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# South Florida Coastal Water Quality Monitoring Network Quarterly Report (C-15397)

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
*Miami's public research university*

**Southeast Environmental Research Center**

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10 December 2004

Carole Milliman Maddox  
SFWMD  
8894 Belvedere Road  
West Palm Beach, FL 33411

Re: South Florida Coastal Water Quality Monitoring Network - Quarterly Report (C-15397)

Dear Ms. Maddox:

This letter serves to transmit the South Florida Coastal Water Quality Monitoring Network Quarterly Report as per our SFWMD/SERC Cooperative Agreement #C-15397. This report consists of this letter along with corresponding tables and figures.

**Project Background**

This report includes water quality data collected monthly during the annual period of record (POR) July – Sept. 2004 from 28 stations in Florida Bay, 22 stations in Whitewater Bay, 25 stations in Ten Thousand Islands, 25 stations in Biscayne Bay, and 28 stations in Cape Romano-Rookery Bay-Pine Island Sound. A total of 49 stations were also collected on the SW Florida Shelf on a quarterly basis. Figure 1 shows the location of the fixed sampling stations.

Water quality parameters monitored at each station include the dissolved nutrients nitrate + nitrite ( $\text{NO}_x$ ), nitrite ( $\text{NO}_2$ ), nitrate ( $\text{NO}_3$ ), ammonium ( $\text{NH}_4$ ), inorganic nitrogen (DIN), and soluble reactive phosphorus (SRP). Silicate ( $\text{Si}(\text{OH})_4$ ) was analyzed at all stations on a quarterly basis in conjunction with SW Shelf sampling. Total concentrations of nitrogen (TN), organic nitrogen (TON), phosphorus (TP), and organic carbon (TOC) were also measured. All concentrations for each of these parameters are reported as parts per million (ppm) except where noted.

Biological parameters monitored included chlorophyll a ( $\mu\text{g l}^{-1}$ ) and alkaline phosphatase activity (APA;  $\mu\text{M hr}^{-1}$ ). Field parameters measured at both surface and bottom of the water column include salinity, dissolved oxygen (DO;  $\text{mg l}^{-1}$ ), and temperature ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ). Turbidity (NTU) of the surface water was also measured.

## Data Results

A previous spatial analysis of data from Florida Bay resulted in the delineation of 3 groups of stations which have robust similarities in water quality (Fig. 2). We have argued that these spatially contiguous groups of stations are the result of similar loading and processing of materials, hence we call them 'zones of similar influence'. The Eastern Bay zone (FBE) acts most like a 'conventional' estuary in that it has a quasi-longitudinal salinity gradient caused by the mixing of freshwater runoff with seawater. In contrast, the Central Bay (FBC) is a hydrographically isolated area with low and infrequent terrestrial freshwater input, a long water residence time, and high evaporative potential. The Western Bay zone (FBW) is the most influenced by the Gulf of Mexico tides and is also isolated from direct overland freshwater sources. Station #7 - Highway Creek did not cluster out with any of the Florida Bay stations and was considered separately.

Using the same statistical approach as above, the TTI-WWB complex was partitioned into 6 distinct zones of similar water quality (Fig. 3). The first cluster was composed of 13 stations in and around the Shark, Harney, Broad, and Lostmans Rivers and is called the Mangrove River (MR) group. This cluster also included a sampling station just off the Faka Union Canal. The second cluster was made up of the 8 stations enclosed within Whitewater Bay proper (WWB). Twelve stations situated mostly in and around the coastal islands of TTI-WWB formed the Gulf Island group (GI). The water quality characteristics at the Coot Bay site were sufficiently different so as to be a cluster of its own. The next cluster contained the northernmost 2 stations in the Blackwater River estuary (BLK). Finally, the Inland Wilderness Waterway zone (IWW) included 11 stations distributed throughout the inside passage as well as the Chatham River and the station off Everglades City.

Biscayne Bay was partitioned into 6 distinct ZSI using the above statistical analysis. The first cluster was composed of 2 stations closest to the shore in the south Bay (Fig. 4); they were called the Alongshore group (AS). These are stations most influenced by the Goulds, Military and Mowry Canals. The second cluster was made up of the 5 stations farther from the coast called Inshore (IS). Thirteen stations situated mostly in the bay proper were called the main Bay (MAIN) group. The next cluster contained 3 stations situated in areas of great tidal exchange (ocean channel, not shown). Two stations in Card Sound grouped together SCARD. For purposes of this report, the stations added to the area north of the Rickenbacker Causeway are defined, a priori, as a distinct cluster, North Bay (NBAY).

The above statistical analysis objectively classified the 49 Shelf sampling sites into 3 zones having similar water quality (Fig. 5). The first cluster was composed of only 2 stations which were closest to the shore off Cape Sable; they were called the SHARK group, after the Shark River, the main source of freshwater to the region. The second cluster was made up of the 7 more northerly stations nearest the coast and called SHOAL. The remaining stations were called the SHELF group.

Sampling in the Rookery Bay area began Jan. 1999, so we now have 5 years of data available. But because of the very heterogeneous nature of the area, we will continue to use generally accepted geomorphological characteristics to group the stations (Fig. 6). These groupings are Cocohatchee River (COCO), Estero Bay (EST), Cape Romano-Marco Island (MARC), Naples Bay (NPL), Pine Island Sound (PIS), Rookery Bay (RB), and San Carlos Bay (SCB).

Data are also reported as box-and-whiskers plots (Figs. 7-28). The center horizontal line in the box is the median of the data, the top and bottom of the box are the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentiles (quartiles), and the ends of the whiskers are the 5<sup>th</sup> and 95<sup>th</sup> percentiles.

Summary statistics of all water quality parameters by ecosystem are shown in Table 1. The median was chosen because it is a more accurate measure of central tendency in non-normally distributed water quality data. The range is expressed as the minimum (Min.) and maximum (Max.) values for the POR, and  $n$  is the number of data points used in the analysis.

Exceptions to data:

We had a problem with the chlorophyll a fluorometer which caused us to reject the data from the August Biscayne Bay and Rookery Bay surveys. This problem has been rectified and a backup fluorometer configured for the analysis. However, we do not expect this occurrence in the future.

If you have any questions about the content of this report, please do not hesitate to contact me at 305-348-4076 or boyerj@fiu.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joseph N. Boyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joseph N. Boyer, Ph.D.  
Associate Director and Scientist

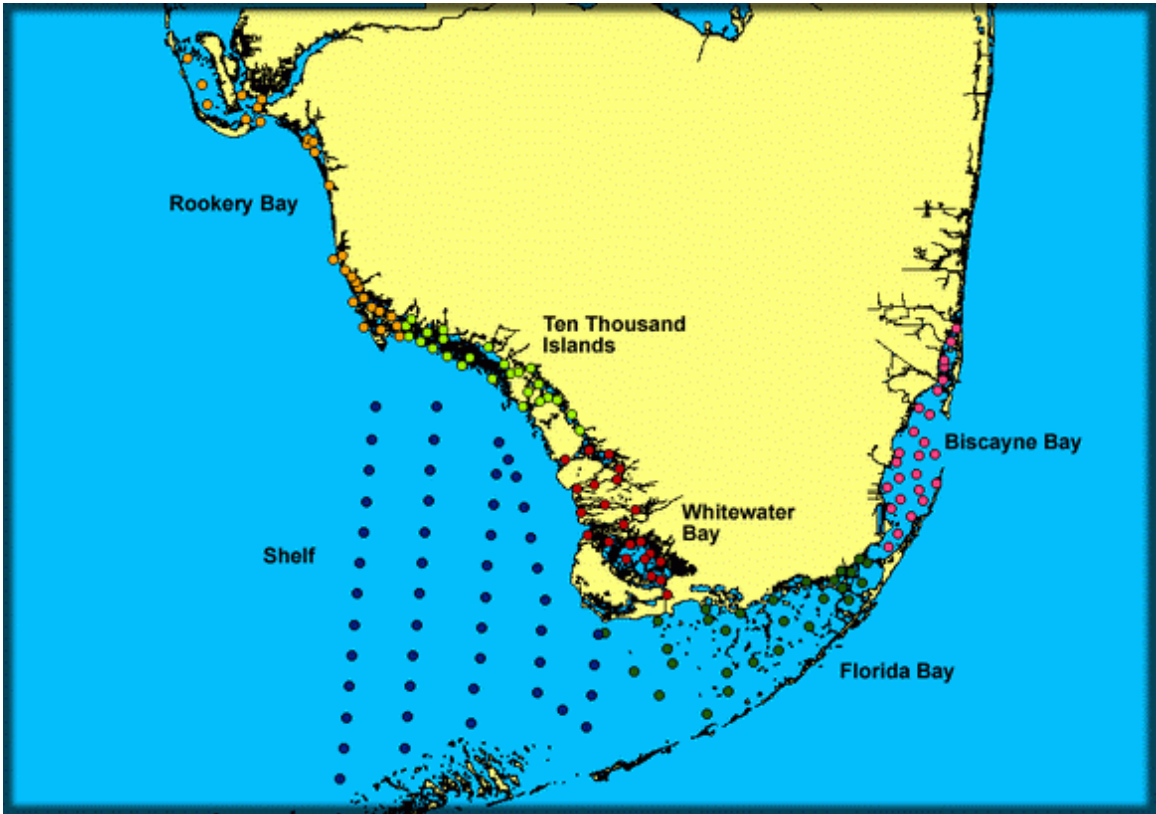
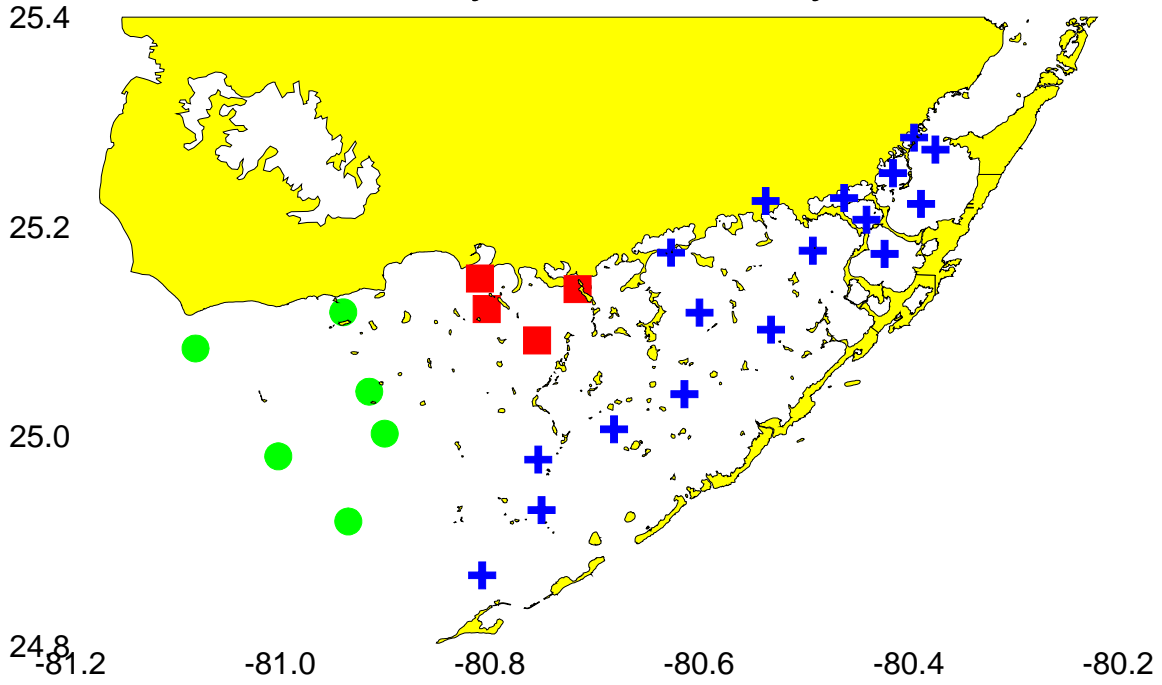


Figure 1: All fixed water quality stations funded by this SFWMD project.

# Florida Bay Water Quality Zones



Eastern Bay (+), Central Bay, (■), Western Bay (●)

Figure 2. Florida Bay zones.

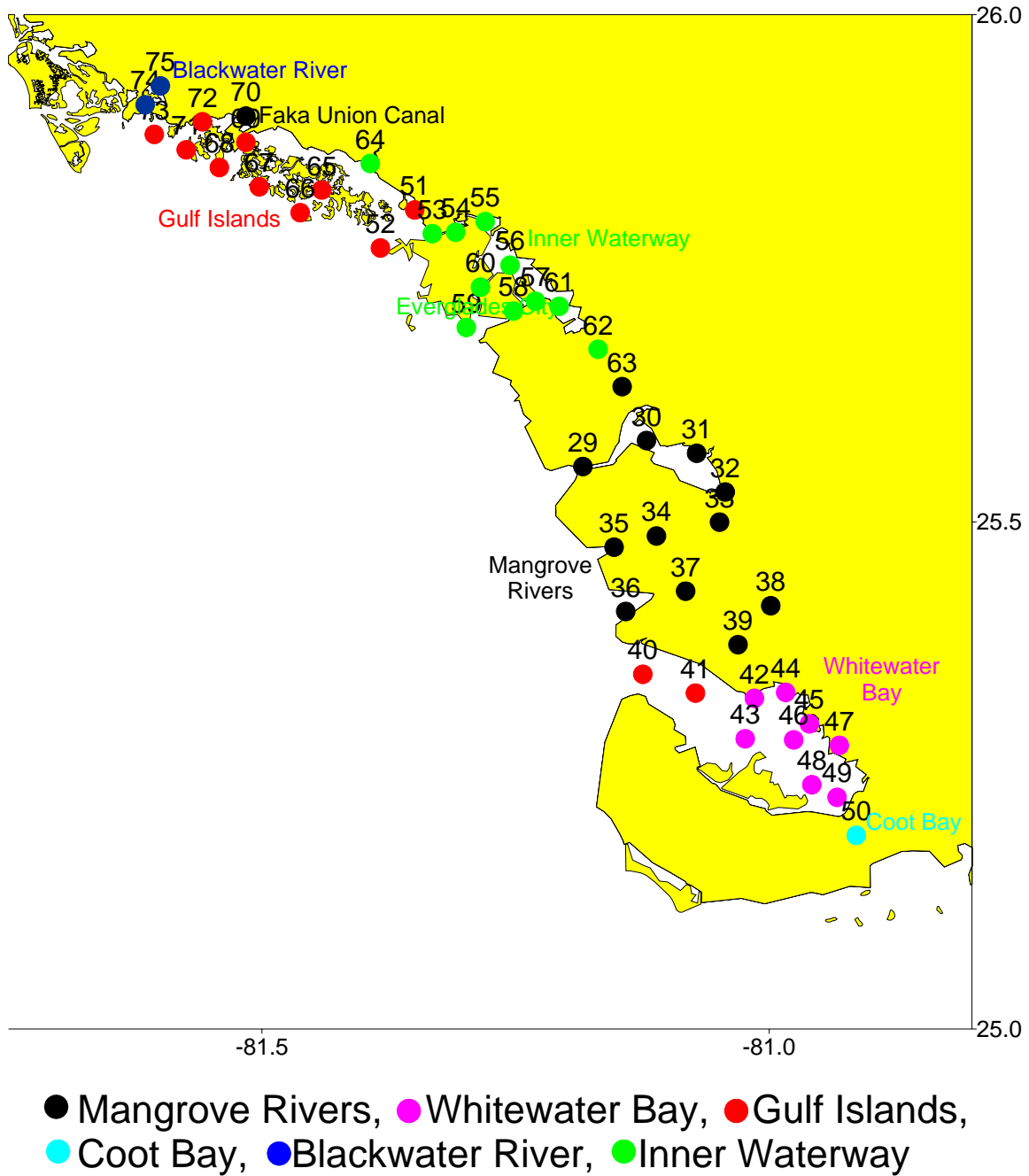


Figure 3. WWB-TTI water quality zones.

