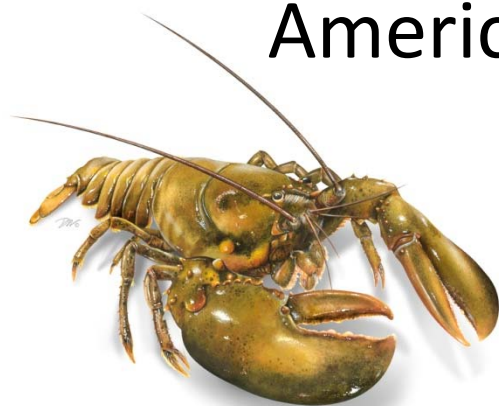




Draft Addendum XXIII

American Lobster Management Board

August 2014



Background



- Draft Addendum XXIII contains information on habitat needs for American lobster and does not include any proposed management changes.
- Developed at the recommendation of the Commission's Habitat Committee to update Amendment 3's habitat section to include information on the habitat requirements and tolerances of American lobster by life stage.

Habitat Components



- The Draft Addendum focuses on Habitat Components.
- Those elements that play a vital role in the reproduction, growth and sustainability of commercial and recreational fisheries by providing shelter, feeding, spawning, and nursery grounds for lobsters to survive.
 - Temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, pH, light and photoperiod, substrate, oceanographic conditions, and diet



Habitat Components



- For each component, a description and summary of habitat requirements, tolerances, and potential effects on lobsters is described for their early-life stages, juveniles, and adults

Category	Life-Stage	Threshold Value
Temperature	Eggs	<5°C winter, 10-12°C hatching
	Larvae	10-12°C
	Juveniles/Adults	5-18°C, preference ~ 16°C, 20.5°C stressed
Salinity	Eggs/Larvae	< 17 ppt
	Juveniles/Adults	< 12 ppt
Dissolved Oxygen	Larvae	< 1 mgO ₂ L ⁻¹
	Juveniles/Adults	< 2 ppm
pH	Larvae	< 7.7 (Stages I – IV)
	Juveniles/Adults	n/a

Impacts to Components



- The Draft Addendum also addresses impacts to the HC's including:
 - Anthropogenic and Ecological (dredging and dumping, energy and transportation projects, pollution and water Quality, and fishing)
 - Climate Change
- Habitat Bottlenecks
- Habitat Enhancement
- Recommendations for Further Habitat Research
- Recommendations for Monitoring and Managing Lobster Habitat

Public Comment



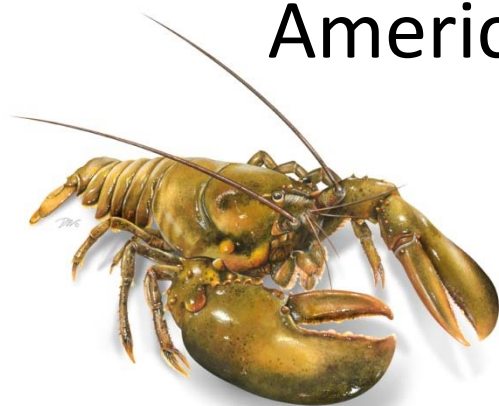
- Public comment period ran from October 30 – December 30, 2013.
- No public comments were received.



Cancer Crab PID

American Lobster Management Board

August 2014



Public Information Document



- Management Issues
- Purpose
- Statement of the Problem
- Description of Resource
- Issues for Public Comment



Management Issues



- In May, the Policy Board initiated the development of a FMP for Cancer Crabs
- Due to the similarities in appearance between Jonah crab and rock crab, both species could be managed together through the Commission's process throughout their range.



Management Issues



- The initiation of the FMP was based on recommendations from the Jonah Crab Fishery Improvement Project (FIP).
- The FIP conducted a pre-assessment benchmark against the MSC sustainable seafood criteria and organized a working group to prioritize threats to Jonah crab and develop potential management measures to address these threats.

Purpose



- The purpose of the PID is to inform the public of the Commission's intent to gather information concerning the Cancer Crab fisheries and to provide an opportunity for the public to identify major issues and alternatives relative to the management of this species
- The underlying question for public comment is: **“How would you like the Cancer Crab fishery and population to look in the future?”**

Statement of the Problem



- While Jonah crab has long been considered a bycatch of the lobster industry, in recent years there has been increasing targeted fishing pressure and growing market demand.
- The status of the Jonah crab fishery in federal or state waters is relatively unknown.
- In the absence of a comprehensive management plan and stock assessment, harvest of Jonah crab may compromise the sustainability of the resource.

Status of the Stocks



- No range wide stock assessment.
- Stock assessment conducted by **RI** found $F > F_{msy}$ level, but biomass was above the B_{msy} level, **so was not considered overfished at this time.**
 - However, the fishery primarily occurs in federal waters and the assessment focused on state waters.
- MA, ME, and NH conduct **inshore state water trawl surveys** which are primarily focused on finfish and **only infrequently encounter** cancer crab species.
- NOAA Fisheries conducts a trawl survey in federal waters which collects data on cancer crab abundance and distribution, distinguished by species;
 - **This data has not yet been analyzed.**

Description of Management



- **Management for the fishery varies from state-to-state.**
- **Commercial:**
 - No maximum landing size restriction in any state
 - All states require some form of commercial catch reporting
 - Commercial licensing in some states is linked to the lobster fishery.
 - In federal waters, commercial harvest of Jonah crab is unregulated.
- **Recreational:**
 - Harvest is allowed in all states.
 - MA, NY, NJ, and MD have varying harvest limits, while the remaining states do not have any.
 - Limits on traps and licensing varies by state.
 - In federal waters, recreational harvest of Jonah crab is unregulated.

Table 1

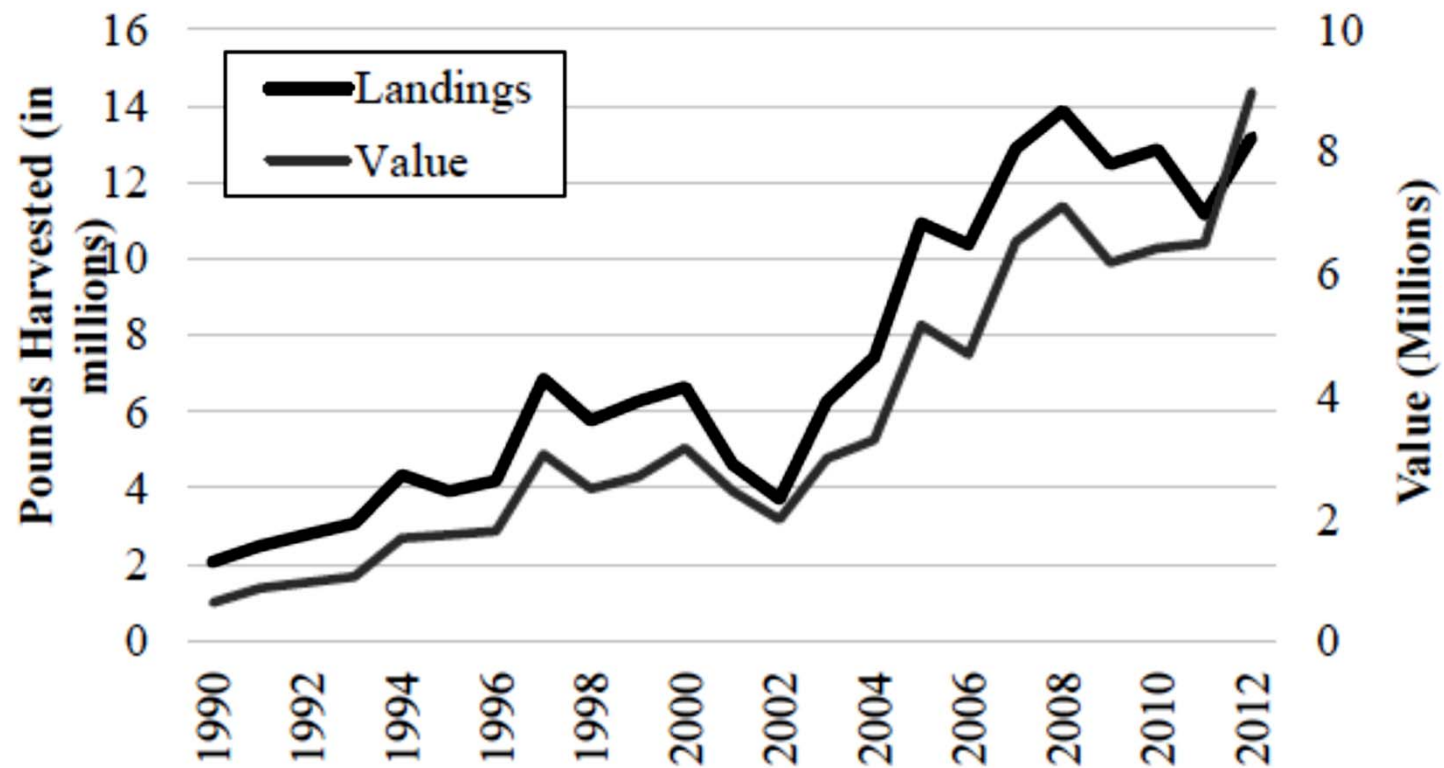


	Comm Trap Limit	Comm Trap Restrictions	Comm License Required	Comm Min Size	Comm Sex Restrictions	Comm Closed Seasons	Comm Harvest Limit	Rec License	Rec Harvest Limit	Rec Trap Limit
ME	Lobster Limit	Lobster Traps	Yes	None	None	Dec 30 - Apr 1 in rivers	200 pounds/day or 500 pounds/trip	No - hand harvest; Yes - traps	No	5 traps
NH	Lobster Limit (1,200)	Lobster Traps	Yes	None	None	No	No	Yes (if more than 12 taken)	No	No
MA	Lobster Limit	Lobster Traps	Yes	None	No egg bearers	Jan 1 0 Apr 30 in state waters	No	No - hand harvest; Yes - traps/SCUBA	25/day	10 traps
RI	No	No	Yes	None	No egg bearers	No	No	Yes	No	No
CT		Lobster Traps	Yes	3.5" to 5" (varies by hardness)	No egg bearers	Open Apr 1 - Dec 15	No	yes	No	10 traps per day
NY	No	Escape panel required	No	3" - 4.5" (varies by hardness)	No egg bearers	No	50/day	No	50/day	No
NJ	No	Biodegradable panel required	Yes	3" - 4.5" (varies by hardness)	No egg bearers	Yes	No	Yes	One bushel/day	yes
MD	No	Turtle BRD and escape panel required	No	3.5" to 5" (varies by hardness)	No female harvest at certain times	Open Apr 1 - Dec 15	25 bushels per vessel/day	No	3 bushels hard crabs; 2 dozen soft crabs	No
VA	No	No	No	None	No	No	No	No	No	No

Description of the Fishery



- The value of Jonah crab has increased recently, resulting in higher landings.
 - In 2012 the fishery was estimated to be worth over \$8 million.



Description of the Fishery



- Landings of rock crabs have fluctuated between approximately 1 and 5 million pounds since 1990.
- Landings in 2012 were 1.7 million pounds and estimated at ~\$830,000.

Issues for Public Comment



- If approved, public comment will be collected on a series of issues being considered for inclusion in the FMP.
- The issues included in the PID are intended to focus the public comment and provide the Board with the necessary input to develop a FMP.

#1 Consistent Coastwide Mgmt?



- Currently states manage their cancer crab fisheries independently of one another.
- **Management Questions**
 - Is consistent coastwide management needed for the cancer crab fishery?
 - Should management of cancer crab be coordinated through the Commission?
 - Are there regional differences in the fishery and/or in the cancer crab stock that need to be considered when implementing management measures?
 - Should the Commission include management of rock crab with the management of Jonah crab?

Issue #2 Objectives?



