



Tribal Harvest Management and Status of Squirrel Lake Walleye Fishery

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Squirrel Lake Walleye Initiative

Musky Shores Bar & Grill

June 17, 2026



Today's Outline



Ceded Territory Overview



Tribal Harvest Management



Squirrel Lake Walleye Fishery

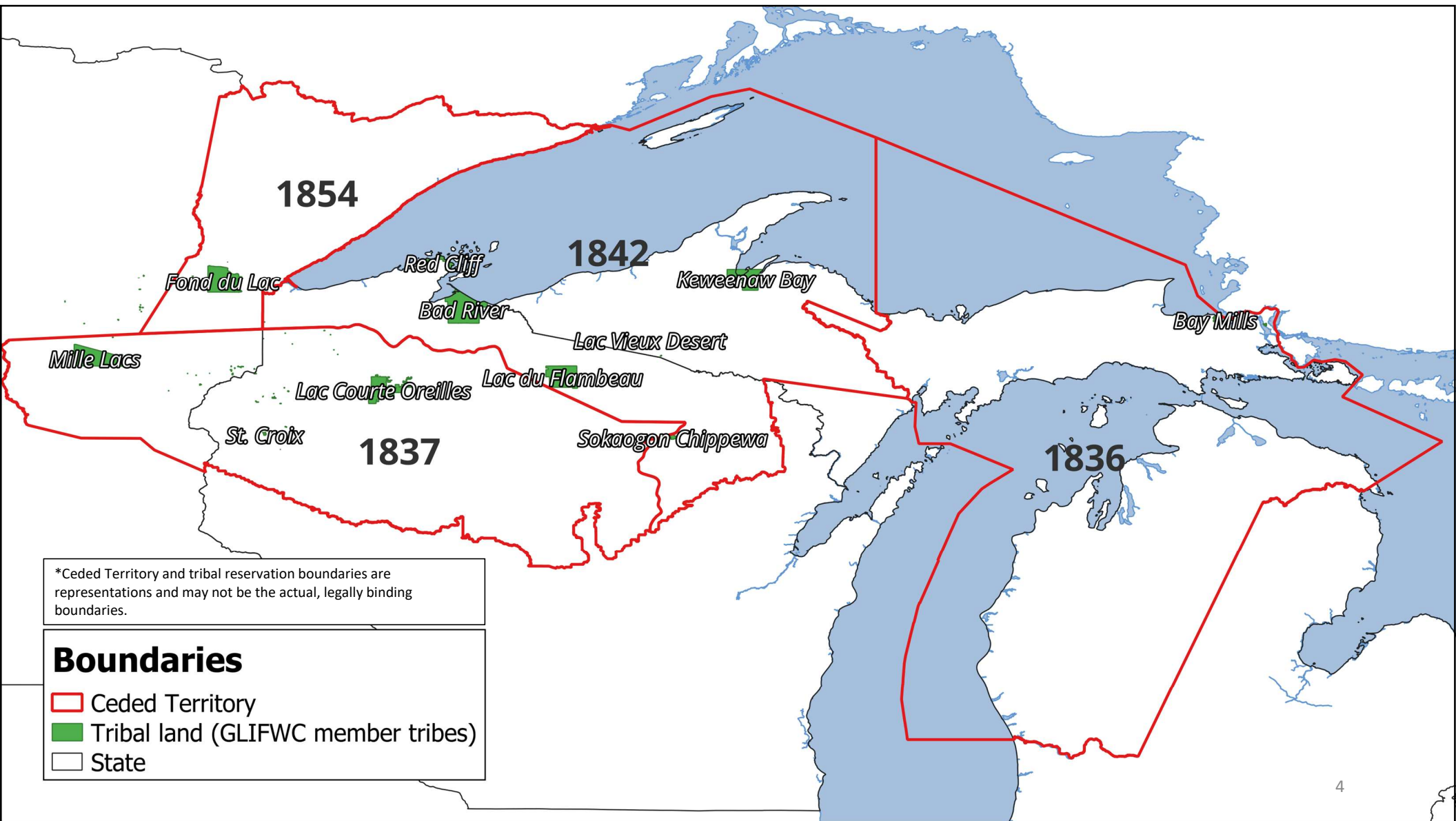


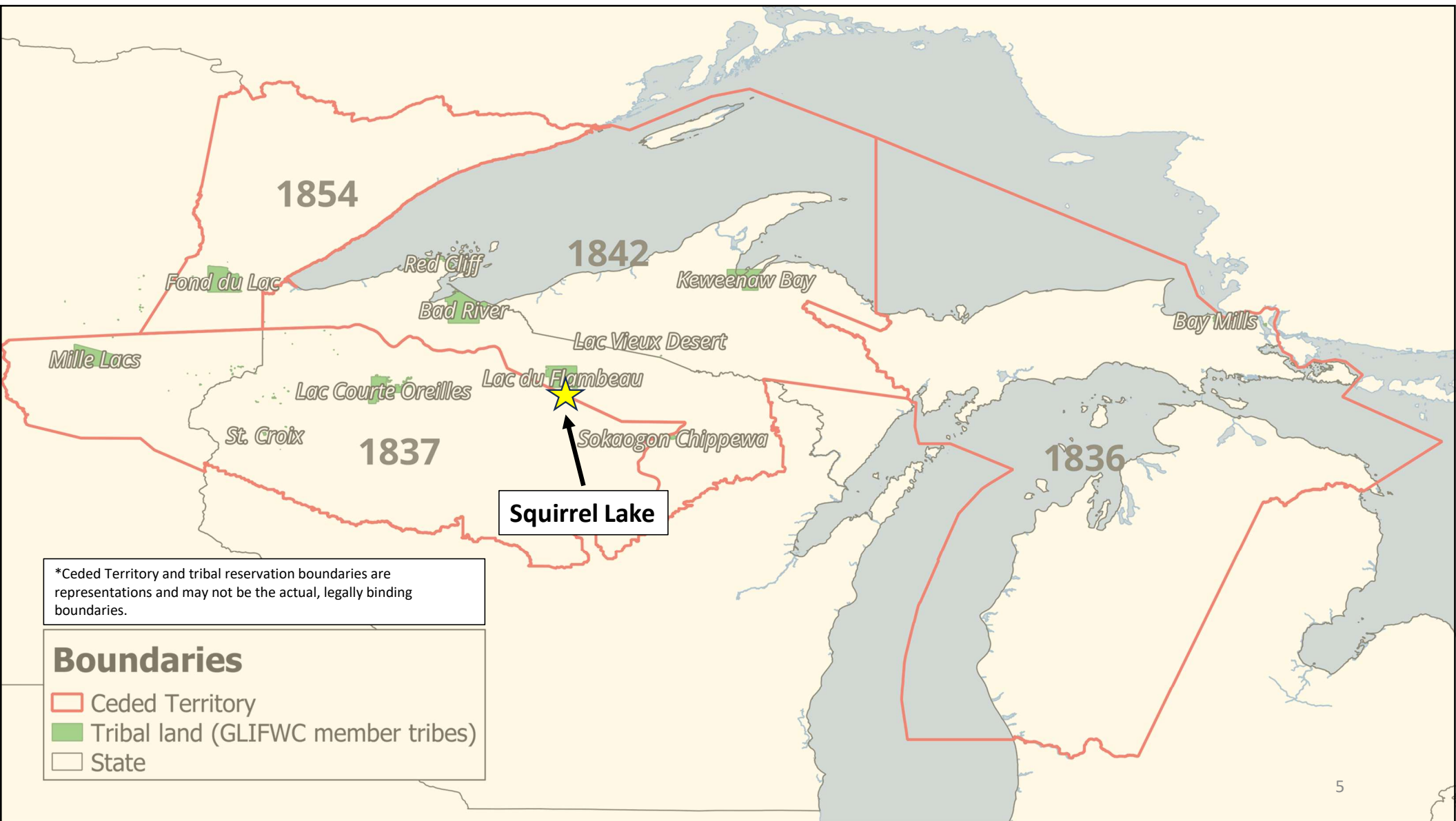
Closing Thoughts/Questions

Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission

- Intertribal natural resource agency comprised of 11 Ojibwe member Tribes.
- Delegated authority of member Tribes to implement off-reservation, treaty-reserved rights in Ceded Territories.
- Entity of self-regulation.









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Squirrel Lake Walleye Fishery



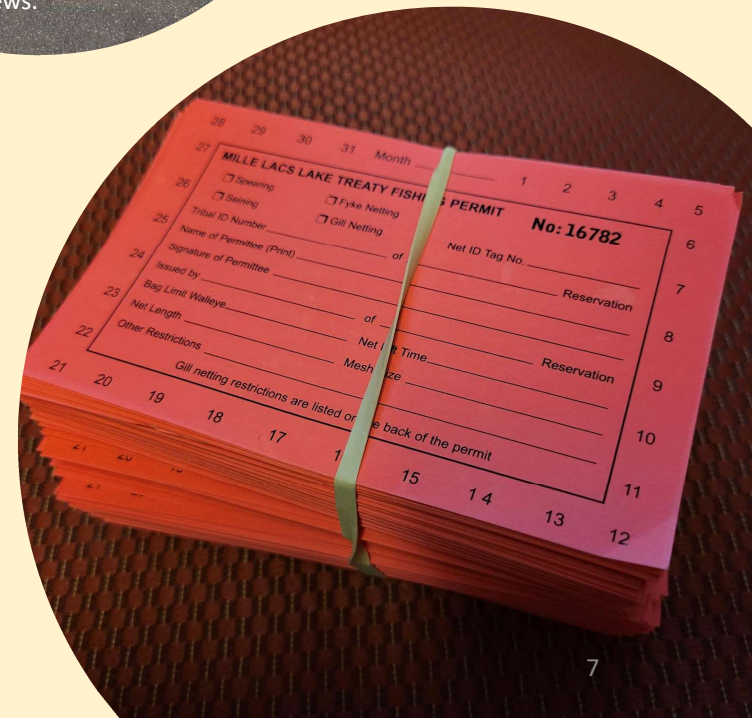
Closing Thoughts/Questions

Spearing and Netting Overview

- Harvesters must possess tribal ID and permit while spearing or netting
- Permits generally issued first-come, first-serve at tribal registration station or boat landing
- Bag limits per permit established by Tribe



Photo by Paul Middlestaedt,
MPR News.



Spearing and Netting Overview (cont'd)

- Creel clerks must be present at the boat landing for either activity to take place
- 20" maximum; one fish between 20-24", and one of any size per permit
- Creel teams count, measure, and determine sex of catch
- Unused permits must be returned to designated monitoring location



Open-water Spearing Regulations

- Season open ice-on to ice-off
- Members may only spear lakes declared by Tribe using designated landings
- May not possess any other fishing gear while spearing
- Gear Requirements:
 - Minimum three barbed tines, each $\geq 3''$ in length



Photo by Paul Middlestaedt, MPR News.

