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The importance of environment and life stage on interpretation of silky shark relative abundance indices for the equatorial Pacific Ocean

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29

30

31 **Abstract**

32 Recent large fluctuations in an index of relative abundance for the silky shark in the eastern
33 Pacific Ocean have called into question its reliability as a population indicator for management.
34 To investigate whether these fluctuations were driven by environmental forcing rather than true
35 changes in abundance, a Pacific-wide approach was taken. Data collected by observers aboard
36 purse-seine vessels fishing in the equatorial Pacific were used to compute standardized trends in
37 relative abundance by region, and where possible, by shark size category as a proxy for life
38 stage. These indices were compared to the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO), an index of
39 Pacific Ocean climate variability. Correlation between silky indices and the PDO was found to
40 differ by region and size category. The highest correlations by shark size category were for small
41 (< 90 cm total length (TL)) and medium (90-150 cm TL) sharks from the western region of the
42 equatorial eastern Pacific (EP) and from the equatorial western Pacific. This correlation
43 disappeared in the inshore EP. Throughout, correlations with the PDO were generally lower for
44 large silky sharks (> 150 cm TL). These results are suggestive of changes in the small and
45 medium silky indices being driven by movement of juvenile silky sharks across the Pacific as the
46 eastern edge of the Indo-Pacific Warm Pool shifts location with ENSO events. Lower correlation
47 of the PDO with large shark indices may indicate that those indices were less influenced by
48 environmental forcing and therefore potentially less biased with respect to monitoring population
49 trends.

50

51 **Keywords:** silky shark; *Carcharhinus falciformis*; Pacific Ocean; purse-seine; PDO; ENSO;
52 FAD

53

54 **Introduction**

55 Assessment and management of the silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) in the Pacific Ocean
56 has been complicated by a lack of information about both the ecology of the silky shark and the
57 amount of fishery removals. Management of the silky shark east of 150°W (EPO), in the Inter-
58 American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) management area (Allen *et al.*, 2010), is based

59 only on trends in indices of relative abundance estimated from data collected by observers
60 aboard large¹ tuna purse-seine vessels. Data available from other fisheries operating in the EPO
61 that catch silky sharks (bycatch or targeted) are either incomplete with respect to fishing effort or
62 with respect to catch by species (Siu and Aires-da-Silva, 2016). In the Western and Central
63 Pacific Ocean (WCPO) there is long-term observer coverage for the longline fishery but the
64 sample size is small and may be unrepresentative of the fishery as a whole. Observer coverage
65 for the purse seine fishery is higher but only in the years since 2010 (Clarke, 2017).
66 Management of silky shark in the WCPO is primarily through a no-retention rule adopted
67 subsequent to a WCPO silky shark stock assessment, which concluded that the species is
68 severely over-fished (Rice and Harley, 2013).

69
70 The first exploration of trends in Pacific silky shark populations began in 2007 in the EPO, and
71 interpretation of these trends, which continue to be updated annually, has proved to be an
72 ongoing challenge. Of concern was the initial decline that began in the late 1990s (Minami *et al.*,
73 2007), which may have been related to expansion of the purse-seine fishery on floating objects in
74 the EPO (Lennert-Cody and Hall, 1999). However, other interpretations are also possible and the
75 processes driving change in the index have continued to be debated (Aires-da-Silva *et al.*, 2014).
76 Since the mid 2000's, the index for the silky shark in the EPO north of the equator has fluctuated
77 considerably (Figure 1), raising further questions as to the processes driving the index. The
78 recent increases in the EPO indices from one year to the next, especially in the northern EPO, are
79 in many cases too rapid to be due exclusively to population growth (Lennert-Cody *et al.*, 2017).
80 Similar fluctuations are found in indices computed for other types of purse-seine sets (sets on
81 dolphin-associated tunas and unassociated tuna schools; Lennert-Cody *et al.*, 2017), suggesting
82 that processes behind the recent changes in the index are not specific to aspects of the fishery on
83 tunas associated with floating-objects.

84
85 Other processes that might contribute to fluctuations in the index include environmentally
86 mediated changes in availability of silky sharks to fishing gear and/or east-west/north-south
87 movement. Here we investigate the potential for recent fluctuations in the EPO index to be
88 driven by environmental forcing. We focus on data from purse-seine vessels fishing on tunas

¹ Vessels with fish-carrying capacity >363 t.

89 associated with floating-objects in the equatorial Pacific: silky shark bycatch in purse-seine
90 fisheries primarily occurs in floating-object (associated) sets (Román-Verdesoto and Orozco-
91 Zöllner, 2005; Clarke, 2017), and the silky shark is a tropical species, preferentially inhabiting
92 temperatures over 23°C (Bonfil, 2008; Musyl *et al.*, 2011). In addition, the purse-seine fishery is
93 the only gear type with adequate observer coverage in both the eastern and western Pacific.
94 Relative abundance indices for the silky shark were computed from bycatch-per-set data by area
95 within the equatorial Pacific and compared to an index of Pacific Ocean-climate variability, the
96 Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO). Where possible, indices also were computed by shark size
97 categories that reflect life stages.

98

99 **Data**

100 Two silky shark data sets were used in this analysis, one from the coast of the Americas to
101 180°W (EP) and the other from 180°W to the west (WP). The data were collected under two
102 different management agencies, the IATTC and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
103 Commission (WCPFC). Although the data collected under these two management agencies
104 largely represent different fleets, both data sets were collected by observers aboard purse-seine
105 vessels setting on tunas associated with floating objects (also referred to as “floating-object” or
106 “associated” sets). Floating-object sets include sets on tunas associated with fish aggregating
107 devices (FADs) and with natural and anthropogenic drifting debris (*e.g.*, tree trunks, metal
108 drums). Since the mid-1990s floating-object sets in the EP have been dominated by sets on FADs
109 (IATTC, 2010; 2016). Sets made in the WP on anchored FADs were excluded from this analysis
110 because FADs used in the EP are drifting FADs.

111

112 The EP data were collected by IATTC observers aboard large purse-seiners during 1994-2016.
113 Collection of quantitative data on non-mammal bycatch by observers began in 1993 but data
114 were not complete for that year. Observers recorded bycatch of silky sharks in three size
115 categories: small (< 90 cm total length (TL)), medium (90-150 cm TL), and large (>150 cm TL))
116 (Román-Verdesoto and Orozco-Zöllner, 2005). These size categories roughly correspond to
117 animals of age < 1 yr, 1 – 3 or 4 yrs, and > 3 or 4 yrs, respectively (Oshitani *et al.*, 2003;
118 Sanchez de Ita *et al.*, 2011). Post-processing of the data was done to remove sets that may have

119 been unusual with respect to fishing practices, such as repeat sets on the same floating-object and
120 sets with no tuna catch (Minami *et al.*, 2006).

