MID-ATLANTIC
FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SCOQ)

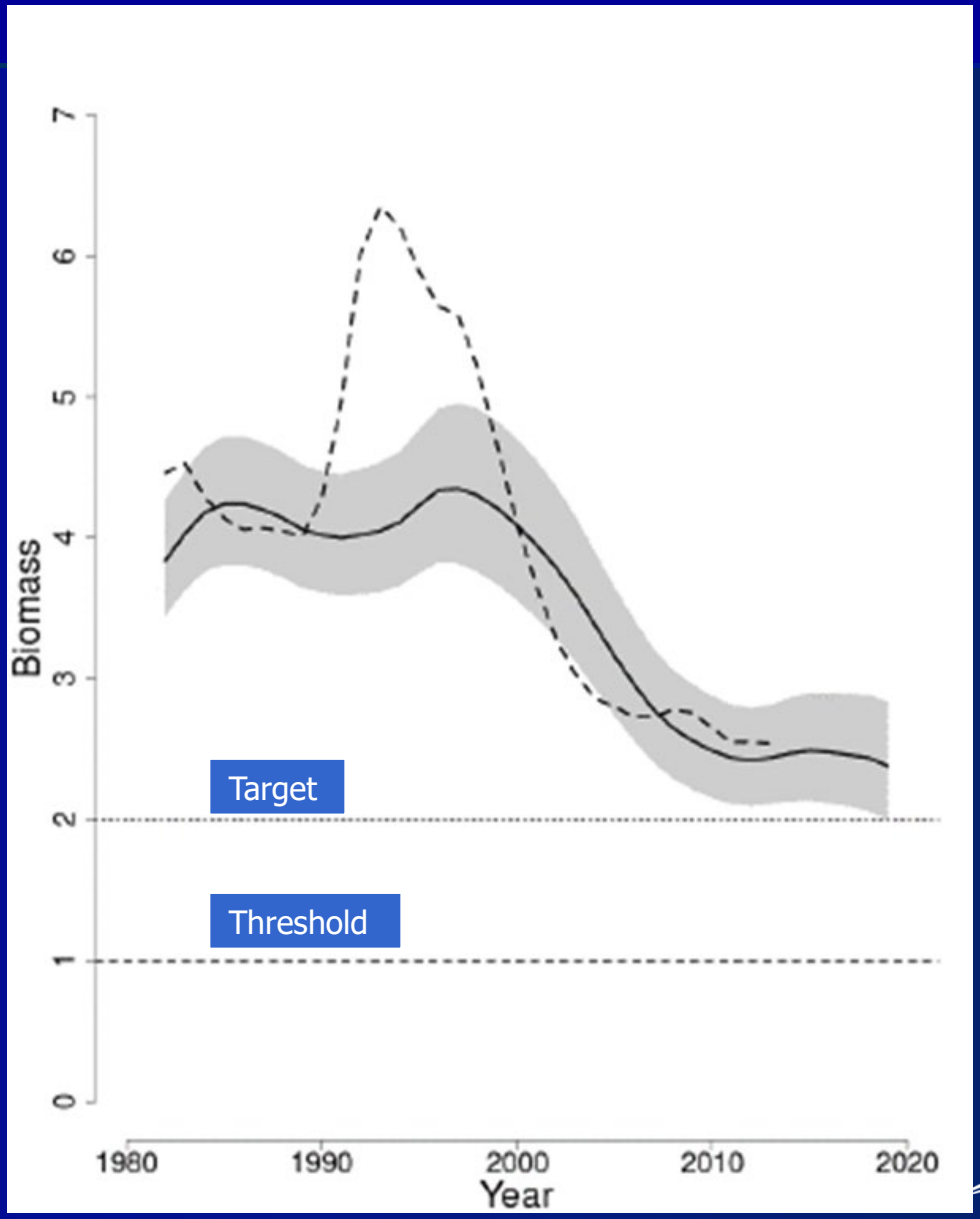
June Council Meeting

June 7, 2023

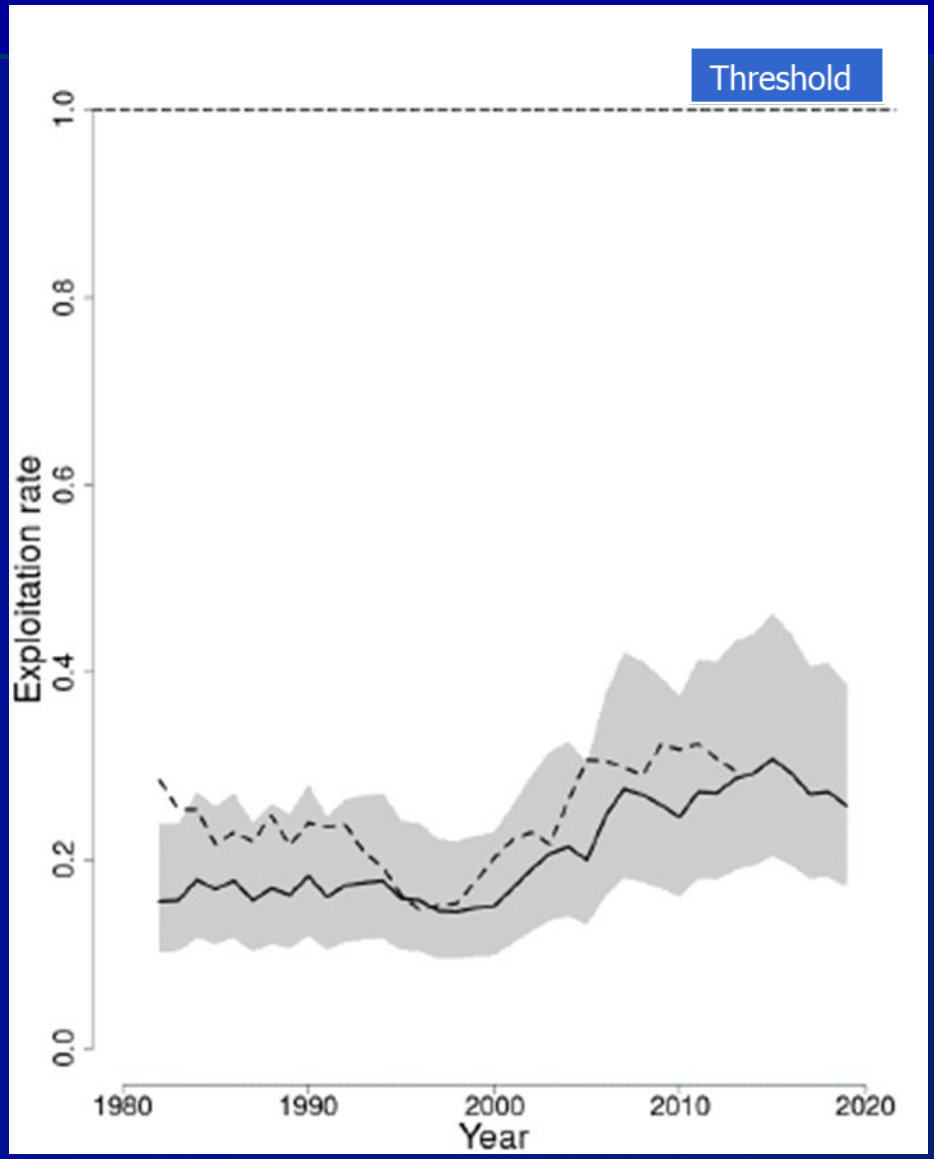
Today's Review (2024 Measures)

