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INDEX OF ABUNDANCE OF SKIPJACK TUNA IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN DERIVED FROM ECHOSOUNDER BUOYS (2010-2020)

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SUMMARY

The collaboration with the Spanish vessel-owners associations and the buoy-providers companies, has made it possible the recovery of the information recorded by the satellite linked GPS tracking echosounder buoys used by the Spanish tropical tuna purse seiners and associated fleet in the Atlantic since 2010. These instrumental buoys inform fishers remotely in real-time about the accurate geolocation of the FAD and the presence and abundance of fish aggregations underneath them. Echosounder buoys have the potential of being a privileged observation platform to evaluate abundances of tunas and accompanying species using catch-independent data. Current echosounder buoys provide a single acoustic value without discriminating species or size composition of the fish underneath the FAD. Therefore, it has been necessary to combine the echosounder buoys data with fishery data, species composition and average size, to obtain a specific indicator. This paper presents a novel index of abundance of skipjack tuna in the Atlantic Ocean derived from echosounder buoys for the period 2010-2020.

RÉSUMÉ

La collaboration entre les associations d'armateurs espagnols et les entreprises fournisseuses de bouées a permis de récupérer les informations enregistrées par les GPS reliés par satellite qui font un suivi des bouées associées à des échosondeurs utilisées par les senneurs espagnols ciblant les thonidés tropicaux et la flottille associée dans l'Atlantique depuis 2010. Ces bouées instrumentales informent les pêcheurs à distance et en temps réel de la géolocalisation précise du DCP ainsi que de la présence et de l'abondance des concentrations de poissons en dessous. Les bouées associées à des échosondeurs peuvent constituer une plateforme d'observation privilégiée pour évaluer l'abondance des thonidés et des espèces qui les accompagnent à partir de données indépendantes des captures. Les bouées associées à des échosondeurs actuelles fournissent une valeur acoustique unique sans discriminer la composition par espèce ou par taille des poissons sous le DCP. Il a donc été nécessaire de combiner les données des bouées associées à des échosondeurs avec les données des pêcheries, la composition des espèces et la taille moyenne, afin d'obtenir un indicateur spécifique. Ce document présente un nouvel indice d'abondance du listao ans l'océan Atlantique, obtenu des bouées associées à des échosondeurs, pour la période 2010-2020.

RESUMEN

La colaboración con las asociaciones de armadores españoles y las compañías proveedoras de boyas ha hecho posible la recuperación de la información grabada por el GPS por satélite que rastrea las boyas ecosonda utilizadas por los cerqueros españoles y la flota asociada que se dirigen a los túnidos tropicales del Atlántico desde 2010. Estas boyas instrumentales informan a los pescadores de forma remota y en tiempo real acerca de la geolocalización de los DCP y de la presencia y abundancia de las agregaciones de peces bajo ellos. Las boyas ecosonda tienen el potencial de ser una plataforma privilegiada de observación para evaluar la abundancia de túnidos y las especies que los acompañan utilizando datos independientes de la captura. Las actuales boyas ecosonda proporcionan un único valor acústico sin discriminar la composición por especies o por tallas de los peces bajo el DCP. Por lo tanto, ha sido necesario combinar los datos de las boyas ecosonda con los datos pesqueros, la composición por especies y la talla media para obtener un indicador específico. Este documento presenta un nuevo índice de abundancia de listado en el océano Atlántico derivado de las boyas ecosonda para el periodo 2010-2020.

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KEYWORDS

Acoustics, Echosounder buoys, Abundance index, Skipjack tuna, FADs

1. Introduction

Fishery stock assessment models are demographic analyses designed to determine the effects of fishing on fish populations and to evaluate the potential consequences of alternative harvest policies (Methot & Wetzel, 2012). Quantification of fish populations is the central part of any fish stock assessment, and it is commonly the most difficult task. This is even more complicated in the case of highly migratory fish stocks, such as tuna, were conventional fishery-independent surveys are in general not practicable. And, in the absence of fishery-independent information, most of the abundance indices used in fish stock assessments are derived from estimates of Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE), the number or biomass of fish caught as a function of effort (Quinn & Deriso, 1999).

Relative abundance indices based on CPUE data are notoriously problematic (Maunder *et al.*, 2006), as catch data is usually biased by fishing effort, coverage, and other limiting factors of fishery data. The primary assumption behind a CPUE-based abundance index is that changes in the index are assumed to be proportional to changes in the actual stock abundance (Maunder & Punt, 2004), being catchability (q) -the portion of the stock captured by one unit of effort - the coefficient of proportionality. One of the associated difficulties is that q is rarely constant and depends on several different components, such as those related to changes in the fishing efficiency and dynamics of the fleet.

Tropical tuna purse seining is one of such fisheries where both factors, fishing efficiency and dynamics of the fleet, are evolving very rapidly due to the fast technological development (Torres-Irineo et al, 2014) and the sharp increase of the use of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) (Scott & Lopez, 2014). This fact makes it difficult to obtain reliable CPUE indices for tropical tunas from purse fisheries fishing under drifting FADs. Recent initiatives such as the EU funded projects RECOLAPE, CECOFAD-1 and CECOFAD-2 were focused on the understanding of the use of FADs in tropical purse seine tuna fisheries and to try to provide reliable estimates of abundance indices (Gaertner *et al.*, 2016). And science-industry collaboration in the context of these and other projects is clearly improving the understanding of the FAD use but also the availability of data with great potential for improving CPUE indices and for developing novel abundance indicators.

The collaboration with the Spanish vessel-owners associations (ANABAC and OPAGAC) and the buoy-providers companies (Marine Instruments, Satlink and Zunibal), has made it possible the recovery of the information recorded by the satellite tracking echosounder buoys used by the Spanish tropical tuna purse seiners and associated fleet in the Atlantic for the period 2010-2020. These instrumental buoys inform fishers remotely in near real-time about the accurate geolocation of the FAD and the presence and abundance of tuna aggregations underneath them.

Apart from its unquestionable impact in the conception of a reliable CPUE index from the purse seine tropical tuna fisheries fishing on FADs, echosounder buoys have also the potential of being a privileged observation platform to evaluate abundances of tunas and accompanying species using catch-independent data (Dagorn *et al.*, 2006; Lopez *et al.*, 2014; Santiago *et al.*, 2016, 2019).

Current echosounder buoys provide a single acoustic value without discriminating species or size composition of the fish underneath the FAD. Therefore, it has been necessary to combine the echosounder buoys data with fishery data, species composition and average size, to obtain a specific indicator. This paper presents a novel index of abundance of skipjack tuna in the Atlantic Ocean derived from echosounder buoys for the period 2010-2020. Equivalent indices were developed in 2019, 2020 and 2021 for the Atlantic (YFT, BET), Indian (SKJ) and Pacific (SKJ in the EPO) oceans following the same methodology described here (Santiago *et al.*, 2019, 2020a,b, 2021; Uranga *et al.*, 2021).

2. Material and methods

2.1 The acoustic data

Acoustic data from echosounder buoys used in this analysis have been provided by the company Satlink. This type of buoy is equipped with a sounder, which operates at a frequency of 190.5 kHz with a power of 100 W. The range extends from 3 to 115 m, with a transducer blanking zone running from 0 to 3 m. At an angle of 32°, the cone of observation under the buoy has a diameter of 78.6 m at a depth of 115 m. The echosounder provides acoustic information in 10 different vertical layers, each with a resolution of 11.2 m. During the period analysed three different buoy models have been used by the fleet: DS+, DSL+ and ISL+. These three buoy models work with similar beam angle, frequency and power, and with the above-mentioned vertical stratification. DSL+ and DS+ obtain three acoustic records per day, i.e., before dawn, at dawn and after dawn in the default mode. ISL+ has the capacity to sample along the day each 15 minutes, transmitting the signal if the value recorded for a 24 hours period is larger than the previous record.