Netting Regulations

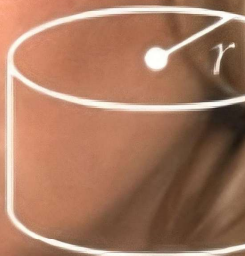
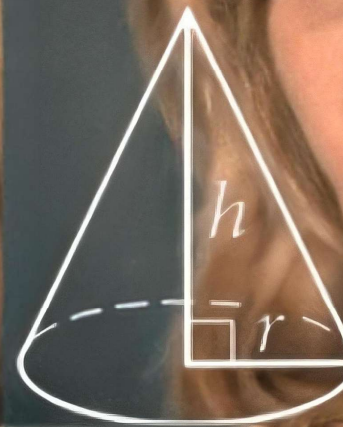
- Season
 - Fyke nets, dip nets, seines: Open year-round
 - Gillnets: June 1 to March 1
- Gear Requirements
 - Fyke nets:
 - Must be identifiable in water and trackable
 - Gillnets:
 - May not exceed length and mesh size listed on permit
 - Must be lifted at least two times in 24-hour period
 - Restricted to lakes > 1,000 acres



Safe Harvest Levels, Declarations, and Quotas—Oh My!

- Safe harvest is meant to be conservative and is based on population data
- Tribal quotas are a percentage of safe harvest
- Tribal harvest is fully monitored when spearing and netting occur
- Each fish is counted and quotas tracked

$$V = \frac{1}{3} \pi r^2 h$$



$$V = \pi r^2 h$$

$$\int \sin x dx = -\cos x + C$$

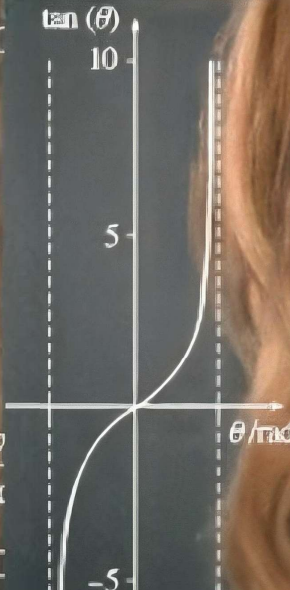
$$\int \frac{dx}{\cos^2 x} = \tan x + C$$

$$\int \tan x dx = -\ln |\cos x| + C$$

$$\int \frac{dx}{\sin x} = \ln \left| \tan \frac{x}{2} \right| + C$$

$$\int \frac{dx}{a^2 + x^2} = \frac{1}{a} \arctan \frac{x}{a} + C$$

$$\int \frac{dx}{x^2 - a^2} = \frac{1}{2a} \ln \left| \frac{x-a}{x+a} \right| + C$$



$$ax^2 + bx + c = 0$$

$$a \left(x^2 + \frac{b}{a}x + \frac{c}{a} \right) = 0$$

$$x^2 + 2 \frac{b}{2a}x + \left(\frac{b}{2a} \right)^2 - \left(\frac{b}{2a} \right)^2 + \frac{c}{a} = 0$$

$$\left(x + \frac{b}{2a} \right)^2 - \frac{b^2 - 4ac}{4a^2} = 0$$

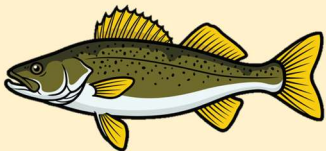
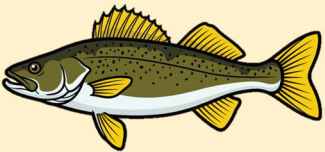
Safe Harvest

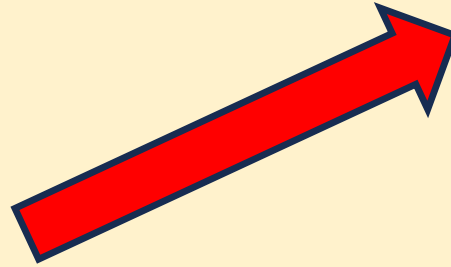


Safe harvest in Wisconsin is derived such that combined tribal and angling exploitation should not exceed 35% of adult stock

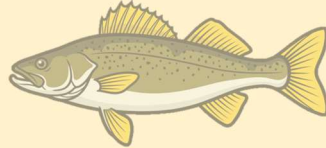
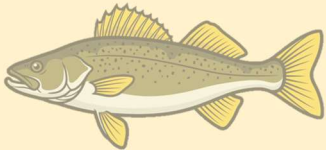
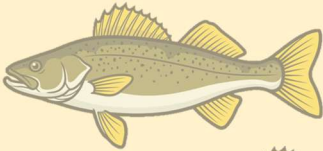
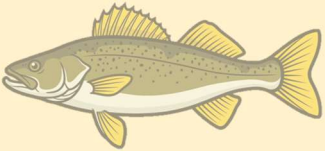


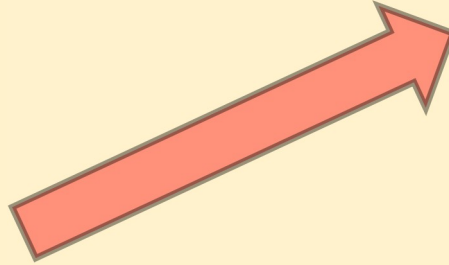
Tribes or GLIFWC Biological Services Director may close a lake to tribal harvest when necessary



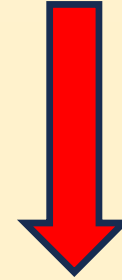


1,250 fish $\pm$ 250

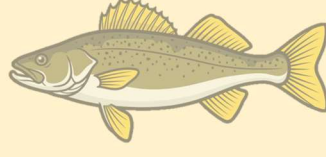
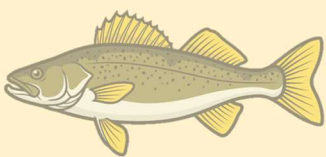
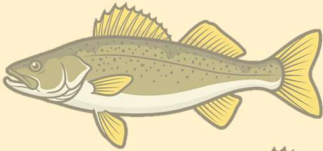
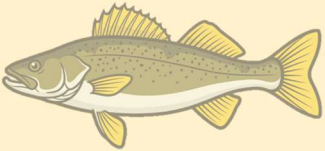


