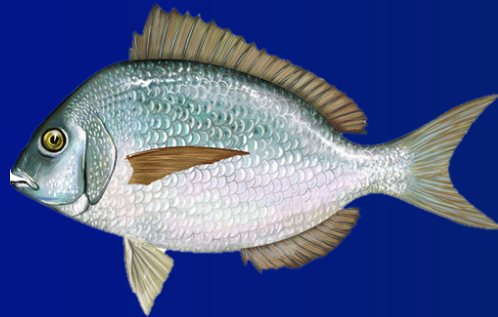




MID-ATLANTIC | FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

Scup

Discard Report



Council and Board
October 8, 2019
Durham, NC

Background

- Estimates from stock assessment
- Trawl gear by calendar quarter, statistical area, and three mesh categories:
 - Large: 5" or greater (min mesh size for scup)
 - Small: in between 2.125" and 5"
 - Squid: 2.125" or less
- Estimated discards are calculated using observer, VTR, and dealer data

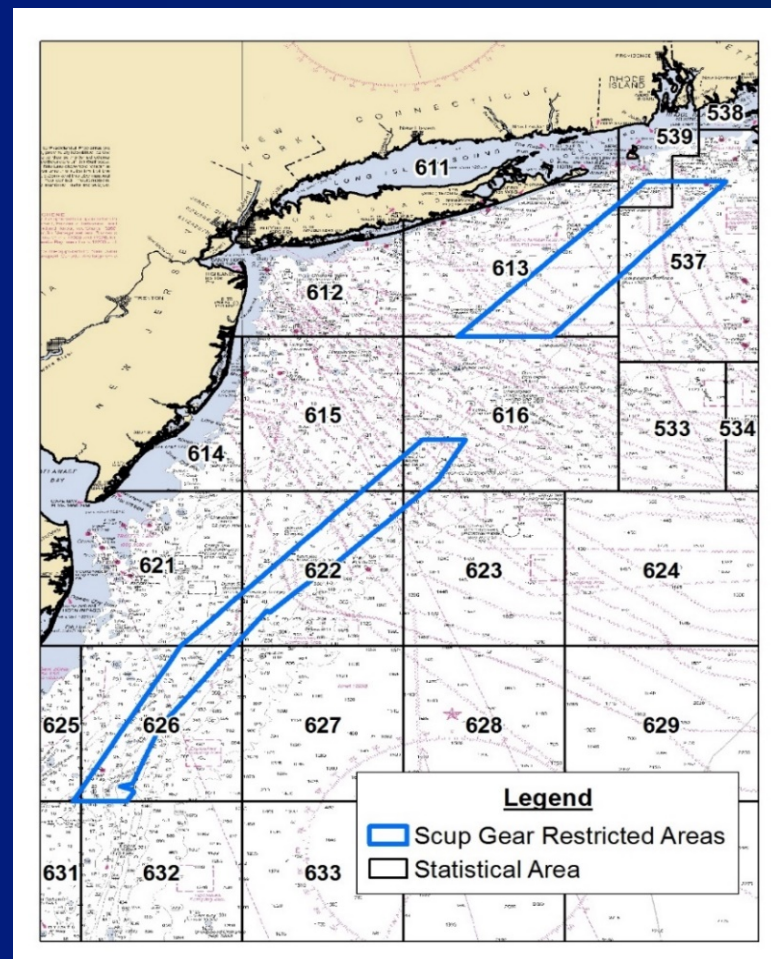
Gear Restricted Areas (GRAs)

Prohibited from fishing for or possessing longfin squid, black sea bass, and silver hake when using mesh <5"

Effective dates:

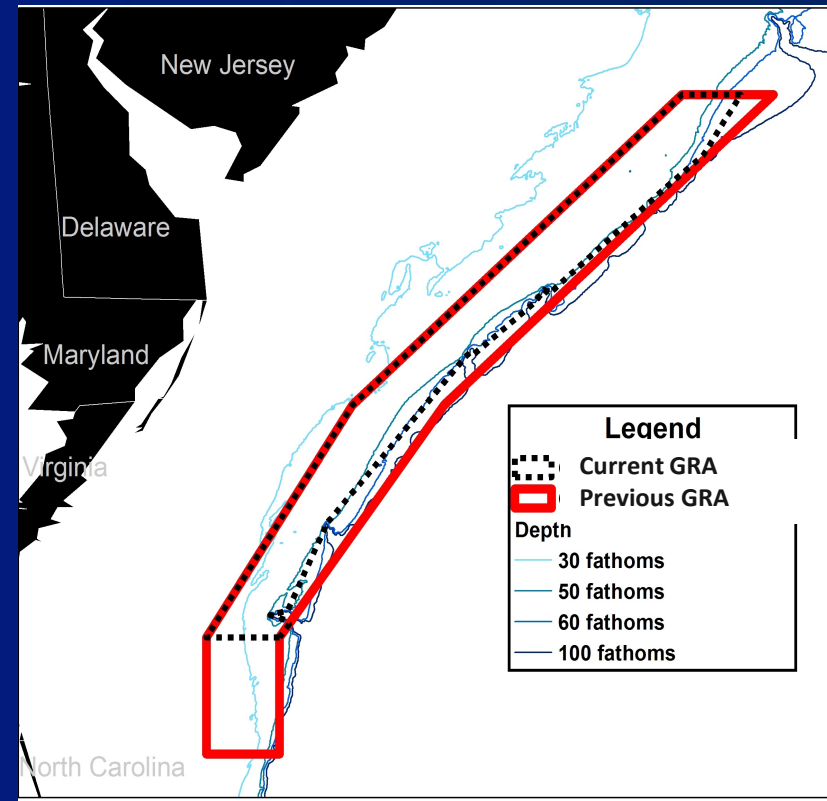
Northern GRA: Nov 1 – Dec 31

Southern GRA: Jan 1 – Mar 15



Southern GRA Boundary Change

- Framework 9
- Regain access to important longfin squid fishing areas
- 33% decrease in the size of the Southern GRA
- In effect in 2017