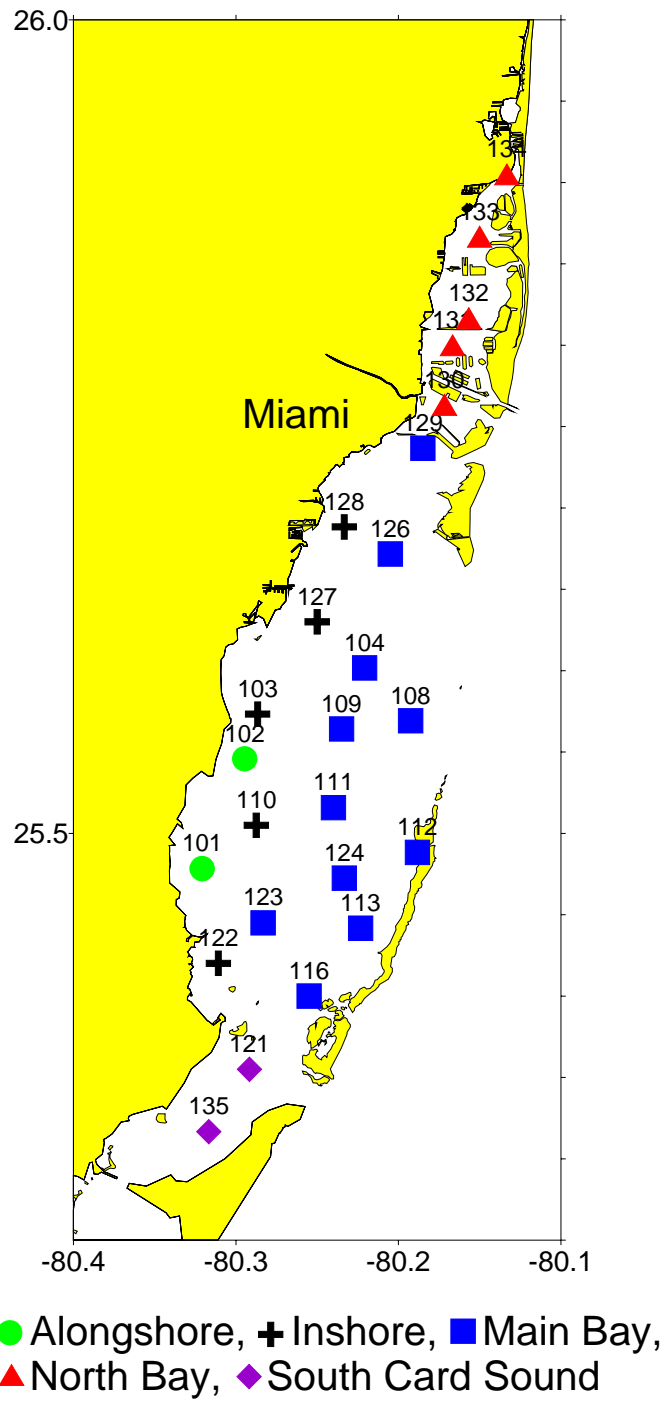


Figure 4. Biscayne Bay water quality zones.



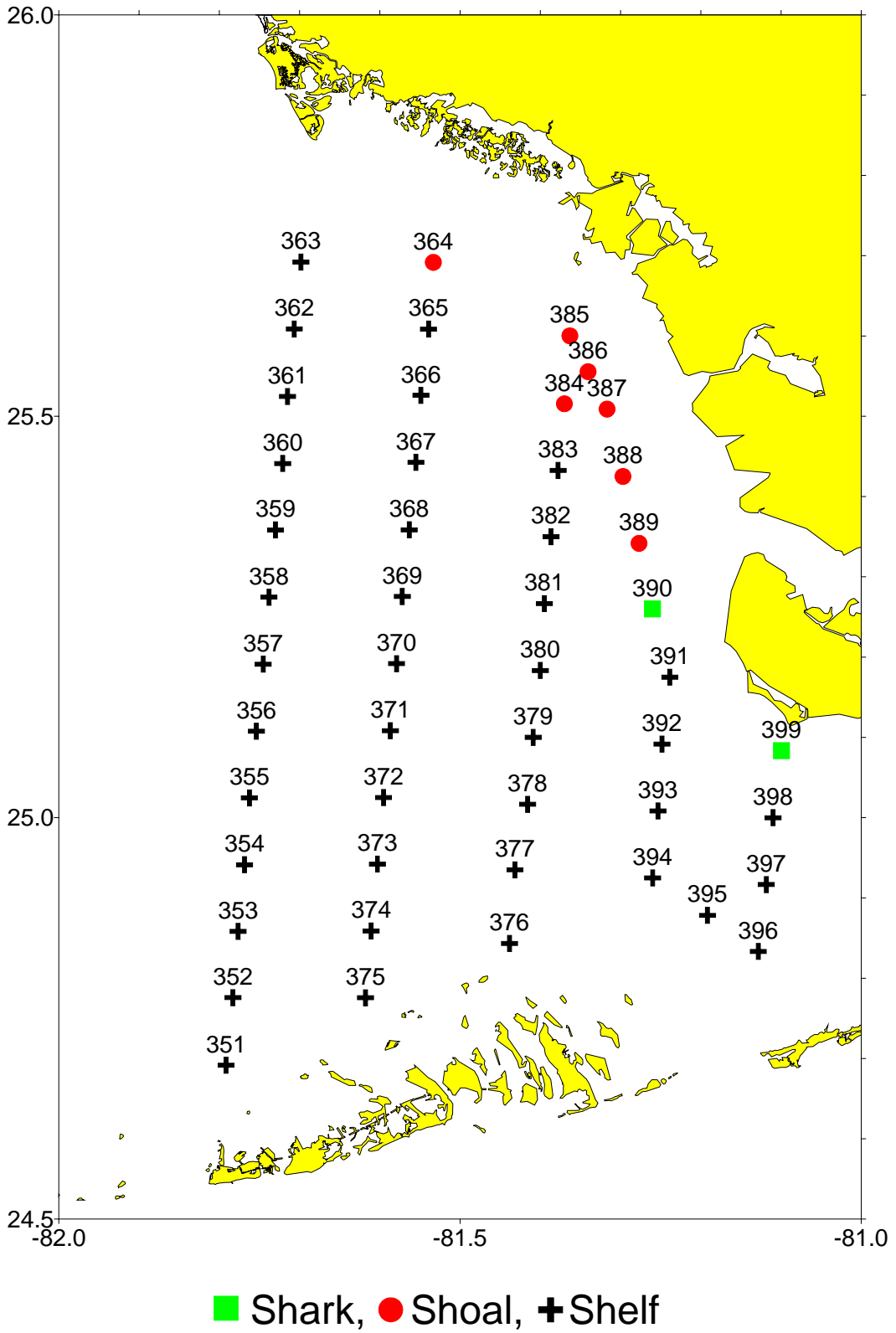


Figure 5. SW Florida Shelf water quality zones.

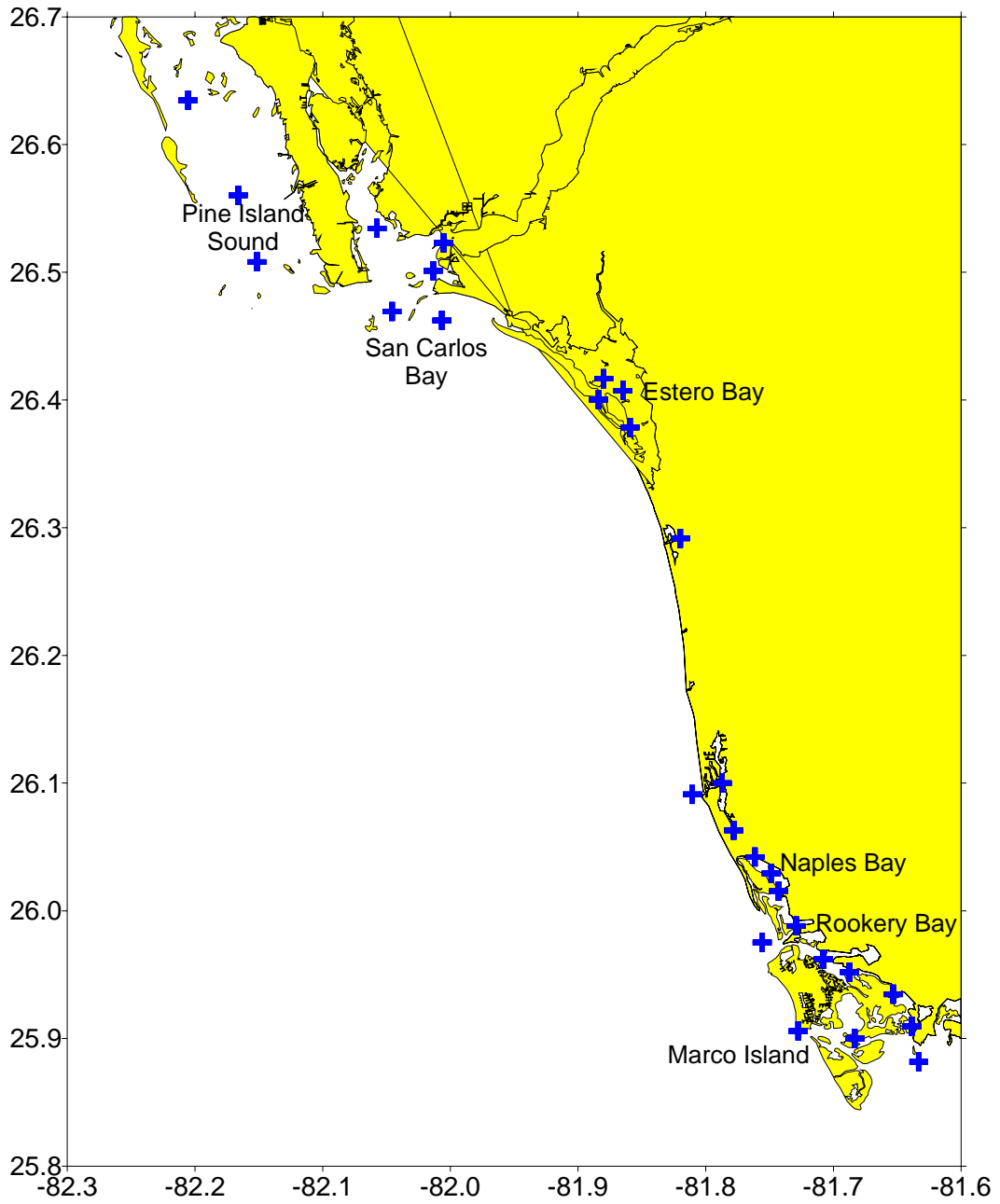


Figure 6. SW estuaries.

# Eastern Florida Bay Zone

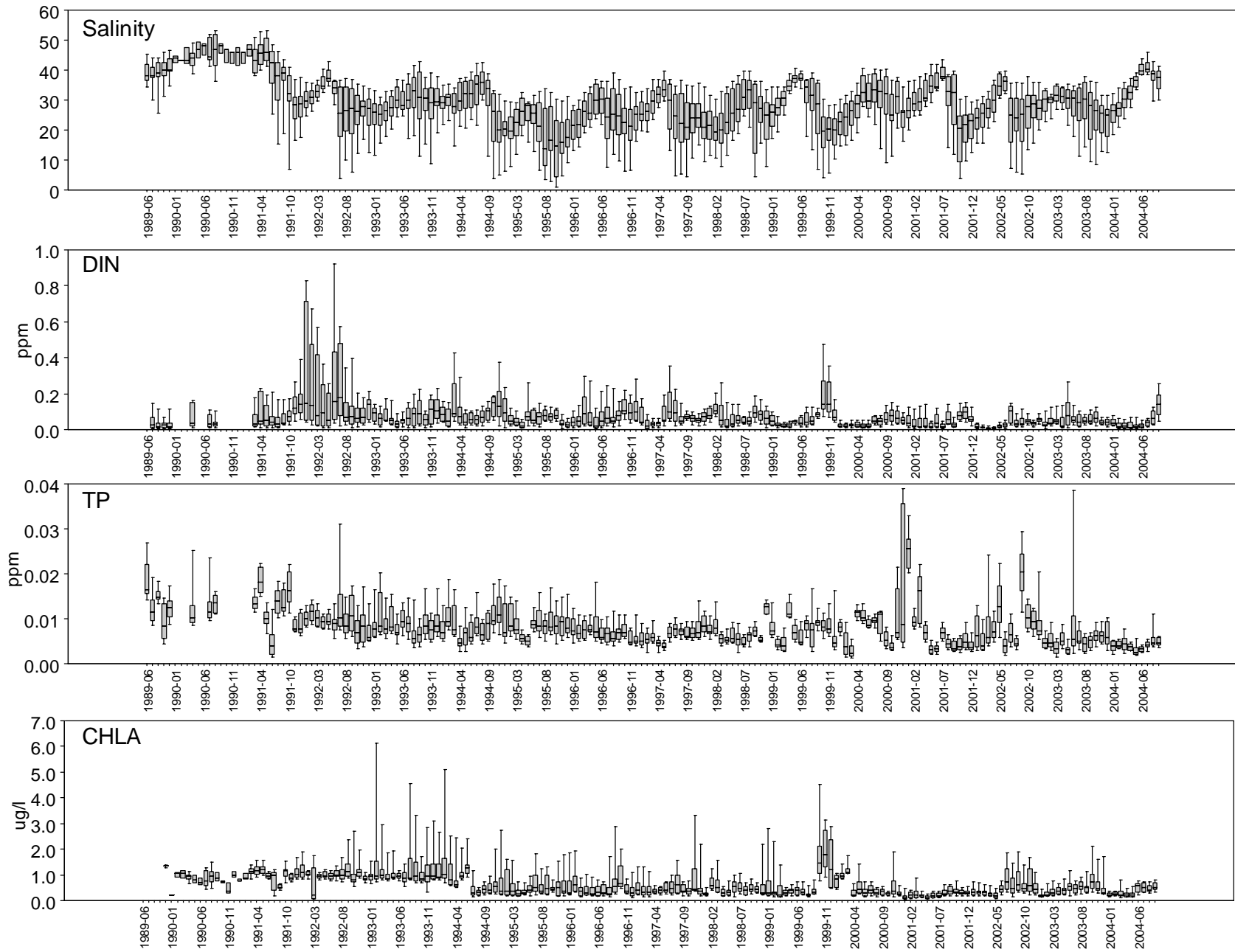


Figure 7. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in Eastern Florida Bay by survey.

