

Norton Sound Red King Crab Fishery

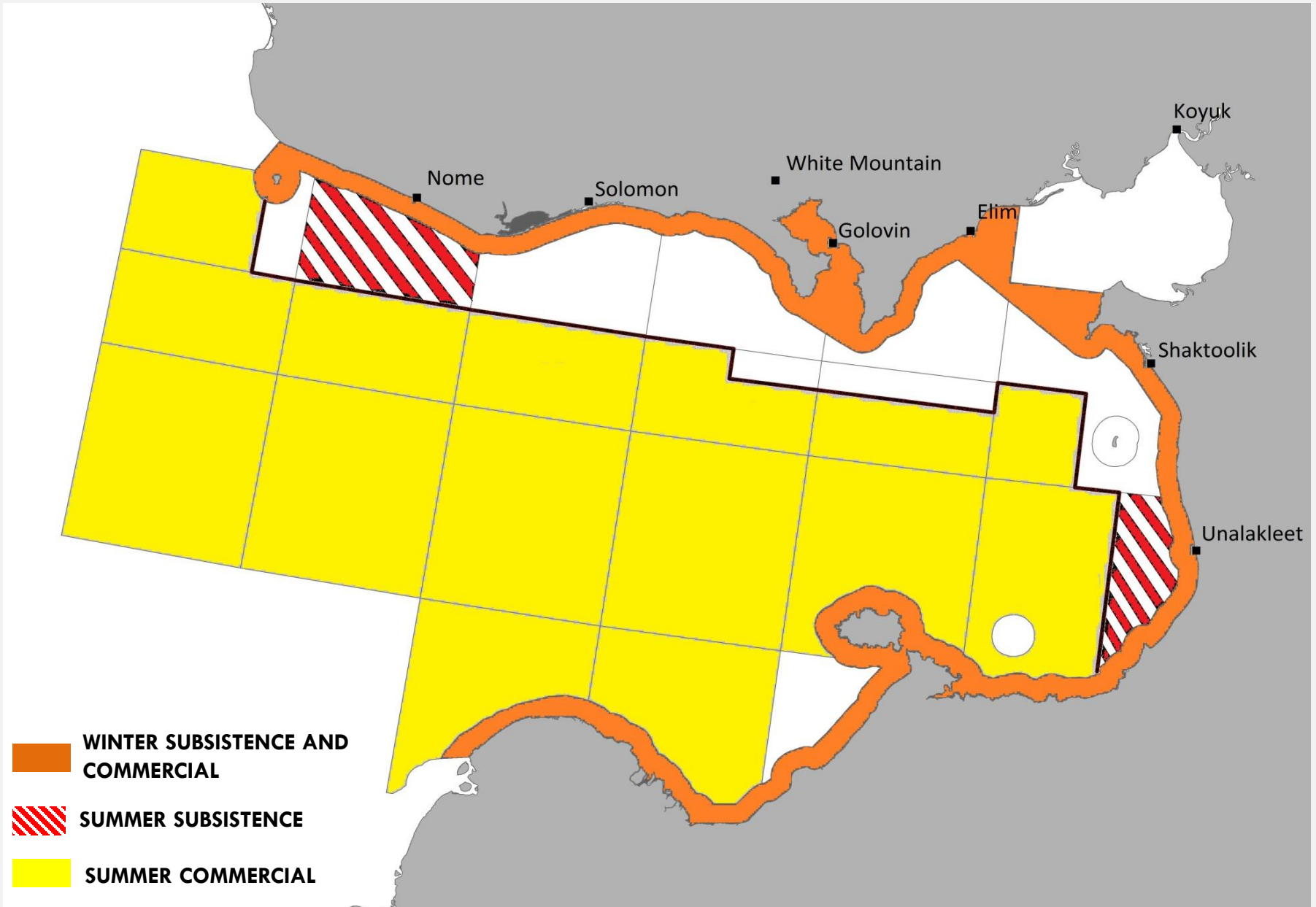


**A Report to the Alaska Board of Fisheries
Presented by Jim Menard and Kevin Clark
March 2020
RC 3, Tab 5**

Norton Sound Crab Management

- Norton Sound is under a Federal Management Plan (FMP) and the NPFMC sets OFL and ABC levels for red king crab after receiving reports from federal and state biologists and statisticians on the CPT and SSC
- The department receives the levels set by the Council in February and sets the GHL in accordance with the State Management Plan
- Before 2016 there was no harvest limit in the winter through the ice commercial fishery and the GHL for the summer commercial fishery was based on OFL and ABC levels received from the Council in May
- Beginning in 2012 the winter commercial harvests increased from a yearly average of near 2.5% of the total commercial harvest to 20% by 2015
- In 2016 the Alaska Board of Fisheries limited the winter commercial crab fishery to 8% of the GHL