Recent Regulatory Changes

2016: incidental possession limit from Nov.-Apr. increased from 500 to 1,000 lbs

2018: October moved from Summer Quota Period to Winter II

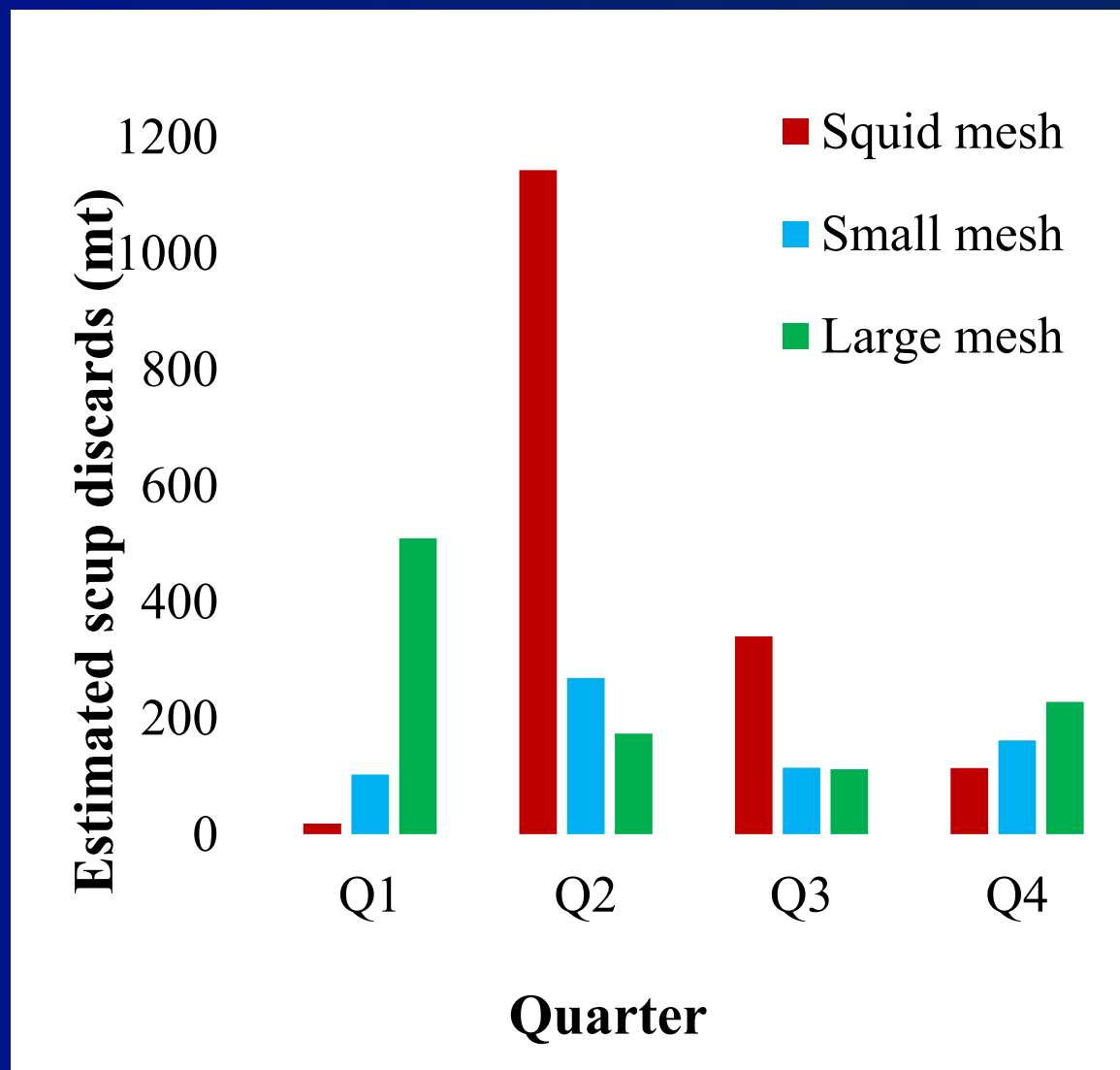
2017: change in the southern scup GRA

2019: incidental possession limit from Apr. 15-Jun. 15 increased to 2,000 lbs.

