



Update: Regulation Change Considerations for Barred Sand Bass

7 November 2024

Presented to:

Marine Resources Committee
CA Fish and Game Commission

Presented by:

Armand Barilotti
Environmental Scientist
CDFW Marine Region



Life History

- Barred sand bass (*Paralabrax nebulifer*, referred as BSB hereon).
- Range: southern Baja California, Mexico to Santa Cruz, California; rare north of Pt. Conception.
- Habitat: coastal rocky reef, soft bottom, and bays.
 - Preference for ecotone where reef meets soft bottom.
- Size: up to 67 cm (26.4 in) and 6 kg (13 lb).
- Mature by 27 cm (10.6 in) and 5 years old.
- Life span: up to 25 years.
- Small home range:
 - 2,682–240,000 m² (0.66 – 59 ac).
- Migrate to form spawning aggregations in summer months over soft bottom habitat.

Photo Credit M. Haggerty, CDFW

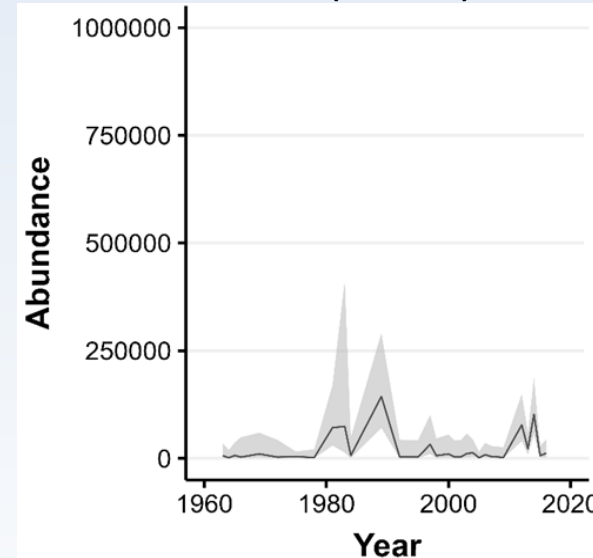




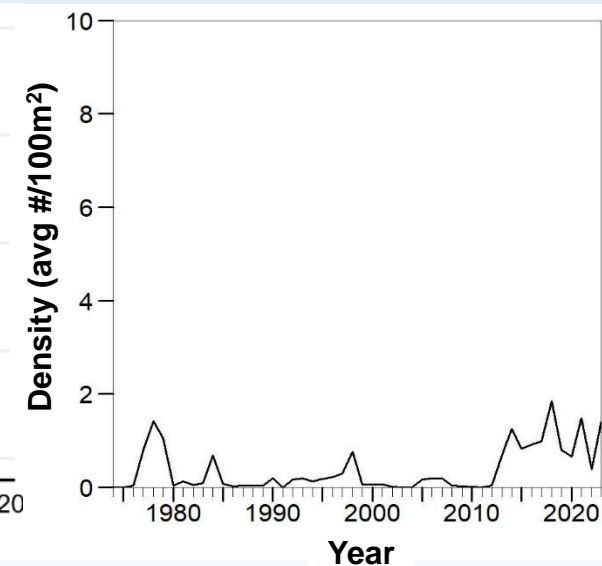
BSB Spawning and Recruitment

- Spawning peaks June through August.
- BSB show minimal annual recruitment.
- Sporadic recruitment from Mexico.
 - 4 major recruitment events in last 60 years .
 - Can occur when upwelling in northern Baja CA is interrupted during warm water years.
- Kelp Bass have higher (~6x) annual baseline recruitment.