- The Commission could considering the following management objectives:
 - A. Provide a management plan that strives, to the extent practicable, to maintain coastwide consistency to implement measures, but allows the states limited flexibility to implement alternative strategies that accomplish the objectives of the FMP
 - B. Define and foster a quality recreational fishery and an economically viable commercial fishery.
 - C. Maximize cost effectiveness of current information gathering and prioritize state obligations in order to minimize costs of monitoring and management.
 - D. Adopt a long-term management regime which minimizes or eliminates the need to make annual changes or modifications to management measures.
- **Management Questions**
 - What should be the objectives in managing cancer crab fisheries through the Commission?

Issue #3 Management Measures?



- The Commission could consider min size restrictions, protection of female Jonah crabs and rec measures.
- **Management Questions**
 - What level of management is appropriate for cancer crabs?
 - Should management be concurrent with monitoring requirements?
 - Should the FMP require a 5” min CW for comm caught Jonah crabs?
 - Should there be a tolerance on the possession for enforcement?
 - Should there be a min CW for rock crab, if so what size range?
 - Should there be a tolerance on the possession for enforcement?
 - Should we prohibit comm harvest of female cancer crabs?
 - Should there be a tolerance on the possession for enforcement?
 - Prohibition on the possession of egg-bearing females?
 - Should there be a tolerance on the possession for enforcement?
 - How should the rec fishery be managed?

Issue #4 Licensing?



- The FIP examined the Jonah crab and lobster fisheries in offshore federal waters and found 98.3% of licensed lobstermen harvest Jonah crab from federal waters.
- **Management Questions**
 - Should the FMP require a license for the comm harvest of cancer crab?
 - For jurisdictions with a lobster fishery, should the FMP require a lobster license in order to comm harvest cancer crabs or should the fishery be licensed separately?
 - Should the directed fishery be limited to those vessels using lobster traps authorized by the lobster FMP?
 - Should harvest by trap fishing vessels using crab traps without lobster trap tags be restricted?
 - Should trip limits be established? If so, should the historic harvesters using vessels deploying lobster traps be given a more liberal trip limit than other gears?
 - Should states require a recreational license to harvest cancer crab?
 - Should harvest for bait purposes be included under a recreational or commercial license?
 - Are there other licensing requirements that should be considered?

Issue #5: Monitoring



- Data collection for cancer crabs varies from state to state and survey to survey.
- **Management Questions**
 - What types of data collection programs should be initiated to monitor the commercial and recreational fishery?
 - What types of fisheries independent data should be collected by the states to help increase understanding of stock status and biology of cancer crabs?
 - Should fishermen be required to report harvest if used for bait purposes?

Issue #6: Emergency Action?



- The FIP recommended that the Commission take emergency action to implement management measures for Jonah crab based on increasing concern of the current and growing market for smaller female Jonah crabs.
- **Management Questions**
 - Should emergency action be taken prior to the finalization of an FMP in order to address concerns of the harvest of small female cancer crabs?
 - If emergency actions are implemented, what should they be?
 - If emergency actions are implemented, when should they begin?

Issue #7: Federal Water?



- There are currently no regulations in federal waters (3-200 miles) for cancer crab fisheries.
- **Management Questions**
- Should management in federal waters be consistent with state waters fisheries?
- What recommendations should the FMP make for federal waters harvest of Cancer crabs?

Issue #8: Other Issues?



- The public may comment on other issues for consideration in the development of the Draft Fishery Management Plan for Cancer Crabs?
- What other issue(s) should be considered in the Draft Cancer Crab FMP?

Timeline



Timeline for Completion of Proposed Cancer Crab FMP

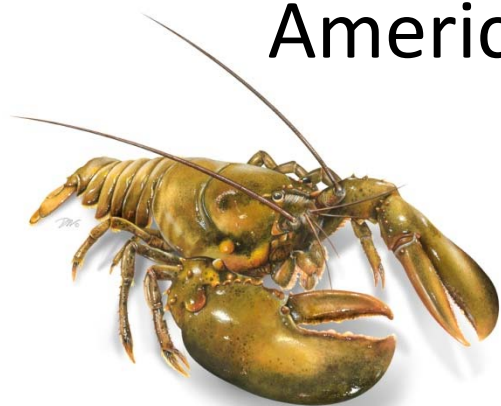
	May 2014	Board tasks the Plan Development Team to develop Public Information Document
Current Step →	August 2014	Board receives the PID and considers approval for public comment
	September - October 2014	Public Comment on the PID
	November 2014	Management Board reviews PID for public comment, considers initiation of Draft FMP. PDT will develop FMP with input from TC and AP.
	February 2015	Management Board reviews Draft FMP for public comment
	March -April 2015	Public comment on Draft FMP
	May 2015	Management Board reviews and considers recommendation of approval of the FMP Full Commission considers approval of the FMP



SNE Reduction Evaluation

American Lobster Management Board

August 2014



Background



- Per Addendum XVII all Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) within Southern New England (SNE) were required to reduce exploitation by 10% in order to address rebuilding.
- The reference base years for evaluating the reduction are 2007 – 2009.



Regulations



- Provided in briefing material
- Area 2 – Mandatory V-notching and immediately release of legal sized egg-bearing female lobsters
- Area 3 – Minimum gauge increases to 3 17/32 inches
- Area 4 – Mandatory V-notching and immediately release of legal sized egg-bearing female lobsters and a season closure to the landing of lobsters from February 1st through March 31st.
- Area 5 - Mandatory V-notching and immediately release of legal sized egg-bearing female lobsters effective June 1, 2012; A season closure to the landing of lobsters from 2/1 – 3/31
- Area 6 - seasonal closure from 9/8 – 11/28

Evaluation



- Not possible for TC to calculate exploitation to determine if there was a 10% reduction without running the full assessment model for SNE.
- The TC also has no means to calculate LCMA level estimates of abundance and exploitation for all of the LCMA's.
 - Would require FI relative abundance indices and FD landings data collected on the same spatial scale which does not exist for all SNE LCMA's.
- TC used nominal landings as proxy for exploitation; there are many issues with this.

Massachusetts



- **In comparison to the reference years, landings in 2013 declined by 12.4%.**
 - There's been a dramatic decline in fishing effort and active permits since late 1990's. Although current active fishers are reporting higher catches, there are fewer people in the fishery.
- *TC Consensus*: MA did meet 10% reduction based on landings, however it is very likely that this was not due to implementation of the V-notching program, but rather due to substantial decline in fishing effort. The V-notching program in LCMA 2 is likely not the best management tool for this area because it relies on fairly high levels of fishing.

Rhode Island



- **Relative to the reference years, landings have declined by 25%.**
- *TC Consensus:* Rhode Island met 10% reduction requirement, based on landings. The TC finds the reduction was not due to the implementation of the V-notching program in LCMA 2, but due to decline in effort. The TC was unable to evaluate the effect of the gauge increase in LCMA 3.

Connecticut



- **Landings in 2013 were 68% lower than 2009.**
The seasonal closure reduced landings, but overall landings have also dropped
- *TC Consensus:* Connecticut achieved a greater than 10% reduction in landings, most of which could be attributed to implementation of the seasonal closure but also due to decreased market demand and abundance.

New York



- No report available to evaluate at the time of the TC call.
- Report submitted and will be evaluated by the TC.

New Jersey



- In LCMA 3, there was a 42% reduction in catch, but likely due to loss of one of three main boats.
- In LCMA 4, landings increased by 3.26% in comparison to the reference base years.
- In LCMA 5, a 33% reduction was achieved.
- *TC Consensus:* The required reduction was achieved in LCMAs 3 and 5, but was not achieved in LCMA 4. Implementation of the seasonal closure and V-notching program had mixed success. For LCMAs 4 and 5, the TC recommends that the LCMT should review the seasonal closure timing.

Maryland

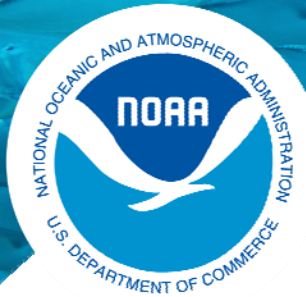


- **Overall landings have increased since reference period.**
- *TC Consensus:* MD did not achieve the 10% reduction. Landings have actually increased since the reference period. However, Maryland has less than 1% of the coastwide lobster landings and this increase had a very limited impact on the SNE stock

LCMA Evaluation



- **Area 2 and 3 – the required reduction was met, but likely not due to the implemented management measures.**
- **Area 4 and 5 – the required reductions were not achieved**
- **Area 6 – the required reduction was met and much of the reduction could be attributed to the management measures**



NOAA
FISHERIES
Greater Atlantic Region

Federal Update - American Lobster Actions

August 5, 2014

Qualify, Allocate, and Transfer- Area 2 and the Outer Cape Area

- Accepting applications through November 3, 2014 for Area 2 and Outer Cape Area eligibility;
- Approximately 130 applications received to date;
- Trap transfer rules in place but awaiting completion of inter-agency database before turning on transferability.

Proposed Rule – SNE Stock Rebuilding Measures

- Accepting comments through August 25, 2014;
- Measures consistent with Commission's recommendations;
- Intended to reduce fishing exploitation by 10% (Add. XVII), reduce latent effort and scale fishery to the diminished size of the SNE resource (Add. XVIII).

Proposed Measures for SNE Areas

Management Measures	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5
V-notching	Mandatory for legal-sized egg-bearing females	N/A	Mandatory for legal-sized egg-bearing females	Mandatory for legal-sized egg-bearing females
Minimum Size Increase	N/A	3 17/32 in (8.97 cm)	N/A	N/A
Seasonal Closure*	N/A	N/A	February 1 – March 31	February 1 – March 31

* Permit holders will have through Feb. 14 to remove all gear and may begin to set traps March 25, but may not possess or harvest lobster during the closure.

Proposed Trap Reduction Schedule

Effective Year	Area 2 Reductions (Percent)	Area 2 Example Allocation	Area 3 Reductions (Percent)	Area 3 Example Allocation
2014 (Present)	N/A	800	N/A	800
End of FY 2014	25	600	5	760
End of FY 2015	5	570	5	722
End of FY 2016	5	542	5	686
End of FY 2017	5	515	5	652
End of FY 2018	5	490	5	620
End of FY 2019	5	466	N/A	N/A

Timing of Trap Cuts and Trap Transfers

- Trap transfers depend on completion of database;
- If trap cuts are effective May 1, 2015, and transfers not allowed, no mitigation;
- Lobster Plan and comments recommend trap transfers and cuts occur at the same time;
- NMFS seeks comments on the timing of the SNE trap cuts.



Regulatory Consistency

American Lobster Management Board

August 2014



Background



- In April 2014, NMFS published a final rule on implementation of limited entry program in Area 2 and OCC and a trap transfer program.
- While the majority of the measures implemented are based on Commission recommendations and consistent with the Commission's plan, there are a few measures which are either not consistent with the Commission's plan or the Commission's plan does not address the issue.

Issue #1



Conservation tax of full business transfers

- Under the final federal rule, a 10-percent transfer tax will be assessed on all partial allocation transfers while full business transfers (sale of the entire permit) will not have a transfer tax.
- Under the Commission's plan both partial and full business transfers are subject to the 10-percent transfer tax.



Issue #2



Conservation tax increments

- Under the final federal rule, trap transfers may be processed in 10-trap increments.
- The Commission's plan does not include language on trap transfer increments

Issue #3



Dual Permit Transfers

- Under the Trap Transfer Program, NMFS will allow a dual state and Federal permit holder to purchase Federal trap allocation from any other dual Federal lobster permit holder.
- Under the Commission's plan, a dual permit holder is restricted to transferring traps only to another dual permit holder from the same state. The Commission was supportive of this allowance in the proposed rule.

Issue #4



- Addendum XXI specified that:
- *Under this addendum, an entity may not own more than 1600 traps (800 active and 800 banked traps). However, those individuals who had more than two (2) permits in December 20003 may retain the number they had at that time, but may not own or share ownership of any additional permits.*
- The above underlined language was neither included in the draft for Board review nor the public comment document and was mistakenly included in the final text of this section.



