

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1 (888) 788-0099 -or- Zoom.us Code: 849016

ADF&G Bethel toll free: 1 (855) 933-2433

Meeting Agenda

Date: April 29, 2026

Time: 10:00am–5:00pm*

Place: Bethel, AK

* breaks when needed.

Time Called to Order:

Chair:

Time Adjourned:

ROLL CALL TO ESTABLISH QUORUM:

QUORUM MET? Yes / No

Upriver Elder:

Processor:

Downriver Elder:

Member at Large:

Commercial Fisher:

Sport Fisher:

Lower River Subsistence:

Western Interior RAC:

Middle River Subsistence:

Y-K Delta RAC:

Upper River Subsistence:

KRITFC:

Headwaters Subsistence:

ADF&G:

INTRODUCTIONS: members, staff, new staff-Kara Domnick and Kay Stewart

INVOCATION:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: *the agenda may be amended at this time.*

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

1. WORKING GROUP BUSINESS:

- A. Election of Co-Chairs
- B. Working Group In-Season Meeting Schedule
- C. Nominate WG representative to serve at KRITFC inseason meeting?

2. 2025 Season Summary and 2026 Forecast (Sean Larson, ADF&G)

- A. Assessment projects review
- B. Chinook salmon total run and drainage wide escapement
- C. 2026 Chinook salmon forecast

3. 2026 Assessment projects: starting dates, funding, etc

- A. ADF&G- Weirs, sonar, telemetry, Ichthyophonus
- B. ONC- inseason harvest estimates, fish distribution?
- C. NVN-Kids Camp, Aniak TF, Salmon Aniak camera, outgoing smolt, inriver turbine
- D. USFWS- Outgoing smolt, Kwethluk weir, fishing boat counts
- E. KRITFC- inseason harvest estimates, Takotna weir, chum genetic research, fishing effort estimates, camera-based escapement monitoring, Chinook marine stock apportionment, water temperature monitoring.

4. 2026 Fishery Management:

- A. Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (Brian, USFWS) with KRITFC
 - i. FSA updates and timeline
- B. ADF&G Management Discussion on Specific Management Actions For 2026
- C. Subsistence Sections 4 & 5 and Districts 4 & 5
 - i. AA #1: Front end closure dates
- D. Sport Fish Division (John Chythlook, ADF&G)
- E. Subsistence Division (ADF&G)

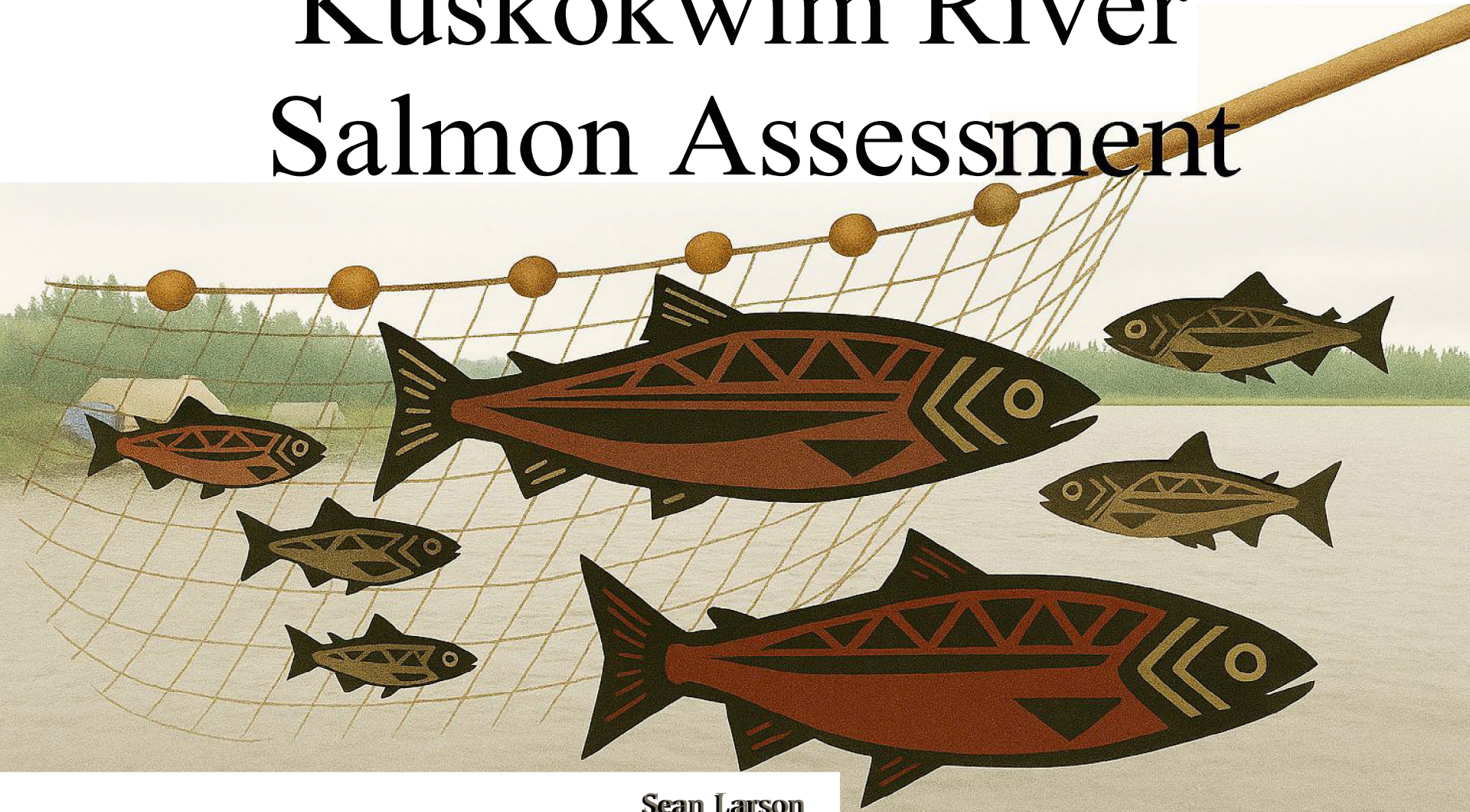
5. PRESENTATIONS:

- A. ADF&G: Resident fish species movement on the Kuskokwim - Matt Albert
- B. ADF&G SOEP: Southern Bering Sea survey results, otolith isotope research - Sabrina Garcia
 - i. REQUEST: Letter of Support

6. COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

NEXT MEETING DATE: _____ Time: _____ Place: _____

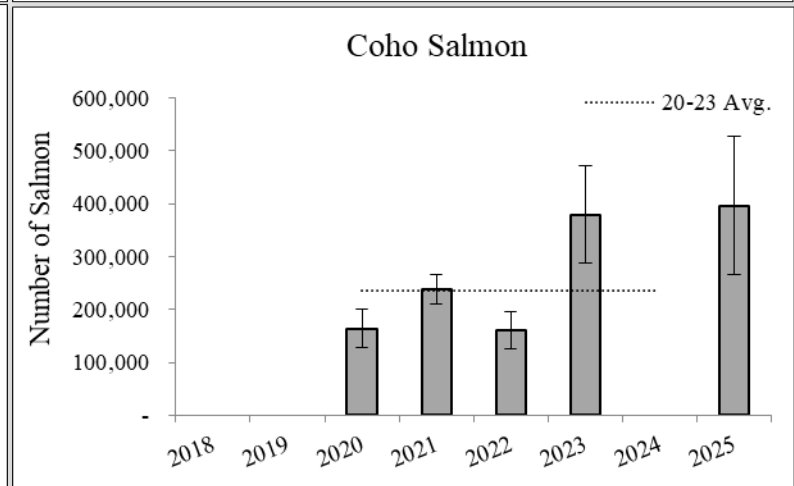
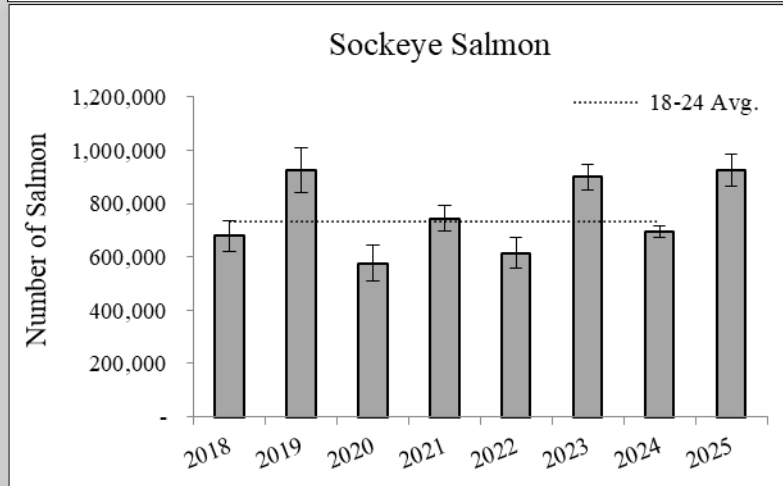
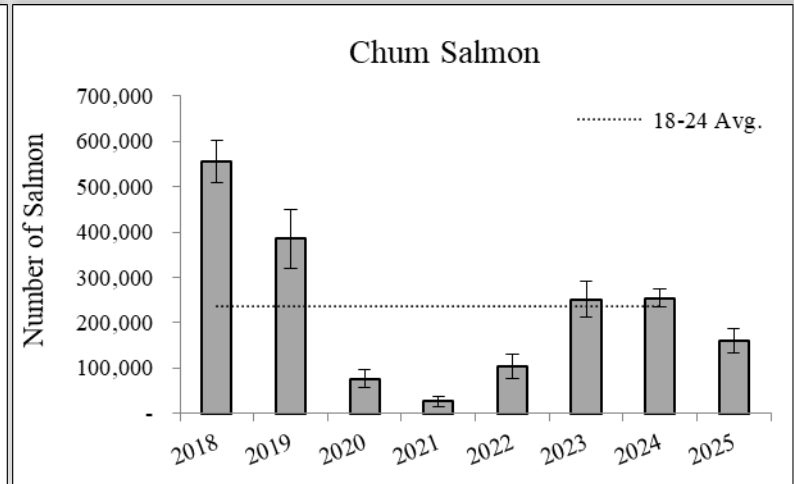
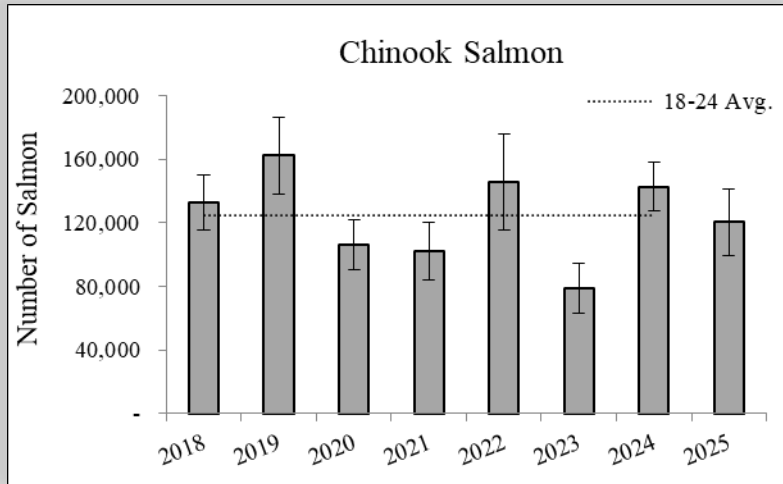
Kuskokwim River Salmon Assessment



