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# North Pacific Observer Program Update

Freezer Longline Coalition Symposium

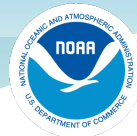
May 14, 2024

# 2023 Observer Data Collections

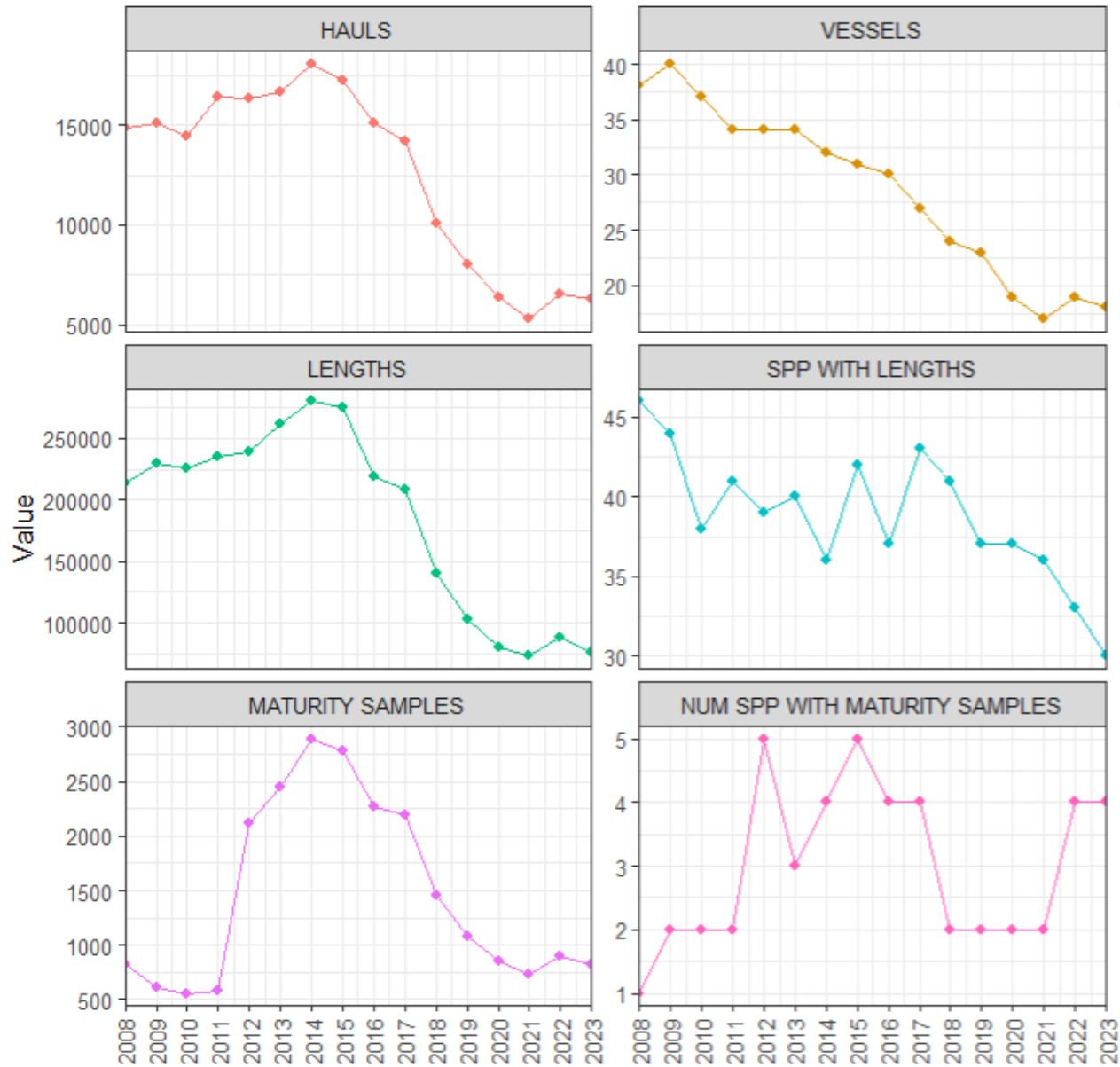


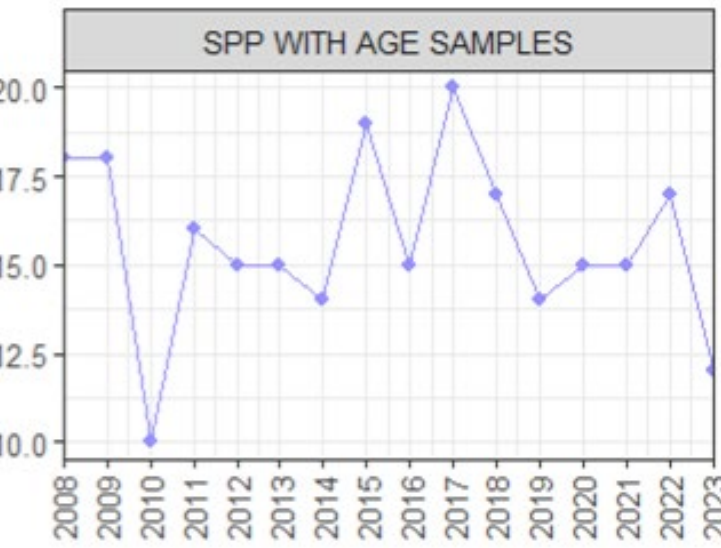
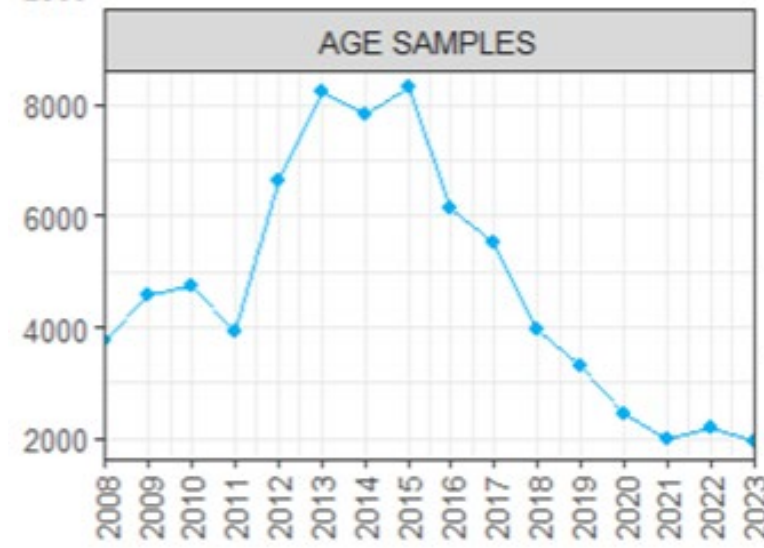
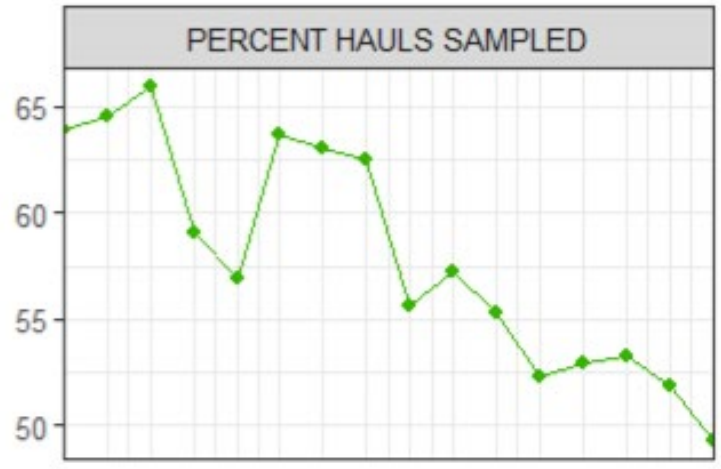
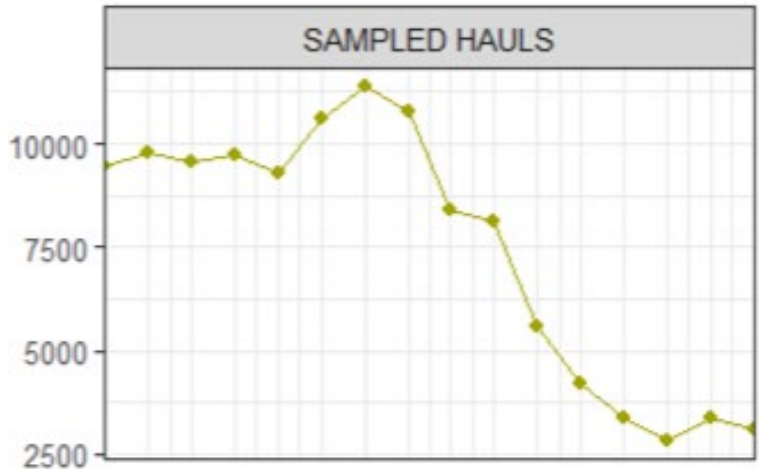
## 18 Freezer Longline Vessels

- 6,276 sets retrieved – over 49% were sampled by observers
- 76,873 lengths collected (from 30 different species)
- 1941 age samples collected (from 12 different species; includes otoliths, scales, vertebrae)
- 829 maturity samples collected from Pacific cod, Pollock, Big Skates, and Longnose skates used to determine spawning timing and status



# Freezer Longline Observer data summaries, 2008-2024





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# 2024 Observer Data Collection Changes

- Increased and improved information on pot gear:
  - pot opening data, including number and diameter of entrances and escape rings
  - types of pots (rigid or slinky) and how they are fished (single or strung)
- Trophic interaction information (stomachs) moving from preserved tissue collection to photo collections
- ATLAS improvements allow for image storage and transmission in-season
- New haul data coding to identify Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative participants
- New marine mammal interaction codes to specify injuries