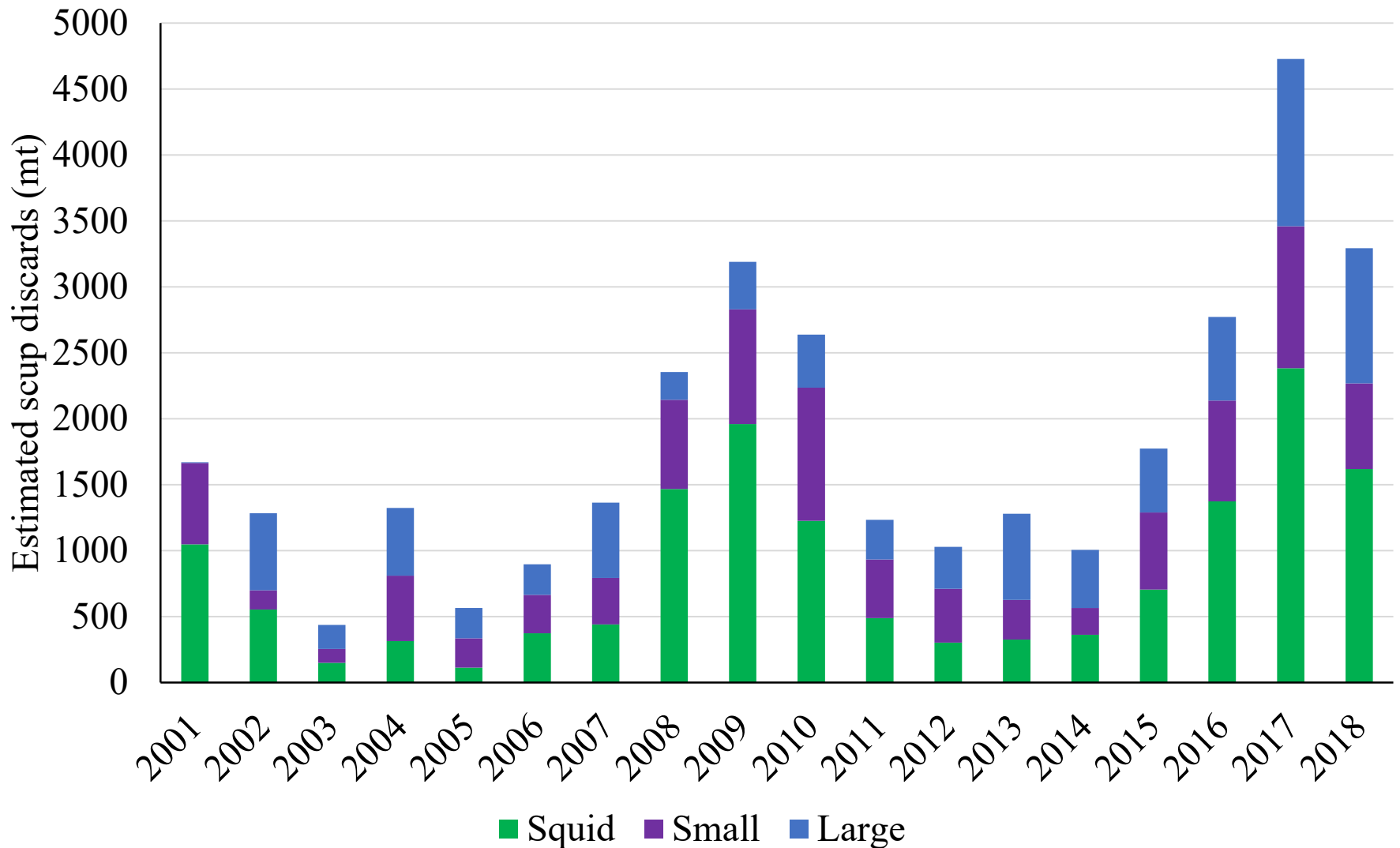


2018 Discards by Quarter and Mesh Size

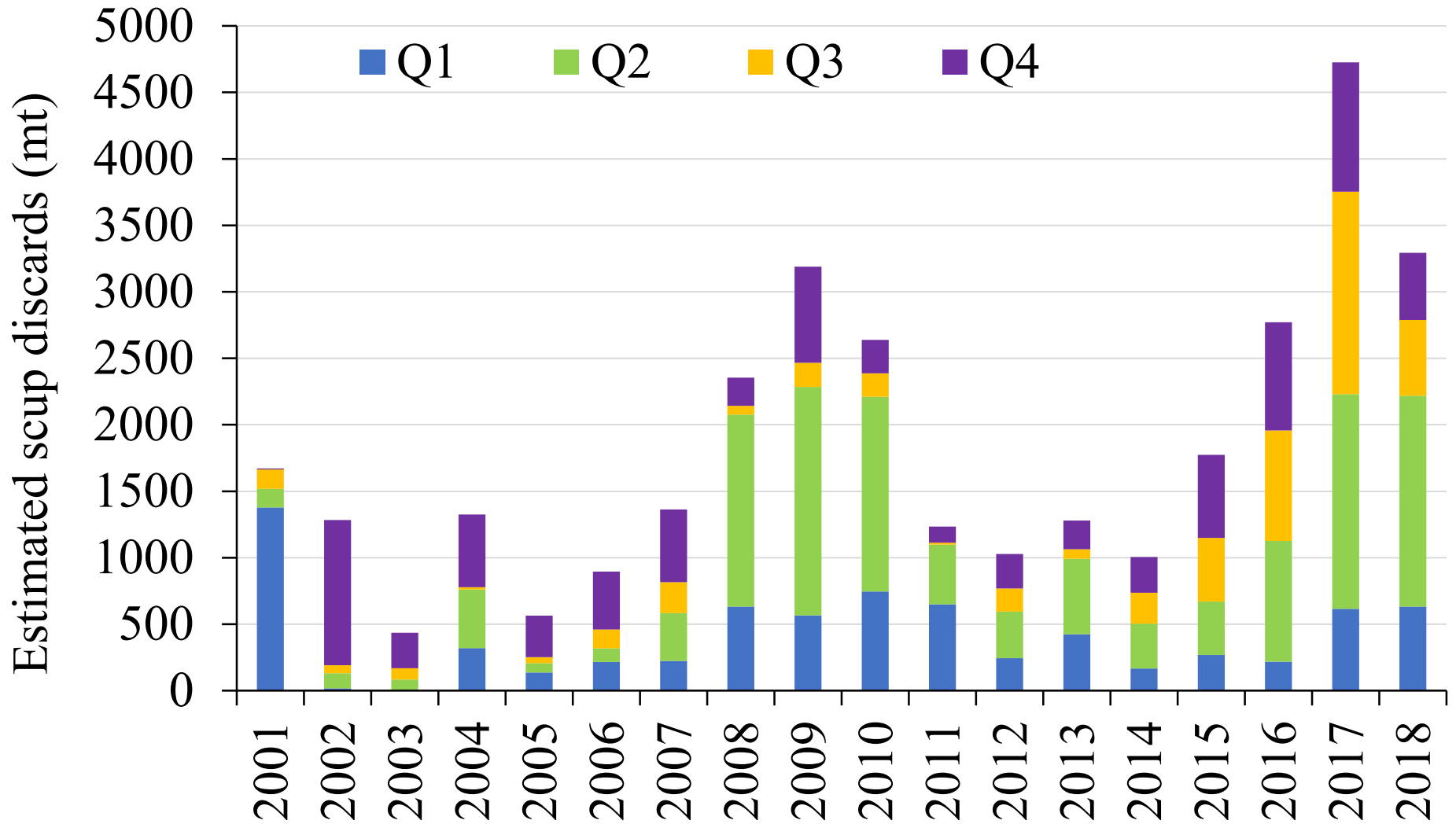
- Discards decreased by 30% but were still high
- Squid mesh accounted for 49% of total
- Highest in Q2