# Central Florida Bay Zone

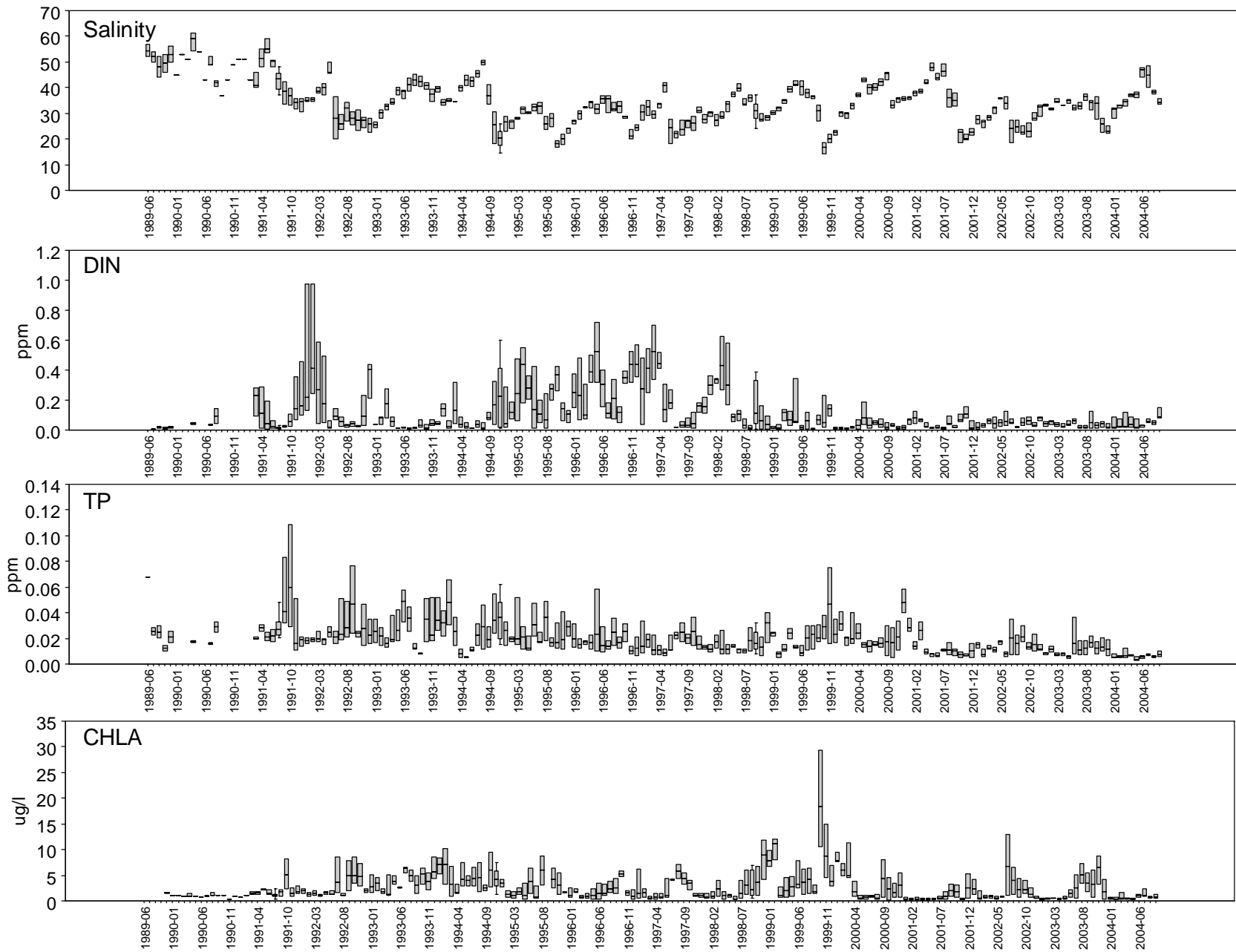


Figure 8. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in Central Florida Bay by survey.

# Western Florida Bay Zone

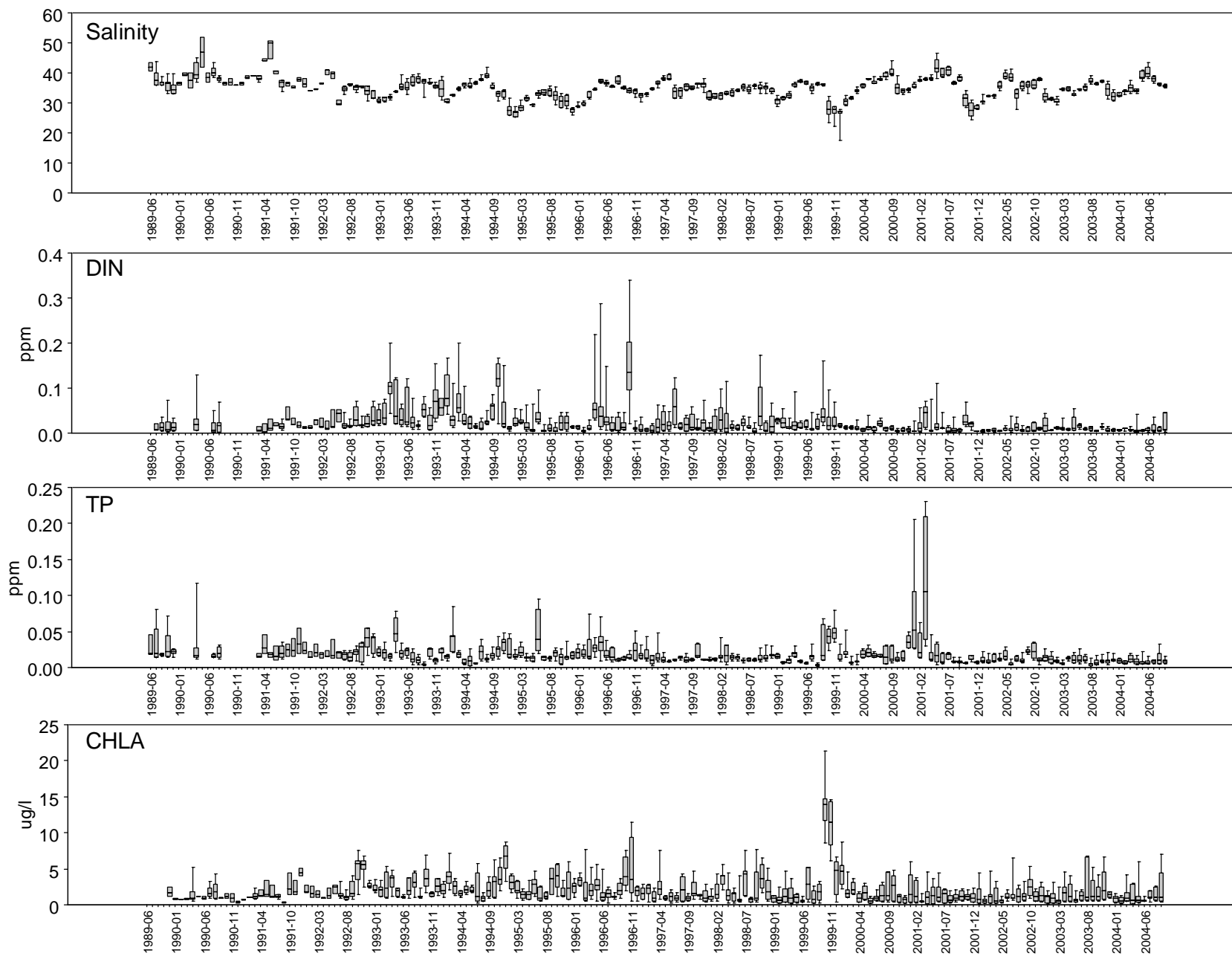


Figure 9. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in Western Florida Bay by survey.

# Whitewater Bay Zone

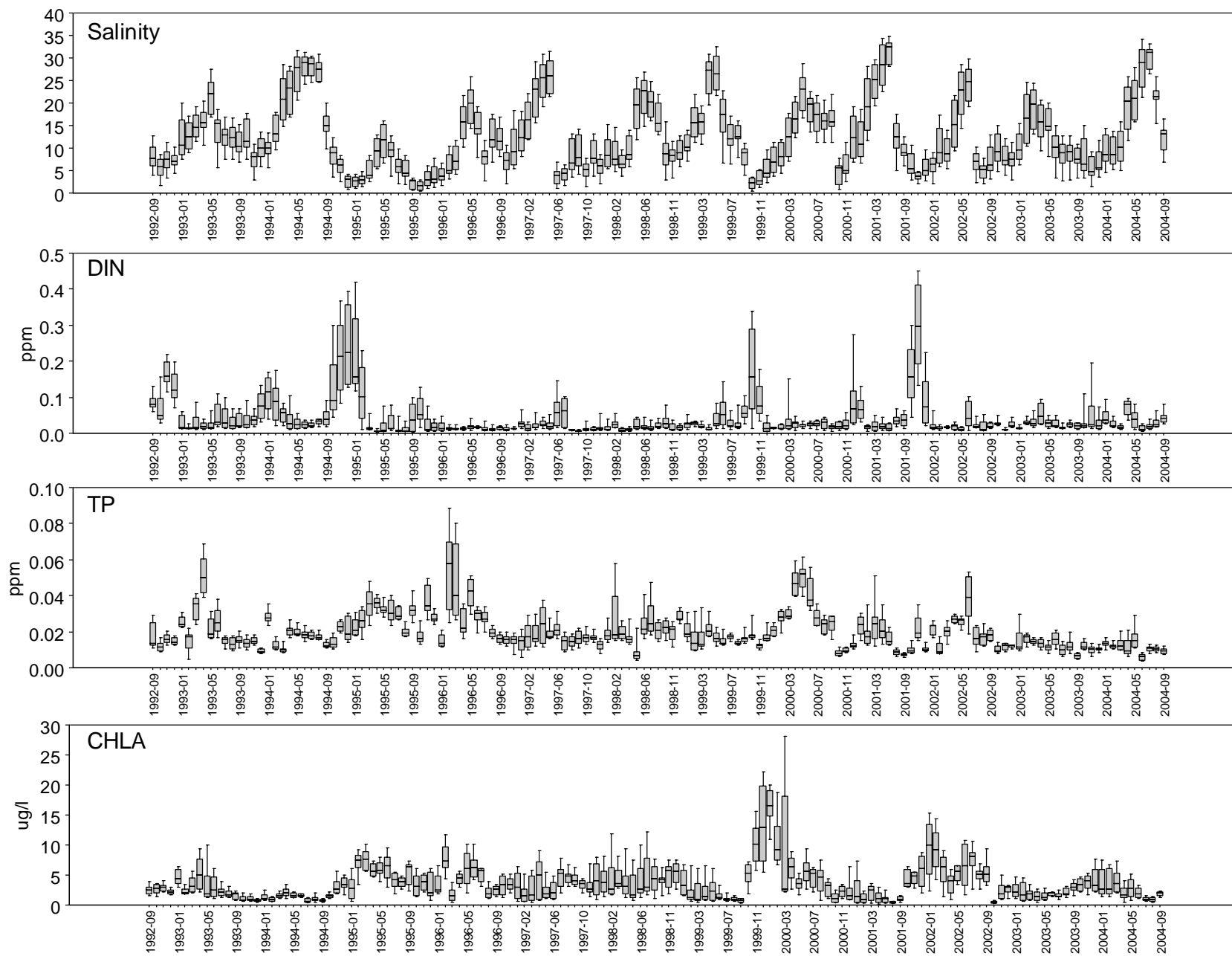


Figure 10. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in WWB-TTI by survey.

# Mangrove Rivers Zone

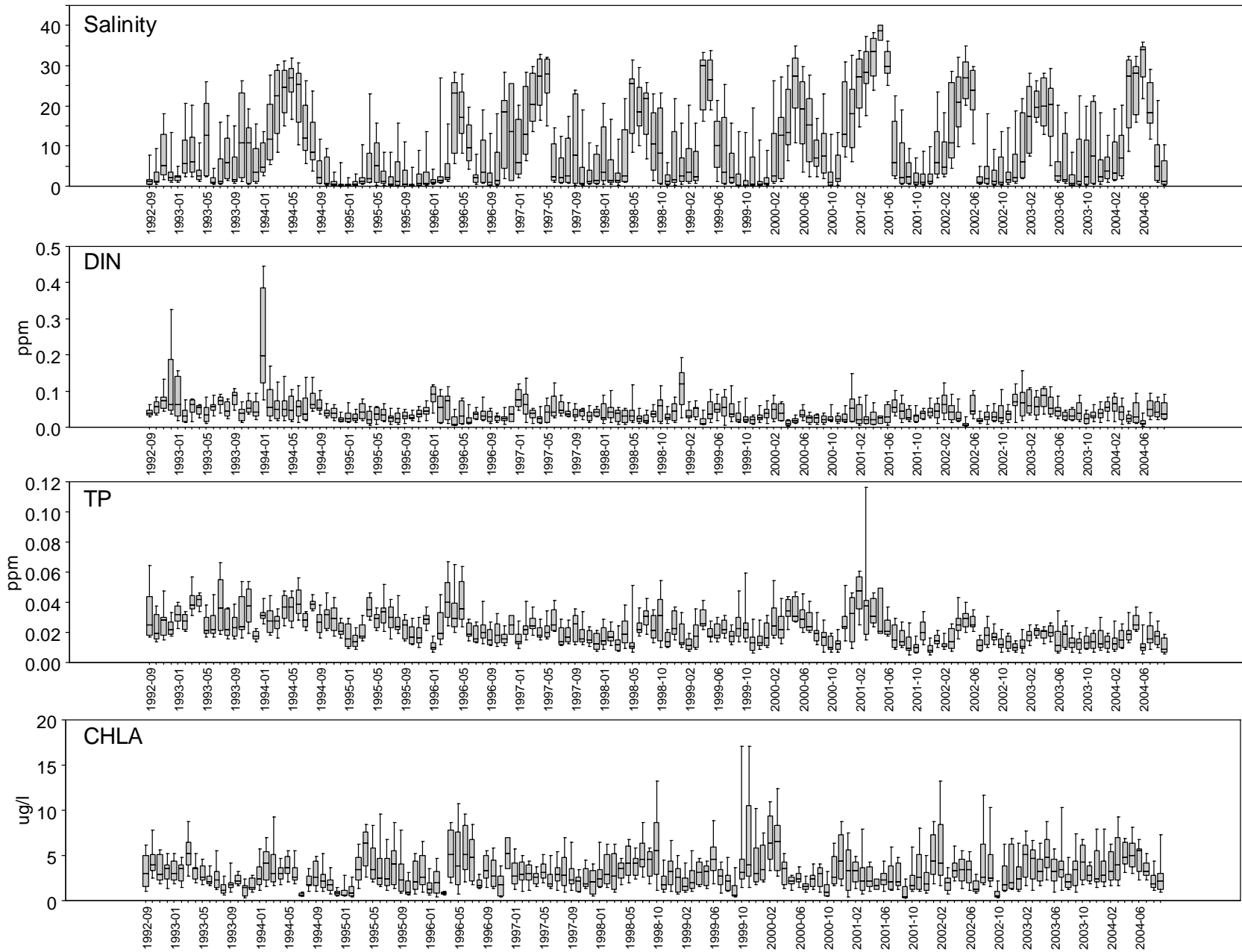


Figure 11. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in WWB-TTI by survey.