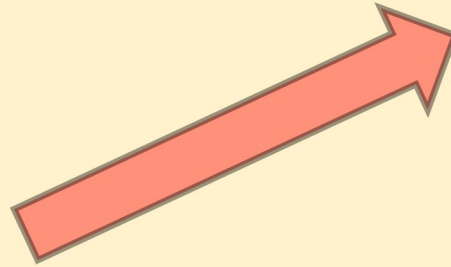


1,250 fish $\pm$ 250

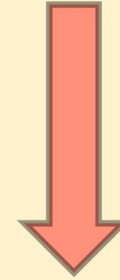


1,000 fish

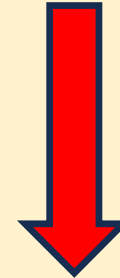




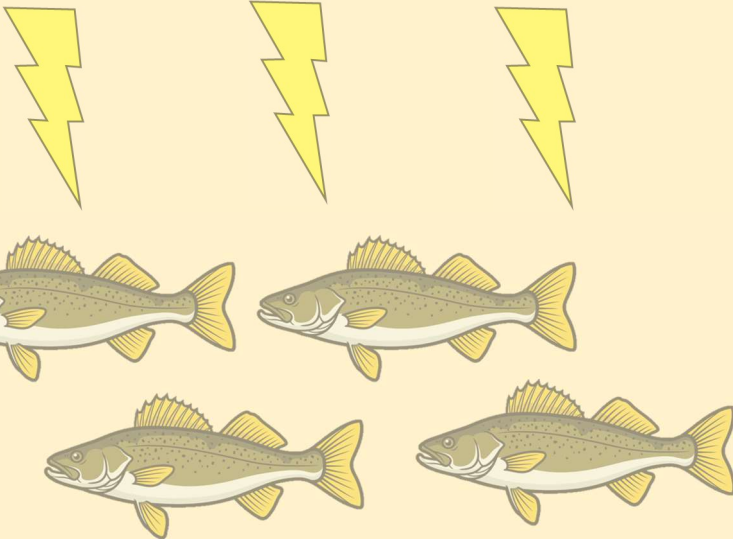
1,250 fish $\pm$ 250



1,000 fish



Safe Harvest = 350 fish





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Tribal Harvest Management



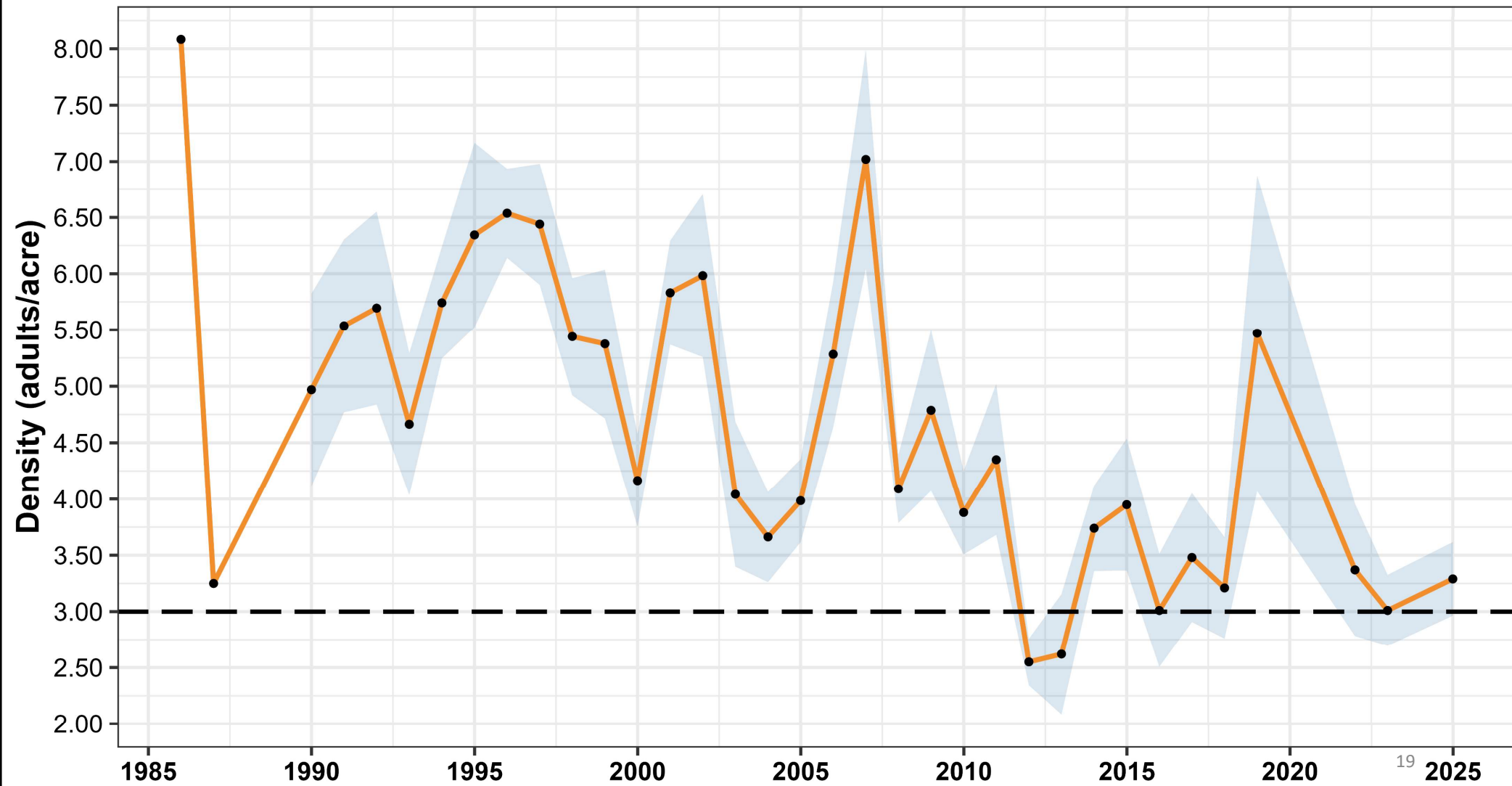
Squirrel Lake Walleye Fishery



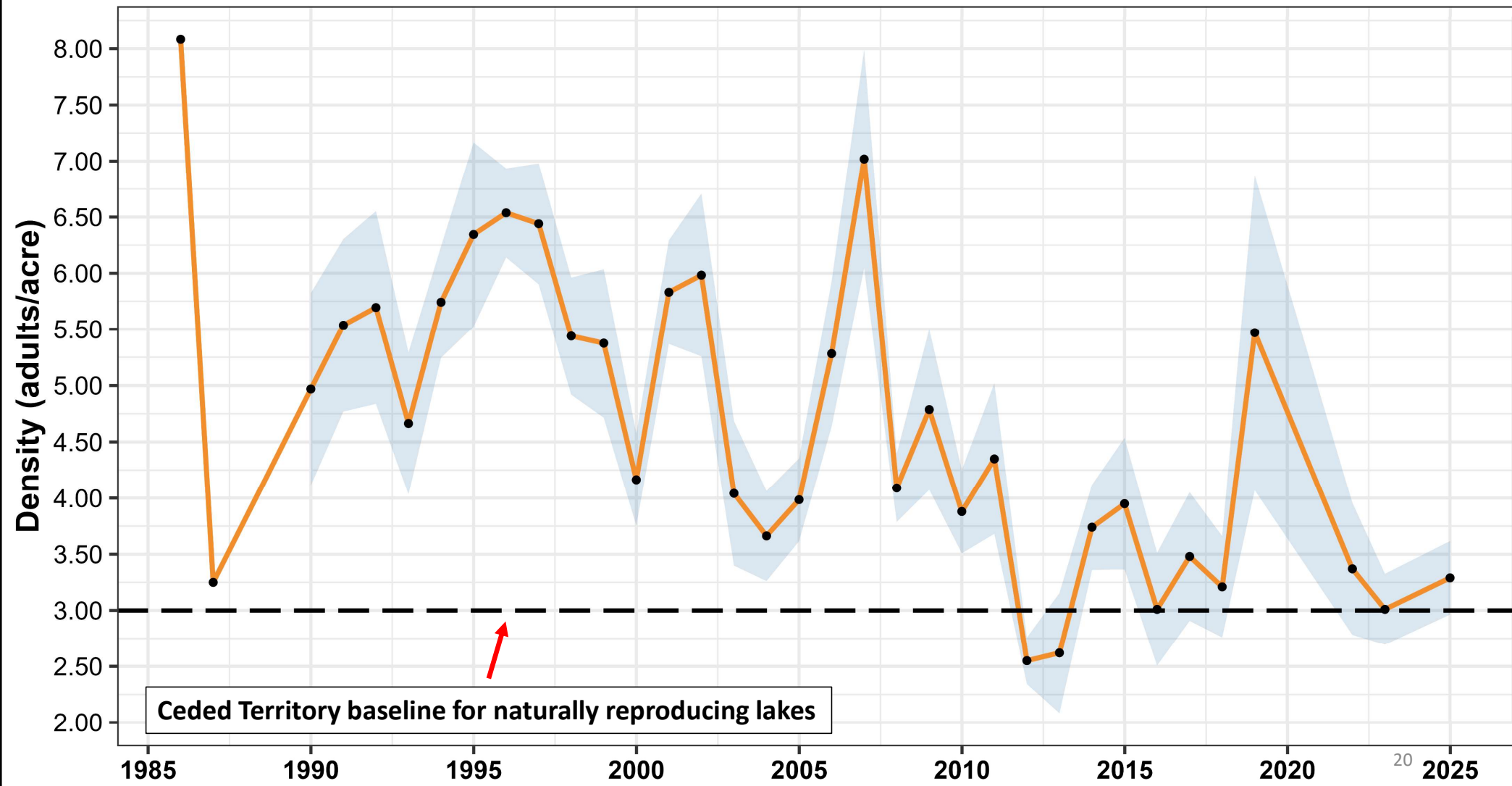
Closing Thoughts/Questions



Squirrel Lake Adult Walleye Abundance, 1986-2025



Squirrel Lake Adult Walleye Abundance, 1986-2025



Mark-Recapture Surveys

- Northern Wisconsin and western Upper Peninsula
- Lakes surveyed semi-annually to roughly every five years
- Long-term study lakes elucidate life histories of individual fishes



Report Your Tagged Fish!



www.glifwc.org/report-tagged-fish

Tag Number *

Tag Color *

Please provide the color of the fish tag (i.e. yellow, green, etc).

Date of Capture *

Location of Capture *

Provide the name of the waterbody and county and the nearest town.

Species of fish (if known)

Length/weight of fish (if known)

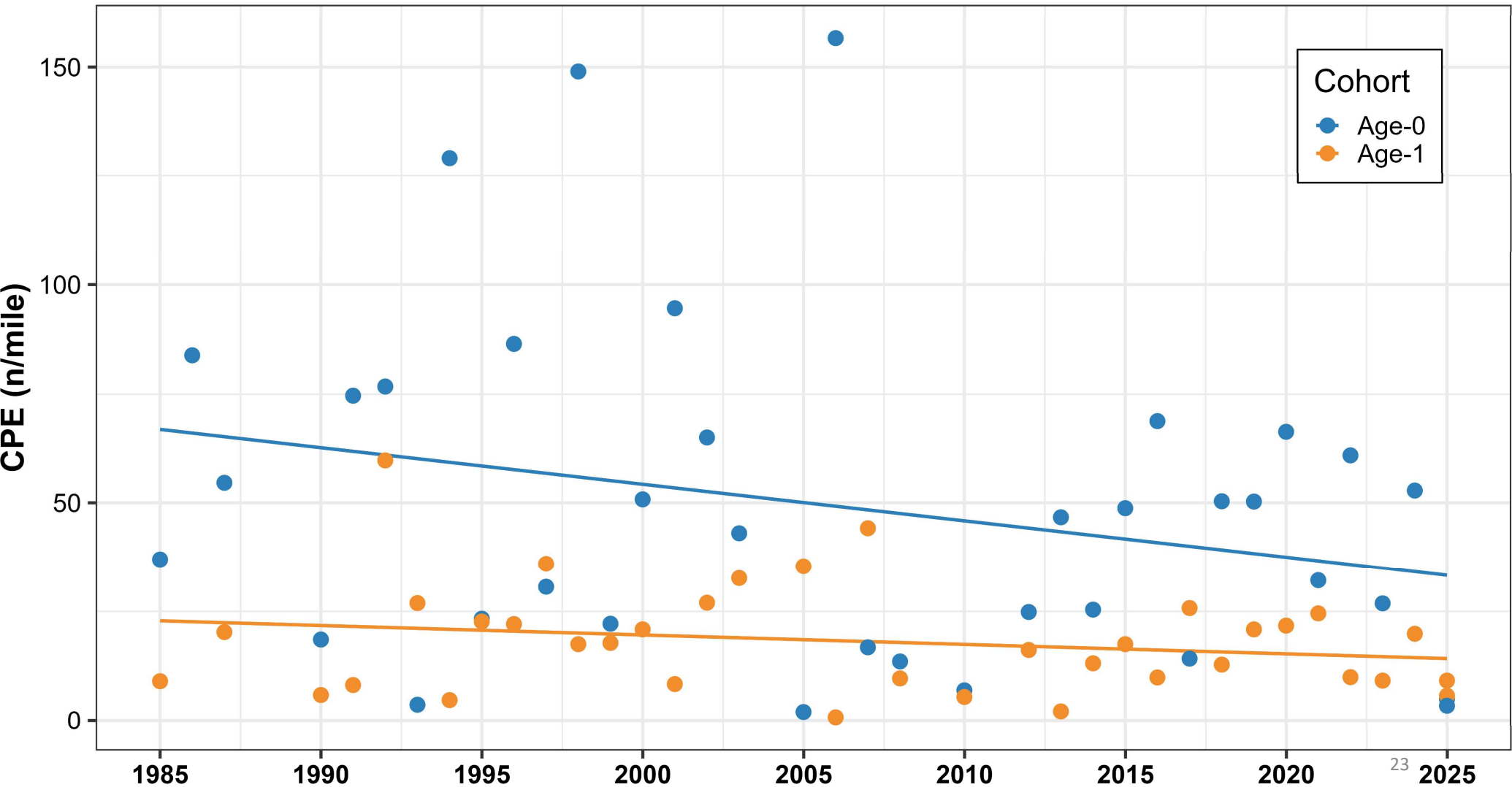
Was this fish kept? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

