

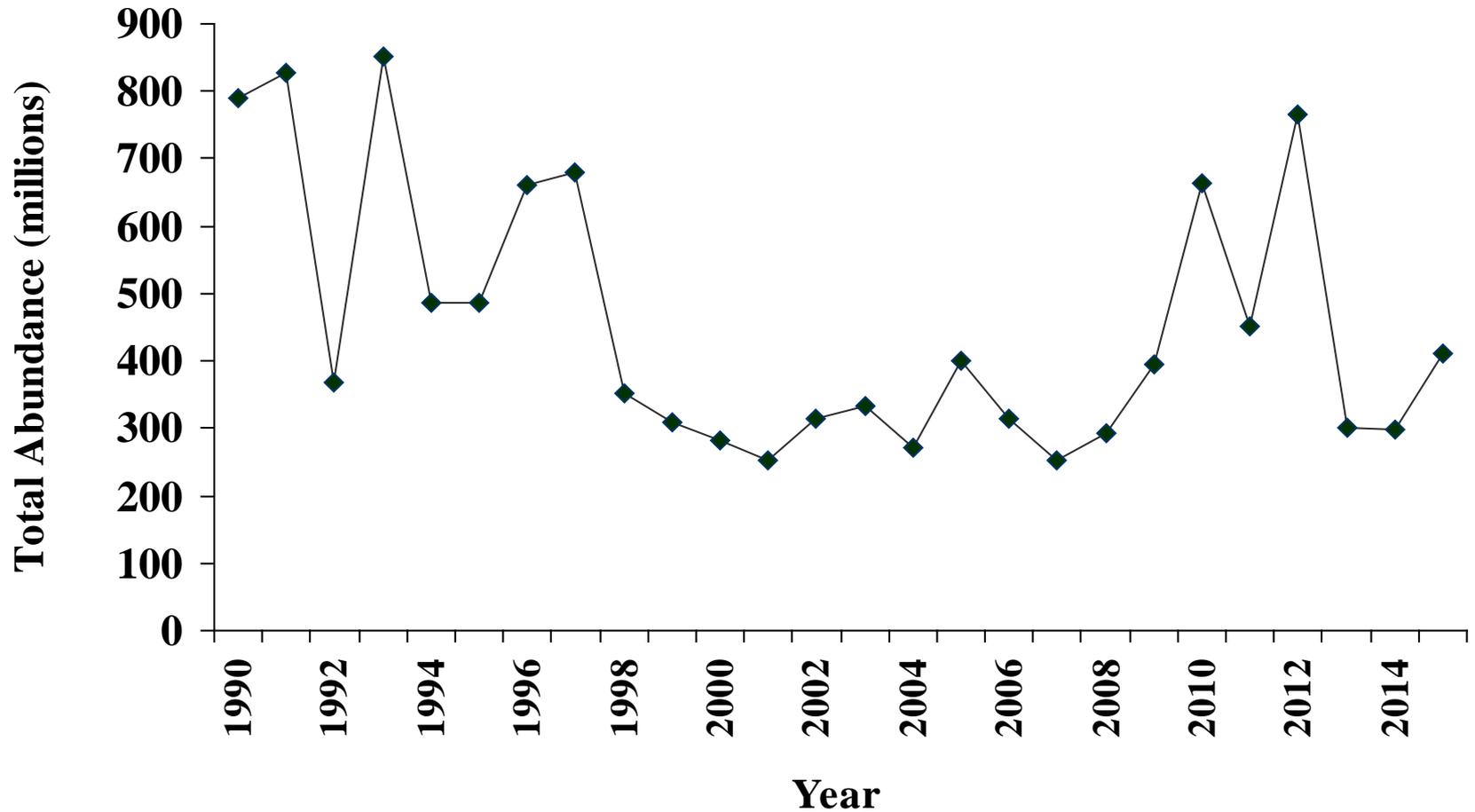
2015 Baywide Winter Crab Dredge Survey Results

