior to the completion of the fishing year.

5.1.3 Empirical Harvest Strategy

An independent review of the Tasmanian Abalone Harvest Strategy was completed in 2021, with a series of recommendations for improvement to the Empirical Harvest Strategy Tasmanian Harvest Strategy. Revisions to the EHS are currently being undertaken based on the recommendations in that review particualry with the use of Management Strategy Evaluation models.

With increasing application of our MCDA based empirical Harvest Strategy (currently five years; 2019-2023), our understanding of the strengths and limitations will improve. It is already apparent that the Control Rule component of the EHS is suitable for maintaining a fishery in a stable phase, but lacks capacity to rebuild stocks when substantial rebuilding is required. Despite the absence of a focused rebuilding strategy within the EHS, it appears to achieve rapid rebuilding under simulation testing.

Formal inclusion of spatial indicators in the EHS is the next significant challenge for the Tasmanian fishery assessment process. As of 2023, the time-series of simple spatial indicators (KgLa/Ha, Lm/Hr, MaxDist) extends to ten years. A key constraint with such a short reference period is identifying appropriate target and limit reference points. Three options are available for inclusion of spatial information in the assessment process:

1. Used as a secondary informal indicator.
2. Included as a factor in CPUE standardisation.
3. Apply gradient based scoring functions for use in the Harvest Strategy.

The Harvest Strategy is currently being re-written and a draft is due for release in 2024 for public comment. It is envisaged that the revised HS will include the refinements to the EHS mentioned, and have a broader scope encompasing policies around commercial, recreational and cutlural sectors.

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Appendix A

Interpreting trends in catch and catch rate, and the size composition of the commercial catch

A.1 The use of catch and catch rates to infer changes in abundance

This assessment is primarily based upon the interpretation of information produced from fishery catch data; both catch distribution and catch rates. It relies upon the assumption that trends in catch-rates reflect changes in abundance of the fishable stock, although no assumptions are made about the structure of that relationship (linear, precision). Despite CPUE being much discredited as an index of abalone abundance (e.g. (Breen, 1992; Prince and Shepherd, 1992; Shepherd and Rodda, 2001) it has been used with some success for many years in the Tasmanian fishery. There are several factors that adversely affect the relationship between CPUE and abalone abundance: biological (abalone behaviour and movement), environmental (sea conditions, habitat complexity) and fleet (skill of fishing team, experience, local knowledge). In particular the ability of fishers to maintain catch rates by changing their fishing patterns (more drops, swim further, swim faster) can lead to hyper-stability in catch rates, masking an underlying decline in stock abundance. If the effects of the above factors are understood and can be minimised then the reliability of CPUE as an index of abundance can be improved.

Abalone tend to aggregate in favourable habitat (e.g. gutters, sand-edges, shallow margins, ledges, boulder junctions), and a large proportion of abalone may be found in only a small area of each reef (Prince and Shepherd, 1992). When these aggregations are fished, the remaining abalone may over several weeks encounter vacated sites, renewing the aggregated structure. Thus reefs may become depleted while catch rates are maintained (McShane, 1995; Officer et al., 2001), and by the time catch rates start to decline rapidly abalone abundance will already have been greatly reduced (Prince and Shepherd, 1992).

Where abalone abundance is high and abalone are locally aggregated, catch rates are primarily a function of handling time (the time taken to detach abalone from the reef and transfer them to the boat). As abalone abundance decreases, and aggregations become smaller and further apart, search time increases, and fishers have to cover more reef area to harvest the same number of abalone. This is one of the key behavioural changes targeted with the geo-referenced effort data captured with the data logger program.

Serial depletion of reefs occurs when divers progressively reduce stock abundance on individual reefs, and maintain stable catch rates by moving between reefs (Prince and Shepherd, 1992). Identifying and detecting serial depletion is problematic as most divers adopt a strategy of returning to known sites in a given frequency, which may be once or twice per year, or once every few years. Serial depletion in effect is a departure from the normal cycle of visitation, with either increasing frequency

of visits, or abandoned sites when they become unviable for commercial fishing. These behavioural changes can only be detected with long term data on fishing activity at fine-spatial scales.

A.2 Change in fishing efficiency

The detection and avoidance of difficulties associated with improvement in fishing efficiency, or effort creep is a continuing problem when catch rates are used as an index of stock biomass or abundance when assessing fisheries. Catch rates (CPUE) and the stock biomass are assumed to be related: CPUE $= qB$, where q is the catchability coefficient and B is the exploitable biomass. If q increases through time in an unknown manner, through diving operations becoming more efficient, then the relationship between CPUE and biomass becomes altered to an unknown degree and the interpretation of CPUE as a measure of biomass becomes biased high.

One of the features of commercial fisheries is that fishermen almost always find ways to make their operations more efficient, and the abalone fishery has been no exception. Thus if stock levels are unchanged, efficiency gains allow more abalone to be collected per unit time now than in the past i.e. catchability increases. This leads to a rise in reported catch rates without an associated increase in abalone abundance, or alternatively it can lead to catch rates appearing to be stable while the stock abundance is declining. Two broad categories of causes of change in fishing efficiency have been identified in the Tasmanian abalone fishery – technological and behavioural.

Technological causes of change in fishing efficiency are usually easy to detect. For example, early in the history of the Tasmanian abalone fishery, divers anchored their boats, and often worked without a deckhand. Later, during the 1970's, the boats carried a deckhand who drove the boat and followed the diver, thus eliminating time spent swimming the catch from the reef to the anchored boat. It was estimated that the catching efficiency of divers doubled between the start of the fishery in the 1960's and 1982 (Harrison, 1983).

Possibly the greatest single improvement occurred during the late 1980's when divers widely adopted the practise of attaching their collecting nets to ropes lowered to them by their deckhands (droplines) and they no longer had to surface every time they filled their nets. This increased efficiency because:

- time spent ascending to the boat, unloading the catch and descending back to the reef was eliminated,
- the diver maintained his position on the productive part of the reef,
- catch bags could be reduced in size, which meant that divers could swim more easily and with less effort.

More recent technological changes to fishing operations include the increased use of GPS navigation systems, Nitrox breathing gases and diver propulsion vehicles (DPV). The extent of the usage of GPS navigators and associated plotting equipment by abalone divers is unknown, but it apparently has become much more widespread over the last five years. Nitrox gas mixing plants are currently used by only a few divers, but these divers are responsible for landing a large proportion of the catch in the regions where they work. DPVs are also not yet in common usage, but can help divers move more quickly between concentrations of abalone, particularly in deeper water.

Many divers reduce operating costs by teaming up with other divers and work from the same vessel, particularly when quota availability becomes reduced and they have comparatively small orders to fill e.g. following a TACC reduction. Team diving has the effect of reducing diver efficiency and team dive catch rates are generally lower than single diver catch rates, but increasing profitability because of cost-sharing between the divers. A comparison of annual mean catch rates from team divers compared with single divers during the period 2000-2014 found mean differences of 9 kg/hr (range 3-16 kg/hr) (fig. A.1). During this period, the percentage of team dives increased, from 15% in 2000, to 42% in 2011. The net effect of team diving over this period will lead to a reduction in the

mean catch rate, independent of changes in stock levels. For this reason, team diving is included as a categorical variable in the statistical standardisation of catch rates.

Since 2007 divers have reported that the availability of improved forecasting of sea conditions was responsible for effort creep through improved catch rates, because they could choose to fish the West Coast when conditions were optimal. Previously they had travelled to the west when they hoped conditions were favourable, but often were not, and faced with the prospect of returning home with no catch, were obliged to fish in less favourable conditions with a greater likelihood of reduced catch rates.

The most recent Tasmanian study into the effects of effort creep on abalone catch rates was made using catch-effort data collected between 1975 and 2000, from Blocks 13 and 14. Using documented estimates of effort creep as guidelines (Buckworth, 1987; Haddon and Hodgson, 2000; Harrison, 1983), a series of plausible effort creep scenarios was constructed. Extrapolation of Harrison's (1983) estimate of effort creep (approximately 5% p.a.) caused an overall reduction in relative CPUE over the study period i.e. by removing the confounding effect caused by improvements in diver efficiency, catch rates were higher in 1975 than they were in 2000 (Tarbath et al., 2001). However, the overall relative trends in catch rate were only slightly altered when using the standardization (fig. A.2).

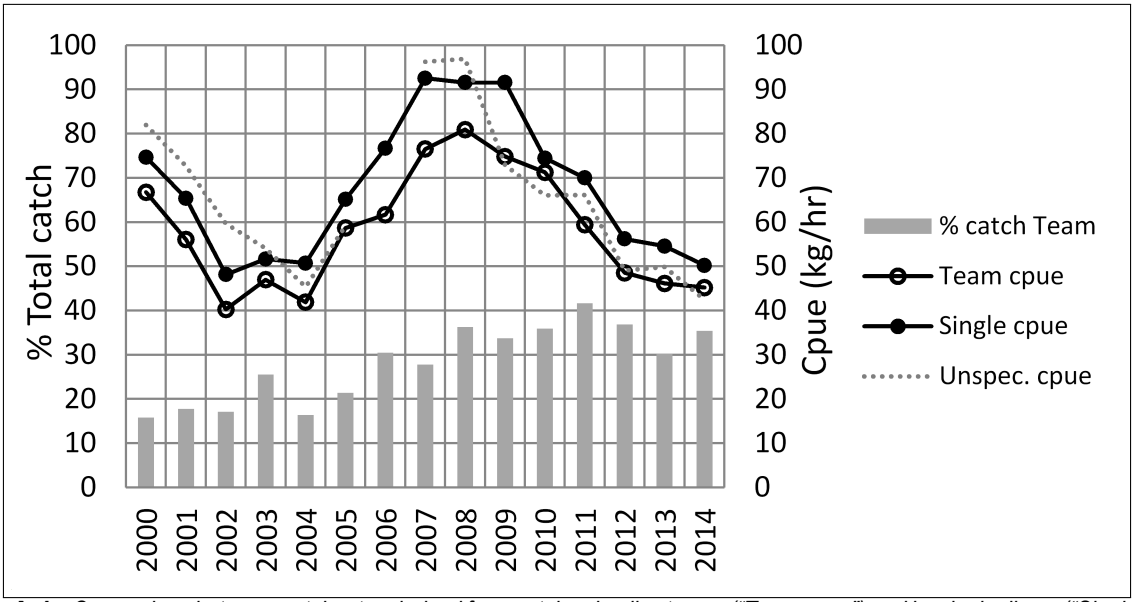


Figure A.1: *Comparison between catch rates derived from catches by dive teams ("Team cpue") and by single divers ("Single cpue"), showing the percentage of the total catch taken by dive teams, from Block 13 (Eastern Zone), between 2000 and 2014. "Unspec.cpue" refers to catch rates where the number of divers could not be determined, which ranged 0-6% pa during the period.*

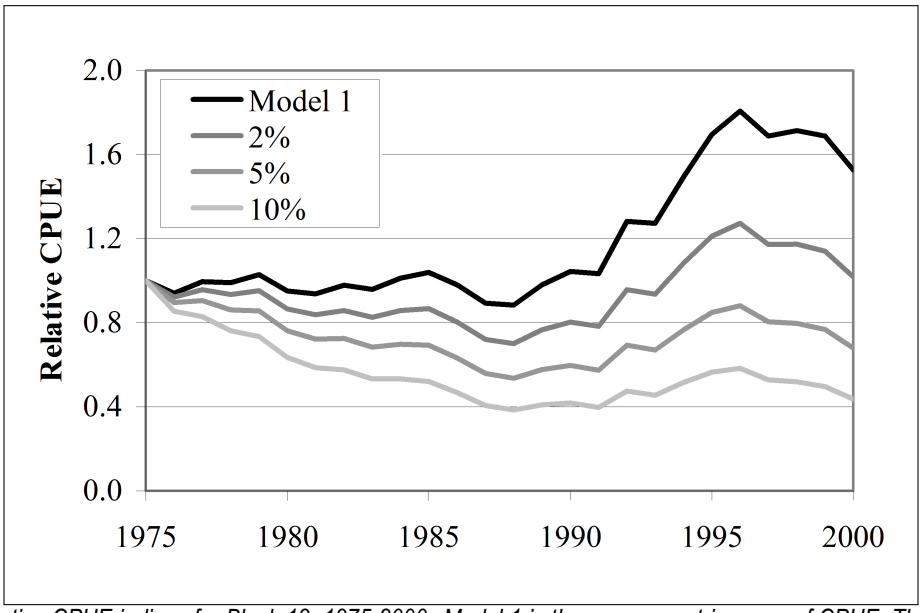


Figure A.2: *Relative CPUE indices for Block 13, 1975-2000. Model 1 is the raw geometric mean of CPUE. The three effort creep scenarios considered are: (i) 2% per annum; (ii) 5% per annum; and (iii) 10% per annum. All values of CPUE are relative to 1975 (Tarbath et al., 2001)*

Appendix B

Early abalone production 1960-1981

Annual tonnages of abalone production from Tasmania have been reproduced from ”Summary of Statistics – Tasmania”, Abalone Situation Report 10, Demersal Mollusc Research Group, published by CSIRO, 1982. Tasmanian Year Book totals were published each year from 1967 by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics (annual totals from 1964 were reported in the 1967 edition). All three totals (Diver Returns, Processor Returns, Tasmanian Year Book) were reported by financial year. Abalone catch prior to 1968 was reported by divers in general fish returns as miscellaneous catch, and annual totals are incomplete. Catches are believed to have been substantially underreported between 1960 and 1981 (i.e. catch totals were higher than shown here). Processor receipts were from Tasmanian processors only: much of the early catch was freighted to interstate processors and is not included amongst these processor receipts. Little or no processing was done in Tasmania prior to 1964. The source of the Tasmanian Year Book totals was not reported.

Year	Diver [a] returns	Processor [b] returns	Tasmanian Year Book [c]
1960	*	*	**
1961	*	*	**
1962	*	*	**
1963	*	*	**
1964	*	49	33
1965	*	225	225
1966	412	753	727
1967	1,050	1,722	2,003
1968	1,966	2,354	2,792
1969	1,894	2,139	2,113
1970	2,297	2,613	2,613
1971	2,504	3,488	3,495
1972	2,287	2,971	2,977
1973	1,703	2,174	2,172
1974	1,883	2,106	2,060
1975	1,919	2,108	2,108
1976	2,289	2,429	2,429
1977	2,263	2,368	2,368
1978	2,823	2,524	2,525
1979	2,762	3,100	3,100
1980	3,391	3,204	3,214
1981	3,800	3,621	3,743

* Records unavailable. ** Records not published.