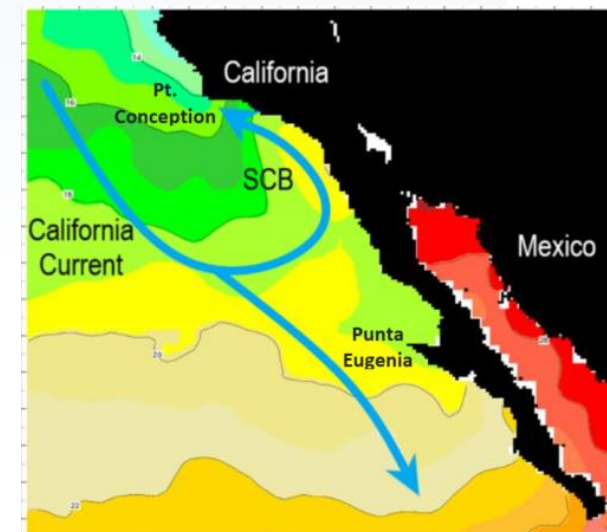
CalCOFI
(larvae)



VRG King Harbor
(BSB < 20 cm)



Jarvis Mason et al. 2024



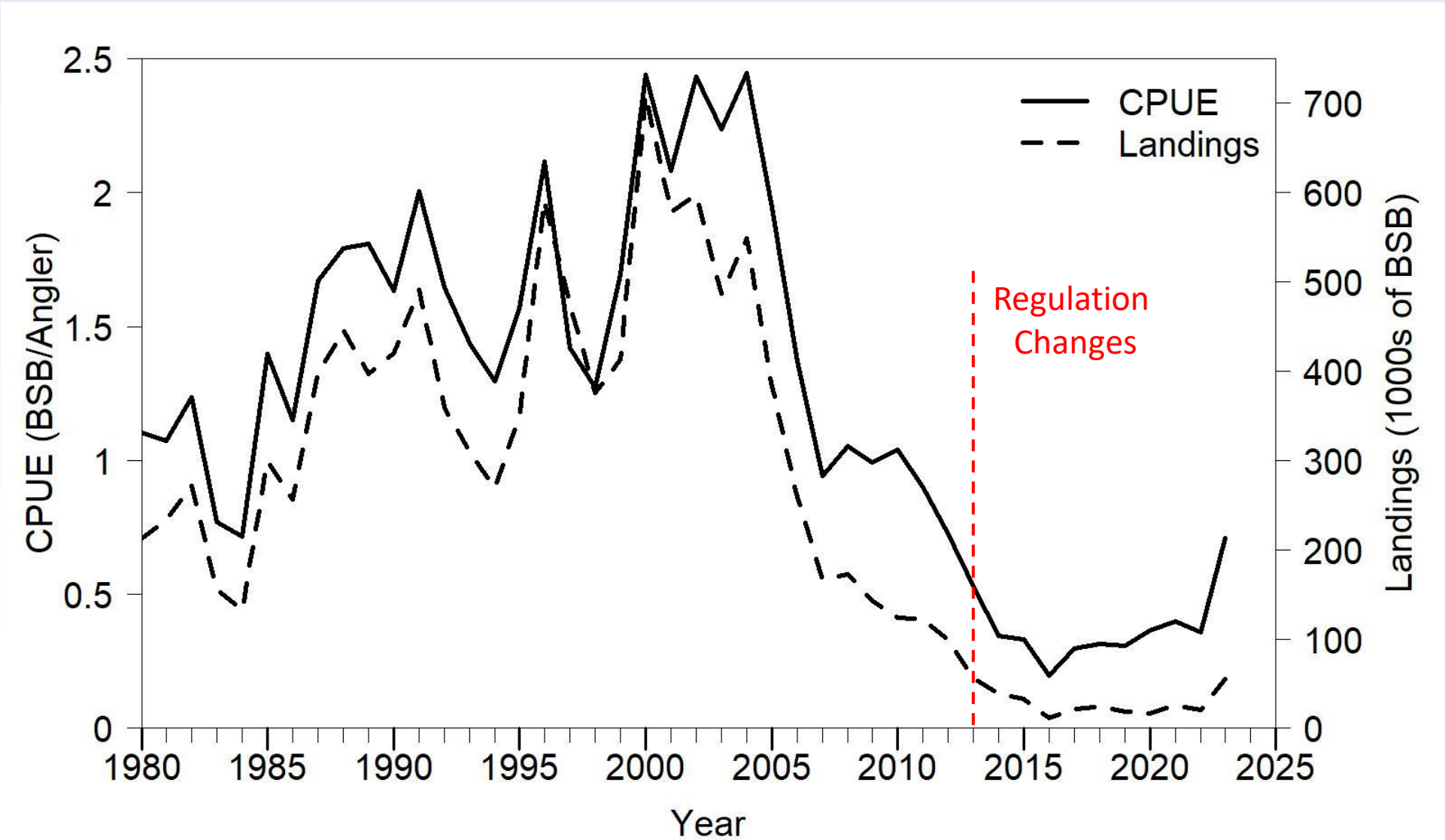


Current Bass (*Paralabrax sp.*) Regulations

- CCR, Title 14, Section 28.30. Kelp Bass, Barred Sand Bass (BSB) and Spotted Sand Bass
 - a. Minimum size: Fourteen inches total length or 10 inches alternate length.
 - b. Limit: Five in any combination of species.
- Effective March 1, 2013
 - Enacted to help protect and recover BSB & kelp bass.
 - Seasonal closure for BSB was recommended by CDFW but rejected by the Fish and Game Commission.