2015 Winter Dredge Survey

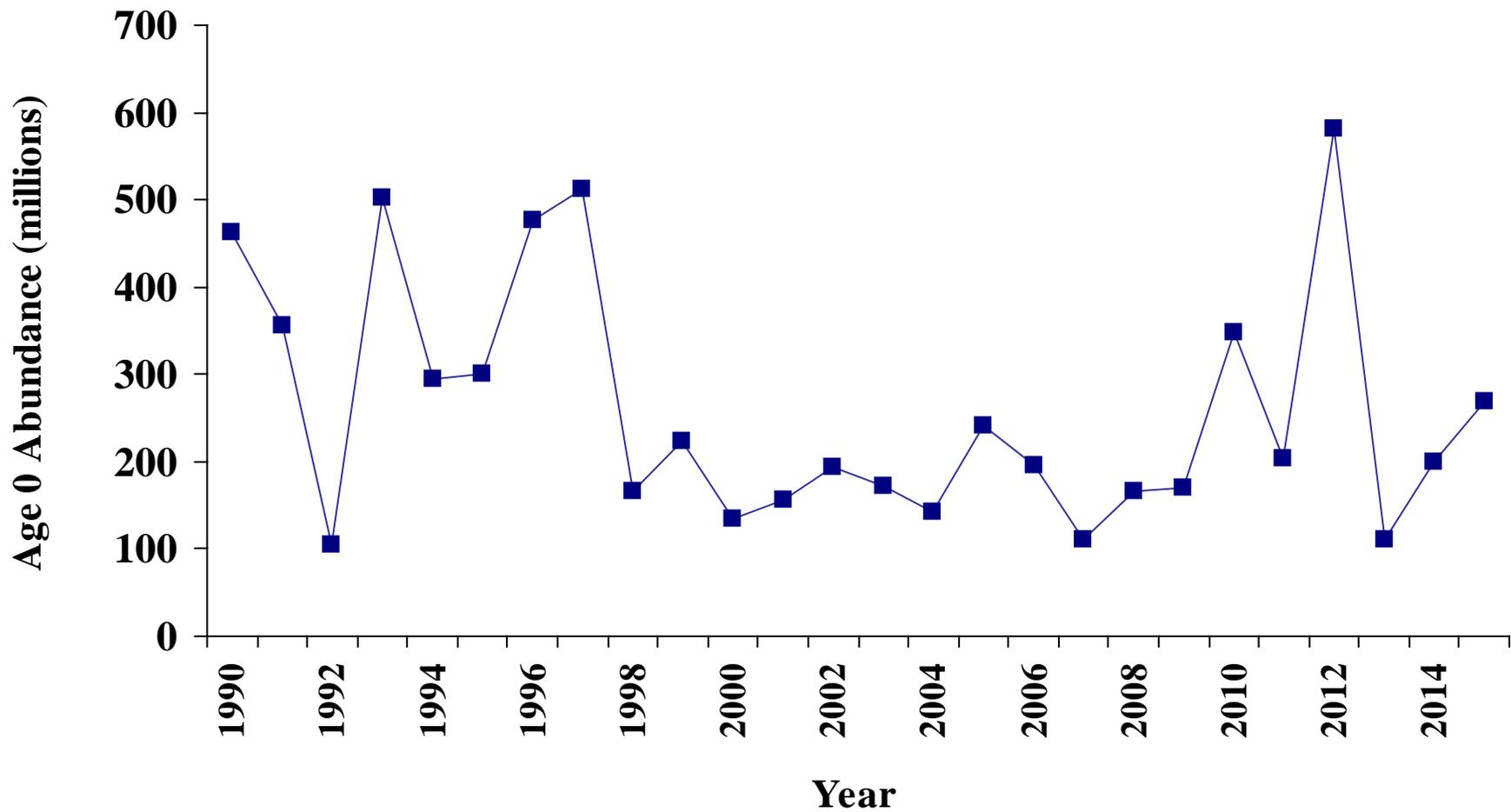
Results Summary

- Overall population estimated to be 410 million, a 38% increase from 2014. The 26 year survey average is 454 million.
- Juvenile abundance is 269 million, a 35% increase from 2014. Survey average is 261 million.
- Adult male crab abundance is 43.7 million, a 49% increase from 2014.
- The abundance of all female crabs (Age 0+) is 232 million animals, a 32% increase over 2014, but below peaks observed 2010-2012.
- The abundance of spawning-age females is 101 million, a 47% increase from 2014. Spawning-age females are no longer depleted but are below the target level of 215 million.
- Winter mortality was substantial in 2015: 19% of adult crabs perished (baywide).
- 2014 Baywide harvest was 35 million pounds, slightly lower than the 2013 harvest of 37 million pounds.
- The 2014 fishery removal (exploitation rate) was at a safe level of 17%, below the target of 25.5% and well below the maximum safe level (threshold) of 34%.