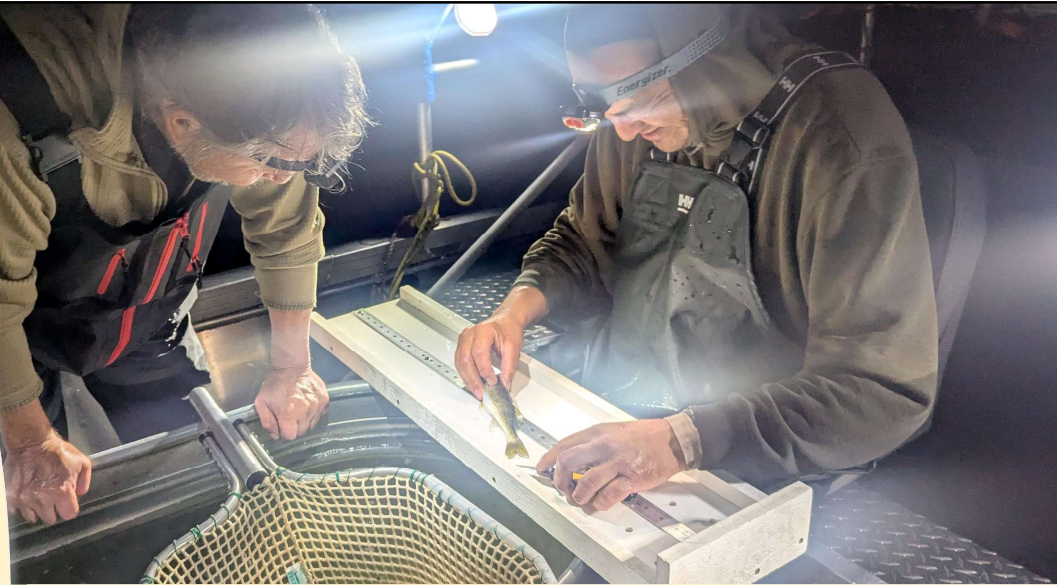
Additional Comments

Squirrel Lake Juvenile Walleye Catch Rates, 1985-2025



Recruitment and Gamefish Surveys

- Conducted each fall during a six-week period beginning the second week of September
- Target juvenile walleyes and gamefish (bass, pike, musky)
- Assess recruitment and survival of juvenile fishes



Harvest Considerations

Allow fish to spawn at least once
before being harvested



Current regulation
No minimum, 1 > 14"

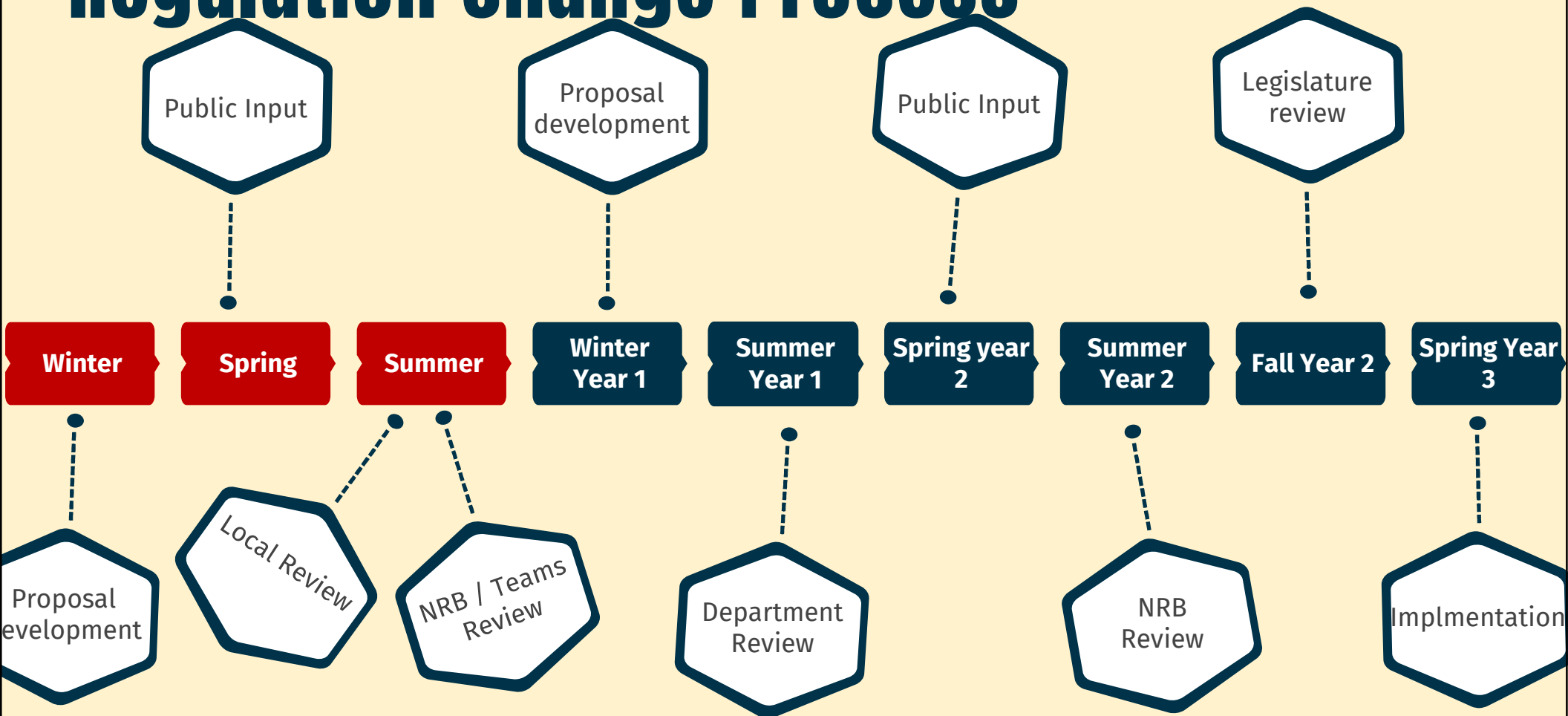


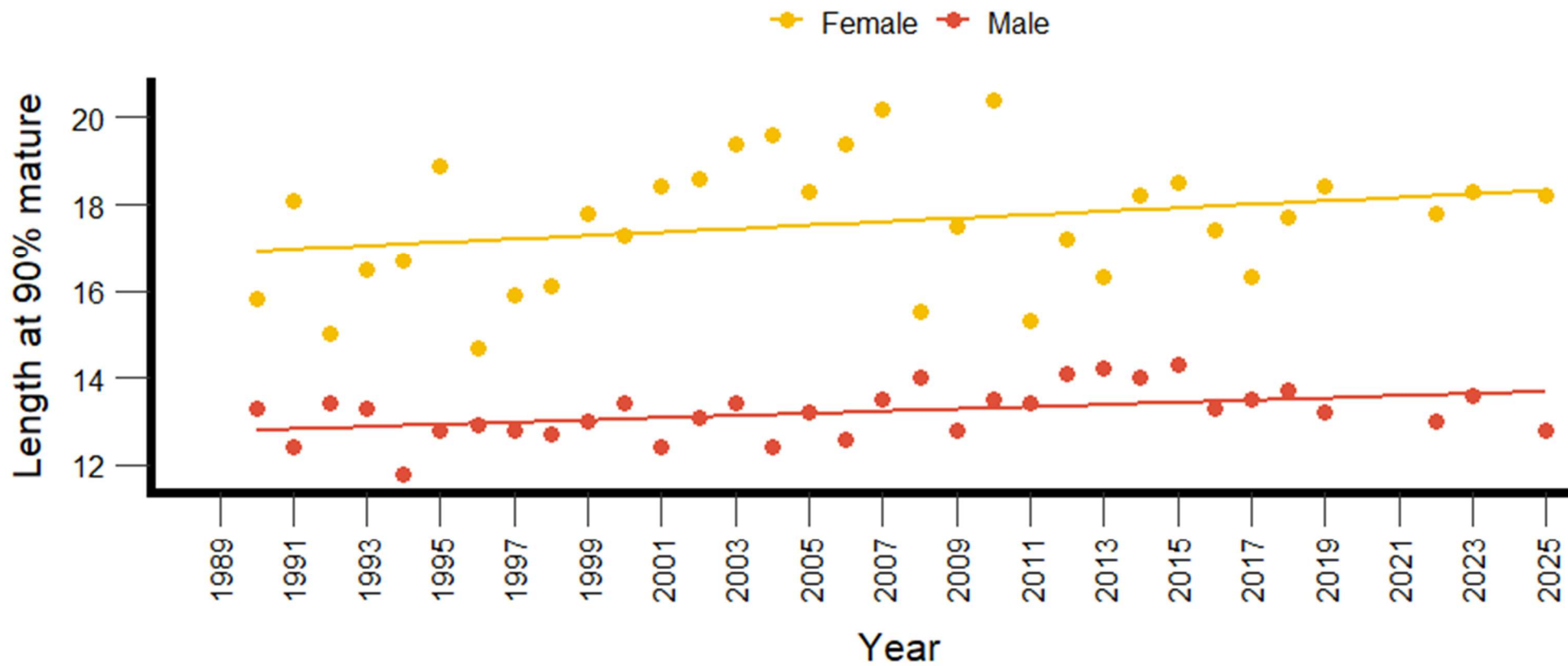
Squirrel Lake walleyes:

Males mostly mature
by 13"