Appendix C

Annual TAC by Zone – 1985 to 2023

Table C.1: *Annual TACC since the introduction of Quota management in 1985. Quota listed for Bass Strait in 1991, 1993, and 1995 are additional to the state-wide TACC, and operated as an experimental fishery open to both abalone and commercial dive license holders. Less than half of the allocated catch in the 1995 Bass Strait fishery was caught,*

Year	State Wide	Eastern Blacklip	Western Blacklip	Central-West Blacklip	Northern Blacklip	Bass Strait Blacklip	Greenlip
1985	3806.0						
1986	3460.0						
1987	3287.0						
1988	2958.3						
1989	2076.0						
1990	2100.0						
1991	2100.0					110.0	
1992	2100.0						
1993	2100.0					100.0	
1994	2100.0						
1995	2100.0					240.0	
1996	2100.0						
1997	2520.0						
1998	2520.0						
1999	2520.0						
2000	2730.0	1190.0	1400.0				140.0
2001	2800.0	1120.0	1260.0		280.0		140.0
2002	2537.5	857.5	1260.0		280.0		140.0
2003	2607.5	857.5	1260.0		280.0	70.0	140.0
2004	2509.5	770.0	1260.0		280.0	70.0	129.5
2005	2502.5	770.0	1260.0		280.0	70.0	122.5
2006	2502.5	770.0	1260.0		280.0	70.0	122.5
2007	2502.5	770.0	1260.0		280.0	70.0	122.5
2008	2593.5	808.5	1260.0		332.5	70.0	122.5
2009	2604.0	850.5	924.0	304.5	332.5	70.0	122.5
2010	2660.0	896.0	924.0	304.5	332.5	70.0	133.0
2011	2565.5	721.0	924.0	304.5	402.5	70.0	143.5
2012	2366.0	549.5	924.0	304.5	378.0	70.0	140.0
2013	2149.0	528.5	1001.0	101.5	308.0	70.0	140.0
2014	1932.0	528.5	840.0	73.5	280.0	70.0	140.0
2015	1855.0	528.5	840.0	52.5	224.0	70.0	140.0
2016	1694.0	528.5	717.5	42.0	189.0	77.0	140.0
2017	1561.0	444.5	717.5	35.0	147.0	77.0	140.0
2018	1333.5	294.0	717.5		98.0	91.0	133.0
2019	1267.0	252.0	717.5		98.0	91.0	108.5
2020	1018.5	220.5	549.5		73.5	91.0	84.0
2021	833.0	220.5	378.0		63.0	87.5	84.0
2022	794.5	224.0	339.5		59.5	80.5	91.0
2023	773.5	227.5	311.5		59.5	84.0	91.0

Appendix D

Annual Catches by Zone – 1975 to 2023

Table D.1: *Annual tonnages of blacklip abalone caught within the statistical blocks and sub-blocks comprising the Eastern Zone in 1974-2023. Catches in blocks split by zoning (Blocks 13 and 31) are reported as Eastern Zone because the majority of later catches occurred there. Any discrepancies between totals and sums of component blocks are due to rounding.*

Year	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1974	163	179	3	40	15		6	5	20	30
1975	247	111	10	47	11	0	0	16	27	49
1976	208	156	0	64	36		1	18	25	45
1977	245	232	2	190	11	0	1	23	35	37
1978	322	218	6	119	24	0	1	32	65	60
1979	374	251	8	148	25	0	2	51	52	43
1980	272	255	7	145	30		1	33	30	42
1981	254	299	18	127	48	1	4	45	69	35
1982	337	218	15	147	24	1	3	36	62	63
1983	252	300	10	189	28		3	43	63	55
1984	318	297	18	166	35	0	5	47	70	73
1985	256	262	4	89	83	0	11	69	80	43
1986	221	262	22	82	93	2	4	65	66	70
1987	224	229	7	47	80	1	1	43	44	32
1988	219	258	6	76	57	1	4	62	44	43
1989	156	172	2	56	43	0	2	61	42	22
1990	133	193	4	76	29	0	3	33	51	40
1991	127	207	2	60	37	3	3	53	50	47
1992	160	122	4	48	28	0	3	56	48	56
1993	272	122	4	107	47	0	1	68	79	49
1994	300	148	10	118	65	1	3	121	85	62
1995	313	256	2	107	35	0	4	108	78	41
1996	393	196	0	80	18		3	74	55	44
1997	471	137	0	64	25	1	2	79	49	47
1998	485	111	1	118	22	2	2	85	66	63
1999	491	66	2	113	35	5	6	102	72	50
2000	381	98	2	71	29		4	62	60	69
2001	324	159	3	108	20	1	2	56	50	40
2002	297	101	1	73	16	0	1	62	58	46
2003	291	116	2	60	17	1	1	88	54	36
2004	221	104	7	50	20		2	92	52	35
2005	181	90	8	56	20		3	116	62	36
2006	183	84	3	67	13	0	2	73	66	71
2007	255	70	0	56	8		6	68	63	61
2008	340	56	1	64	8		0	50	61	56
2009	341	63	1	52	20		1	51	52	91
2010	342	70	1	39	10	0	2	71	59	73
2011	359	15	0	37	8		1	30	47	54
2012	269	22		15	8	0	1	21	23	60
2013	199	22		24	9		1	21	27	56
2014	180	38		27	10		2	38	30	43
2015	227	25		26	11		2	29	45	36
2016	253	64	0	24	23		4	31	18	14
2017	285	53	0	19	6		1	15	19	6
2018	181	31		11	3		1	17	19	2
2019	144	29		7	3	0	1	20	23	4
2020	141	27		0	1		0	16	22	
2021	139	25			4		1	19	19	
2022	146	20			3		1	21	20	
2023	154	17			1		0	20	19	
avg 75-23	261	133	5	75	25	1	2	50	48	46
avg 92-23	273	80	2	57	17	1	2	56	47	46

Table D.1: *Eastern Zone continued*

Year	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
1974	68	18	10	0	8	103	50	102	35	857
1975	74	15	16	5	44	69	16	44	32	835
1976	56	18	12	9	40	72	9	37	50	857
1977	53	11	10	8	55	90	22	119	54	1197
1978	88	22	13	11	93	87	25	137	105	1431
1979	30	9	23	7	80	52	12	105	60	1332
1980	46	158	34	7	108	91	27	148	105	1538
1981	77	137	19	15	68	154	22	146	52	1586
1982	49	97	20	9	89	100	32	170	48	1520
1983	92	99	31	14	99	103	65	296	90	1831
1984	61	109	10	11	106	112	52	148	76	1715
1985	44	120	20	17	86	71	5	85	171	1516
1986	56	88	12	20	50	58	14	124	164	1475
1987	34	66	12	8	76	45	11	67	54	1083
1988	34	79	10	6	65	52	16	95	97	1225
1989	16	34	7	8	41	31	11	39	27	770
1990	36	61	1	2	61	77	21	54	22	898
1991	31	67	2	9	64	66	12	30	21	893
1992	30	76	1	1	71	57	7	10	13	793
1993	24	75	1	1	88	40	8	15	15	1018
1994	17	57		3	104	24	8	11	21	1158
1995	21	43		1	82	19	6	10	26	1155
1996	29	69	3	6	90	39	11	28	20	1159
1997	32	106	1	13	190	32	32	23	33	1336
1998	44	161	2	25	181	77	31	10	15	1502
1999	53	143	0	9	94	60	26	11	39	1377
2000	44	104	1	8	101	16	21	10	74	1155
2001	24	111	1	13	68	9	27	13	66	1095
2002	15	46	0	2	53	7	15	12	43	848
2003	21	51		3	50	8	19	3	28	850
2004	19	51	1	1	44	11	24	6	22	762
2005	18	66		0	43	13	36	7	15	770
2006	23	88	1	1	40	10	41		7	772
2007	14	59		1	55	11	32		4	766
2008	9	68		1	48	6	28		10	805
2009	22	63	0		50	5	26	2	13	852
2010	20	67		0	38	6	20	3	67	887
2011	17	37	0	1	35	5	16	4	42	710
2012	14	22			14	2	19	5	49	544
2013	38	39			7	8	51	7	15	524
2014	23	38	0		19	1	47	6	19	523
2015	19	23		0	20	4	34	5	19	522
2016	17	20			15	3	17	3	15	520
2017	3	7			5	1	12	2	9	442
2018	1	2			6	0	9	1	7	290
2019	0	2			1	0	12		4	249
2020							11		3	220
2021						4	6		3	219
2022						2	7		2	222
2023						3	7		4	225
avg 75-23	34	63	9	7	62	39	22	51	40	937
avg 92-23	22	61	1	5	58	16	21	9	23	758

Table D.2: *Annual tonnages of blacklip abalone caught within the statistical blocks and sub-blocks comprising the Western Zone in 1974-2023 (Sub-Block 6D, Blocks 7 to 12, Sub-blocks 13A, 13B). Pre-zoning (1975-1999) catches from Block 13 are reported in the Eastern Zone. Pre-zoning (1975-1999) catches from Sub-block 6D are reported in the Northern Zone. Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.*

Year	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
1974		1		3	24	82	143		254
1975		36	42	126	130	191	143		668
1976		56	77	252	179	240	153		957
1977		24	22	123	98	153	189		608
1978		13	27	115	258	275	208		894
1979		19	23	172	166	269	325		974
1980		81	63	316	195	338	351		1343
1981		88	87	444	260	417	246		1541
1982		34	34	249	100	303	235		955
1983		102	58	199	175	430	242		1206
1984		78	38	248	284	682	258		1588
1985		99	23	246	140	479	155		1142
1986		97	11	133	127	289	194		851
1987		84	44	251	82	339	195		995
1988		53	27	160	126	276	162		805
1989		49	46	120	109	212	145		682
1990		56	21	95	80	232	125		610
1991		54	30	102	106	219	140		650
1992		70	40	102	96	267	160		735
1993		67	40	110	65	197	177		655
1994		37	38	78	60	203	160		576
1995		33	17	44	69	186	185		533
1996		68	13	59	75	145	148		509
1997		75	28	140	66	224	227		760
1998		50	27	78	47	165	204		571
1999		60	24	115	58	220	251		729
2000	21	61	23	205	148	333	288	54	1132
2001	49	32	15	186	157	321	304	43	1107
2002	31	52	17	174	149	366	237	93	1118
2003	34	104	27	142	246	352	232	67	1205
2004	24	89	22	130	193	390	250	96	1194
2005	26	110	26	92	149	389	311	65	1167
2006	50	75	6	143	198	384	229	89	1175
2007	34	39	18	178	231	354	267	68	1189
2008	35	51	9	156	178	345	305	79	1159
2009	47	107	51	155	110	244	327	77	1118
2010	23	110	37	159	158	245	278	68	1079
2011	17	95	48	171	159	247	257	56	1049
2012	59	97	19	172	146	273	267	44	1076
2013	11	44	8	158	180	288	251	41	983
2014	34	44	5	98	142	220	249	37	830
2015	32	65	11	89	115	240	245	34	831
2016	19	31	12	62	77	170	299	34	704
2017	12	37	7	56	78	195	274	42	701
2018	11	41	14	57	89	174	262	52	700
2019	16	53	5	65	81	179	251	53	703
2020	7	27	6	39	58	129	227	50	542
2021	5	29	9	27	24	111	135	38	379
2022	11	24	4	33	54	83	105	21	336
2023	12	23	4	48	30	72	100	17	305
avg 75-23	26	58	27	138	127	263	221	55	871
avg 92-23	26	59	20	110	115	241	233	55	839

Table D.3: *Annual tonnages of blacklip abalone caught within the statistical blocks and sub-blocks comprising the Northern Zone in 1974-2023 (Blocks 1 to 4, Sub-blocks 5A, 5B, 5C, 31B, Blocks 39 to 40 and Blocks 47 to 49D). There are no records for the Northern Zone part of Block 31 prior to the creation of the zone in 2001. Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components are due to rounding*

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	31	39	40	49	Total
1974	52	3	20	4	13	7		4	1		105
1975	32	1	27	15	38	110		2	1		227
1976	39	0	51	8	46	63		5	0		212
1977	17	1	87	8	51	50		6	2		222
1978	21	3	55	25	65	79		8	2		259
1979	24	2	10	9	85	112		6	1		250
1980	51	3	33	3	92	196		3	1		382
1981	19	8	32	9	120	257		6	2		454
1982	22	9	27	13	121	147		5	2		345
1983	22	2	31	52	228	231		7	4		576
1984	10	1	33	55	312	298		6	3		718
1985	43	0	26	11	319	322		5	1		728
1986	35	4	24	13	267	213		10	5		571
1987	44	62	24	54	198	185		6	1		571
1988	29	17	22	60	168	244		3	1		543
1989	14	7	10	5	88	192		1	1		319
1990	11	10	9	11	82	197		0	0		320
1991	6	7	14	26	97	169		1			321
1992	4	4	15	10	77	268		4			381
1993	9	4	8	9	67	161		0	0		259
1994	16	2	4	1	49	82		0			155
1995	12	4	2	10	63	124		0	0		214
1996	8	2	1	2	64	115		0	0		193
1997	10	1	10	6	56	98		1			182
1998	3	1	0	2	60	129		0	1		196
1999	5	1	6	6	56	149		5	0		227
2000	0		10	10	38	169	16	5	2		250
2001	2	1	12	12	117	162	25	11	3		345
2002	10	2	35	16	104	143	30	4	3		346
2003	25	1	62	10	73	62	6	8	1		247
2004	10	0	88	39	55	67	13	6	1		279
2005	15	2	92	18	73	75	11	2	0		288
2006	11	3	57	8	96	62	17	4	0		259
2007	6	0	47	3	89	42	55	11			253
2008	5		24	10	163	70	29	5			306
2009	10	0	28	6	172	95	20	9	0		340
2010	5	1	41	24	133	128	37	5			374
2011	17	1	82	6	156	136	24	5			426
2012	3	0	72	9	98	128	30	5	0		346
2013	22	0	68	2	60	101	25	7	0		284
2014	17	1	59	3	54	72	40	4			250
2015	13	4	38	6	58	52	26	5		8	208
2016	8	3	45	8	56	42	26	4		11	203
2017	4	3	33	6	41	34	27	7		9	163
2018	2	1	11	4	29	9	25	5	0	11	97
2019	5	1	5	5	28	9	24	10	1	11	97
2020	2	0	3	2	9	10	26	8	0	10	70
2021	2	1	6	1	7	6	22	7	0	12	64
2022	0	1	3	0	11	6	23	5		10	59
2023	1	0	4		16	4	24	4		6	59
avg 75-23	15	4	30	13	92	118	25	5	1	10	291
avg 92-23	8	1	30	8	70	88	25	5	1	10	232

Table D.4: *Annual tonnages of blacklip abalone caught within statistical blocks comprising the Bass Strait Zone in 1974-2023 (Blocks 32-38, 41-46, 50-57). The Bass Strait Islands fishery was temporarily closed in 2007. Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.*

Year	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	41	42	43	44	45	46
1974				3									
1975	1	10	1	7	7		2	0					
1976		5		1	1		0			1			
1977	6	11		0	3	1	2	0					
1978	1	5	2	6	5	0	4			1			
1979	2	9	0	0	2	1	2	0					3
1980	2	6	1	1	2	1	0	1		0			
1981	1	6	1	1	0	2				1			
1982	0	6	1	0	2	1	4						0
1983	0	3	0	1	5	1	3						0
1984	0	7	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1			3
1985	3	6	1	2	1		0	2	0	2	0		
1986	0	9	2	3	2	1	1	1	0	4		0	1
1987	0	7	0	2	1	2	1	2		8	1		0
1988	0	11	1	1	0	0			0	2	1		1
1989	0	3	0	0	0	0		1	0	0	0	0	1
1990	0	1		0	1	0		0	0				
1991		2		0	0	0	0	0					0
1992	0	2	0	1	0	0					0		
1993	0	3	0	0	0	0	0						0
1994	0	3	0	0		0	0						
1995	1	0	0	0	0	1		0					
1996		0		0				0					
1997	0	0		0									
1998	0	2											
1999	0	4		0	0	0	1						
2000	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0			0		
2001	5	10	1	0	0	0	3						
2002	1	11	1	0	0	0	2				0		
2003	0	5	0	0	0	6	2	1	2	2	0	0	2
2004	0	3	0	0	0	3	1	4	4	1		0	1
2005		7	0	0	0	6	2	4	1	2			0
2006	0	11	0	0	0	20	10	1	4	5			5
2007		2		3									
2008	1	5	0		0	21	6	1	2	5	1	1	3
2009	2	4	0	1	0	10	1	5	2	8	6	1	1
2010	0	20	0	0	0	1	26	1	0	3	0	1	1
2011	0	23	0	1		1	19	1	0	2	0	1	1
2012	1	14	0	0		4	17	0		3	1	1	1
2013	0	18	1	0	0	4	14			5	1	1	0
2014	1	19	1	1	2	2	16	0		5	1	1	0
2015	1	15	0	0	1	2	24	1	1	6	1	1	0
2016	0	20	0	0	4	2	20	1	2	5	0	0	
2017	1	19	1	0	7	3	14	1	1	6	1	0	0
2018	1	22	1	2	4	4	13	2	1	2			
2019	0	20	0	2	9	1	15	1		3	0	0	0
2020	2	21	1	0	2	2	25	0	0	1	1	1	
2021	1	15	0	1	2	2	25	0	0	3	1	0	
2022	1	13	1	1	1	2	16	2	0	2	0	0	
2023	0	18	0	1	2	1	22	1	1	2	0	0	
avg 75-23	1	9	0	1	2	3	8	1	1	3	1	1	1
avg 92-23	1	11	0	1	1	4	11	1	1	4	1	1	1