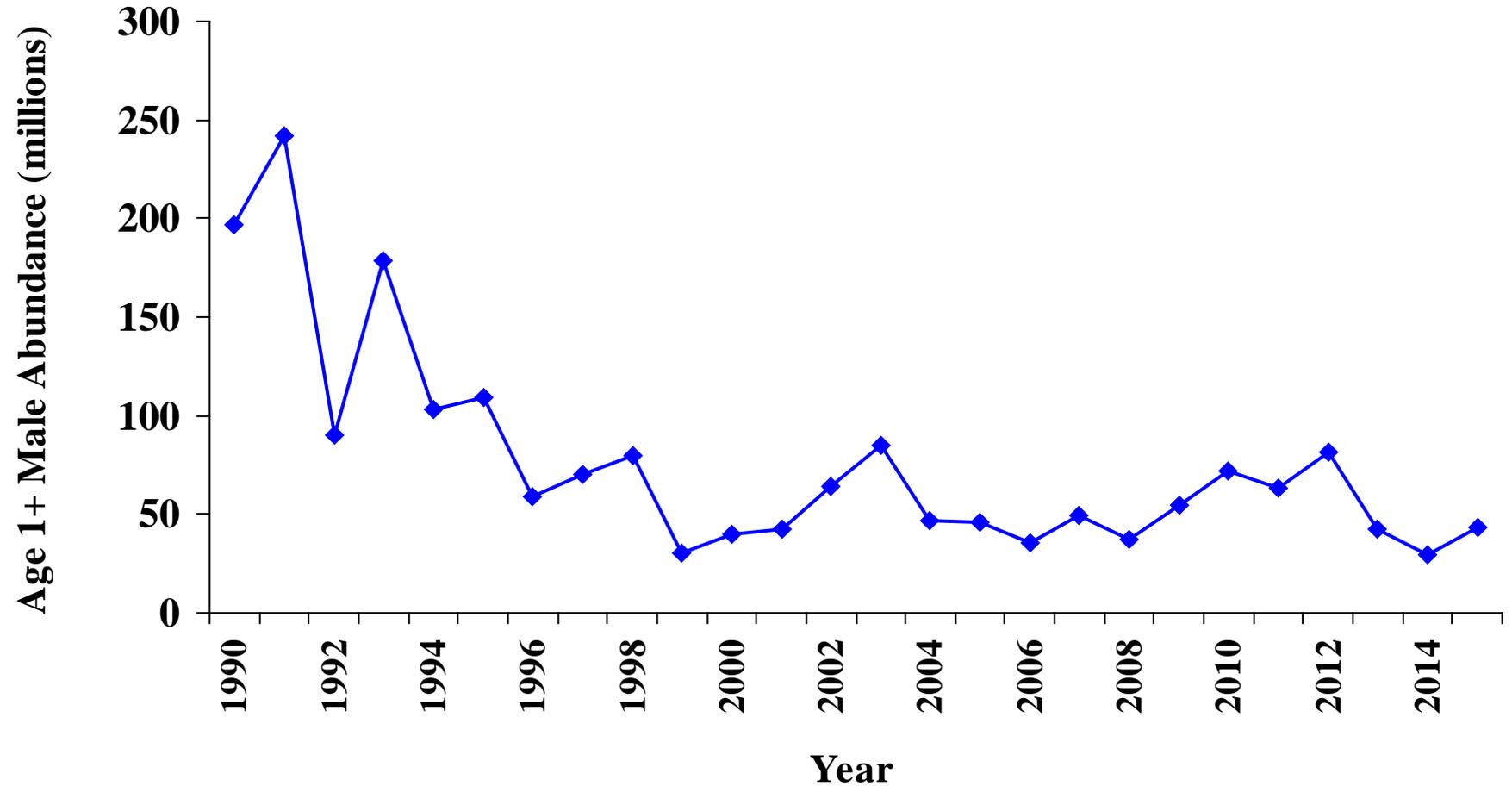
The estimated total number of crabs in Chesapeake Bay in 2015 is just over 410 million animals, a 38% increase from last year. This is the number of juvenile and adult male and female crabs present at the start of the 2015 crabbing season. The estimate accounts for 19% over winter mortality on adult crabs Bay wide.



