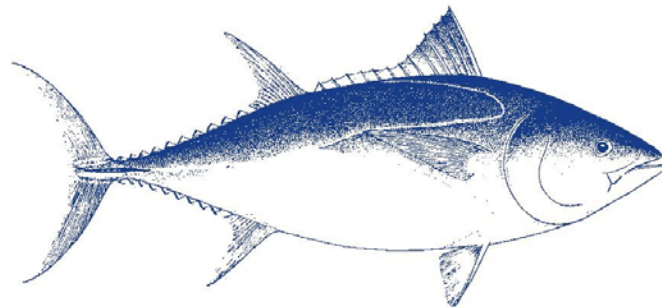




Extract from the

REPORT OF THE 6th MEETING OF THE CCSBT STOCK ASSESSMENT GROUP AND THE 10th MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

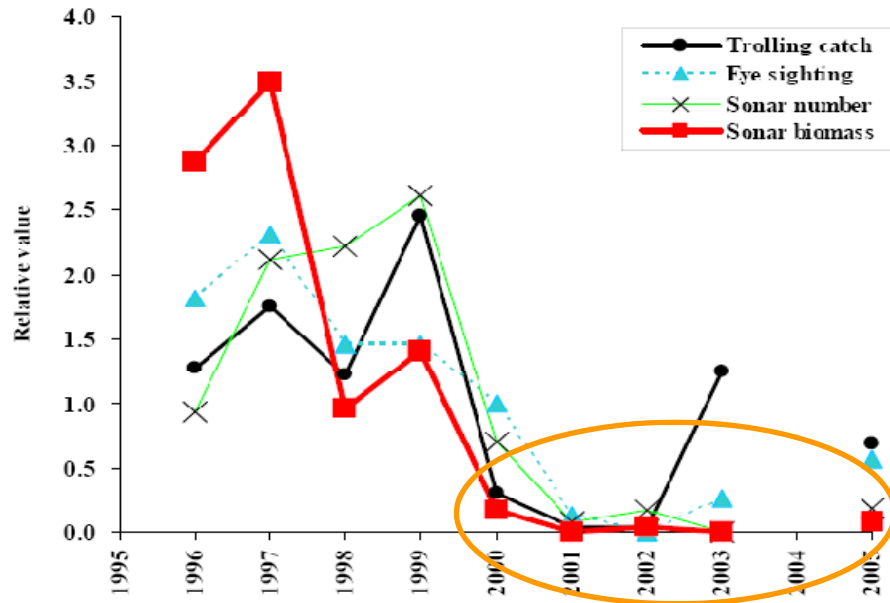
Taipei, 28 Aug – 9 Sep 2005



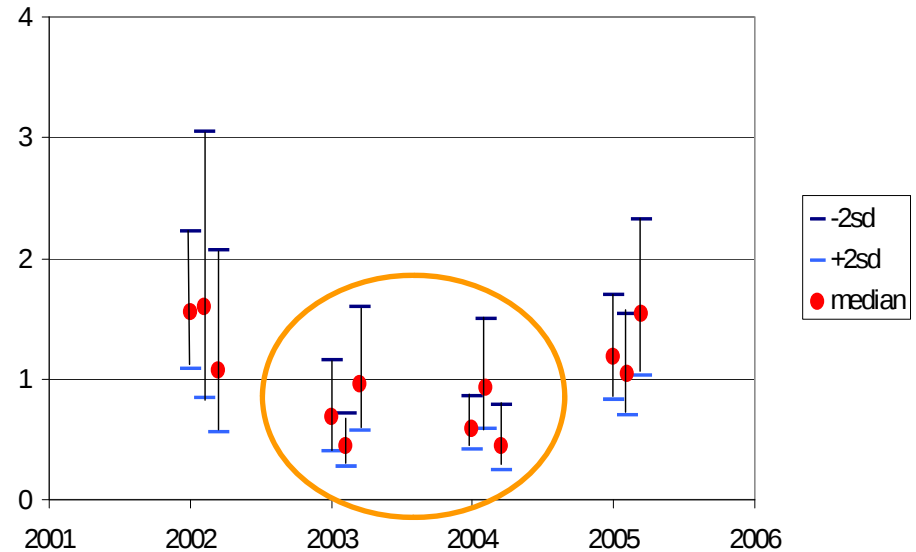




Recruitment Indicators



Relative values of four acoustic abundance indices for age 1 SBT off south-western Australia, showing low recruitment after 1999.



