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:
Downriver Elder:
Commercial Fisher:
Lower River Subsistence:
Middle River Subsistence:
Upper River Subsistence:
Headwaters Subsistence:
Processor:
Member at Large:
Sport Fisher:
Western Interior RAC:
Y-K Delta RAC:
KRITFC:
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.

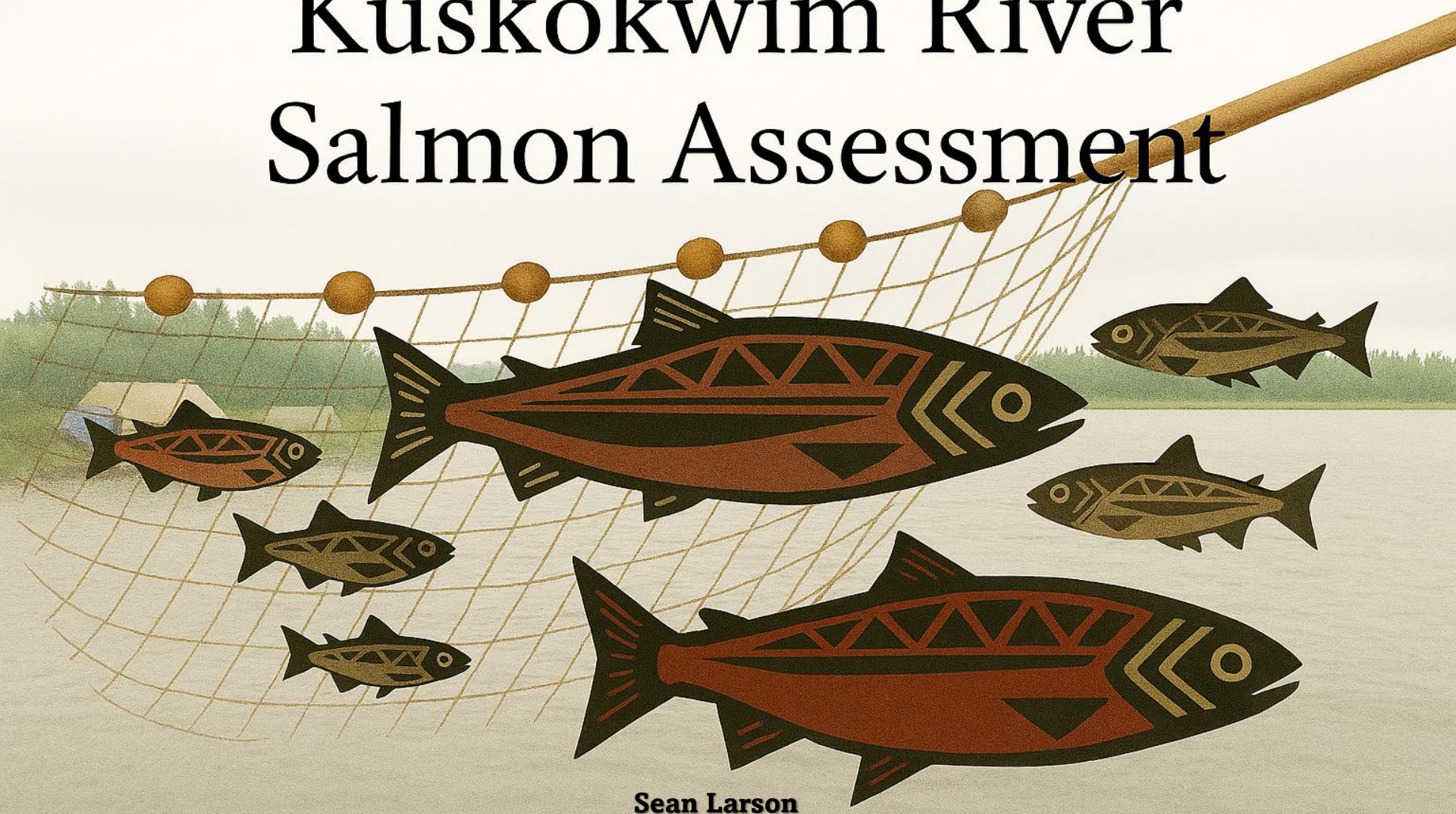
4. **2026 Fishery Management:**
   - **A. Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (Brian, USFWS) with KRITFC**
     - i. FSA updates and timeline
   - **B. ADF&G Management Discussion on Specific Management Actions For 2026**
   - **C. Subsistence Sections 4 & 5 and Districts 4 & 5**
     - i. **AA #1: 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:_____