The fishing companies belonging to ANABAC and OPAGAC that have provided acoustic information from their echosounder buoys were: Albacora SA, Atunera Sant Yago SA, Atunsa, Calvopesca El Salvador SA de CV, Cantabrica de Tunidos SAU, Icube Tuna Fisheries NV, Inpesca Fishing Belize Ltd, Integral Fishing Service INC, Intertuna, NV, Overseas Tuna Company NV and Pevasa. This adds up to a total of 27 purse seine vessels from 7 different flags (Belize, Cabo Verde, Curacao, El Salvador, Spain, Guatemala and Panama) operating in the ICCAT convention area.

The database of acoustic information of the Atlantic Ocean from Satlink buoys comprises around 15 million of records from over 40,000 buoys for the period from January 2010 to December 2020. From each single data record transmitted via satellite, the following information can be extracted: "*Name*", unique identification number of the buoy, given by the model code (DS+, DSL, ISL, ISD, SLX) followed by 5-6 digits; "*OwnerName*", name of the buoy owner assigned to a unique purse seine vessel; "*MD*", message descriptor (160, 161 and 162 for position data, without sounder data, and 163, 168, 169 and 174 for sounder data); "*StoredTime*", date (dd/mm/yyyy) and hour (HH:MM) of the echosounder record; "*Latitude, Longitude*", GPS latitude and longitude of recorded data during each day (in decimals); "*Bat*", charge level as a percentage (not provided, except for the D+ and DS+ models, in voltage); "*Temp*", temperature (Not provided); "*Speed*", speed in knots; "*Drift*", bearing in degrees (Not provided); "*Layer1-Layer10*", estimated tons by layers (values are estimated by a manufacturer´s method which converts raw acoustic backscatter into biomass in tons, using a depth layer echo-integration procedure based exclusively on an algorithm based on the target strength (TS) and weight of skipjack tuna; "*Sum*", sum of the biomass estimated at each layer; "*Max*", maximum biomass estimated at any layer; and "*Mag1, Mag3, Mag5 and Mag7*", magnitudes corresponding to the counts of detected targets according to the TS of the detection peak.

2.2 From acoustic data to a species-specific abundance indicator

To calculate the biomass aggregated under a FAD from the acoustic signal, Satlink uses the density of one species, skipjack, to provide the biomass in tons, biomass data from Satlink was converted to decibels reversing their formula for the biomass computation. Then we recomputed biomass using standard abundance estimations equations (Simmonds & MacLennan, 2005):

$$Biomass_i = \frac{s_V \cdot Vol \cdot p_i}{\sum_i \sigma_i \cdot p_i}$$

where *Sv* is the volume backscattering strength, *Vol* is the sampled volume and p_i and σ_i are the proportion and linearized target strength of each species *i* respectively. Species proportions in weight were extracted from the logbooks of the fleet associated to OPAGAC (19 vessels) for each 1ºx1º and month stratum, as explained below. Mean fish lengths (L_i) used for skipjack (SKJ), bigeye (BET) and yellowfin (YFT) were obtained from ICCAT T2CS - catch-at-size, and weights were obtained using weight-length relationships (ICCAT conversion factors). Then, the following TS-length relationships were used to obtain linearized target strength per kilogram:

$$\sigma_i = \frac{10^{(TS)/10}}{w_i}$$

where w_i is the mean weight of each species and *TS* is the backscattering cross-section of each species individual fish. It is assumed that the linear value of TS, is proportional to the square of fish length (Simmons and MacLennan 2005).

$$TS_i = 20\log(L_i) + b_{20,i}$$

Given that each brand uses different operating frequencies, we used different b20 values for each species. For Satlink, the b20 values were obtained from (Boyra *et al.*, 2018) for SKJ, from Bertrand and Josse (2000) and (Oshima, 2008) for YFT and from Boyra *et al.* (2018) for BET.

Since acoustic records do not always have information on catch composition for the same time-area strata, we followed a three-step hierarchical process to get this correspondence: 1) use species distribution data from the same 1ºx1º grid, year and month; 2) alternatively, use the same quarter and 1ºx1º grid; and finally, as a last resort 3), use the mean values of species distribution data at same quarter and five large regions covering the whole Atlantic Ocean: region 1, data above 25N and to the left of 35W; region 2, data above10N and to the right of 35W; region 3, data below 25N and to the left of 35W; region 4, data below 10N and to the right of 35W; and region 5, data with all the remaining data corresponding to latitudes below 10S.

The results presented in this document correspond to the fraction of the acoustic signal estimated to be informative for the biomass of skipjack.

2.3 Acoustic data cleaning and filtering

A set of five filters were applied to the original data to remove artifacts: isolated, duplicated and ubiquitous rows, that are mainly caused by satellite communication incidents; buoys located 1 km or closer to land or located in areas with a bottom depth shallower than 200 m, detected and removed using shoreline data from the GSHHG database (Wessel 1996) and a worldwide global bathymetry information (Amante and Eakins 2009); and "on-board" or "at sea" positions, identified using a Random Forest algorithm (Orue *et al.* 2019; Santiago *et al.* 2020), these cases are mainly related to buoy activation incidents on-board vessels prior and post deployment.

In addition to the previously mentioned cleaning filters, the following selection criteria (Santiago *et al.* 2020) were used to build the final dataset to feed into the standardization analysis: i) shallower layers (<25m) were excluded because they are consider to potentially reflect non-tuna species (Orue *et al.* 2019); ii) only data recorded around sunrise, between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m. in local time, were considered for the analysis because they are supposed to capture the echosounder biomass signals that better represents the abundance of fish under the FADs (Moreno *et al.* 2007); and finally, iii) acoustic data belonging to what we defined as "virgin segments" were selected in order to use the segment of a buoy trajectory whose associated FAD likely represents a new deployment which has been potentially colonized by tuna and not fished yet. To calculate virgin segments, single buoy segments were divided into smaller sub-segments where the difference between two consecutive observations of the same buoy was larger than 30 days. Then, the newly renamed sub-segments with less than 30 observations and those having a time difference between any of the consecutive observations longer than 4 days during the first 35 days were removed. Finally, from the remaining data we consider as virgin segments those segments of trajectories from 20-35 days at sea (Orue *et al.* 2019).

Figure *1* shows a diagram with an example of "virgin" segments used for the calculation of the BAI index.

Acoustic records equal or less than 0,01 tonnes were considered zeros. This is a conservative preliminary value since further validation is needed.

2.4 The BAI index: Buoy-derived Abundance Index

The estimator of abundance BAI was defined as the 0.9 quantile of the integrated acoustic energy observations in each of the "virgin" sequences. A high quantile was chosen because the large values are considered to be likely produced by tuna (in opposition to plankton or bycatch species). This assumption is followed by all the buoy brands in the market, which use the maximum value as the summary of each time interval. In our case we selected a high quantile instead of the maximum to try to provide a more robust estimator by avoiding eventual outlier values. We did this to avoid considering the expected lowest values that might appear after eventual hauls occurring along the sequence. The total number of "virgin" sequences analysed, and hence the number of observations in the model, rose to 35,787, of which 34,899 (97.52%) were positives.

2.5 Covariates

Covariates included year-quarter (yyqq), and 5°x5º ICCAT areas fitted as categorical variables. Other variables used in the standardization process included velocity of the buoy, FAD densities and a set of environmental variables. They were chosen for potential effects on the horizontal-vertical distribution of tunas and their association to FADs (FAD density, mixed layer height, sea surface temperature, chlorophyll concentration and detected fronts in sea surface temperature and chlorophyll daily datasets computed with Belkin and O'Reilly method) or on the quality of the echosounder measurements (buoy velocity). These variables were incorporated in the model as continuous variables.

A proxy of 1ºx1º and monthly FAD densities were calculated as the average number of buoys over each month by summing up the total number of active buoys of the Spanish and associated fleet recorded per day over the entire month and dividing by the total number of days.