- Surfclam fishery info doc
  - Fishery data update, no survey data
  - Received Level 3 SC and Level 1 OQ Management Track Assessments in 2020
- Fishery performance report (both species)
- Staff recommendations for surfclam
- SSC recommendations for surfclam
- Repeat for ocean quahog…

Surfclam Biomass



Surfclam Fishing Mortality



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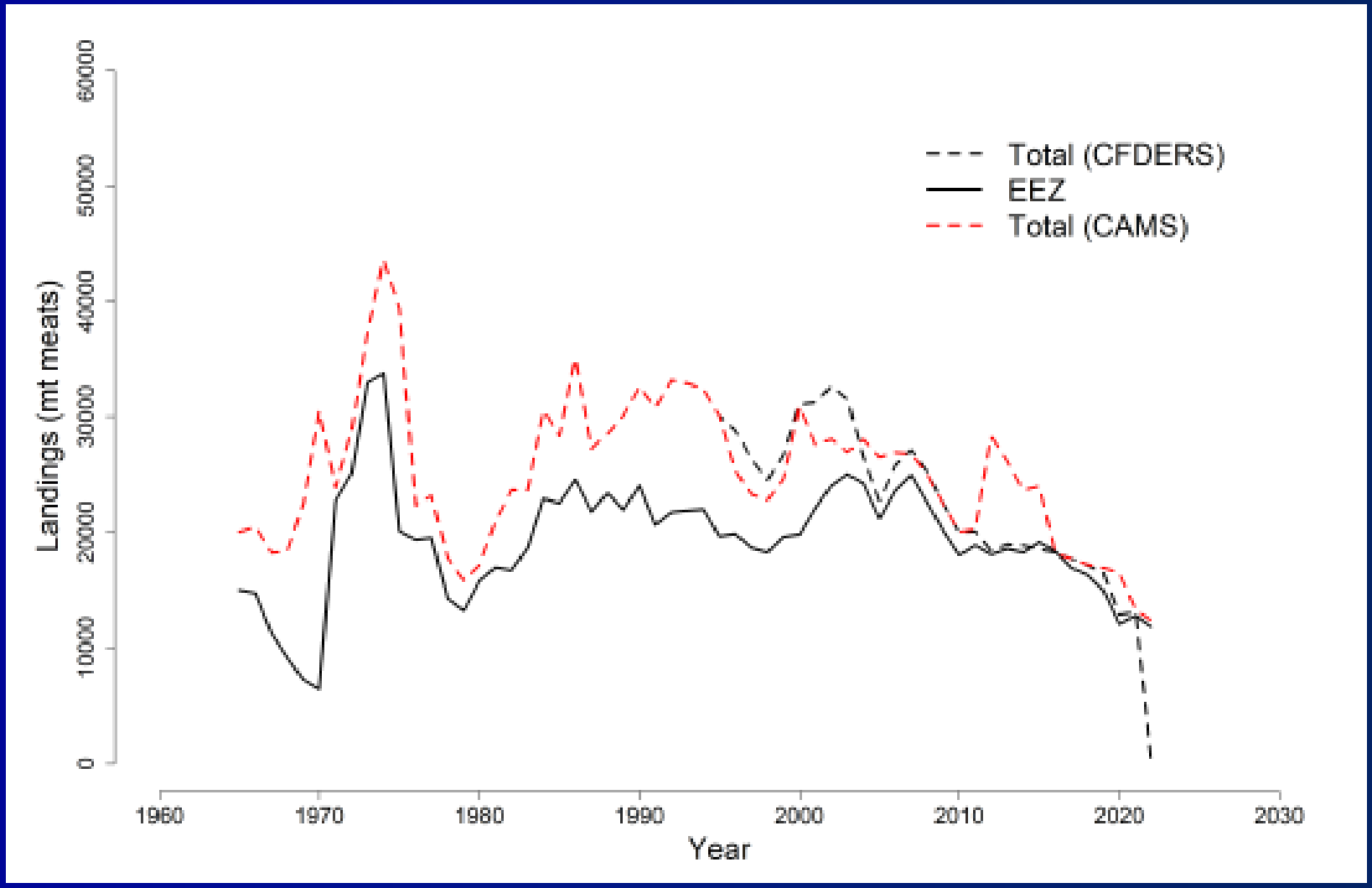
Surfclam Info Doc



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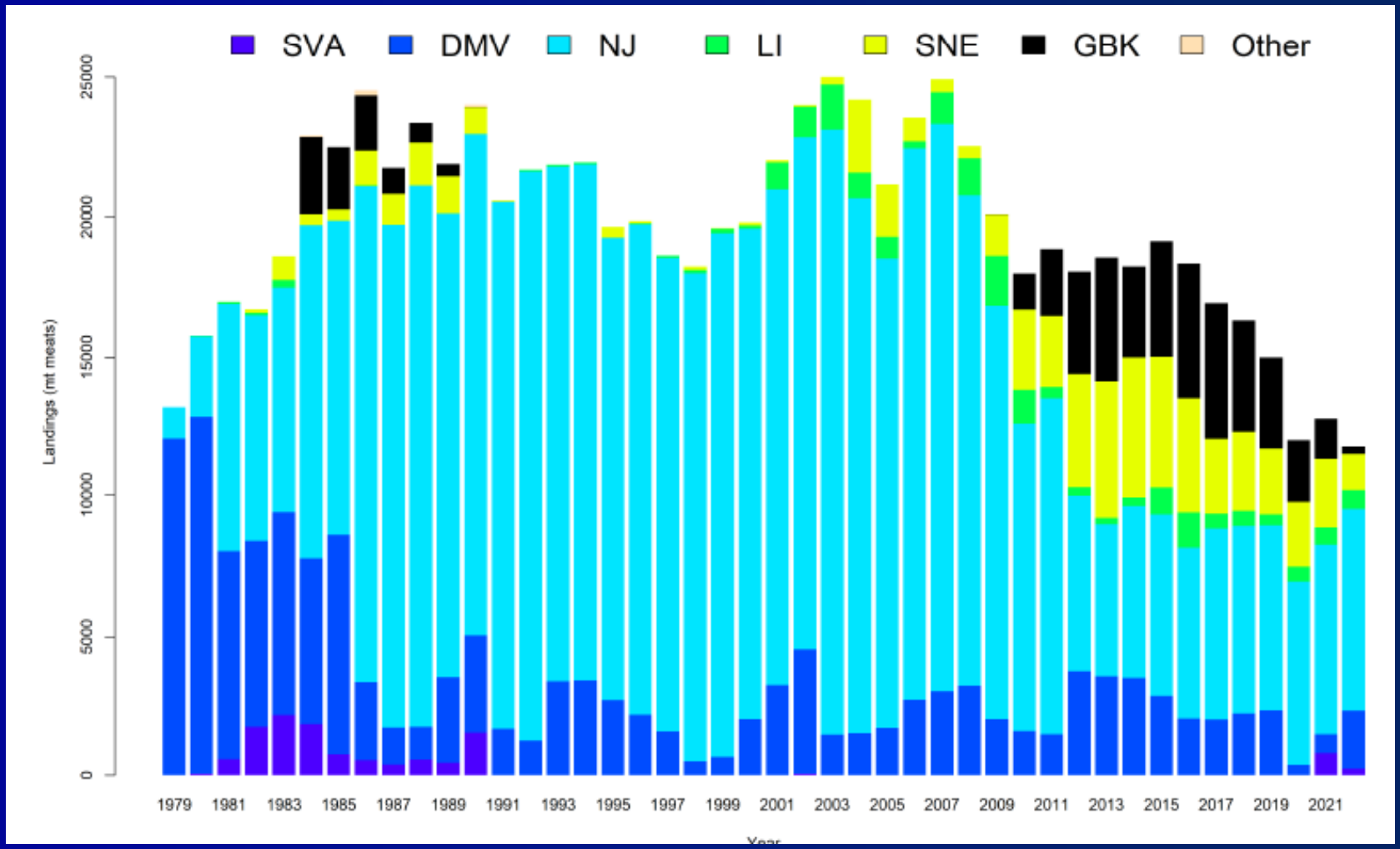