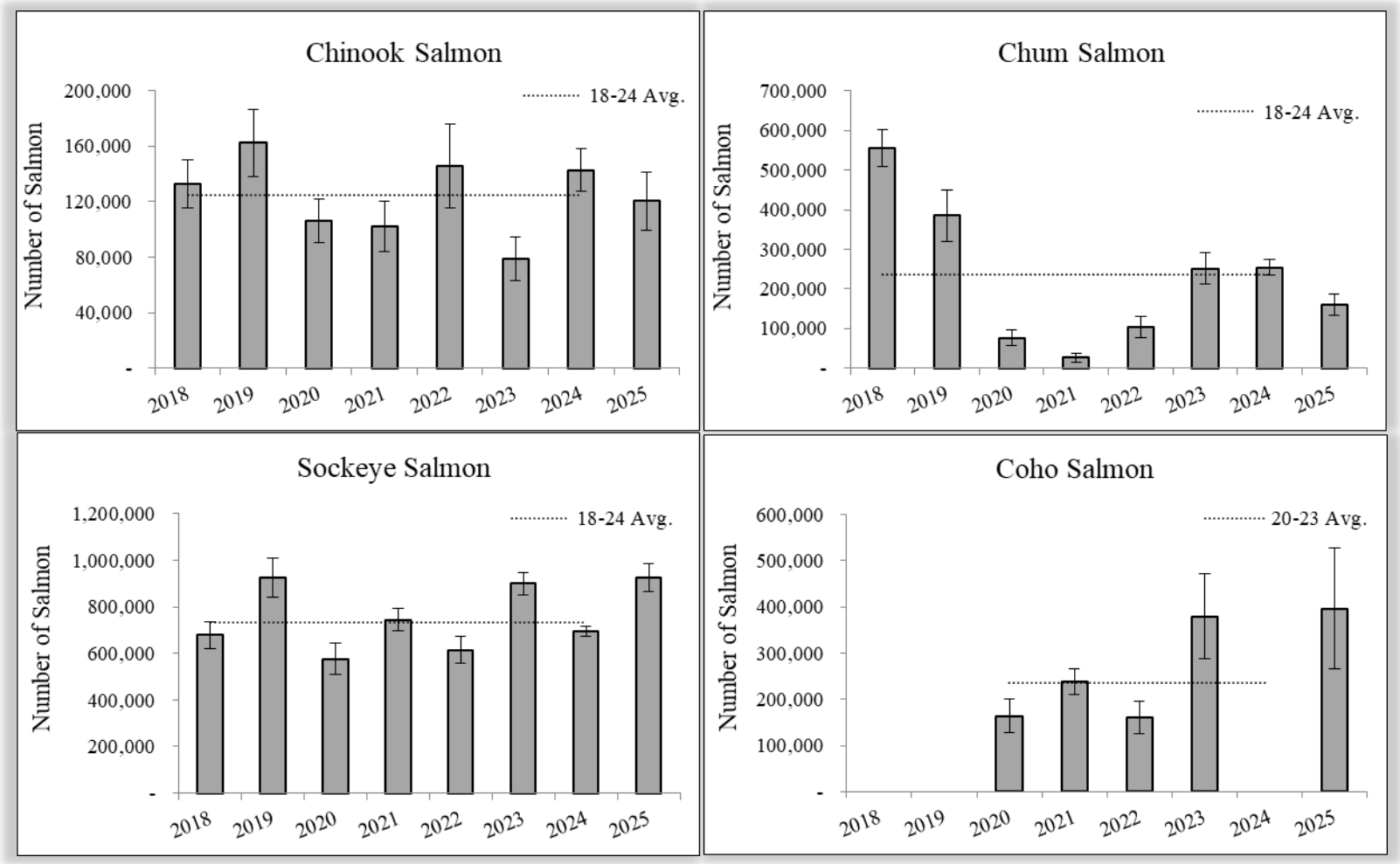
Kuskokwim River Salmon Assessment



Sean Larson

Alaska Dept. Fish and Game

Sonar Results

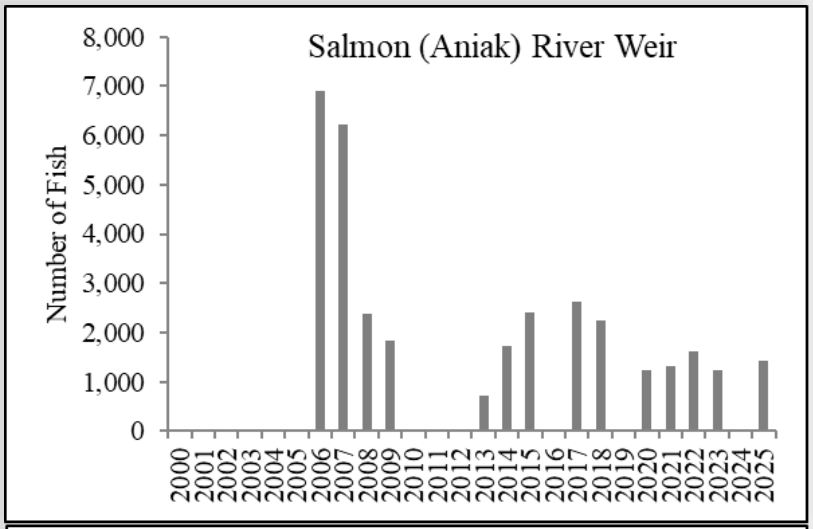


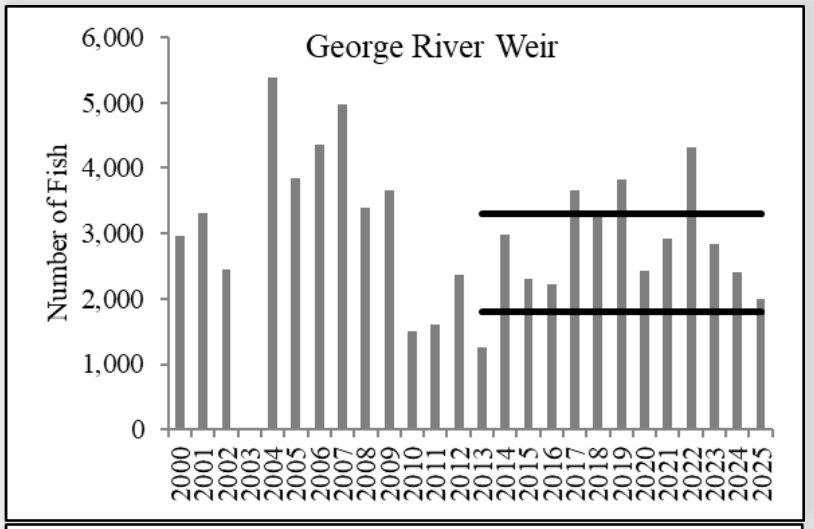
2025 Estimates

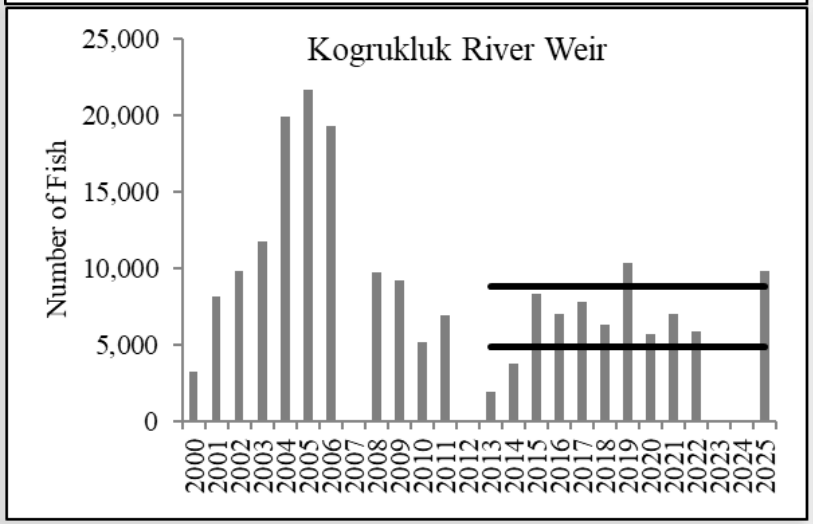
Chinook: 120,492 **Chum: 159,622** **Sockeye: 924,085** **Coho: 396,141**