The environmental variables evaluated in the model were:

- *Ocean mixed layer thickness:* defined as the depth where the density increase compared to density at 10 m depth corresponds to a temperature decrease of 0.2°C in local surface conditions (θ10m, S10m, P0= 0 db, surface pressure).
- *Chlorophyll:* Mass concentration of chlorophyll a in sea water (depth = 0).
- *Sea Surface Temperature* (SST)
- *SST and Chlorophyll fronts:* Oceanographic front detection was performed using the "grec" package for R for each daily dataset, that provides algorithms for detection of spatial patterns from oceanographic data using image processing methods based on Gradient Recognition (Belkin & O'Reilly, 2009).

2.6 The model

The model we propose is based in an assumption very similar to the fundamental relationship among CPUE and abundance widely used in quantitative fisheries analysis. In our case we built the index based on the assumption that the signal from the echosounder is proportional to the abundance of fish.

$$BAI_t = \varphi \, . B_t$$

where BAI_t is the Buoy-derived Abundance Index and B_t is the abundance in time t (Santiago *et al.*, 2016).

Although it would appear to be obvious, there is not plenty of literature on the relationship between acoustic indicators and fishing performance. It is assumed that acoustic echo integration is a linear process, i.e., proportional to the number of targets (Simmonds & MacLennan, 2005) and has been experimentally proven to be correct with some limitations (Foote, 1983; Røttingen, 1976). Therefore, acoustic data (echo integration) is commonly taken as an estimator of abundance and is thoroughly applied to provide acoustic estimation of abundance of many pelagic species (e.g., Hampton, 1996; ICES, 2015; Massé, Uriarte, Angélico, & Carrera, 2018).

As with the catchability, the coefficient of proportionality φ is not constant for many reasons. In order to ensure that φ can be assumed to be constant (i.e., to control the effects other than those caused by changes in the abundance of the population) a standardization analysis should be performed aiming to remove factors other than changes in abundance of the population. This can be performed standardizing nominal measurements of the echosounders using a Generalized Linear Mixed Modelling (GLMM) approach.

Considering the low proportion of zero values (2.48%) the delta lognormal approach (Lo *et al.*, 1992) was not considered. GLMM (log-normal error structured model) was applied to standardize the acoustic observations. A stepwise procedure was used to fit the model with all the explanatory variables and interactions in order to determine those that significantly contributed to explaining the variability of the data. For this, deviance analysis tables were created for the positive acoustic records. Final selection of explanatory variables was conducted using: a) the relative percent increase in deviance explained when the variable was included in the model (normally variables that explained more than 5% were selected), and b) The Chi-square ($\chi 2$) significance test. Those variables that explained less than 5% of the variability in the data were not considered for the final model.

Interactions between the temporal component (year-quarter) with the rest of the variables were also evaluated. If an interaction was statically significant, it was then considered as a random interaction(s) within the final model (Maunder & Punt, 2004).

Lastly, the selection of the final mixed model was based on the Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC), the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), and a Chi-square ($\chi 2$) test of the difference between the log-likelihood statistic of different model formulations. The year-quarter effect least square means (LSmeans) were bias corrected for the logarithm transformation algorithms using Lo et al (1992). All analyses were done using the lme4 package for R (Bates *et al.*, 2015).

3. Results

A total of 15 million of records from more than 40,000 buoys for the period from January 2010 to December 2020 were integrated into 34,899 observations for the GLM analysis. Each observation was calculated as the 90% percentile of a “virgin” segment of buoy trajectories. A virgin segment was defined as the segment of a buoy trajectory from 20-35 days at sea, so that the associated FAD likely represents a new deployment which has been potentially colonized by tuna and not already fished.

In this analysis we have obtained from the acoustic signal of the echosounder buoys associated to FADs the biomass of skipjack tuna aggregated under a FAD.

Figure 2 shows the histograms of the BAI and log transformed BAI nominal values. Log transformation makes the data to follow a normal distribution, as shown in the left panel of **Figure 2. Figure 3** shows the spatial distribution [5ºx5º] of the number of “virgin” sequences of buoy trajectories that have been used in the GLM analysis. The quarterly evolution of the number of observations on a 5ºx5º grid is shown in

Figure *4*. The number of observations available has grown considerably over the years, especially since 2013.

Independent variables tested in the GLM were year-quarter (yyqq), 5ºx5º area (area), buoy model (model), buoy velocity (vel), FAD density (den), chlorophyll concentration (chl), detected fronts in chlorophyll (chlfront), sea surface temperature (sst), detected fronts in sst (sstfront) and mixed layer height (mid). The dependent variable (BAI) was the 0.9 quantile of the integrated acoustic energy observations in the "virgin" sequence.

Figure 5, Figure 6 and **Figure 7** show boxplots of log transformed BAI nominal values for each of the independent variables, expressed as categorical.

Figure 8 shows the quarterly evolution of the log BAI nominal index by squares of 5x5 degrees from 2010 to 2020.

The results of the deviance analysis are shown in Error! Reference source not found.**.** The model explained 35% of the total deviance being the most significant explanatory factors: year-quarter, 5ºx5º area and the interaction year-quarter*area that was considered as random interaction. No significant residual patterns were observed (**Figure 9)**.

Quarterly series of standardized BAI index are provided in
and **Figure 10**. Most of the nominal values are embedded within the confidence interval of the standardized BAI index. The BAI index shows a decreasing trend at the beginning of the series, from 2010 to 2012; then a stabilization period at a low level from 2013 to 2016, followed by an increasing trend in 2017 and 2018 to levels of the beginning of the series. The CVs remain relatively stable (between 9-16%) during the whole time series.

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Table 1. Deviance table for the GLM lognormal model of the 2010-2020 period. Significant (p<0.05) factors and interactions explaining >5% of total deviance are highlighted.

Variable	Df	Deviance	Resid..Df	Resid..Dev	F	Pr..F.	Dev..Exp
NULL	NA	NA	31283	35373	NA	NA	NA
yyqq	43	4254	31240	31119	129	0	12.03%
area	31	2906	31209	28213	122	0	8.21%
model	2	776	31207	27438	506	0	2.19%
den	1	0	31206	27437	0	0.5651	0%
chl	1	12	31205	27426	15	0.0001	0.03%
chlfront	1	4	31204	27422	5	0.0296	0.01%
sst	1	300	31203	27122	392	0	0.85%
mld	1	44	31202	27078	57	0	0.12%
yyqq:area	1206	3952	29996	23126	4	0	11.17%
yyqq:model	35	156	29961	22970	6	0	0.44%

Table 2. Nominal and standardized Buoy-derived Abundance Index for the period 2010-2020. Standard errors and coefficient of variations of the standardized series are also included.

Quarter	Index nominal	BAI Index	BAI se	BAI cv	**Quarter**	Index nominal	BAI Index	BAI se	BAI cv
10Q1	1.267	1.624	0.249	0.153	**15Q3**	0.823	0.810	0.081	0.100
10Q2	1.282	1.377	0.208	0.151	**15Q4**	0.941	0.944	0.083	0.088
10Q3	1.005	1.033	0.161	0.156	**16Q1**	0.591	0.761	0.084	0.110
10Q4	1.823	1.952	0.304	0.156	**16Q2**	0.737	0.863	0.118	0.137
11Q1	1.167	1.357	0.218	0.161	**16Q3**	0.833	0.846	0.097	0.114
11Q2	1.354	1.446	0.223	0.154	**16Q4**	0.888	0.903	0.090	0.100
11Q3	0.674	0.663	0.103	0.155	**17Q1**	0.606	0.768	0.088	0.114
11Q4	0.910	0.825	0.125	0.151	**17Q2**	1.062	0.996	0.123	0.123
12Q1	0.583	0.631	0.098	0.156	**17Q3**	1.282	1.097	0.135	0.123
12Q2	0.969	1.082	0.167	0.155	**17Q4**	1.323	1.493	0.151	0.101
12Q3	0.526	0.561	0.087	0.155	**18Q1**	1.220	1.434	0.161	0.112
12Q4	0.536	0.517	0.078	0.151	**18Q2**	1.798	1.979	0.244	0.123
13Q1	0.514	0.669	0.100	0.149	**18Q3**	1.638	1.485	0.175	0.118
13Q2	0.604	0.737	0.103	0.140	**18Q4**	1.737	1.585	0.174	0.109
13Q3	0.617	0.570	0.072	0.126	**19Q1**	1.496	1.749	0.232	0.133
13Q4	0.834	0.954	0.115	0.121	**19Q2**	1.491	1.524	0.202	0.132
14Q1	0.624	0.828	0.108	0.130	**19Q3**	1.406	1.418	0.196	0.138
14Q2	0.693	0.745	0.093	0.125	**19Q4**	1.461	1.577	0.200	0.127
14Q3	0.746	0.790	0.091	0.115	**20Q1**	1.219	1.341	0.196	0.146
14Q4	0.778	0.860	0.089	0.104	**20Q2**	1.454	1.838	0.235	0.128
15Q1	0.595	0.758	0.089	0.118	**20Q3**	1.169	1.122	0.148	0.132
15Q2	0.758	0.762	0.091	0.119	**20Q4**	0.823	0.810	0.081	0.100