Lobster Assessment Update

American Lobster Management Board

August 2014



Progress

- All landings data have been finalized.
 - A few issues with RI and NY landings were identified and fixed
 - Final catch-at-length matrix is being completed
- Assessment will include data through 2013
- Lobster SAC meets in September
 - Model runs will commence
- Assessment Completion
 - Late Winter/Early Spring 2015
 - Presented to board at May 2015 meeting



Preview

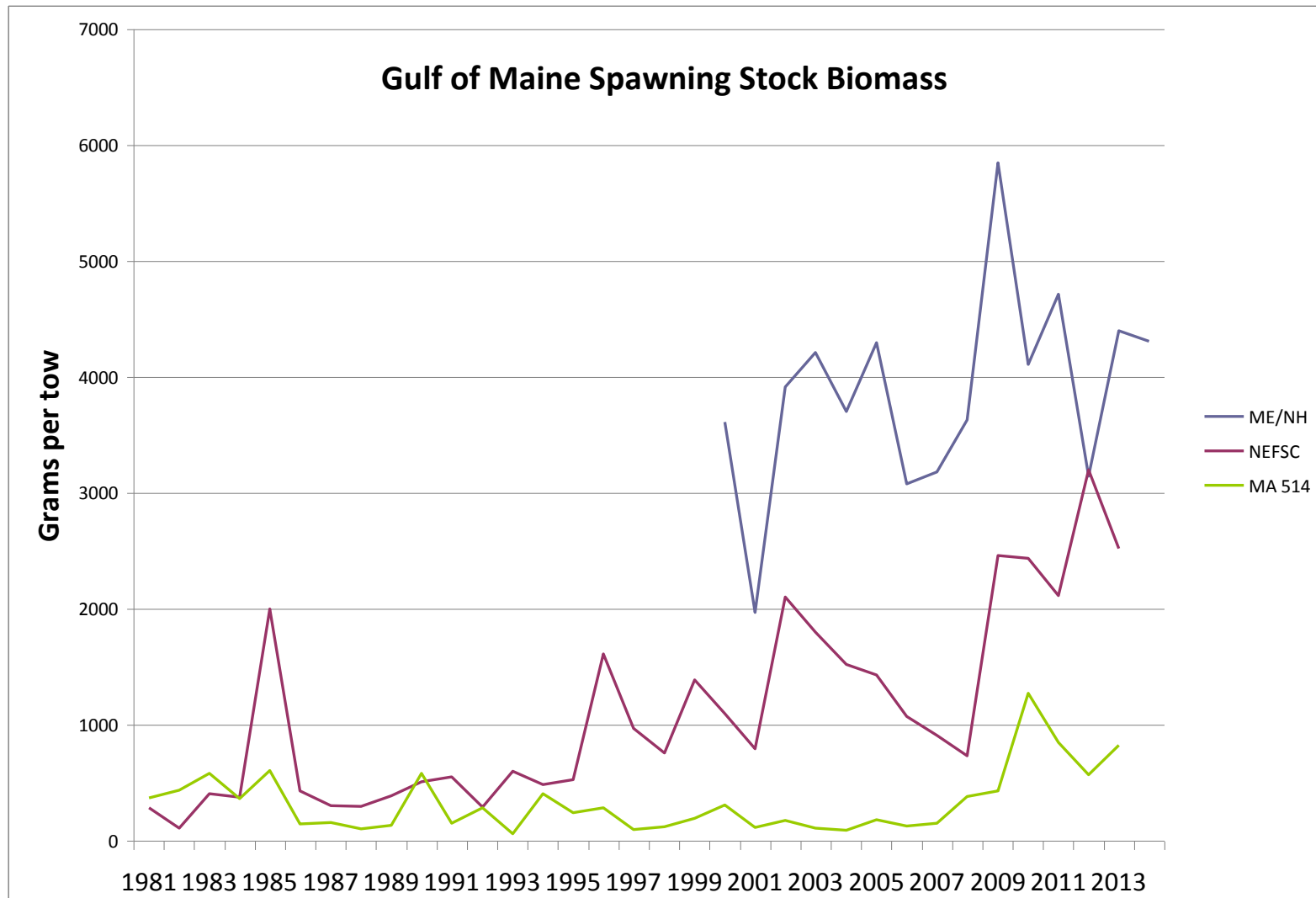


- Stock indicators
 - Model free indicators of abundance and exploitation
 - Fishery Indicators
 - Provide a good general “thumbnail” sketch of stock health