Table D.4: *Bass Strait Zone continued*

Year	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	Total
1974	2	3	9									17
1975	1	12	9									51
1976	1	12	33									55
1977		8	17									48
1978	3	10	11									46
1979		27	7									54
1980		10	1									24
1981	3	33	10									57
1982	1	45	7									68
1983	9	45	19									87
1984	4	80	44									145
1985	4	48	50									120
1986	15	85	97									223
1987	18	58	67									169
1988	18	36	41									112
1989	14	15	24									60
1990	6	14	20									43
1991	8	12	10									33
1992	3	10	11									27
1993	1	7	7	0								19
1994	0	7	12									23
1995	0	6	2	1	0	0	3				0	14
1996		4	0									4
1997		6	2									8
1998		7	3									12
1999		14	4									24
2000		12	26									44
2001		17	75								2	113
2002		12	48					0			0	77
2003	0	10	76		7	2	36	2		7	2	164
2004	0	6	62		1	0	44	6	2	8		146
2005	0	6	54		8	0	35	5	3	3	0	137
2006	0	5	57		3	0	23	5	2	1	1	154
2007	0	6	59									70
2008		7	74	0	1		27			6		160
2009		4	75		5		24	1		4	2	157
2010		8	72		2		13					148
2011		8	104		3		14			2		180
2012	0	9	151		2		15	2		5		229
2013		14	113		5		18	3				196
2014		8	89		3	0	11	2			0	163
2015		8	60		1		9	2		4		137
2016	0	7	21		12		10					104
2017		3	14		3		12	3		4		92
2018		4	14		4		11	3	2	3		90
2019	0	5	14				16			2		91
2020		5	17		4		11					93
2021	1	4	19		1		12					87
2022		4	16		3		15		1	3		81
2023	0	3	15		3		4	3		5		83
avg 75-23	4	16	37	0	3	0	17	3	2	4	1	91
avg 92-23	0	7	43	0	3	0	17	3	2	4	1	98

Table D.5: *Annual tonnages of greenlip abalone caught from the Greenlip fishery. Occasionally, small amounts of catch (< 1 t) are taken from Blocks 50-57. Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.*

Year	1	2	3	4	5	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
1974		2		1	17	1	6	3	9	3	13	5			9
1975		3		1	8	0	7	3	17	14	49	69	14	11	3
1976	0	0	0		14	1	14	1	26	11	55	49	2	10	2
1977	0	0		0	17	3	6	6	23	21	50	24	1	22	8
1978	1	3	0	2	12	0	8	4	12	17	51	38	7	17	1
1979	0	0		0	8	2	11	10	21	8	46	15	4	4	6
1980	0	3			5		4	7	15	3	29	13	4	4	3
1981		12	0	4	9		6	12	17	17	34	10	9	0	4
1982	0	14		2	2	1	27	4	13	14	29	7	9	9	1
1983	0	9	0	5	9	2	23	4	21	8	34	9	4	8	2
1984	0	7	1	5	11	1	50	9	27	15	56	7	6	0	8
1985	0	1	0	1	3	6	53	9	20	15	42	4	7	7	5
1986	1	8		3	5	2	39	4	14	7	36	2	10		8
1987	13	125	5	69	8	1	32	8	20	10	30	8	10	7	12
1988	3	33	2	12	10	1	35	8	23	5	28	13	6		2
1989	1	70	3	10	6	1	22	4	16	2	22	10	3		5
1990	2	49	3	13	11	0	23	4	9	3	25	6	1	3	7
1991	2	29	3	16	12		20	4	7	2	31	6	3	0	6
1992	3	21	1	8	5		16	5	4	1	25	7	2	0	10
1993	2	18	0	9	3	0	9	2	5	2	22	8	3		2
1994	4	26		7	10		12	6	8	1	22	5	5	0	2
1995	14	10	0	12	8	1	25	5	9	3	21	3	3	9	6
1996	37	34	1	13	3		11	4	14	4	20	2	8	12	13
1997	35	33	0	6	6		17	8	13	1	12	4	11	15	22
1998	33	34	0	5	14		4	5	6	1	23	1	2	2	17
1999	21	25	1	10	10		6	2	17	1	15	1	2	4	2
2000	2	4	1	3	13		12	8	11	2	14	3	2	2	15
2001	8	8	1	2	3		7	15	15	2	9	3	1	0	21
2002	11	6	1	7	7		17	4	16	2	8	2	2	9	12
2003	14	11	3	4	10		18	5	16	1	11	2	1	3	16
2004	15	11	4	4	10		9	4	4	1	13	3	1	11	22
2005	16	7	4	3	12		6	2	12	1	10	3	1	15	13
2006	11	9	2	5	8		3	5	5	1	11	1	4	13	13
2007	10	7	3	6	9		20	3	6	1	13	2	0	5	14
2008	4	10	1	5	5		13	3	6	1	12	4	3	5	12
2009	8	8	3	6	5		13	2	5	1	13	2	2	2	20
2010	11	11	4	6	8		16	5	13	2	10	0	0	4	9
2011	6	9	9	4	5		13	5	5	3	14	4	2	12	11
2012	2	6	3	4	3		20	3	17	3	19	1	1	3	13
2013	2	12	2	4	5		14	8	23	2	17	2	1	4	9
2014	2	14	2	4	7		14	10	18	2	20	3	3	4	7
2015	4	13	1	5	6		22	7	16	2	14	2	2	1	9
2016	3	17	0	4	4		16	6	11	0	21	3	2	1	16
2017	2	19	0	3	4		15	4	13	1	19	3	8	4	14
2018	4	10	2	4	4		15	5	12	2	19	6	3	0	16
2019	4	12	1	5	5		12	3	14	1	12	7	1	1	15
2020	1	13	1	7	3		9	3	10	1	6	3	1	0	16
2021	3	14	0	2	4		21	2	6	0	5	2	2	0	10
2022	1	16	1	3	2		17	4	11	1	4	1	1		18
2023	5	13	2	2	2		12	5	13		13	2		0	6
avg 75-23	7	17	2	7	7	1	16	5	13	5	23	8	4	6	10
avg 92-23	9	14	2	5	6	1	14	5	11	1	15	3	3	5	13

Table D.5: *Greenlip Zone continued*

Year	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	51	52	53	55	Total
1974	14	9		0				1	8						
1975	4	2		0					7	2					
1976	9	2		0					8	6					
1977	4	1		1	0		0		40	2					
1978	2			1				1	13	3					
1979	2	1							11	0					
1980	5	0		0		0			6						
1981	2	0		2				3	12	1					
1982	3							2	7						
1983							0	14	40	11					
1984	4	0	0	1			2	52	60	2					
1985	4	1	0	1			1	12	36	3					
1986	7	0	0	2		0	1	57	35	14					
1987	1	1		9	5		1	37	33	3					
1988	1	1		2		0	7	35	28	5					
1989	2	5	1	2		0	6	20	27	4					
1990	0	2					4	21	27	11					
1991		1		0	0		8	13	32	6					
1992	0		1		0		3	4	14	2					
1993	0					0	3	2	26	4	0		0		
1994								3	48	3					
1995	2	1						5	23	5					
1996	2	0					0	1	15	0					
1997	1							1	28	3					
1998	25	0		1				2	43	8	0				
1999	4								20	1					
2000	12			0				0	24	12					
2001	4	0						0	35	9					
2002	2								27	7					
2003	1			0					14	10		0	0		
2004	0			0					14	6					
2005	1	0		0					19	1	0		0		
2006	0		0	0			0	0	29	2	0		0		
2007								0	21	3					
2008	0	0		0					33	3					
2009	1	0		0	0		0		26	2			0		
2010	0								30	5					
2011	0	1		0	0			0	31	5					
2012	0	0							36	6			0		
2013	1			0				0	32	3			0		
2014				0	0				24	6		0	0		
2015		0		0	0				32	5					
2016	2			0				0	32	3	0		0		
2017	1			0	0			0	26	4	0		0		
2018	3	0		1				2	21	4	0		0		0
2019	1	0		1				1	11	2			0		
2020	0	0		0	0				8	3			0		
2021	0	0		0	0			0	8	4			0		
2022		0		0					9	3	0			0	
2023		0		0	0			0	11	5			0		
avg 75-23	3	1	0	1	0	0	2	9	24	4	0	0	0	0	0
avg 92-23	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	24	4	0	0	0	0	0

Table D.6: *Annual tonnages of greenlip abalone caught within the seven management regions comprising the Greenlip Zone in 1974-2023. Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.*

Year	KI	NW	PB	CN	NE	FG	BS	Total
1974	33	1	29		3	10		24
1975	177	0	14		4	2		18
1976	156	1	25		0	2		28
1977	146	3	18		0	2		59
1978	147	0	11		6	2		27
1979	108	2	19		1	1		19
1980	74		12		3	1		11
1981	99		12		17	5		22
1982	83	1	30		17	2		9
1983	88	2	24		15	14		59
1984	120	1	61		14	55		73
1985	103	6	62		3	15		42
1986	74	2	54		13	61		54
1987	93	1	45		212	52		44
1988	85	1	39		51	46		43
1989	58	1	28		84	34		37
1990	50	0	30		68	26		49
1991	53		26		50	22		49
1992	44		26		33	8		21
1993	42	0	11	0	30	6		33
1994	47		14		36	3		61
1995	54	1	31		37	8		36
1996	64		24		85	5		19
1997	63		39		74	2		37
1998	40		21	0	72	28		64
1999	42		8		58	4		31
2000	43		27		10	12		41
2001	45		28		19	4		29
2002	43		29		25	2		30
2003	38		34	0	33	1		30
2004	37		31		34	0		25
2005	42		19	0	29	1		25
2006	40		16	0	27	1		23
2007	31		34		26	0		23
2008	35		25		20	0		19
2009	27		34	0	25	2		14
2010	34		25		31	0		23
2011	44		24		28	2		21
2012	45		33	0	16	0		21
2013	56		24	0	20	2		23
2014	59		21	0	22	0		23
2015	45		31		23	0		22
2016	44		32	0	24	2		22
2017	52		29	0	24	1		19
2018	47		30	0	20	6	0	17
2019	39		28	0	22	3		17
2020	24		25	0	22	1		13
2021	18		31	0	19	0		14
2022	21		35	0	20	0		13
2023	33		18	0	22	0		15
avg 75-23	62	1	27	0	31	9	0	30
avg 92-23	42	1	26	0	31	3	0	26

Appendix E

History of Management Changes

This history has been compiled from a number of sources, principal among which has been DPIPWE's Abalone Management Plans.

1962	Legal minimum length (LML) of 5 inches (127 mm) minimum shell diameter introduced.
1964	LML increased to 6 inches (152 mm).
1965	LML reduced to 5 inches. Introduction of commercial abalone diving licenses. All abalone to be landed live (no processing at sea). Skippers of boats engaged in abalone fishing required to lodge monthly fish returns as part of their license conditions.
1966	Abalone processing factories required to record the number of persons from whom abalone were bought.
1967	Abalone divers required to carry a measuring device to measure the abalone before taking them. Special penalty introduced for possession of undersized abalone at $1 per fish. Abalone to be sold in live condition to registered processors only.
1968	Abalone catch returns were introduced. These recorded daily catches and effort by reporting block, and were lodged monthly by the skipper (not necessarily a diver) of an abalone fishing vessel. More than one diver's catch could be reported on a return. These returns replaced the general fish return on which earlier catches were reported.
1969	License limitation introduced. Rapid expansion of the fishery led to this first attempt to control effort. Only divers fishing the previous year were licensed to fish in 1969. This figure (120 divers) was maintained in subsequent years.
1971	Only licensed divers allowed to dive from a boat engaged in abalone fishing. Unusually prolonged calm sea conditions and warm water were associated with a widespread die-off of abalone and rock lobster between the Arthur River and Granville Harbour. Substantial quantities of both species were reported killed.
1972	License transfer from a retiring diver to his nominee allowable on grounds of health problems. Annual license fees calculated as 1.5% of the mean of the previous three years value of annual production. An additional five licenses were issued to divers living in the Furneaux Group. These divers were restricted to fishing the Furneaux Group, but the other 120 divers were not prevented from fishing there. Penalties for breaches of regulations in relation to abalone fishing increased. Permit to transfer licenses between divers revoked.
1974	License transfer from a retiring diver to his nominee permitted. Computerised catch records started from July 1974.
1979	Penalties for breaches of regulations in relation to abalone fishing increased, with special penalties rising to $2 per fish. Identification cards for divers introduced.
1982	Penalties for breaches of regulations in relation to abalone fishing increased, with special penalties rising to $10 per fish. Catch restricted by marketing crisis: processors limit divers to 24 tonnes pa.

1983	Penalties for breaches of regulations in relation to abalone fishing increased. Easing of market difficulties sees lifting of processor applied catch restrictions.
1985	Individual transferable quota (ITQ) and a total allowable catch (TACC) were introduced. Each of the 120 general license divers were allocated 28 units of quota, the Furneaux Group divers 20 units: therefore there were 3460 units. For 1985, the quota unit was set at 1100 kg i.e. the TACC was 3806 tonnes. – This amount was derived from an estimate of average catches, with a 10% bonus granted by the Minister to compensate for any financial difficulties caused by the new system. License fees were increased to 2.5% of the value of the annual landed catch, for each quota unit held. Quota unit transfers between Furneaux divers and non-Furneaux divers were prohibited. The 120 Tasmanian mainland divers were prohibited from diving in the Furneaux group. Divers were required to own at least 16 units, but could accumulate no more than 80. The catch (kg) per quota unit was determined by the Liaison Committee based upon advice from the Government researchers. Catch dockets recording the catch weight landed by individual divers were introduced.
1986	Annual license fees set at 5% of value of annual landed catch. The catch per ITQ was reduced to 1000 kg (9% reduction) i.e. TACC was 3460 tonnes.
1987	LML increased to 132 mm from 127 mm. The catch per ITQ was reduced to 950 kg (5% reduction) i.e. TACC was 3287 tonnes.
1988	The catch per ITQ was reduced to 855 kg (5% reduction) i.e. TACC was 2958.3 tonnes. The minimum legal weight for abalone meats was set at 90 g.
1989	The catch per ITQ was reduced to 600 kg (30% reduction) i.e. TACC was 2076 tonnes. A fishery for abalone in Bass Strait was held in April, with a LML of 110 mm and a maximum size limit of 132 mm. Each diver was limited to 2.4 tonnes, with 198 tonnes caught. The fishery was free of fees, and while only licensed abalone divers could participate, was held to be distinct from the Tasmanian abalone fishery (hence the maximum size limit). The minimum meat weight regulation of 90g was amended to apply only to blacklip abalone.
1990	LML for blacklip abalone on south and west coasts between the Wild Wave River (north of Sandy Cape) and Whale Head increased to 140 mm. LML for greenlip in Furneaux Group waters increased to 140 mm. Furneaux Group boundary removed. The Furneaux Group divers were issued with an extra 8 units each, which could only be fished by the divers themselves and were not transferable. This increased the number of units in the fishery to 3500, and the TACC to 2100 tonnes.
1991	A fishery for abalone in Bass Strait was held in May, with a LML of 118 mm. The TACC was 110 tonnes, with a fee of $1.40 per kg of quota. The license system was restructured: the diving entitlement was uncoupled from the entitlement to hold quota units and the lower and upper limits on the amount of units held was abolished.
1992	Minimum meat weight for greenlip was set at 70 g. Development of DPIF's compliance catch database (SEALSPROD) that enabled auditing of catch from vessel to factory.
1993	A fishery for abalone in Bass Strait was held in May and June, with a LML of 110 mm. The TACC was 100 tonnes, with a fee of $5.00 per kg of quota. Minimum meat weight regulation amended to 90g for all abalone other than greenlip. Penalties reviewed and significantly increased, with the option of prison terms for serious and repeat offenders. Special penalties increased to $50 per fish.
1994	Quota owners were given the choice of continuing with their annual abalone licenses or entering into a Deed of Agreement that applied for 10 years with the right of renewal for perpetuity. 90% of owners chose the Deed of Agreement. The Deed of Agreement set a fee structure that included both management costs and return to the community, based upon an increasing (but non-linear) proportion of beach price. At $6/kg, no fees were payable, at $35/kg fees were 10% at and at $200/kg, fees were 33% of beach price.