Sean Larson

Alaska Dept. Fish and Game

Sonar Results



2025 Estimates

3 Chinook: 120,492

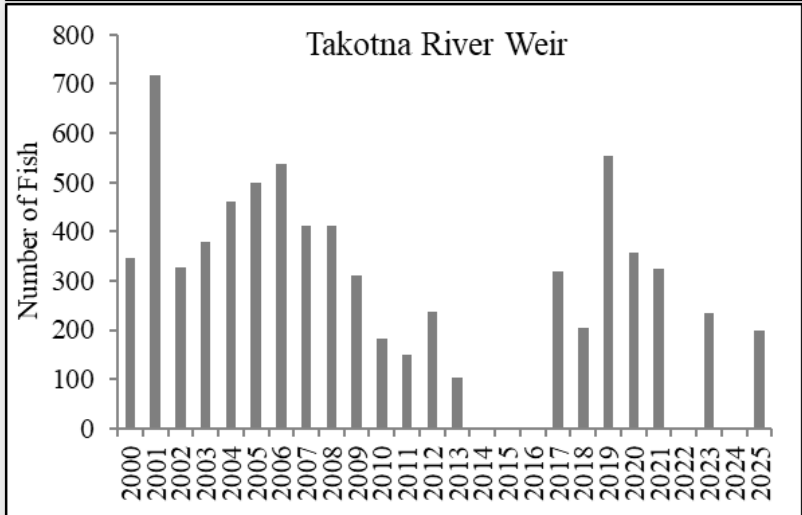
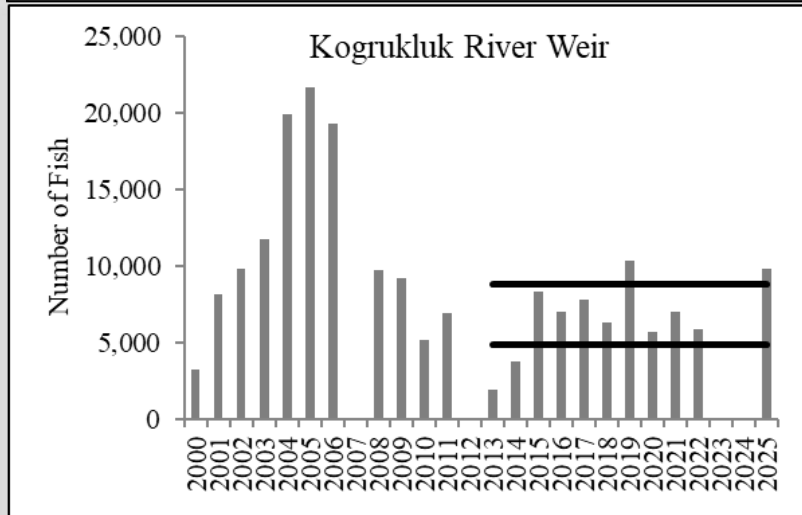
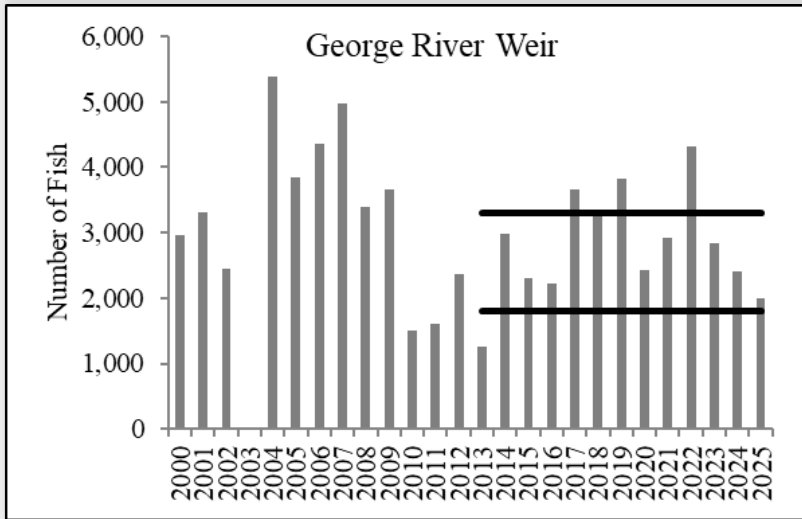
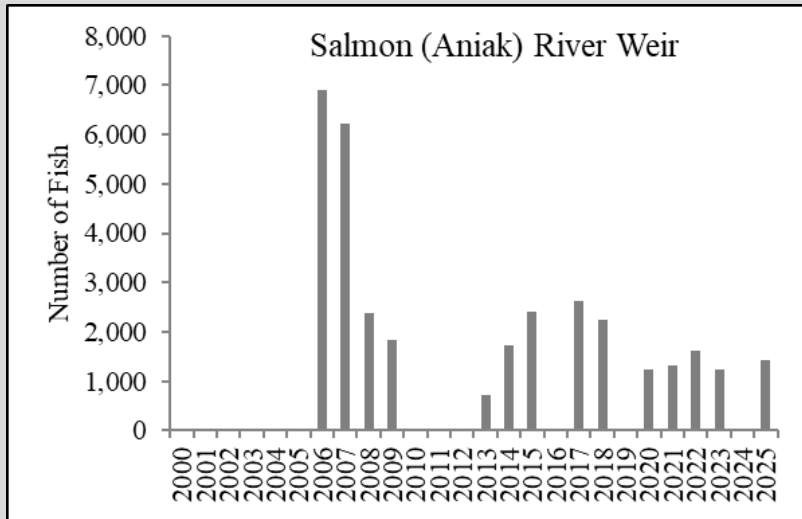
Chum: 159,622

Sockeye: 924,085

Coho: 396,141

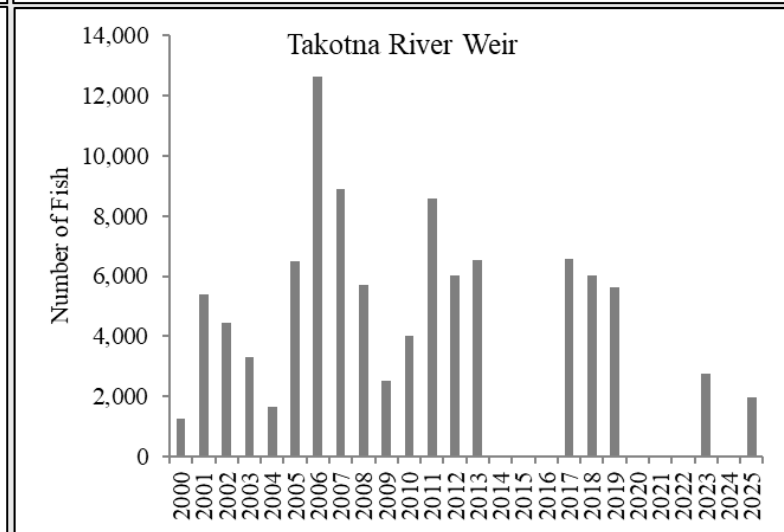
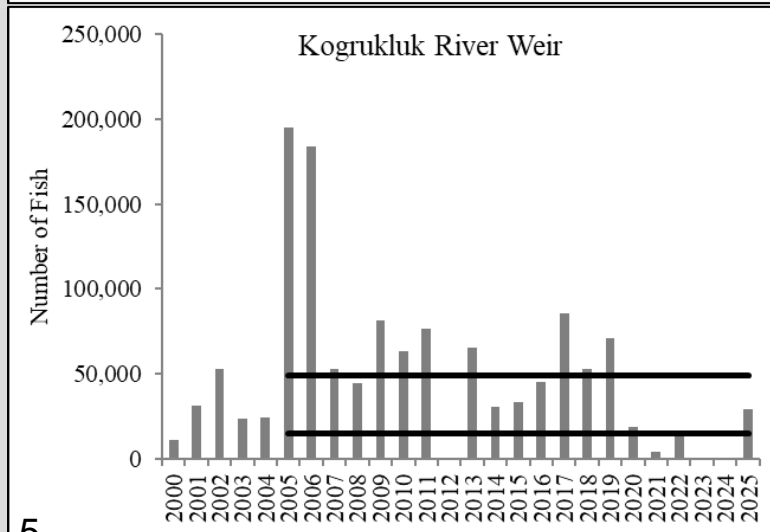
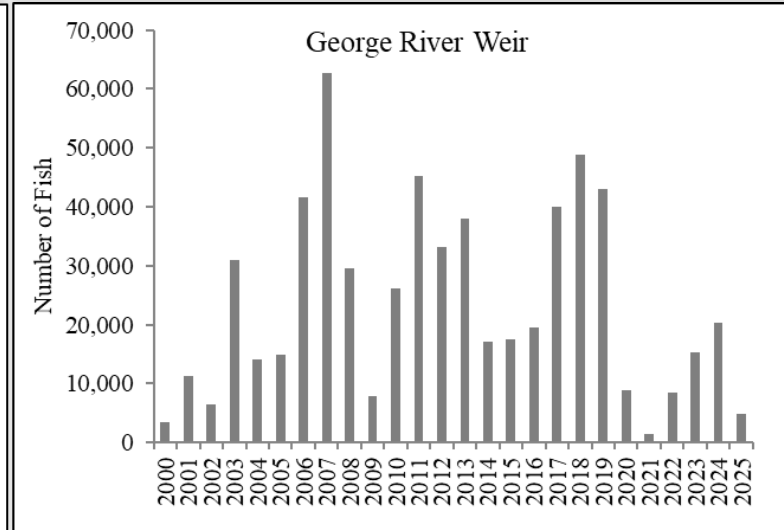
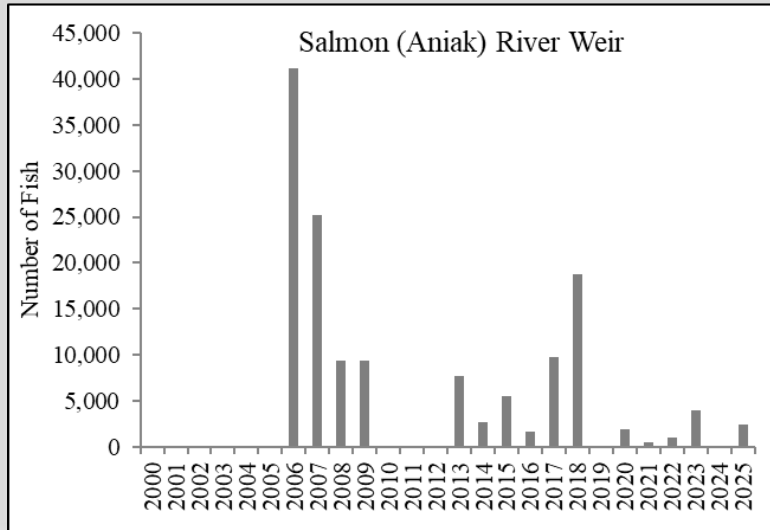
Weir Escapement