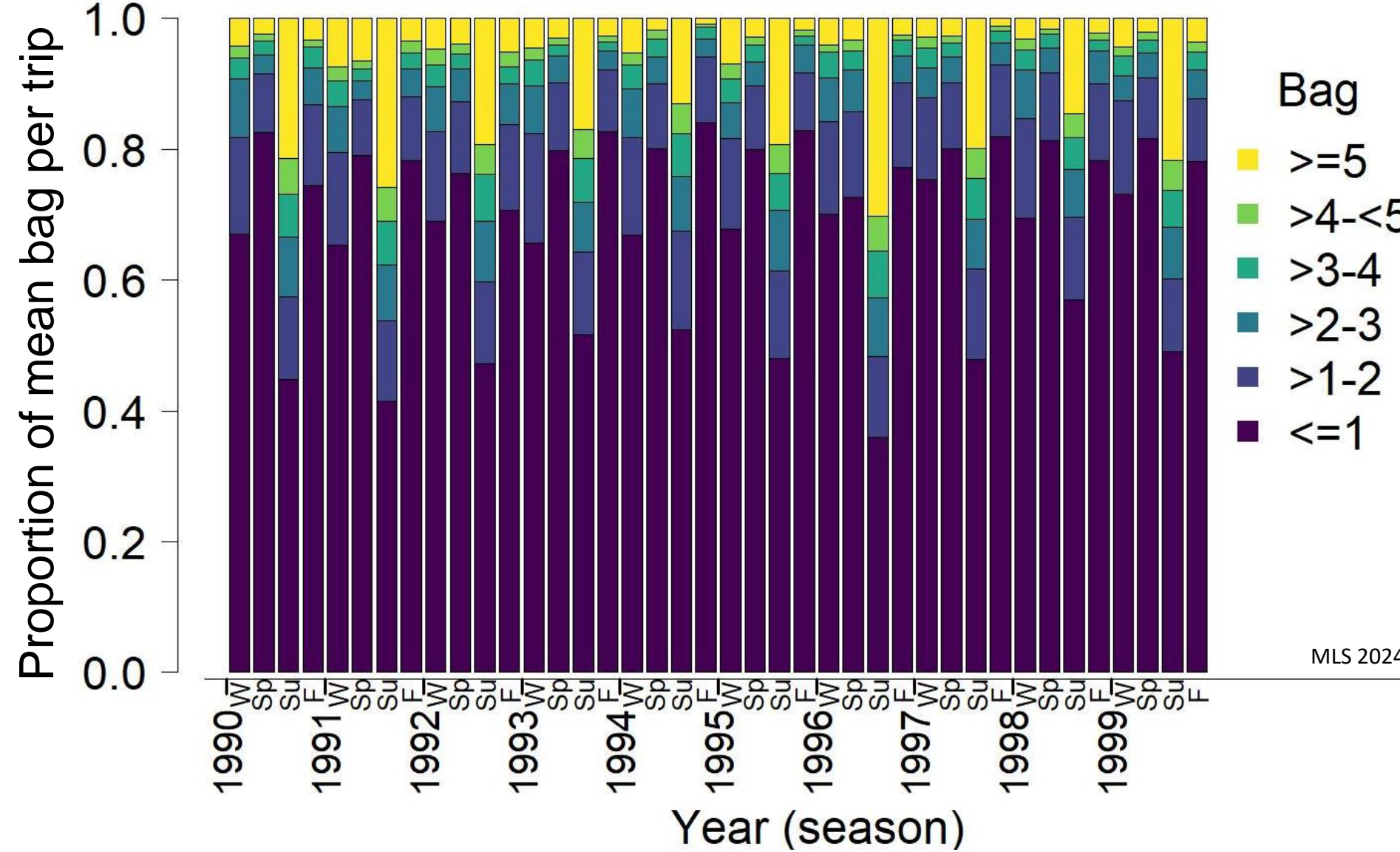


BSB CPFV Landings 1980 - 2023





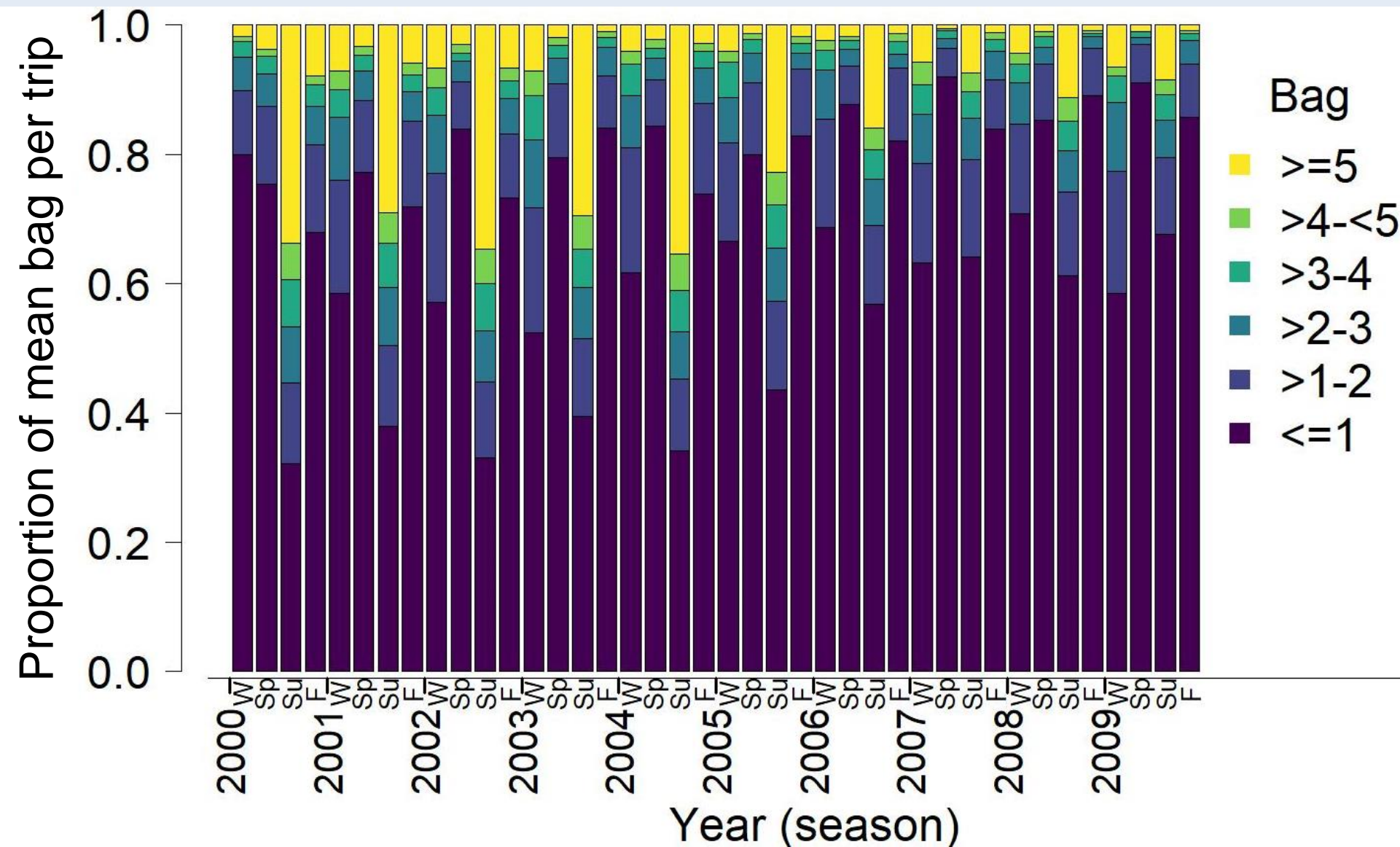
1990s Mean BSB Bag per Trip



- Bag = # BSB / # anglers
- W = Dec – Feb
- Sp = Mar – May
- Su = June – Aug
- F = Sept - Nov