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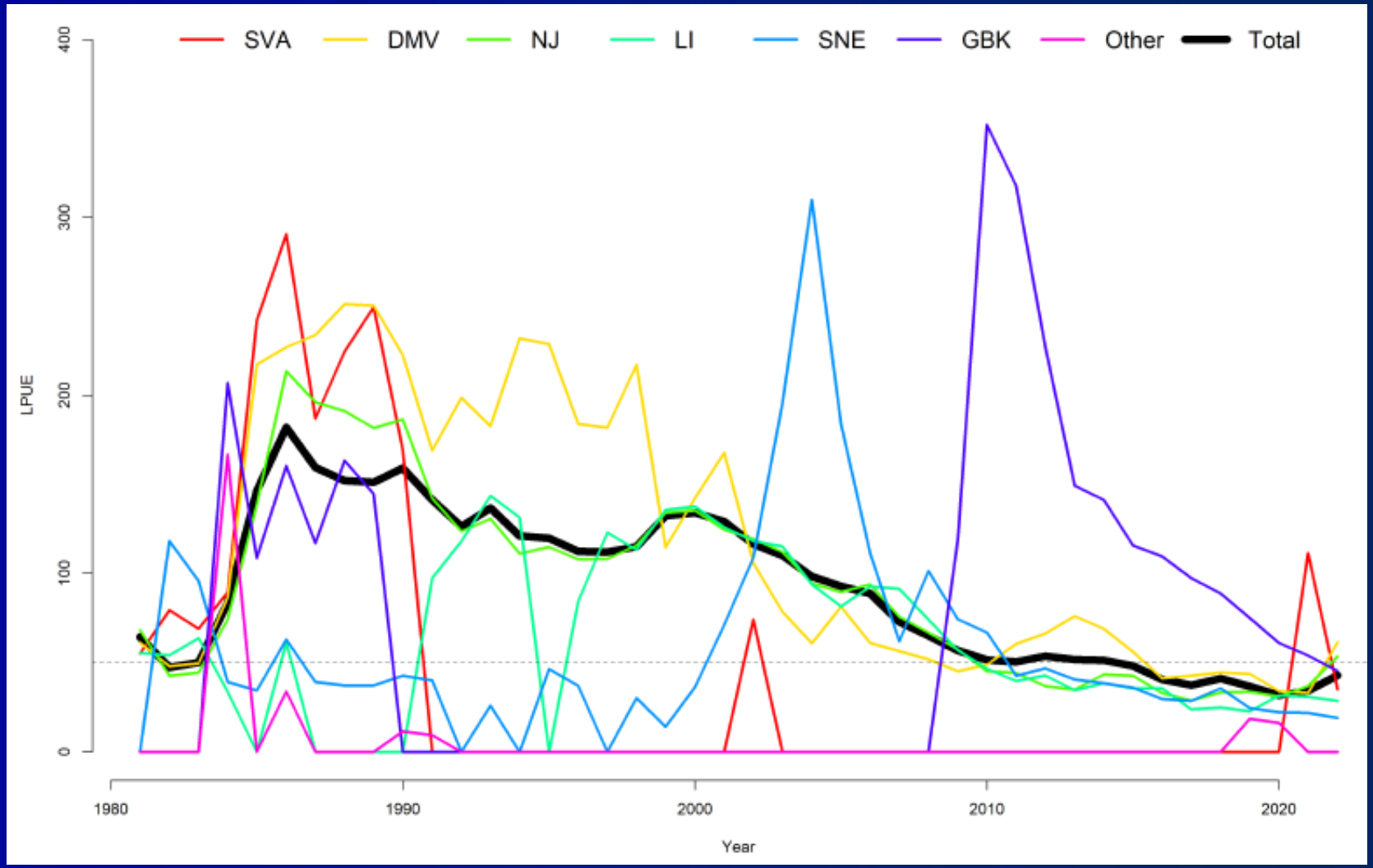

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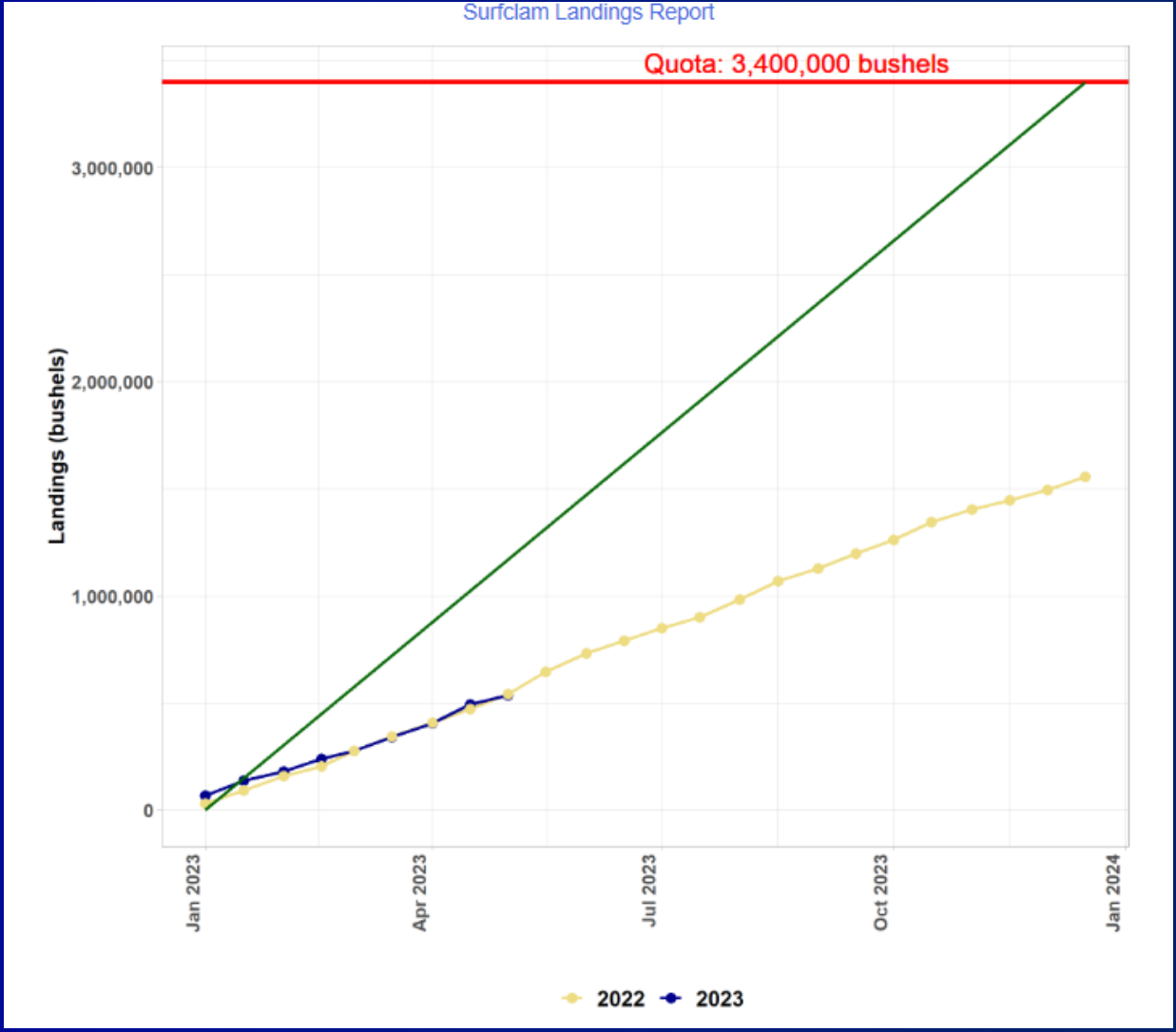
Surfclam Info Doc