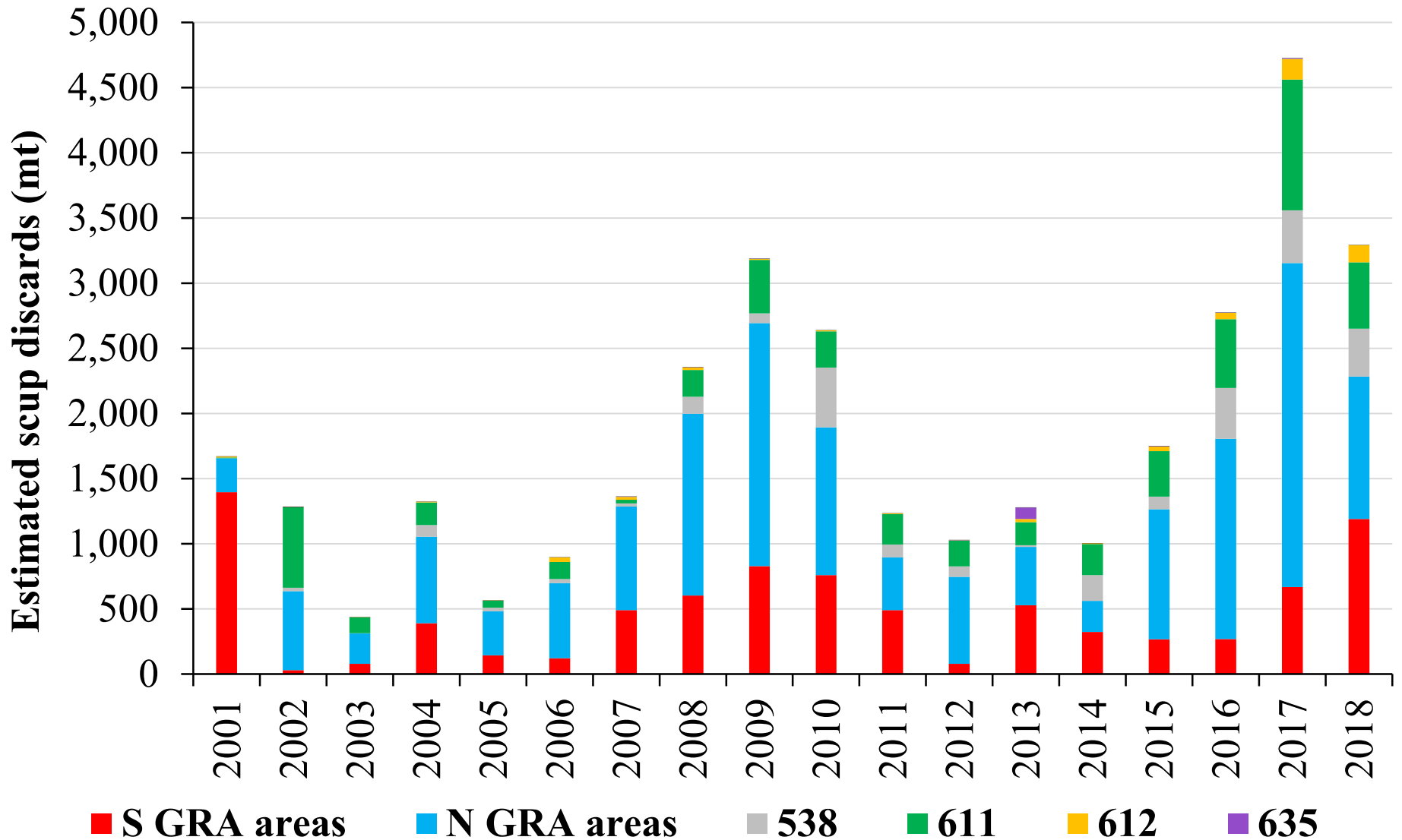
Discards By Mesh



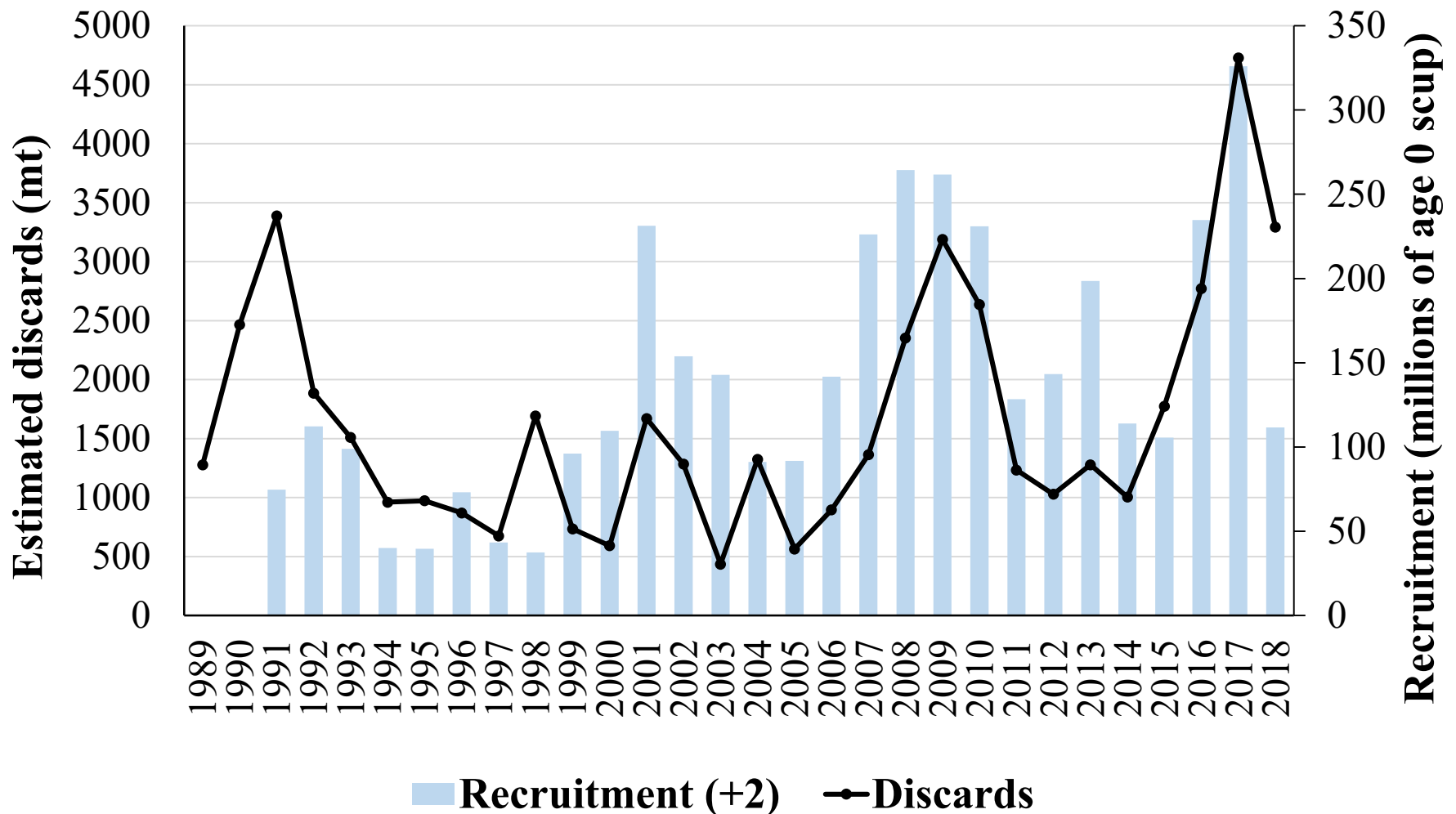
Discards by Quarter



Discards by Area



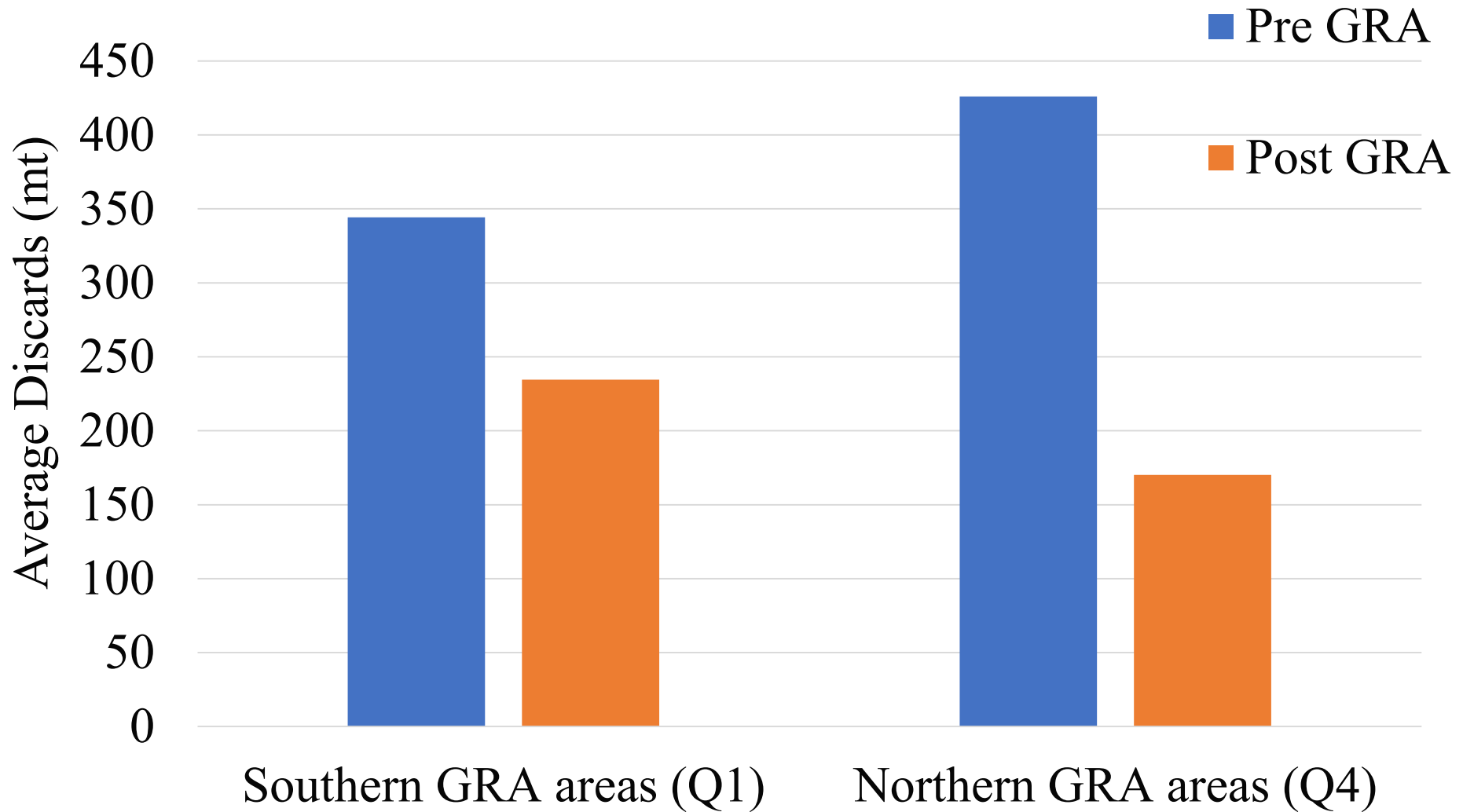
Discards and Recruitment



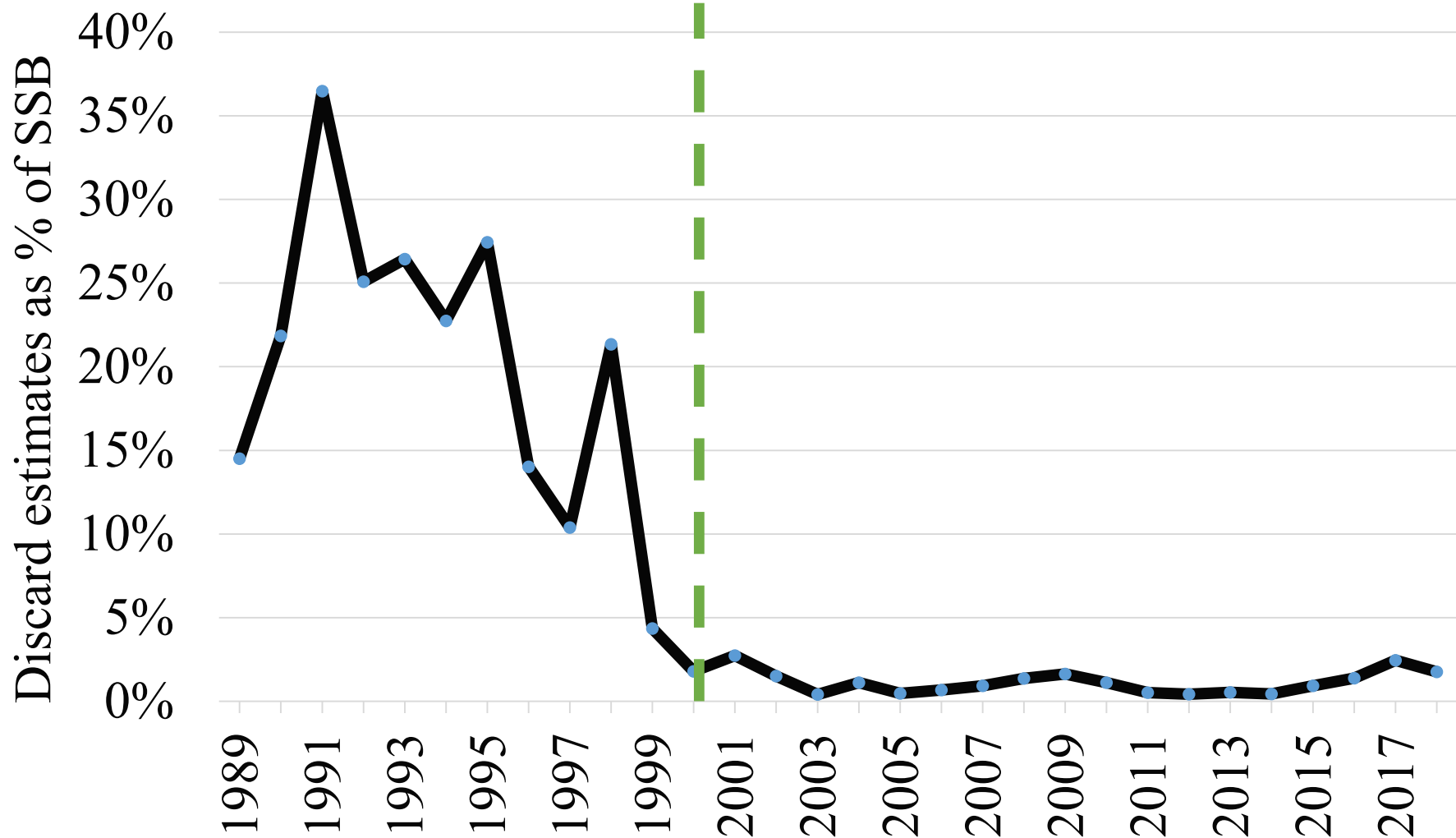
Discards Before and After GRAs

- GRA comparison:
 - Quarter 1: Southern GRA
 - Quarter 4: Northern GRA
 - Stat areas that are partially included in the GRA
 - Averages across years, pre and post-GRA

Discards Before and After GRAs



Discards and Biomass



Conclusions

- Discards should continue to be evaluated
- Discard information in future years may provide insight into the effects of recent regulatory changes:
 - increases in the incidental possession limit (2016, 2019)
 - southern GRA boundary modification (2017)
- Discards may continue to decline due to the low recruitment from 2016-2018.