Chinook Salmon



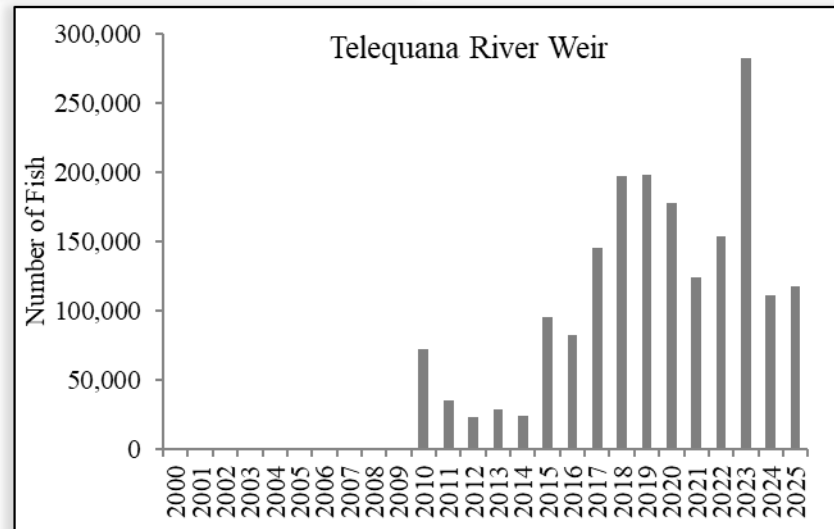
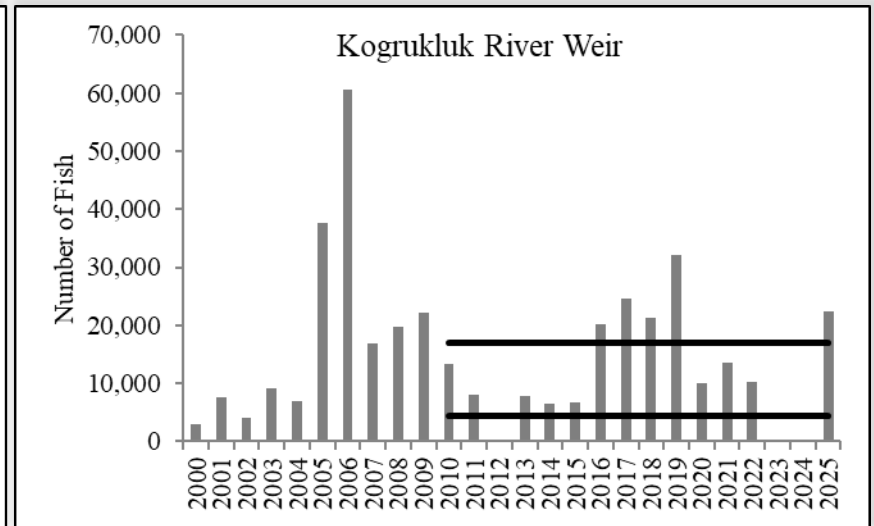
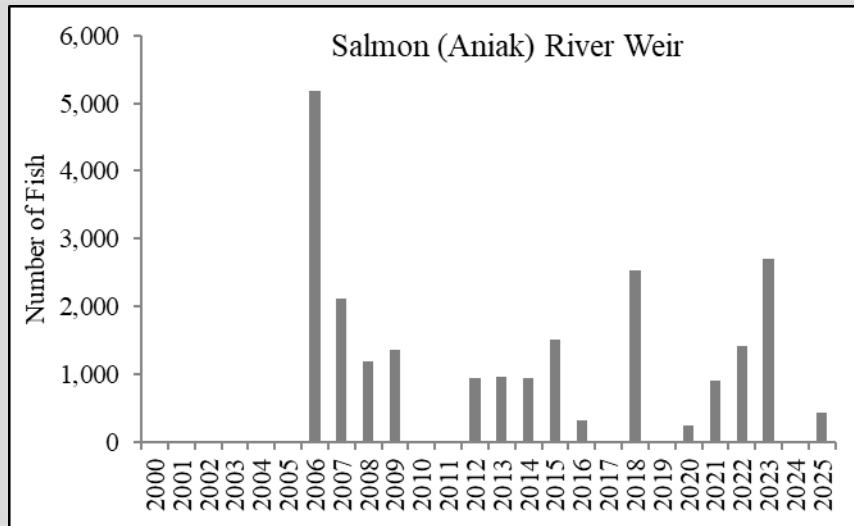
Weir Escapement