121

122 Based on the spatial and temporal distributions of floating-object sets in the EP (Lennert-Cody *et*
123 *al.*, 2017), eight areas were defined in the EP equatorial region from the coast of the Americas to
124 180°W between 10°S to 8°N: four areas north of the equator and four areas south of the equator
125 (Figure 2). After data processing, and excluding sets outside of the equatorial zone, data on
126 63,768 sets were available for analysis, which represents over 80% of large-vessel floating-
127 object sets of trips sampled by IATTC observers (numbers of sets by area are shown in Figure 3).
128 In the post-processed IATTC dataset, there were no floating-object sets west of 180°W. IATTC
129 coverage of large-vessel trips originating in the Americas and fishing within the IATTC
130 management area (coast to 150°W; Allen *et al.*, 2010) was typically 60% or greater, depending
131 on the country and the year². Because of the expansion of the EP floating-object set fishery in the
132 mid-1990s (Lennert-Cody and Hall, 1999), the areas farthest to the west within the EP, Areas 3-4
133 and 7-8 (Figure 2), only contain data beginning in 1995 and 1996, respectively. Areas 4 and 8
134 fall outside the IATTC management area.

135

136 The WP data were collected by onboard observers of national observer programs that
137 participated in the WCPFC observer program during 2004-2015 (Clarke, 2017). Data prior to
138 2004 were considered unreliable for shark species identifications. Post-processing of the WP
139 data was done to remove data of countries that were not active over the full 12-year period and
140 sets that may have been faulty as they did not catch any tuna. The data (Figure 2) were further
141 limited to the region from 145°E - 180°W and 10°S - 5°N as this area had fishing activity
142 throughout the 12-year period. Although WP silky shark bycatch data were not recorded by
143 shark size category, samples of the size composition of the bycatch were collected. The vast
144 majority (~96%) of lengths in those samples from the WP post-processed data set were
145 equivalent to the EP small or medium size categories. The data for the WP provided by the
146 WCPFC included vessel trips that extended into the EP (*i.e.*, to the east of 180°W). The WCPFC

² The remaining trips are covered by national observer programs of various countries, see *e.g.*, Table 1 of:
http://www.iatcc.org/Meetings/Meetings2017/AIDCP-36/PDFs/Docs/English/MOP-36-05_Report-on-the-International-Dolphin-Conservation-Program.pdf

147 data east of 180°W were not included in this analysis because duplicate data (*i.e.*, sets covered by
148 both IATTC and WCPFC observer programs) could not be easily identified.

149

150 The monthly Pacific Decadal Oscillation index (PDO) for 1950 to 2017 was obtained from the
151 website of the Joint Institute for the Study of Atmosphere and Ocean³ at the University of
152 Washington. The PDO is an index of inter-annual-to-interdecadal variability of the Pacific Ocean
153 climate (Mantua and Hare, 2002) that has been shown to correspond to many facets of variability
154 in the ecological dynamics of the eastern North Pacific Ocean (Mantua *et al.*, 1997; Francis *et*
155 *al.*, 1998; Franks *et al.*, 2013). It is the first principal component of sea surface temperature
156 (SST) variability for latitudes north of 20°N, after removing a globally-integrated trend. The
157 PDO has a strong El Niño component (Mantua and Hare, 2002; Franks *et al.*, 2013) along with
158 other lower-frequency oceanic signals in both the tropics and subtropics (*e.g.*, Newman *et al.*,
159 2016). As such, the PDO is a single mode of complex North Pacific variability that is only partly
160 related to tropical processes.

161

162 **Methods**

163 Standardized bycatch-per-set (BPS) indices, by area and shark size category (where available),
164 were estimated in order to model effects of factors other than inter-annual oceanographic
165 variability that may influence trends in shark abundance. These standardized indices were
166 constructed by fitting a zero-inflated negative binomial (ZINB) generalized additive model
167 (GAM) to the BPS data following the method of Minami *et al.* (2007). The ZINB is a
168 distribution that is commonly used to model count data with a high proportion of zero-valued
169 observations and also large count values (*e.g.*, Zuur *et al.*, 2009), which is the case for silky
170 shark bycatch in purse-seine fisheries in the Pacific Ocean and elsewhere (Minami *et al.*, 2007;
171 Amandè *et al.*, 2008; Clarke, 2017). All ZINB GAMs were fitted to the set-by-set data using an
172 EM algorithm (*e.g.*, Minami *et al.*, 2007). For modelling the EP BPS data, the same covariates
173 were used as those of Minami *et al.* (2007) for each component of the ZINB GAM: year (a
174 categorical variable), linear terms for fishing gear characteristics (depth of the purse-seine net,
175 depth of the floating-object below the water's surface), for proxies for local community biomass
176 (natural logarithm of the amount of tuna catch, natural logarithm of the amount of other bycatch

³ <http://research.jisao.washington.edu/pdo/>

177 species), and for two proxies for local floating-object density and for SST (measured by the
178 observer at the time of the set), and smooth terms for the day of the year (to capture seasonality),
179 latitude and longitude (to capture temporally-invariant spatial gradients), and time of the set. The
180 model used for the WP BPS data was somewhat different, in part because less covariate
181 information was available: year (factor), month (factor), country of vessel registry and type of
182 associated set (both factors), linear terms for the natural logarithm of tuna catch and natural
183 logarithm of a proxy for object density, and smooth terms for latitude, longitude and time of day
184 of the set. No interaction terms were included in the models.

185
186 From the estimated ZINB GAM coefficients a standardized index of relative abundance was
187 computed on a monthly time step. With exception of the time step (year and day of the year at
188 the mid-point of each month for EP, or month for WP) and latitude and longitude, all other
189 covariates were fixed at their median value (continuous variables) or most common value
190 (categorical variables). The medians and most common factors were determined separately for
191 the north EP, the south EP and the WP. The standardized index was the predicted BPS in each 1°
192 square of an area at a time step, summed over all 1° squares in the area. A monthly time step was
193 selected to be consistent with the time step of the PDO (see below). Finally, a 12-month
194 symmetric moving average was applied to each standardized time series to remove seasonal
195 pattern in the predicted trend.