Gulf of Maine



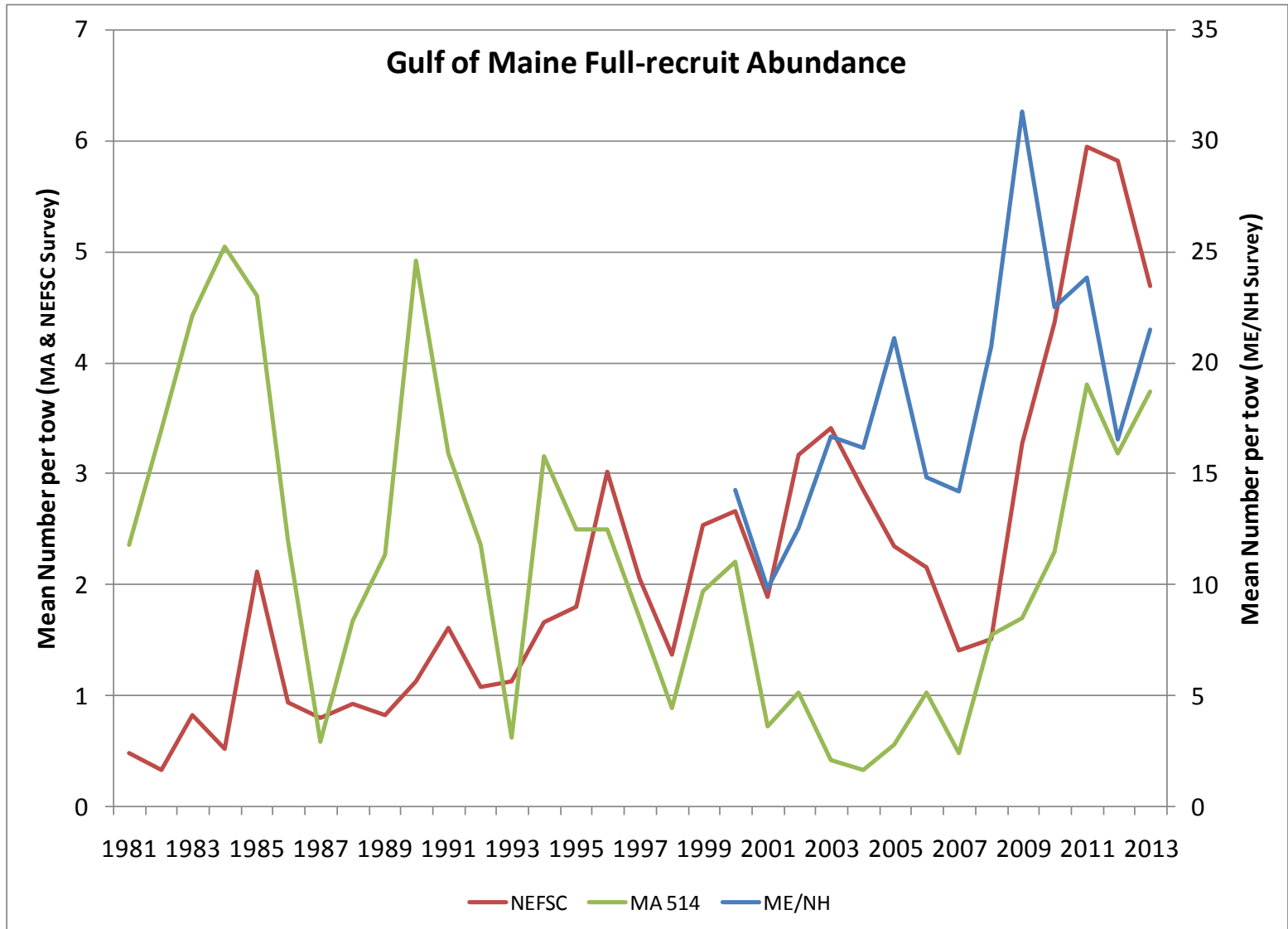
- Abundance Indicators



Gulf of Maine



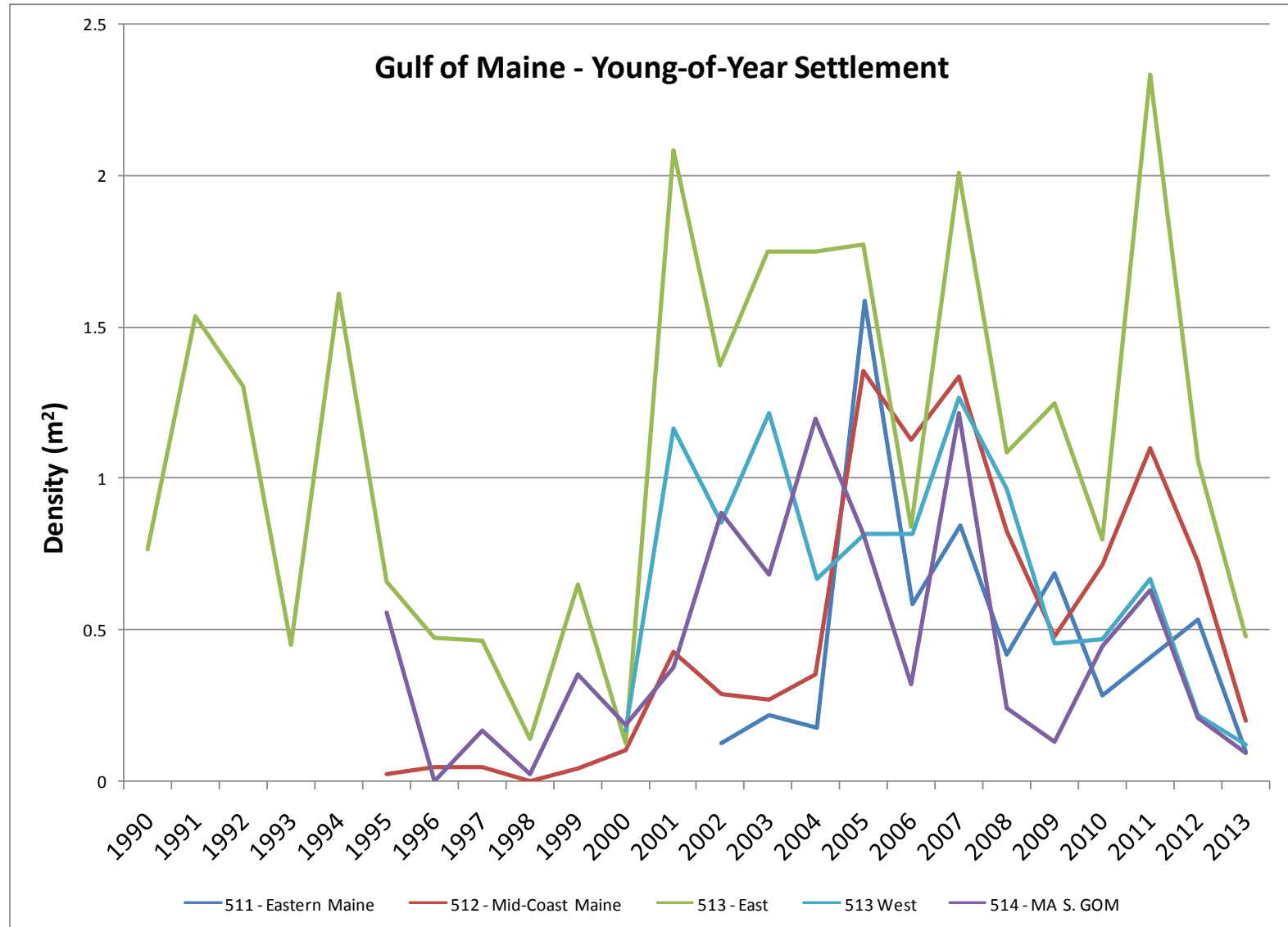
- Abundance Indicators



Gulf of Maine



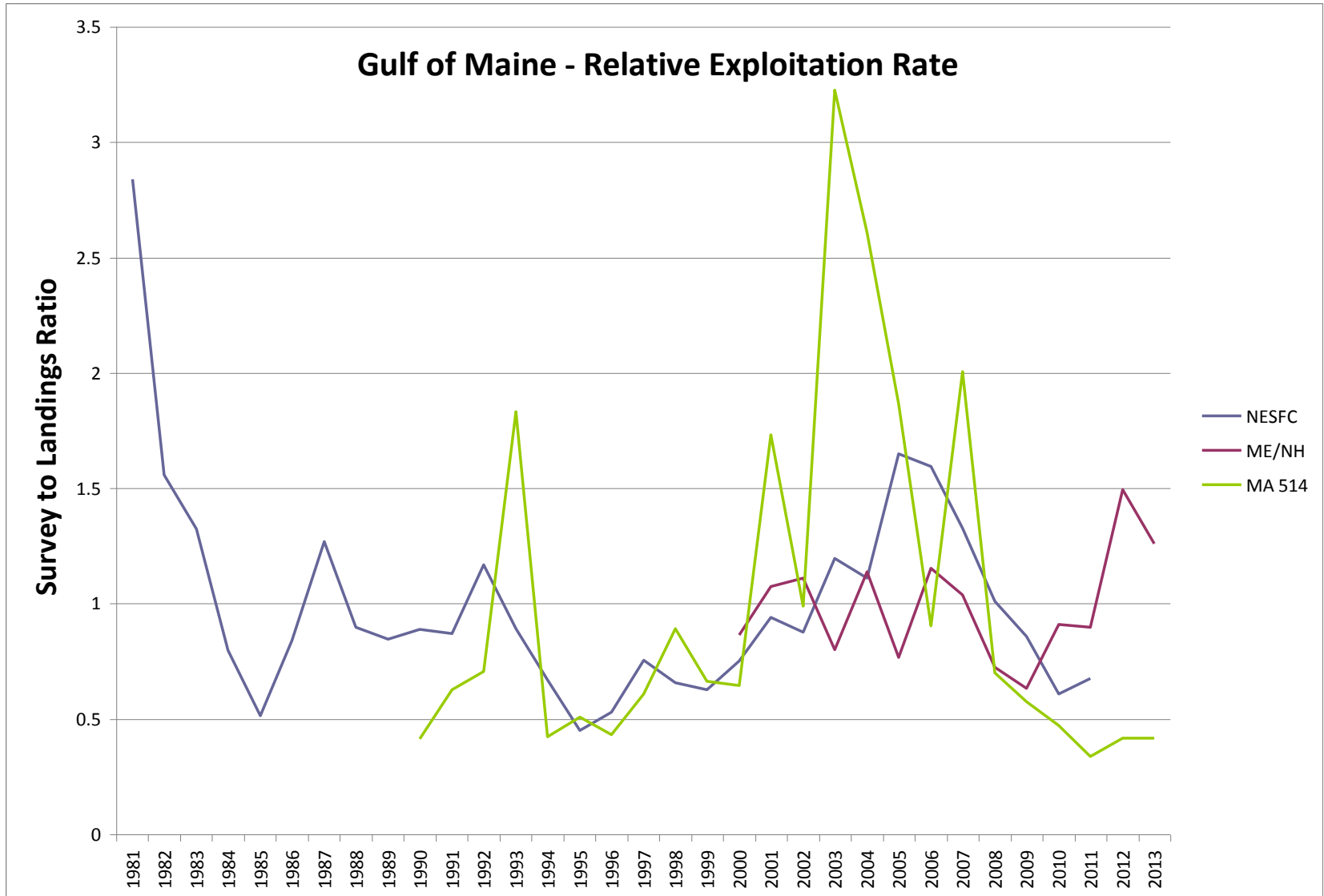
- Recruitment Indicators



Gulf of Maine



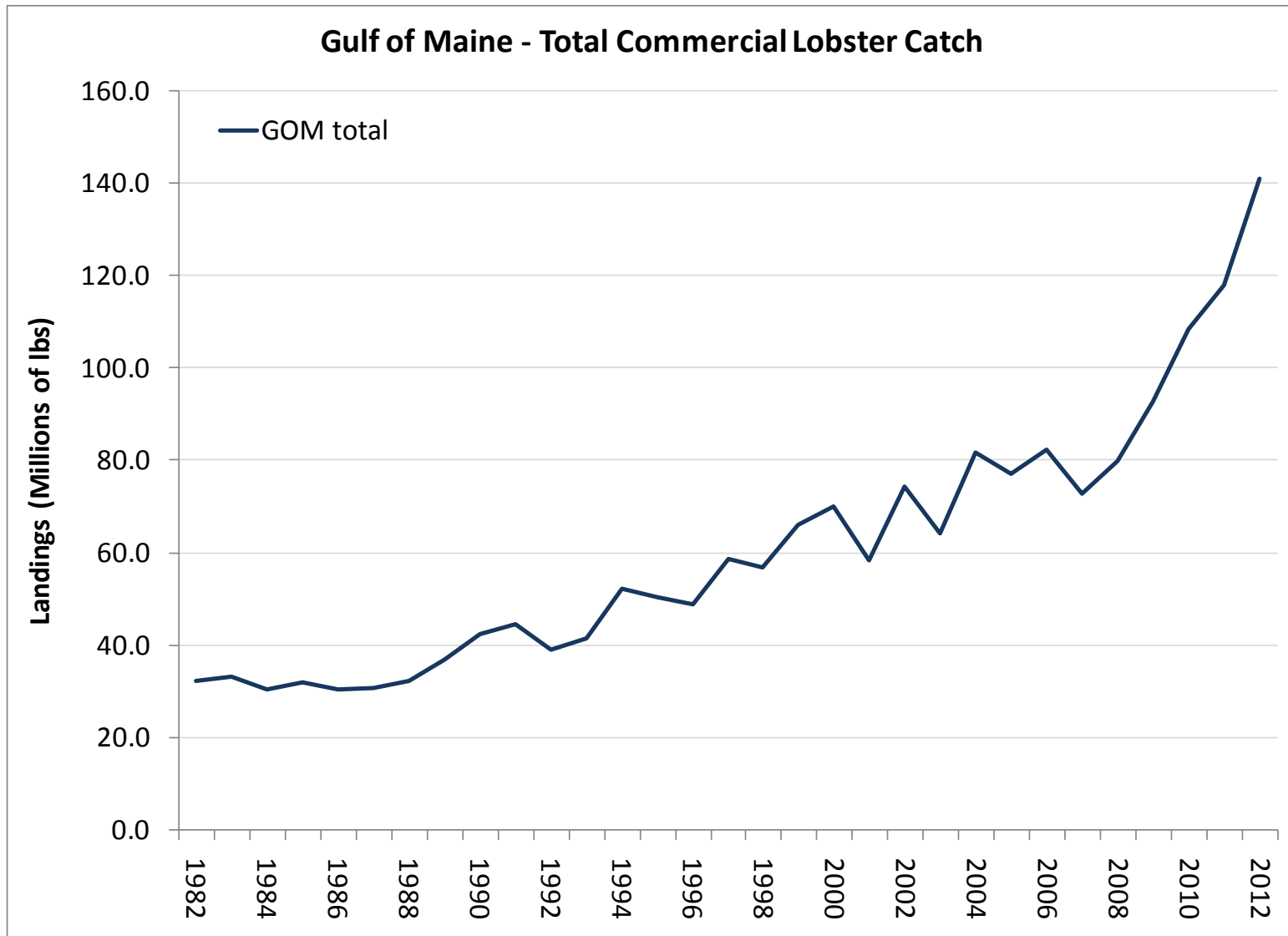
- Mortality Indicators



Gulf of Maine



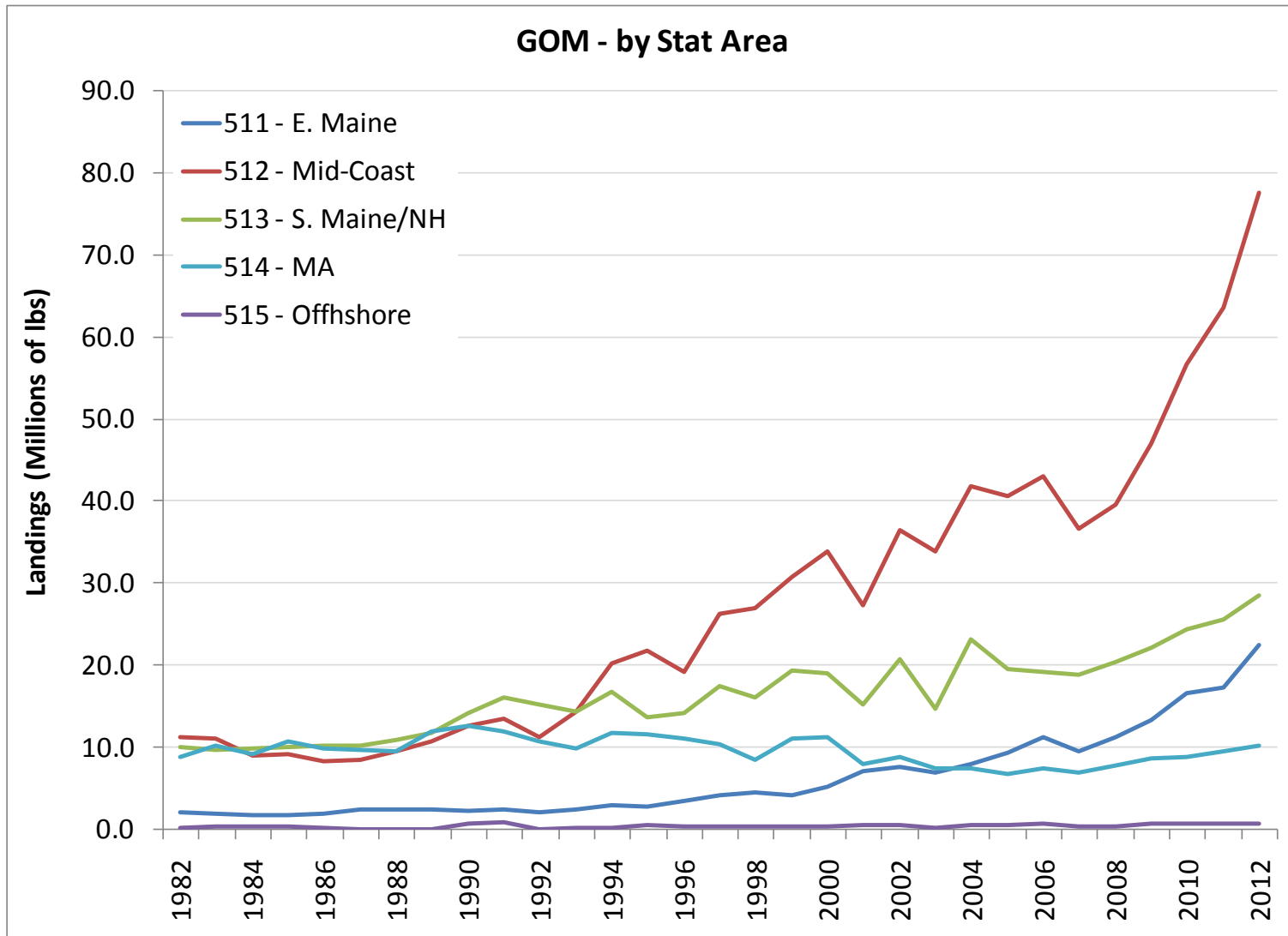
- Fishery Indicators – Commercial Catch



Gulf of Maine



- Fishery Indicators – Commercial Catch



GOM SUMMARY



- The Gulf of Maine Stock appears to be in good condition.