# Gulf Islands Zone

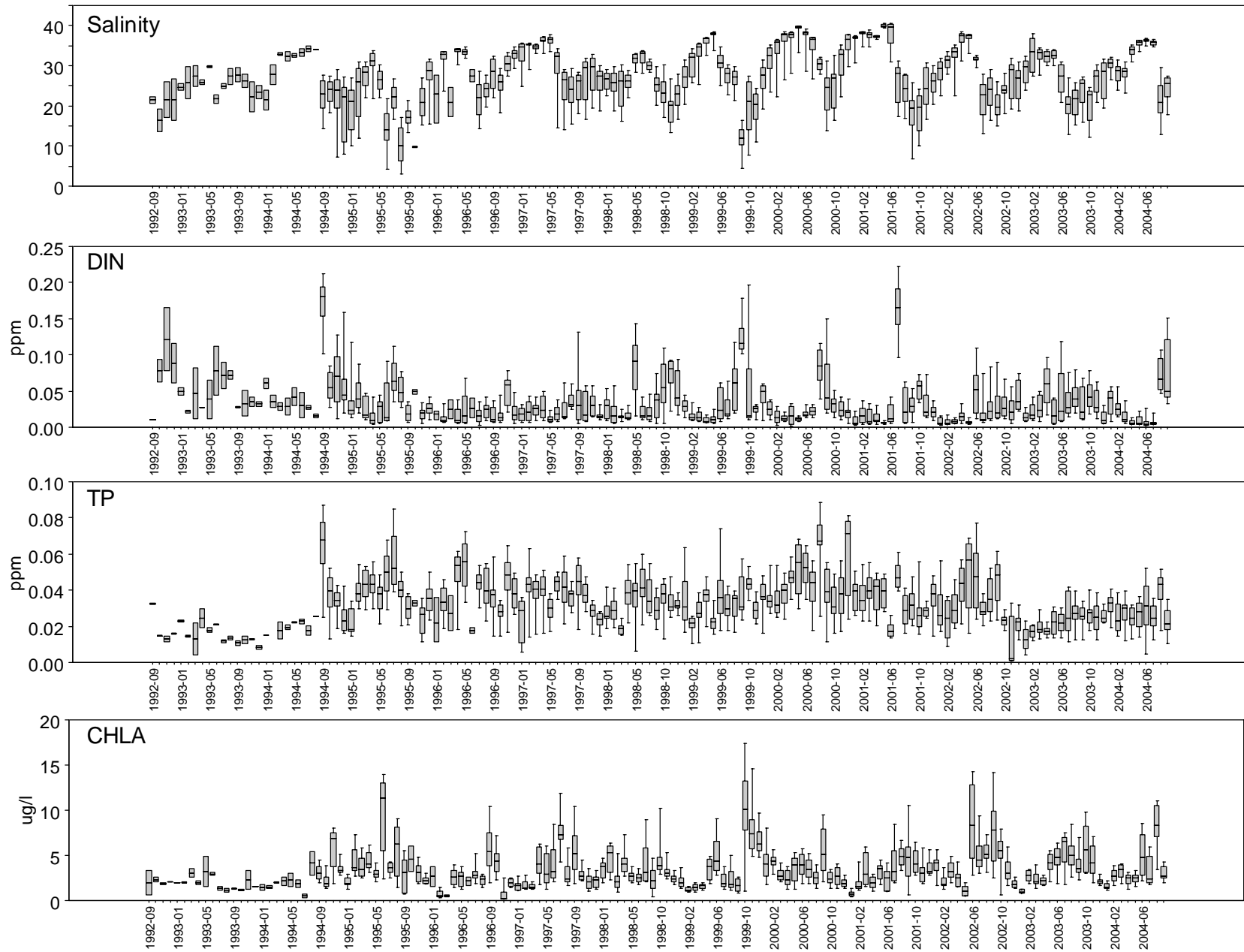


Figure 12. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in WWB-TTI by survey.



# Inner Waterway Zone

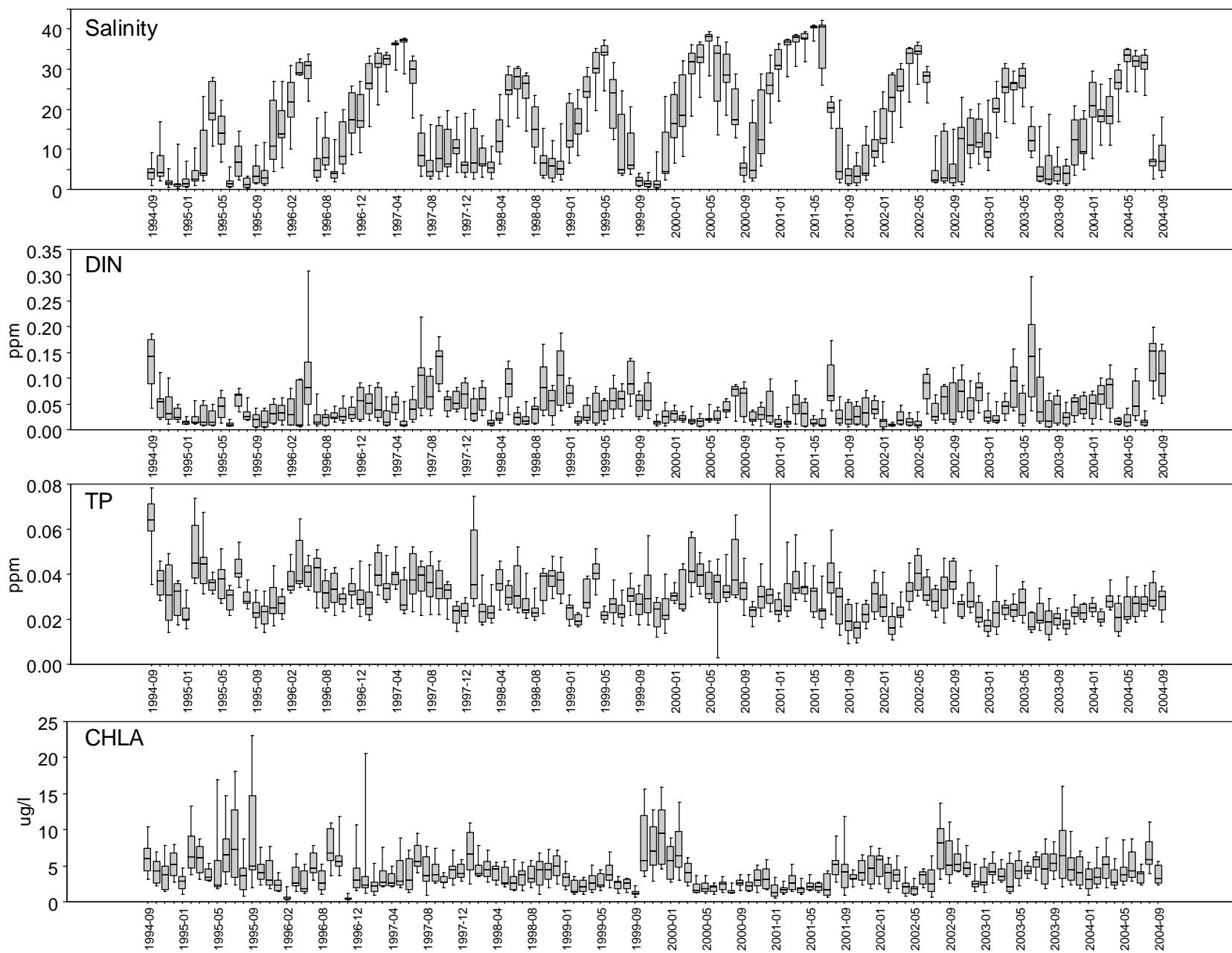


Figure 13. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in WWB-TTI by survey.

# Blackwater River Zone

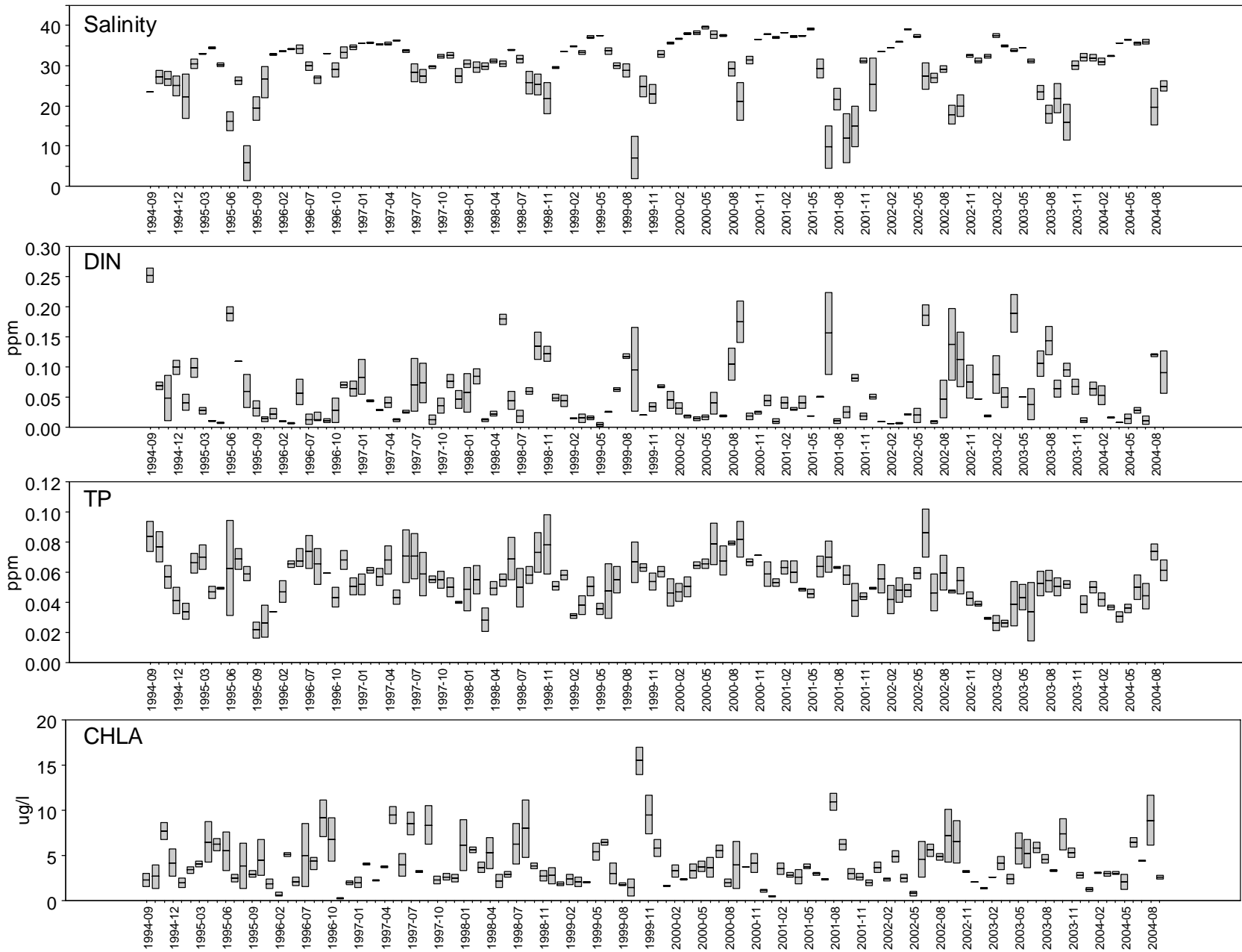


Figure 14. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in WWB-TTI by survey.