NORTON SOUND CRAB FISHERIES

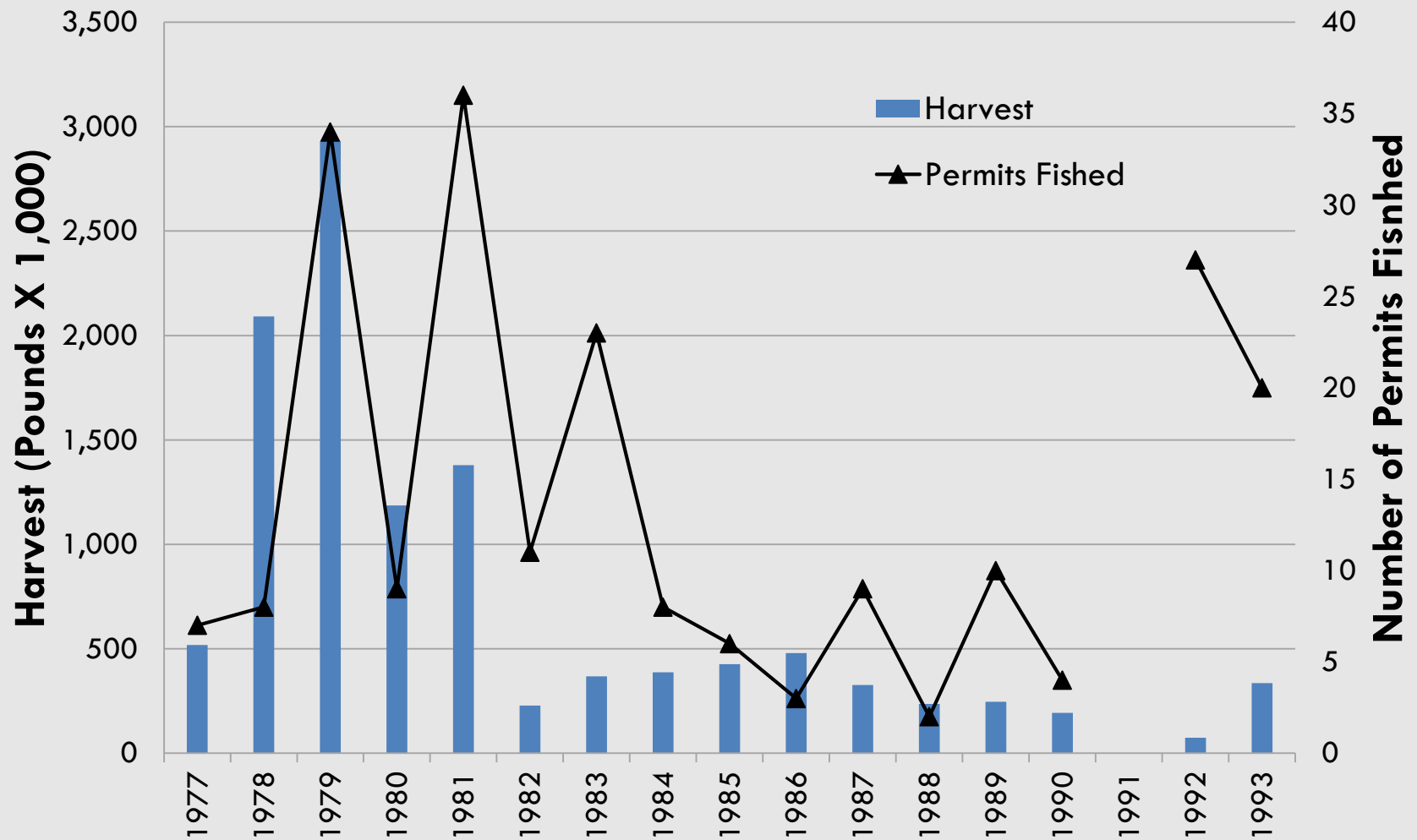


SUMMER COMMERCIAL CRAB FISHERY BEFORE THE 1994 SUPER-EXCLUSIVE DESIGNATION

1977-1993

- Limited to 40 to 50 pots depending on vessel size
- Vessels not from Norton Sound
- Fishery season often a week or less