Chum Salmon



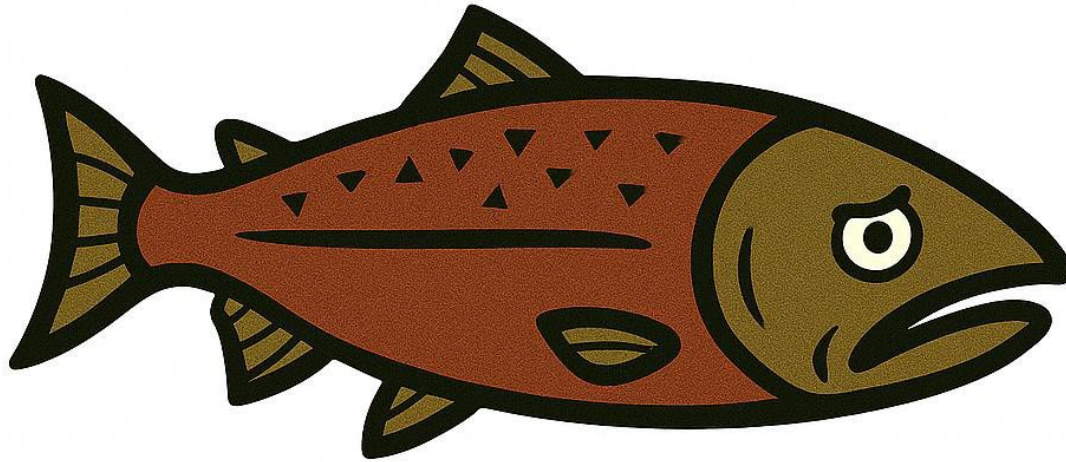
Weir Escapement

Sockeye Salmon



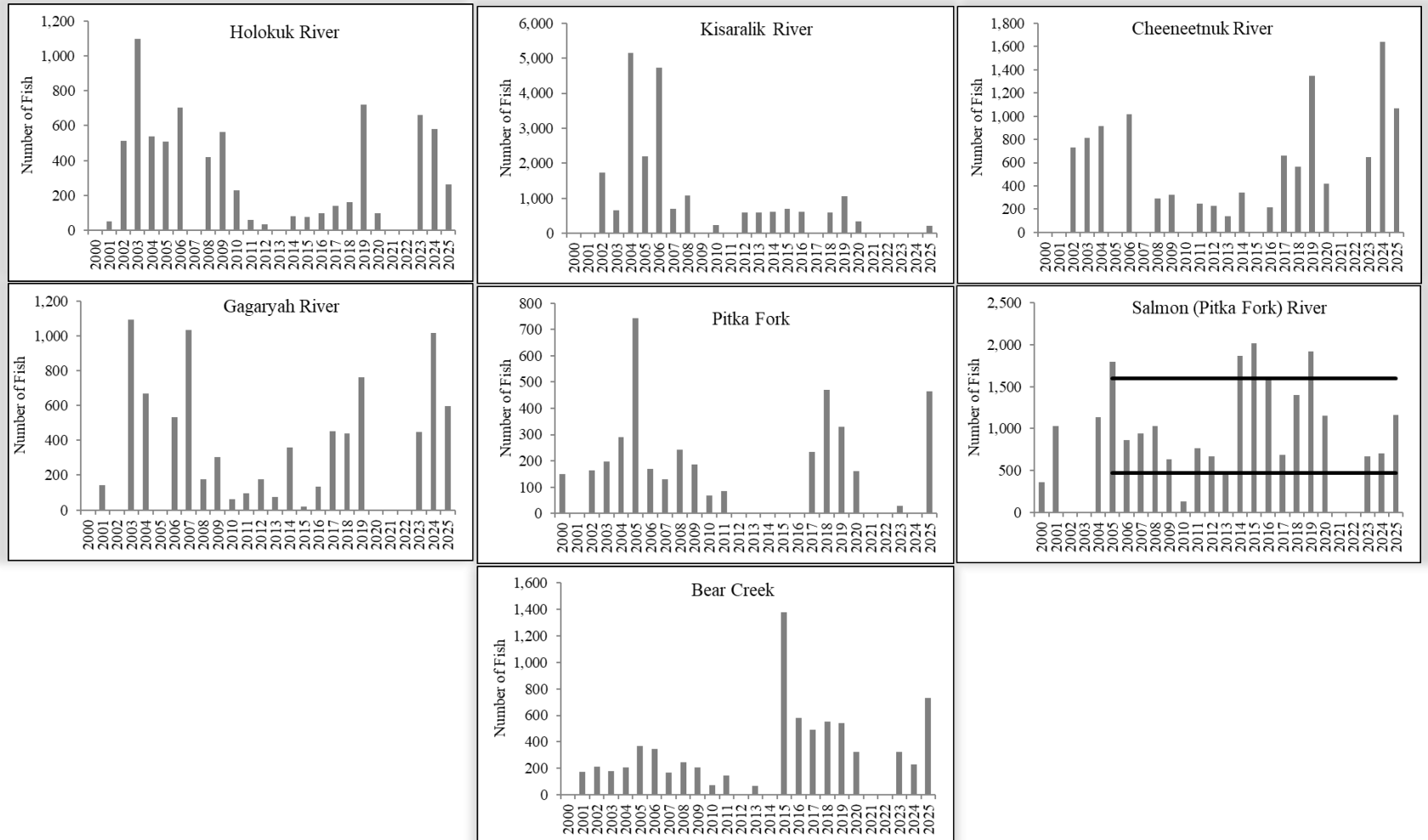
Weir Escapement

Coho Salmon

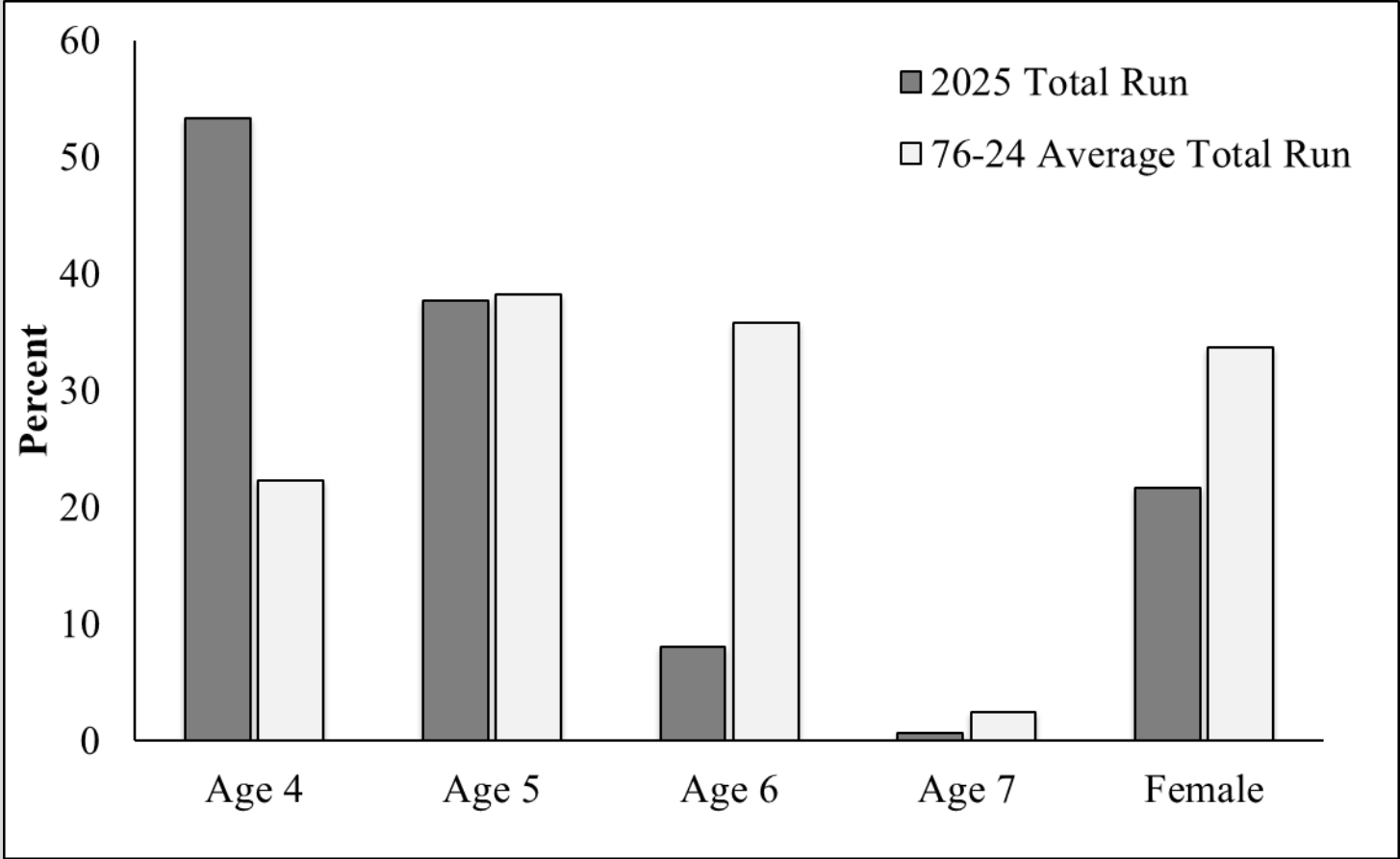


Aerial Escapement

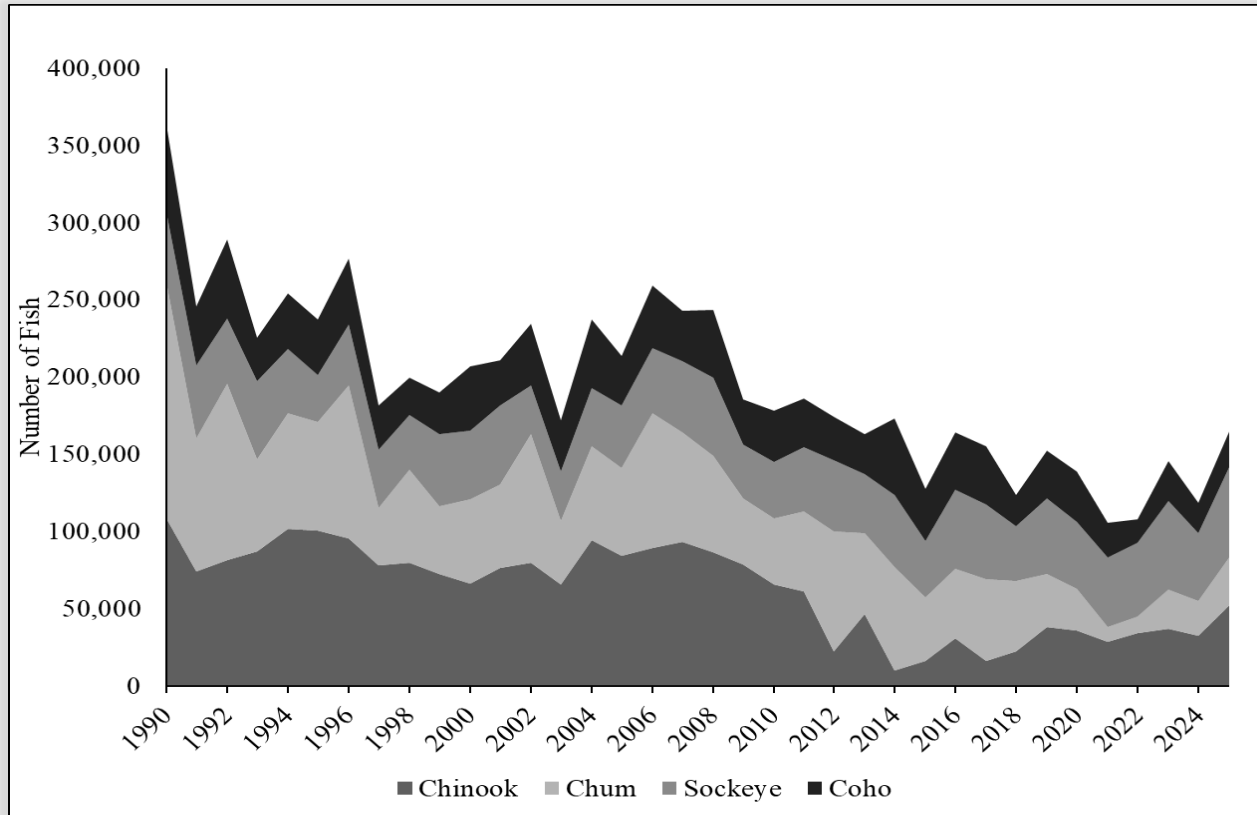
Chinook Salmon



Chinook Salmon - Age/Sex Composition

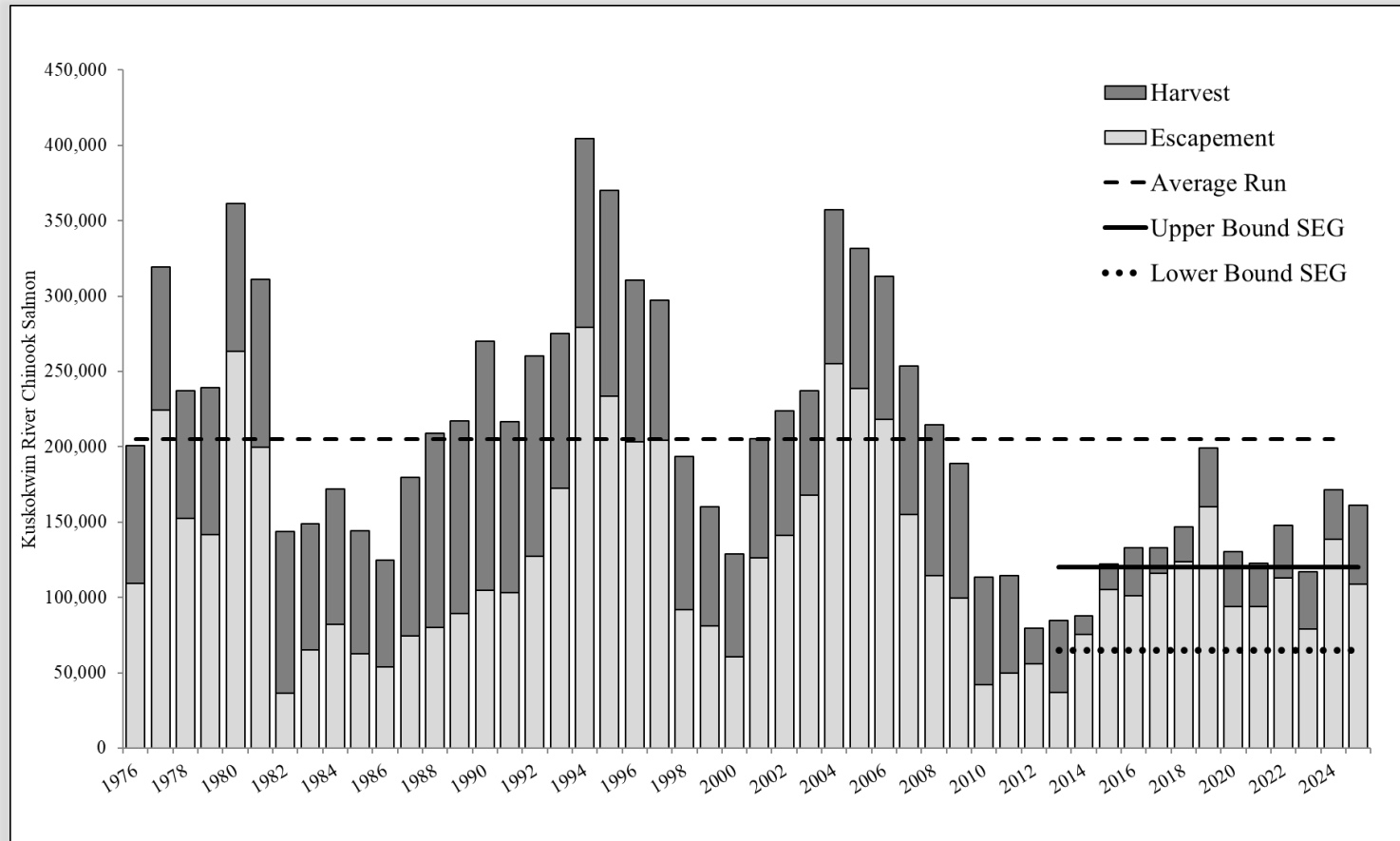


Kuskokwim River Subsistence Harvest



	2025 Harvest	90-24 Avg	ANS
Chinook	52,367	62,596	67,200-109,800
Chum	30,705	57,627	41,200-116,400
Sockeye	58,418	42,714	32,200-58,700
Coho	22,969	33,748	27,400-57,600