- 2022: 33 vessels (8 less that 2021)
- 8 processors/dealers SCOQ in 5 states
- Increase in overall ex-vessel value
  - $28 million in 2022
  - Up $4 million from 2021

Surfclam Landings (thru May 24)



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Fisheries Performance Report

- Covers both SCOQ
- Advisors met April 13, 2023
- Asked series of trigger questions
- AP identified several "Critical Issues"
- Also note, advisors would like status quo quotas (quota stability = fishery/market stability)

Fisheries Performance Report

- AP raised several issues in past FPR documents for Council action.
- Concerned about relevance of the FPR to the Council.
- AP requests an update from Council on how their requests are being followed up on or taken up.

Fisheries Performance Report

- Regulations for shellfish safety have been updated by FDA.
- NOAA Fisheries has not addressed these changes on Georges Bank (PSP Area) - preventing fishery access.
- AP requests Council hold meeting with NOAA Fisheries leadership (Regional Administrator or others) and appropriate public heath safety groups (NOAA Seafood Inspection), and its SCOQ advisors, to discuss prioritizing implementation of 2019 model ordinance regs.

Fisheries Performance Report

- Co-occurrence of surfclam and quahog continues to be an issue of concern for these fisheries.
- AP concerned about enforcement of requirements to target these species separately on fishing trips.
- AP are working to address accountability issue for this fishery (monitoring and enforcement) while working through modifications to outdated species separation requirement regulations.

Fisheries Performance Report

- Important Council support research in Great South Channel Habitat Management Area (Nantucket Shoals/Southern New England area.
- Lack of access in this area is challenge for industry and has negatively impacted catch rates. Advisors would like to see Councils prioritize this issue.
- Wind: Development of wind energy and aquaculture areas, protected marine areas and historic monuments, and other offshore ocean uses have become an even more critical issue for our industry.

Fisheries Performance Report

- Other Important Issues:
  - The SCOQ AP would like to request that Fishery Management Act Teams (FMATs) be conveyed jointly with the AP for issues related to these fisheries.

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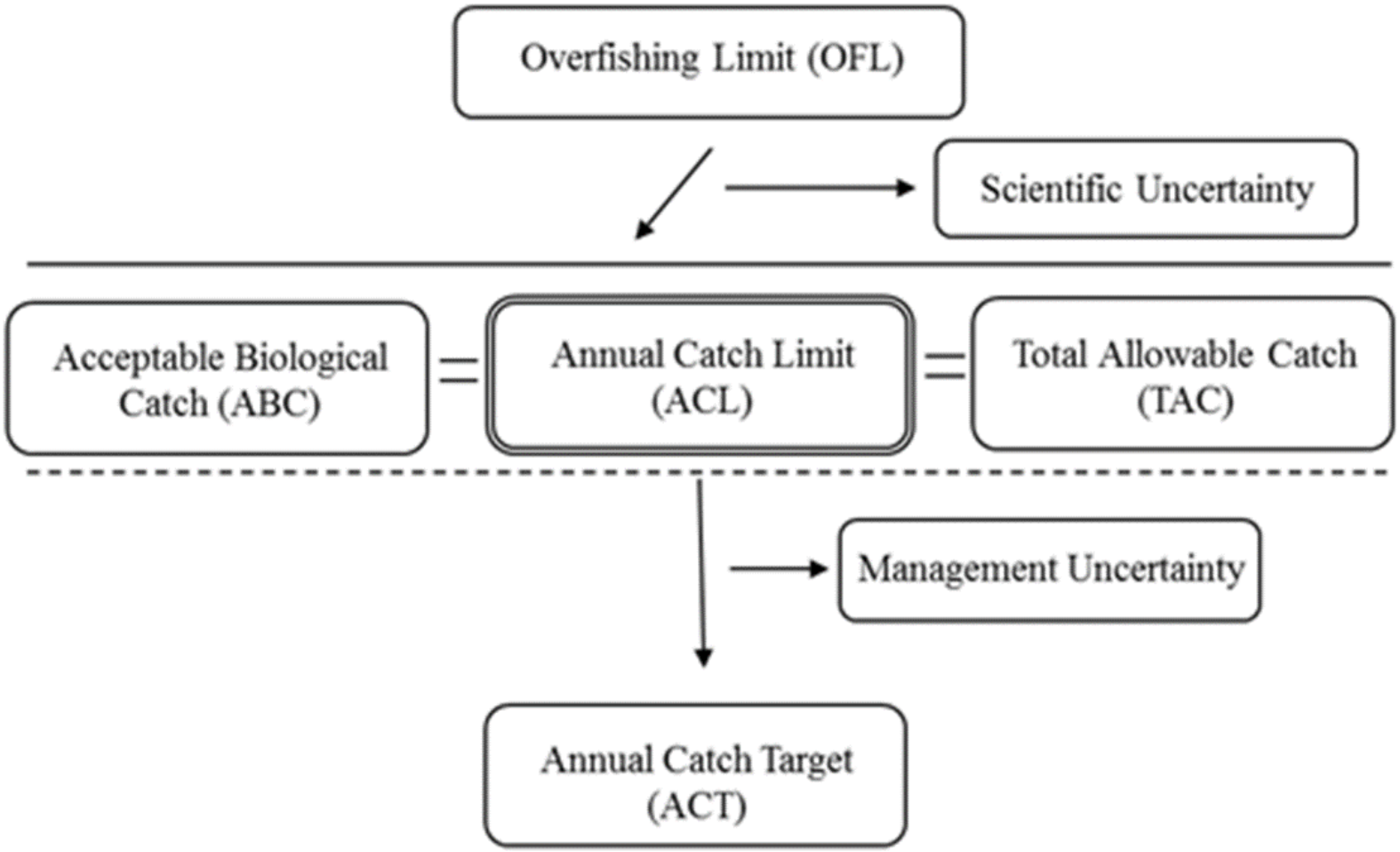
SSC Recommendation 2021-2026

- SSC-modified OFL probability distribution
- Coefficient of variation (OFL CV) of 100%
- Based on report for Level 3 Management Track Assessment
- 2024 p*=0.46

Atlantic Surfclam Flowchart



Surfclam SSC/Council Recommendations

Year	OFL	ABC	ACL	ACT	Commercial Quota
2021	51,361 mt	47,919 mt	47,919 mt	29,363 mt	26,218 mt
2022	48,202 mt	44,522 mt	44,522 mt	29,363 mt	26,218 mt
2023	45,959 mt	42,237 mt	42,237 mt	29,363 mt	26,218 mt
2024	44,629 mt	40,946 mt	40,946 mt	29,363 mt	26,218 mt
2025	44,048 mt	40,345 mt	40,345 mt	29,363 mt	26,218 mt
2026	43,886 mt	40,264 mt	40,264 mt	29,363 mt	26,218 mt