SUMMER COMMERCIAL FISHERY HARVEST TRENDS PRIOR TO SUPER-EXCLUSIVE DESIGNATION

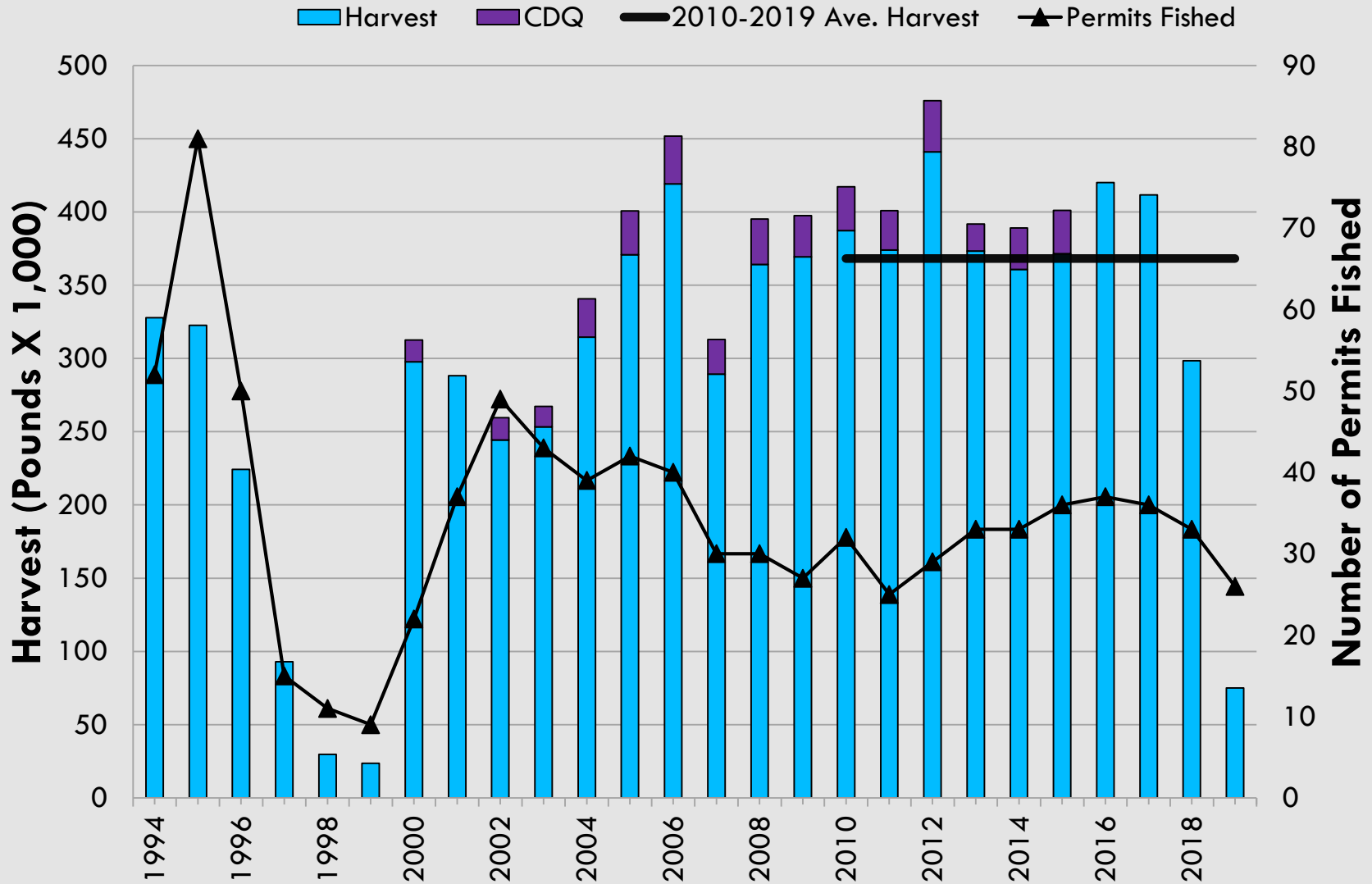


SUMMER COMMERCIAL CRAB FISHERY SUPER-EXCLUSIVE DESIGNATION

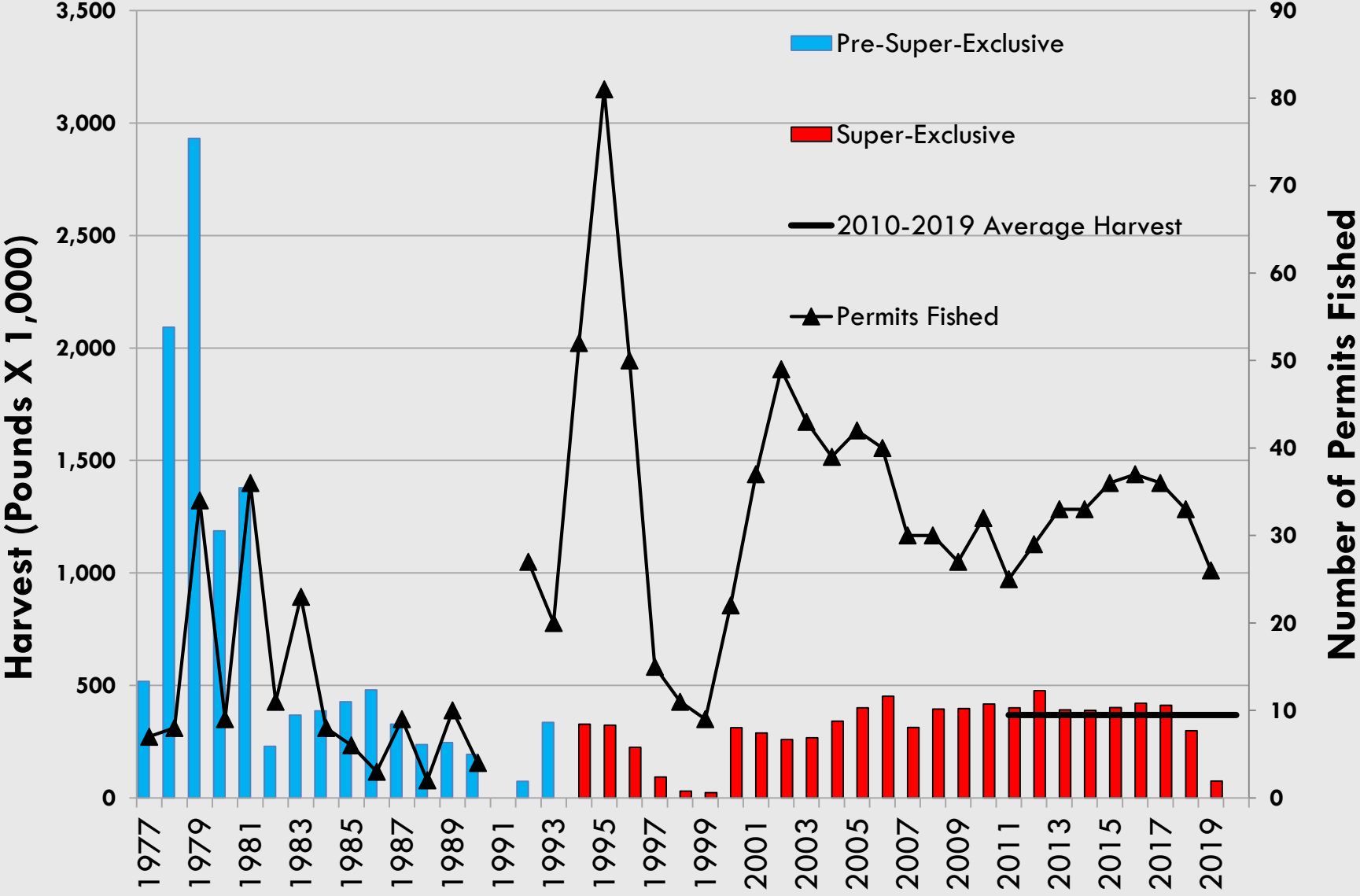


- **Super-exclusive designation in 1994 and fishery shifts to smaller vessels.**
- **Local fishery as buyer will only buy from Norton Sound residents.**
- **Season dates June 15 – Sept. 3.**

SUMMER COMMERCIAL FISHERY HARVEST POST SUPER-EXCLUSIVE DESIGNATION



SUMMER COMMERCIAL HARVEST TRENDS



WINTER COMMERCIAL CRAB FISHERY

Began in 1978.