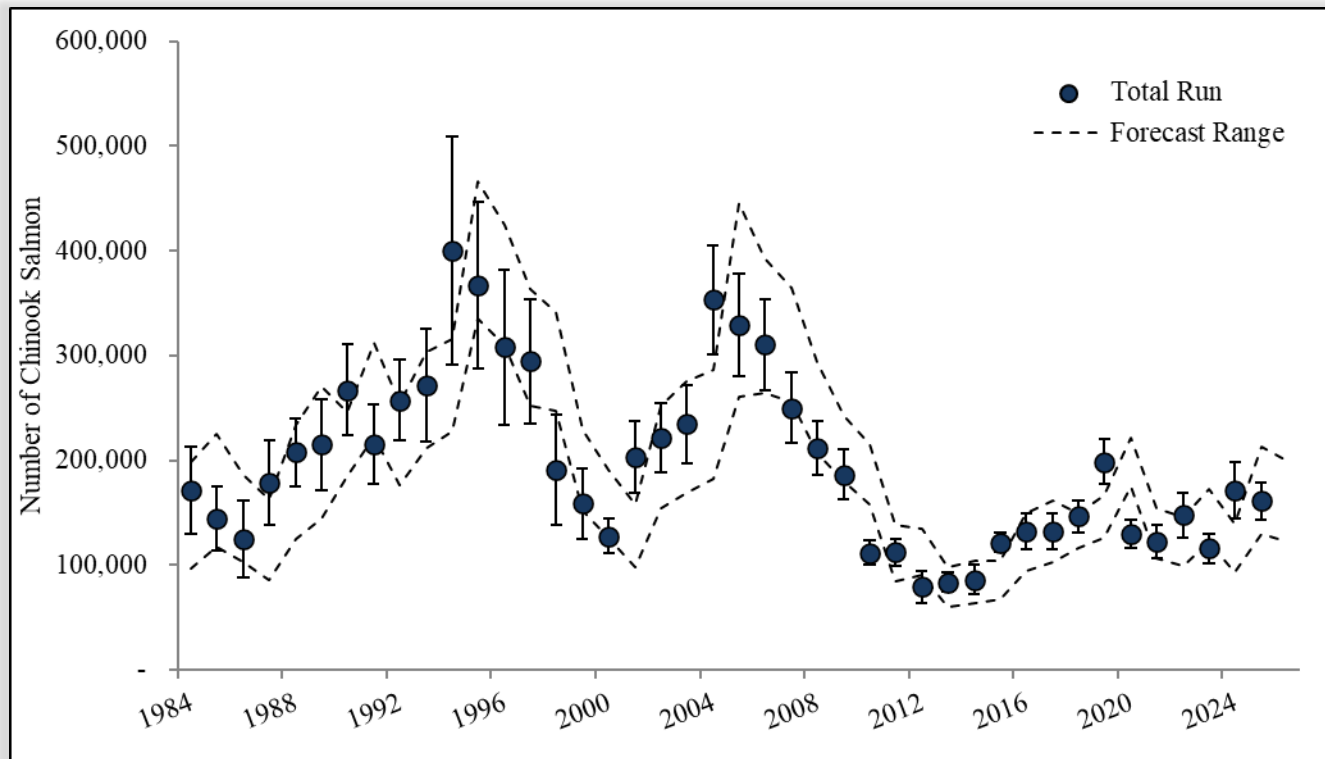
Chinook Salmon Run Reconstruction



Total Run Size – 161,295 (95% CI: 143,387–179,204)

Total Escapement – 108,792 (95% CI: 91,279–126,305)

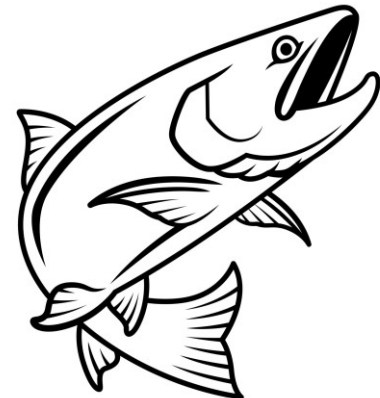
2026 Chinook Salmon Forecast



Forecast Range: 123,000–200,000

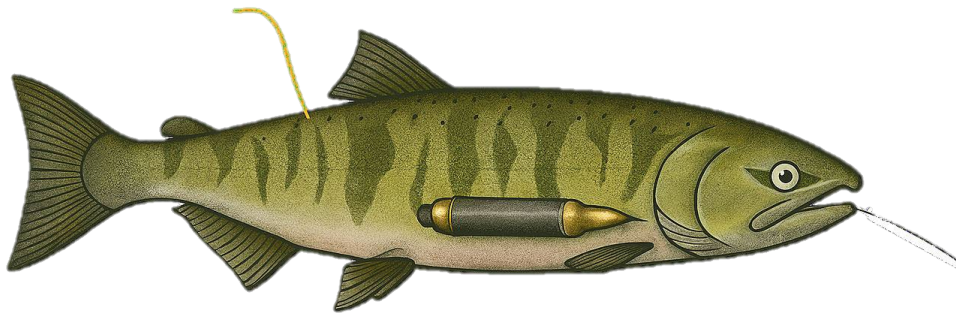
Summary

- Escapement goals
 - Chinook: 2 goals met, 1 goal exceeded
 - Chum: 1 goal met
 - Sockeye: 1 goal exceeded
 - Coho: No formal estimates but observed passage within goal
- Ages
 - Age-4 Chinook salmon was above average
 - Age-5 Chinook salmon was average
 - Age-6 and age-7 Chinook salmon was below average
- Total Run Size ~ 161,295
 - Below the 205,000 average
- Total Escapement ~ 108,792
- Total Harvest ~ 52,367
- †₃ Forecast Range ~ 123,000–200,000



New and Noteworthy in 2026

- Chum salmon tagging and mark-recapture
 - Tagging near Bethel (BTF site)
 - Radio tags and spaghetti tags (please report!)
 - Use weirs as recapture sites
 - Total abundance upriver from Bethel



- Tatlawiksuk River weir



Southern Bering Sea Juvenile Salmon Survey



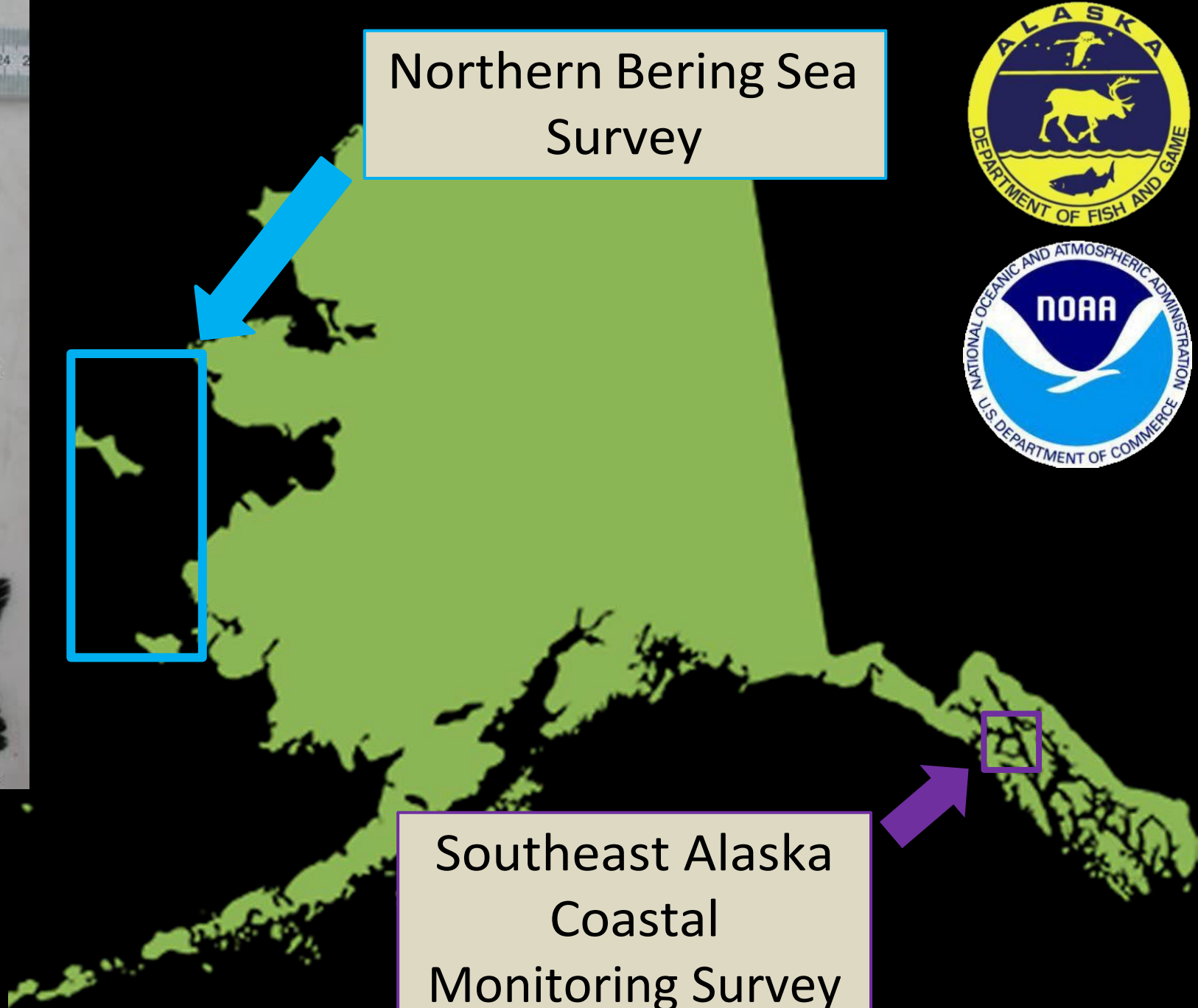
Sabrina Garcia, Fishery Biologist, ADF&G
Salmon Ocean Ecology Program