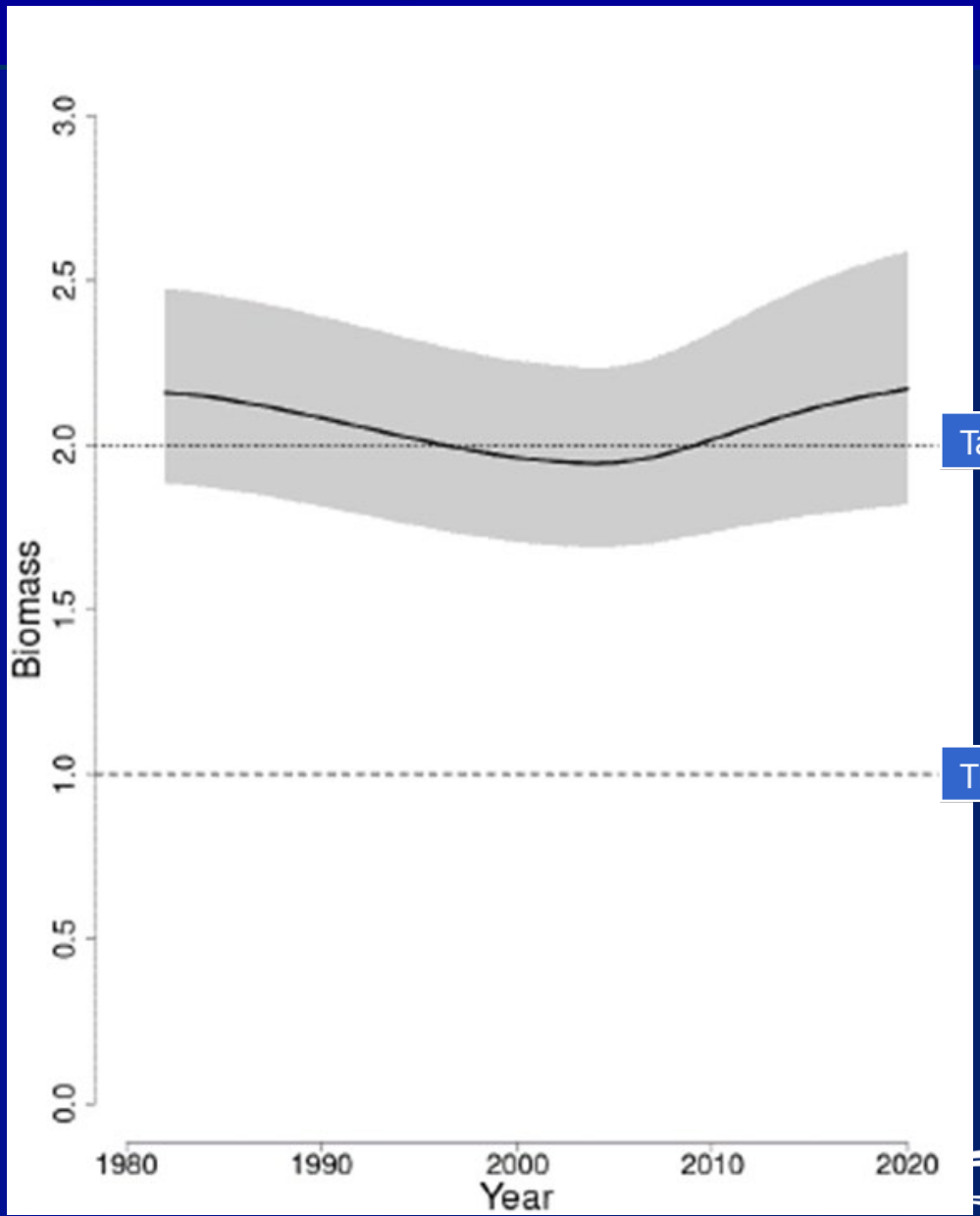
Surfclam Staff Recommendations

- No changes to measures for 2024
  - Council will need motion to recommend RA suspend minimum size (required annually)
  - Last year, GARFO determined the proportion of surfclams in fishery smaller than 4.75 inches did not exceed the 30 percent trigger for minimum size requirement.
  - 27.6 percent of the coast wide surfclam landings to date in 2022 (August 2021 through July 2022) were undersized (LCL 25.4 percent and UCL 29.8 percent).