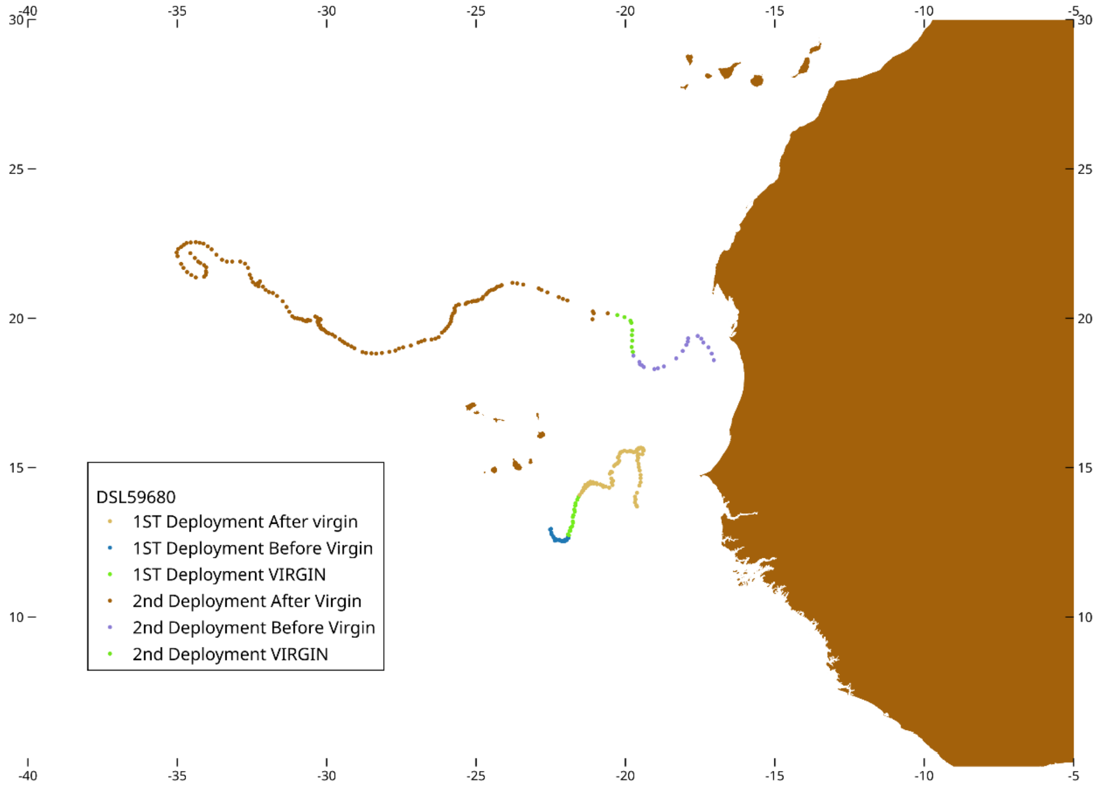


Figure 1. Example of "virgin" segments used for the calculation of the BAI index. Trajectories correspond to buoy DSL59680 with two different paths representing drifts of different FADs. A virgin segment is defined as the segment of a buoy trajectory whose associated FAD likely represents a new deployment, which has been potentially colonized by tuna and not already fished. We consider as virgin segments (i.e. when tuna has aggregated to FAD) those segments of trajectories from 20-35 days at sea. "Virgin" segments are shown in green in the Figure.

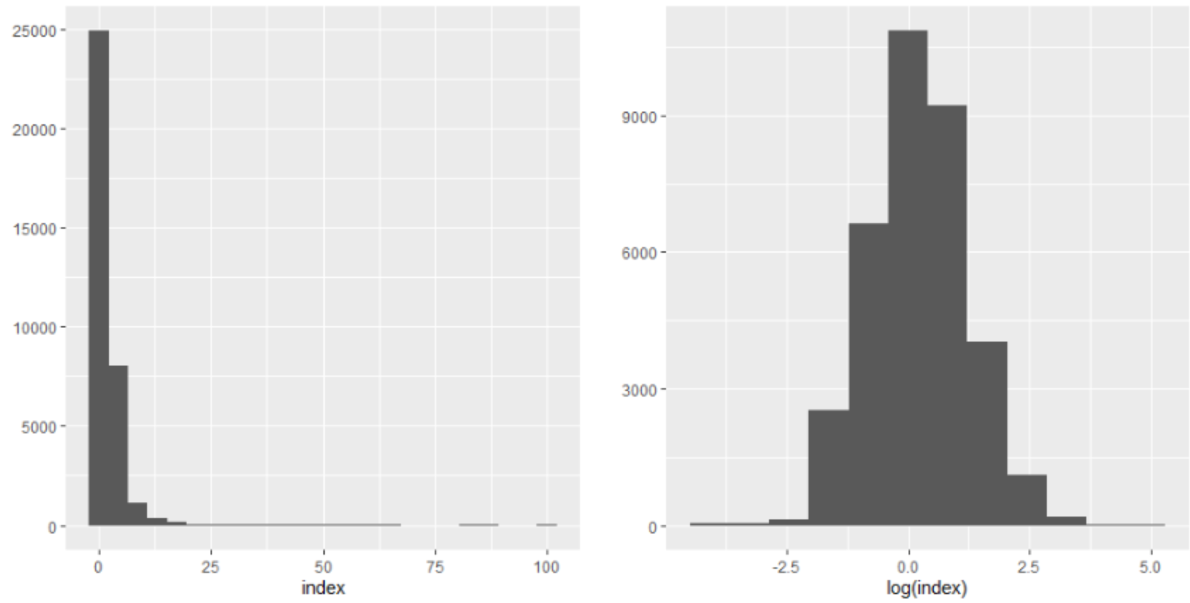


Figure 2. Histograms of the nominal values (left) and the log transformed nominal values (right) of the Buoy-derived Abundance Index (0.9 quantile of the integrated acoustic energy observations in "virgin" sequences).