Northern Bering Sea
Survey



Southeast Alaska
Coastal
Monitoring Survey



Early marine ecology

Stocks moving north



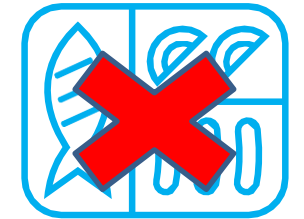
Different food available



Increasing ocean temperatures



= Empty stomachs



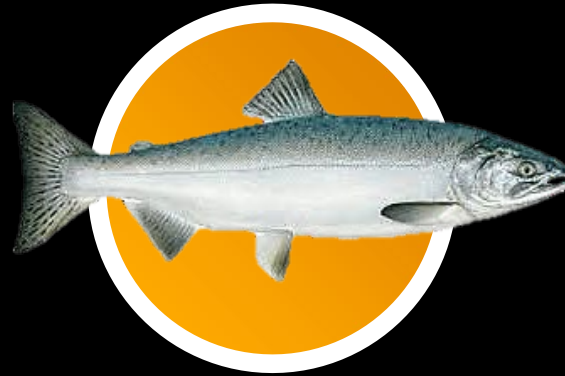
Increasing ocean temperatures



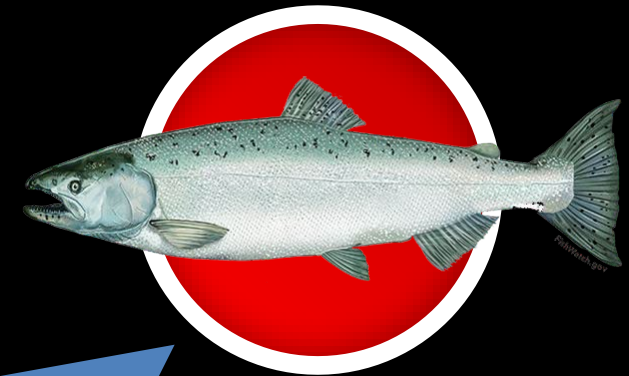
= poorer condition

Forecasting tools

Pink salmon



Chinook salmon



**Southeast
Alaska**



**Northern
Bering Sea**



Northern Bering Sea Survey



19 Southern Bering Sea Survey



Southeast Alaska Coastal Monitoring Survey



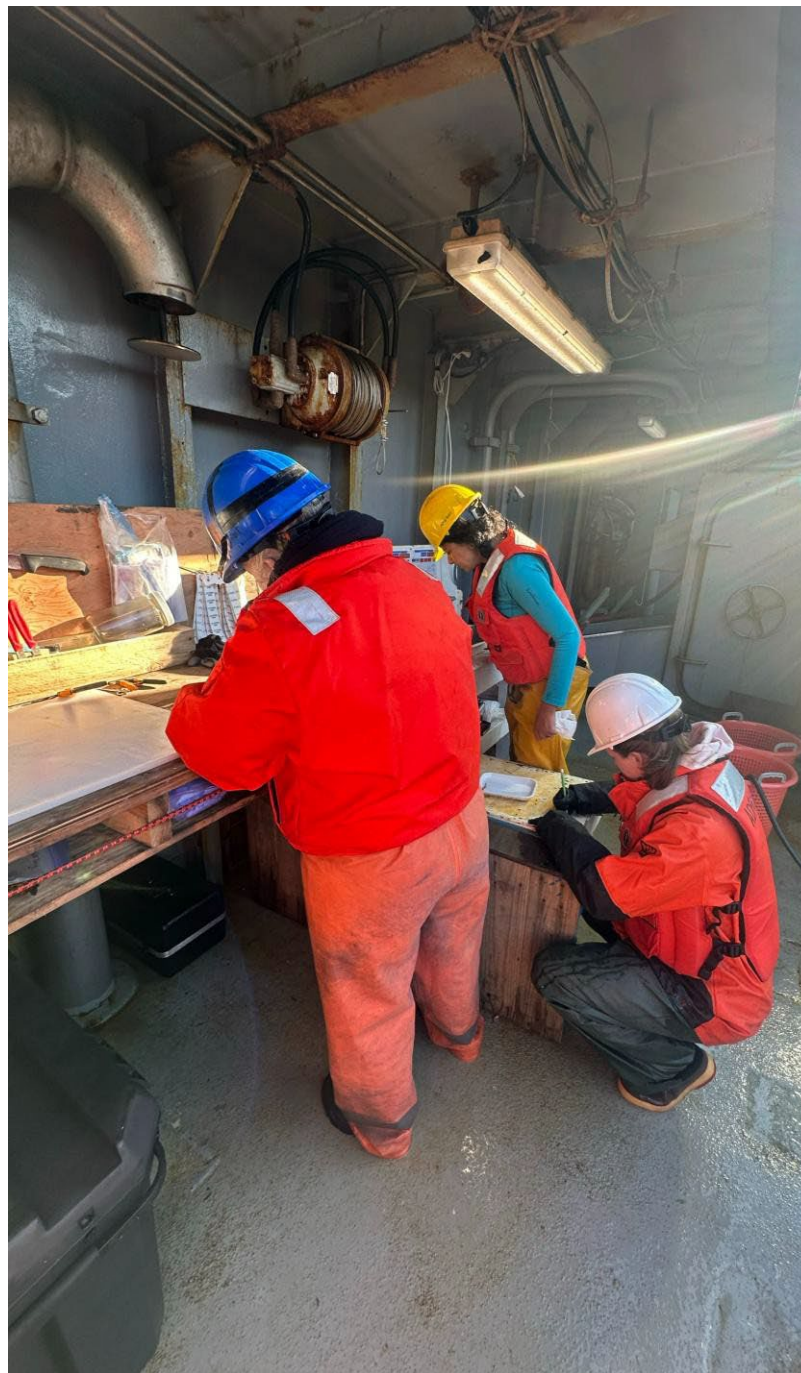
- 2024 restart
- Large vessel
- September sampling
- Full ecosystem survey





CTD

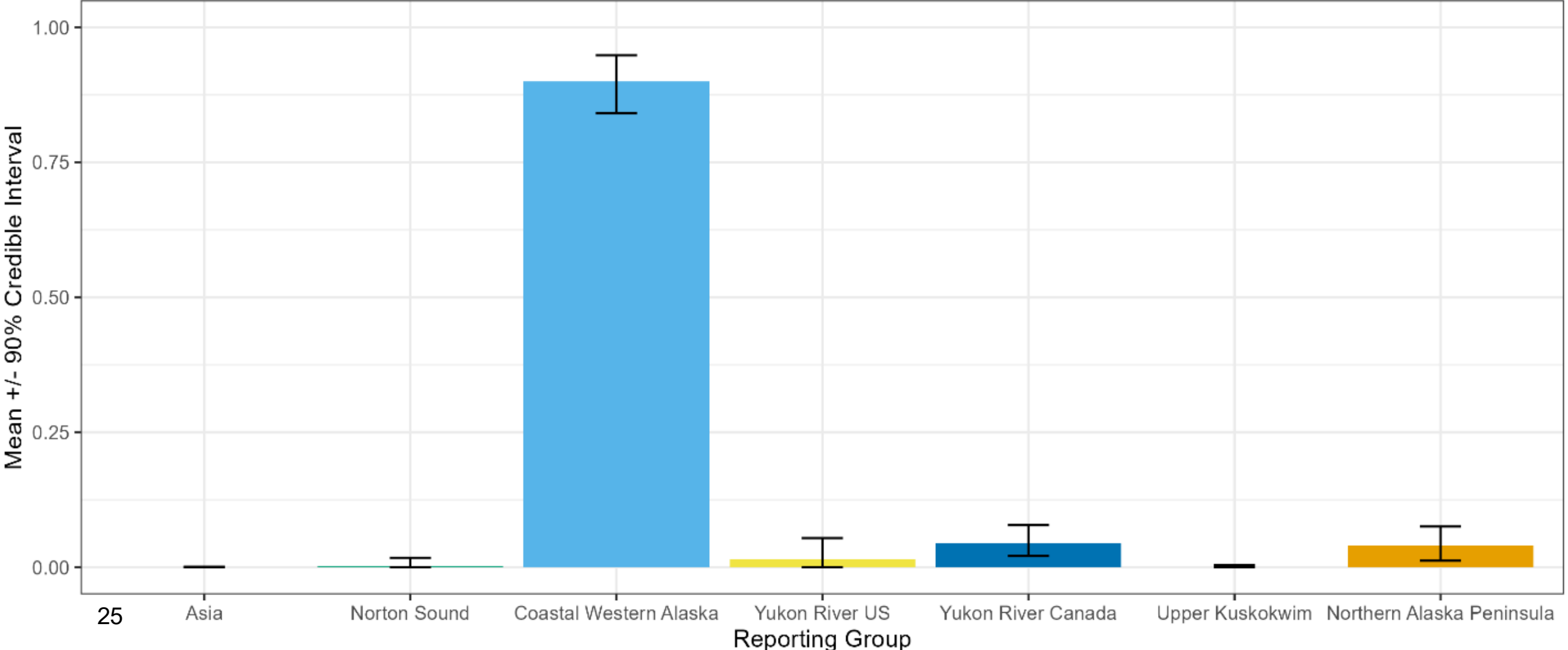




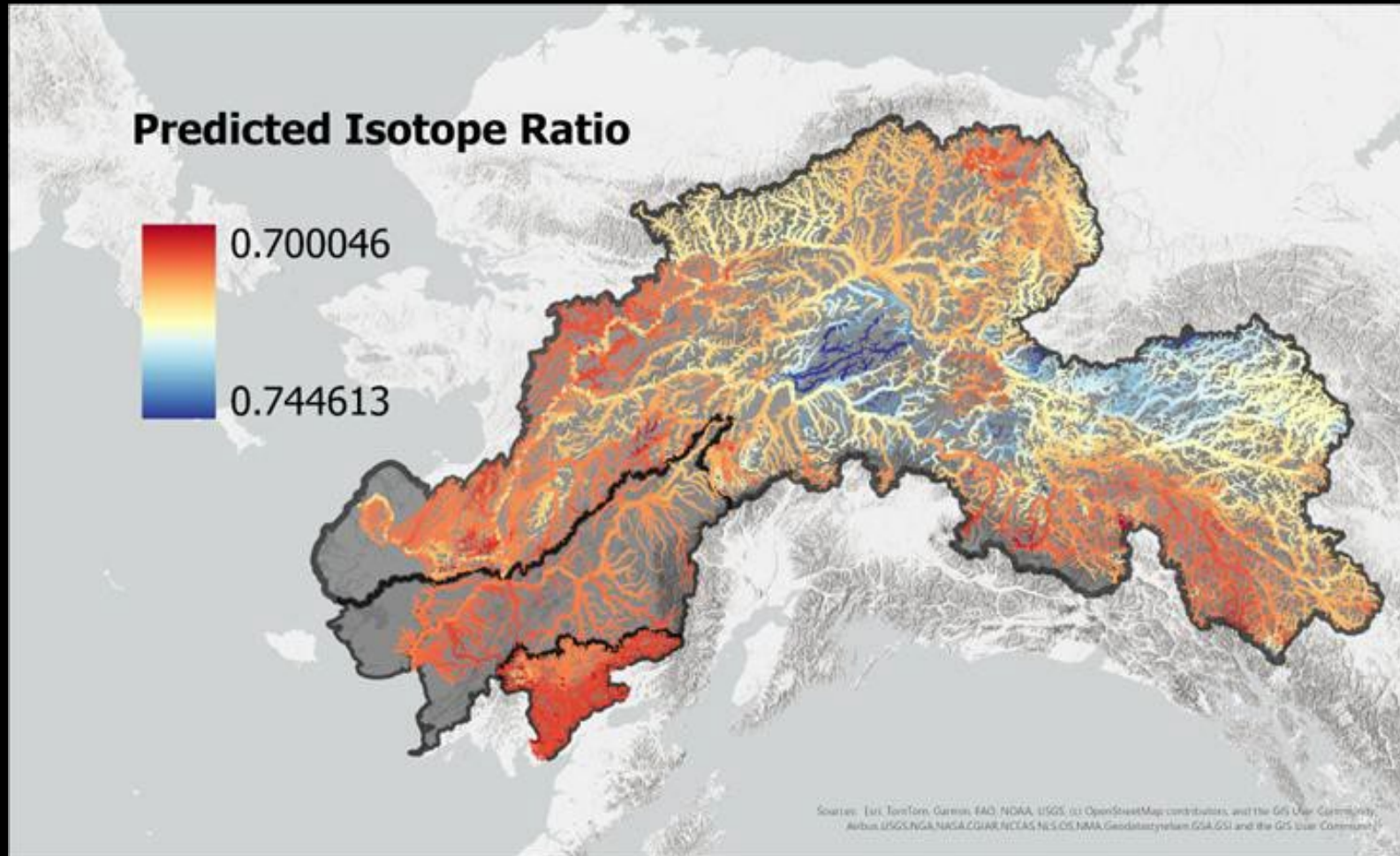
Chinook salmon stock compositions - 2025

