

Korean SBT otolith collection activities in 2024

Republic of Korea

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ABSTRACT

To investigate the age and growth of southern bluefin tuna (SBT) we collected 82 otolith samples in 2024, totally 1,275 otoliths since 2015. The relationship between fork length and total weight was $TW=7.9E-05 \times FL^{2.718}$ ($R^2=0.913$). The von Bertalanffy growth's parameters estimated from the non-linear method using length-at-age data were $L_{\infty}=176.9$ cm, $K = 0.186/\text{year}$, $t_0 = -1.209$ years.

1. Sampling activities of otolith and ovary and its process

Since 2015 a total of 1,275 otoliths of SBT have been collected by Korean scientific observer program (Fig. 1). The fork length and weight were measured onboard for each specimen by sex, and the age was determined from annuli in otolith, based on the CCSBT manual (CCSBT, 2002). We analyzed the relationship between fork length (FL) and total weight (W), and estimated the von Bertalanffy growth parameters (1938). We first calculated the growth parameters using Walford method (Walford 1946) and the mean fork length by age. With the calculated parameters as initial (or starting) values, they were re-estimated by the non-linear method using length-at-age data which consists of length and age estimated to each fish at the time the fish was captured, and their confidence intervals were constructed through bootstrapping with 1,000 iterations using R package *FSA* (Ogle et al. 2018) in the R stats package (R Core Team 2018).

2. Analysis of age and growth using otolith

The SBT otolith samples were collected from April to September during 2015-2024. The length distributions collected for analyzing age of SBT are shown in Table 1. The length ranged from 66 cm to 181 cm with a mean of 131.9 cm in fork length (FL).

The relationship between fork length and total weight is shown in Fig. 2, which was $W = 7.9E-05 \times FL^{2.718}$ ($R^2 = 0.913$).

Fig. 3 shows the von Bertalanffy growth model for SBT with the 95% confidence intervals for the mean length-at-age and the 95% prediction intervals from bootstrapping. With initial values ($L_{\infty}=168.8$ cm, $K=0.175/\text{year}$, $t_0=-1.547$ years) estimated by Walford method (1946) using the back-calculated mean fork length, the von Bertalanffy's growth parameters estimated from the non-linear method using length-at-age data were $L_{\infty}=176.9$ cm, $K=0.186/\text{year}$, $t_0=-1.209$ years.

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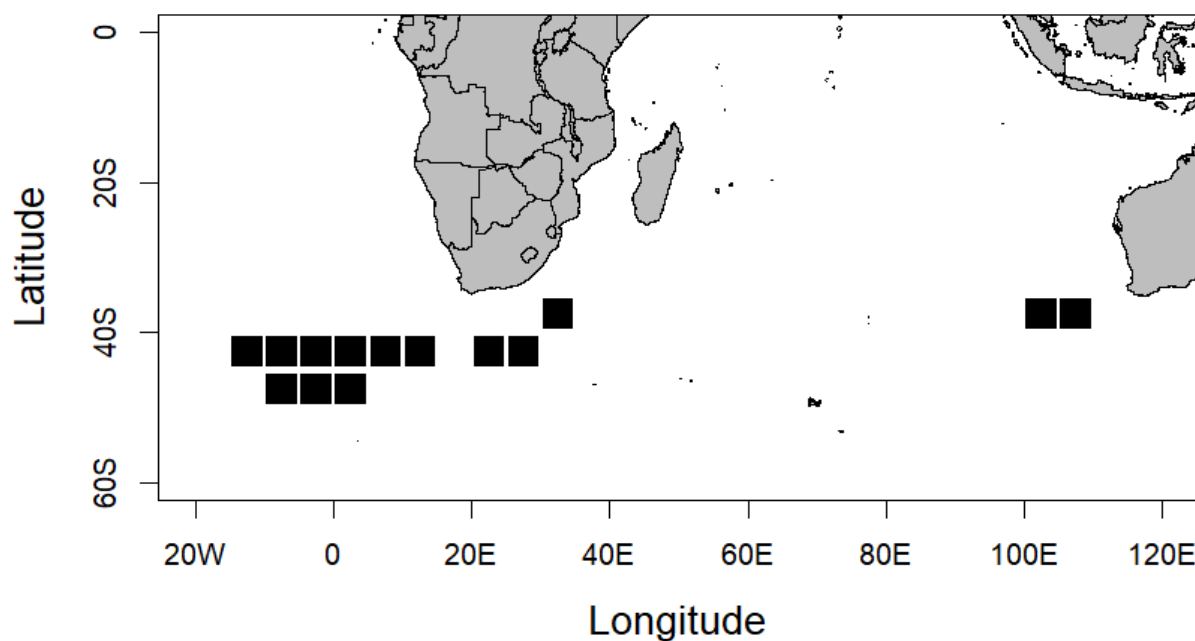


Fig. 1. Map showing the sampling area of SBT otoliths collected by Korean scientific observer program during 2015-2023.