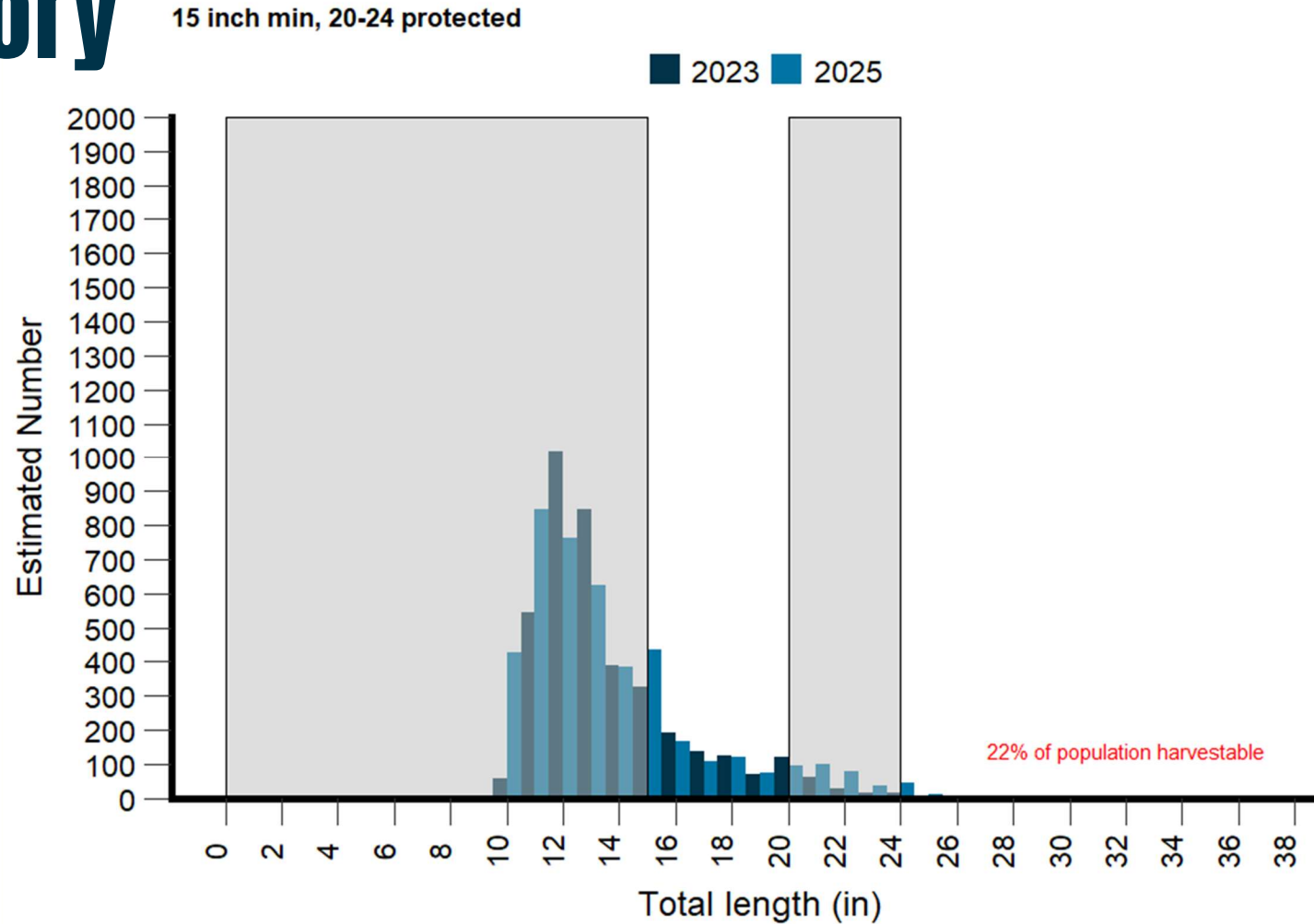
Females mostly
mature by 18"