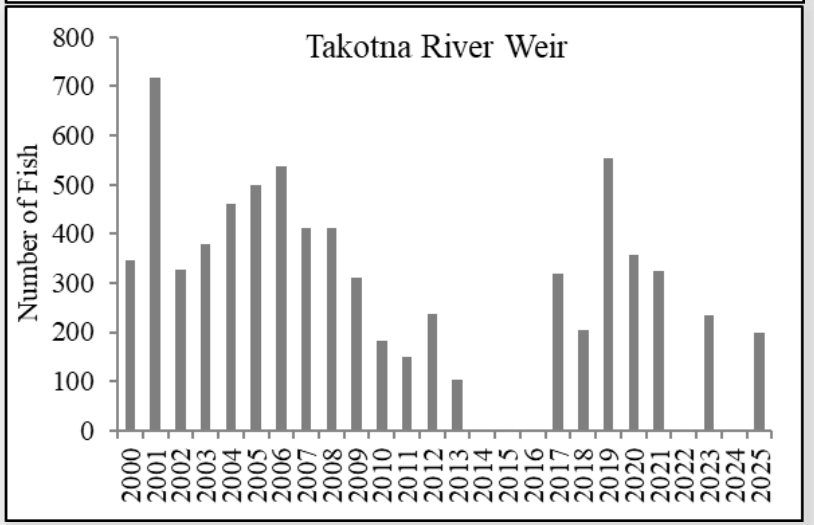
Weir Escapement

Chinook Salmon



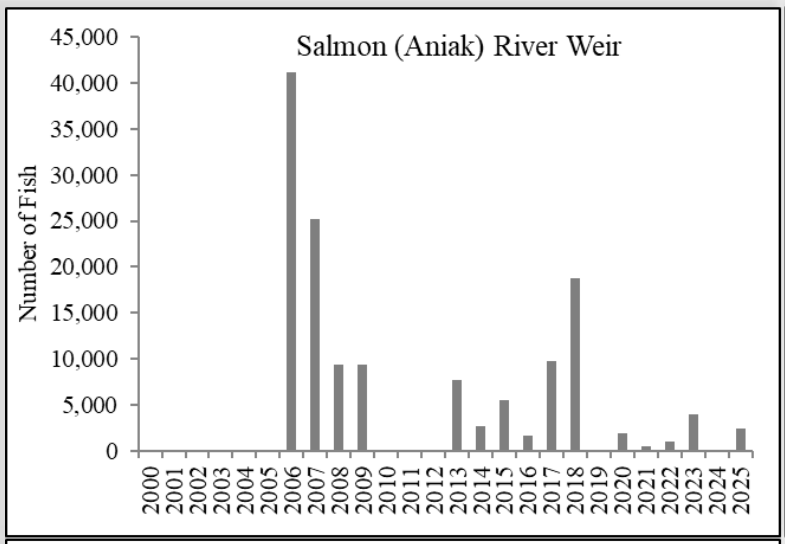


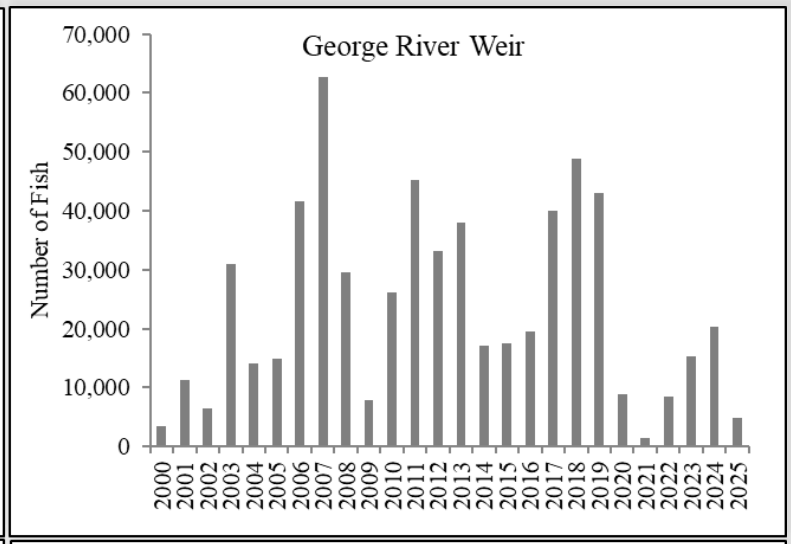


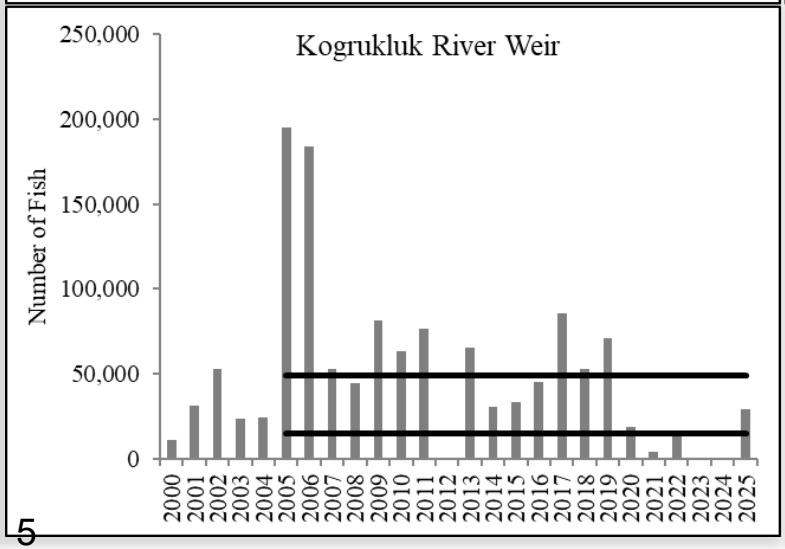


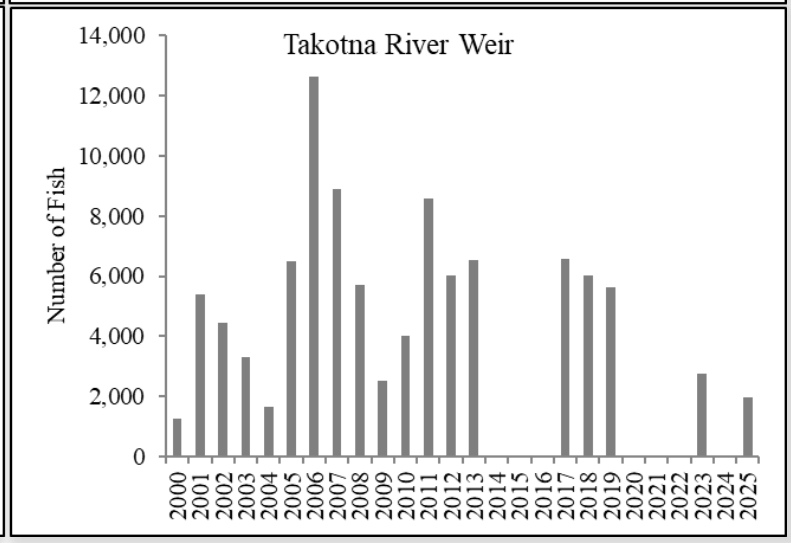
Weir Escapement