Season dates in regulation were November 15 - May 15 and in 2016 changed to January 15 – April 30.

Through the ice only. Pots and handlines are legal gear.

Harvested limited to 8% of GHL beginning in 2016 season.

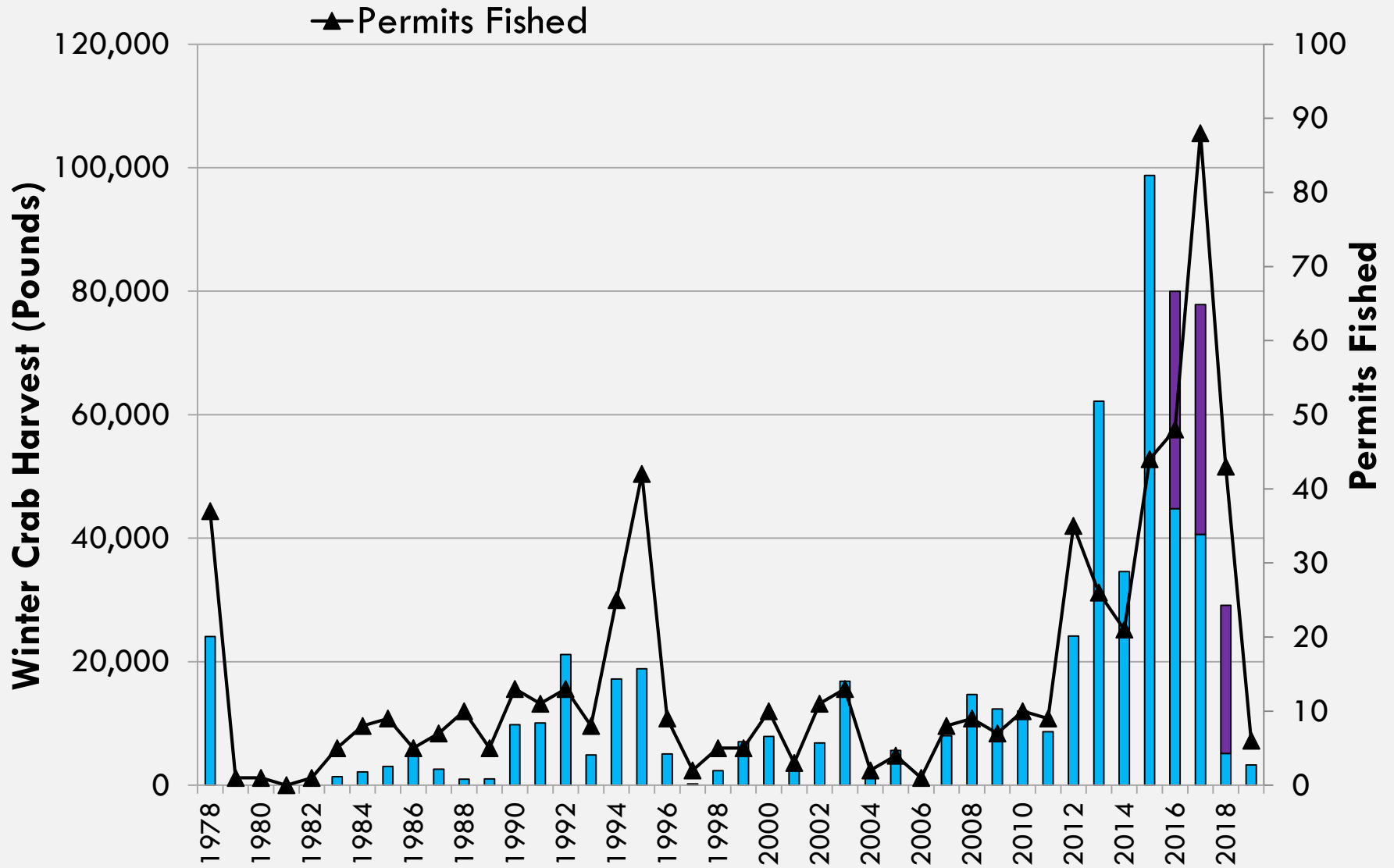
Crab pots limited to 20 per permit holder beginning in 2017 season.