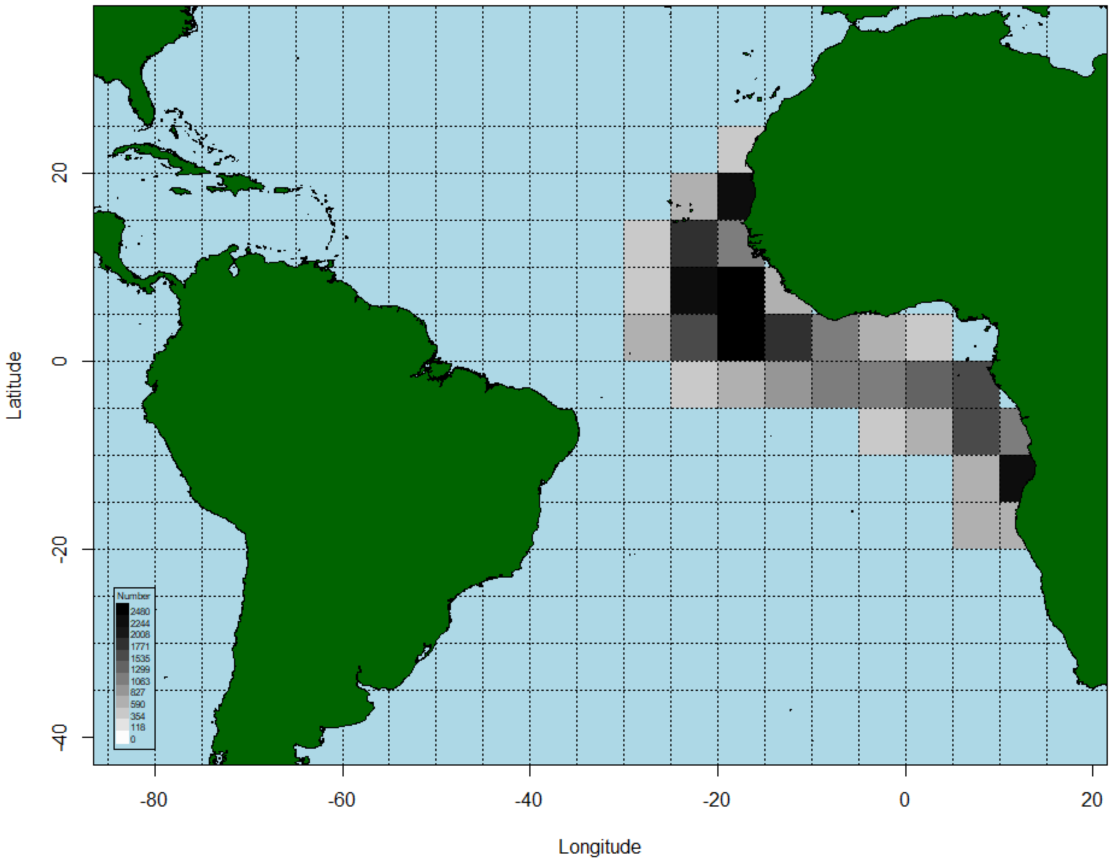


Figure 3. Spatial distribution [5ºx5º] of the “virgin” sequences of buoy trajectories that have been used in the GLM analysis.

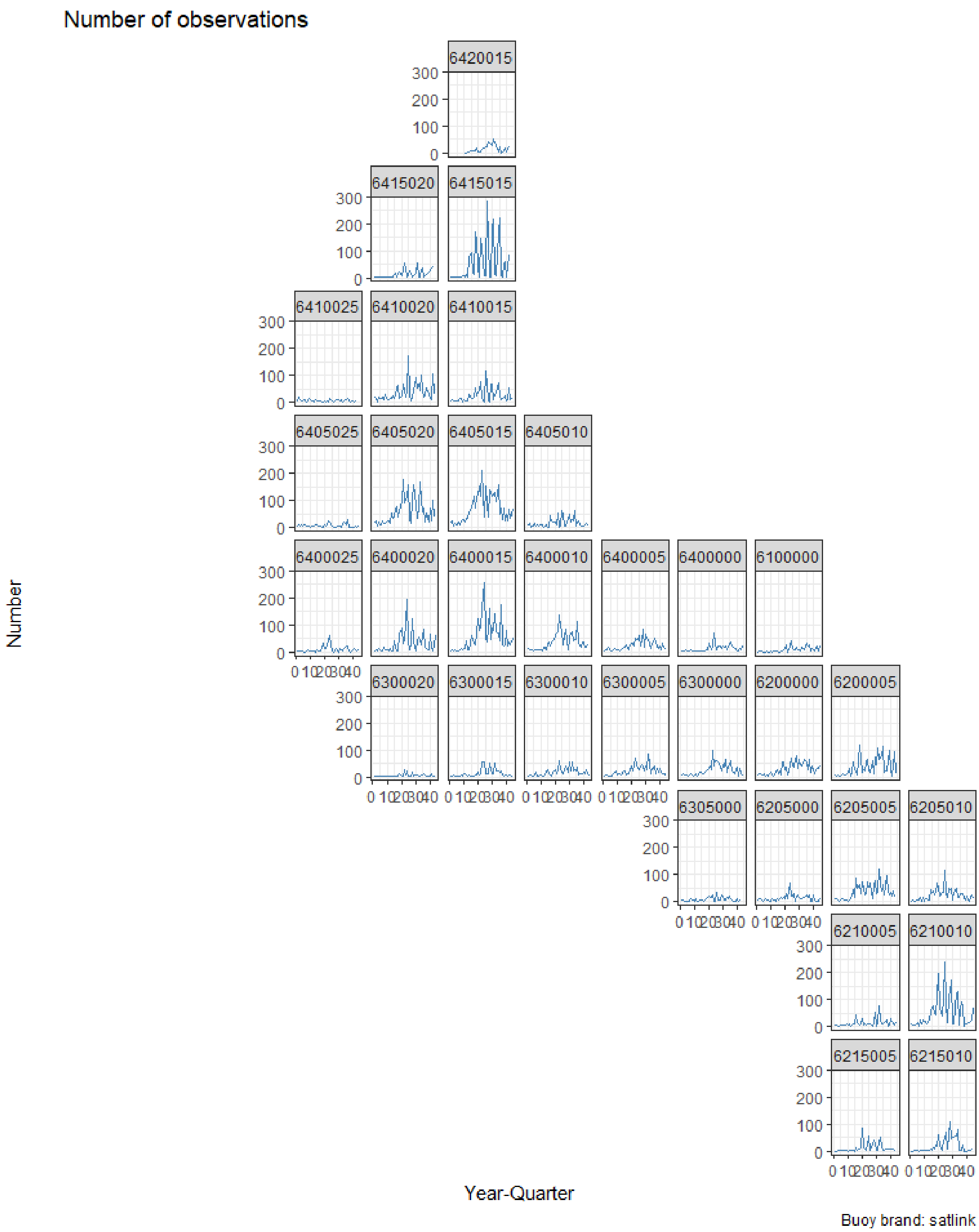
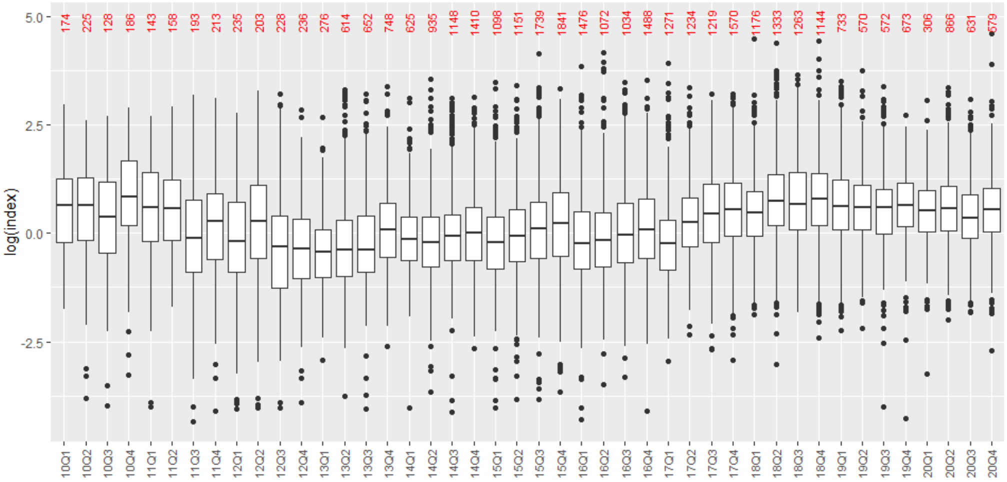
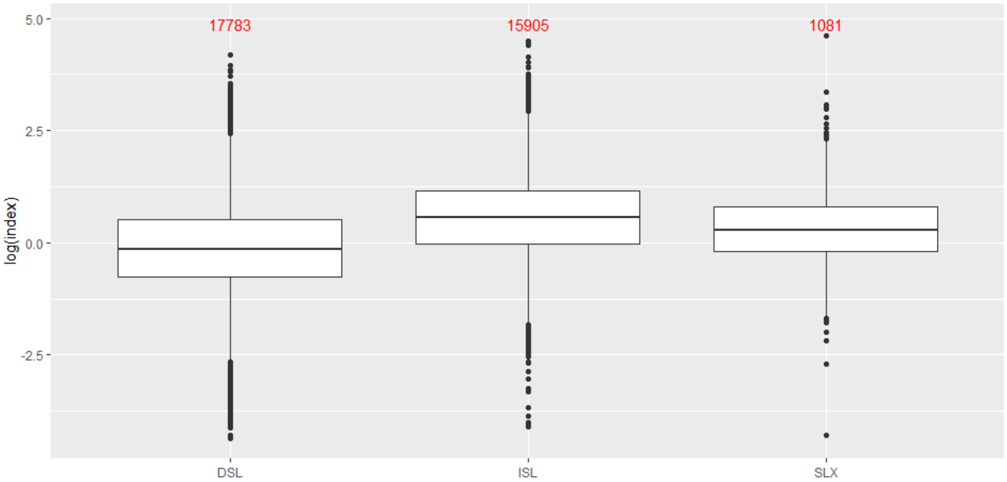


Figure 4. Quarterly evolution of the number of observations ("virgin" sequences of buoy trajectories) on a 5ºx5º grid.