Chum Salmon



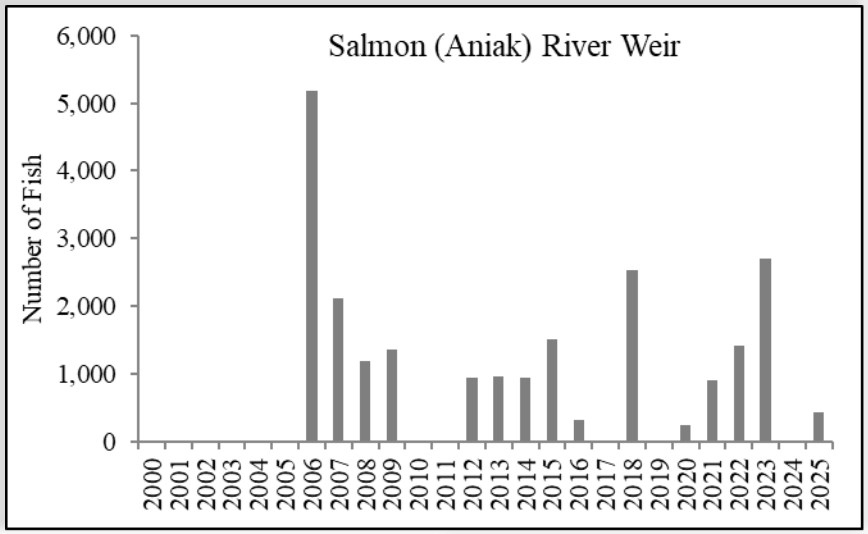


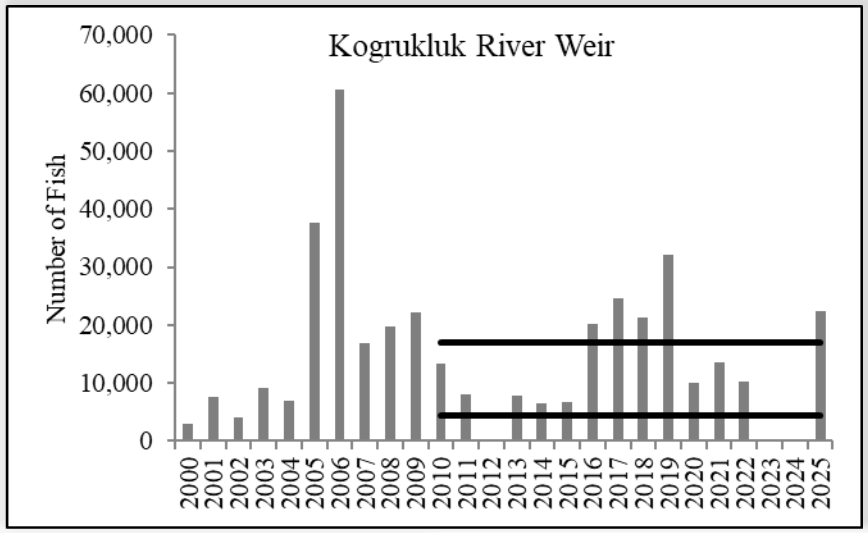


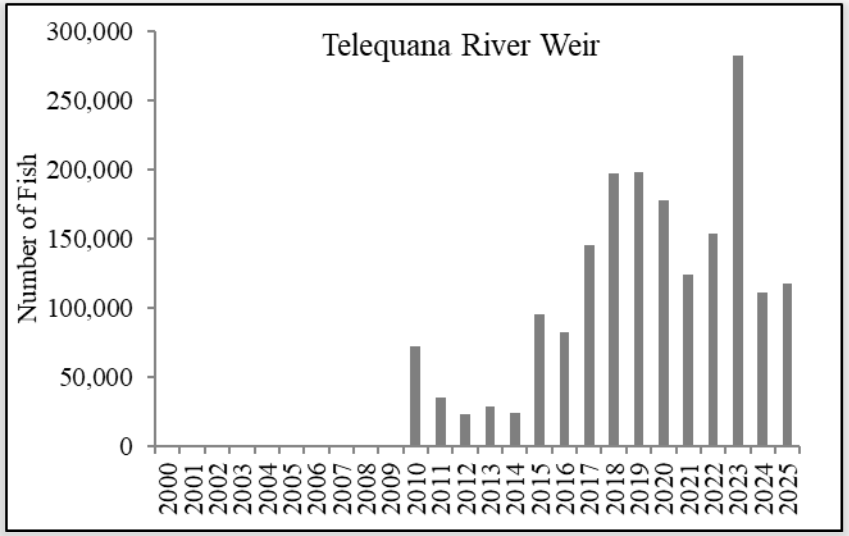


Weir Escapement

Sockeye Salmon

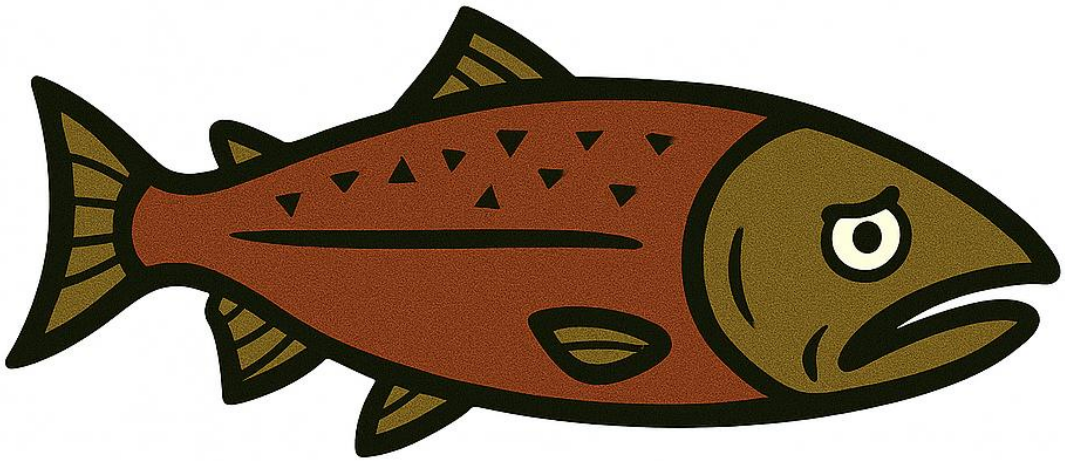






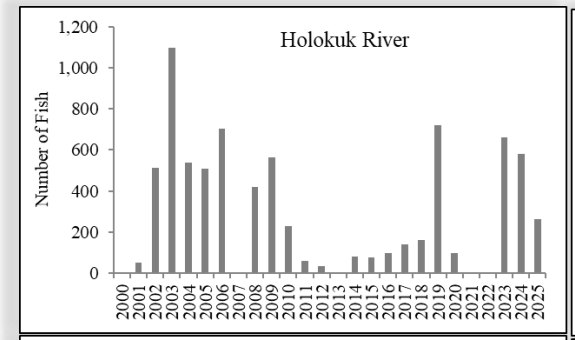