# Alongshore Zone

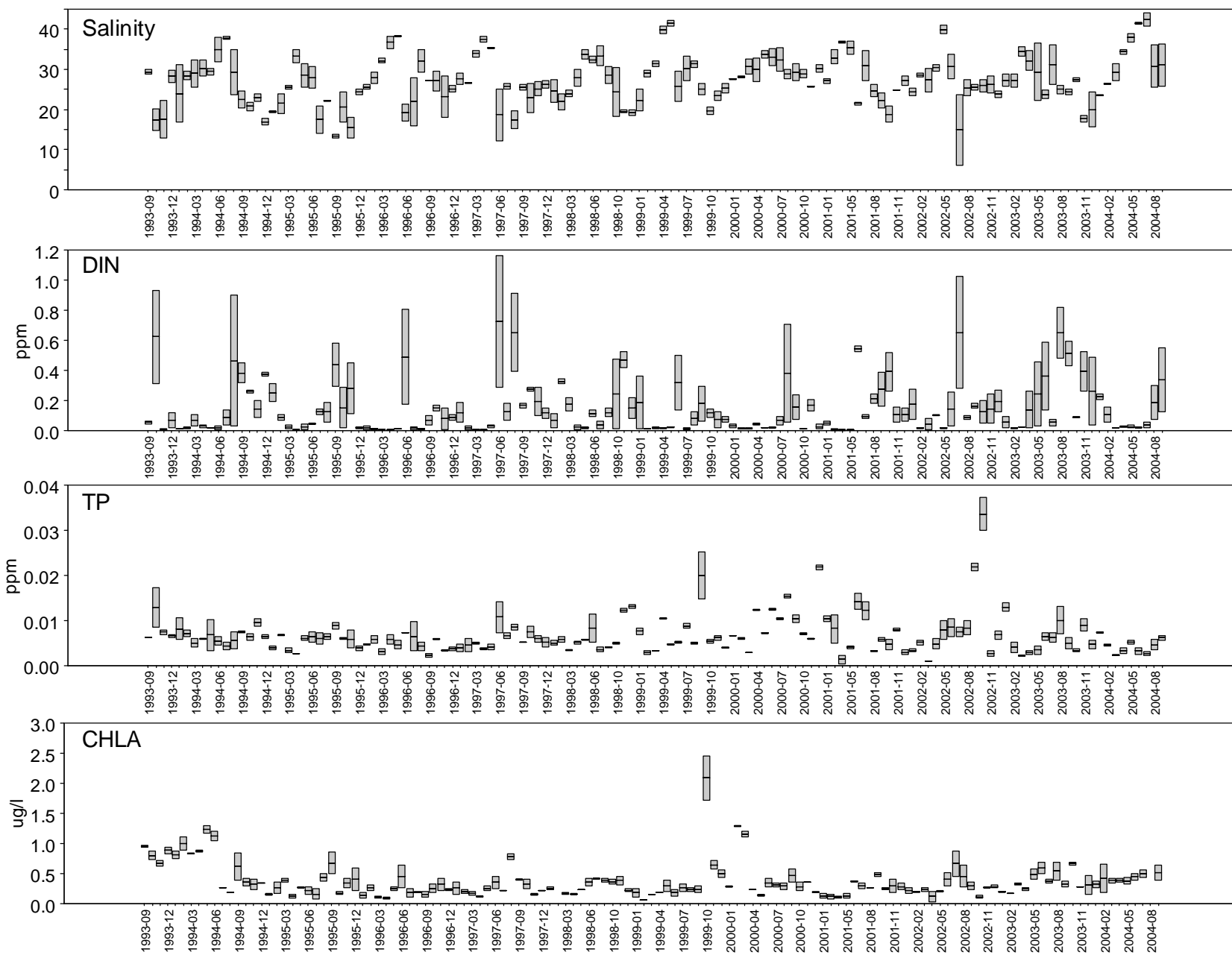


Figure 15. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in Biscayne Bay by survey.

# Inshore Zone

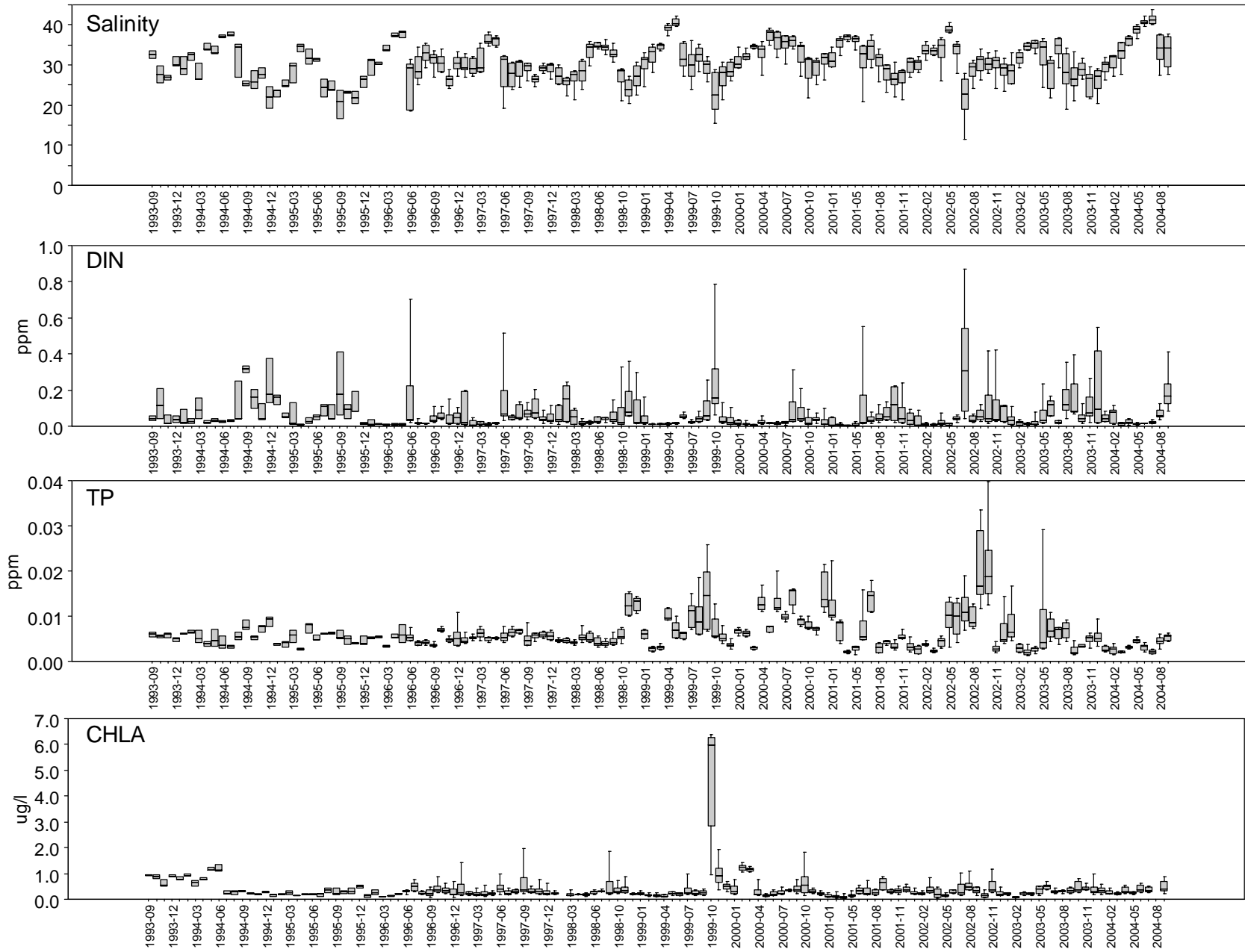


Figure 16. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in Biscayne Bay by survey.

# Main Bay Zone

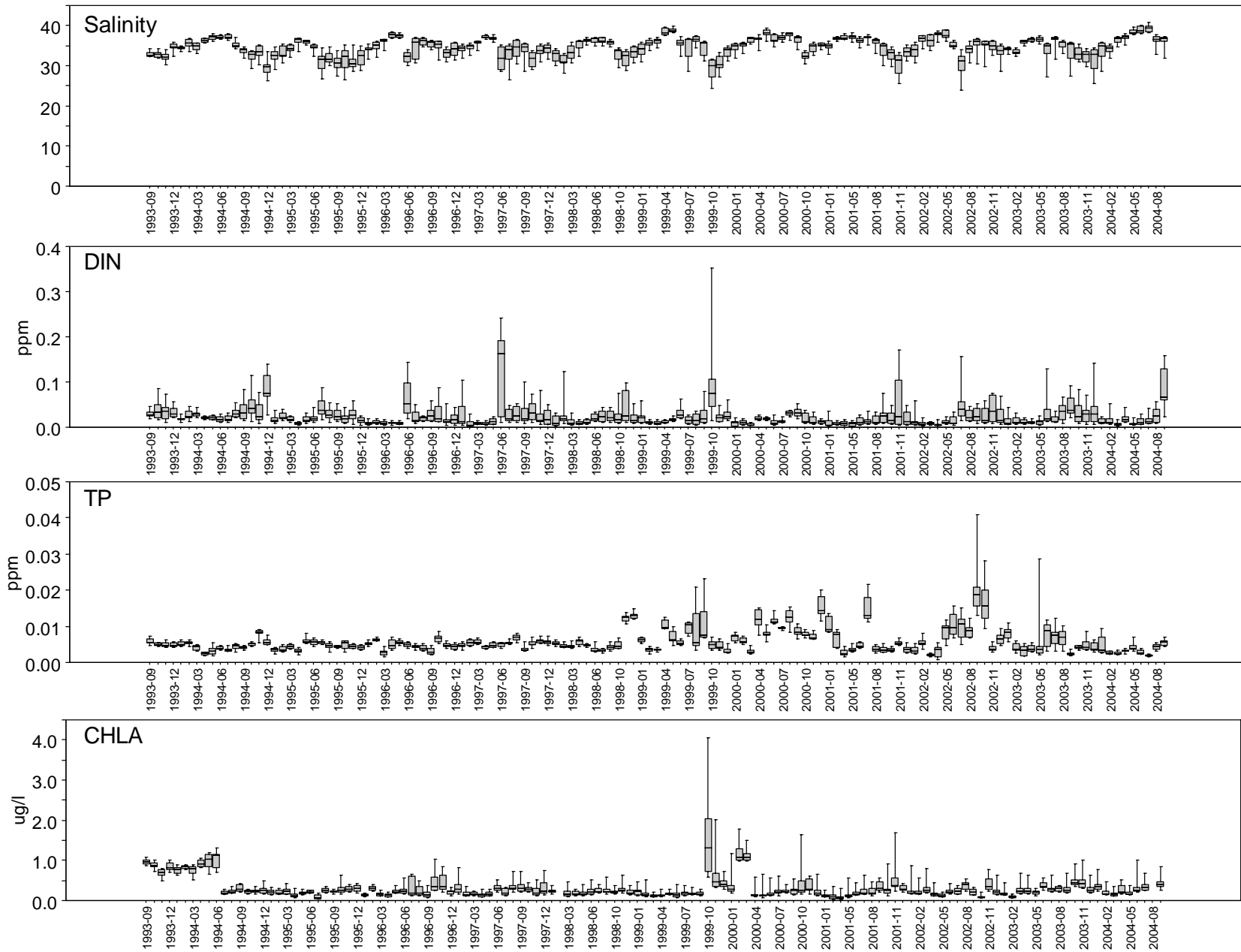


Figure 17. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in Biscayne Bay by survey.

# South Card Sound Zone

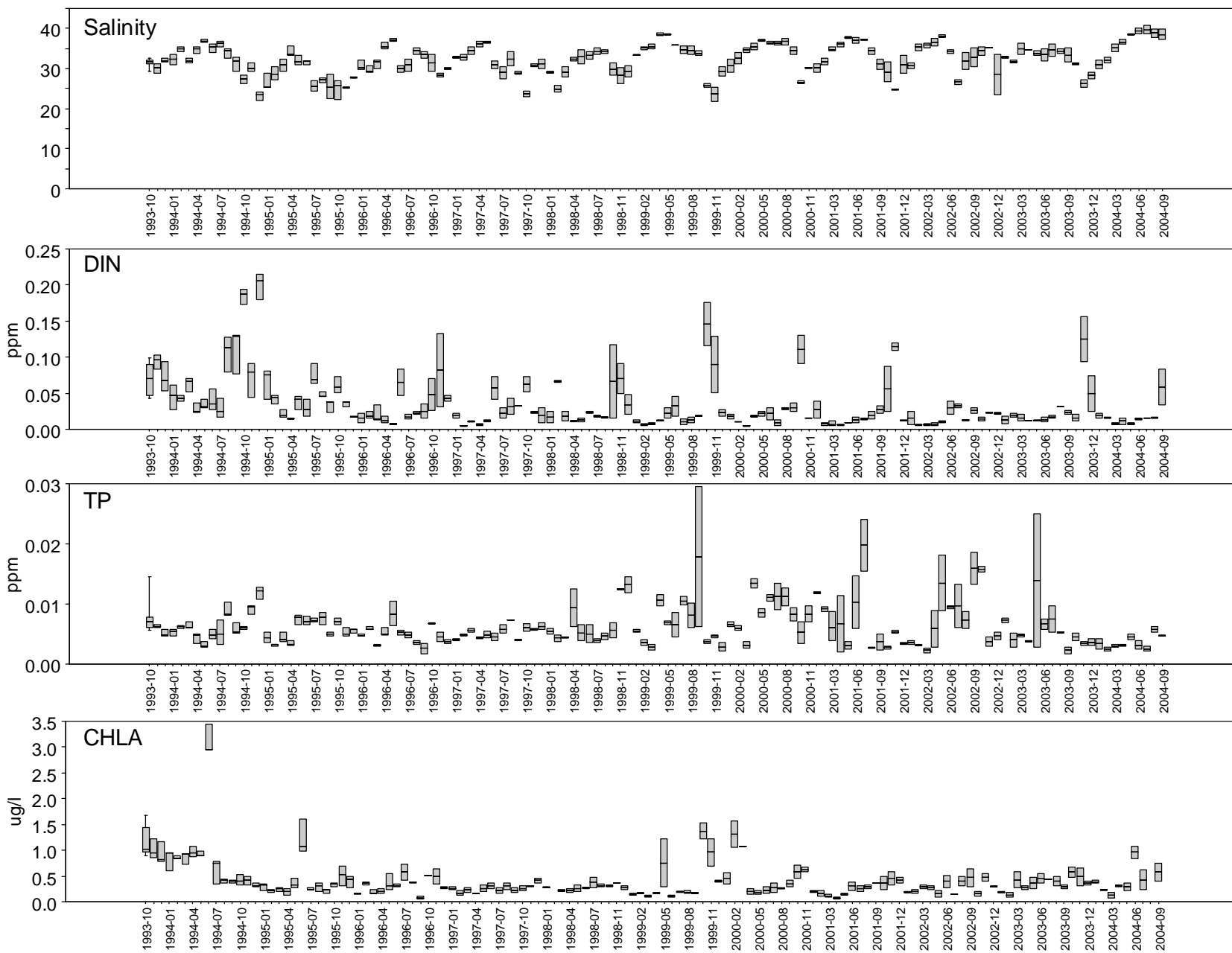


Figure 18. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in Biscayne Bay by survey.