196
197 For each area and shark size category, approximate pointwise 95% confidence intervals were
198 computed for the standardized BPS index by resampling from a multivariate normal distribution
199 with means, variances and covariances of the estimated ZINB GAM coefficients (Wood, 2006),
200 assuming known GAM smoothing parameters and negative binomial scale parameters. Five
201 hundred indices were simulated in this manner for each area and size category for which a trend
202 could be computed; a value of 500 was selected as a compromise between the typical number of
203 simulation runs used to compute confidence intervals (1000's) and the time required to run each
204 simulation. Pointwise confidence intervals were computed at each time step from the 500
205 simulated index values using the percentile method (Efron, 1982).

206

207 To evaluate the correlation between the PDO and the standardized BPS indices, the Spearman
208 rank correlation coefficient was computed. For consistency, the PDO index was first filtered with
209 the same moving average filter as was applied to the standardized BPS indices. Because the two
210 indices are on different scales, both the filtered PDO and the filtered standardized BPS indices
211 were then each centered and scaled by subtracting their respective means and dividing by their
212 respective standard deviations to facilitate visual comparison. The Spearman rank correlation
213 coefficient was computed between these normalized indices (the rank correlation is unaffected
214 by normalization). Approximate 95% confidence intervals for the correlation coefficient were
215 computed for each area and shark size category (where applicable) using the 500 simulated index
216 values described above.

217

218 **Results**

219 Nominal (unstandardized) annual silky shark BPS was generally greater in the equatorial WP
220 than in the equatorial EP, and varied by area and shark size category within the equatorial EP
221 (Figure 3). The magnitude of small silky BPS was typically greater north of the equator (Areas 1
222 - 4) than south of the equator (Areas 5 – 8), whereas that of large silky sharks were similar
223 throughout the equatorial EP. Temporal trends in large silky BPS also were similar across the
224 equatorial EP, showing an overall decreasing trend over the 23 year period. In contrast, temporal
225 trends for small and medium silky sharks varied by area and were most similar to those of large
226 silky sharks south of the equator. North of the equator, a decrease in the BPS trends for small and
227 medium silky sharks is only pronounced in the northern inshore area (Area 1).

228

229 Standardized BPS indices could not be obtained for some areas and/or shark size categories
230 within the equatorial EP. Standardized indices for Area 4 were not computed due to a lack of
231 data in some years, in particular prior to 1999 and in 2015. Standardized indices were not
232 computed for Area 8 due to model instability, probably because of the low numbers of data
233 observations before 2007 and after 2012; about 67% of the data in Areas 4 and 8 corresponded to
234 years 2007-2012. Standardized indices were not computed for small sharks in Areas 5 - 6
235 because of the very low level of bycatch (Figure 3) and for Areas 5 - 6 (medium sharks) and
236 Area 7 (small sharks) because of a lack of convergence of the EM algorithm within 100
237 iterations. Also, the fit of the ZINB GAM to the silky shark BPS data was better for the EP than

238 for the WP (Table 1), possibly because fewer covariates could be included in the WP model due
239 to data gaps.

240
241 For those areas where standardized BPS indices could be computed, trends varied by area and
242 shark size category (Figure 4). As with the nominal indices, the standardized trends for large
243 sharks within the equatorial EP were dominated by a pronounced decrease in the late 1990s that
244 continued into the early 2000's south of the equator. In contrast, the standardized trends for small
245 and medium sharks within the EP do not show this pronounced decrease except for medium silky
246 sharks in Areas 2 and 7, and the decrease in Area 2 occurred only at the beginning of the time
247 series. In the offshore north EP (Area 3) there is no decreasing trend for either small or medium
248 sharks. The standardized medium silky trend was most similar to the standardized large silky
249 trend in Area 2, both indices highest in 1995. In addition, the small and medium shark indices of
250 Area 3 appear more similar to the WP trend in Area 9 over the 2004-2015 period than to the EP
251 indices in the inshore Area 1 (Figures 4, 5). However, the peak in the WP index around 2011
252 lags that for small and medium sharks in Area 1, which occurred in 2010.

253
254 There was considerable spatial and life-stage related variability in the correlation between the
255 PDO and the standardized silky BPS indices (Figure 6). The highest correlation with the PDO
256 was found in the offshore north equatorial EP for small and medium sharks (Area 3). The
257 similarity between the small silky index in Area 3 and the PDO is striking. Higher correlation
258 was found between small/medium silky indices and the PDO in Areas 2-3 and 7, than between
259 the large shark index and the PDO in the same areas. Within a shark size category, the
260 correlation decreases to the east within the equatorial EP (*i.e.*, Area 3 correlation > Area 2
261 correlation > Area 1 correlation), and the correlation low or not significant in the north equatorial
262 EP inshore area (Area 1). The correlation coefficient is low for the PDO and the WP silky index
263 (Area 9), despite the good visual agreement, perhaps in part because the WP index only spans a
264 12-year period.

265
266 The primary effect of the standardization process was the reduction of high bycatch rates in some
267 years (*cf.*, Figure 3 and Figure 4). For example, for 2005 and 2014, Area 3 for small and medium
268 silky sharks, the peaks in the nominal indices are not apparent in the standardized indices. Also

269 changed by the standardization process was the relative level of the bycatch rates for small silky
270 sharks in Areas 1-2 between 2001-2006 relative to the 1995-1997 period.

271

272 **Discussion**

273 In this study it has been demonstrated that the level of correlation of silky shark relative
274 abundance indices for the equatorial Pacific with the PDO differs by geographical region and life
275 stage. The highest correlations identified between the PDO and shark indices by size category
276 were for small and medium silky sharks from the western region of the equatorial EP and from
277 the equatorial WP. It was demonstrated that this significant correlation for juvenile sharks (*i.e.*,
278 small and medium sharks) disappears in the inshore area of the EP, and that the correlation with
279 the PDO is weaker for adult (large) silky sharks throughout the EP. The correlation between the
280 PDO and juvenile silky shark indices in the equatorial WP and western region of the equatorial
281 EP implies that during warm (El Niño-like) conditions the shark indices increase whereas cold
282 (La Niña-like) conditions lead to a decrease in the silky shark indices. Although correlation is not
283 synonymous with causation, we hypothesize that this correlation may be driven by movement of
284 juveniles across the Pacific as the Indo-Pacific Warm Pool shifts location with ENSO event
285 characteristics that influence the PDO index.