Weir Escapement

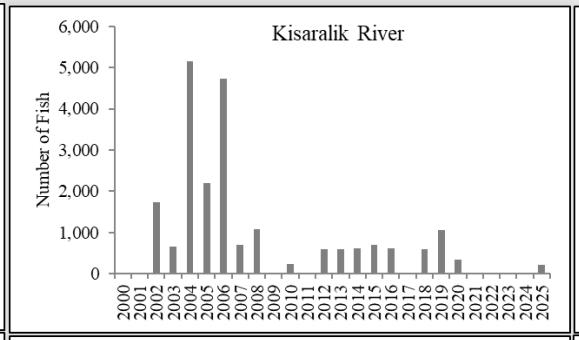
Coho Salmon

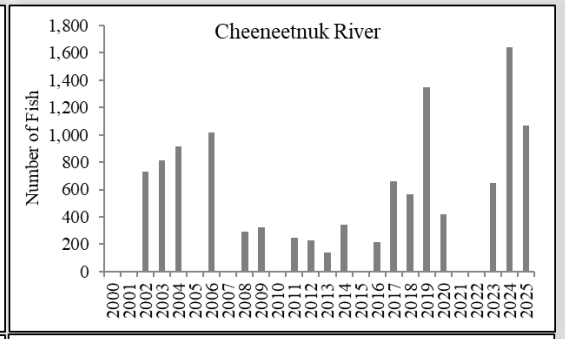


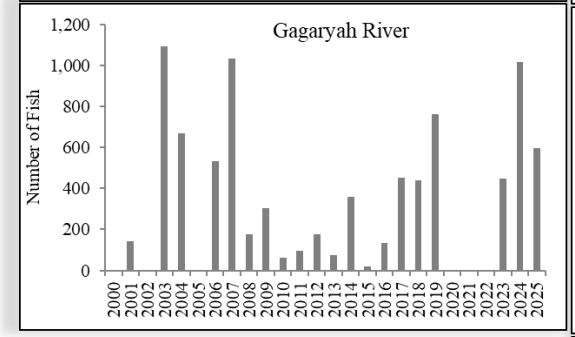
Aerial Escapement

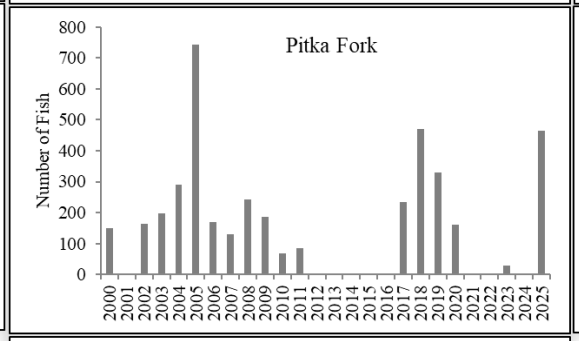
Chinook Salmon