MC Feedback

- Agreed with the staff recommendation:
 - discards continue to be monitored
 - no changes to management needed at this time
- High discards in 2017 more driven by recruitment than GRA boundary change
- Hypothesis testing approach in the future

Public comment:

- Discards are a problem that everyone wants to help fix
 - SCeMFiS proposal

AP Comments

- Move towards total retention
- Lower the size limit
- State regs contributing to discard problems
 - low trip limits for scup when caught during targeted black sea bass trips
- Multiple advisors: discards need to be reduced

Questions and Discussion

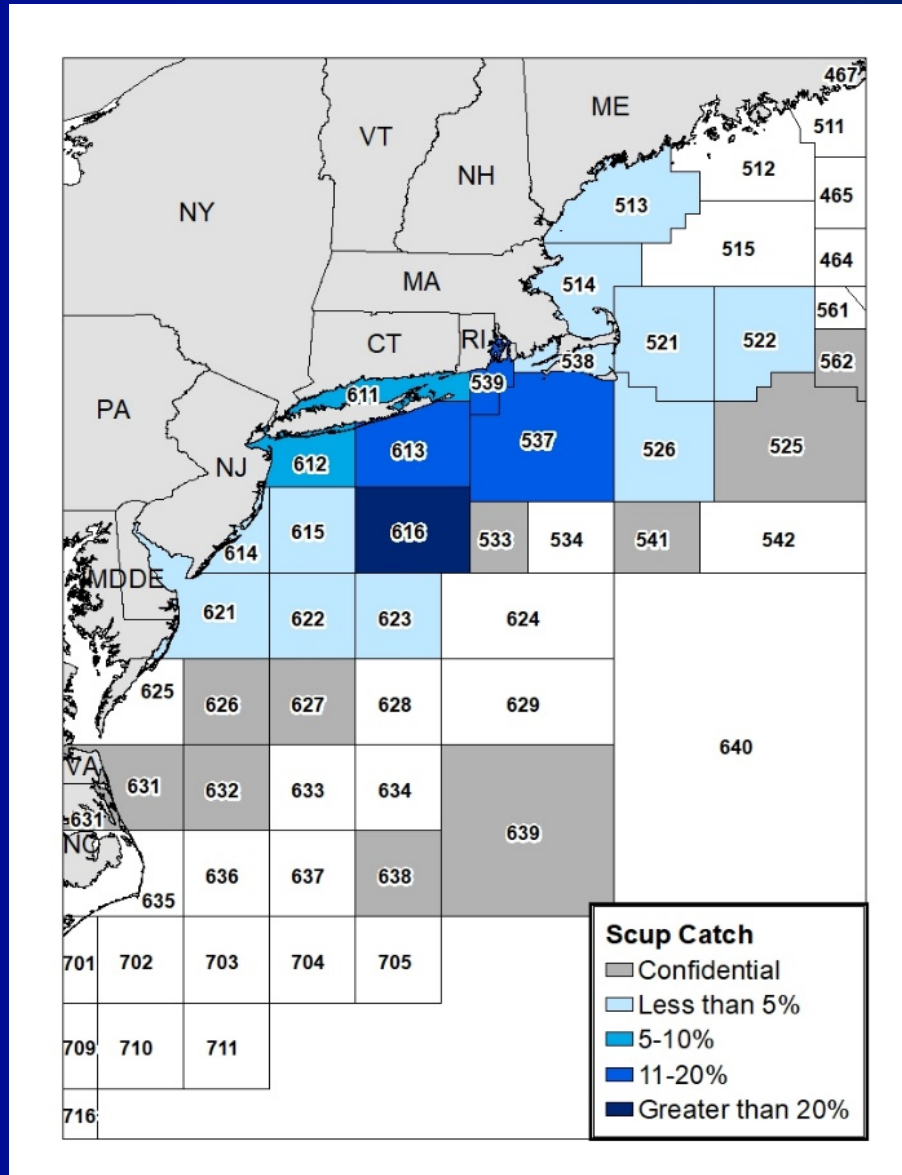
- Staff/MC recommendation:
 - Discards continue to be monitored
 - No changes to management needed at this time



Quota Periods

Quota Period	Dates 2018-2019	Dates 1997-2017	Allocation	Possession limit
Winter I	Jan–Apr	Jan–Apr	45.11%	50,000 pounds
Summer	May–Sept	May–Oct	38.95%	State-specific
Winter II	Oct–Dec	Nov– Dec	15.94%	12,000 pounds*