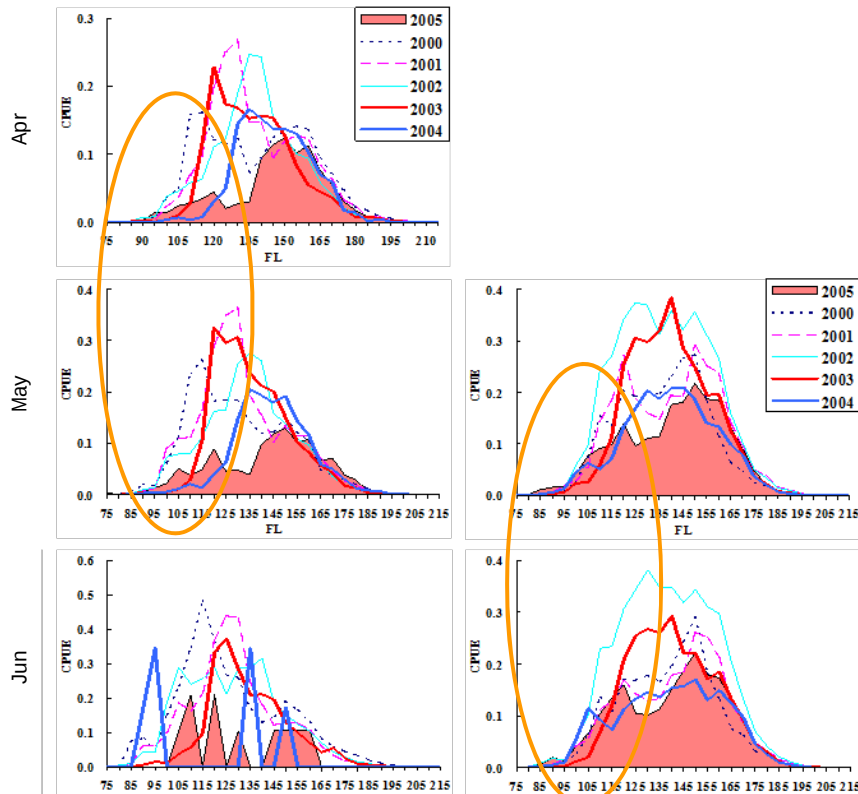
Estimates of surface abundance of age 2-4 SBT in the Great Australian Bight from commercial spotter pilot data, showing lower abundance in 2003 and 2004.