High pot losses in unstable ice years.

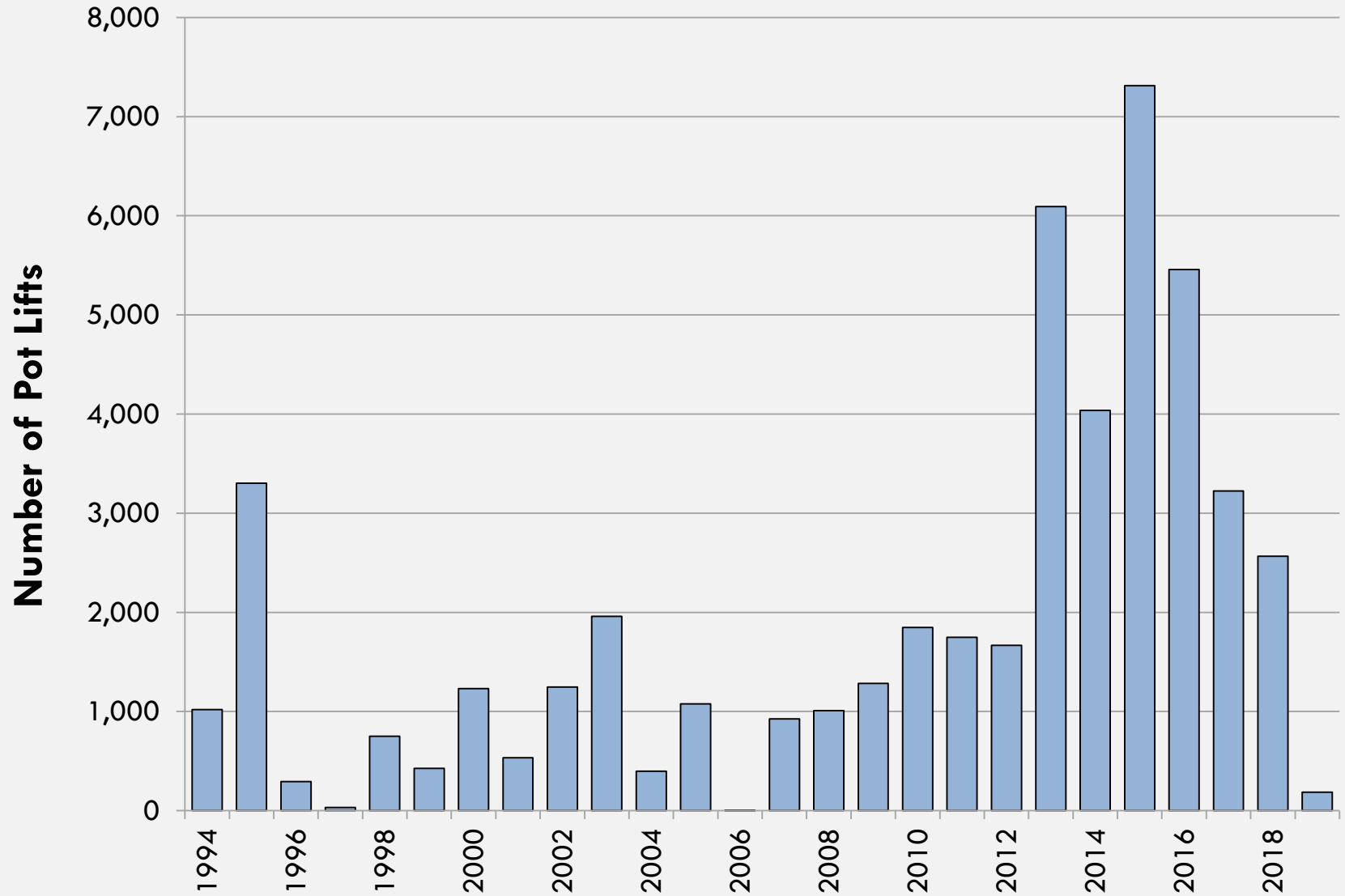
Photo by Johnnie Noyakuk