1995	A fishery for abalone in Bass Strait was held in May and June, with a LML of 110 mm. Only 12 commercial divers (i.e. non-abalone) participated. While the TACC was 100 tonnes, only 21 tonnes was taken. The fee was $10.00 per kg of quota. Another Bass Strait fishery was held in November, with both abalone and commercial divers participating. The LML was 100 mm, and the TACC was set at 140 tonnes, with a fee of $10/kg. Only 106 tonnes was taken before the fishery was closed. It was maintained by divers that a very high proportion of the fishable biomass had been taken, and that continuing the fishery could affect the sustainability of stocks.
1996	The *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995* was introduced. Trigger points were introduced by DPIF to initiate a management response if catch and catch rates changed by a pre-determined quantity with respect to those from two earlier reference periods.
1997	The TACC was increased to 2520 tonnes (720 kg per quota unit). Difference in beach price between east coast and west coast blacklip first appears – is initially $2.00.
1998	The first abalone Fishery Management Plan was introduced. Among changes that it introduced were catch monitoring, which included: 1. Pre-fishing reporting by divers. 2. Post-fishing reporting of catch by divers and processors. 3. Processors required to maintain a daily balance of stock in, stock out and stock on hand. 4. Processors to report prior to movement of stock out and on receipt of stock. 5. Reports to be made by telephone, where information was immediately available to Compliance Audit Unit and Tasmania Police. For several years, greenlip abalone had attracted premium beach prices, causing a diversion of effort to that species. To enhance protection, a number of management changes were made: • For management purposes, the greenlip fishery was subdivided into two regions: the Furneaux Group and the remainder (North West, North East and King Island) • LML was raised to 140 mm state-wide (except the North West, which was left at 132 mm), • The annual catch for the Furneaux Group was capped at 42 t based on estimates of sustainable yield. This cap was managed monthly, so that where more than one twelfth of the annual cap (3.5 t) was taken in any month, the Minister could close the fishery until the next month. Within the Furneaux Group, several other rules were introduced to reduce effort: • Divers could only work two days per week. Originally, the days were fixed, but because this forced divers to work in often hazardous conditions, divers were allowed to nominate which two days they could work. • A 200 kg/day bag limit was introduced, as was a 200 kg/day landing limit. This effectively meant that catch was not held on motherships overnight. • These rules were repealed in 1999. • The greenlip catch from the remainder of the State was to be limited to 106 tonnes. • Because the Department was unable to monitor catch closely enough, the monthly Furneaux Group catch usually overran its limit, and the fishery there was closed in August when the regional cap was met. The greenlip cap in the rest of the State was also overrun. Vessels over 10 m landing abalone at Smithton or Stanley had to make a prior report to the CAU reporting service so that Tasmania Police could inspect their catch. Fixed trigger points were abandoned as an assessment strategy as rising catch and catch rates indiscriminately fired triggers. Assessments have since used catch and catch rate trends to monitor stock levels. A new compliance catch database (LMM/QMS) introduced by DPIWE

1999	LML for greenlip raised to 140 mm in North West, and 150 mm for the remainder. This applied to the commercial fishery only, the LML for recreational fishers remaining at 140 mm. The greenlip fishery was divided into east (Furneaux Group and North East) and west (King Island and North Wes t) with quarterly caps of 17 tonnes and 20 tonnes respectively. Overrun of caps led to a closure of the greenlip fishery in October. Within the Furneaux Group, Block 35 was closed to fishing between 1 October and 31 March to protect spawning abalone.
2000	The blacklip fishery was divided into two East and West management zones with boundaries at Whale Head and Port Sorell. The greenlip fishery was managed separately. Eastern blacklip units were set at 340 kg (TACC 1190 t), Western units at 400 kg (1400 t) and greenlip units at 40 kg (140 t), with a TACC for the whole fishery of 2730 tonnes. Size limits for blacklip abalone remained unchanged. The zone boundaries meant that the Western Zone had a size limit of 140 mm from Whale Head to the Wild Wave River and 132 mm from there to Port Sorell. Following egg-per-recruit studies by researchers, LML for King Island greenlip was raised to 155 mm, 140 mm for North West and 145 for both the North East and the Furneaux Group. The Block 35 (Franklin Sound - Furneaux Group) greenlip catch was capped at 20 tonnes. Catch were reported on a smaller spatial scale with the introduction of sub-blocks state-wide. Owners of fishing license (abalone dive) were allowed to hold more than one license and allow others to dive those licenses as supervisors.
2001	The Northern Zone (between Arthur River in the west and Musselroe Point in the east) for blacklip abalone was established, with a LML of 127 mm except between Woolnorth Point and the Arthur River, where 132 mm prevailed. Catch per unit was 80 kg, with a TACC of 280 t. Because the Northern Zone covered coast that was previously included in the two other blacklip zones, catch for those zones was proportionally reduced, with a further allowance for declining Eastern Zone stocks. The TACC for the West was set at 1260 t (360kg/unit), and the East at 1120 t (320 kg/unit). The greenlip TACC remained at 140 tonnes, so production from the entire fishery was 2800 t, or 800 kg/unit. In association with establishment of Northern Zone, research monitoring areas were set aside at the Inner Sister, Swan Island, Waterwitch Reef, and the Doughboys. LML's for recreational divers were changed to 132 mm for blacklip state-wide, and 145 mm for greenlip in all areas except the North West, which remained at 140 mm. The regional catch for the greenlip fishery was limited in three of the main regions. The North West catch was capped at 40 t, the North East at 30 t, while the Furneaux Group catch remained fixed at 42 t. Catch from King Island and the Bass Strait islands (Kent, Curtis, Hogan Groups) was not capped.
2002	Production for the whole fishery was set at 2537.5 t (725 kg/unit). LML for Eastern Zone was increased to 136 mm. LML for greenlip on King Island was reduced to 150 mm. LML for greenlip in the North West was increased to 145 mm. Eastern Zone TACC reduced to 857.5 t (245 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC remained 1260 t (360 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC remained 280 t (80 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC remained 140 t (40 kg/unit). Catch from the Actaeons (sub-blocks 13C, D and E) was capped at 350 t, managed firstly as a half-yearly cap, then quarterly. The fishery there was closed in September and then mid-October when those caps were reached.

2003	Fishery production was set at 2607.5 t (745 kg/unit) state-wide. Eastern Zone TACC remained 857.5 t (245 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC remained 1260 t (360 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC remained 280 t (80 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC remained 140 t (40 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC set at 70 t (20 kg/unit). A Bass Strait blacklip zone (TACC 70 tonnes (20kg/unit), LML of 114 mm) was created within the Northern Zone in central Bass Strait and part of the Furneaux Group. Its purpose was to enable the catching of abalone smaller than allowed by the Northern Zone size limit. The Bass Strait Boundaries were set at Cowrie Point in the west and Anderson Bay in the east. The Flinders Island boundaries were on an unnamed point north of Settlement Point on the western side of the island (40°00'36.32") and Foochow Inlet on the east. Blacklip catch from Block 5 (Northern Zone) was capped at 100 t. LML for Western Zone between the Wild Wave River and Arthur River was increased to 136 mm from 132 mm. Abalone taken from Western Zone subject to upper size limit of 160 mm by canners and live market buyers. Note that this was not rigidly enforced and market sampling showed most samples contained many abalone over this size.
2004	Fishery production was set at 2509.5 t (717 kg/unit) state-wide. Eastern Zone TACC reduced to 770 t (220 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC remained 1260 t (360 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC remained 280 t (80 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC reduced to 129.5 t (37 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC remained 70 t (20 kg/unit). The greenlip TACC reduction affected the North West only, where the annual cap was reduced by 10 t to 30 t. October-March closure for Franklin Sound greenlip fishery abolished. Block 35 cap reduced from 20 t to 15 t.
2005	Fishery production was set at 2502.5 t (715 kg/unit) state-wide. Eastern Zone TACC remained 770 t (220 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC remained 1260 t (360 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC remained 280 t (80 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC reduced to 122.5 t (35 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC remained 70 t (20 kg/unit). The greenlip TACC reduction affected the North East only, where the annual cap was reduced by 7 t to 23 t. Team diving (sharing catch from one quota unit by two divers) was introduced to legitimise the practise of divers catching abalone for others when they held no quota to which their catch could be assigned. Team dive dockets were submitted by teams, but not computerised. High grading (discarding large abalone in the catch from the deck) prohibited. Caufing of abalone (holding abalone in cages at sea) was prohibited. Introduction of cancellation reports where a prior reported trip is cancelled. Introduction of single (blacklip) zone fishing provisions. Overcatch provisions introduced to cover unintentional underestimation of catch weight. In Victoria in December, ganglioneuritis detected on two land-based (Portland and Port Fairy) and two offshore (Westernport) aquaculture sites.

2006	Fishery production was set at 2502.5 t (715 kg/unit) state-wide. Eastern Zone TACC remained 770 t (220 kg/unit) Western Zone TACC remained 1260 t (360 kg/unit) Northern Zone TACC remained 280 t (80 kg/unit) Greenlip TACC remained 122.5 t (35 kg/unit) Bass Strait Zone TACC remained 70 t (20 kg/unit) On 1 January 2006, interim reduction in LML for Perkins Bay greenlip area (Blocks 47, 48A), from 145 mm to 140 mm. On 20 September 2006, LML for Bass Strait Zone in Blocks 41-46 (North Coast) reduced from 114 mm to 110 mm. On 1 November 2006, LML for Eastern Zone was increased to 138 mm from 136 mm. LML for greenlip abalone in Perkins Bay was reduced to 132 mm from 140 mm. As a temporary measure to facilitate research, Block 30 was entirely closed to commercial abalone fishing and partially closed (except sub-block 30A) to recreational abalone fishing. The bag limit for recreational fishers in sub-block 30A reduced to 5 abalone per day. May 2006: Victorian ganglioneuritis (AVG) outbreaks reported from wild stocks adjacent to land-based aquaculture site at Port Fairey. As a precautionary measure, the Tasmanian wild fishery in Bass Strait closest to the Victorian coast was closed to abalone fishing, from 16 August 2006, initially for three months but then extended to 28 February 2007. The closure was for waters within latitudes 39º12' S and 39 º33' S, and longitudes 146 ºto 147 º35' (Blocks 51 to 56, and part of Block 57, including Wright Rock and Endeavour Reef). The taking of abalone in Tasmanian waters from vessels used in the Victorian fishery was prohibited, and the transfer by sea of abalone from King Island to the Tasmanian mainland was prohibited.
2007	Fishery production was set at 2502.5 t (715 kg/unit) state-wide. Eastern Zone TACC remained 770 t (220 kg/unit) Western Zone TACC remained 1260 t (360 kg/unit) Northern Zone TACC remained 280 t (80 kg/unit) Greenlip TACC remained 122.5 t (35 kg/unit) Bass Strait Zone TACC remained 70 t (20 kg/unit) N.B. it was agreed that the Bass Strait component (70 t) would not be caught due to concerns about disease outbreaks (AVG) in abalone stocks in adjacent Victorian waters. In October 2007, it was agreed that the cap for the southern part of the Actaeons (Sub-blocks 13C, 13D and 13E) would be reduced from 350 t to 266 t, and that a cap of 245 t be implemented for the South Coast (Sub-blocks 12B, 12C, 12D, 13A and 13B).
2008	The total catch state-wide was set at 2,593.5 t, or 741 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC increased to 808.5 t (231 kg/unit) Western Zone TACC remained 1260 t (360 kg/unit) Northern Zone TACC increased to 332.5 t (95 kg/unit) Greenlip TACC remained 122.5 t (35 kg/unit) Bass Strait Zone TACC remained 70 t (20 kg/unit) As part of a controlled trial in the North West, size limits in Block 5 and part of Block 6 were reduced for divers meeting defined operating requirements on the basis that there were large stocks of abalone too small to catch at the larger size limit, and that removing these smaller abalone would promote growth among the remaining fish. The LML in the Northern Zone part of Block 5 (5A, 5B and 5C) was reduced from 132 mm to 127 mm, and in sub-blocks 5D, 6A, 6B and 6C, from 136 mm to 132 mm. To promote fishing in the Northern Zone part of Block 5, the cap was increased from 100 t to 152.5 t and the Northern Zone TACC increased to 332.5 t. The remainder of the Northern Zone was capped at 180 t. In Bass Strait, south of 39°33', the Bass Strait Zone was reopened to fishing on 1 January 2008. North of this line, all islands in the Bass Strait Zone remained closed to fishing as part of measures to reduce the spread of AVG from Victoria. The closed area included the Kent, Hogan and Curtis Groups. It was reopened to fishing on 6 July 2008. Fears of an outbreak of AVG resulted in the closure of the Lower Channel (sub-blocks 14A, 14B, 14C and 14D) to abalone fishing between 16 September 2008 and 12 March 2009. The area was reopened after extensive sampling and testing failed to find diseased abalone. Actaeons (Blocks 13C, 13D, 13E) closed to fishing for the remainder of the year from 21 October because the 266 t catch limit had been reached (340 t). South Coast closed to fishing on 29 October because the 245 t catch limit had been reached (332 t).

2009	The total catch state-wide was set at 2,604 t, or 744 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC increased to 850.5 t (243 kg/unit) Western Zone TACC reduced to 924 t (264 kg/unit) Central Western Zone TACC established at 304.5 t (87 kg/unit) Northern Zone TACC remained 332.5 t (95 kg/unit) Greenlip TACC remained 122.5 t (35 kg/unit) Bass Strait Zone TACC remained 70 t (20 kg/unit) A new zone was created on the west coast to transfer catch from the South West further north. The Central Western Zone covers Blocks 6, 7 and 8. The Western Zone was correspondingly reduced to Blocks 9, 10, 11, 12, 13A and 13B. Blocks 7 and 8 were closed to fishing on 13 July because the 108 t cap had been reached (155 t). The North West greenlip region (cap 30 t) was closed to fishing on 1 August after the 20 t Perkins Bay cap was reached (20.1 t). The region's catch was 33.9 t. The North East greenlip region was closed to fishing on 19 October because the 23 t cap had been reached (35 t). The Actaeons were closed to fishing on 1 November, because the 340 t cap had been reached (341 t). The South Coast (cap 300 t) was closed to fishing on 1 November with the catch at 321 t. The Block 5 (cap 152 t) was closed to fishing on 5 December with the catch at 172 t. Experimental fishing project with reduced size limits continued in Blocks 5 and 6, where the LML was reduced under permit from 132 mm to 127 mm (Block 5) and 136 mm to 132 mm (Block 6), provided GPS data loggers were used.
2010	The total catch state-wide was set at 2,660 t, or 760 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC increased to 896 t (256 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC remained 924 t (264 kg/unit). Central Western Zone TACC remained 304.5 t (87 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC remained 332.5 t (95 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC increased to 133 t (38 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC remained 70 t (20 kg/unit). Experimental fishing project with reduced size limits continued in Blocks 5 and 6, where the LML was reduced under permit from 132 mm to 127 mm (Block 5) and 136 mm to 132 mm (Block 6), provided GPS data loggers were used. In September 2010, the size limit for greenlip caught between Andersons Bay (Block 41) and Cowrie Point (Block 46) was reduced from 145 mm to 132 mm, in line with Blocks 47 and 48A (Perkins Bay/Black Reef). The Furneaux Group was brought into the Bass Strait Zone 114 mm size limit area. The size limit for Eastern Zone blacklip caught in Block 31A north of Cod Bay and Georges Rocks (latitude 40º54'53"S) was reduced from 138 mm to 132 mm while fishing under permit. This was a temporary measure between July and October to encourage fishing there. Block 31A was closed to fishing on 4 October after 50 t of abalone had been caught, but was subsequently reopened in December 2010 (at 138 mm) to ease pressure across the remainder of the fishery. Furneaux Group blacklip closed 9 August, capped at 35 t (49 t caught). The Actaeons closed 13 September capped at 340 t cap (342 t). Block 22 closed 13 October when the 60 t cap was almost reached (55 t). It was reopened in December to ease pressure on the reminder of the fishery. Blocks 7, 8 and 6D closed 20 October capped at 150 t (171 t). North East greenlip closed 1 November, capped at 23 t (25 t). North West greenlip closed 13 November, capped at 18 t (23t). Perkins Bay greenlip closed 13 November, capped at 20 t (20t). All the Northern Zone except Block 5 closed 22 November capped at 180 t (191 t caught). South Coast closed 13 December capped at 300 t (311 t). King Island greenlip closed on 13 December, cap 30 t (32 t).