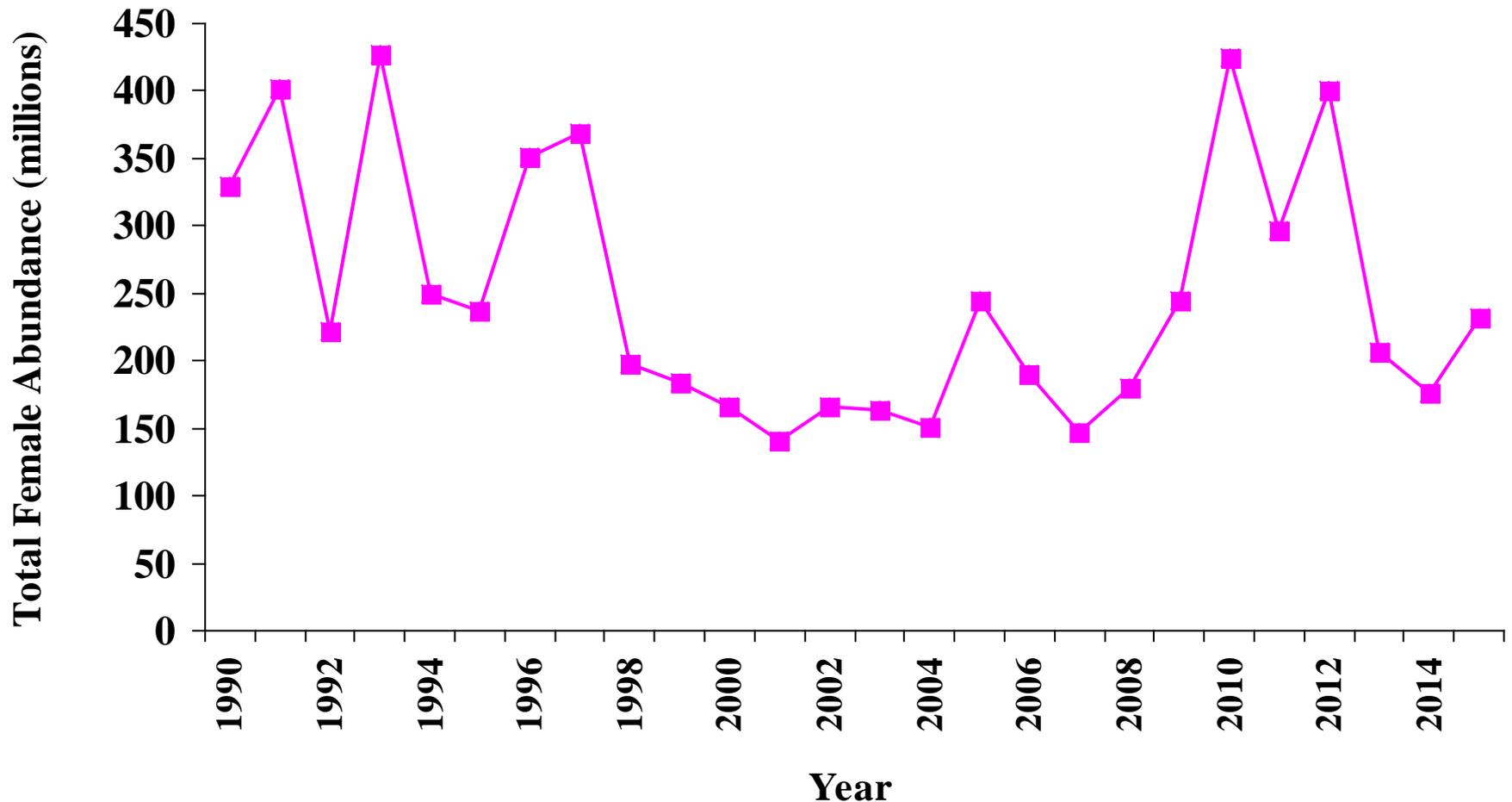
The estimated Abundance of juvenile (age 0) crabs in Chesapeake Bay in 2015 is 269 million animals, a 35% increase over last year and the second consecutive year of increasing juvenile abundance.