Reporting Groups: Asia Coastal Western Alaska Yukon River Canada Northern Alaska Peninsula

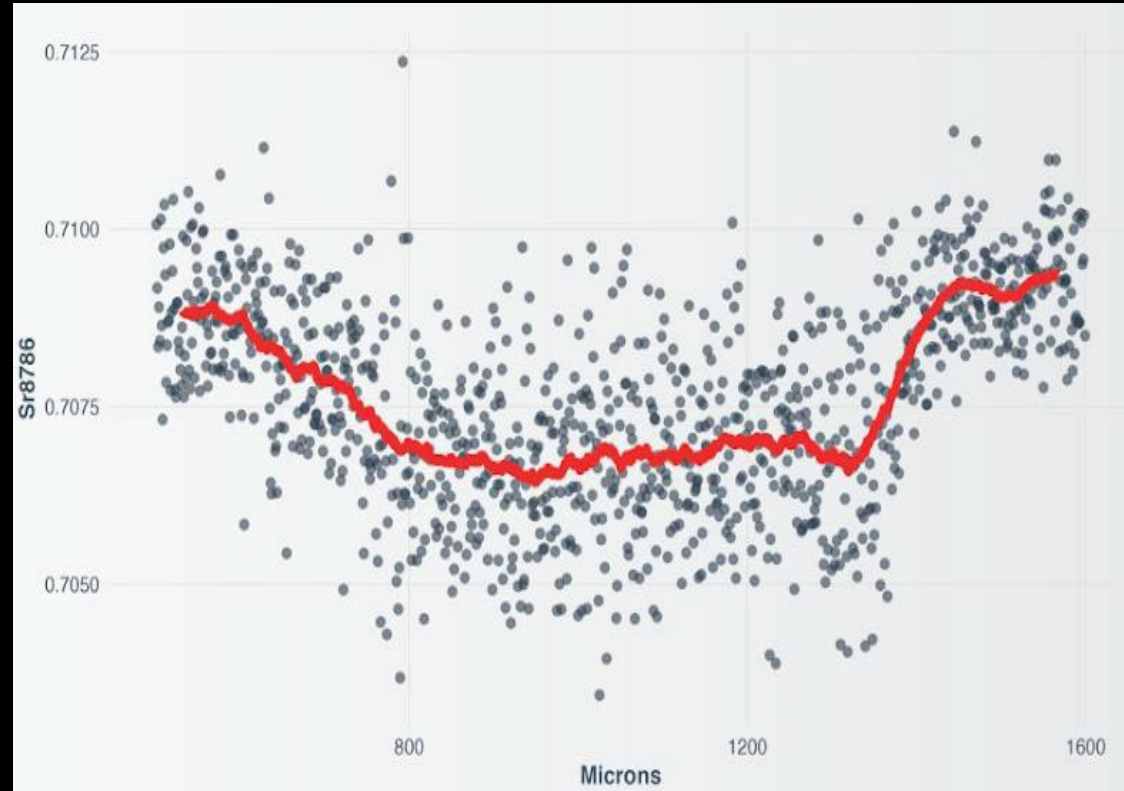
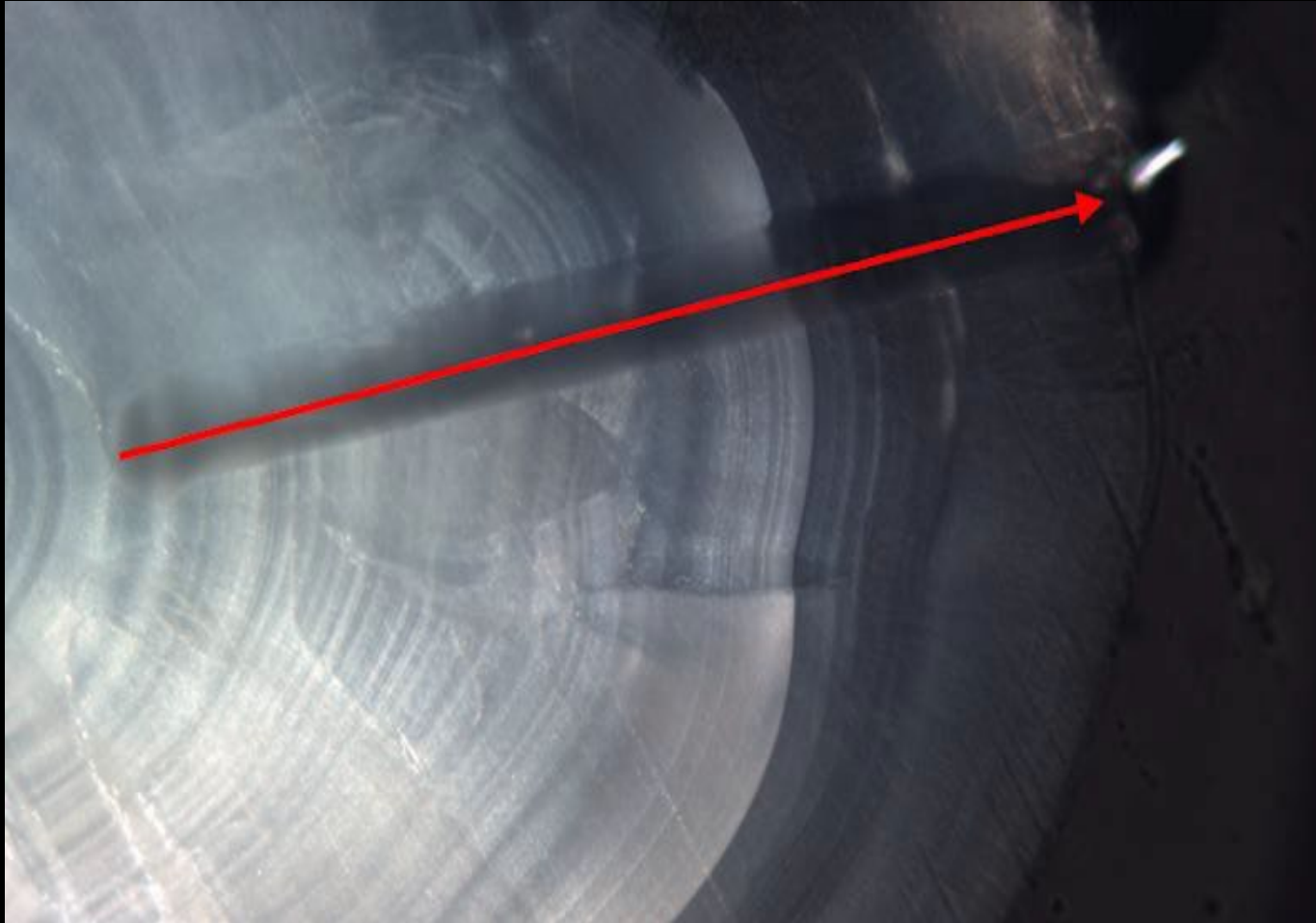
Norton Sound Yukon River US Upper Kuskokwim



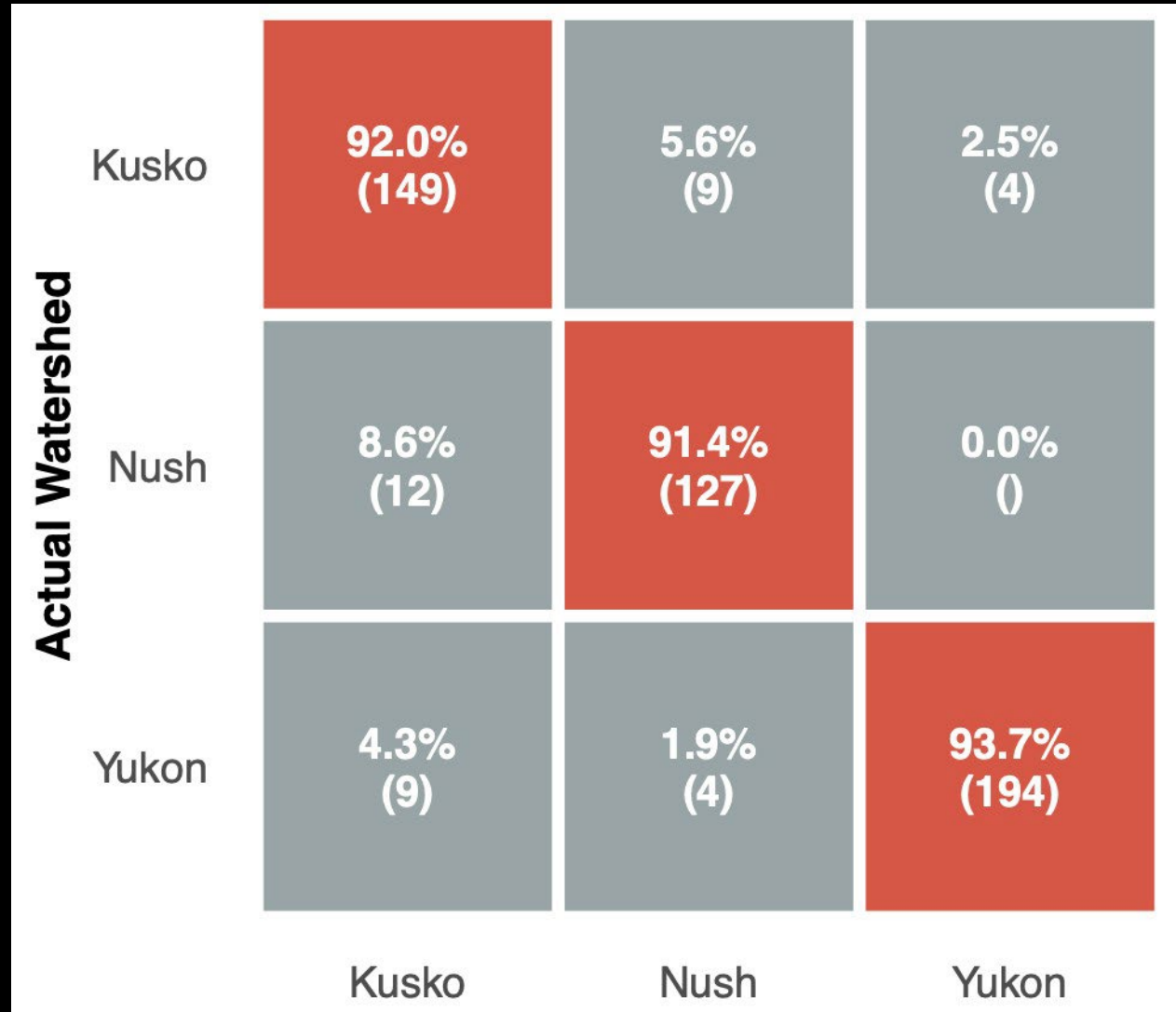
Otolith microchemistry analysis for stock discrimination (Makhlouf et al. 2025)