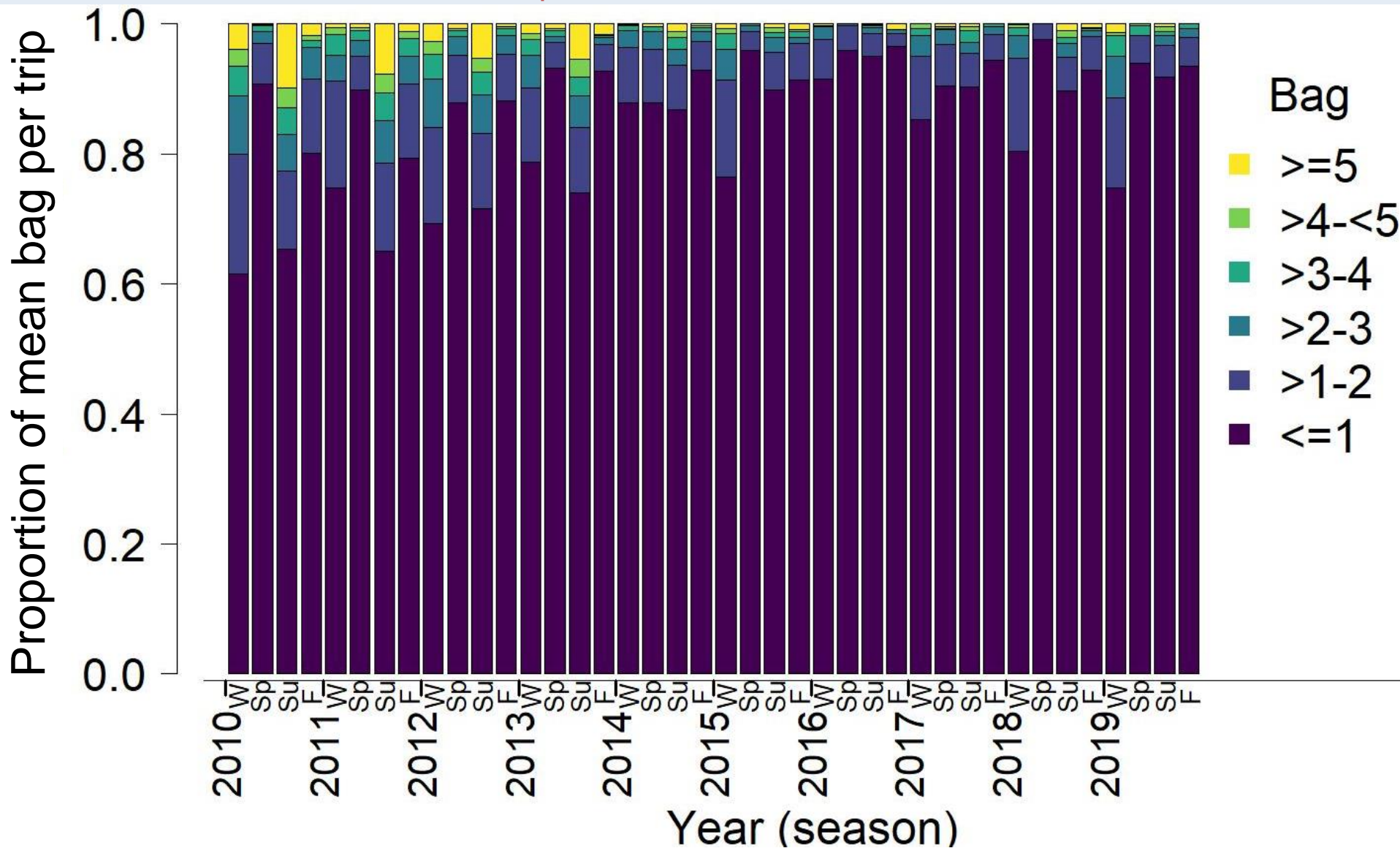
2000s Mean BSB Bag per Trip





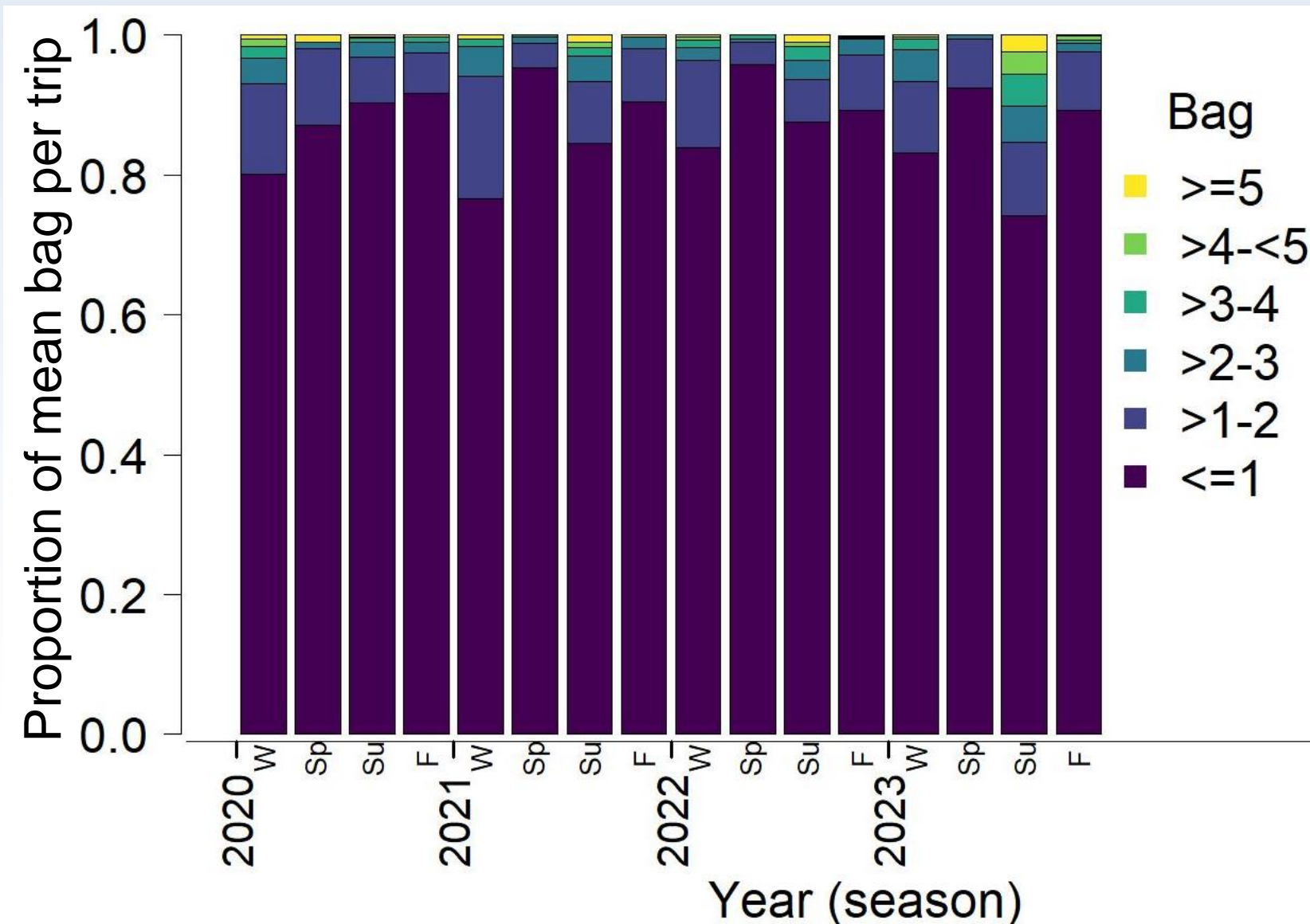
2010s Mean BSB Bag per Trip

Regulation change





2020s Mean BSB Bag per Trip





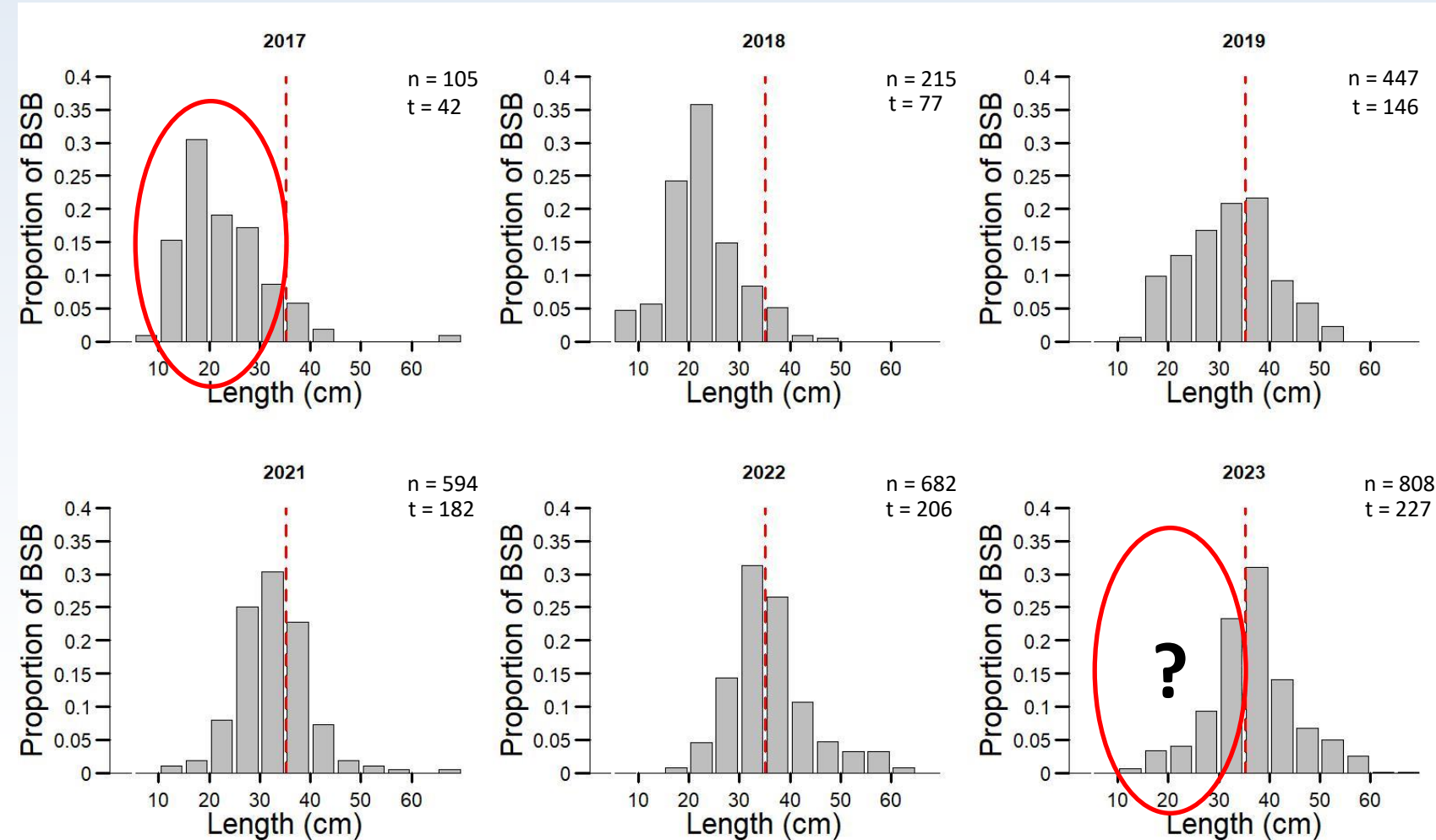
CDFW BSB Dive Surveys 2017 - 2023

- 10 sand/reef ecotone sites from San Diego to Santa Monica Bay.
 - 6 artificial reefs.
 - 4 natural reefs.
 - 3 MPAs.
- Survey Sept – Nov.
 - Sample each site monthly.
 - Minimum of 3 transects per site visit.





CDFW BSB Dive Surveys 2017 – 2023 (cont.)



- No sizeable recruitment pulse behind these legal fish as seen in previous years.
- With less recruitment, increased fishing success on these spawning aggregations is potentially unsustainable.