2011	The total catch state-wide was set at 2,565.5 t, or 733 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC decreased to 721 t (206 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC remained 924 t (264 kg/unit). Central Western Zone TACC remained 304.5 t (87 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC increased to 402.5 t (115 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC increased to 143.5 t (41 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC remained 70 t (20 kg/unit). Experimental fishing project with reduced size limits continued in Blocks 5 and 6, where the LML was reduced under permit from 132 mm to 127 mm (Block 5) and 136 mm to 132 mm (Block 6), provided GPS data loggers were used. The remainder of the 40 units issued to the five Furneaux Group divers in 1990 were transferred back to the Government. The Eastern Zone was closed to fishing in all parts except Block 31 between 1 January and 31 March. Actaeons (Sub-blocks 13C, 13D and 13E) closed 29 October capped at 341 t (359 t caught). Lower Channel (sub-blocks 14A, 14B) closed 5 December cap 10 t (12.5 t caught). Block 22 closed 12 September, reopened 18 December cap 40 t (54 t caught). Blocks 23, 24 closed 12 November cap 50 t (54 t caught). Freycinet/Bicheno (Blocks 25-28, 29A) closed 5 December cap 40 t (47.5 t caught). Block 5 Northern Zone closed 29 August cap 142.5 t (155 t caught). Remainder NW Northern Zone (Blocks 47, 48, 49) closed 29 October cap 100 t (112 t caught). North East Northern Zone (Block 39, 40, 31B) closed 5 December cap 30 t (29 t caught). Granville Harbour/Sandy Cape (Blocks 7, 8, 6D) closed 23 May cap 160 t (159.5 t caught). Furneaux Group Bass Strait Zone closed 20 June cap 35 t (44 t caught). North West greenlip closed 29 October cap 18 t (21 t caught). Perkins Bay greenlip closed 1 October cap 20 t (21 t caught). North East greenlip closed 5 December cap 23 t (23.5 t caught). Furneaux Group greenlip closed 28 November cap 42 t (44.5 t caught). Telephone reporting requirements were suspended on 16 November when the company operating the call centre unexpectedly ceased trading. Following the discovery of AVG-affected greenlip in NSW in November 2011, all imports of live abalone into that state from Tasmania and Victoria have been subject to restrictions. This measure has since greatly reduced the size of the domestic live greenlip market causing a collapse in high-grade greenlip beach prices. LML in the Northern blacklip fishery in Blocks 47, 48 and 49 reduced from 127 mm to 125 mm, provided GPS loggers used.
2012	The total catch state-wide was set at 2,366 t, or 676 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC decreased to 549.5 t (157 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC remained 924 t (264 kg/unit). Central Western Zone TACC remained 304.5 t (87 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC decreased to 378 t (108 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC decreased to 140 t (40 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC remained 70 t (20 kg/unit). No caps were implemented in the Eastern Zone. The Eastern Zone was closed to fishing in all parts except Block 31 between 1 January and 31 March. East Furneaux Bass Strait Zone (sub-blocks 33B, 33C, Blocks 36, 38) closed 13 August, cap 35 t (36.4 t caught). Eastern Zone sub-block 30A closed 13 August, cap 4 t (4.5 t caught). North East greenlip closed 27 August cap 23 t (32.7 t caught). North East Northern Zone closed 27 August cap 30 t (35 t caught). Granville Harbour/Sandy Cape (Blocks 7, 8, 6D) closed 15 October cap 154.5 t (174 t caught). Blocks 47, 48, 49 Northern Zone (Hunter &Three Hummock Islands) closed 15 October, cap 130 t (156 t caught). Sub-block 48A, Block 47 (Black Reef greenlip) closed 12 November cap 20 t (26 t caught). Remainder North West greenlip closed 19 November, cap 18 t (18.5 t caught). Telephone reporting requirements reinstated with a new operator on 27 February. GPS and depth loggers made mandatory throughout the fishery from 1 January 2012. LML at Block 49 (Hunter Island & Three Hummock Island but not Albatross Island) was reduced from 125 mm to 120 mm. The LML at Albatross Is. was increased to 127 mm from 125 mm.

2013	The total catch state-wide was set at 2,149 t, or 614 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC decreased to 528.5 t (151 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC increased to 1001 t (286 kg/unit). Central Western Zone TACC decreased to 101.5 t (29 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC decreased to 308 t (88 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC remained 140 t (40 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC remained 70 t (20 kg/unit). The Central Western Zone/Western Zone boundary was moved north to the Wild Wave River between 6D and 6C, meaning that Blocks 7 and 8, and sub-block 6D reverted to the Western Zone, and that the Central Western Zone comprised 5D, 6A, 6B and 6C. The Eastern Zone was closed to fishing in all parts except Block 31 between 1 January and 31 March. North East greenlip closed 3 June, cap 23 t (24 t caught). Bass Strait Zone east coast Furneaux Group closed 19 August, cap 30 t (27 t caught). Annual catch from waters around the Freycinet Peninsula and northward, (including sub-blocks 26B, 26C, 26D, 27A, 27B, 27C, 27D, 27E, 28A & 28B) was capped at 5 t, and the LML increased to 145 mm, these measures to restore populations in the area. It was closed 26 August, 11 t caught. North West greenlip closed 23 September, cap 18.5 t (23 t caught). Block 30A blacklip closed 23 September, cap 4 t (4.5 t caught). North East blacklip closed 7 October, cap 30 t (32 t caught). Blocks 47, 48, 49 Northern Zone (Hunter &Three Hummock Islands) closed 15 October, cap 100 t (126 t caught). Blocks 5 closed 11 November, cap 60 t (60 t caught). Furneaux Group greenlip closed 25 November, cap 47 t (55 t caught). South West Western Zone closed 2 December, cap 405 t (528 t caught).
2014	The total catch state-wide was set at 1,932 t, or 552 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC remained 528.5 t (151 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC decreased to 840 t (240 kg/unit). Central Western Zone TACC decreased to 73.5 t (21 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC decreased to 280 t (80 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC remained 140 t (40 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC remained 70 t (20 kg/unit). Number of Fishing Licenses (Abalone Dive) or FLAD, changed from 125 to 121. Catch from part of the Freycinet-Bicheno region (26B-28B) was capped at 10 t at LML 145 mm and closed to fishing on 4 June 2014. It was reopened again at 145 LML on 24 September to spread fishing effort, with a further 10 t cap. South West Western Zone closed 28 April, cap 350 t (287 t caught). South West Western Zone re-opened 26 November (108 t caught). North East greenlip closed 20 March, cap 25.5 t (21 t caught). North West greenlip closed 1 June 2014, cap 21 t (23 t caught). Sub-block 30A closed 1 June 2014, cap 4 t (4 t caught). East Furneaux Bass Strait Zone closed 30 June 2014, cap 30 t (37 t caught). Furneaux Group greenlip closed 23 July, cap 47 t (59 t caught). North East Northern Zone closed 23 July, cap 30 t (44 t caught). Remainder Furneaux Bass Strait Zone closed 8 August, no cap (6 t caught). Block 5 Northern Zone closed 12 November, cap 50 t (54 t caught).
2015	The total catch state-wide was set at 1,855 t, or 530 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC remained at 528.5 t (151 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC remained at 840 t (240 kg/unit). Central Western Zone TACC decreased to 52.5 t (15 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC decreased to 224 t (64 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC remained at 140 t (40 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC remained at 70 t (20 kg/unit). Number of Fishing Licenses (Abalone Dive) or FLAD, remained at 121. The LML of 145 mm for the Freycinet-Bicheno region (26B-28B) was retained for 2015. North-East greenlip closed 6 May, 25.5 t cap (30.6 t caught). North-East blacklip closed 10 May, 30 t cap (30.4 t caught). Furneaux Group blacklip closed 17 June, 30 t cap (44.1 t caught). Block 30A closed 24 June, 4 t cap (4.6 t caught). North-West greenlip (except Perkins Bay) closed 24 June, 21 t cap (21.6 t caught). Freycinet blacklip closed 15 July, 20 t cap (22.4 t caught). Albatross Island (49D) closed 5 August, 10 t cap (8 t caught). Central North blacklip closed 5 August, 5 t cap, reopened 7 December (6.5 t caught). Block 5 (5A-C) Northern Zone closed 3 September, 50 t cap (58.4 t caught). Blocks 14, 15, 16 blacklip (excl. 14B) closed 10 October, 50 t cap (51.4 t caught). Blocks 23 and 24 blacklip closed 4 November, (41.3 t caught).

2016	The total catch state-wide was set at 1,694 t, or 484 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC remained at 528.5 t (151 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC decreased to 717.5 t (205 kg/unit). Central Western Zone TACC decreased to 42 t (12 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC decreased to 189 t (54 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC remained 140 t (40 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC increased to 77 t (22 kg/unit). Number of Fishing Licenses (Abalone Dive) or FLAD, remained at 121. The LML of 145 mm for the Freycinet-Bicheno region (26B-28B) was retained for 2016. Albatross Island (49D) closed 19 February, 10 t cap (10.8 t caught). North-east blacklip closed 15 June, 30 t cap (30.2 t caught). Furneaux Group blacklip closed 19 August, 30 t cap (45.7 t caught). North-west greenlip (except Perkins Bay) closed 31 August, 21 t cap (21.6 t caught). North-east greenlip closed 19 August, 21 t cap (34.5 t caught). King Island greenlip closed 14 September, 20 t cap (23.5 t caught). Block 5 blacklip closed 5 October, 50 t cap (53.2 t caught).
2017	The total catch state-wide was set at 1,561 t, or 446 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC decreased to 444.5 t (127 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC remained at 717.5 t (205 kg/unit). Central Western Zone TACC decreased to 35 t (10 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC decreased to 147 t (42 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC remained at 77 t (22 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC remained at 140 t (40 kg/unit). Number of Fishing Licenses (Abalone Dive) or FLAD, remained at 121. The LML of 145 mm for the Freycinet-Bicheno region (26B-28B) was retained for 2017. Albatross Island (49D) 10 t cap (8.8 t caught) and Block 5 Northern closed 29 March, 42.5 t cap (41.3 t caught). North-east greenlip closed 10 May, 25.5 t cap (29.6 t caught). North-east blacklip closed 16 June, 27.8 t cap (33.9 t caught). Furneaux Group (east) blacklip closed 19 July, 39.5 t cap (40.1 t caught). King Island greenlip closed 04 September, 20.0 t cap (24.1 t caught). North-west greenlip (except Perkins Bay) 17.8 t cap (18.8 t caught) and Furneaux Group greenlip closed 29 November, 47 t cap (52.5 t caught).
2018	The total catch state-wide was set at 1,333.5 t, or 381 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC decreased to 294 t (84 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC remained at 717.5 t (205 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC decreased to 98 t (28 kg/unit), in part due to assigning Central West Zone blocks (6A, 6B, 6C) to the Northern Zone, and assigning Northern Zone Blocks 49A, 49B, 49C, 48 and 47 into the Bass Strait Zone. Bass Strait Zone TACC increased to 91 t (26 kg/unit) in part through inclusion of Blocks 49A, 49B, 49C, 48 and 47 from Northern Zone. Greenlip TACC decreased to 133 t (38 kg/unit). Number of Fishing Licenses (Abalone Dive) or FLAD, remained at 121. The LML of 145 mm for the Freycinet-Bicheno region (26B-28B) was retained for 2018. North-west Sub-blocks 5D, 6A, 6B, 6C and south coast sub-blocks 13A, 13B closed for blacklip 25 April. Block 40 opened for blacklip 30 July. Blocks 28C and 29 closed for blacklip 6 August. Block 49D closed for blacklip 3 September. All Blocks 22 to 31 closed to blacklip 21 September. Blocks 31B and 39 closed to blacklip 12 October. Blocks 10, 11 and 33 closed to blacklip 31 October. Blocks 10, 11, 13A, 13B opened to blacklip 4 December. Blocks 2A, 2B, 2C, 4A closed to greenlip 28 May. Blocks 32 and 33 opened to greenlip 26 June. Blocks 48B, 48C, 49, 5, 40 opened to greenlip 30 July. Blocks 1, 3, 4B and 4C closed to greenlip 3 September. Blocks 31 and 39 opened for greenlip 10 September, and closed 22 September. Block 48B, 48C, 49 and 5 closed to greenlip 27 September. Blocks 32 and 33 closed to greenlip 31 October. Blocks 31, 39, 48B, 48C, 49 and 5 opened to greenlip 17 December.

2019	The total catch state-wide was set at 1,267.0 t, or 362 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC decreased to 252 t (72 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC remained at 717.5 t (205 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC remained at 98 t (28 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC remained at 91 t (26 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC decreased from 133 t to 108.5 t (31 kg/unit). Number of Fishing Licenses (Abalone Dive) or FLAD, remained at 121. The LML of 145 mm for the Freycinet-Bicheno region (26B-28B) was retained for 2019. The LML for Western Zone increased from 140 mm to 145 mm on July 1. North-west Sub-block 49D, East coast Blocks 22 to 31, and south coast sub-blocks 13A, 13B closed for blacklip 21 April. North-west Blocks 49A, 49B, 49C closed from 23 June. North-west Blocks 5D, 6A, 6B and 6C closed to blacklip fishing 4th August. North-east and Bass Strait Blocks 28B, 28C, blocks 29, 30 and sub-block 31A, and sub-block 38A closed to blacklip 27 August. North-west Blocks 48B and 48C closed to blacklip 13 October. North-East and North-West greenlip regions opened 1 July. North-east Blocks 31A, 31B, 39A and 39B closed to greenlip 8 July. King Island blocks 2A, 2B, 2C and 4A closed to greenlip 4 August. Remaining King Island Blocks closed to Greenlip 7 September. North-west blocks 48 (except for sub-block 48A), 49 and 5 closed to Greenlip 29 September
2020	The total catch state-wide was set at 1,018.5 t, or 291 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC decreased to 220.5 t (63 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC was reduced to 549.5 t (157 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC was reduced to 73.5 t (21 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC remained at 91 t (26 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC decreased to 84 t (24 kg/unit). Number of Fishing Licenses (Abalone Dive) or FLAD, remained at 121. The LML was increased fro m129mm to 132mm for the Upper North West area (i.e. Wild Wave River to Albatross). East coast Blocks 16, 22, 23, 24, 27 were closed to fishing for 2020. Eastern Zone opened on 1st April. North-west Blocks 49A, 49B, 49C closed 24 April. Bass Strait Blocks opened July 1. South coast sub-blocks 13A, 13B closed for Blacklip 2nd September. Bass Strait blacklip sub-block 38A and East Coast Block 29 closed 4th October. North-west blocks 6, 48, 49, North-east blocks 31, 39, and South-East block 14 closed 9th November. East coast Blacklip block 21 closed 13th December. North-east and North-west Greenlip opened 1st July. North-east Blocks 31A, 31B, 39A and 39B closed to Greenlip 12 July.
2021	The total catch state-wide was set at 833 t, or 238 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC was maintained at 220.5 t (63 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC was reduced to 378 t (108 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC was reduced to 63 t (18 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC reduced to 87.5 t (25 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC was maintained at 84 t (24 kg/unit). Number of Fishing Licenses (Abalone Dive) or FLAD, remained at 121. East coast Blocks 16, 22, 23, 24, 27 were closed to fishing for 2021. Eastern Zone opened on 1st April. Sub-blocks 6A, 6B, 6C closed 14th April. Sub-blocks 48A, 48B, 48C, 49A, 49B, 49C closed 8th May. Block 29 closed 12th May. South coast sub-blocks 13A, 13B closed 23rd June. Sub-blocks 48A, 48B, 48C, 49A, 49B, 49C re-opened 1st July. Block 38 closed 19th July. Sub-blocks 48A, 48B, 48C, 49A, 49B, 49C closed 18th August. Sub-blocks 28B, 28C closed 22nd August. Block 21 and Sub-block 49D closed 8th October. Sub-blocks 12A, 12B, 12D closed 30th October. Block 5 closed 8th November. Block 20 closed 15th November. Sub-blocks 31B, 39A closed 25th November. Bloc k14 closed 20 December. North-east and North-west Greenlip opened 1st July. North-east Blocks 31A, 31B, 39A and 39B closed to Greenlip 11th July. North-west greenlip closed 5th December