# North Bay Zone

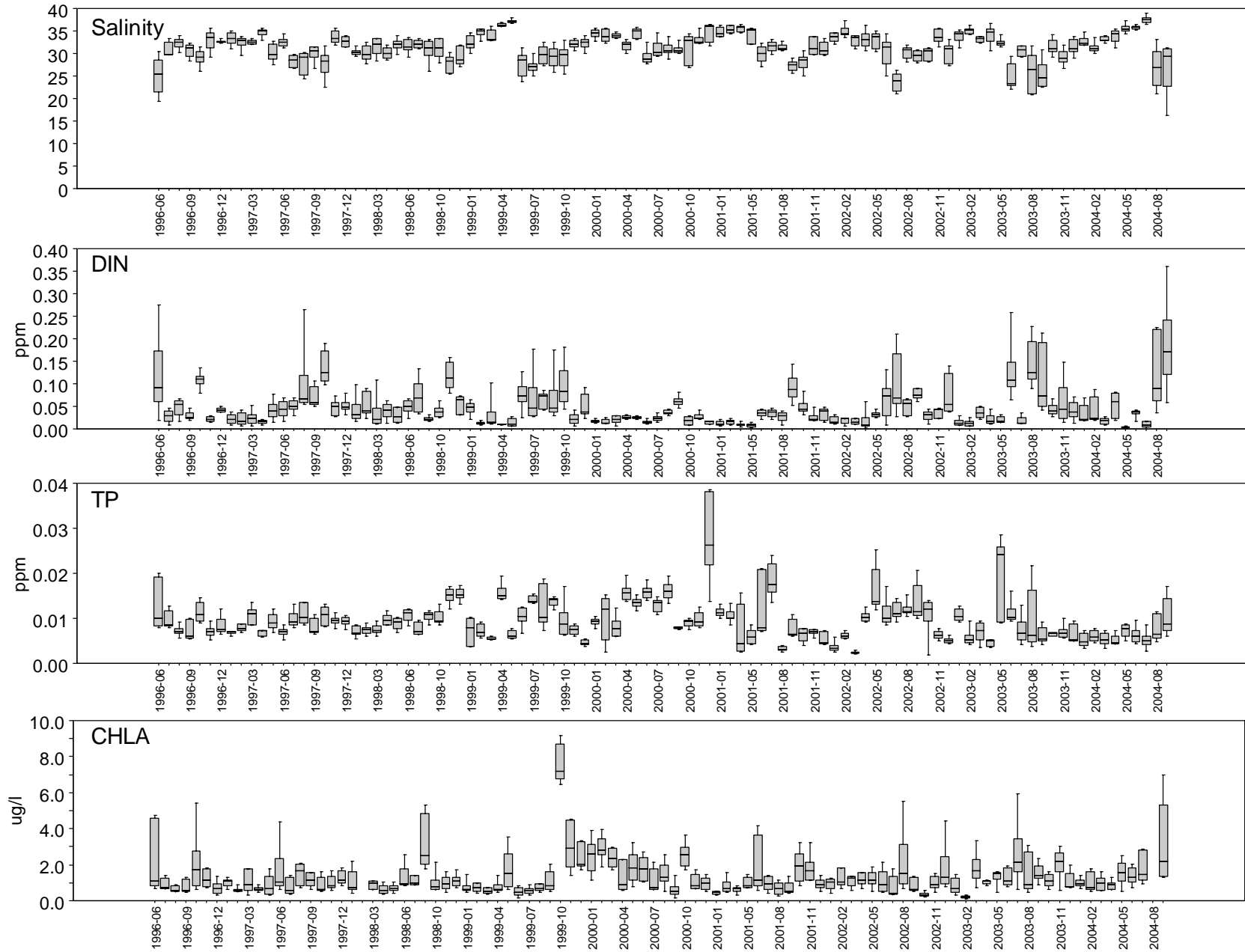


Figure 19. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in Biscayne Bay by survey.

# Shelf Zone

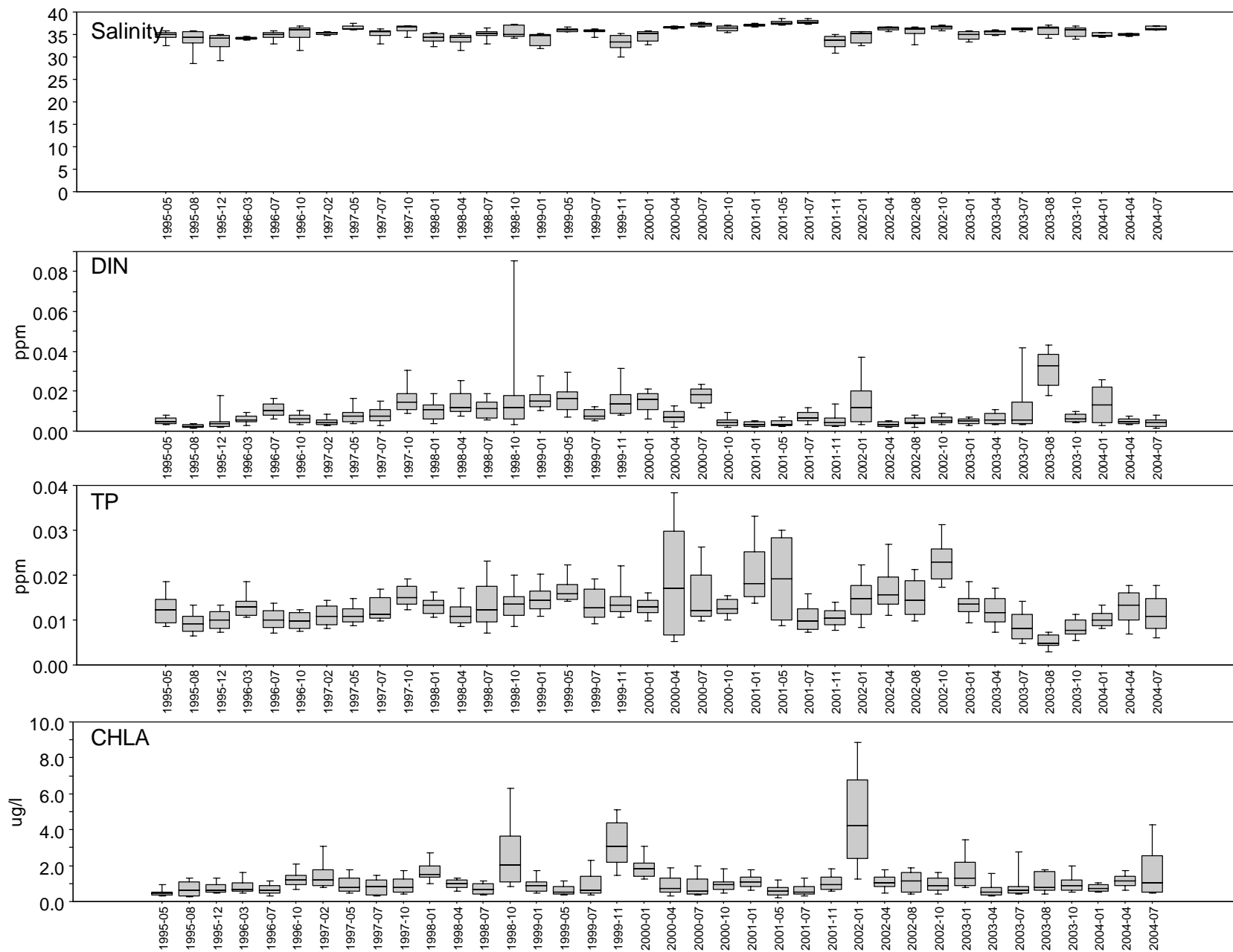


Figure 20. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in SW Florida Shelf by survey.



# Shark Zone

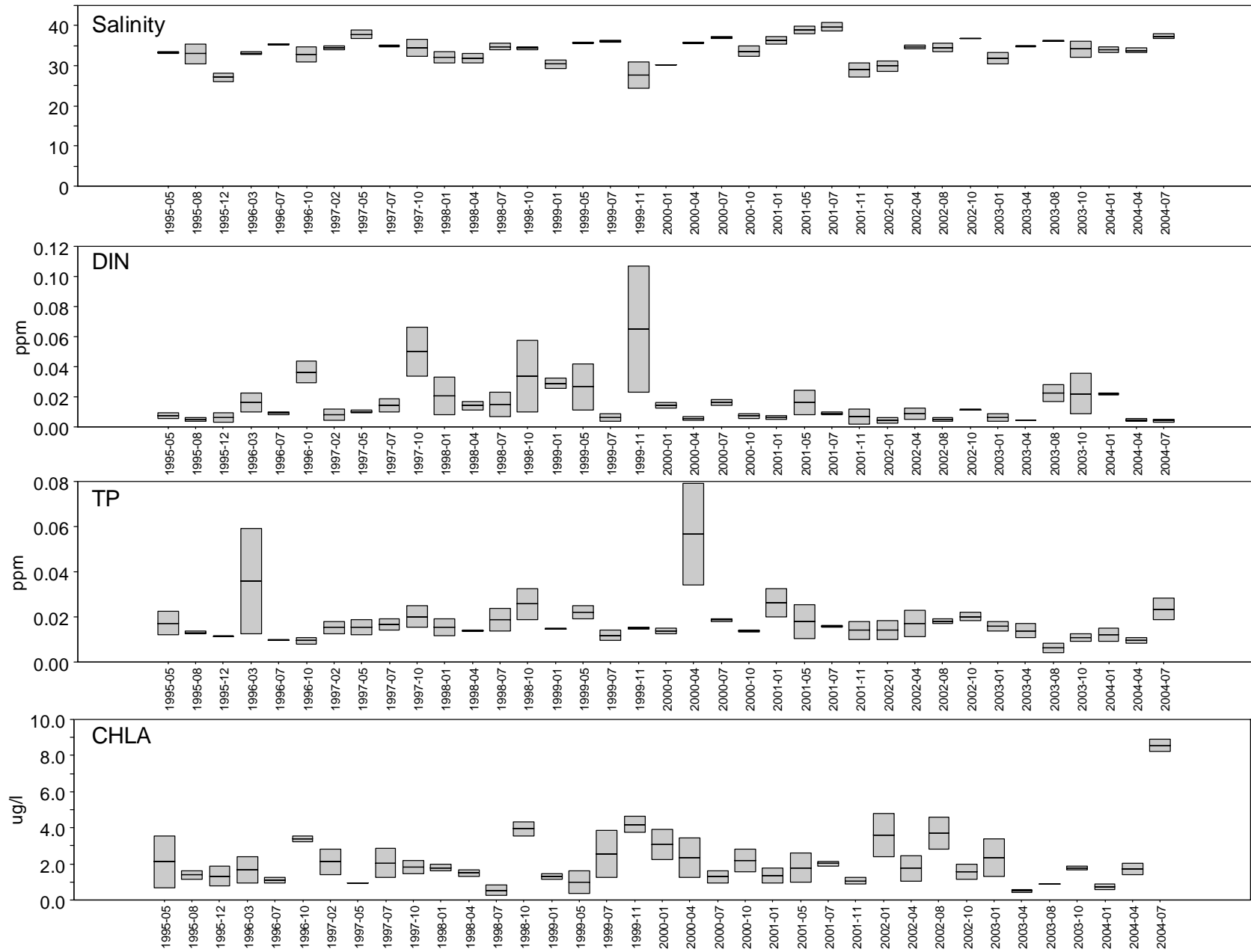


Figure 21. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in SW Florida Shelf by survey.

# Shoal Zone

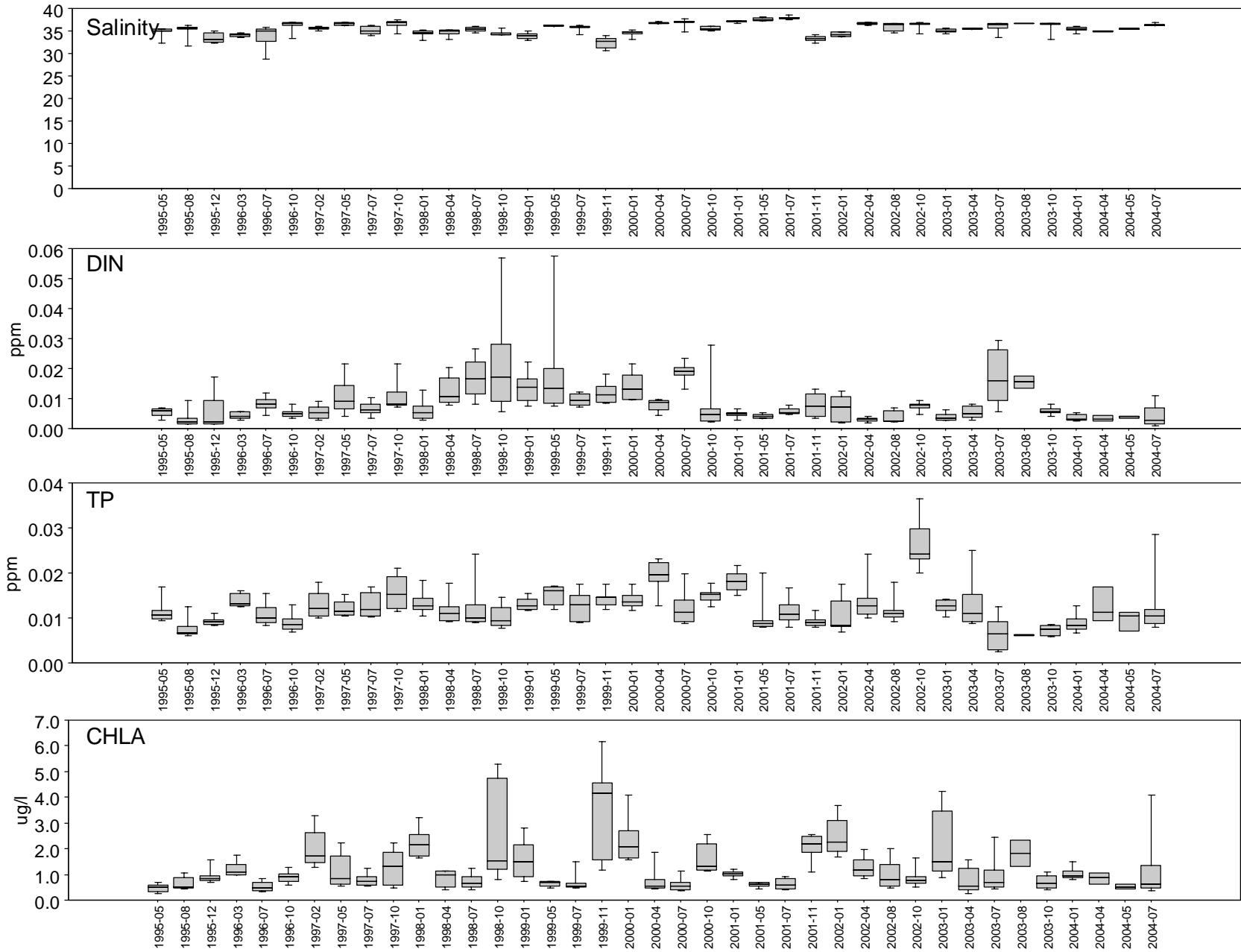


Figure 22. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in SW Florida Shelf by survey.