Regulation change Process

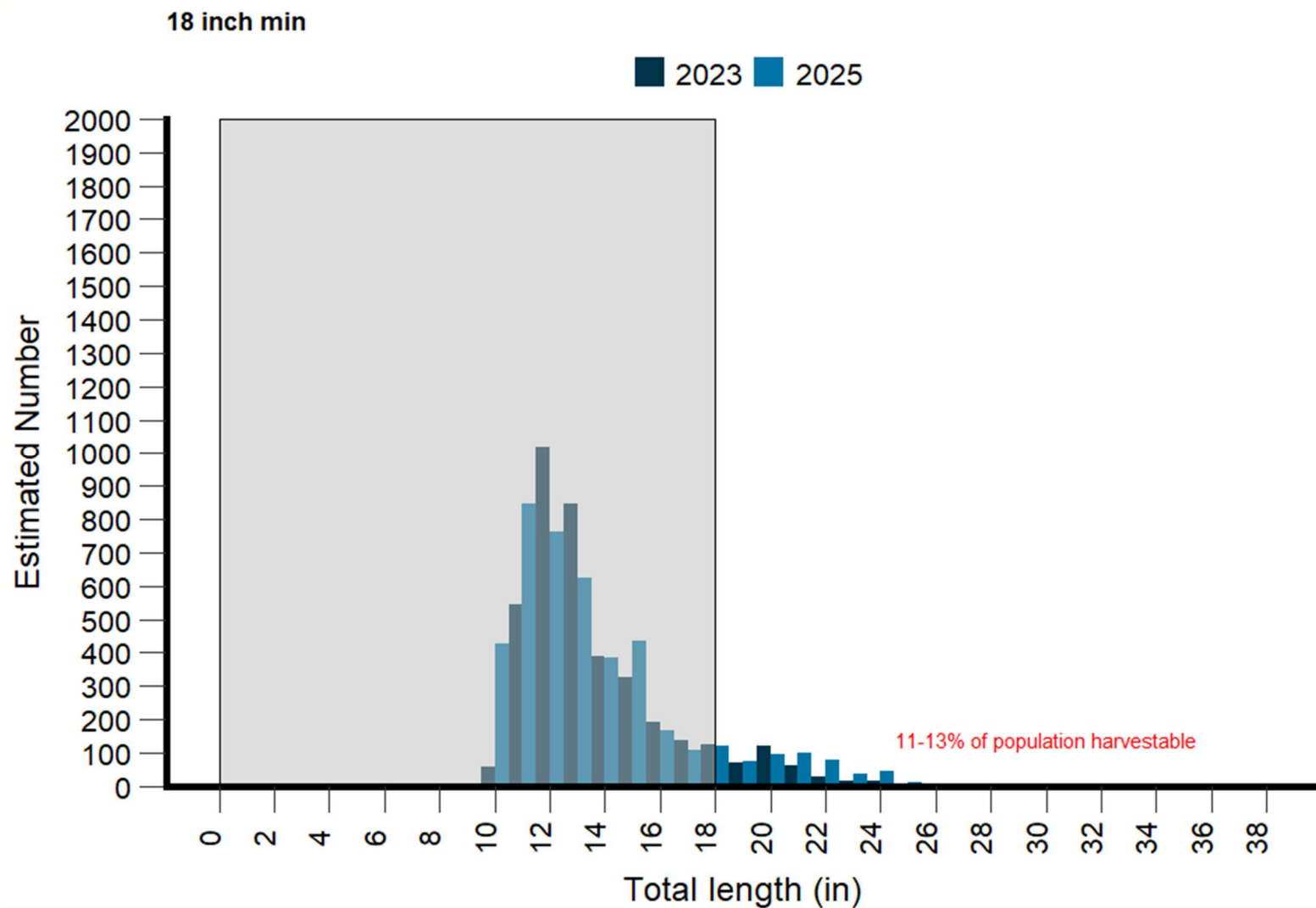




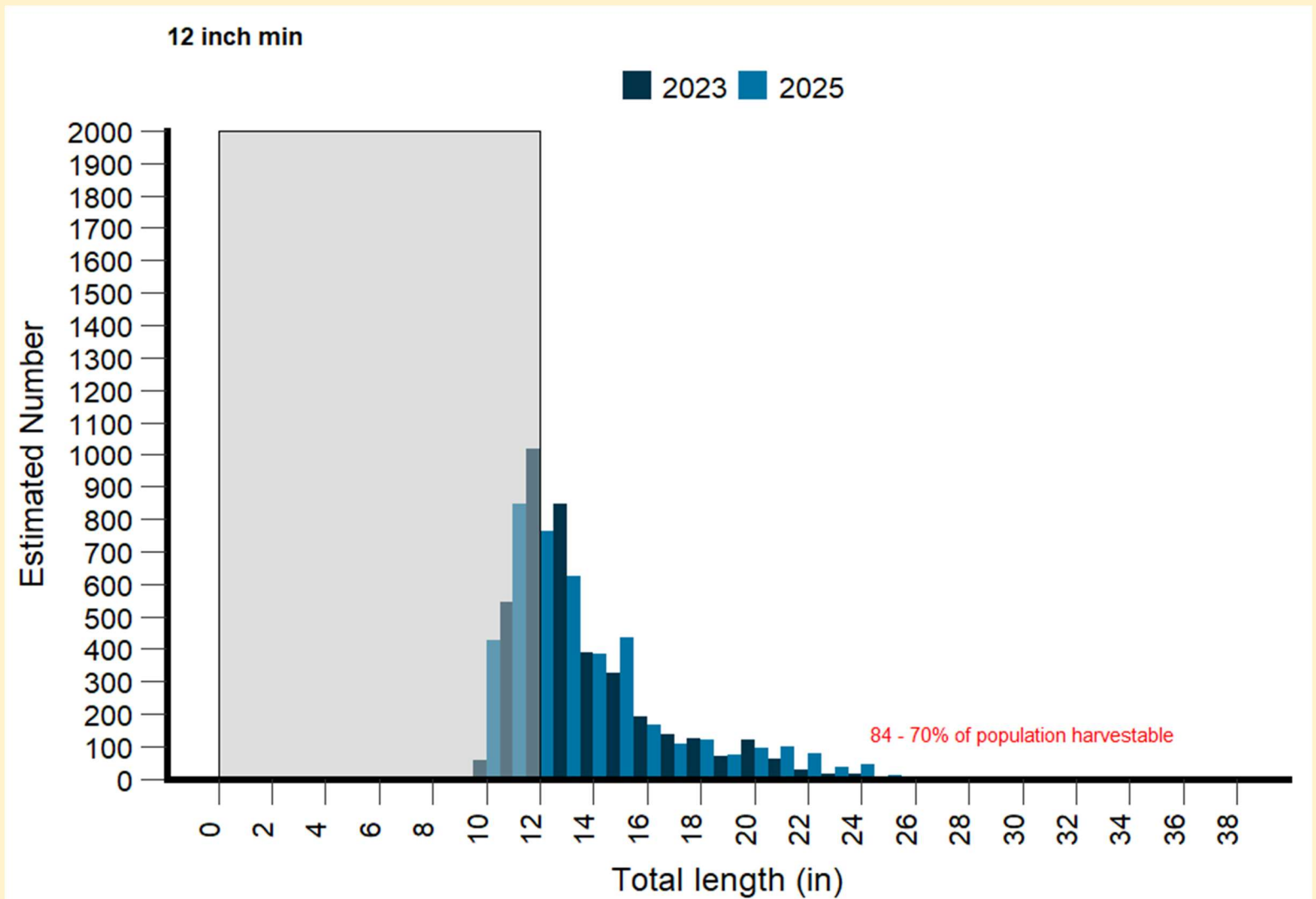
Ceded Territory Standard



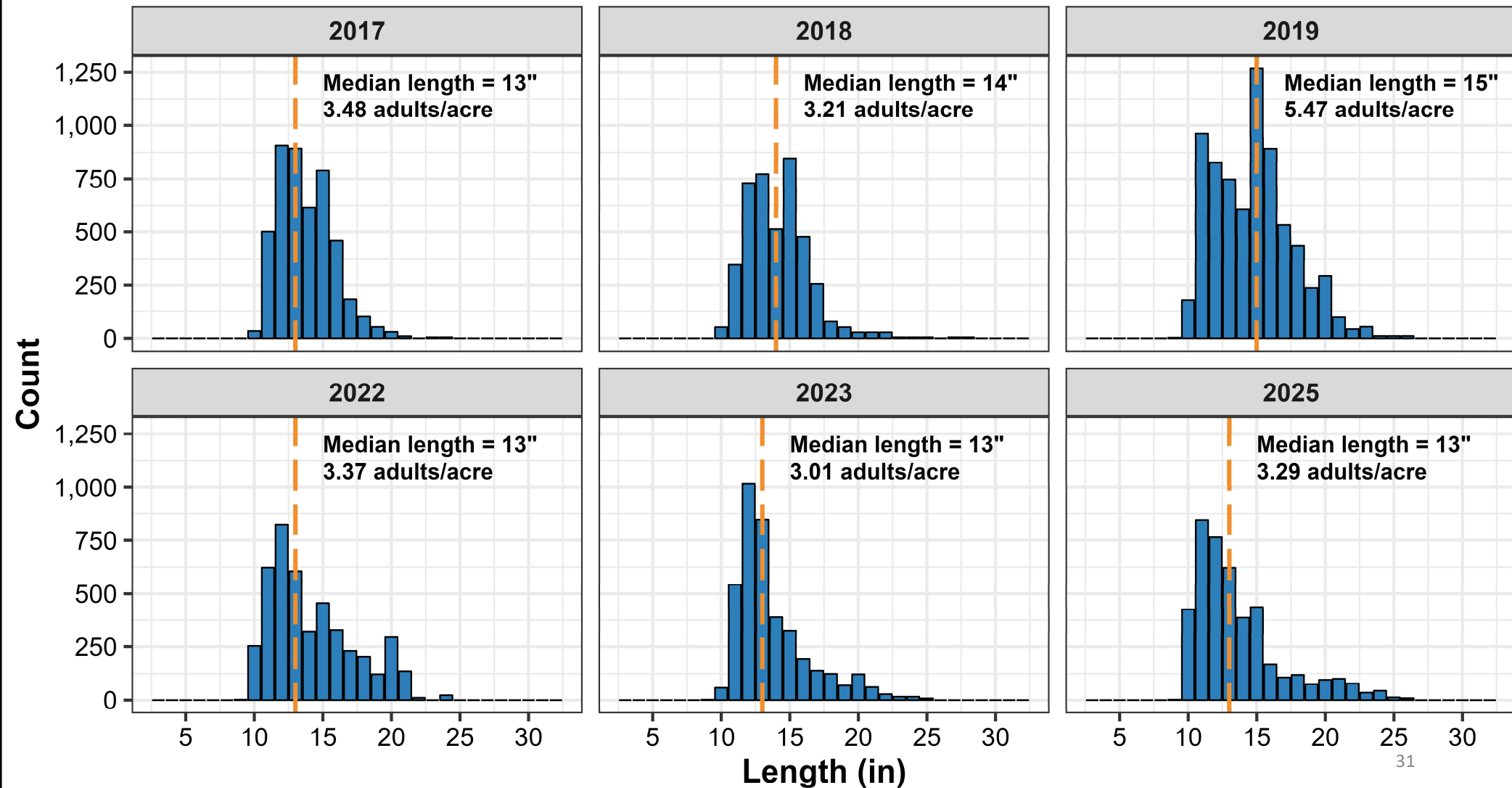
18" Min



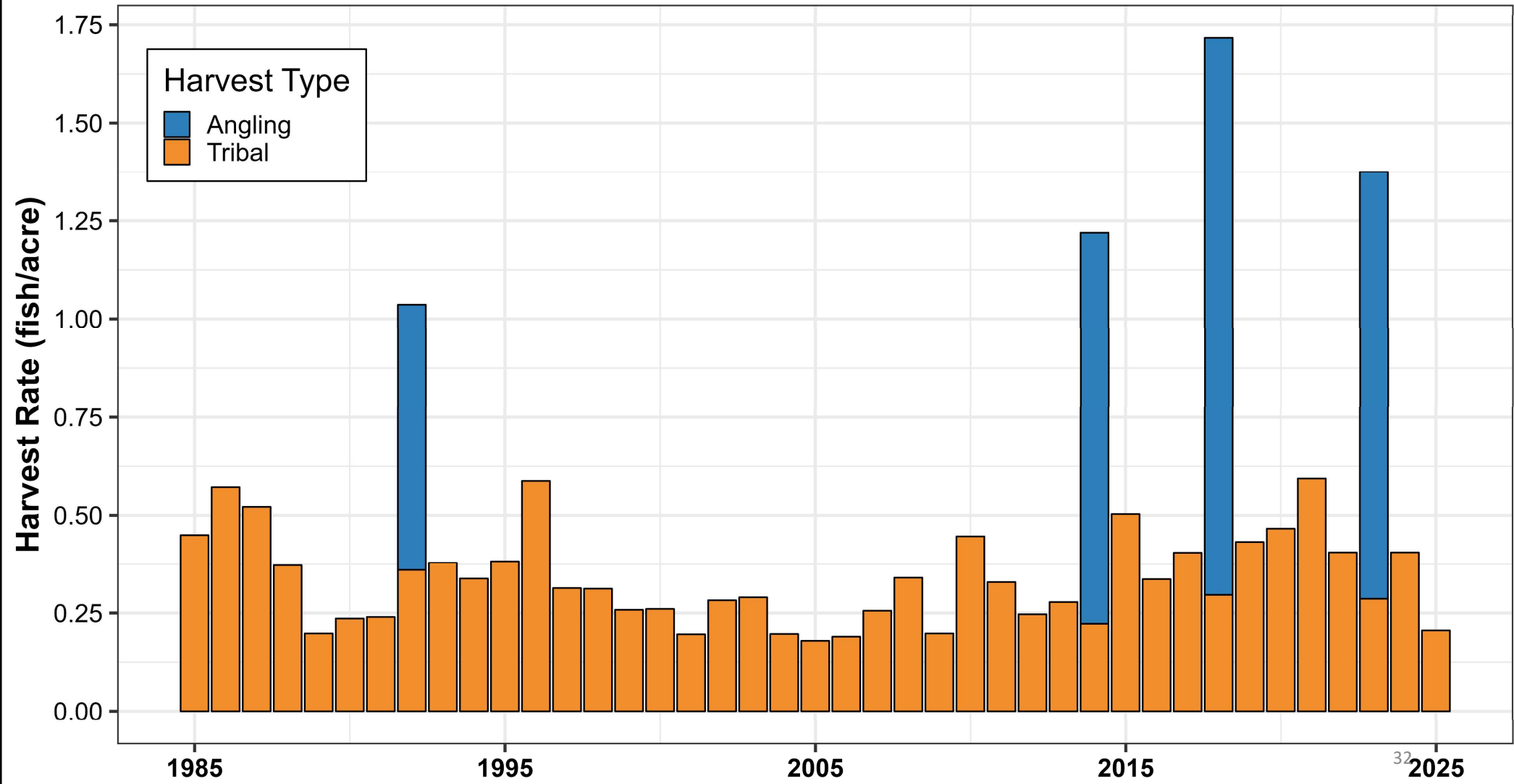
12" Min



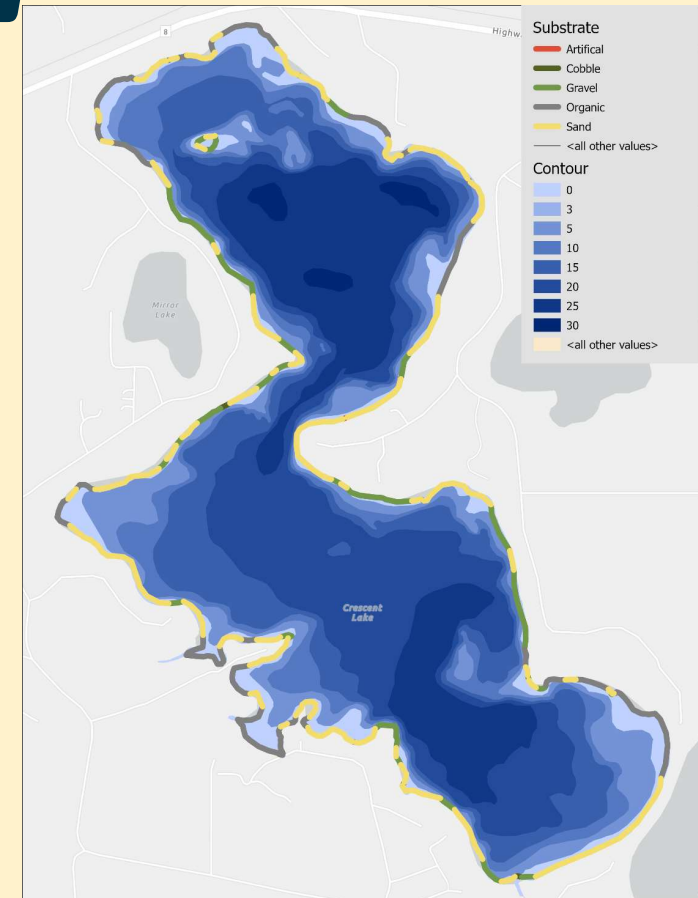
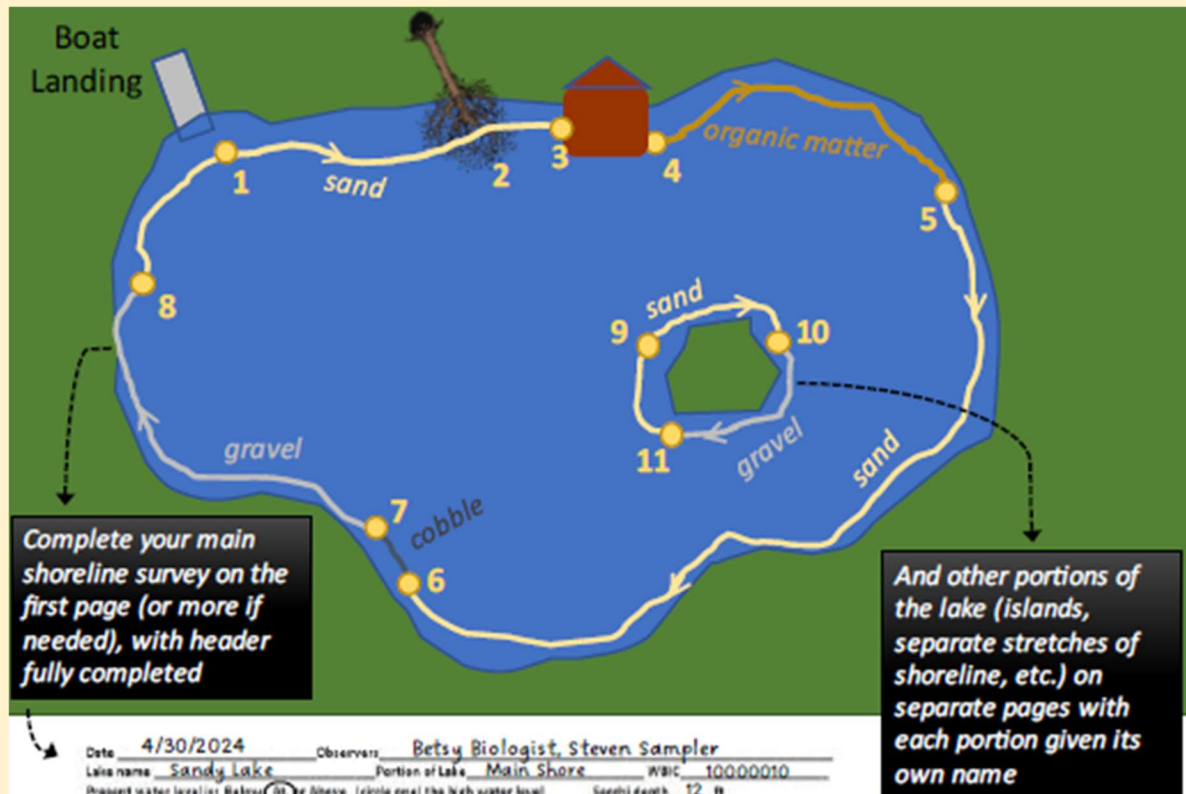
Squirrel Lake Walleye Size Structure, 2017-2025