- Special research project using photos to determine if Pycnopodia (sunflower sea stars) are being encountered in observed fisheries



# Observer Recruitment and Retention

- Nationally, observer provider companies are noting difficulty in recruiting and retaining observers
  - In 2023, 45% of our fishery observers were new to the profession
- In Alaska, this has been reported more acutely by full-coverage providers than the partial-coverage provider
- NMFS is working to increase awareness of observing through career fairs, outreach to universities, and increased web-based materials (“day in the life” stories; videos)
  - Investigating alternative career paths into observing
- FLC and Alaskan Observers worked with FMA to institute a voluntary second observer program to help more observers qualify for their Lead Level 2 qualifications



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# Keeping the Work Environment Safe

- NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement offers, “Ensuring a Safe Work Environment for Observers”
  - [Jaclyn.smith@noaa.gov](mailto:Jaclyn.smith@noaa.gov) - Observer Liaison Agent
- NOAA’s Workplace Violence Protection and Response will provide training or consultation with industry to help ensure a safe working environment
  - [Lori.Newell@noaa.gov](mailto:Lori.Newell@noaa.gov) - WVPR Regional Representative
- OLE meetings with vessel companies
  - Discussions focused on current issues detected in the fishing fleet in general and in specific sectors.



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# Questions?



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