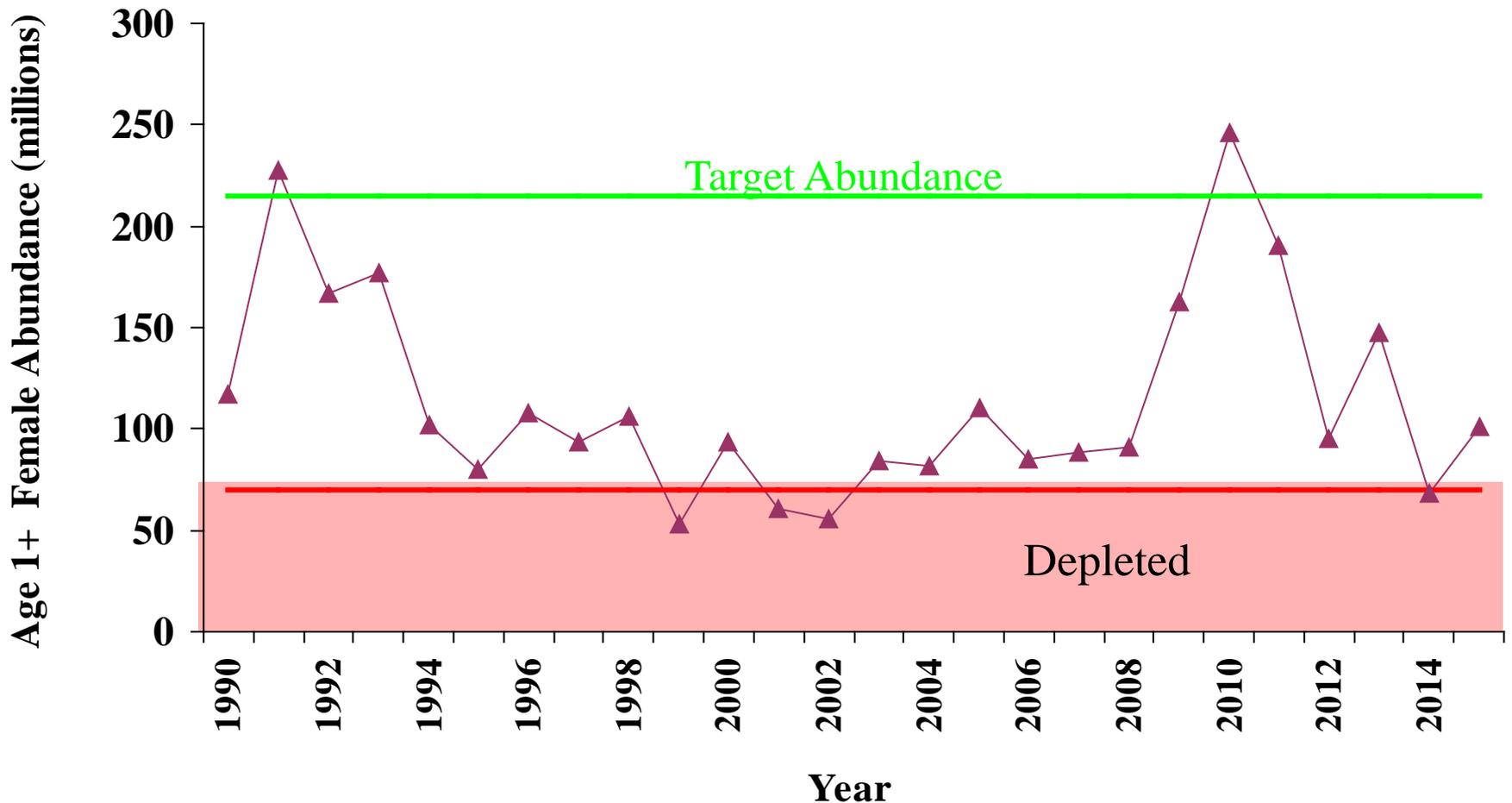
The estimated abundance of adult (age 1+) male crabs in Chesapeake Bay in 2014 is 43.7 million animals, a 49% increase from last year.



The estimated abundance of all female (Age 0+) crabs in Chesapeake Bay in 2015 is 232 million animals – a 32% increase over last year, but still lower than the peaks observed 2010-2012. These crabs represent the entire female population that will be subject to the 2015 fishery. The Bay wide sustainable fishing target is to remove 25.5% of these animals in 2015.



The estimated abundance of spawning-age female crabs in Chesapeake Bay in 2015 is 101 million animals, a 47% increase over the 2014 estimate which was just below the minimum safe threshold of 70 million crabs (red line). When there are less than 70 million spawning-age female crabs, the population is considered to be depleted. The target number of spawning-age females (green line) is 215 million. The 2015 estimate accounts for a Bay Wide over winter mortality of 19%.



Estimate of Bay wide fishery removals of female crabs relative to established reference points 1990 – 2014. Baywide harvest in 2014 was 35.3 million pounds with a removal level of 17%. 2013 harvest was 37 million pounds.