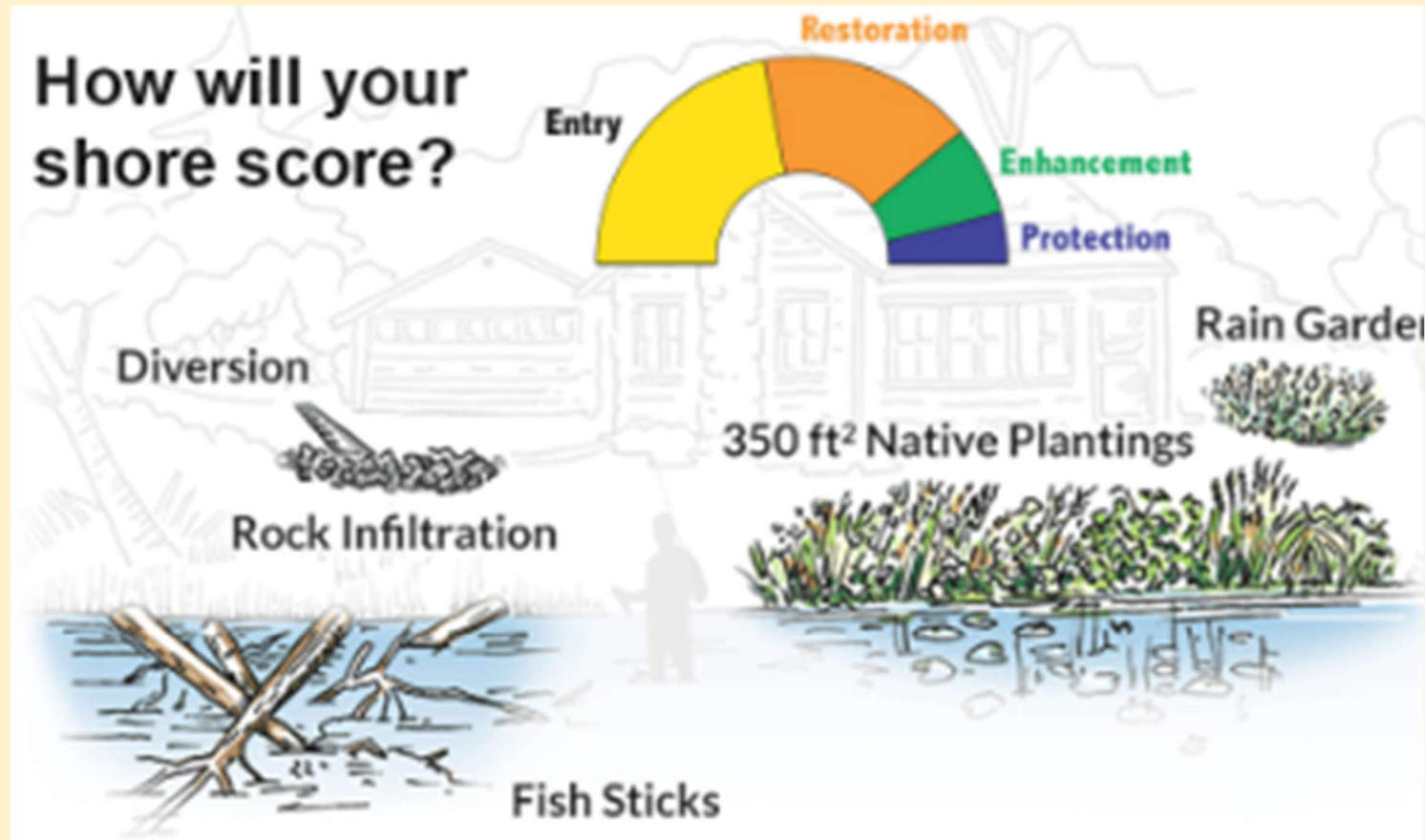
Squirrel Lake Walleye Harvest, 1985-2025



Nearshore Substrate Survey



Shoreline assessments



<https://extensionlakes.org/wi>



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Squirrel Lake Walleye Fishery



Closing Thoughts/Questions



Key Takeaways

- Squirrel Lake is a popular fishery with persistent angling opportunity
- Recruitment and adult density have declined
- Harvest-oriented regulations place higher pressure on immature fish
- Angling regulation change and habitat improvements offer greatest “bang-for-the-buck” for current walleye population

Additional Resources

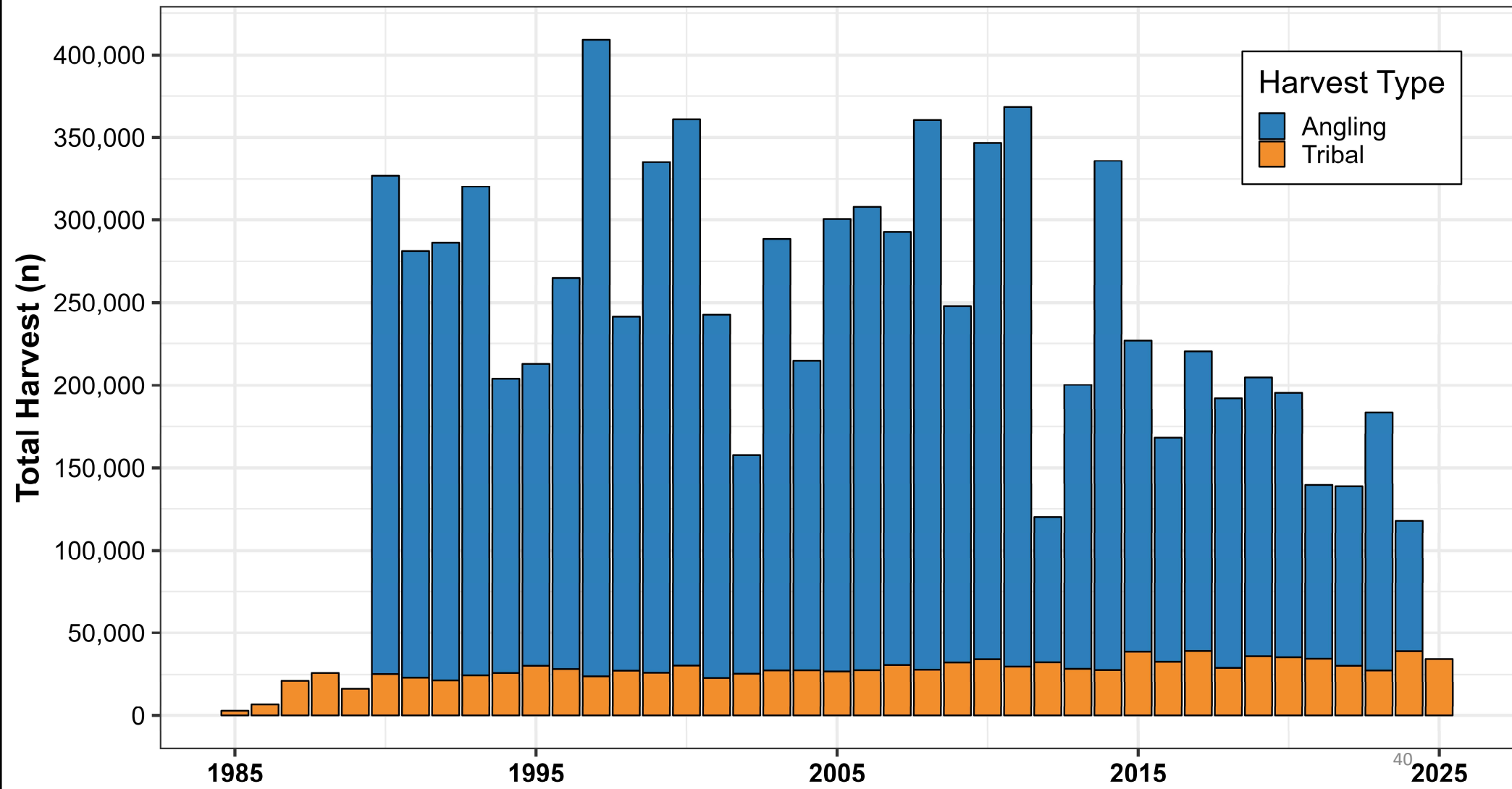
- <https://healthylakeswi.com/>
- <https://www.midwestglaciallakes.org>
- <https://www.keepfishwet.org/walleye-in-our-hands>