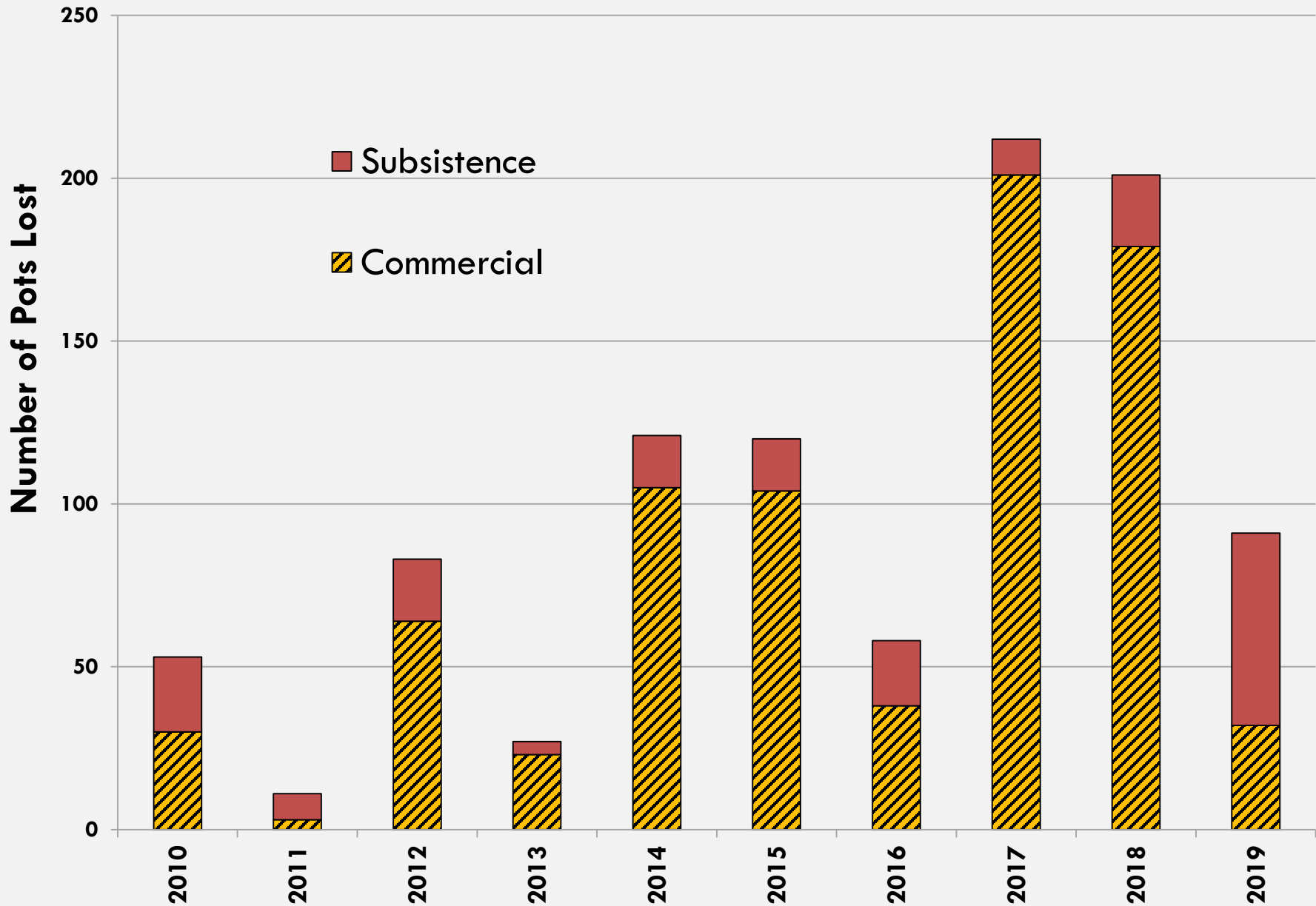
WINTER COMMERCIAL FISHERY HARVEST TRENDS