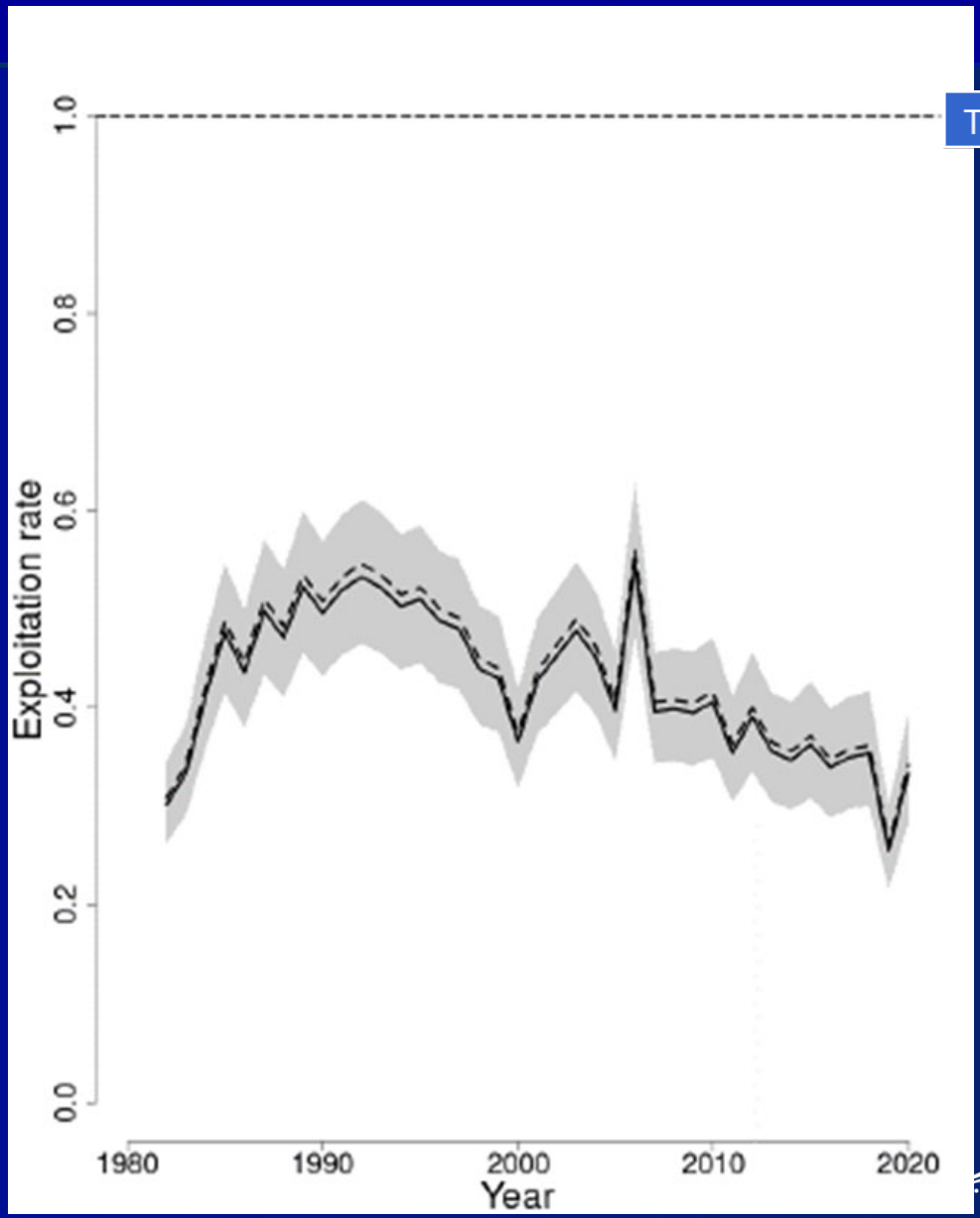
Surfclam ABC for 2024

- Surfclam biomass remains above target levels and fishing mortality remains well below target values. Despite some warning signs in stock trends, the SSC concluded **that no changes were necessary for the previously approved ABC of 40,946 mt for Surfclam in 2024**.
- Warning signs include:
  - Long-term trends in Landings Per Unit Effort as fleet shifts among areas.
  - The fraction of undersized clams in landings has been increasing recently with current estimates between 25.4% and 29.8%, just below the 30% trigger limit in the Management Plan.
  - Mixed catches with Ocean Quahog remain a concern for both fisheries.
  - Higher temperatures reduce growth rates in southern part of range.

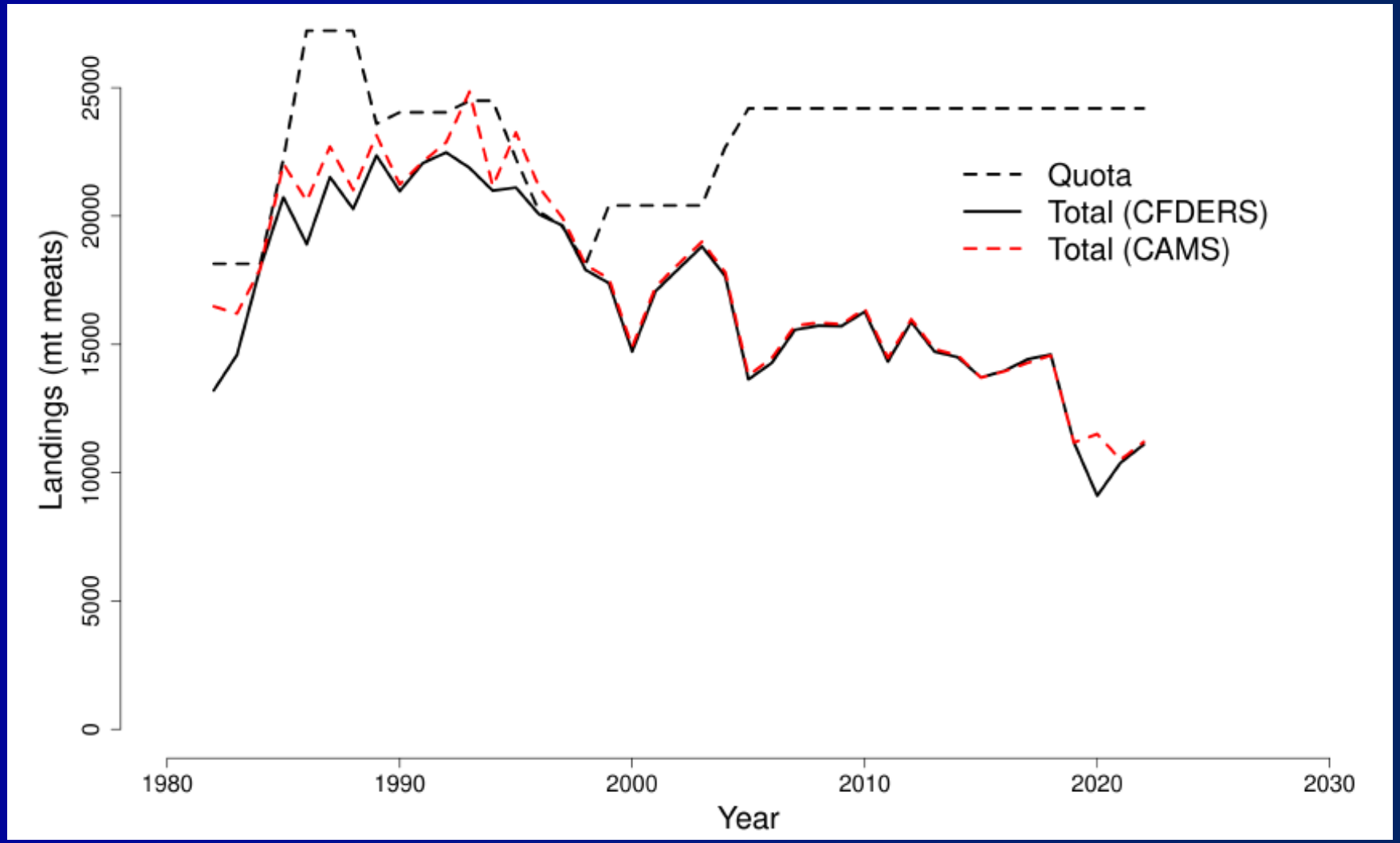
Quahog Biomass



Quahog Fishing Mortality



Quahog Info Doc



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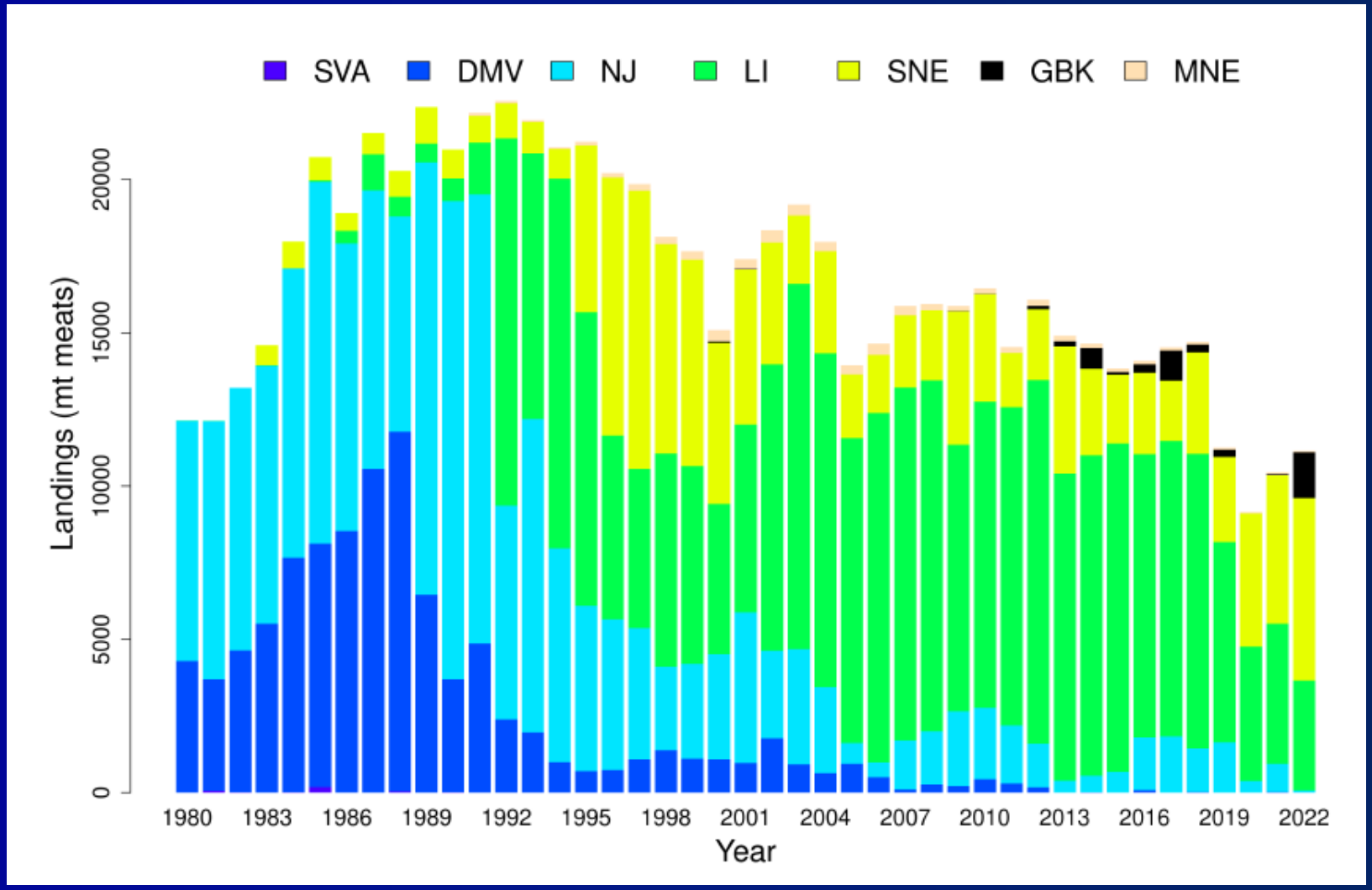