Otolith microchemistry analysis for stock discrimination (Makhlouf et al. 2025)

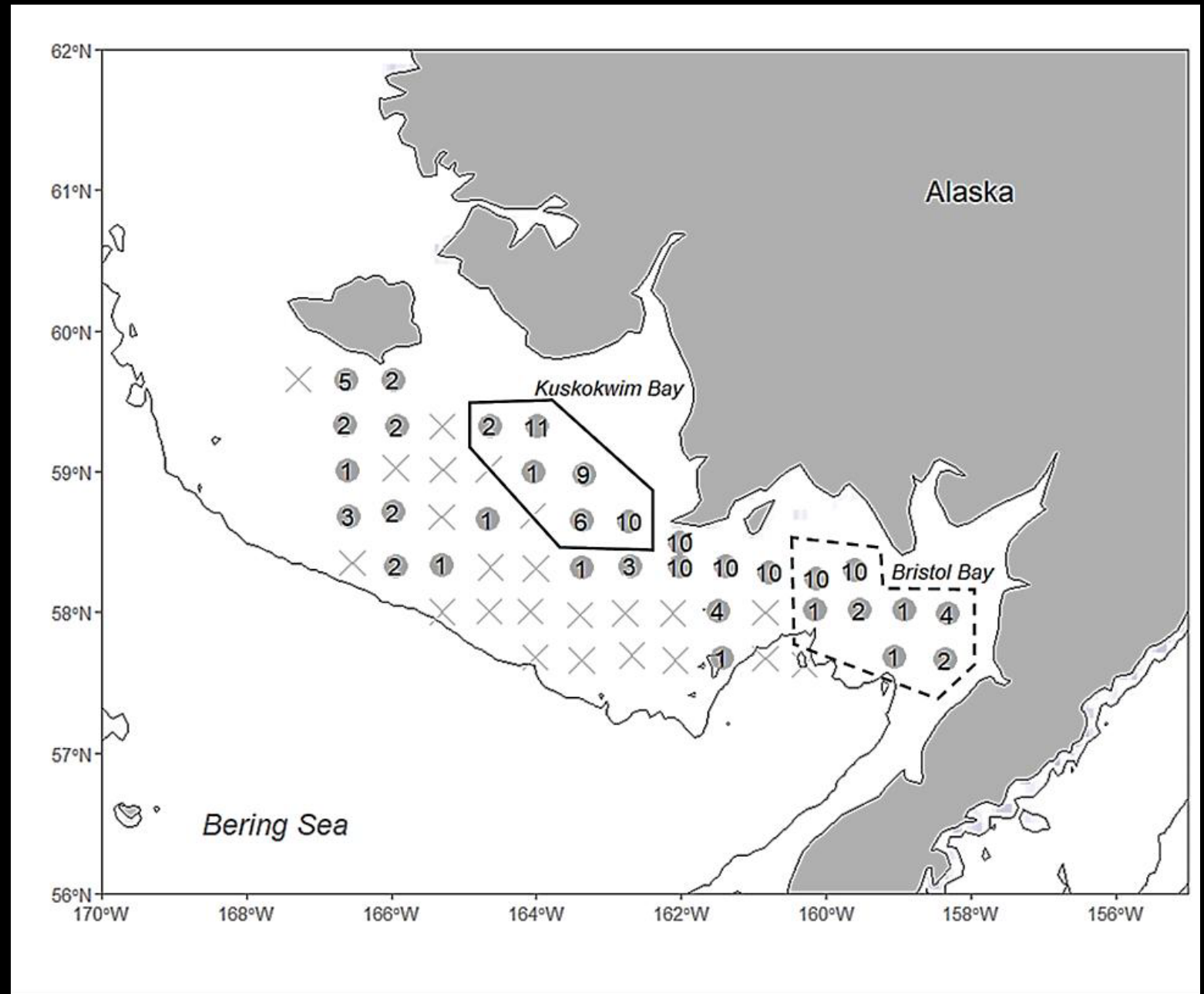


Otolith microchemistry analysis for stock discrimination (Makhlouf et al. 2025)



NPRB Proposal: Otolith shape and chemistry analysis for juvenile Chinook salmon stock discrimination

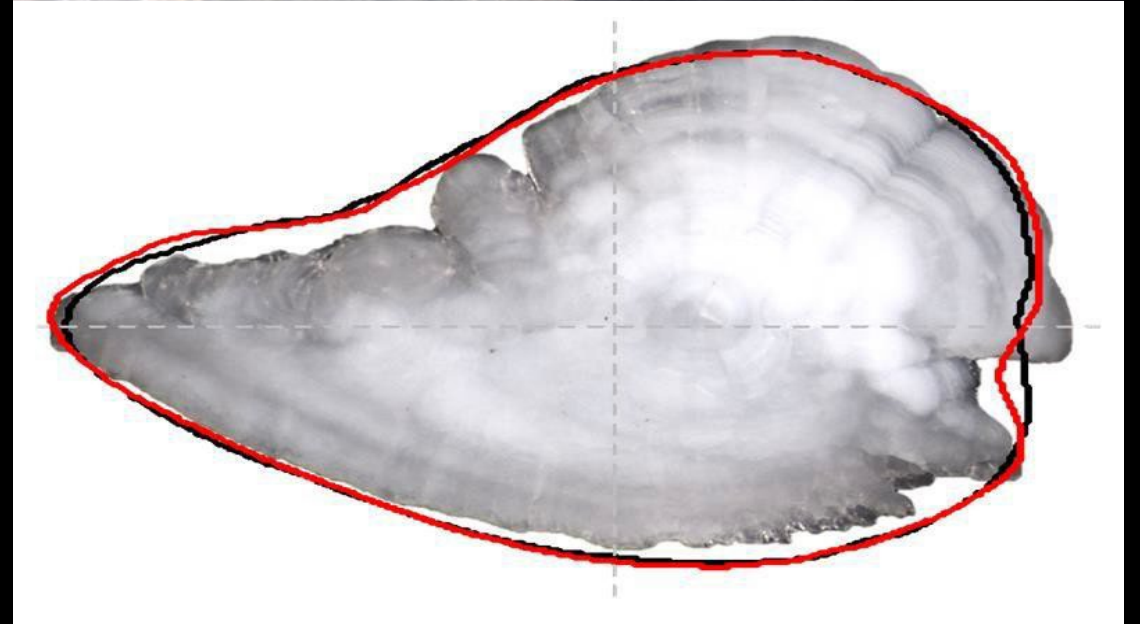
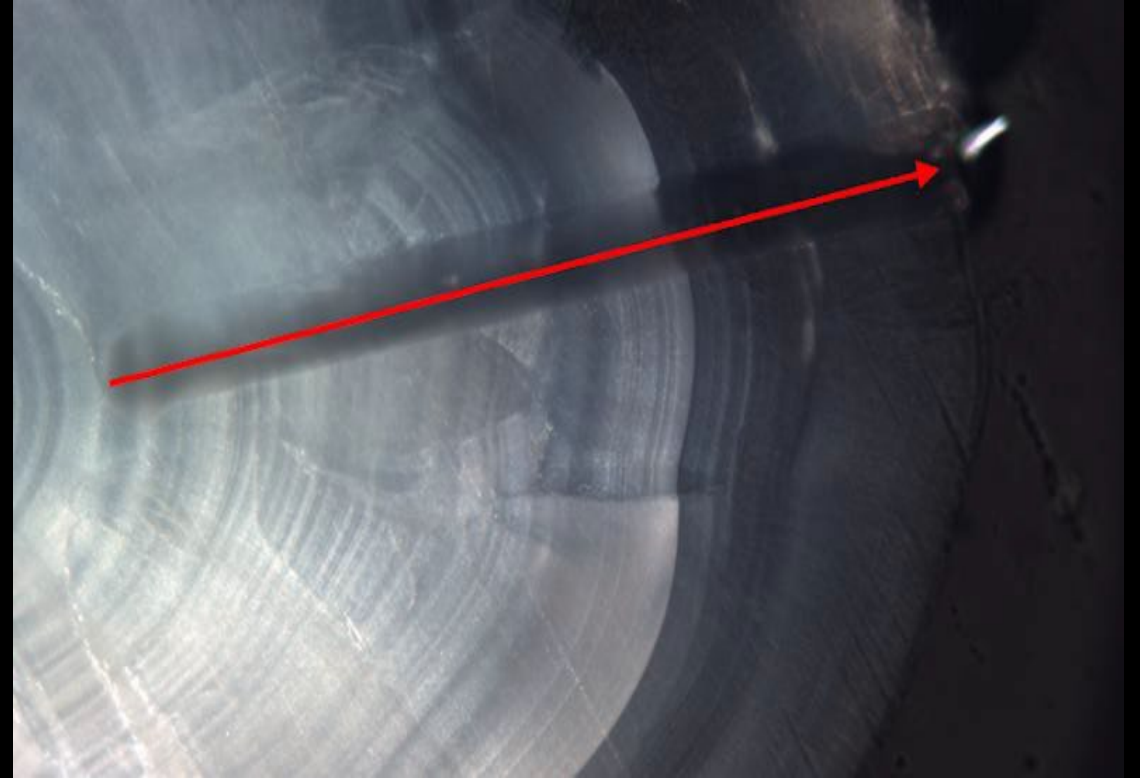
PIs: Sabrina Garcia,
Ben Makhoulf (UW),
Kevin McNeel
(ADF&G MTA Lab),
and Mat Wooler
(UAF)



NPRB Proposal: Otolith shape and chemistry analysis for juvenile Chinook salmon stock discrimination

Multi-step approach:

- 1) Genetics
- 2) Microchemistry
- 3) Shape analysis



Thank you!

sabrina.garcia@alaska.gov

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