2022	The total catch state-wide was set at 773.5 t, or 221 kg/unit. Eastern Zone TACC was increased to 227.5 t (65 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC was reduced to 311.5 t (89 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC was reduced to 59.5 t (17 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC reduced to 84 t (24 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC was increased to 91 t (26 kg/unit). Number of Fishing Licenses (Abalone Dive) or FLAD, remained at 121. East coast Blocks 16, 22, 23, 24, 27 were closed to fishing for 2022. Eastern Zone opened on 1st April. Sub-block 12A closed 12th February. Sub-blocks 12B, 12D, 13A and 13B closed 6th March. Block 29 closed 4th July. Sub-blocks 48B, 48C, 49A, 49B and 49C closed 28th July. Sub-blocks 20A and 20B closed due to PST on 17th August, re-opening on the 5th November following negative PST results, reaching the cap and closing on 18th December. Block 37 closed 21st August. Block 21 closed 4th September. Sub-block 20C closed 30th September. Sub-blocks 6A, 6B and 6C closed 17th October. Block 11 closed 22nd October. Block 5 closed 7th November. Block 10 closed 12th November. Block 3 closed 18th December. North-east Blocks 31A, 31B, 39A and 39B closed to Greenlip 9th July. Block 2 and 4 closed to Greenlip on 18th December. North-west greenlip closed 25th December.
2023	Abalone Fishery Advisory Committee (AbFAC) replaced by Abalone Fishery Core Group (AFCG) comprising representatives from Tasmanian Abalone Council (TACL), Seafood Industry Tasmania (SIT) and IMAS. Regional AFCG Port Meetings held in St Helens (5th October), Stanley (6th October), and Hobart (9th October). The total catch state-wide was set at 756 t, or 216 kg/unit for 2024. Eastern Zone TACC was increased to 231 t (66 kg/unit). Western Zone TACC was reduced to 294 t (84 kg/unit). Northern Zone TACC was increased to 63 t (18 kg/unit). Bass Strait Zone TACC reduced to 80.5 t (23 kg/unit). Greenlip TACC was decreased to 87.5 t (25 kg/unit). Number of Fishing Licenses (Abalone Dive) or FLAD, remained at 121. East coast Blocks 16, 22, 23, 24, 27 and 28A were closed to fishing for 2023. Eastern Zone opened on 1st April with LML increase to 140 mm. Sub-blocks 12A, 12B, 12D, 13A and 13B closed 24th February. Block 29 closed 20th May. Sub-blocks 48B, 48C, 49A and 49C closed 28th May. Sub-blocks 28B and 28C closed 22nd June. Sub-blocks 6A, 6B and 6C closed 25th June. Greenlip sub-blocks 31A, 31B, 39A and 39B opened 3rd July with LML increase to 150 mm and closed 6th July (North East Greenlip Region). North-west Greenlip Region closed 1st September. Blocks 36 and 38 closed 28th September. Greenlip Block 2 and 4 closed 30th September. Block 21 closed 6th November. Block 33 closed 26th November. Sub-blocks 31B and 39A closed 1st December. Block 3 closed 14th December. Block 11 closed 15th December. Sub-block 6D closed 21st December.

Appendix F

Maps of Reporting Blocks

It is not intended that these maps be used for any purpose other than identifying the position of sub-blocks mentioned in this report.