A) Year-quarter



B) Buoy model



C) Buoy speed

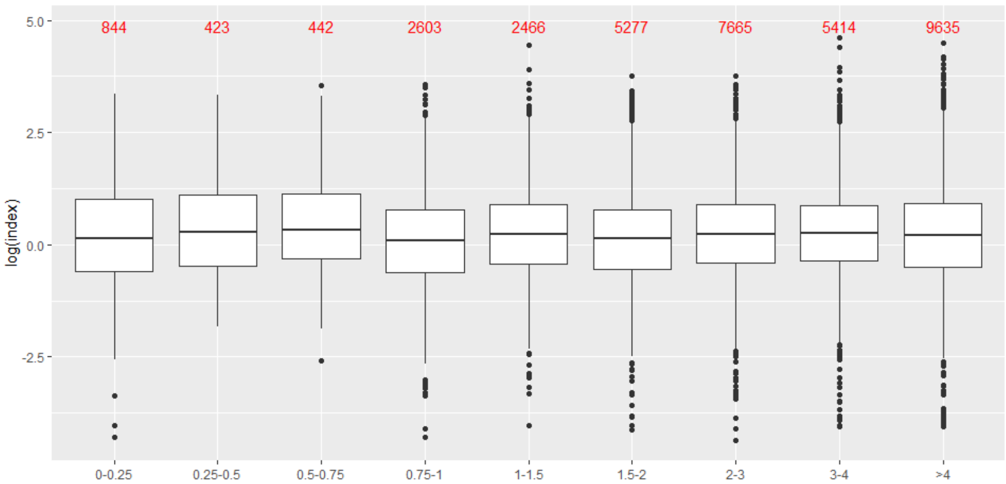
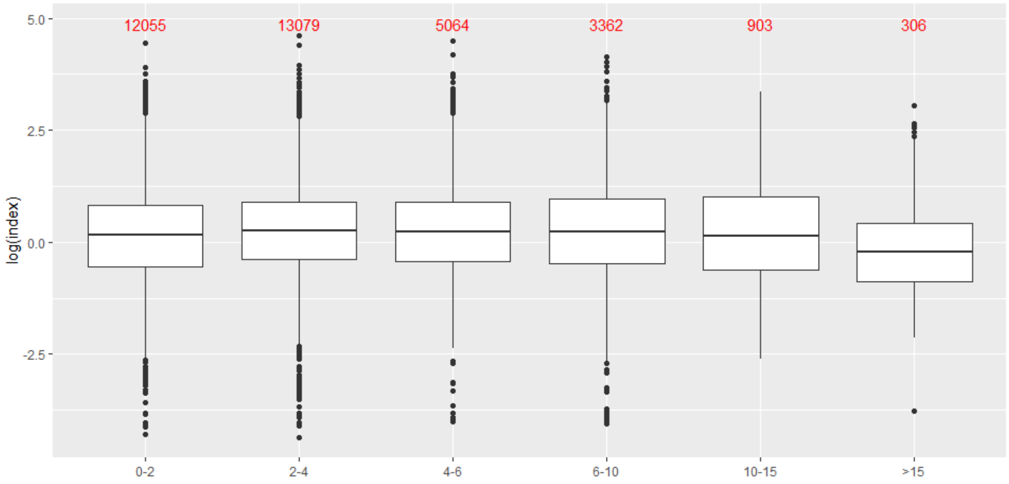
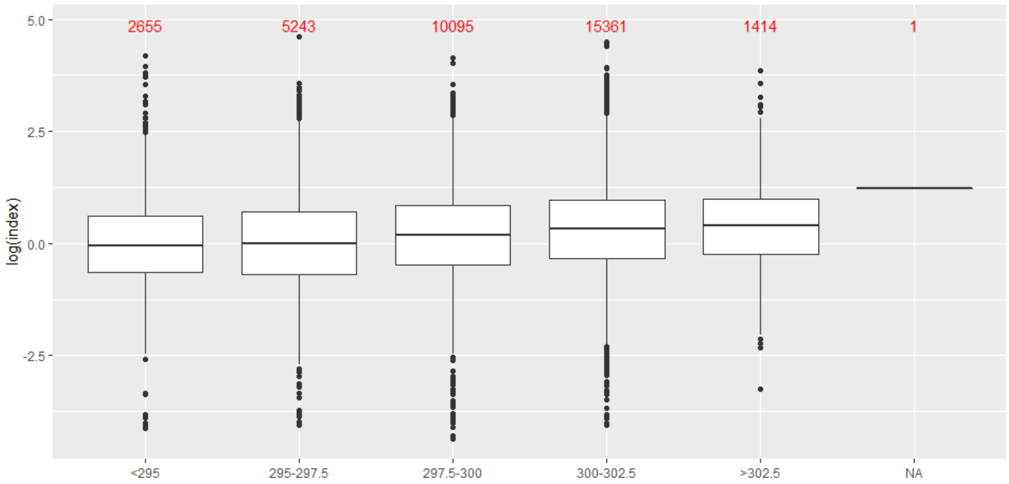


Figure 5. Boxplot of log (BAI) for year-quarter, buoy model and buoy speed (expressed as categorical). Number of observations for each categorical value is shown in red.