Table 1. Length distributions of SBT collected by Korean observer programs, 2015-2024

Month	Area 8			Area 9			Total		
	No. samples	Range of FL (cm)	Mean FL (cm)	No. samples	Range of FL (cm)	Mean FL (cm)	No. samples	Range of FL (cm)	Mean FL (cm)
Apr				333	90-173	134.1	333	90-173	134.1
May				309	87-174	133.8	309	87-174	133.8
Jun				331	82-177	122.8	331	82-177	122.8
Jul				179	83-181	118.5	179	83-181	118.5
Aug	68	66-178	127.6	23	90-127	105.5	91	66-178	121.9
Sep	32	86-168	135.2				32	86-168	135.2
Total	100	66-178	130.0	1,175	82-181	132.0	1,275	66-181	131.9

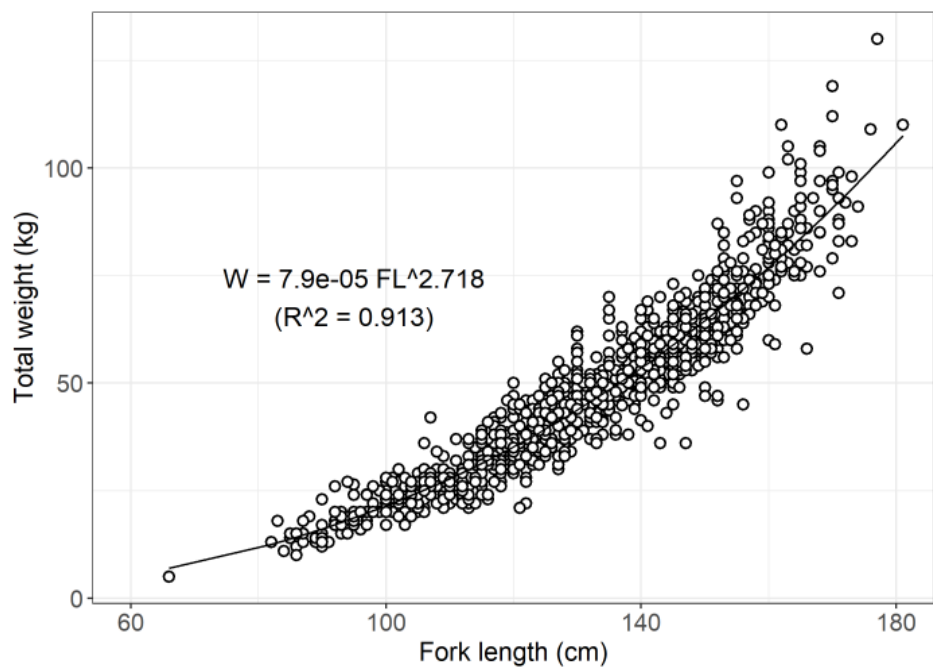


Fig. 2. Relationship between fork length and total weight of SBT collected during 2015-2024.

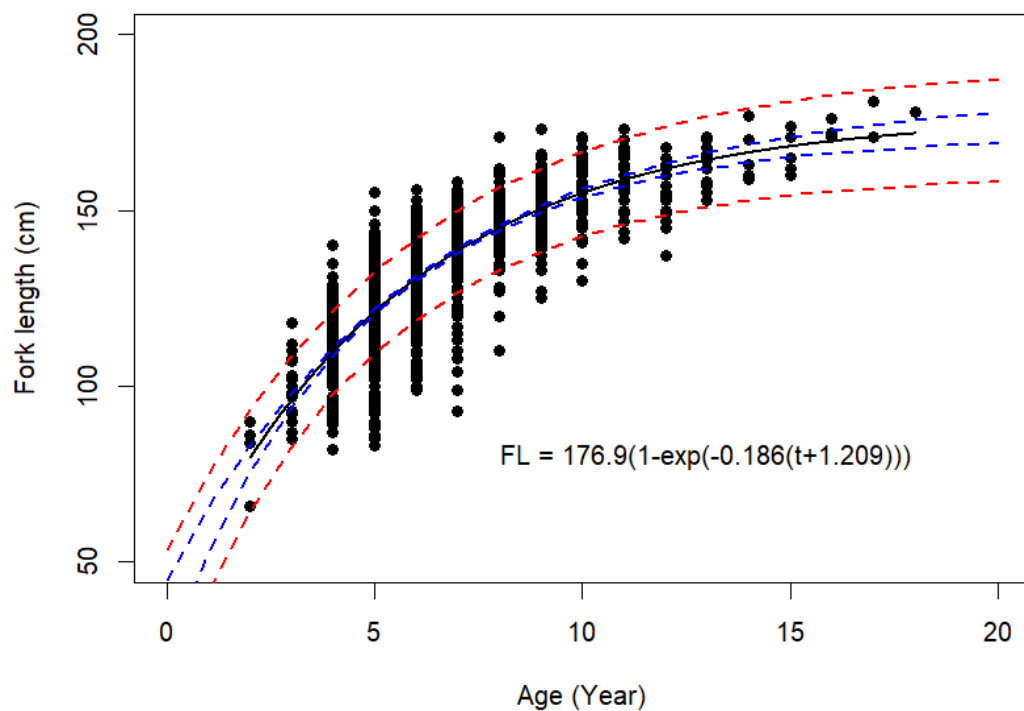


Fig. 3. The von Bertalanffy growth curve of SBT (Red: 95% CI, Blue: prediction interval).