Commercial Catch

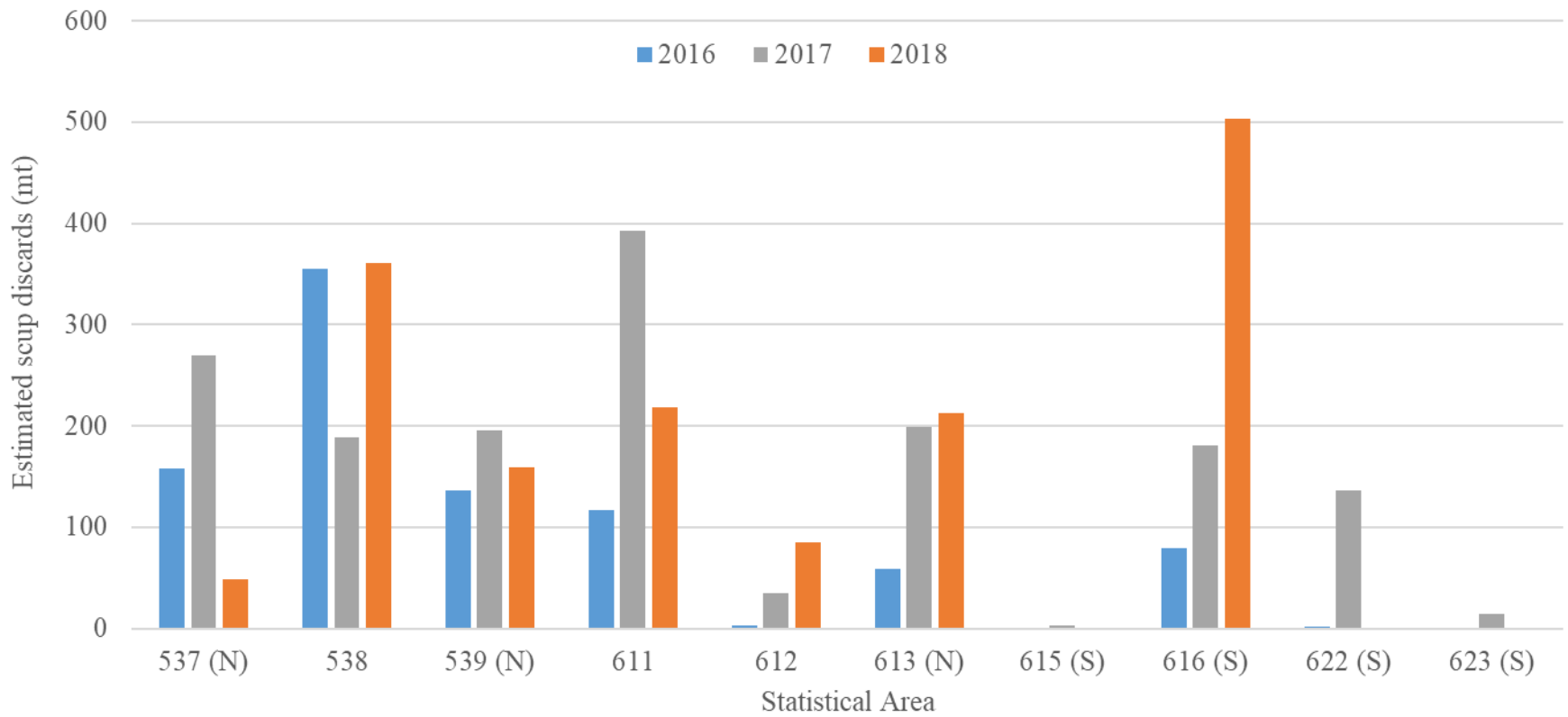


2019 incidental possession limit change

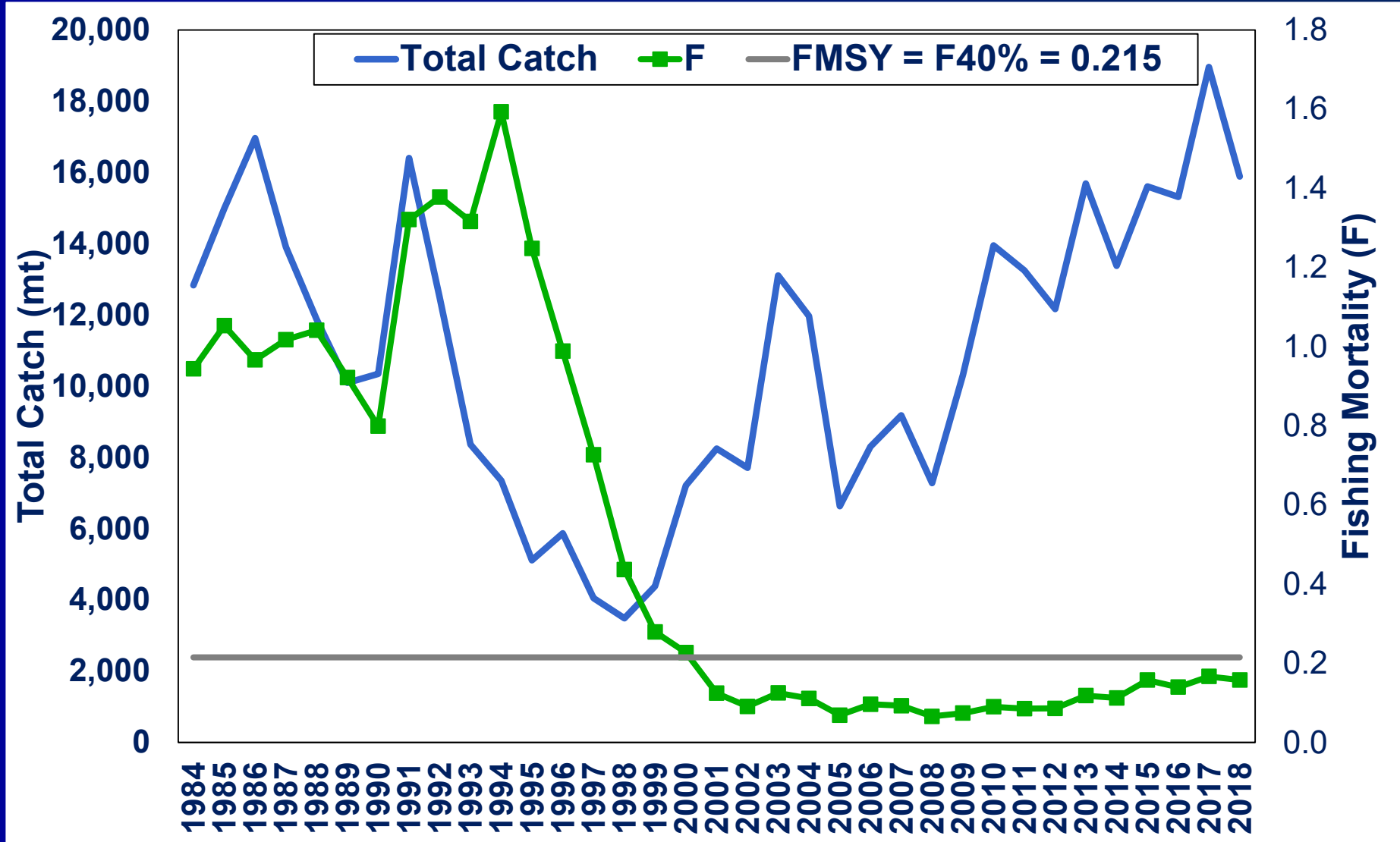
- scup small mesh incidental possession limit for the commercial fishery from 2018 vs 2019

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	1,000 lb				200 lb					1,000 lb		
2019	1,000 lb			2,000 lb			200 lb			1,000 lb		

Quarter 2 (April-June) Discards, Top 10 Discard Areas



Fishing Mortality



Biomass, Recruitment