286

287 Movement of juvenile silky sharks within the equatorial Pacific Ocean could be non-directional
288 and/or due to directed swimming. Non-directional swimming would be movement that is not
289 ontogenetic, such as might be the case for individuals seeking favorable habitat (*e.g.*, a preferred
290 temperature range). The warming of the central Pacific during an El Niño is believed to be in
291 part due to advection of warm water from the WP (Kessler, 2006; Wang *et al.*, 2016). Silky
292 sharks are born at about 65 – 81 cm TL (Oshitani *et al.*, 2003; see also summary in Clarke *et al.*,
293 2015), and therefore the spatial distribution of the EP small shark size category, which represents
294 individuals of age < 1 yr, might be more likely to be influenced by movement of water masses
295 than the spatial distribution of adults. Alternatively, if juvenile silky shark movement were the
296 result of directed swimming, a cruising speed of 0.5 m s⁻¹ (Filmlalter *et al.*, 2015; Ryan *et al.*,
297 2015), for example, over a one year period would equate to more than 15,000 km per year, which
298 at the equator would be about 142 degrees of longitude – more than enough to move from the
299 western margin of the WP into Area 3 of the EP (Figure 2).

300
301 For non-directional movement to be a plausible mechanism, however, there would need to be an
302 increasing gradient in the abundance of silky sharks, in particular juvenile silky sharks, from the
303 western EP into the far western part of the WP. The abundance of silky sharks in the equatorial
304 Pacific is not known, and locations of silky shark pupping grounds within the Pacific are not
305 known. Nonetheless, assuming that bycatch-per-set is related to absolute abundance, the
306 difference between the average nominal bycatch-per-set of the WP and that in the EP is
307 consistent with such a gradient. The average nominal bycatch-per-set for the WP was greater
308 than that of the juvenile silky sharks in the western EP in a number of years, including in 2010-
309 2011 and 2015 (Figure 3). However, given the overall similarity between the western EP and
310 WP silky index trends (Figure 5), there would also need to be greater abundance to the west of
311 145°E within the Pacific. Available data from the western edge of the WP are not consistent with
312 this hypothesis (Lawson, 2011; Clarke, 2017) and instead indicate areas of high abundance in the
313 waters of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and various parts of the Central Pacific,
314 depending on year. It is important to consider, however, that these areas farther to the west are
315 poorly represented in the available WP observer data. Thus, the non-directional movement
316 hypothesis cannot be adequately evaluated with existing data.

317
318 If directed swimming were occurring, Pacific-wide spatial gradients in shark abundance would
319 not be necessary to produce an increase in abundance in the EP. In general, if juvenile silky
320 shark movement were directed towards a particular region, then directed swimming to that
321 region would result in an increase in local abundance. It is unknown whether such directed
322 (ontogenetic) movement occurs for the silky shark.

323
324 Clearly, any movement hypothesis is speculative given the state of knowledge about the ecology
325 of the silky shark in the Pacific Ocean, and more data collection and studies would be necessary
326 to evaluate such mechanisms. Other shark species show ontogenetic, seasonal and
327 environmentally based movement (Kai *et al.*, 2017). At present, more data are collected on the
328 oceanography of the Pacific Ocean than are collected and/or available for analysis of the ecology
329 of at-risk species such as the silky shark. Other alternative hypotheses that could explain the
330 correlation between oceanographic conditions and juvenile silky sharks include: north and south

331 movement of the juveniles or the purse-seine fleet, given that the highest catch rates are on the
332 northern extreme of the fishery (Lennert-Cody *et al.*, 2017); environmentally mediated changes
333 in catchability (*e.g.*, vertical distribution) associated with thermocline fluctuations; biological
334 factors that may fluctuate with environmental changes, such as survival and maturity; and,
335 environmentally mediated change in the spatial distribution and abundance of prey. Given its
336 recent CITES listing⁴, expanding data collection for the silky shark and other shark species is of
337 importance because fishery-dependent data are the main source of information on shark
338 distributions and status. Unfortunately, those data can be biased even when sample sizes are
339 large (Maunder *et al.*, 2006).

340
341 The lack of correlation of the small silky shark index with the PDO in the north EP inshore area
342 (Area 1) may be due to a combination of increased fishing activity and different oceanographic
343 forcing. A greater diversity of fisheries that catch the silky shark is believed to operate in the
344 inshore area of the north EP (Area 1) (Siu and Aires-da-Silva, 2016). Thus, any increase in silky
345 shark abundance with El Niño warming might be removed as bycatch and catch in fisheries other
346 than the purse-seine fishery. In addition, the warming of the far eastern Pacific during an El Niño
347 is due to a reduction in upwelling of cooler waters, rather than eastward advection of warmer
348 west-central Pacific waters (Kessler, 2006). Thus, eastward movement of juveniles with warmer
349 water might not be expected to have as much of an effect on silky abundance in inshore regions
350 of the EP. The net result may be that the purse-seine indices for the silky shark in the inshore
351 north equatorial EP may not be expected to correlate with the PDO to the extent seen in the
352 offshore equatorial EP (Figure 6).

353
354 The lag in the timing of the peak in the WP silky index around 2011 relative to the peak in the
355 EP small and medium silky indices in Area 3 around 2010 (Figure 5), would seem to contradict
356 our hypothesis about movement of juveniles into the western EP from the WP. Movement from
357 west to east would be expected to produce a lag in the opposite direction. Unfortunately, the only
358 strong El Niño event for which there is silky data in both the WP and the EP is the 2009-2010 El
359 Niño. There is a range of characteristics associated with El Niño events (Capotondi *et al.*, 2015)
360 and the 2009-2010 El Niño has been hypothesized to be a hybrid of a classical cold tongue El

⁴ <https://cites.org/eng/cop/17/prop/index.php>

361 Niño, of which the 1997-1998 event is an example, and a warm pool, or Modoki El Niño
362 (Johnson, 2013), which might lead to a different response in the WP.

363
364 Our results suggest that for EPO management purposes, a relative abundance index for large
365 silky sharks may be the only reliable index that can be generated from these purse-seine data. We
366 have demonstrated that inter-annual fluctuations in the indices for small and medium silky sharks
367 in the offshore region of the north EP correlate with inter-annual variability in oceanographic
368 conditions. In contrast, the trend in the index of relative abundance for large silky sharks was
369 shown to be more consistent across areas within the EP and showed less or no correlation with
370 the PDO, suggesting the large shark index is less influenced by fluctuations in the environment
371 of the EP.