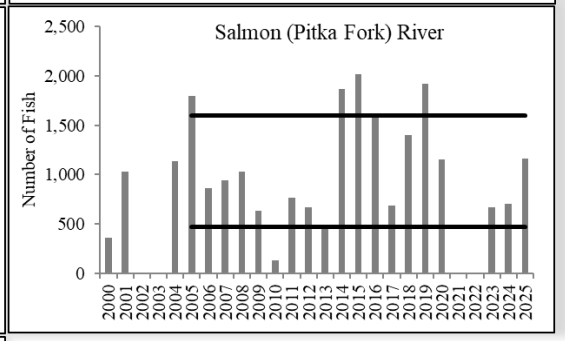


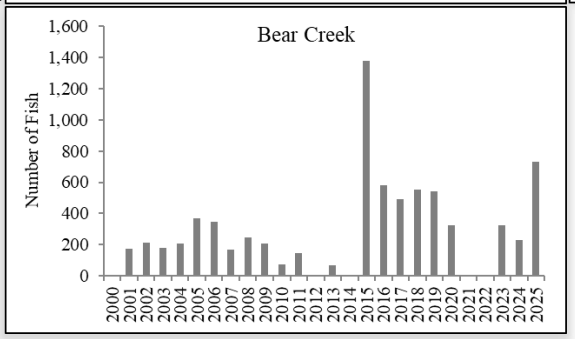




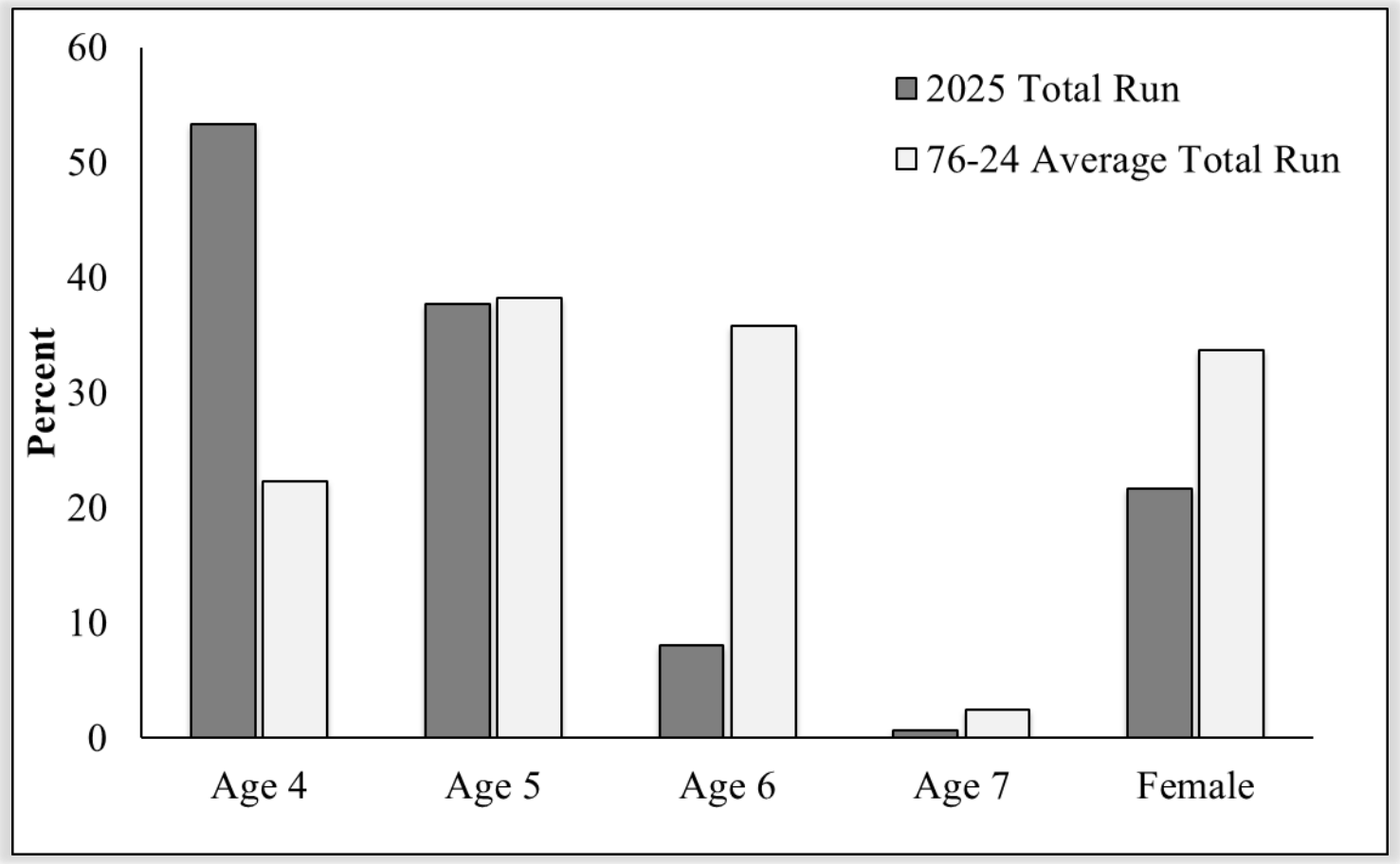




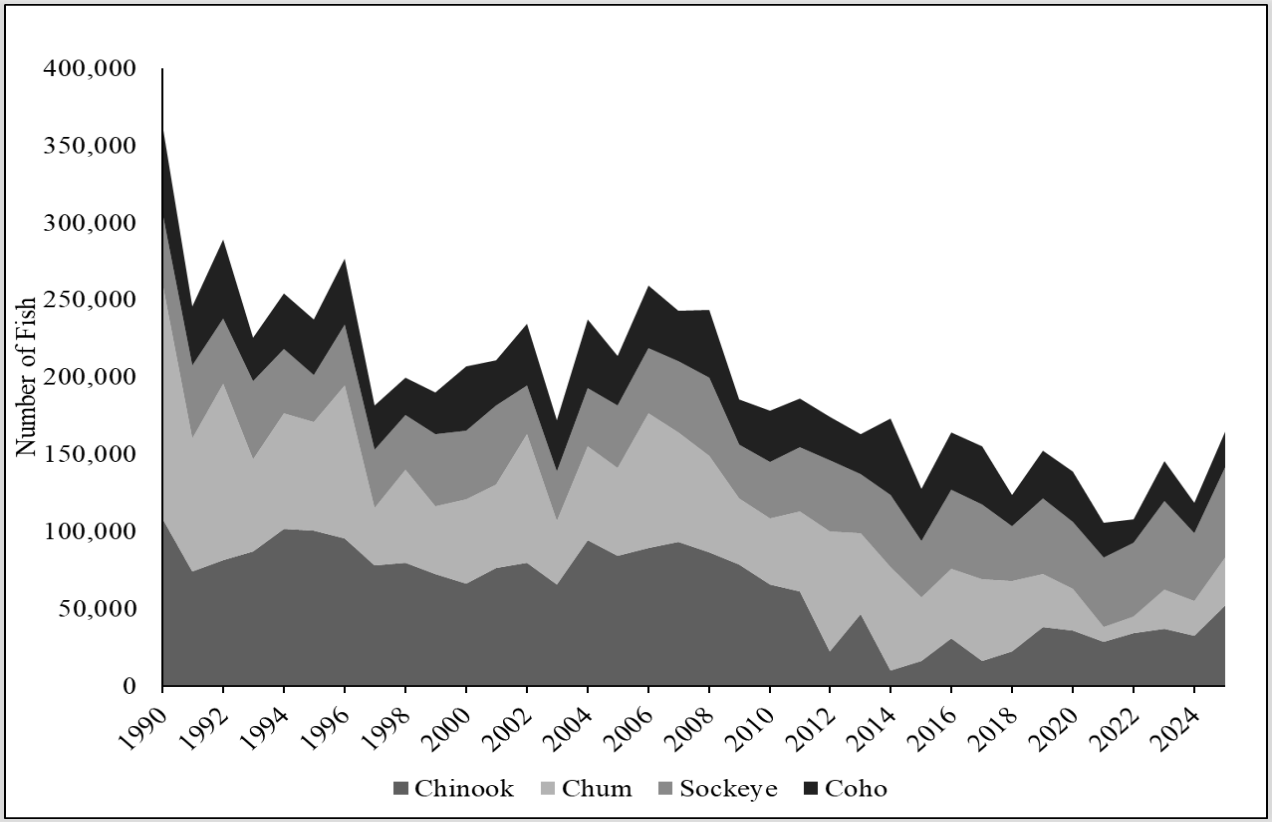




Chinook Salmon - Age/Sex Composition

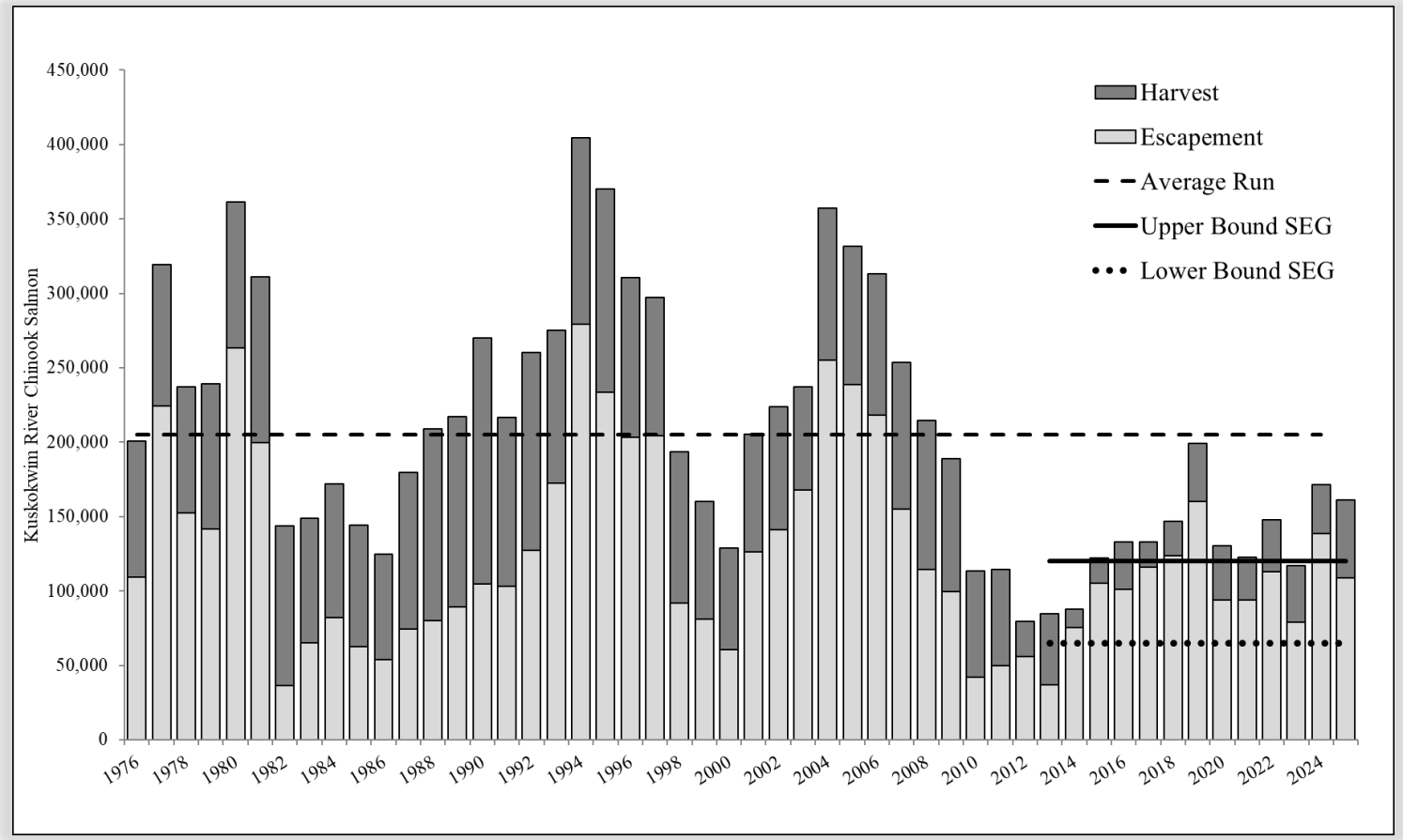