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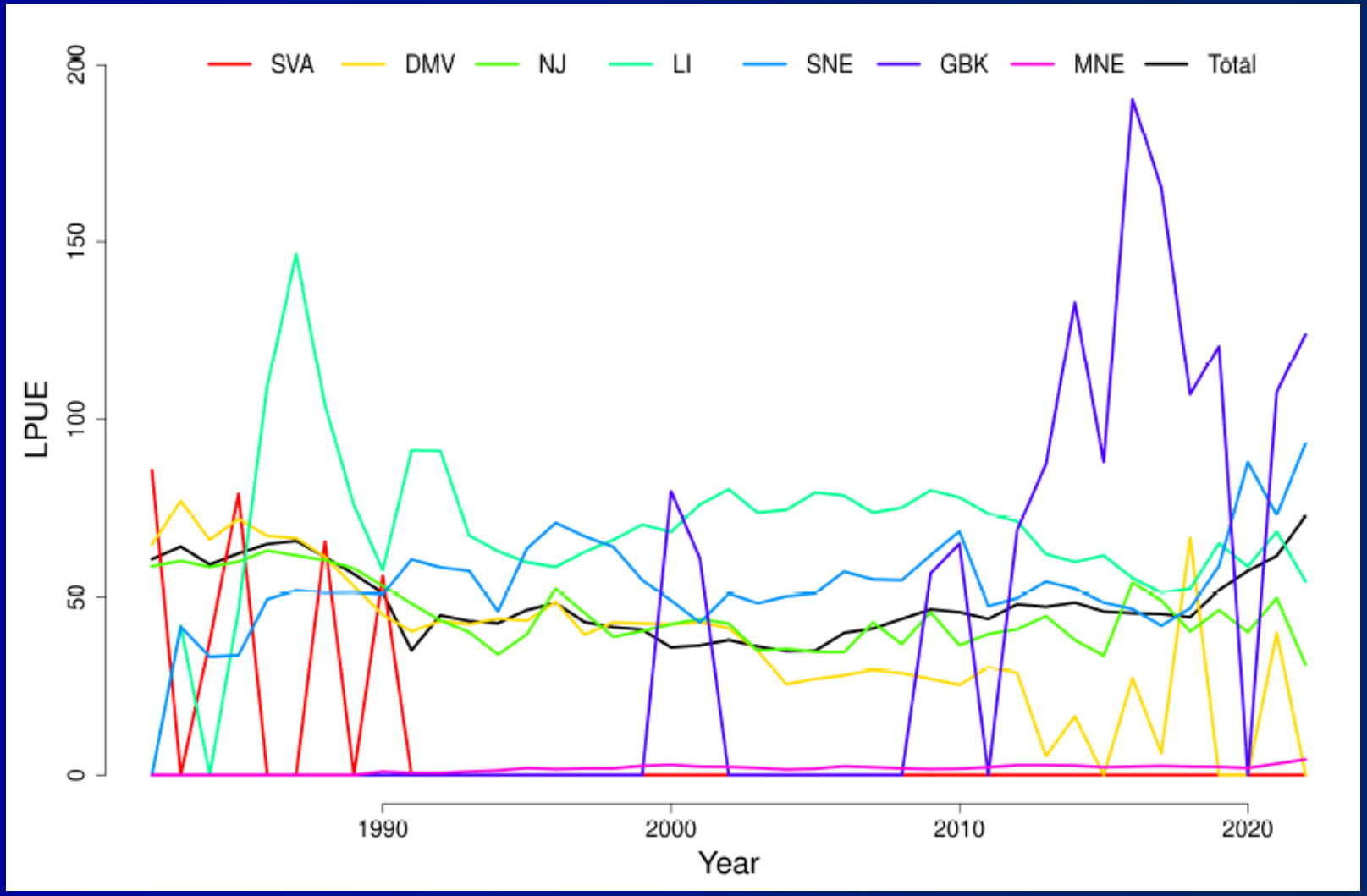
Quahog Info Doc



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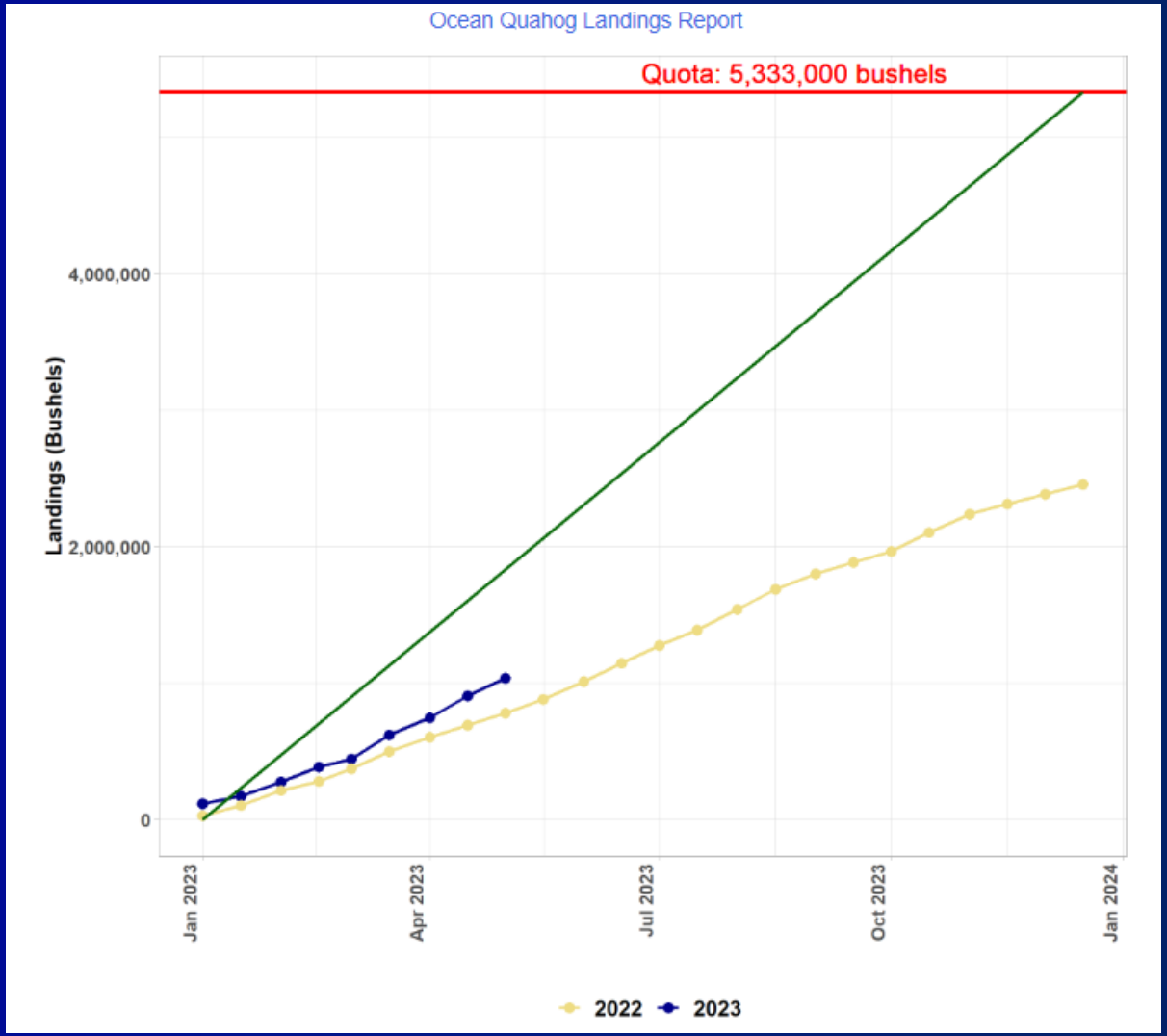
Quahog Info Doc