372

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383

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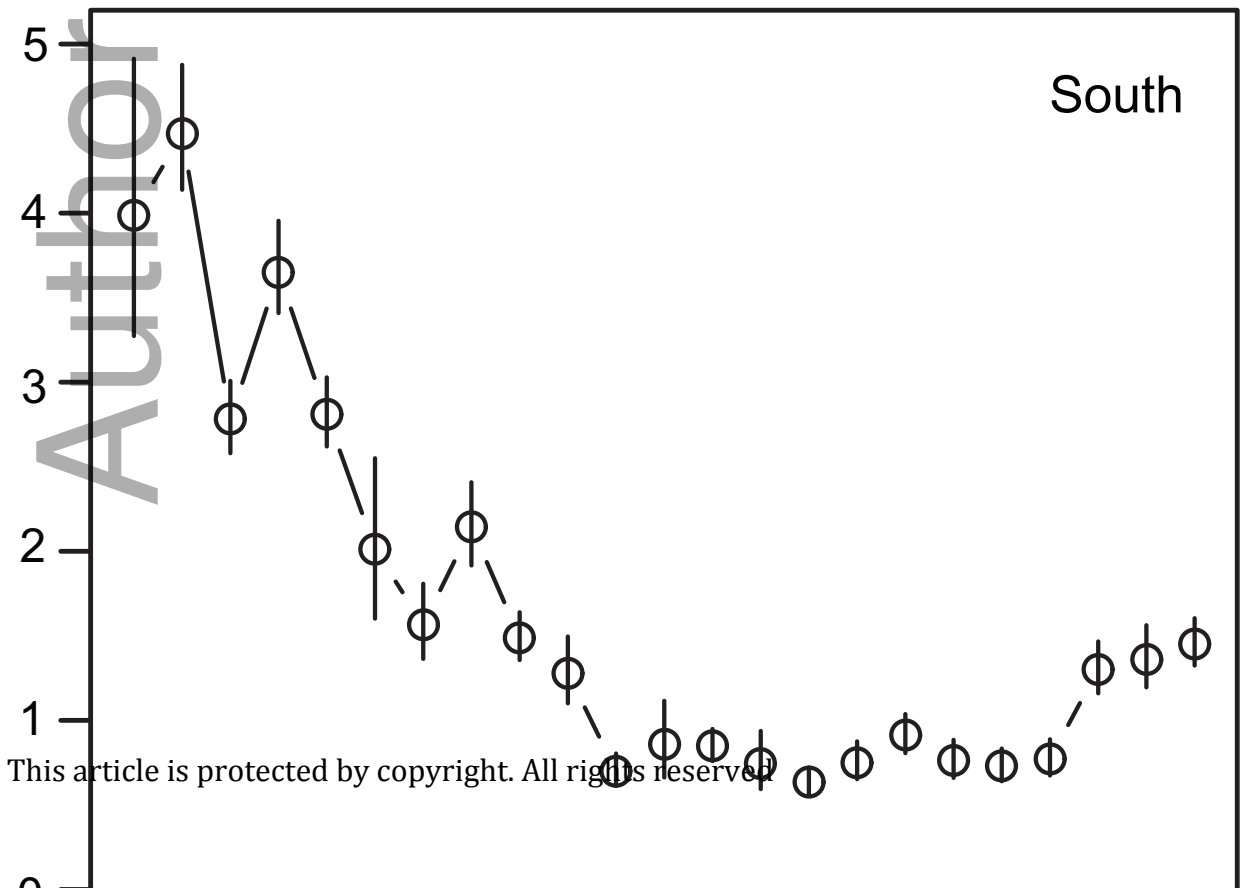
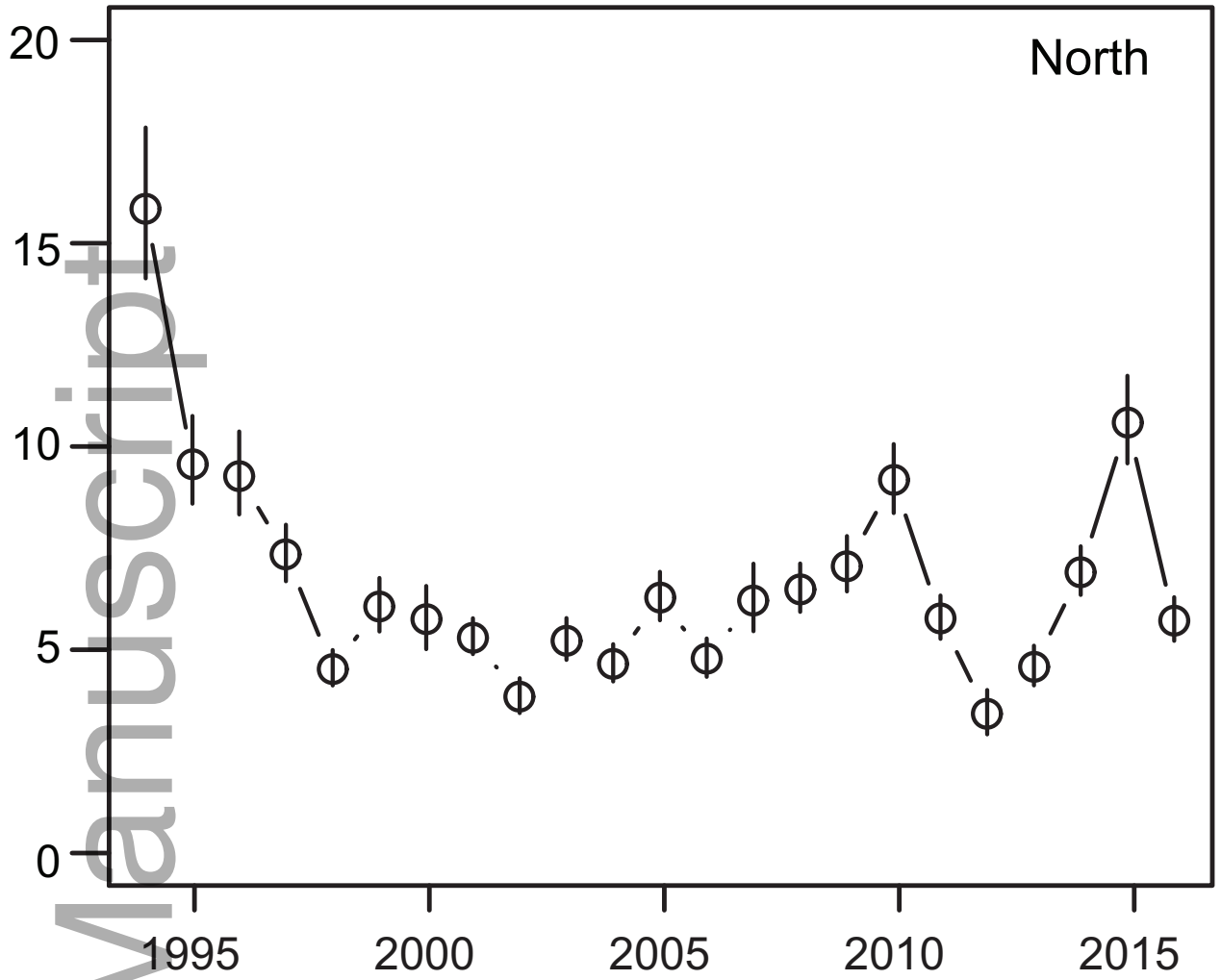
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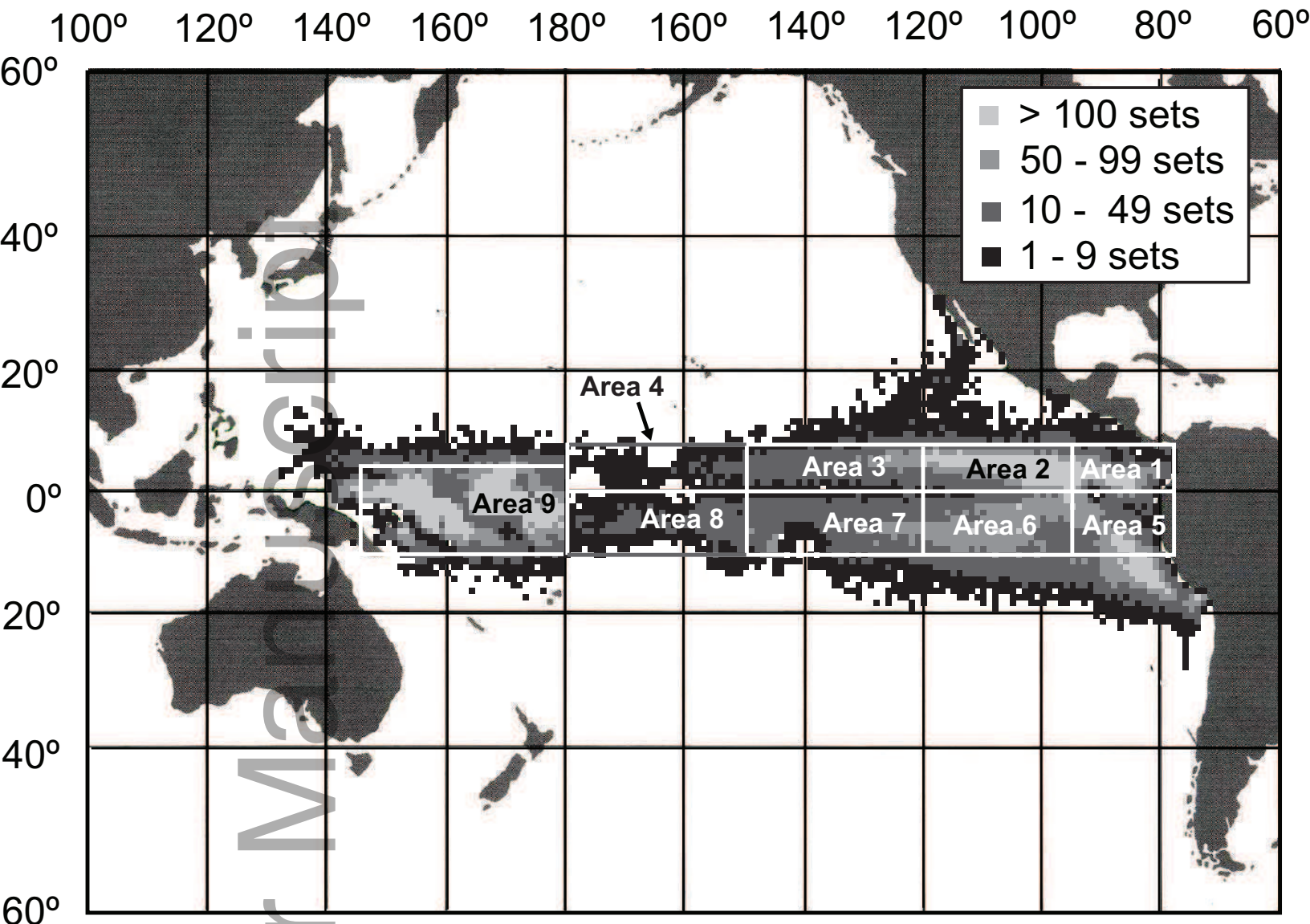
489 **Table 1.** Percent deviance explained by the logistic and negative binomial regression
 490 components of the ZINB GAM models, by area and shark size category (where applicable). S:
 491 small; M: medium; L: large.