CDFW unpublished data 2024



Outreach

Engagement category	Stakeholder Group	Format	Date
Presentation & discussion	Fishing industry (SAC, CCA CA)	Remote	Feb. 20, 2024
Presentation & discussion	BSB Researchers	Remote	Feb. 21, 2024
Presentation & discussion	Fishing industry	Remote	Apr. 30, 2024
Tribal notification	Tribal leaders and representatives	Letter	Jul. 8, 2024
Working group meeting	Fishing industry, BSB researchers, CDFW	Hybrid	Sept. 4, 2024
Working group meeting update	Fishing industry, BSB researchers, CDFW	Remote	Oct. 7, 2024



BSB Working Group

- Goals:
 - Improve understanding of the current status of the BSB population and fishery.
 - Develop a shared understanding of the current need for a conservation measure.
 - Identify information gaps and strategies to collaborate on future data collection.
 - Support an open collaborative process (now and in the future) to share information on the species and fishery.



Potential Regulation Options

- Adopt an interim regulation for the next three years to explore more management procedures with MSE.
- Table shows potential regulation options and how they would have changed the 2023 BSB CPFV landings (55,409 BSB landed in 2023).

BSB bag limit options	% BSB saved	# BSB saved
5 year-round (no change)	0%	0
4 year-round	3.5%	1,990
3 year-round	11.2%	6,227
3 June-Aug, 5 Sept-May	10.5%	5,836
0 June-Aug, 2 Sept-May (original proposal)	76.1%	42,151



Recommendation and Next Steps

- Year-round bag limit of 4 BSB, with no more than 5 bass in combination, with a sunset of 3 years
- Notice = December 10-11, 2024
- Discussion = February 2025
- Adoption = April 2025, effective by June 1, 2025
- Continue to work with stakeholders to fill priority research gaps and develop a long-term conservation strategy that is based on best available science to protect BSB spawning aggregations.

Thank You

Armand Barilotti

Environmental Scientist

Southern California Fisheries Research
and Management Project

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Marine Region

Email: AskMarine@Wildlife.ca.gov

Enhanced Status Report:

<https://marinespecies.wildlife.ca.gov/barred-sand-bass/true/>