Kuskokwim River Subsistence Harvest



	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

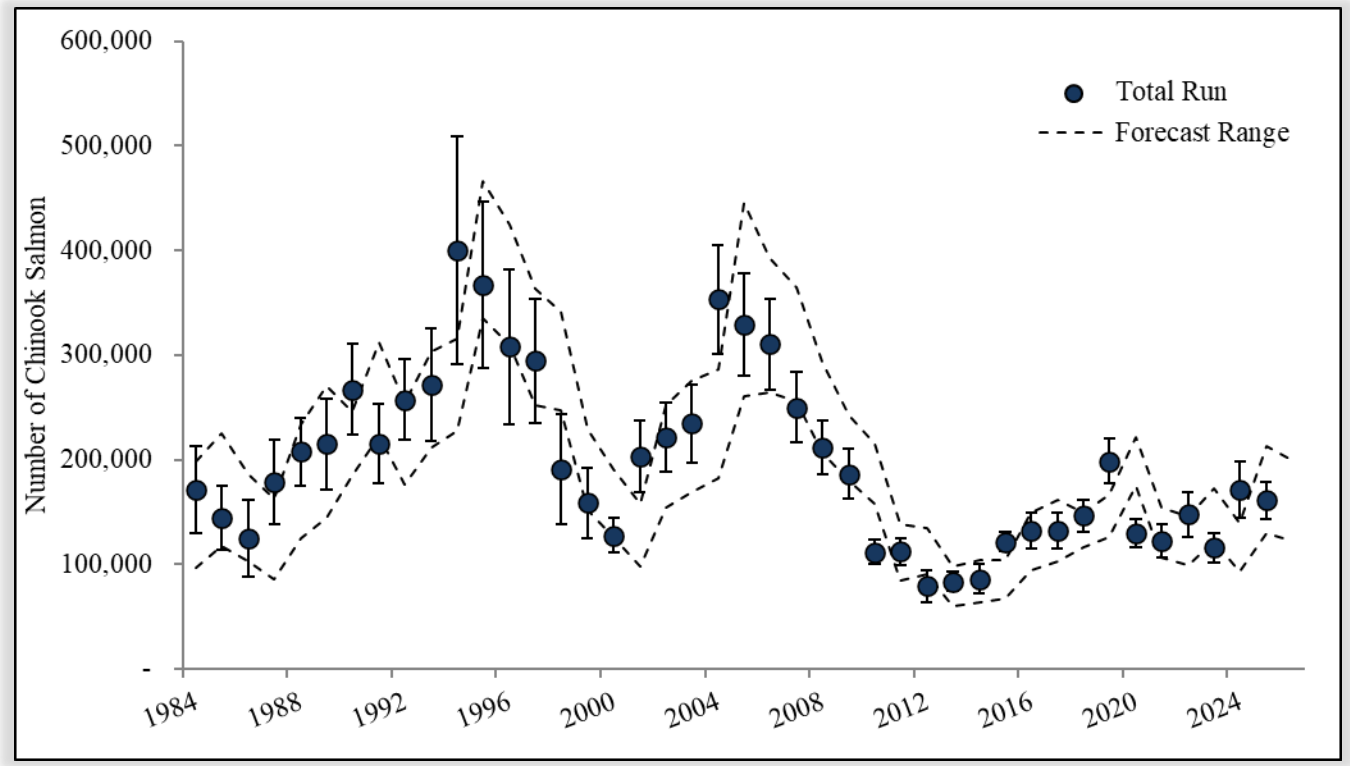
Chinook Salmon Run Reconstruction



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

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