	Logistic component S; M; L	Negative binomial component S; M: L
Area 1	19%; 19%; 15%	38%; 33%; 34%
Area 2	22%; 19%; 16%	33%; 27%; 24%
Area 3	17%; 16%; 15%	20%; 29%; 25%
Area 6	---; ---; 27%	---; ---; 31%
Area 7	---; 19%; 23%	---; 29%; 26%
Area 9	7%	17%

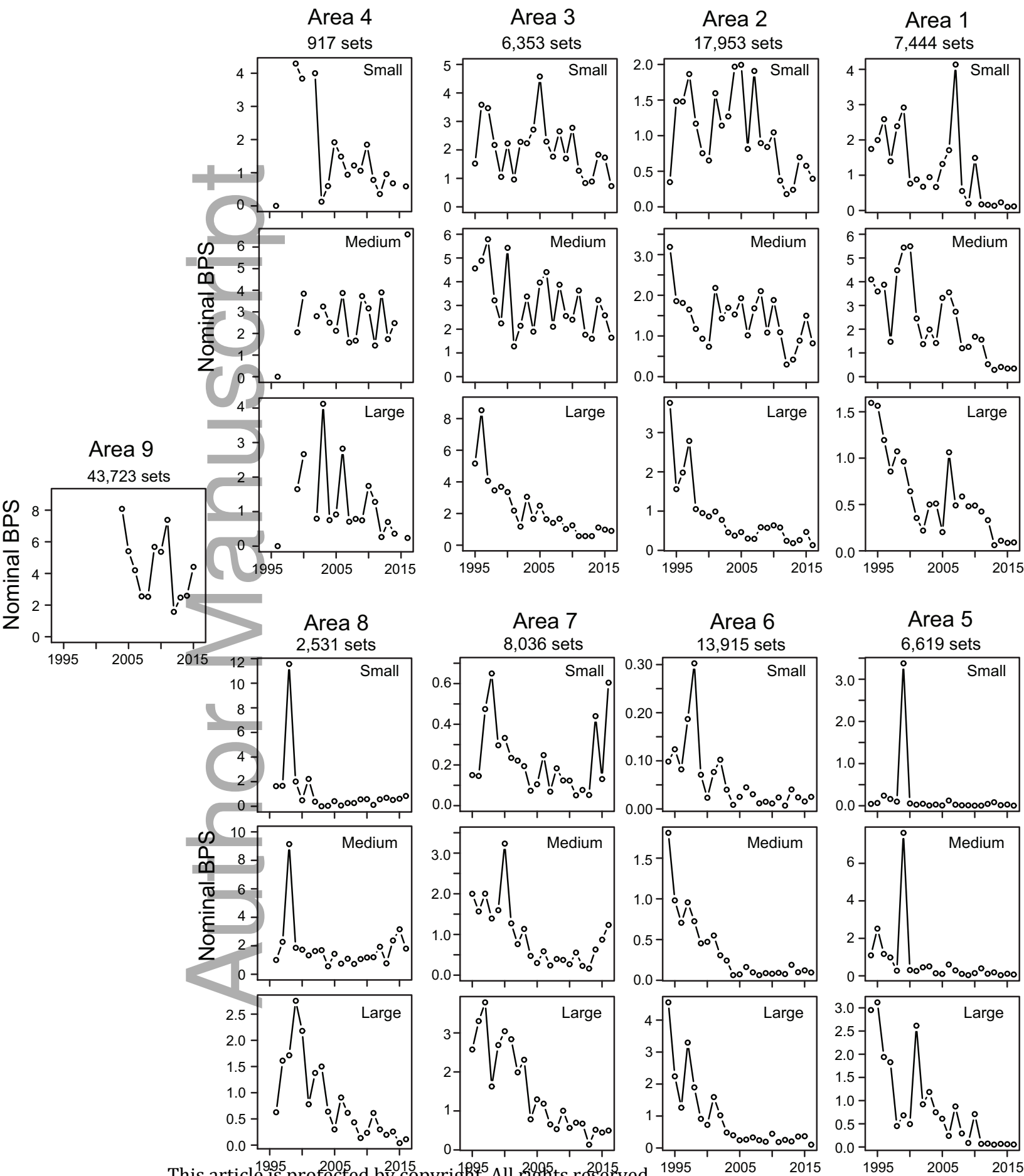
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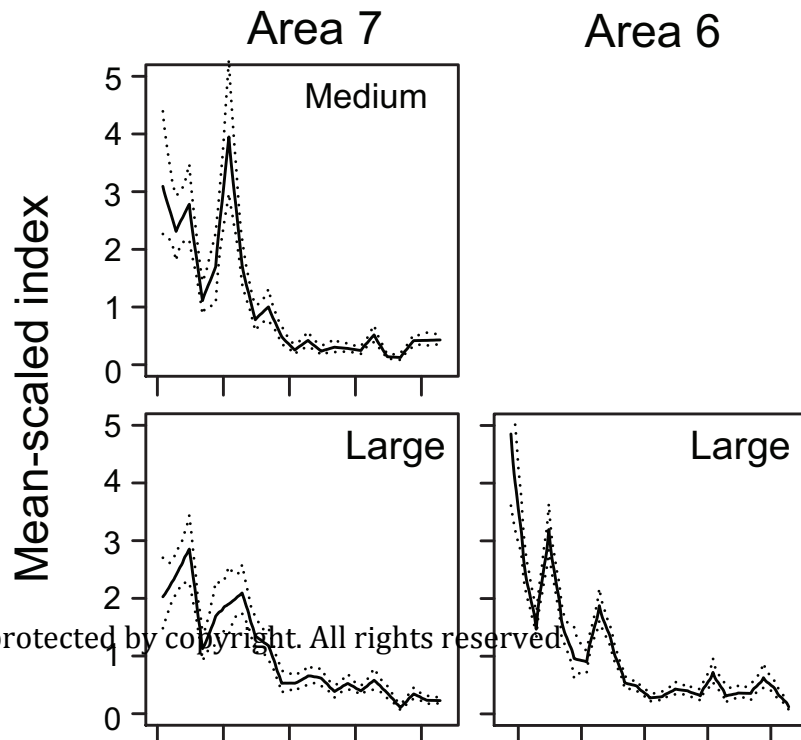
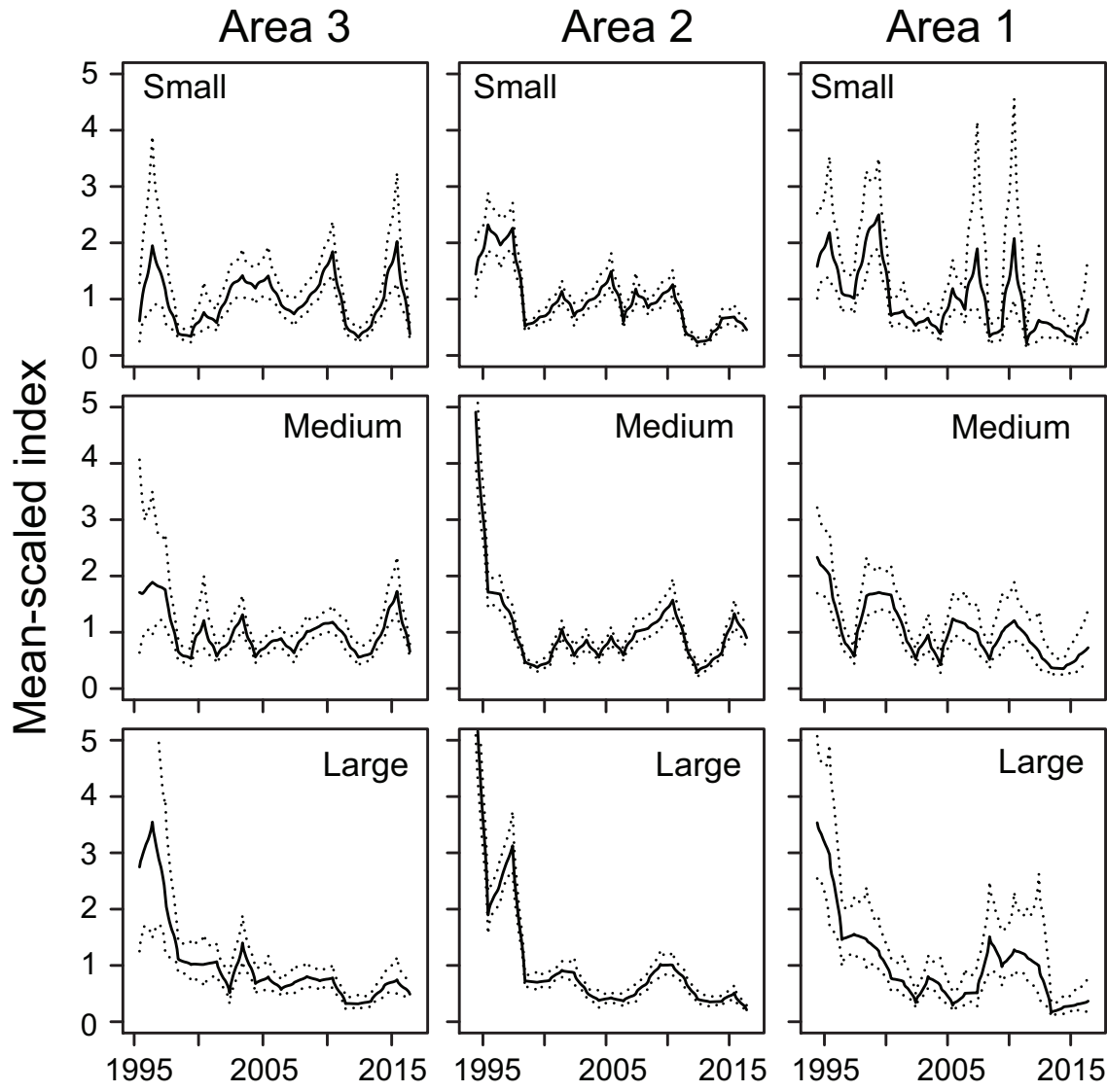
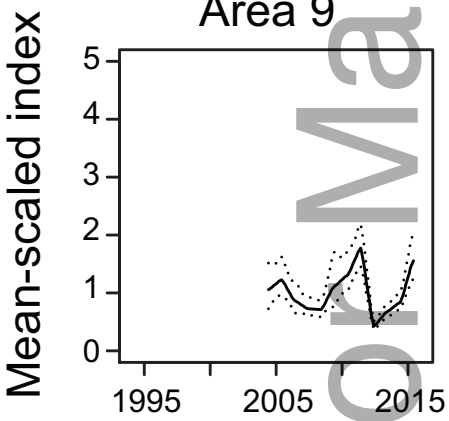
Standardized BPS