# Marco Zone

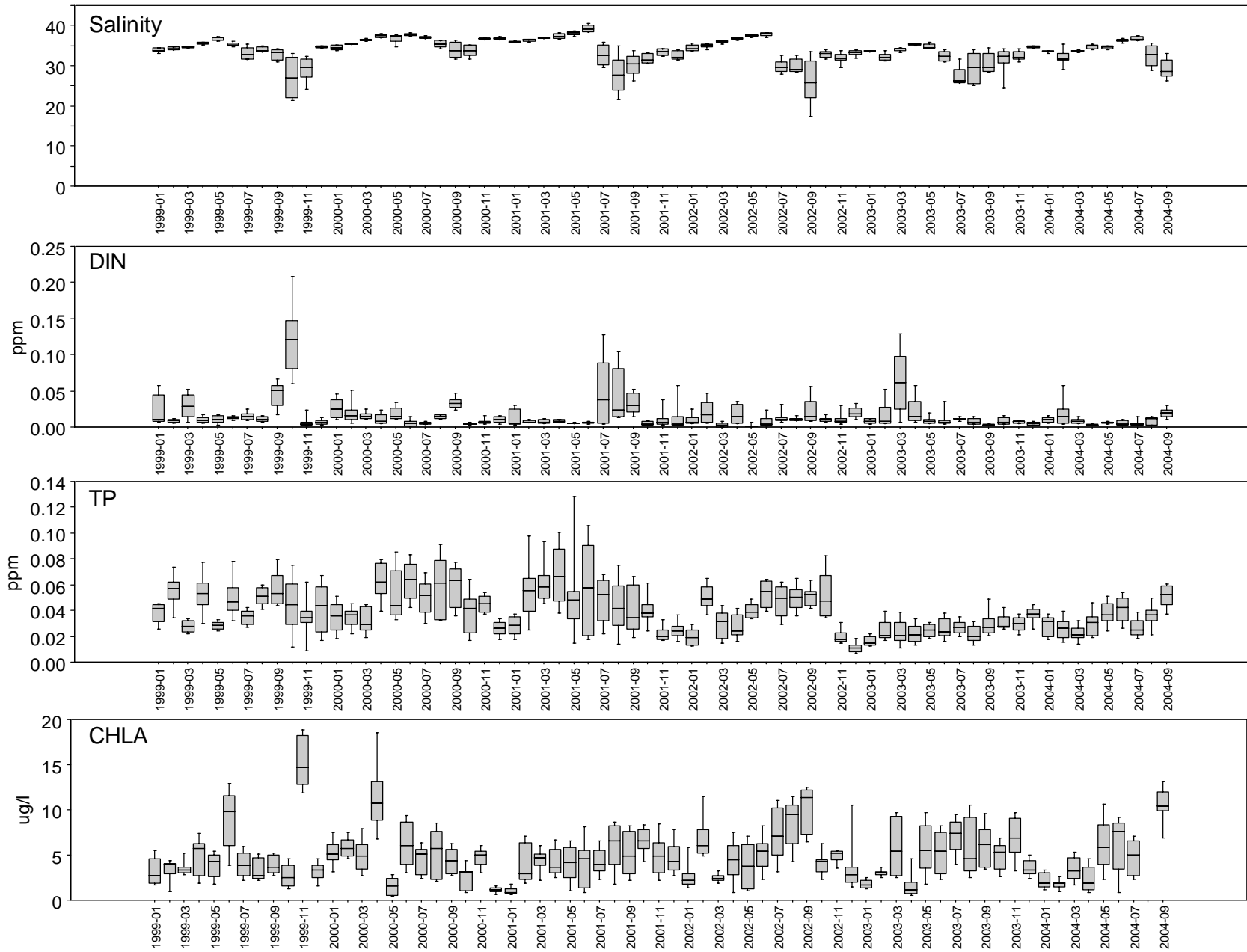


Figure 23. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in RB-PIS by survey.

# Rookery Bay Zone

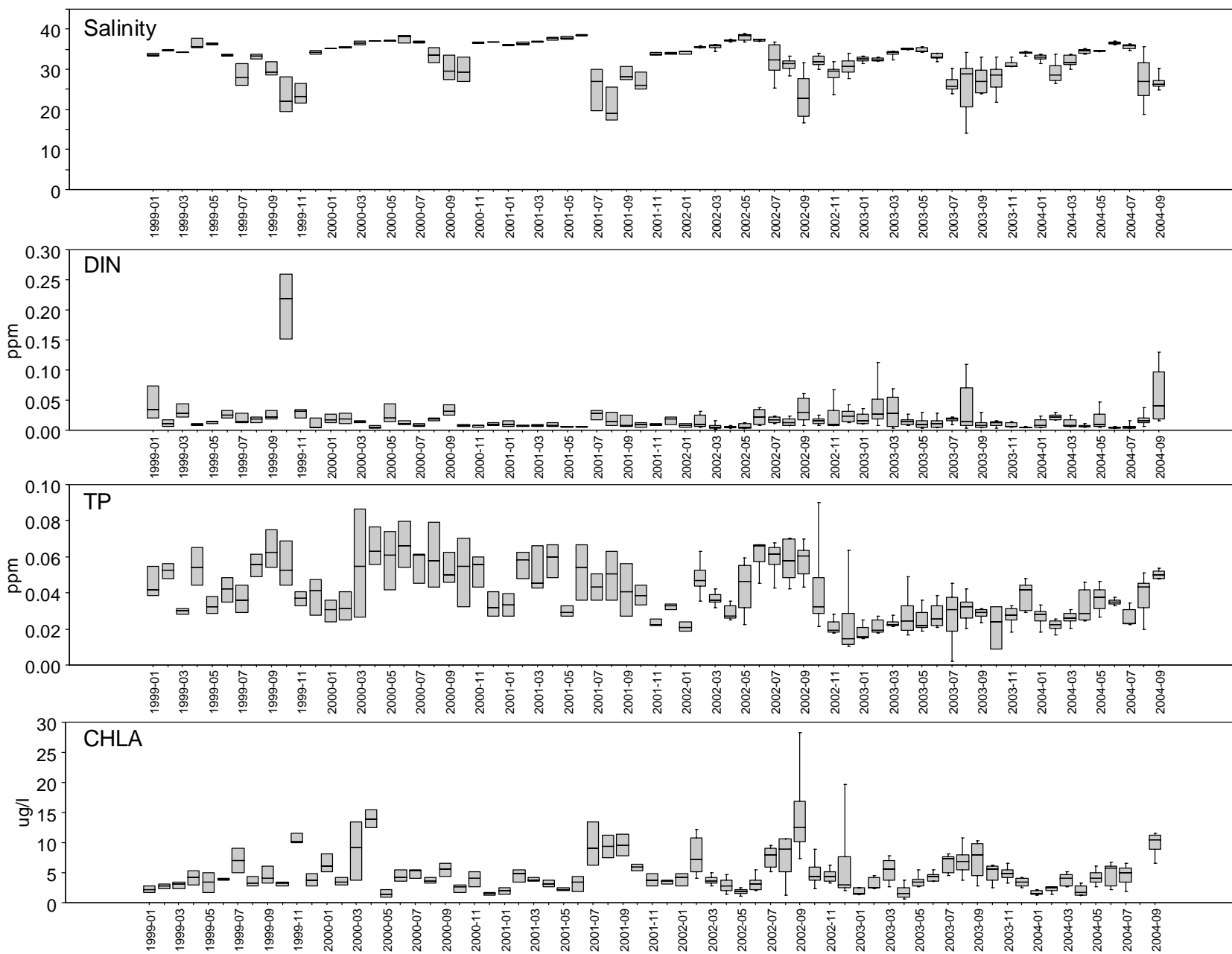


Figure 24. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in RB-PIS by survey.

# Naples Zone

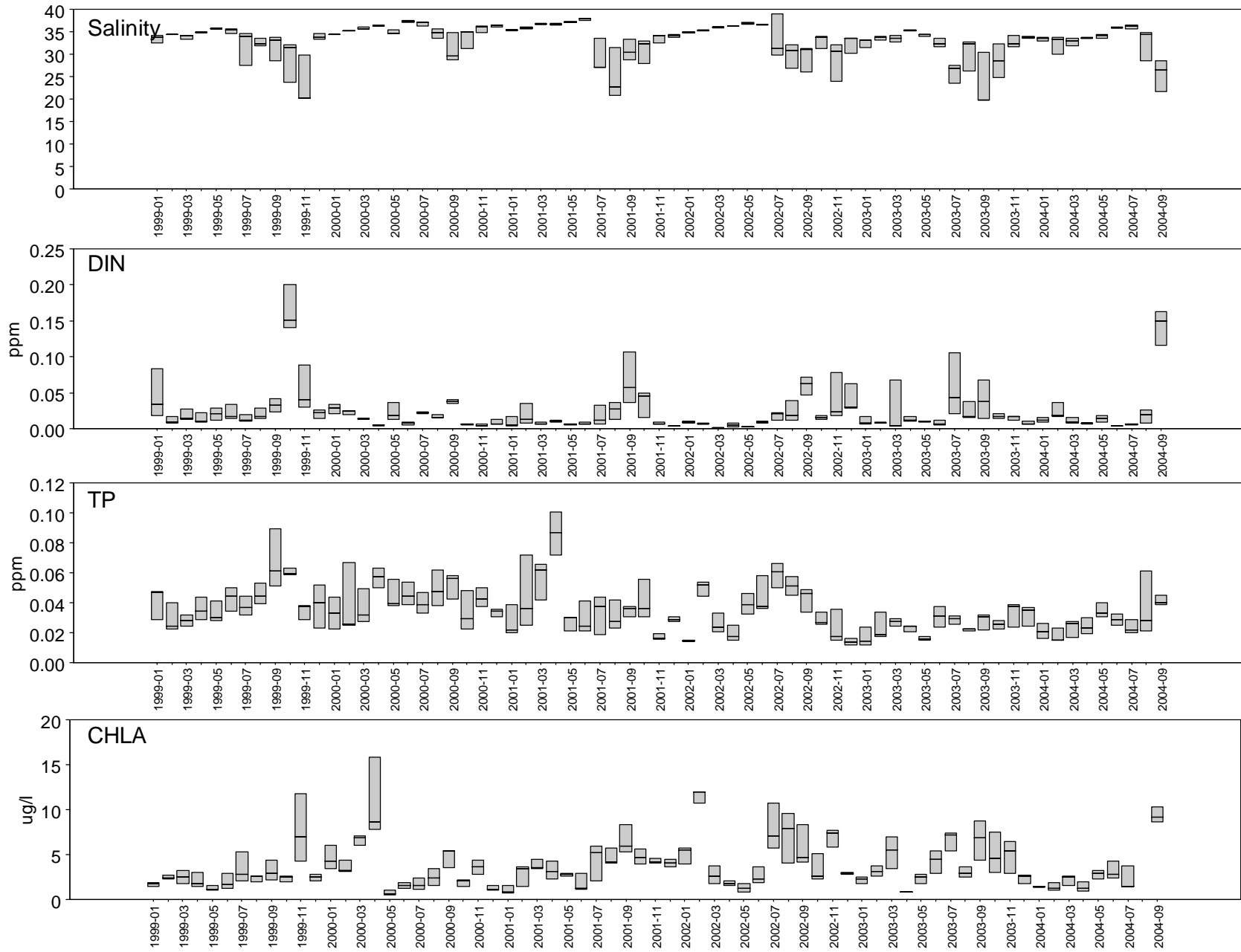


Figure 25. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in RB-PIS by survey.

# San Carlos Bay Zone

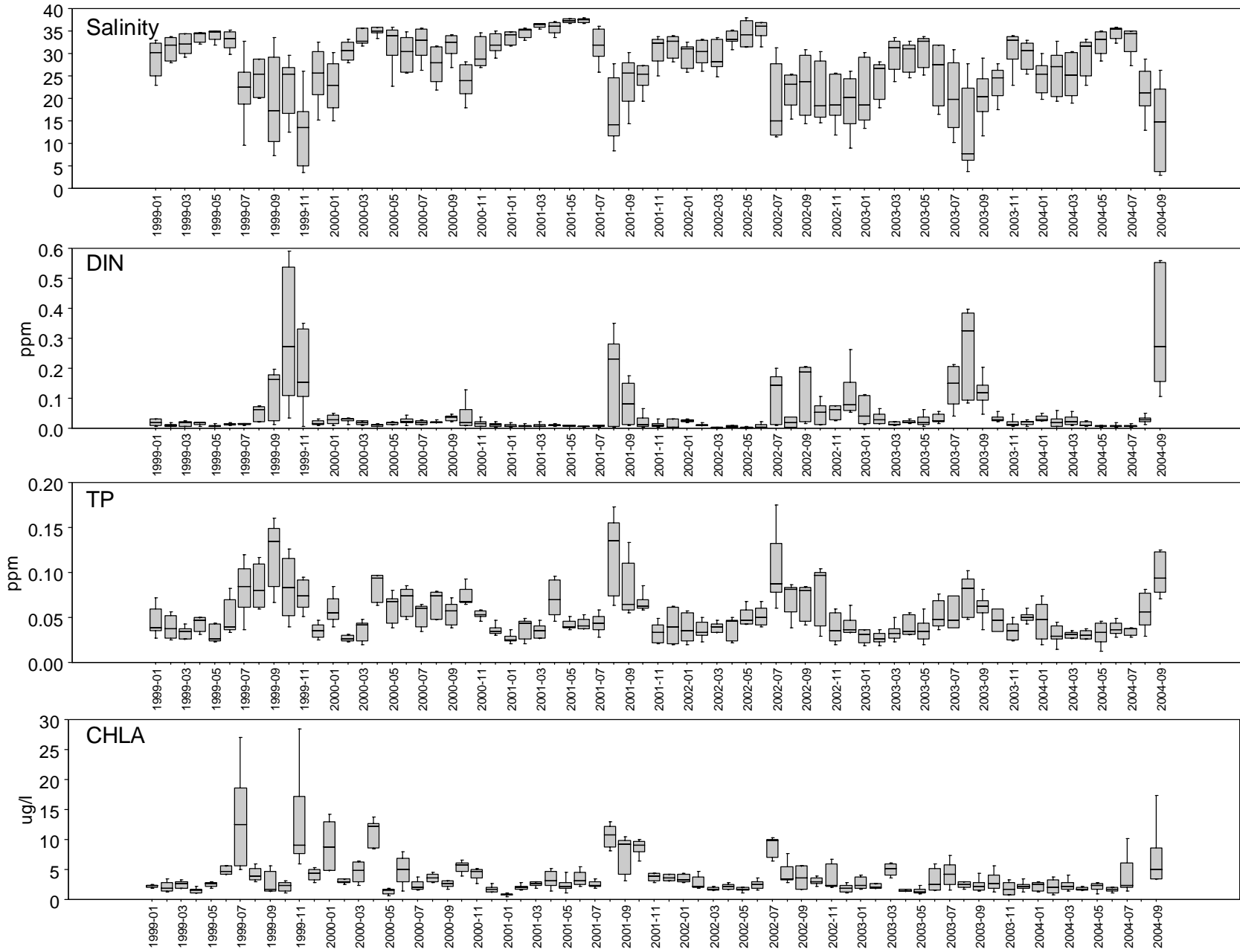


Figure 26. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in RB-PIS by survey.