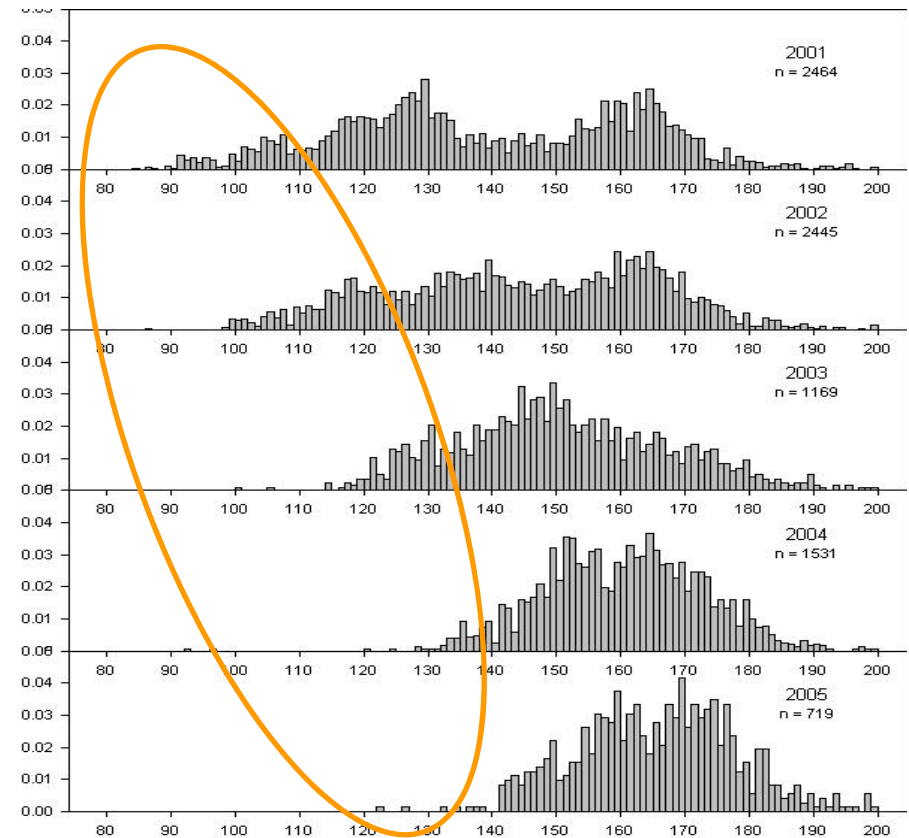
Recruitment Indicators

Area7
Off Tasmania

Area9
Off Cape



Size composition in the Japanese LL fishery from 2000 - 2005, showing a marked reduction of fish from the 1999 - 2001 year classes.



Length-frequency distribution of SBT in the New Zealand charter catch, showing the near absence of fish from the cohorts of 1999 onwards.



Summary of Recruitment Indicators

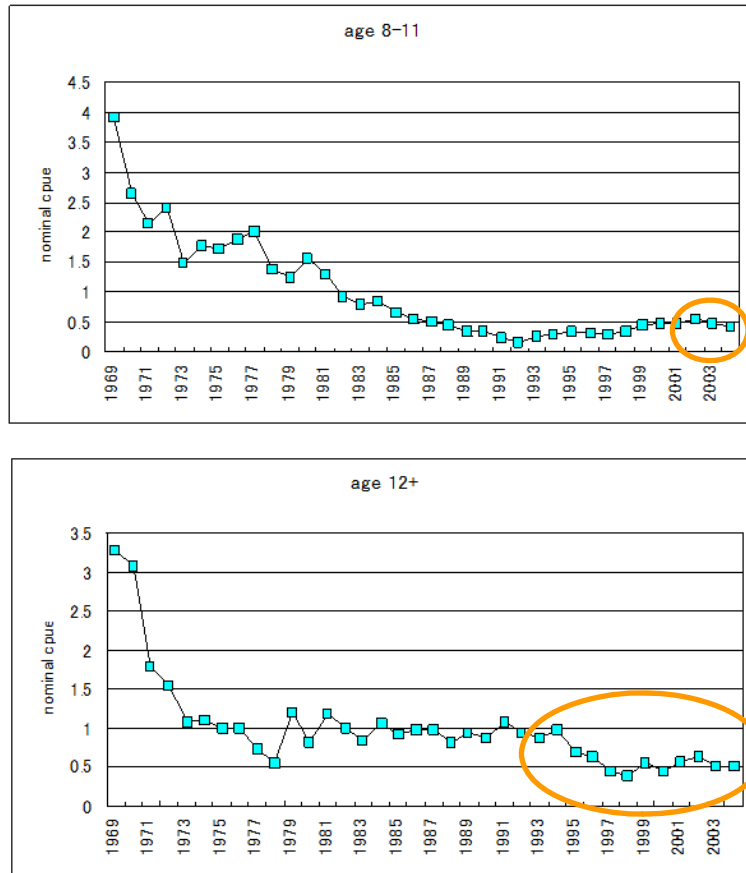
Various indicators presented in 2005 confirm that there have been at least two very low recruitments in 2000 and 2001:

- Acoustic Survey: Acoustic data indicate low recruitment after 1999.
- Size Frequency: Size distribution data in the Japanese LL fishery shows virtual absence of cohorts recruited from the 1999 -2001 cohorts. The charter fishery in New Zealand also shows an absence of fish recruited since 1999.
- Commercial Spotting: Australian commercial aerial spotting data show lower abundance in 2003 and 2004.
- Tagging Data: Exploitation rates on the 2000 and 2001 year classes are high, and are consistent with estimates of low recruitments to these year classes.