Figure F.1: *Map of King Island blocks*

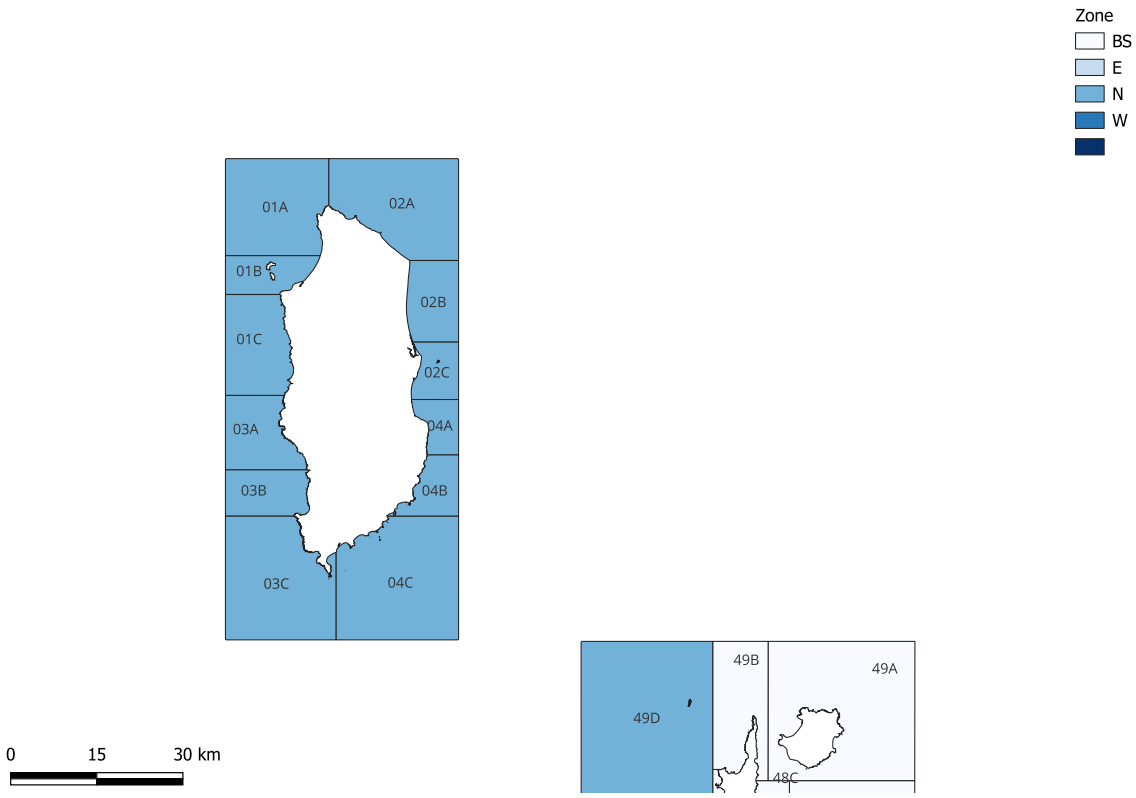


Figure F.2: *Map of North West blocks*

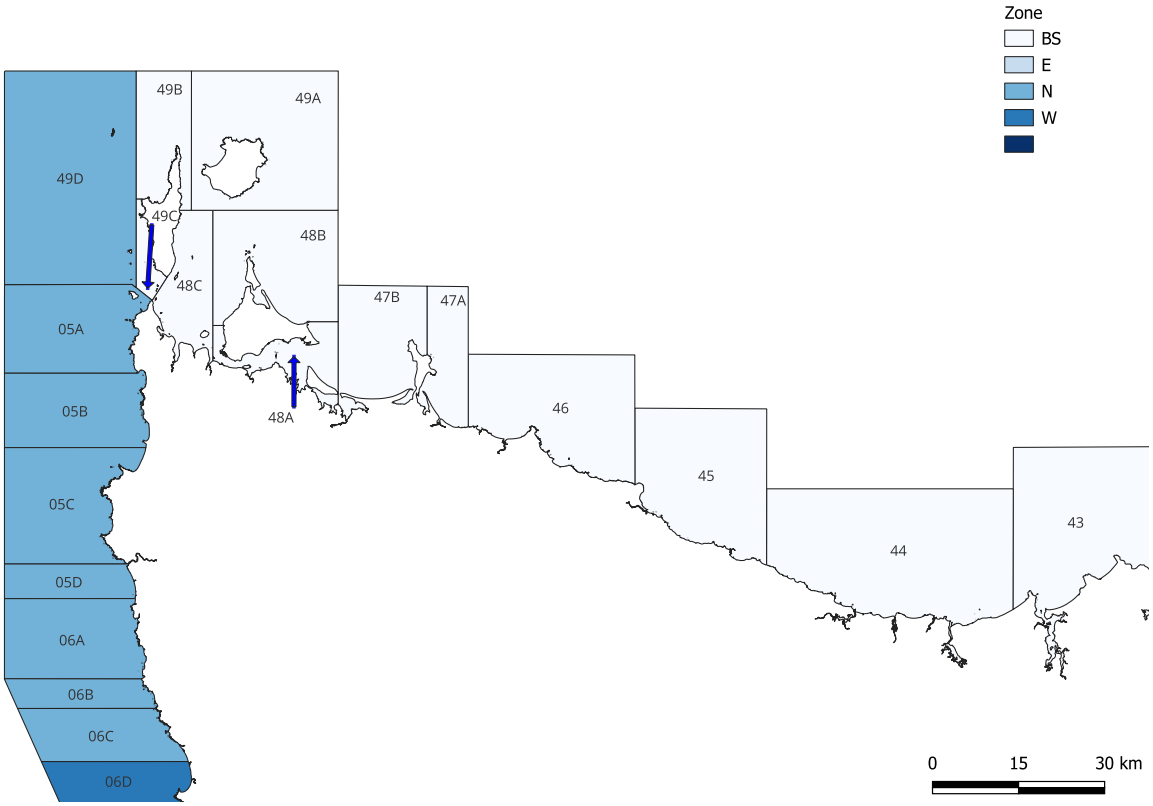


Figure F.3: *Map of Central West Coast blocks*

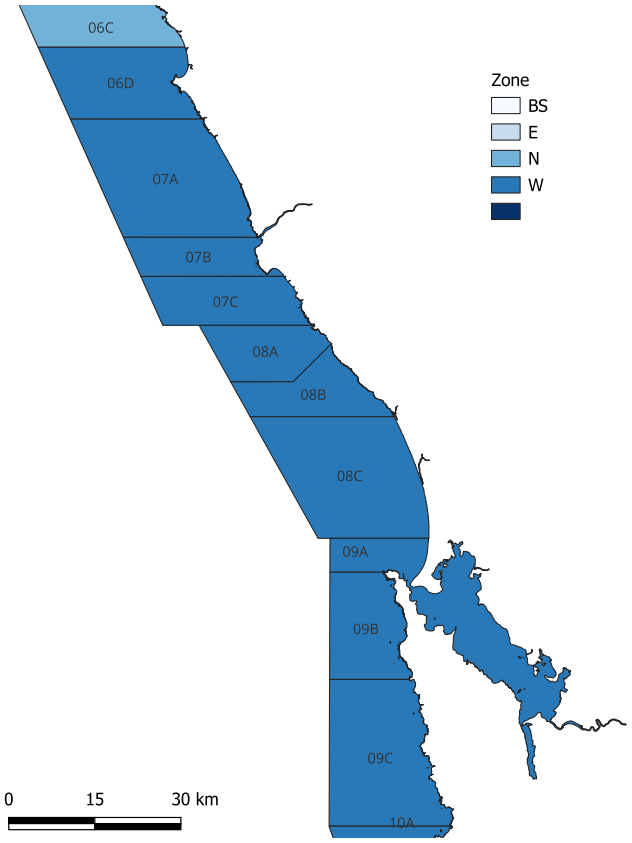


Figure F.4: *Map of South West blocks*

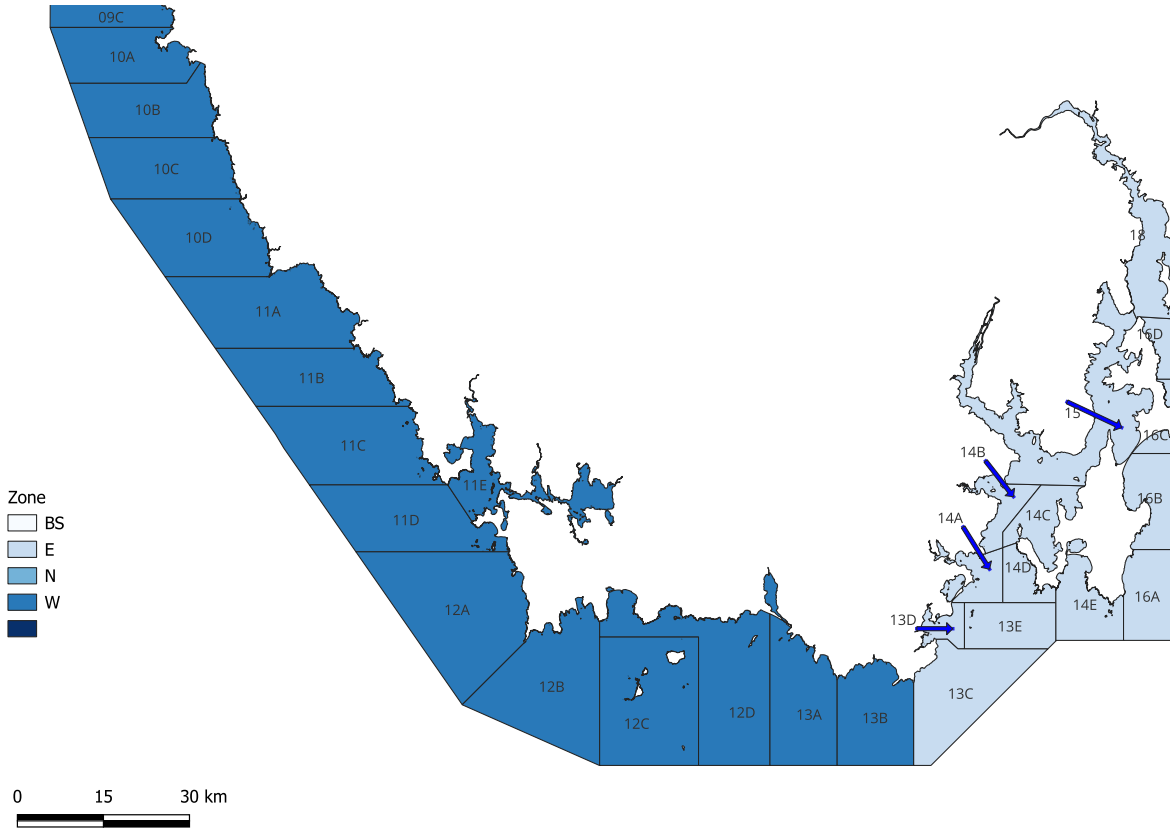


Figure F.5: *Map of South East blocks*

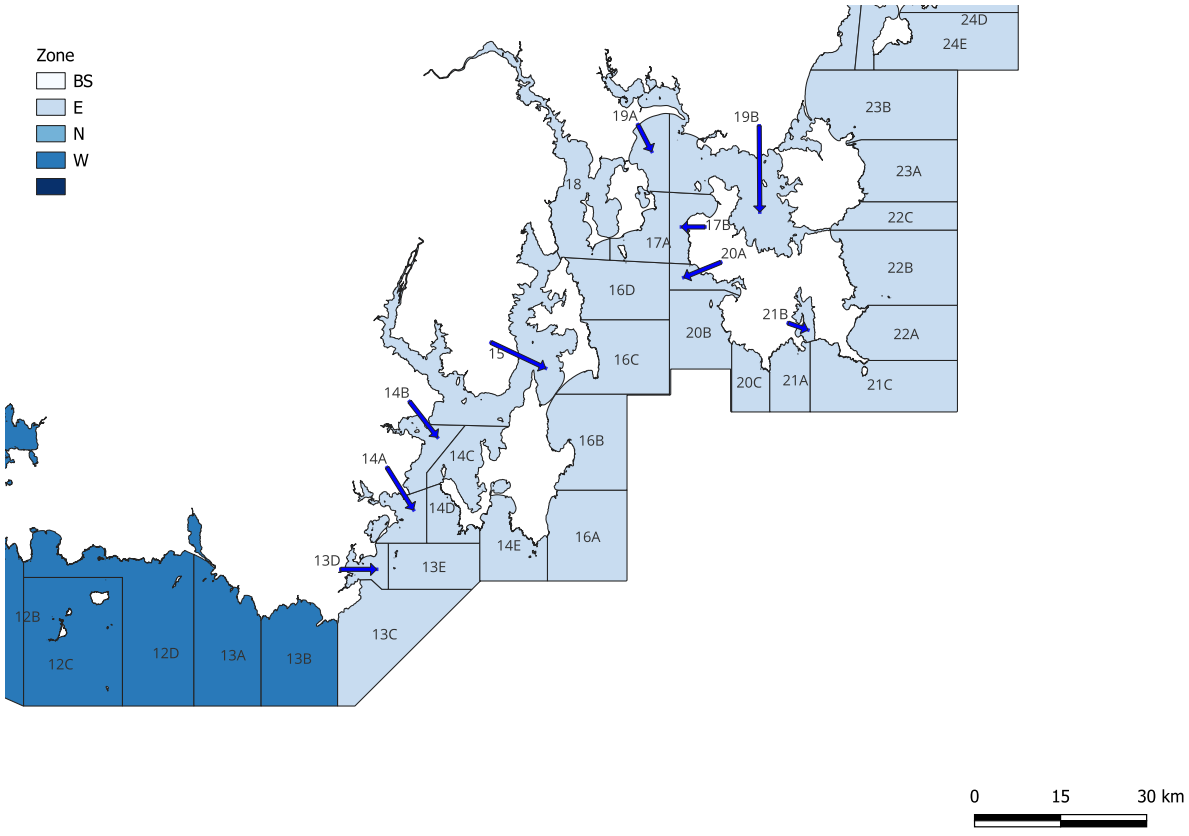


Figure F.6: *Map of Upper East Coast blocks*

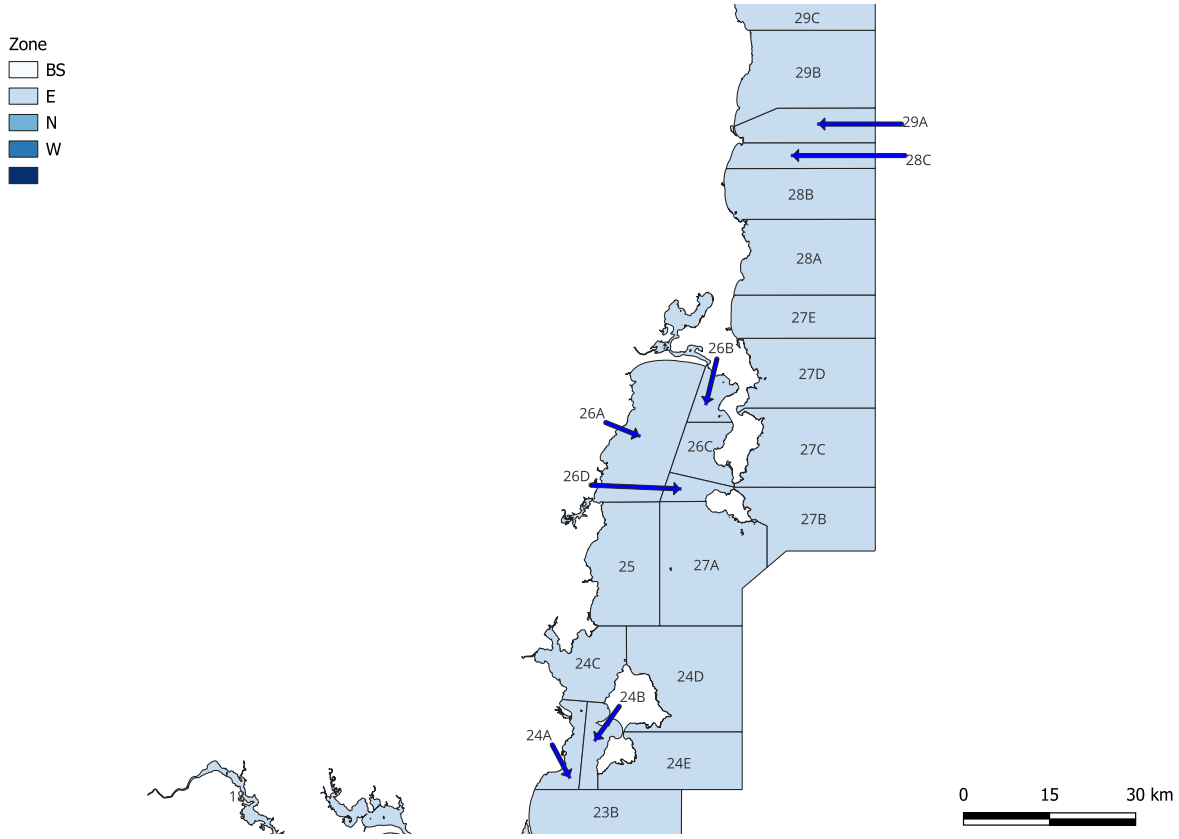


Figure F.7: *Map of North East blocks*

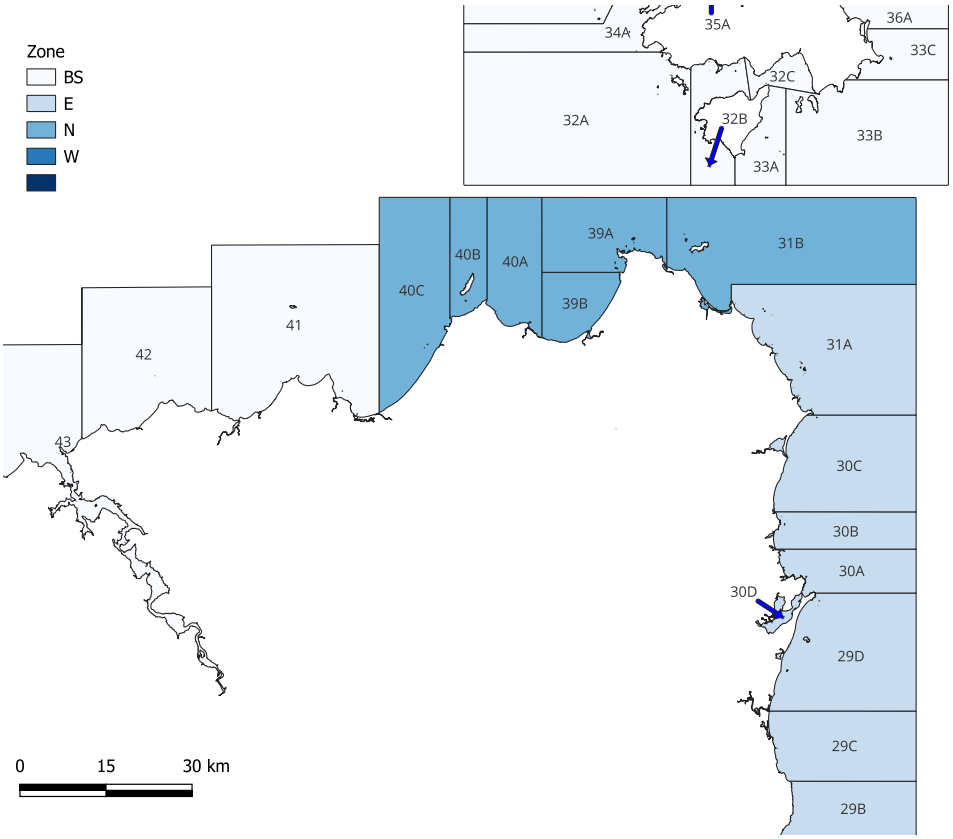


Figure F.8: *Map of Furneaux Group blocks*

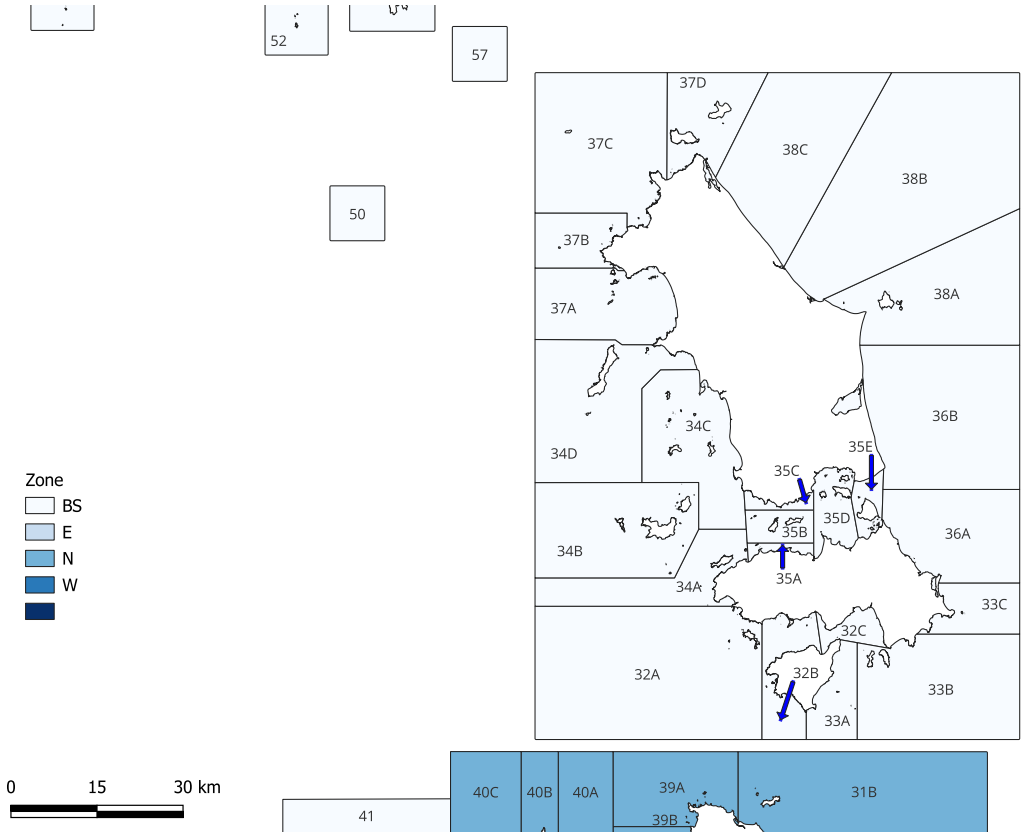
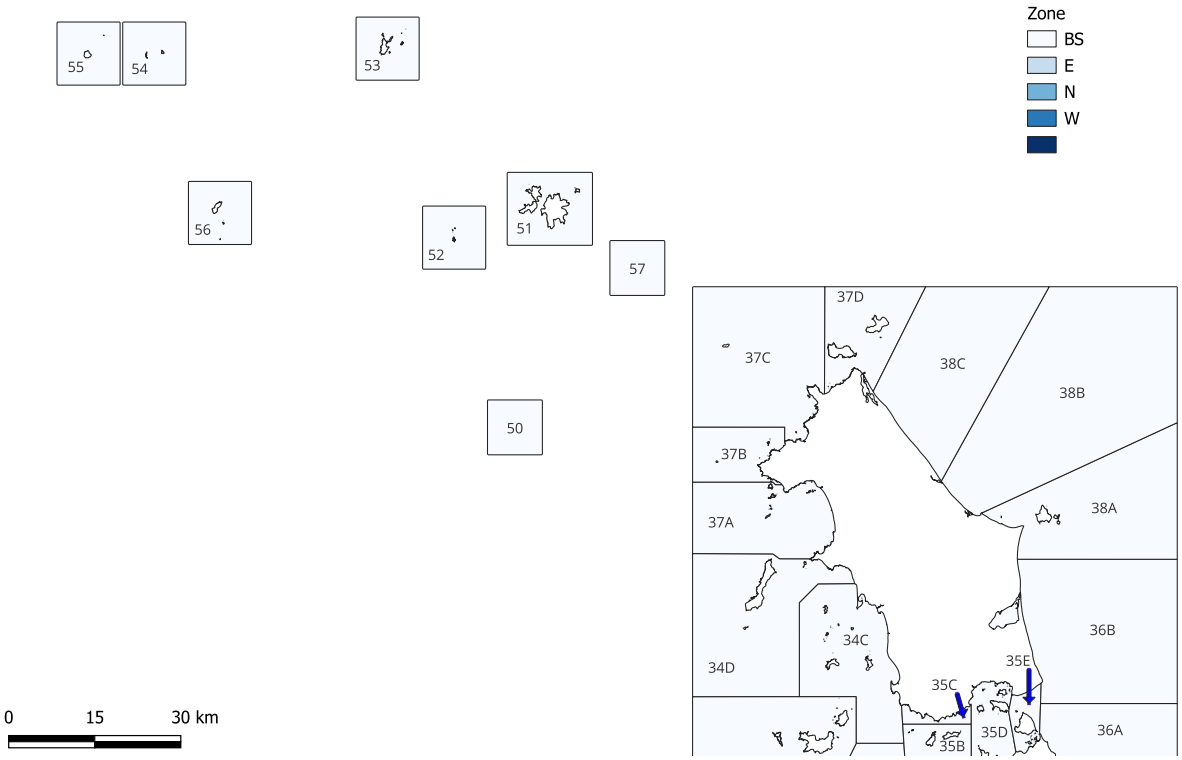


Figure F.9: *Map of Bass Strait Island blocks*



Appendix G

Commercial size limits for blacklip and greenlip abalone, 2023

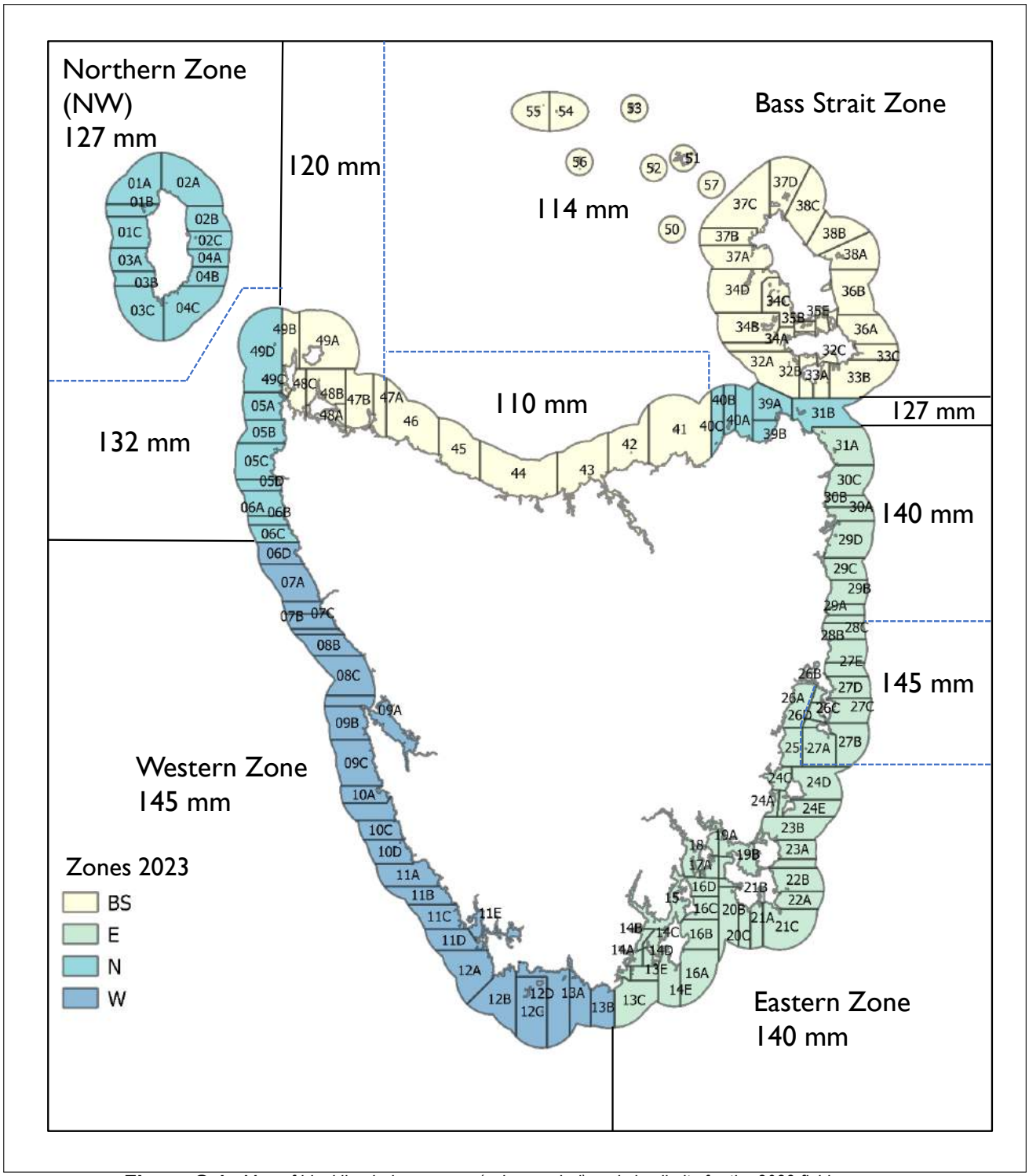


Figure G.1: *Map of blacklip abalone zones (colour coded) and size limits for the 2023 fishing year.*