# Estero Bay Zone

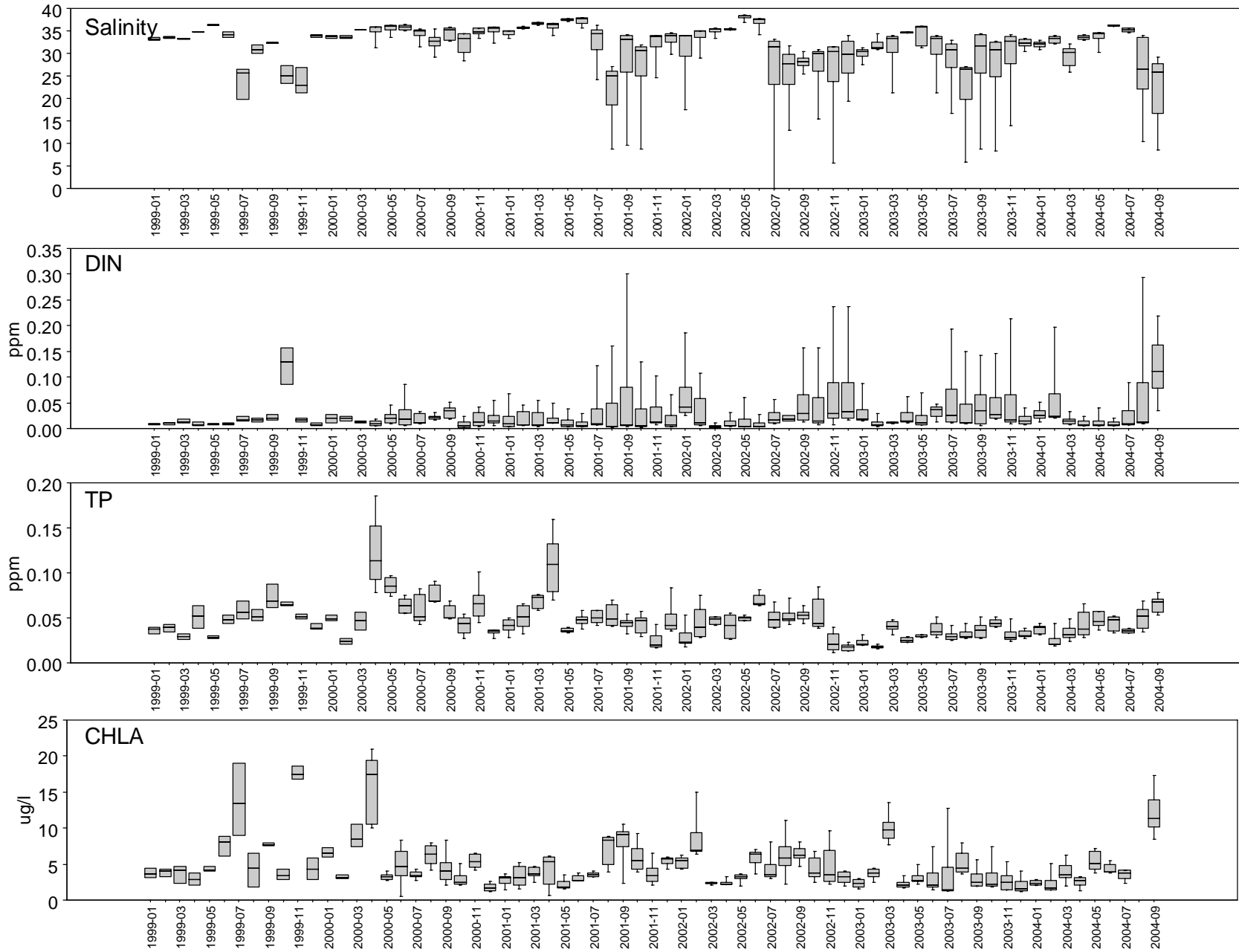


Figure 27. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in RB-PIS by survey.

# Pine Island Sound Zone

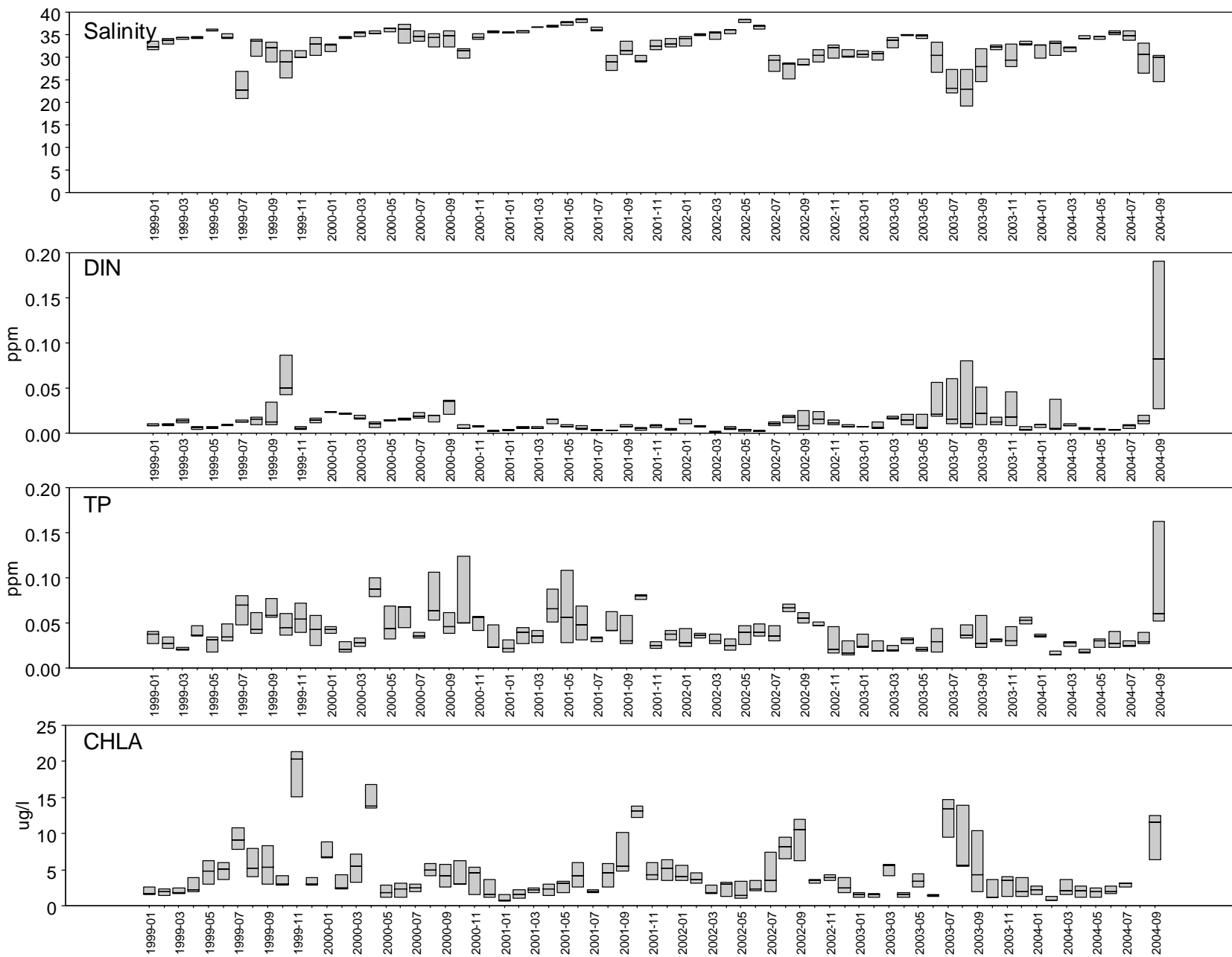


Figure 28. Box-and-whisker plots of water quality in RB-PIS by survey.



Table 1.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>
Alkaline	Biscayne Bay	0.216	0.092	1.034	75
Phosphatase Activity ( $\mu\text{M h}^{-1}$ )	Florida Bay	0.375	0.113	1.444	84
	Rookery Bay	0.068	0.020	0.309	87
	SW Shelf	0.038	0.014	0.266	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	0.069	0.025	1.855	78
	Whitewater Bay	0.392	0.038	1.786	66
Chlorophyll <i>a</i> ( $\mu\text{g l}^{-1}$ )	Biscayne Bay	0.423	0.203	6.987	50
	Florida Bay	0.597	0.143	7.257	84
	Rookery Bay	5.612	1.388	17.392	58
	SW Shelf	0.957	0.336	8.910	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	4.273	0.740	13.826	78
	Whitewater Bay	1.902	0.515	9.838	66
Surface Dissolved Oxygen ( $\text{mg l}^{-1}$ )	Biscayne Bay	5.07	3.09	6.67	75
	Florida Bay	5.15	3.17	7.58	84
	Rookery Bay	5.06	3.33	9.95	87
	SW Shelf	5.58	3.82	6.65	45
	Ten Thousand Is.	4.36	1.53	7.69	78
	Whitewater Bay	4.36	1.91	6.45	66
Bottom Dissolved Oxygen ( $\text{mg l}^{-1}$ )	Biscayne Bay	5.02	2.55	7.16	75
	Florida Bay	5.19	3.66	8.40	84
	Rookery Bay	4.84	3.08	6.96	86
	SW Shelf	5.26	4.85	6.65	45
	Ten Thousand Is.	4.40	1.67	7.63	78
	Whitewater Bay	4.41	1.97	7.55	66
$\text{NH}_4^+$ (ppm)	Biscayne Bay	0.021	0.004	0.220	75
	Florida Bay	0.042	0.000	0.242	84
	Rookery Bay	0.005	0.001	0.173	87
	SW Shelf	0.002	0.000	0.007	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	0.033	0.002	0.126	78
	Whitewater Bay	0.018	0.002	0.064	66

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>
NO <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup> (ppm)	Biscayne Bay	0.002	0.000	0.024	75
	Florida Bay	0.002	0.000	0.007	84
	Rookery Bay	0.001	0.000	0.024	87
	SW Shelf	0.000	0.000	0.001	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	0.004	0.000	0.012	78
	Whitewater Bay	0.002	0.001	0.011	66
NO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> (ppm)	Biscayne Bay	0.012	0.000	0.425	75
	Florida Bay	0.005	0.000	0.036	84
	Rookery Bay	0.008	0.000	0.424	87
	SW Shelf	0.002	0.000	0.005	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	0.019	0.000	0.107	78
	Whitewater Bay	0.016	0.002	0.069	66
pH	Biscayne Bay	7.960	7.730	8.555	75
	Florida Bay	8.045	7.720	8.380	84
	Rookery Bay	7.945	7.465	8.200	87
	SW Shelf	7.835	7.660	8.000	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	7.758	7.055	8.825	78
	Whitewater Bay	7.818	7.225	8.500	66
Surface Salinity	Biscayne Bay	37.09	16.19	44.13	75
	Florida Bay	38.53	3.00	48.57	84
	Rookery Bay	30.32	3.02	37.72	87
	SW Shelf	36.35	35.82	37.96	47
	Ten Thousand Is.	20.90	0.30	36.86	78
	Whitewater Bay	17.84	0.34	36.43	66
Bottom Salinity	Biscayne Bay	37.04	25.93	44.14	75
	Florida Bay	38.80	3.24	49.01	84
	Rookery Bay	32.93	5.56	37.65	86
	SW Shelf	36.37	35.98	37.96	47
	Ten Thousand Is.	22.47	0.32	36.91	78
	Whitewater Bay	18.81	0.30	35.53	66
Si(OH) <sub>4</sub> (ppm)	Biscayne Bay	0.101	0.032	1.972	25
	Florida Bay	0.802	0.102	4.604	28
	Rookery Bay	0.861	0.200	3.488	29
	SW Shelf	0.092	0.005	0.760	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	2.593	0.603	4.083	26
	Whitewater Bay	1.603	0.047	2.548	22

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>
Soluble	Biscayne Bay	0.001	0.000	0.003	75
Reactive	Florida Bay	0.001	0.000	0.006	84
Phosphorus (ppm)	Rookery Bay	0.004	0.001	0.153	87
	SW Shelf	0.001	0.000	0.003	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	0.004	0.001	0.036	78
	Whitewater Bay	0.001	0.000	0.006	66
Surface Temperature (°C)	Biscayne Bay	30.60	26.84	33.18	75
	Florida Bay	30.51	27.88	32.91	84
	Rookery Bay	29.82	27.30	31.92	87
	SW Shelf	30.70	29.76	31.41	47
	Ten Thousand Is.	30.35	26.87	33.24	78
Bottom Temperature (°C)	Whitewater Bay	30.55	27.96	33.53	66
	Biscayne Bay	30.38	27.10	33.19	75
	Florida Bay	30.43	27.73	32.55	84
	Rookery Bay	29.63	27.42	31.41	86
	SW Shelf	30.69	29.54	31.41	47
Total Nitrogen (ppm)	Ten Thousand Is.	30.31	27.39	32.56	78
	Whitewater Bay	29.93	27.97	31.72	66
	Biscayne Bay	0.263	0.167	0.590	75
	Florida Bay	0.464	0.199	0.961	84
	Rookery Bay	0.290	0.188	0.826	87
Total Organic Carbon (ppm)	SW Shelf	0.220	0.144	0.294	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	0.354	0.238	0.642	78
	Whitewater Bay	0.339	0.178	0.616	66
	Biscayne Bay	2.453	1.570	7.064	75
	Florida Bay	6.831	1.762	14.123	84
Total Organic Nitrogen (ppm)	Rookery Bay	4.749	2.266	16.680	87
	SW Shelf	1.751	1.164	9.381	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	8.866	3.839	17.010	78
	Whitewater Bay	12.361	5.294	25.569	66
	Biscayne Bay	0.219	0.040	0.427	75
Total Organic Nitrogen (ppm)	Florida Bay	0.365	0.193	0.789	84
	Rookery Bay	0.265	0.084	0.591	87
	SW Shelf	0.216	0.141	0.290	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	0.310	0.138	0.557	78
	Whitewater Bay	0.300	0.145	0.570	66

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>
Total	Biscayne Bay	0.005	0.002	0.017	75
Phosphorus (ppm)	Florida Bay	0.005	0.003	0.035	84
	Rookery Bay	0.039	0.018	0.196	87
	SW Shelf	0.011	0.005	0.033	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	0.030	0.003	0.079	78
	Whitewater Bay	0.011	0.006	0.036	66
Turbidity (NTU)	Biscayne Bay	0.63	0.22	3.55	75
	Florida Bay	1.45	0.15	12.89	84
	Rookery Bay	4.66	0.71	17.38	87
	SW Shelf	2.77	0.30	64.45	49
	Ten Thousand Is.	4.85	0.62	11.64	78
	Whitewater Bay	1.38	0.53	6.90	66