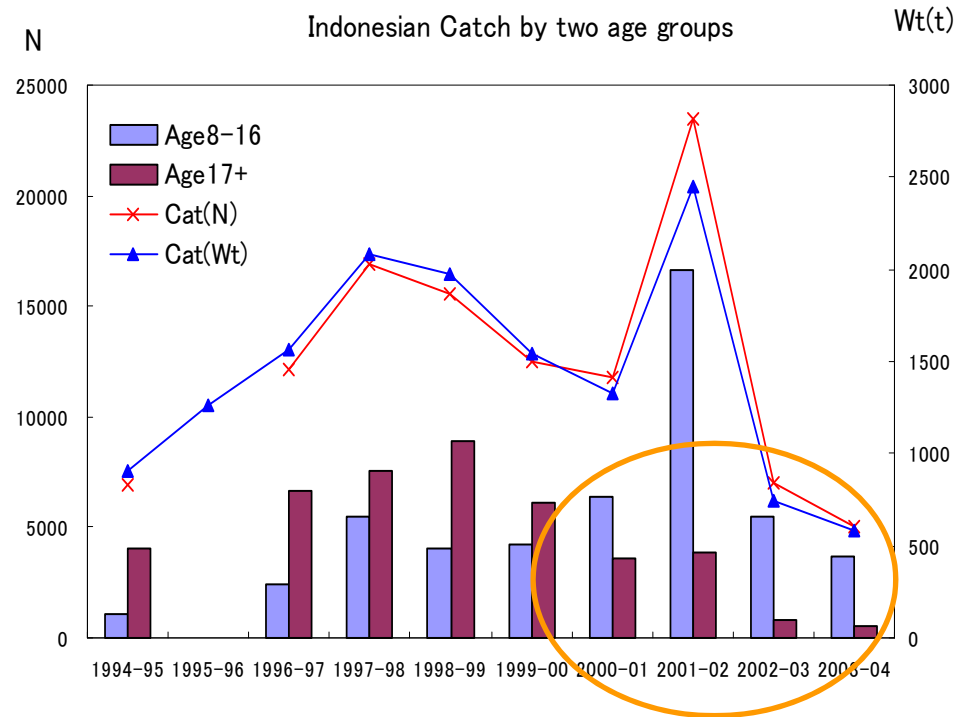
In summary, indicators of recruitment suggest markedly lower recruitment in 2000 and 2001, with some indication that recruitment in 1999 was also weak.



Spawning Stock Biomass Indicators



Nominal CPUE of Japanese LL catches by age group, showing reduced catch rates of 12+ SBT from 1995 onwards,



Trends in Indonesian SBT catch for 2 age-groups, showing the recent decline in catches and decreased contribution of 17+ large adult SBT.



Summary of Spawning Stock Biomass Indicators

- Catch rates of fish aged 12 and older by Japanese LL indicate a drop in spawning stock biomass in about 1995. Recent Indonesian catch has remained low and the majority of the catch has been relatively young spawners. Observer data from Indonesian fisheries trainees from 2000 to 2005 is consistent with a declining spawning stock biomass.
- In addition, the preliminary Indonesian catch estimate for the first six months of 2005 suggests a substantial increase in exploitation of the spawning stock.

In summary, spawning stock indicators suggest that spawning stock biomass has declined since the mid to late 1990s, after a period of relative stability in the 1980s and early 1990s.



Exploitable Biomass Indicators



Japanese longline nominal CPUE is low compared to historical values. CPUE of ages 4-7 increased after the mid-1980s, but decreased over the past 2 years. CPUE of ages 8-11 increased since 1992, but declined in 2003 and 2004.



Summary of Exploitable Biomass Indicators

- Japanese LL CPUE of SBT for all ages combined suggests that LL exploitable biomass has remained fairly constant during the past 10 years, though this level is low compared to historical values. Results indicate increases in the CPUE of ages 8-11 since about 1992, but there was a slight decline in 2003 which continued into 2004. CPUE of fish aged 4-7 has increased since the mid-1980s and remained broadly constant over the last 10 years.

In summary, CPUE indicators suggest stable exploitable biomass over the last 10 years. However, recent low recruitments are likely to lead to declines in future exploitable biomass.