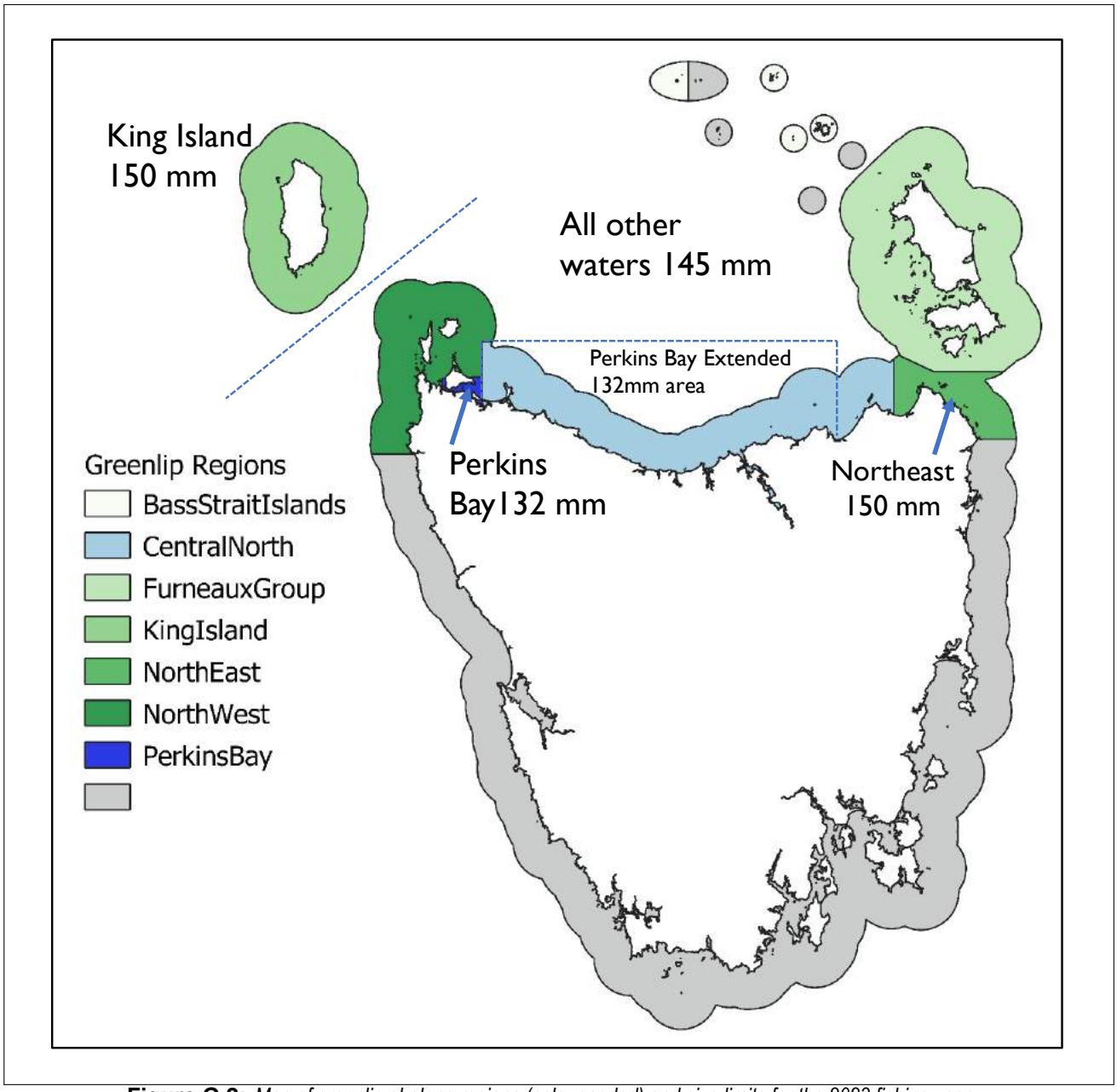


Figure G.2: *Map of greenlip abalone regions (colour coded) and size limits for the 2023 fishing year.*

Appendix H

2024 TACC Recommendations

The following tables provide a summary of the 2024 TACC recommended at the Abalone Fishery Core Group (AFCG) meeting held on the 2nd November 2023 at the NRE Lands Building, Hobart TAS. Recommendations are based on data available from the NRE FILMS database to 30th October 2023. Final TACC 2024 figures were subjected to rounding such that the recommended TACC was divisible by 3500 (the number of quota units in the fishery).

Table H.1: *Summary of 2024 TAC recommendations from the Abalone Fishery Core Group (AFCG) meeting held on the 2nd November 2023. AFCG and IMAS TACC 2024 is based on data available from NRE FILMS to 30th October 2023. Note: the IMAS TACC 2024 exludes Blocks where there were insufficient catch data to trigger the MCDA. The final 2024 TACC and kg/unit were subjected to rounding (Rnd) such that the recommended AFCG TACC was divisible by 3500 (the number of quota units in the fishery). The TACC Adj. represents the difference in the 2023 and 2024 TACC.*

Zone	TACC 2023	AFCG TACC 2024	IMAS TACC 2024	kg/unit 2024	kg/unit 2024 Rnd	TACC 2024 Rnd	TACC Adj. (t)	TACC Adj. %
Eastern Blacklip	227.5	229.33	224.33	65.5	66	231.0	3.5	2%
Western Blacklip	311.5	293.04	272.87	83.7	84	294.0	-17.5	-6%
Northern Blacklip	59.5	64.45	50.55	18.4	18	63.0	3.5	6%
Bass Strait Blacklip	84.0	81.97	51.92	23.4	23	80.5	-3.5	-4%
Greenlip	91.0	88.36	95.29	25.2	25	87.5	-3.5	-4%
State-wide	773.5	757.16	694.96	216.3	216	756.0	-17.5	-2%

Table H.2: *Eastern Zone Catch, CPUE, Harvest Strategy scores and recommended TACC for 2024 based on available data to 30th October 2023 at the time of AFCG meeting. CPUE Targets are based on the 55th percentile of standardised annual mean CPUE, with a weighting of 65:25:10 on CPUE, Gradient 4 and Gradient 1 performance measures respectively. Final TACC 2024 figures were subjected to rounding such that the recommended TACC was divisible by 3500 (the number of quota units in the fishery).*

Block No	Catch 2022	Catch Targ	Catch YTD	CPUE YTD	Score CPUE	Score Grad4	Score Grad1	Score	HS adj	IMAS adj	AFCG adj	MCDA 2024	IMAS 2024	AFCG 2024
13	146.4	146.9	93.0	84.0	6.8	5.9	5.2	6.4	1.05	1.05	1.05	154.2	154.2	154.2
14	20.0	24.5	10.5	58.8	3.6	3.3	3.4	3.5	0.85	0.85	0.85	20.8	20.8	20.8
17	2.7	4.0									1.00	0.0	0.0	4.0
19	0.7	1.0									1.00	0.0	0.0	1.0
20	21.2	21.0	14.4	77.4	5.7	5.7	1.2	5.3	1.00	1.00	1.00	21.0	21.0	21.0
21	20.1	18.0	16.3	71.0	4.2	5.1	3.8	4.4	0.90	0.90	0.90	16.2	16.2	16.2
28	1.8	2.0	2.7	80.1	6.3			0.0		1.00	1.00	0.0	2.0	2.0
29	6.7	5.1	7.2	80.3	6.4	4.9	2.5	5.6	1.00	1.00	1.00	5.1	5.1	5.1
31	1.9	5.0	3.6	81.9	5.5	4.9	2.5	5.0	1.00	1.00	1.00	5.0	5.0	5.0
Total	221.6	227.5	147.8									222.3	224.3	229.3

Table H.3: *Western Zone Catch, CPUE, Harvest Strategy scores and recommended TACC for 2024 based on available data to 30th October 2023 at the time of AFCG meeting. CPUE Targets are based on the 55th percentile of standardised annual mean CPUE, with a weighting of 65:25:10 on CPUE, Gradient 4 and Gradient 1 performance measures respectively. Final TACC 2024 figures were subjected to rounding such that the recommended TACC was divisible by 3500 (the number of quota units in the fishery).*

Block No	Catch 2022	Catch Targ	Catch YTD	CPUE YTD	Score CPUE	Score Grad4	Score Grad1	Score	HS adj	IMAS adj	AFCG adj	MCDA 2024	IMAS 2024	AFCG 2024
6	11.2	10.5	3.6	114.9	4.5	8.1	4.9	5.4	1.00	1.00	1.00	10.5	10.5	10.5
7	23.9	22.0	8.3	133.3	4.1	6.8	5.1	4.9	0.90	0.90	0.90	19.8	19.8	19.8
8	4.1	9.3	1.2					0.0			1.00	0.0	0.0	9.3
9	32.9	43.6	12.6	125.4	3.1	6.3	3.7	4.0	0.85	0.85	0.85	37.1	37.1	37.1
10	54.3	40.7								0.90	1.00	0.0	36.6	40.7
11	83.1	68.3	39.2	105.6	2.9	6.8	7.3	4.3	0.90	0.90	1.00	61.5	61.5	68.3
12A	14.9	9.6	15.0	125.8	5.8	9.2	9.7	7.1	1.10	1.00	1.00	10.6	9.6	9.6
12B	11.2	4.9	11.0	109.4	5.7	9.3	10.0	7.0	1.10	1.00	1.00	5.4	4.9	4.9
12C	63.5	69.2	21.5	137.0	2.8	4.8	3.1	3.4	0.85	0.85	0.85	58.8	58.8	58.8
12D	15.3	6.5	15.2	95.8	4.8	9.2	8.6	6.3	1.05	1.00	1.00	6.8	6.5	6.5
13	21.4	27.5	16.5	98.8	4.5	6.1	5.5	5.0	1.00	1.00	1.00	27.5	27.5	27.5
Total	335.8	312.2	144.2									238.0	272.9	293.0

Table H.4: *Northern Zone Catch, CPUE, Harvest Strategy scores and recommended TACC for 2024 based on available data to 30th October 2023 at the time of AFCG meeting. CPUE Targets are based on the 55th percentile of standardised annual mean CPUE, with a weighting of 65:25:10 on CPUE, Gradient 4 and Gradient 1 performance measures respectively. Final TACC 2024 figures were subjected to rounding such that the recommended TACC was divisible by 3500 (the number of quota units in the fishery).*

Block No	Catch 2022	Catch Targ	Catch YTD	CPUE YTD	Score CPUE	Score Grad4	Score Grad1	Score	HS adj	IMAS adj	AFCG adj	MCDA 2024	IMAS 2024	AFCG 2024
1	0.4	1.5									1.00	0.0	0.0	1.5
2	0.8	0.0	0.3								1.00	0.0	0.0	0.0
3	3.4	3.0	0.8					0.0			1.00	0.0	0.0	3.0
4	0.2	4.0	0.0								1.00	0.0	0.0	4.0
5	10.5	10.0	8.2	90.0	4.6	9.3	4.8	5.8	1.00	1.00	1.00	10.0	10.0	10.0
6	6.3	1.7	3.2	118.2	5.5	9.3	6.3	6.5	1.05	1.00		1.8	1.7	5.0
31	22.5	23.1	23.2	62.5	5.9	5.2	3.5	5.5	1.00	1.00	1.00	23.1	23.1	23.1
39	4.7	5.2	4.2	42.9	5.5	5.8	3.3	5.3	1.00	1.00	1.00	5.2	5.2	5.2
40											1.00	0.0	0.0	0.0
49	9.8	10.5	4.1	92.4	10.0	8.2	6.3	9.2	1.20	1.00	1.20	12.6	10.5	12.6
Total	58.6	59.1	44.1									52.7	50.6	64.5

Table H.5: *Bass Strait Zone Catch, CPUE, Harvest Strategy scores and recommended TACC for 2024 based on available data to 30th October 2023 at the time of AFCG meeting. CPUE Targets are based on the 55th percentile of standardised annual mean CPUE, with a weighting of 65:25:10 on CPUE, Gradient 4 and Gradient 1 performance measures respectively. Final TACC 2024 figures were subjected to rounding such that the recommended TACC was divisible by 3500 (the number of quota units in the fishery).*

Block No	Catch 2022	Catch Targ	Catch YTD	CPUE YTD	Score CPUE	Score Grad4	Score Grad1	Score	HS adj	IMAS adj	AFCG adj	MCDA 2024	IMAS 2024	AFCG 2024
32	0.9	1.1	0.1								1.00	0.0	0.0	1.1
33	12.7	16.9	12.7	60.3	2.5	4.1	2.2	2.9	0.80	0.80	0.80	13.5	13.5	13.5
34	0.7	0.0									1.00	0.0	0.0	0.0
35	1.1	0.0	0.7								1.00	0.0	0.0	0.0
36	0.9	2.0	2.5								1.00	0.0	0.0	2.0
37	2.3	2.0									1.00	0.0	0.0	2.0
38	15.9	20.0	22.2	133.6	10.0	5.5	6.1	8.5	1.15	1.15	1.15	23.0	23.0	23.0
41	1.8	0.0	0.2								1.00	0.0	0.0	0.0
42	0.3	0.0	0.9								1.00	0.0	0.0	0.0
43	2.2	2.5	0.7					0.0			1.00	0.0	0.0	2.5
44	0.3	1.0									1.00	0.0	0.0	1.0
45	0.3	0.0									1.00	0.0	0.0	0.0
47											1.00	0.0	0.0	0.0
48	3.9	4.4	3.1	60.9	6.9	8.3	4.1	7.0	1.05	1.00	1.00	4.6	4.4	4.4
49	16.1	11.0	14.8	96.0	5.5	6.3	4.4	5.6	1.00	1.00	1.00	11.0	11.0	11.0
51	2.6	5.5	1.4								1.00	0.0	0.0	5.5
53	14.8	16.0	1.6					0.0			1.00	0.0	0.0	16.0
55	1.4										1.00			
56	2.6		0.5								1.00			
Total	80.7	82.4	61.5									52.1	51.9	82.0

Table H.6: *Greenlip Zone Catch, CPUE, Harvest Strategy scores and recommended TACC for 2024 based on available data to 30th October 2023 at the time of AFCG meeting. CPUE Targets are based on the 55th percentile of standardised annual mean CPUE, with a weighting of 65:25:10 on CPUE, Gradient 4 and Gradient 1 performance measures respectively. Final TACC 2024 figures were subjected to rounding such that the recommended TACC was divisible by 3500 (the number of quota units in the fishery).*

Region	Catch 2022	Catch Targ	Catch YTD	CPUE YTD	Score CPUE	Score Grad4	Score Grad1	Score	HS adj	IMAS adj	AFCG adj	MCDA 2024	IMAS 2024	AFCG 2024
KI	20.1	18.0	19.4	58.1	5.4	5.3	4.0	5.2	1.00	1.00	1.00	18.0	18.0	18.0
NW	13.0	12.0	15.3	60.5	5.1	10.0	7.5	6.5	1.05	1.00	1.00	12.6	12.0	12.0
PB	0.7	0.0										0.0	0.0	1.0
CI	0.1	0.0	0.2					0.0				0.0	0.0	1.0
NE	34.7	20.9	17.8	52.9	6.1	3.7	1.6	5.0	1.00	1.00	0.85	20.9	20.9	17.8
FG	21.4	38.6	26.7	67.7	9.0	8.0	5.8	8.4	1.15	1.15	1.00	44.4	44.4	38.6
BS	0.1	0.0	0.0									0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	90.1	89.5	79.4									95.9	95.3	88.4

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