A) Buoy densities



B) Sea surface temperature



C) Chlorophyll concentration

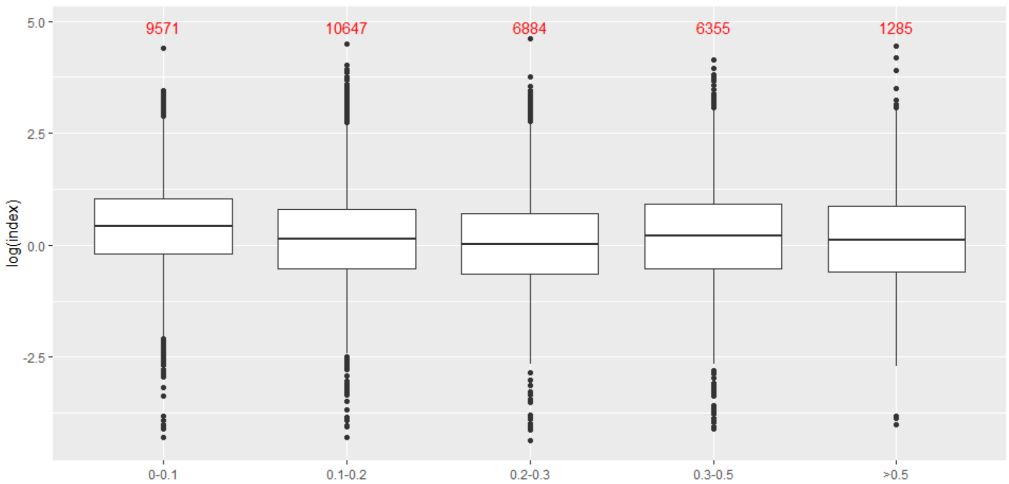
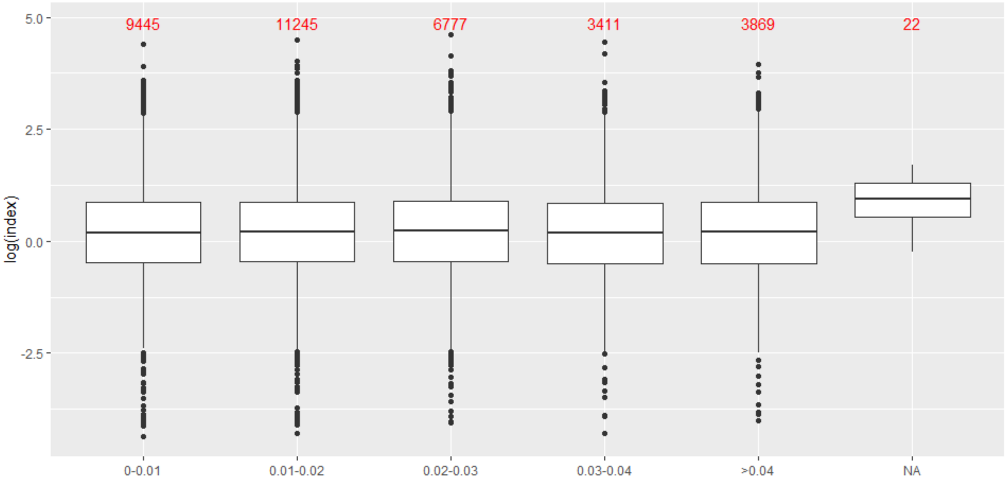
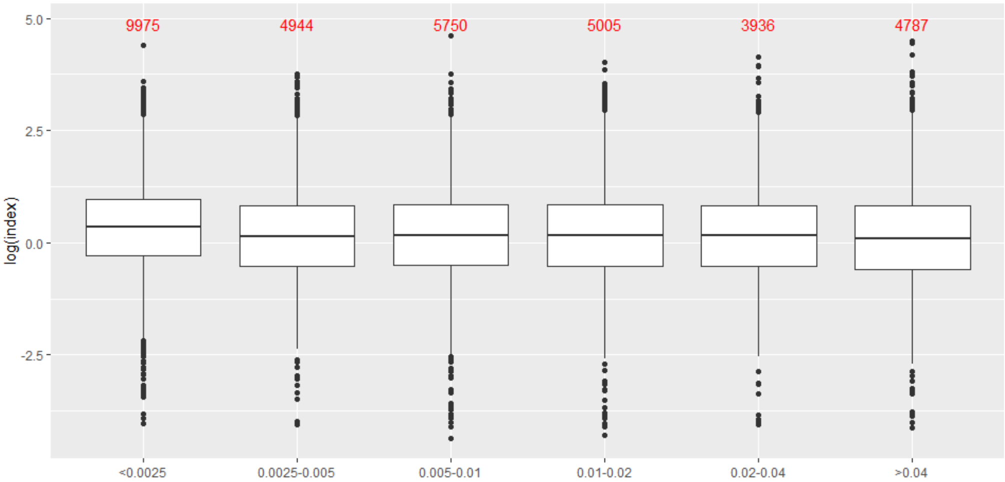


Figure 6. Boxplot of log (BAI) for buoy densities, sea surface temperature and chlorophyll concentration (expressed as categorical). Number of observations for each categorical value is shown in red.

A) Fronts of sea surface temperature



B) Fronts of chlorophyll concentration



C) Mixed layer height

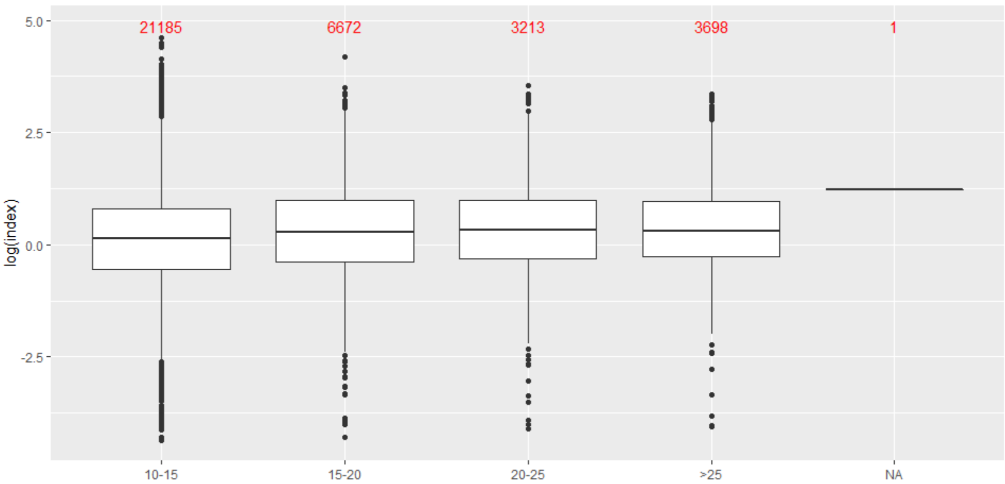


Figure 7. Boxplot of log (BAI) for fronts of sea surface temperature, fronts of chlorophyll concentration and mixed layer height (expressed as categorical). Number of observations for each categorical value is shown in red.