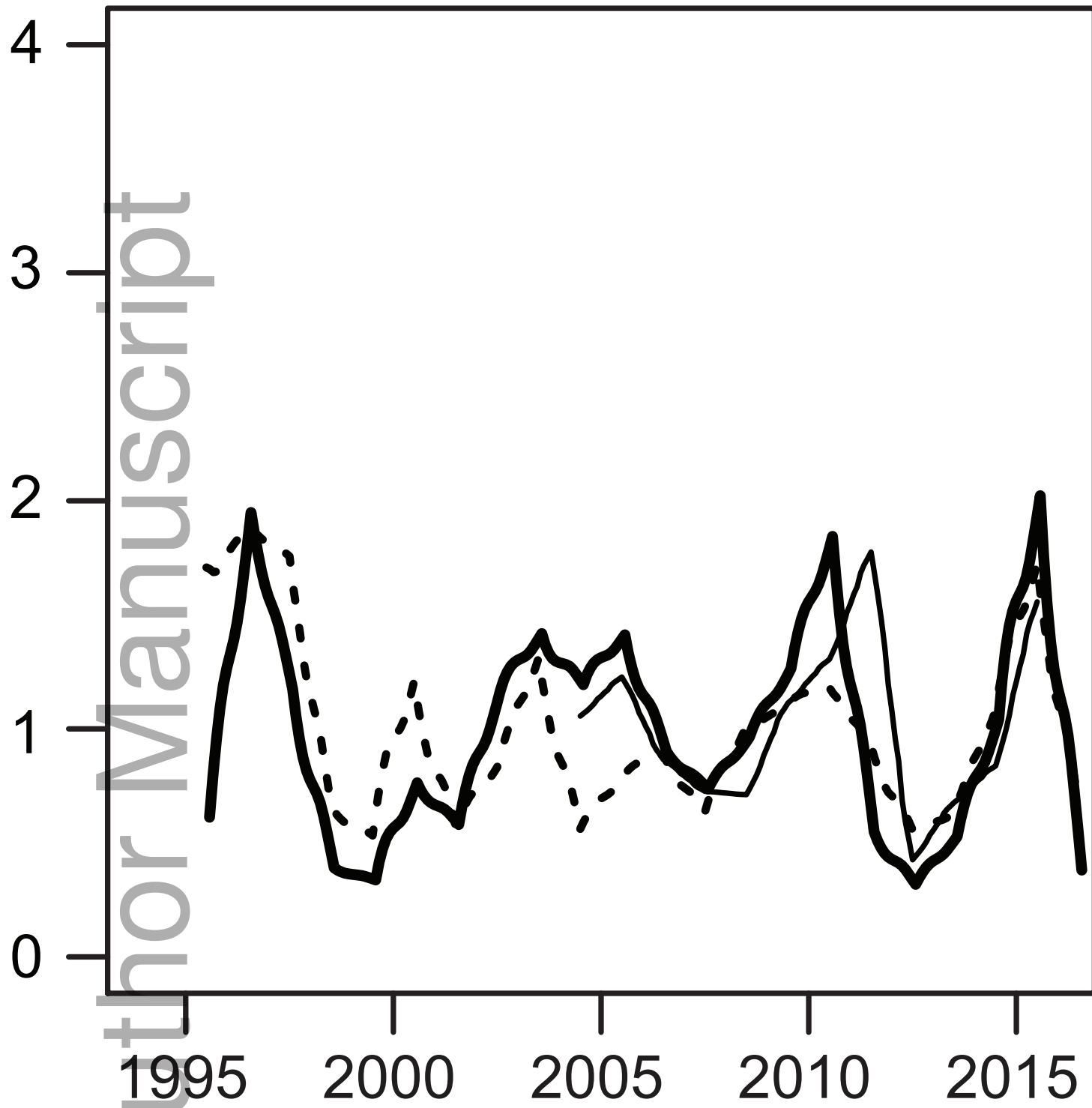




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