– Abundance - 

– Exploitation - 

*Large increase in relative exploitation in ME is a concern.

– Recruitment - 

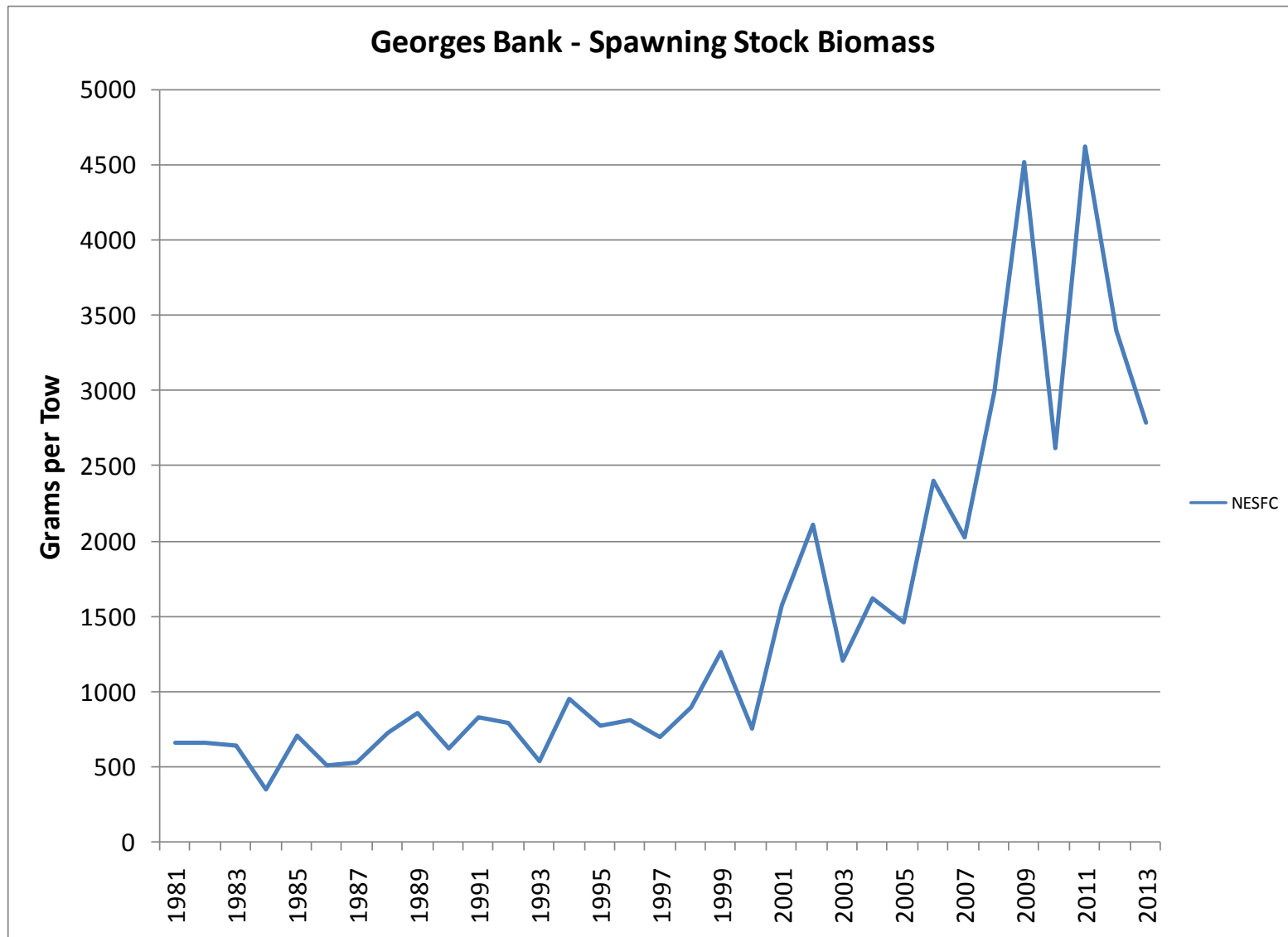
*Two consecutive years of poor YOY settlement is a concern. This could lead to future declines in catch and should be monitored closely.

– Catch - 

Georges Bank



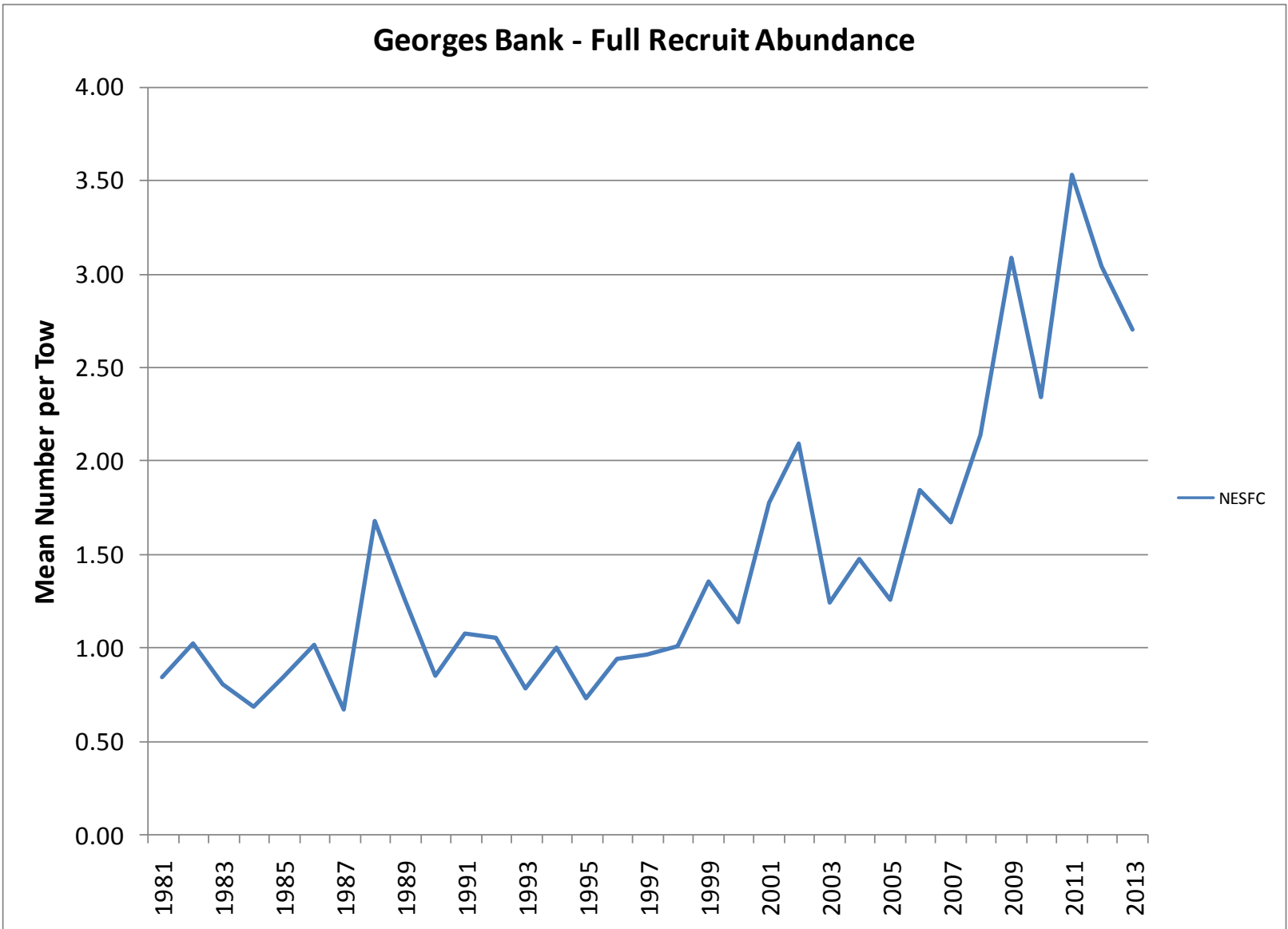
- Abundance Indicators (NEFSC)



Georges Bank



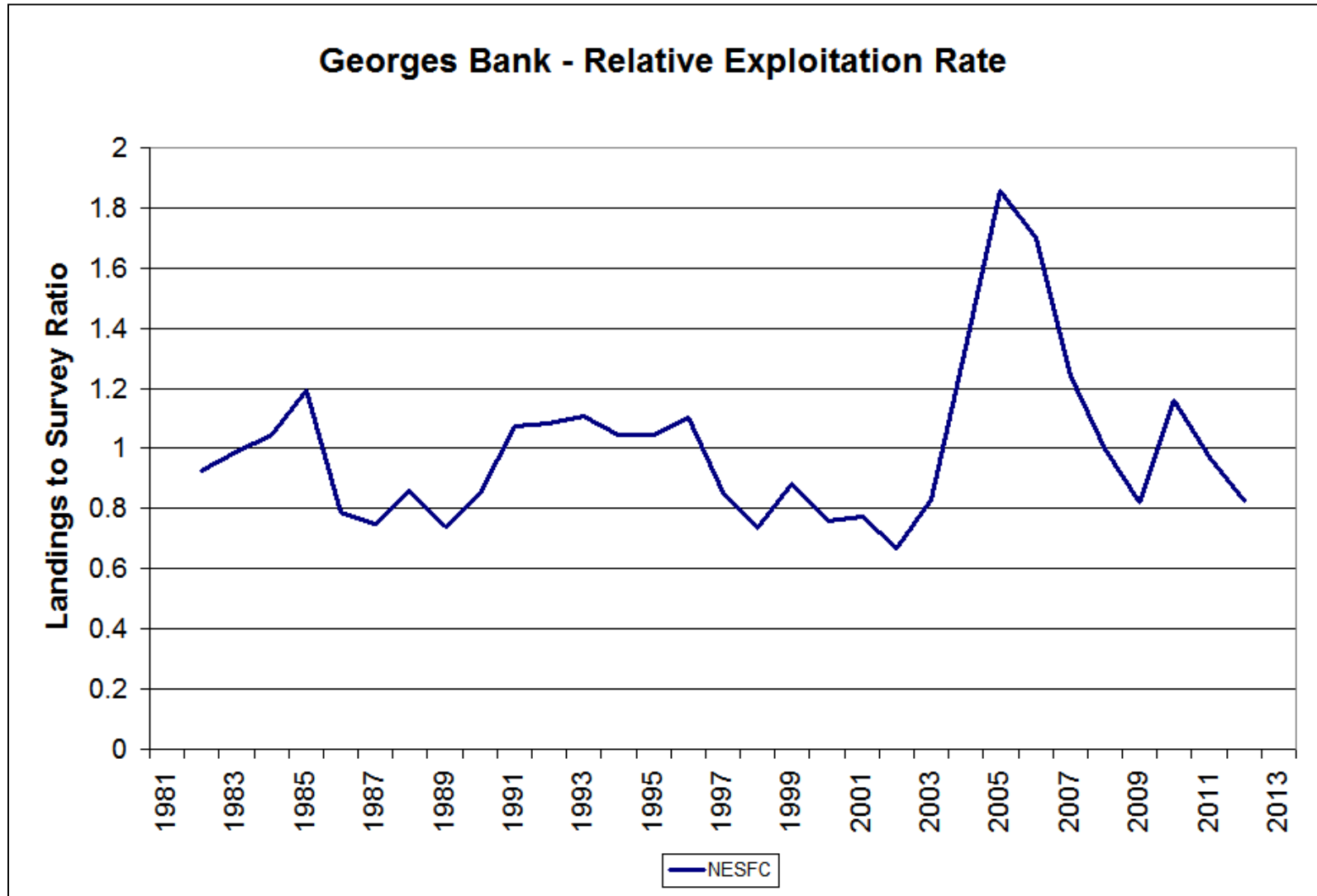
- Abundance Indicators (NEFSC)