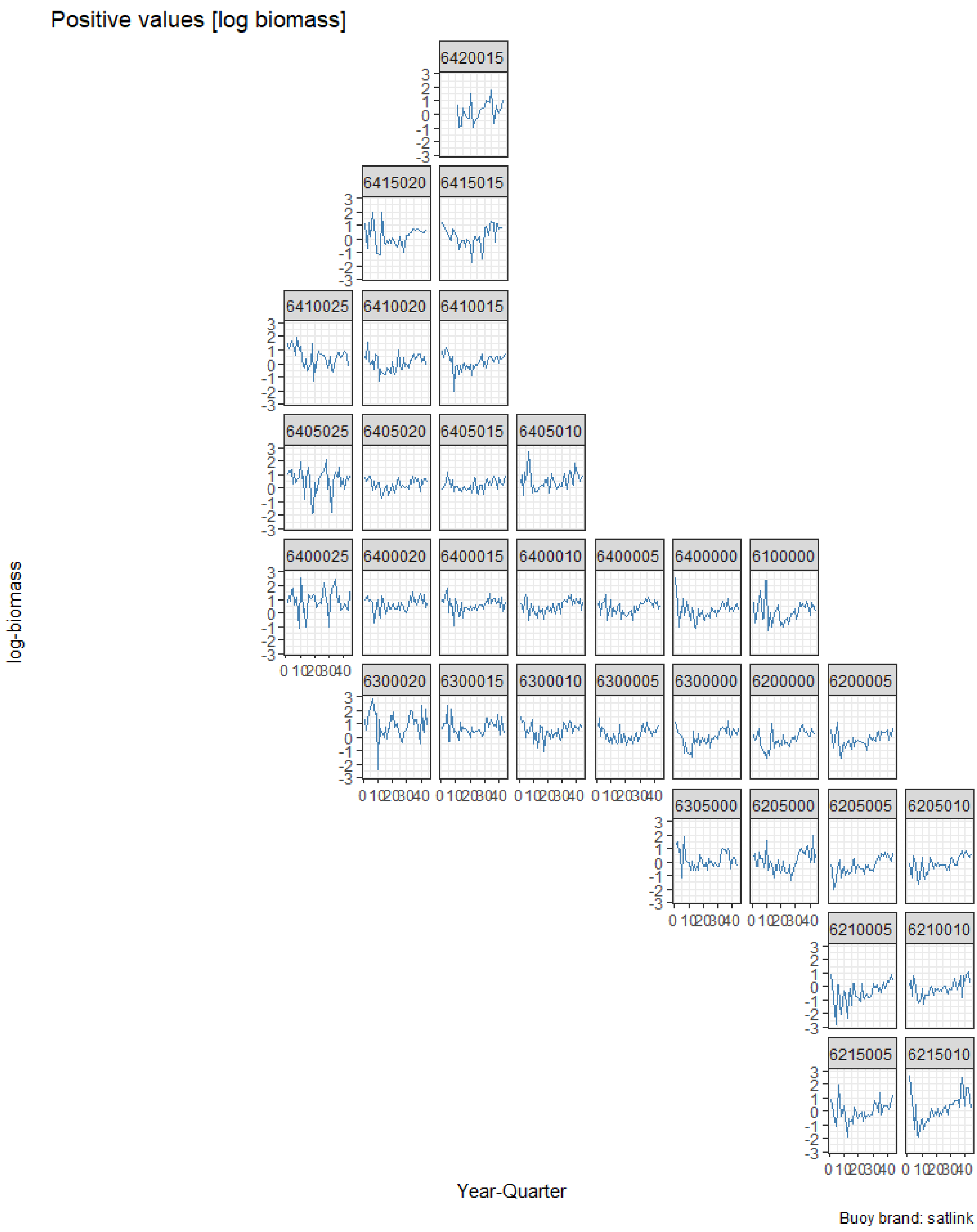


Figure 8. Quarterly evolution of the log BAI index in the Atlantic Ocean by squares of 5x5 degrees from 2010 to 2020.

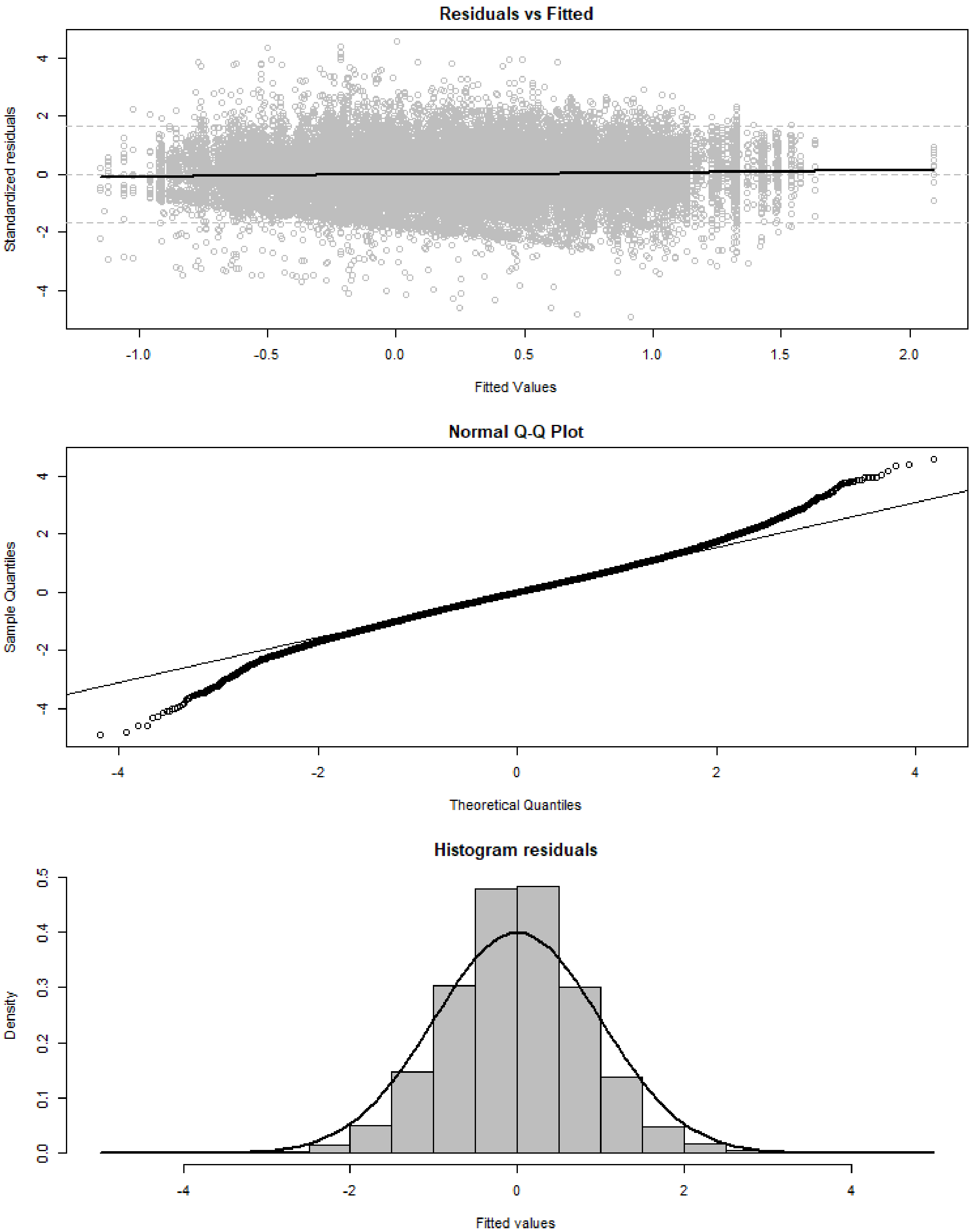


Figure 9. Diagnostics of the lognormal model selected for the period 2010-2020: residuals vs fitted, Normal Q-Q plot and frequency distributions of the residuals.

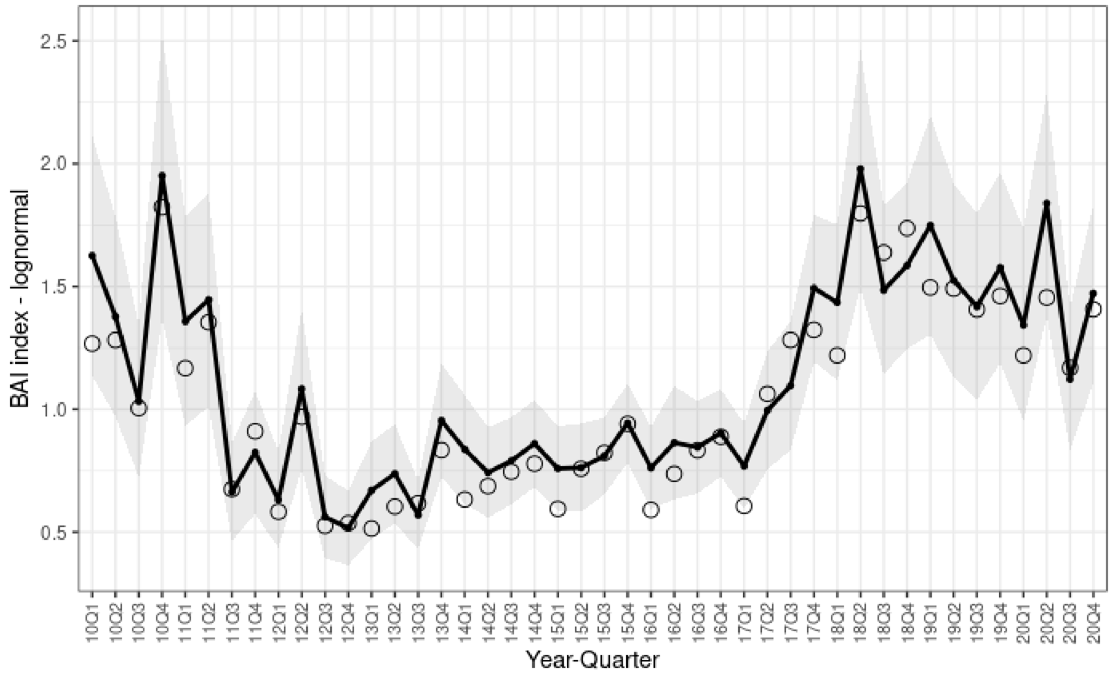


Figure 10. Time series of nominal (circles) and standardized (continuous line) Buoy-derived Abundance Index for the period 2010-2020. The 95% upper and lower confidence intervals of the standardized BAI index are shown.