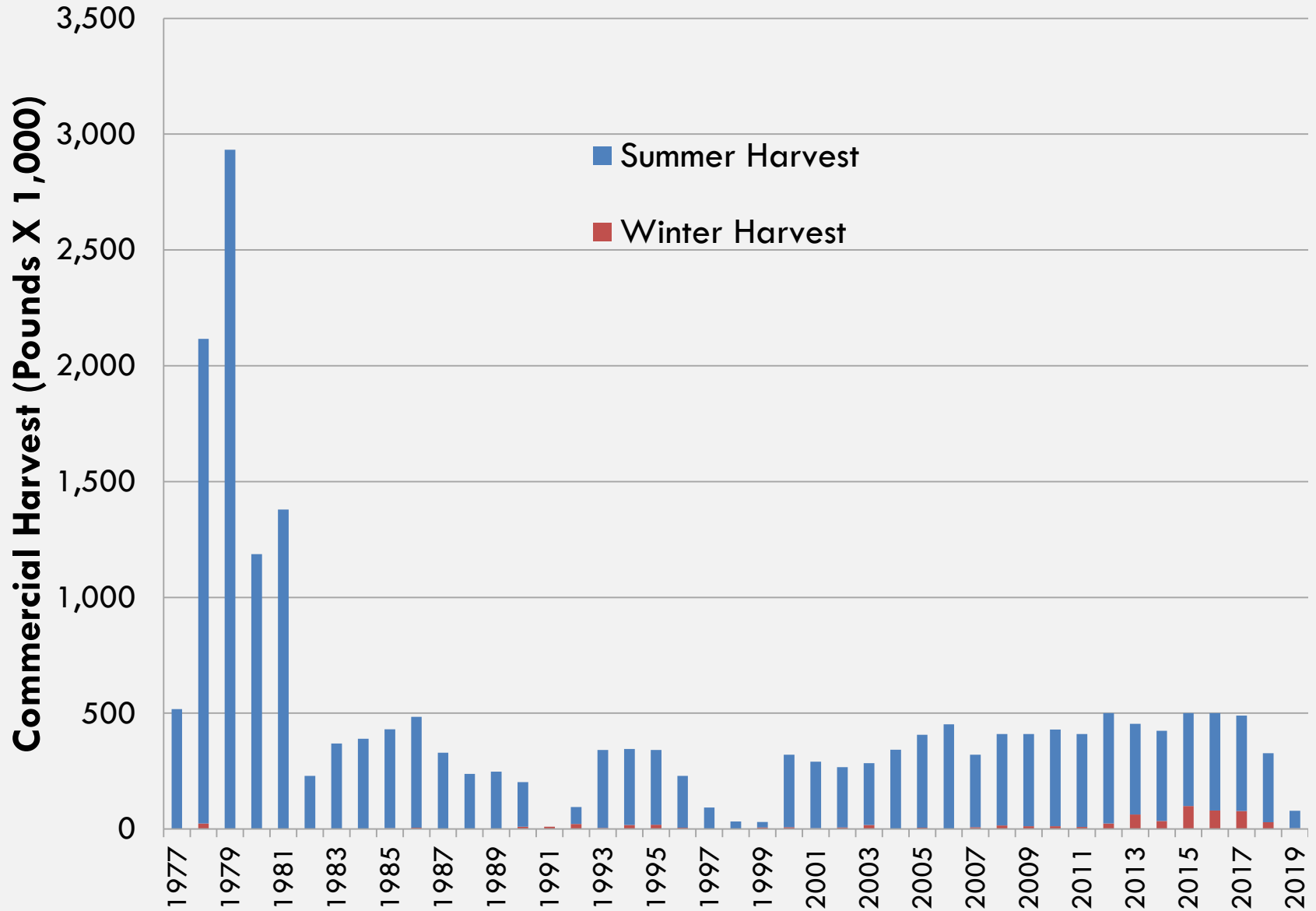
WINTER COMMERCIAL CRAB FISHERY EFFORT



WINTER CRAB FISHERY POT LOSSES



COMMERCIAL RED KING CRAB HARVEST



PROPOSALS AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS



Proposal 273 would modify the winter season start date and proposal 274 would restrict a commercial permit holder from replacing crab pots lost during the winter season.

Changing commercial fishing season dates and not allowing commercial pot replacement may help reduce winter pot losses.

Proposals 275 and 276 would allow pot fishing for Pacific cod 14 days before and after season.

Pot fishing occurring near the crab season start may result in crab prospecting.

QUESTIONS?