Georges Bank



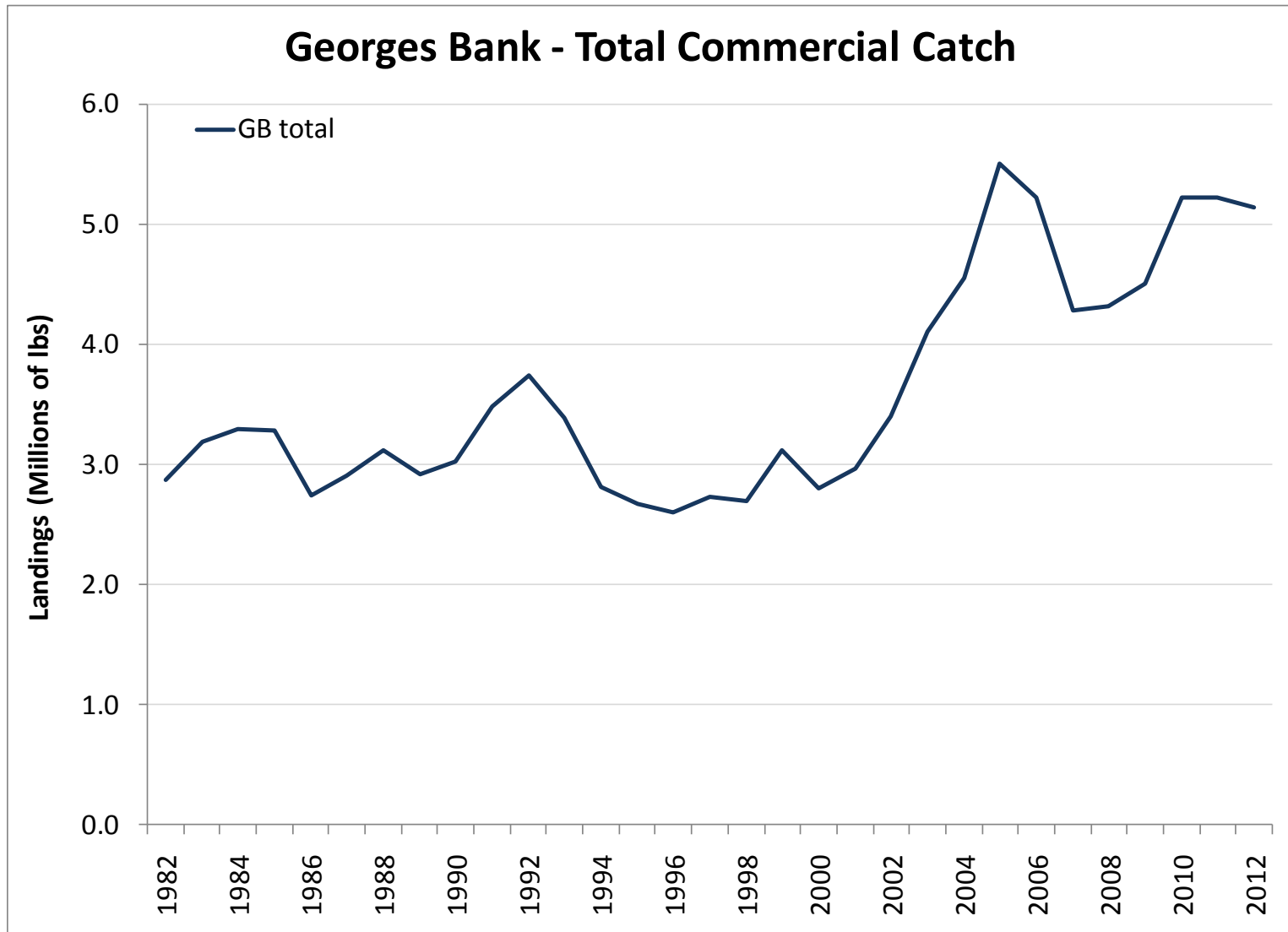
- Mortality Indicators



Georges Bank



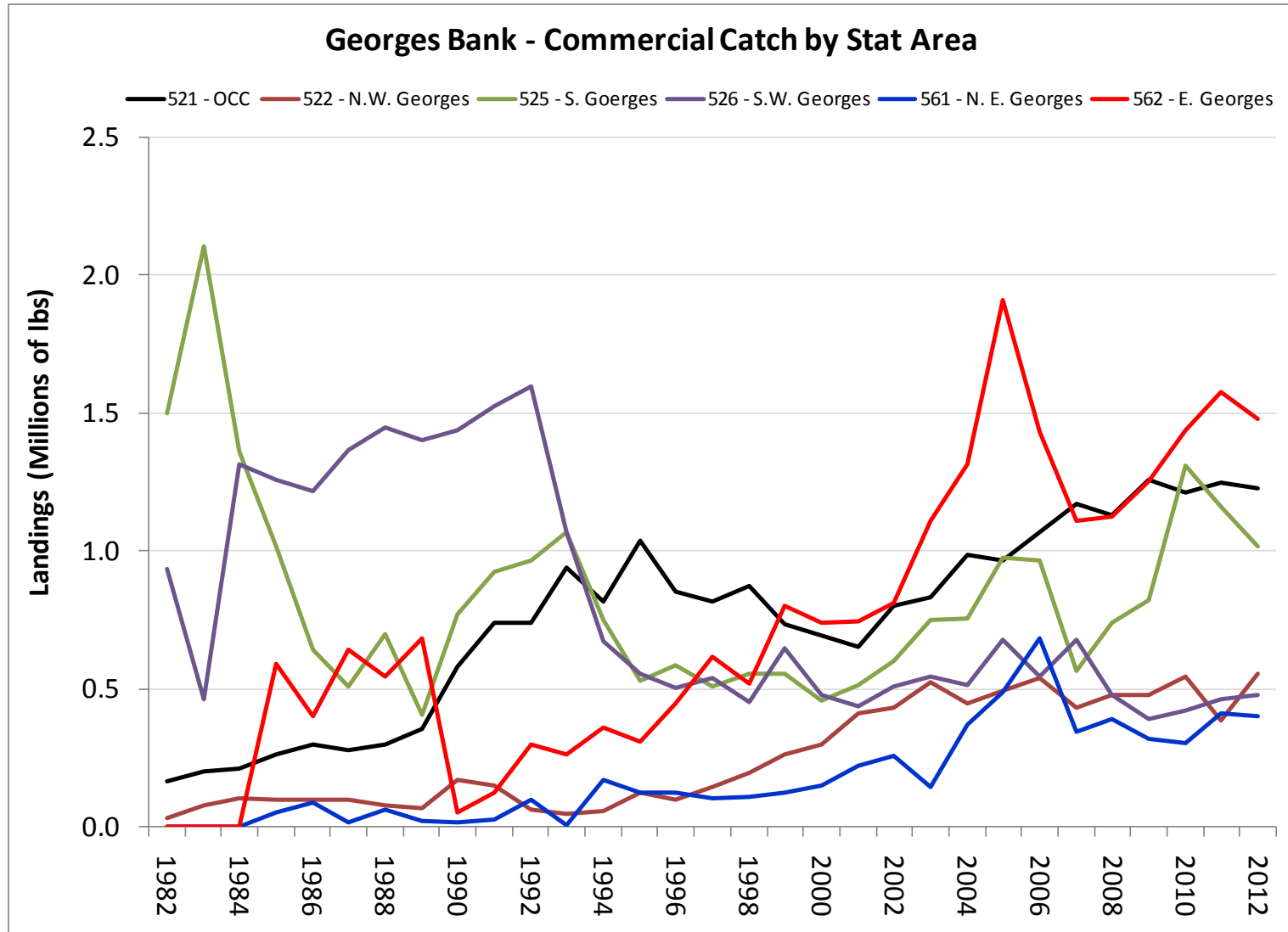
- Fishery Indicators – commercial catch



Georges Bank



- Fishery Indicators – commercial catch



GB SUMMARY




- The Georges Bank Stock appears to be in good condition.

– Abundance - 

– Exploitation - 

– Recruitment - 

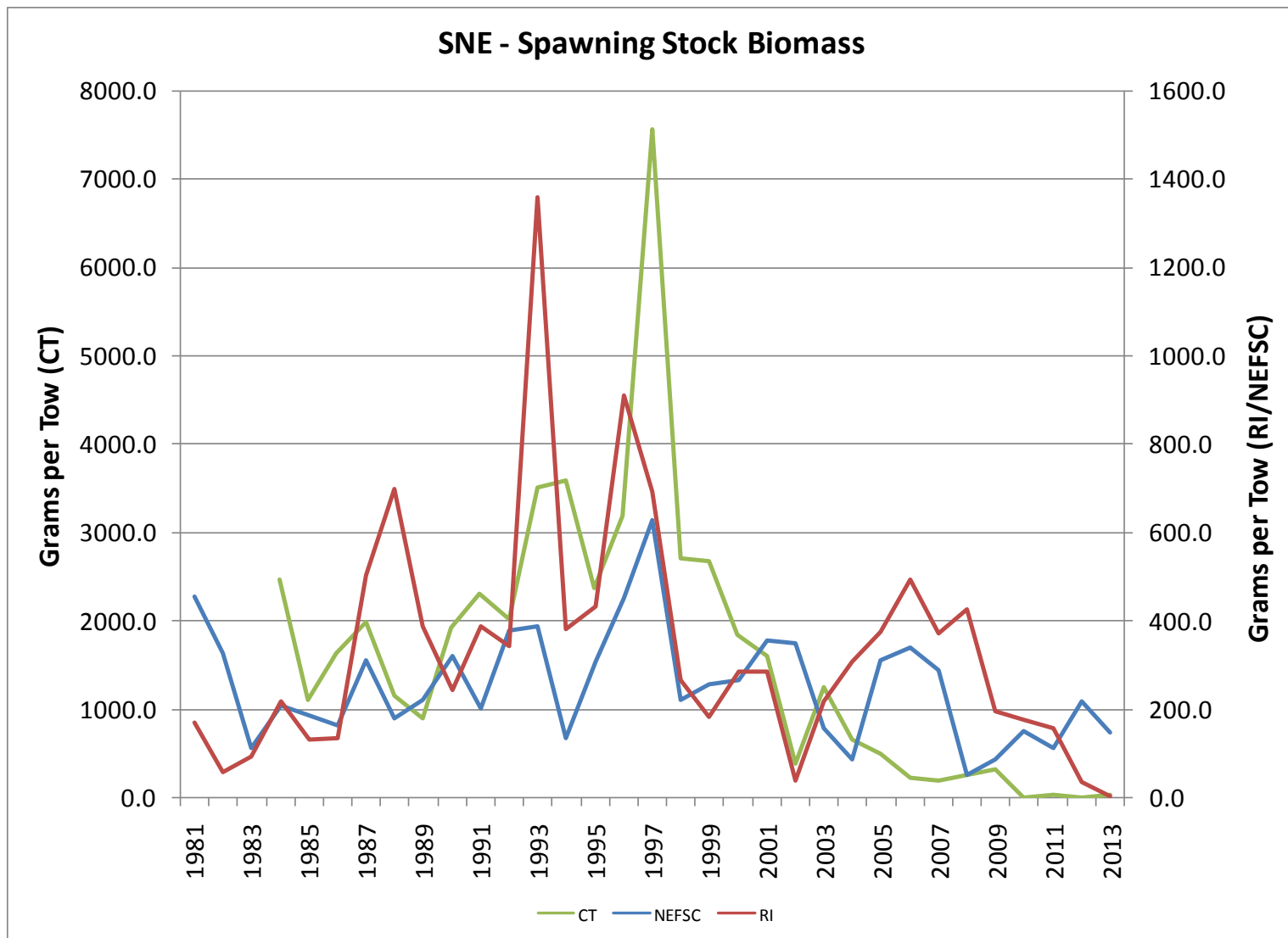
– Catch - 

*We do not have a YOY, larval, or ventless trap survey for GB to provide a good indicator for recruitment. Managers must use caution because there is no good “forecast” of incoming recruitment for this stock.