- 2022: 12 non-ME vessels
- ME fishery landed 12,711 bu (2022)
- 8 processors/dealers of SCOQ in 5 states
- Increase in overall ex-vessel value
  - $21 million in 2022
  - Up $3 million from 2021

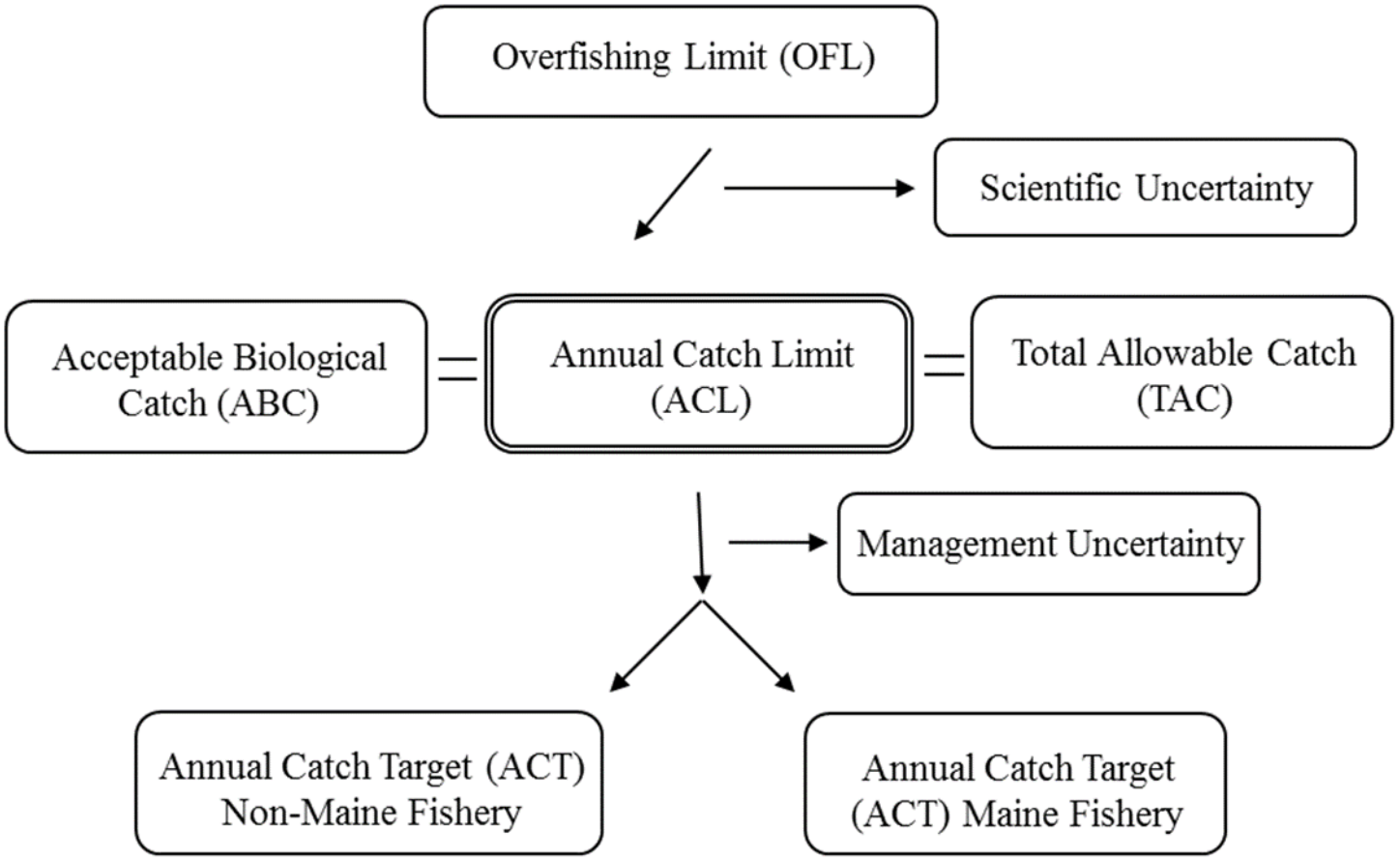
Quahog Landings – Non-Maine (thru May 24)



SSC Recommendation 2021-2026

- SSC-modified OFL probability distribution
- Coefficient of variation (OFL CV) of 100%
- Based on report for Level 1 Management Track Assessment
- 2024 p*=0.49

Ocean Quahog Flowchart



Quahog SSC/Council Recommendations

Year	OFL	ABC	ACL	ACT*	Commercial Quota*
2021	44,960 mt	44,031 mt	44,031 mt	25,924 mt	24,689 mt
2022	45,001 mt	44,072 mt	44,072 mt	25,924 mt	24,689 mt
2023	45,012 mt	44,082 mt	44,082 mt	25,924 mt	24,689 mt
2024	44,994 mt	44,065 mt	44,065 mt	25,924 mt	24,689 mt
2025	44,948 mt	44,020 mt	44,020 mt	25,924 mt	24,689 mt
2026	44,875 mt	43,948 mt	43,948 mt	25,924 mt	24,689 mt

* For combined Maine and non-Maine quahog fishery.

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Quahog Staff Recommendations

- No changes to measures for 2024

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Ocean Quahog ABC for 2024

- In view of the high stock biomass, low fishing mortality, and absence of any trends in indicators**, the SSC concluded that no changes were necessary for the previously approved ABC of 44,065 mt for Ocean Quahog in 2024.**

NEFSC Clam Survey

- 2022 Survey - It happened! Data not entered/processed in time for this meeting.
- 2023 Survey – It's supposed to happen.
- 2023 EM Project will deploy image collection system on clam survey to develop capabilities to id and measure surfclam and quahog using machine learning.

Cornell Genetics Work – Supplement

- Processing federal waters samples to fill in holes – will rerun gene flow models