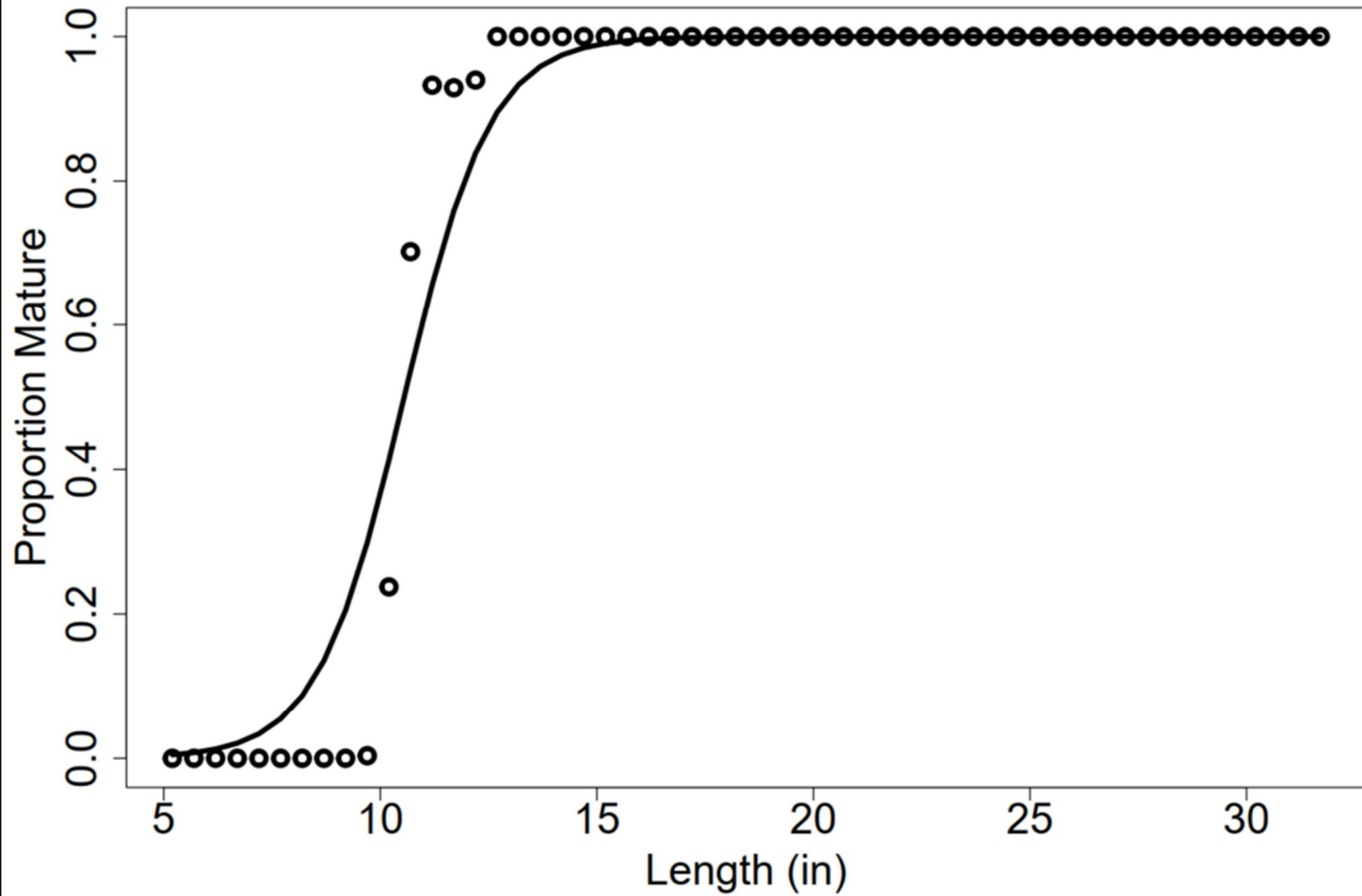


Questions?

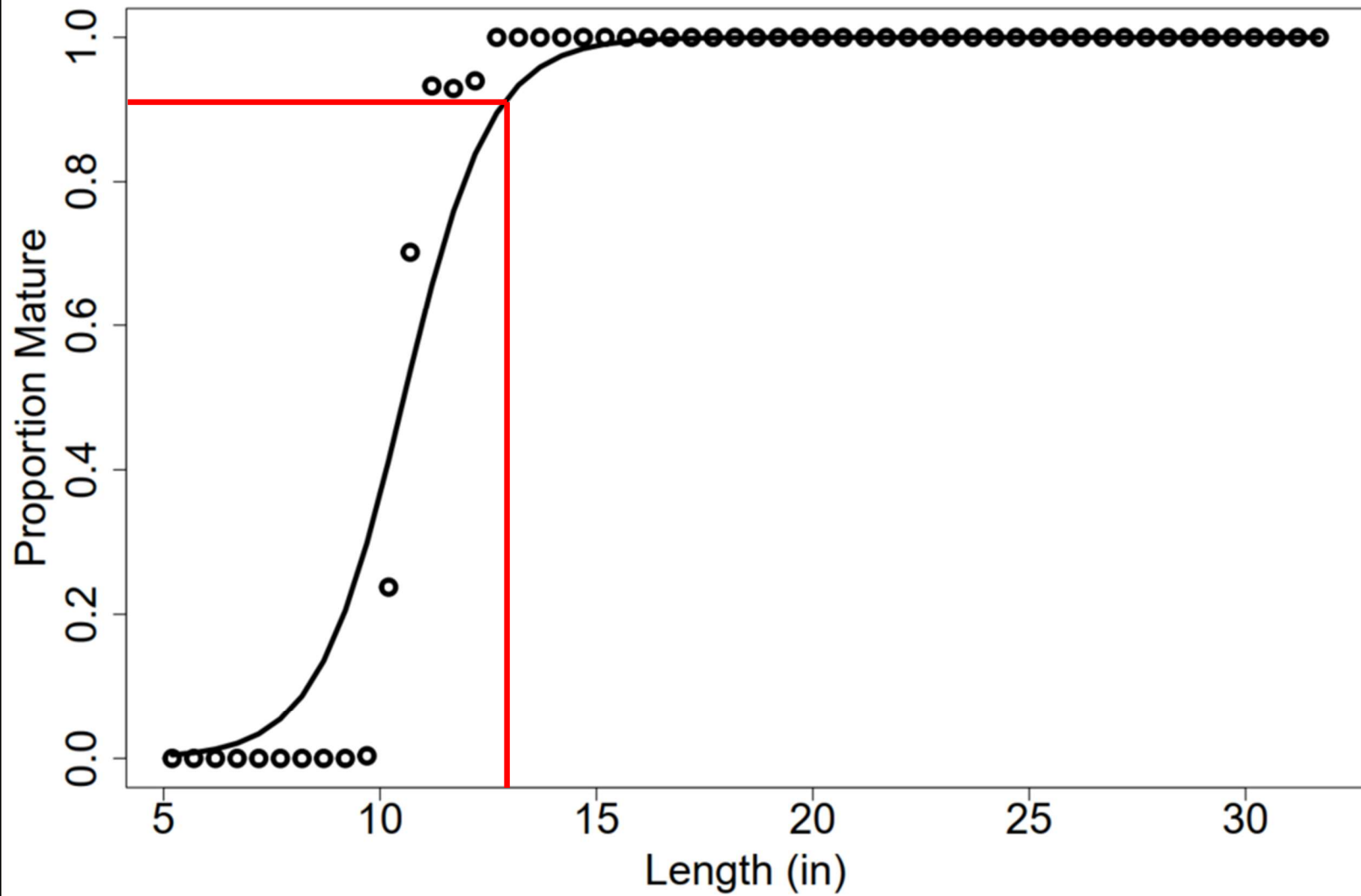
Ceded Territory Walleye Harvest, 1985-2025



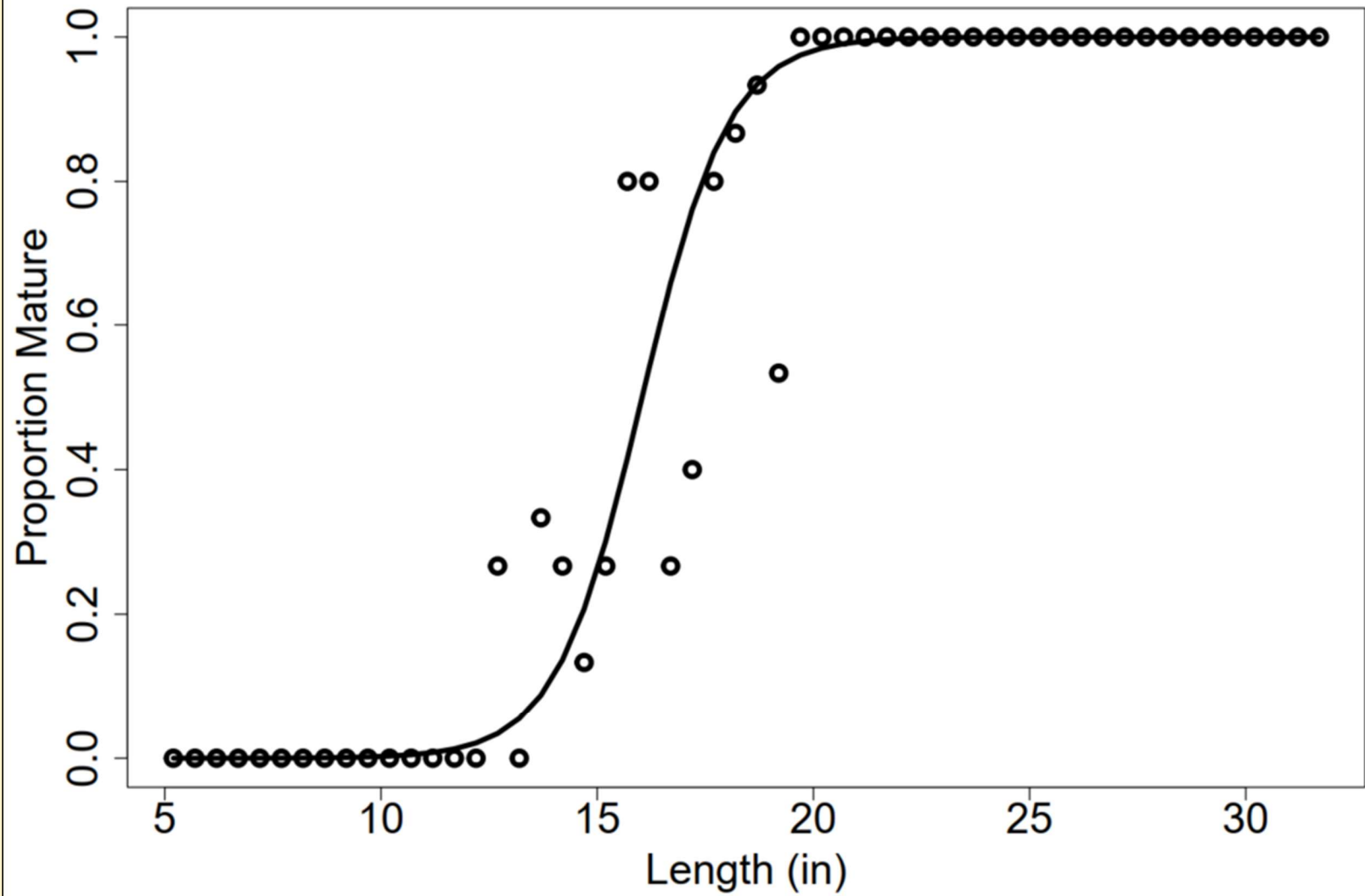
ONEIDA Co., SQUIRREL L Males 2025 Length at 90% Maturity = 12.8



ONEIDA Co., SQUIRREL L Males 2025 Length at 90% Maturity = 12.8



ONEIDA Co., SQUIRREL L Females 2025 Length at 90% Maturity = 18.2



ONEIDA Co., SQUIRREL L Females 2025 Length at 90% Maturity = 18.2