Southern New England



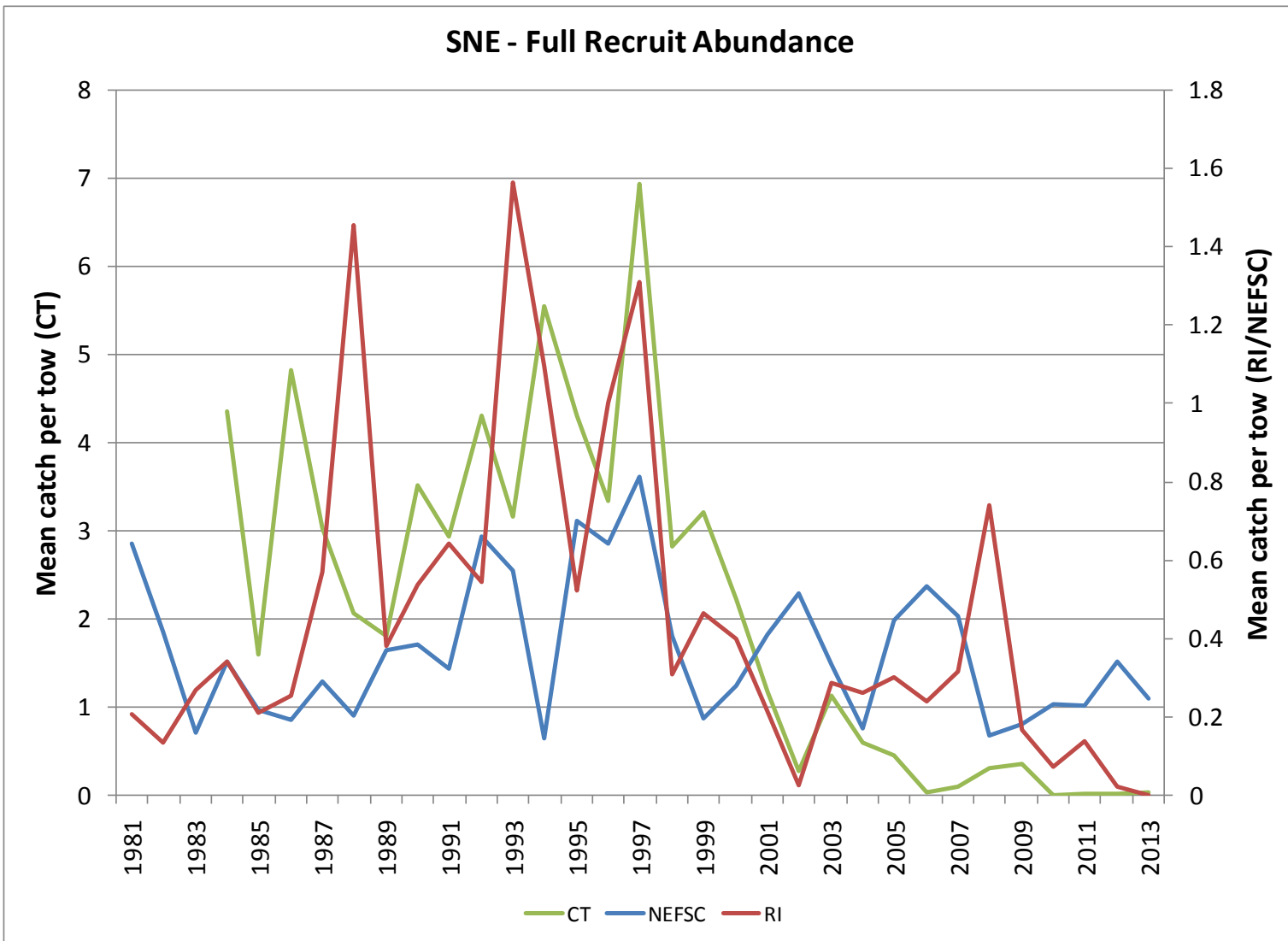
- Abundance Indicators



Southern New England



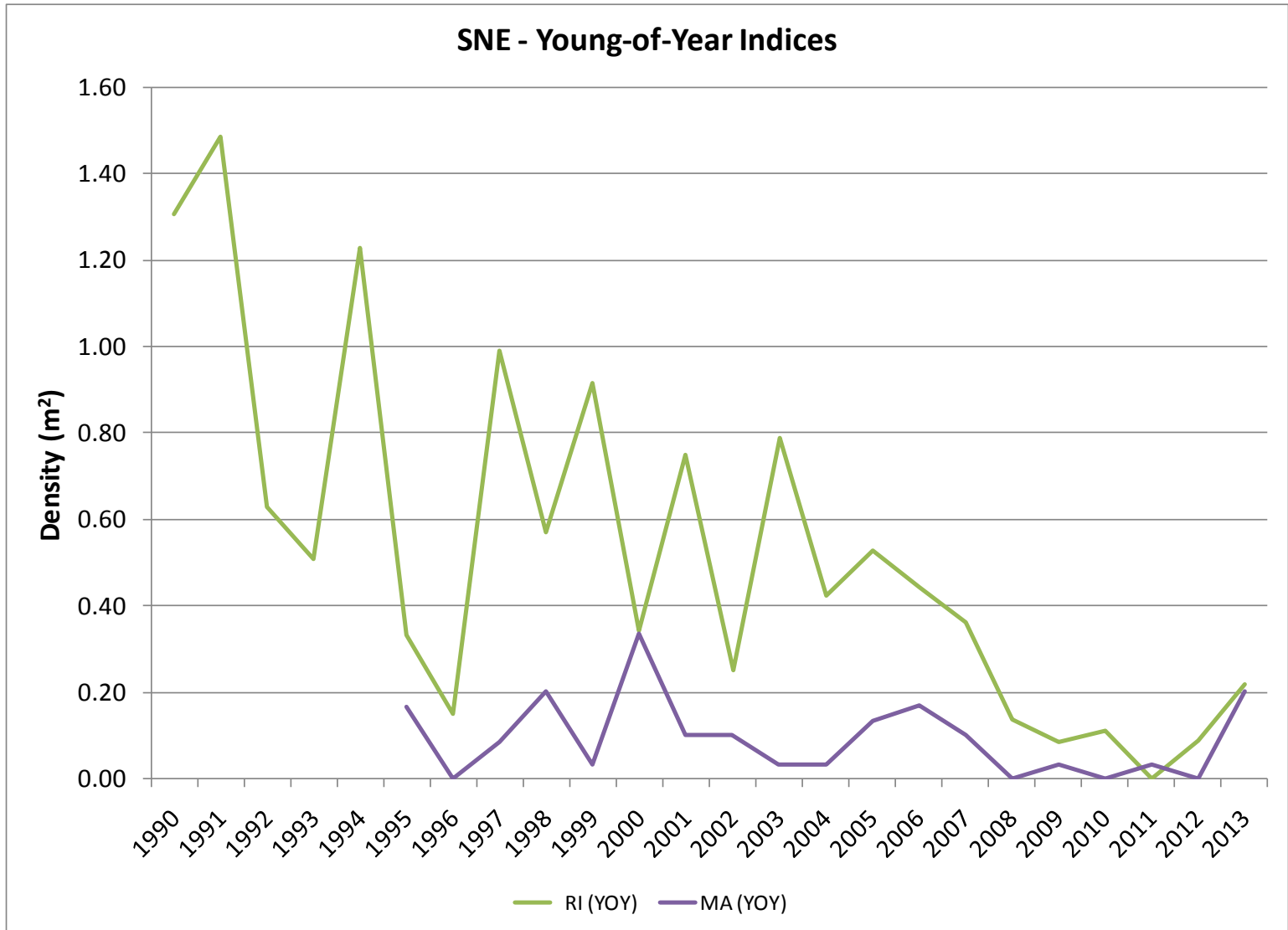
- Abundance Indicators



Southern New England



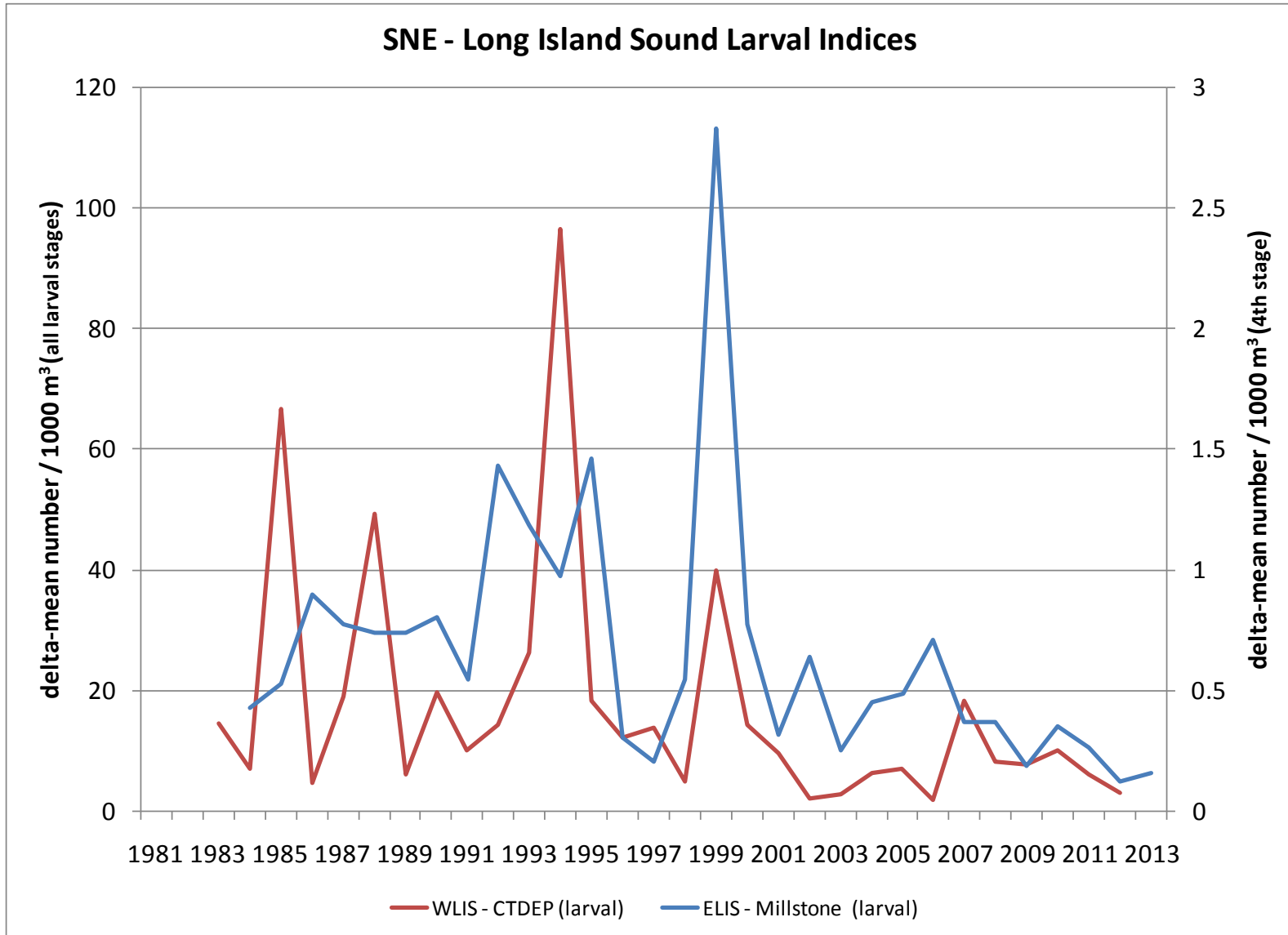
- Recruitment Indicators



Southern New England



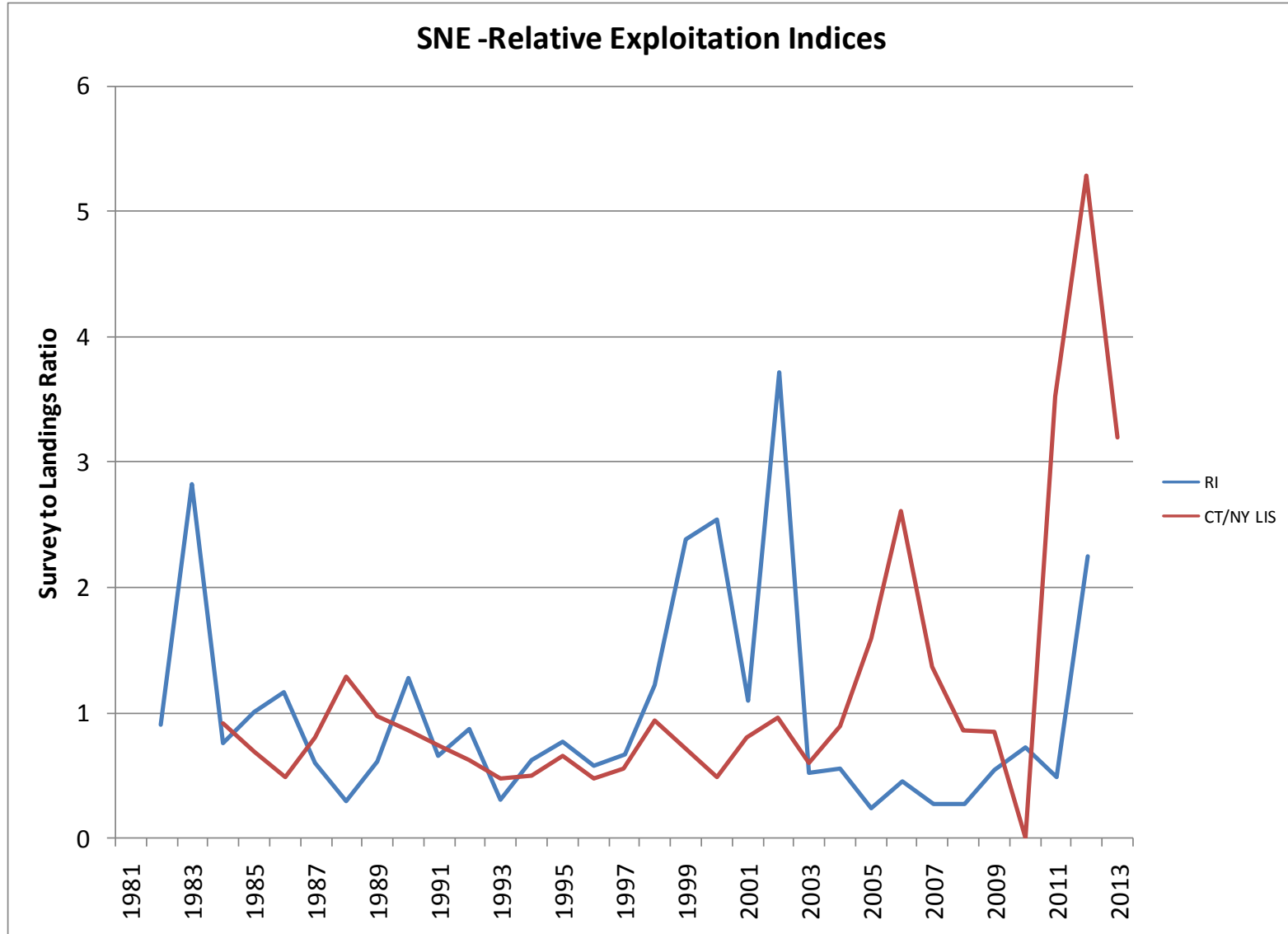
- Recruitment Indicators



Southern New England



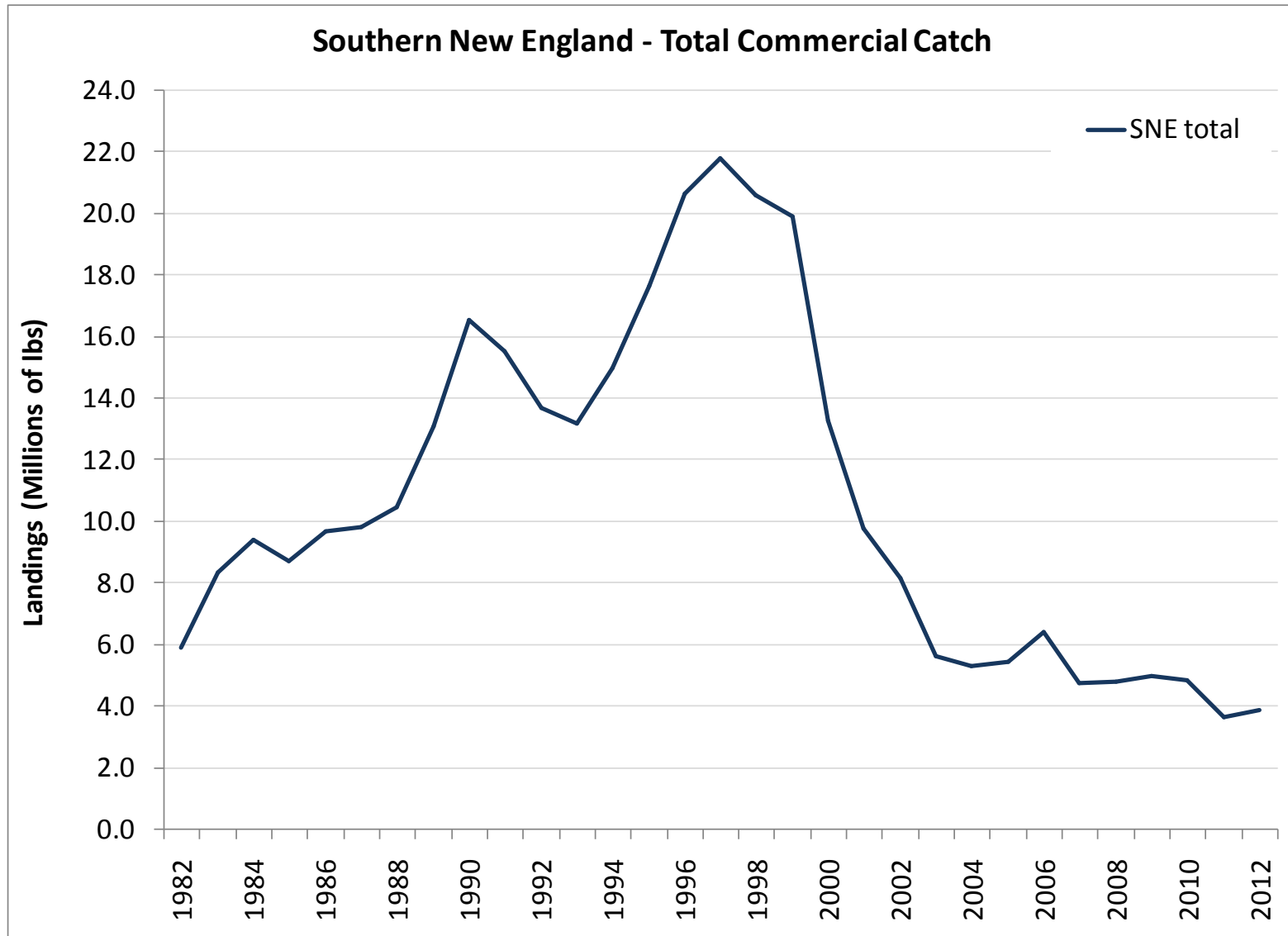
- Mortality Indicators



Southern New England



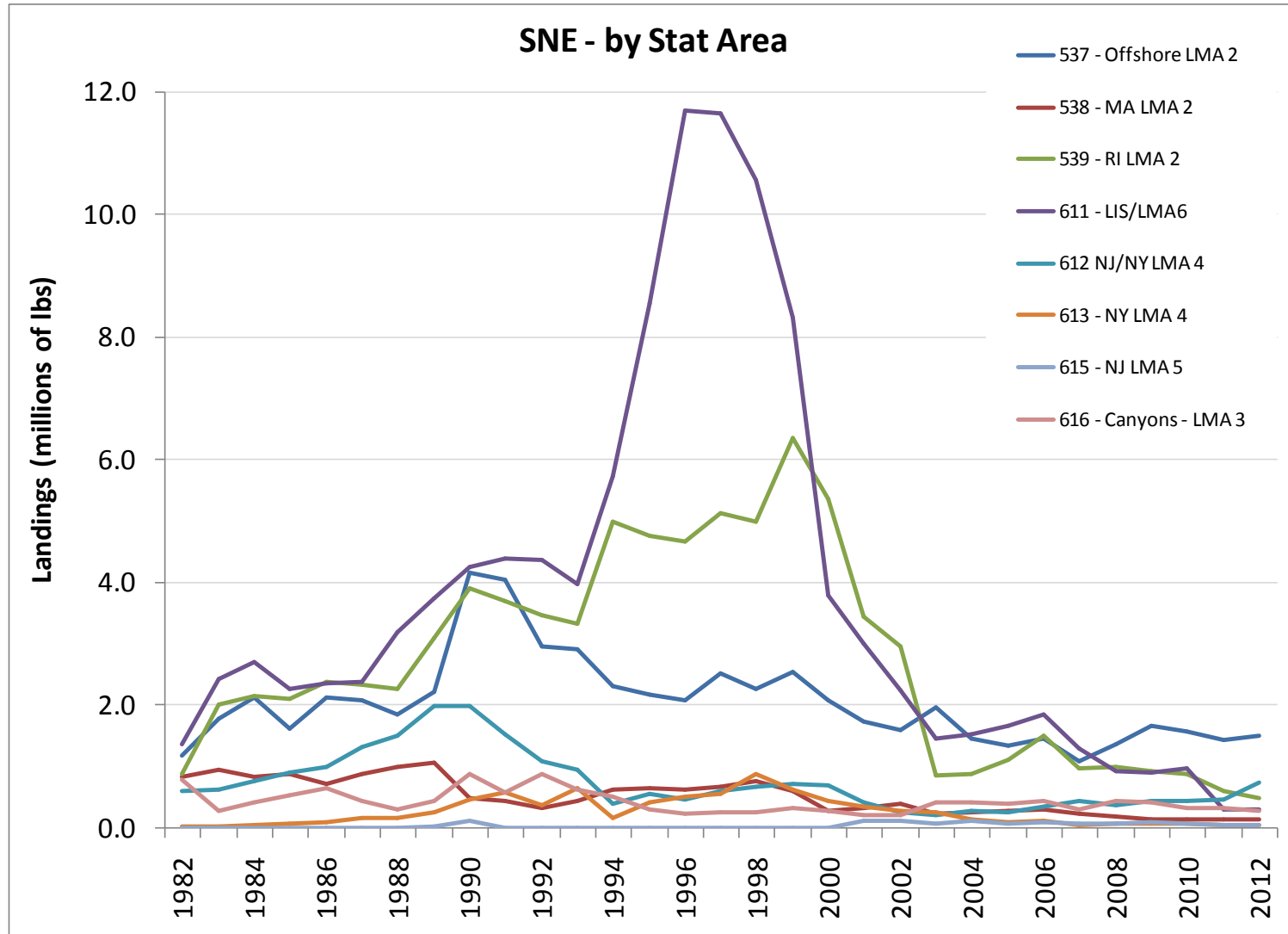
- Fishery Indicators – commercial catch



Southern New England



- Fishery Indicators – commercial catch



SNE SUMMARY



- The SNE stock still appears to be in poor condition.

– Abundance - 

– Exploitation - 

*Exploitation rates have increased in recent years as stock size declines faster than commercial catch.

– Recruitment - 

*YOY settlement continues to be extremely low. Recruitment failure still appears to be occurring.

– Catch - 

*CPUE in many LCMA's has increased or remained stable for those still fishing. Dramatic attrition in the fishery has allowed remaining fishermen to benefit . Caution is needed with interpretation of CPUE indices, they are very poor indicators of abundance.