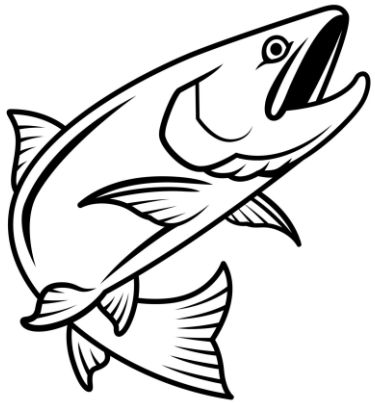
2026 Chinook Salmon Forecast



Forecast Range: 123,000–200,000

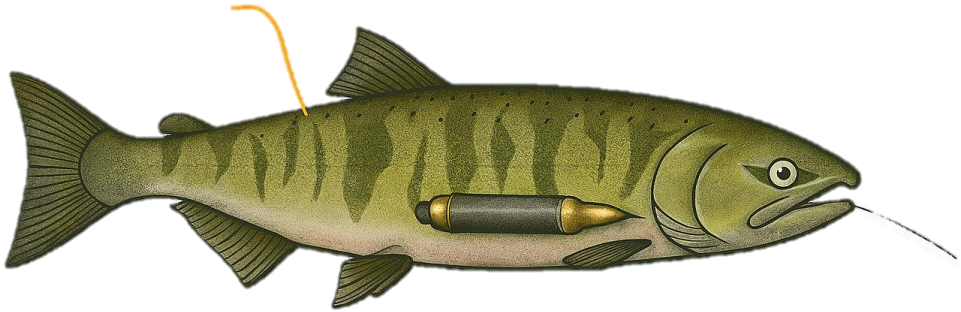
Summary

- 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
- Forecast Range ~ 123,000–200,000



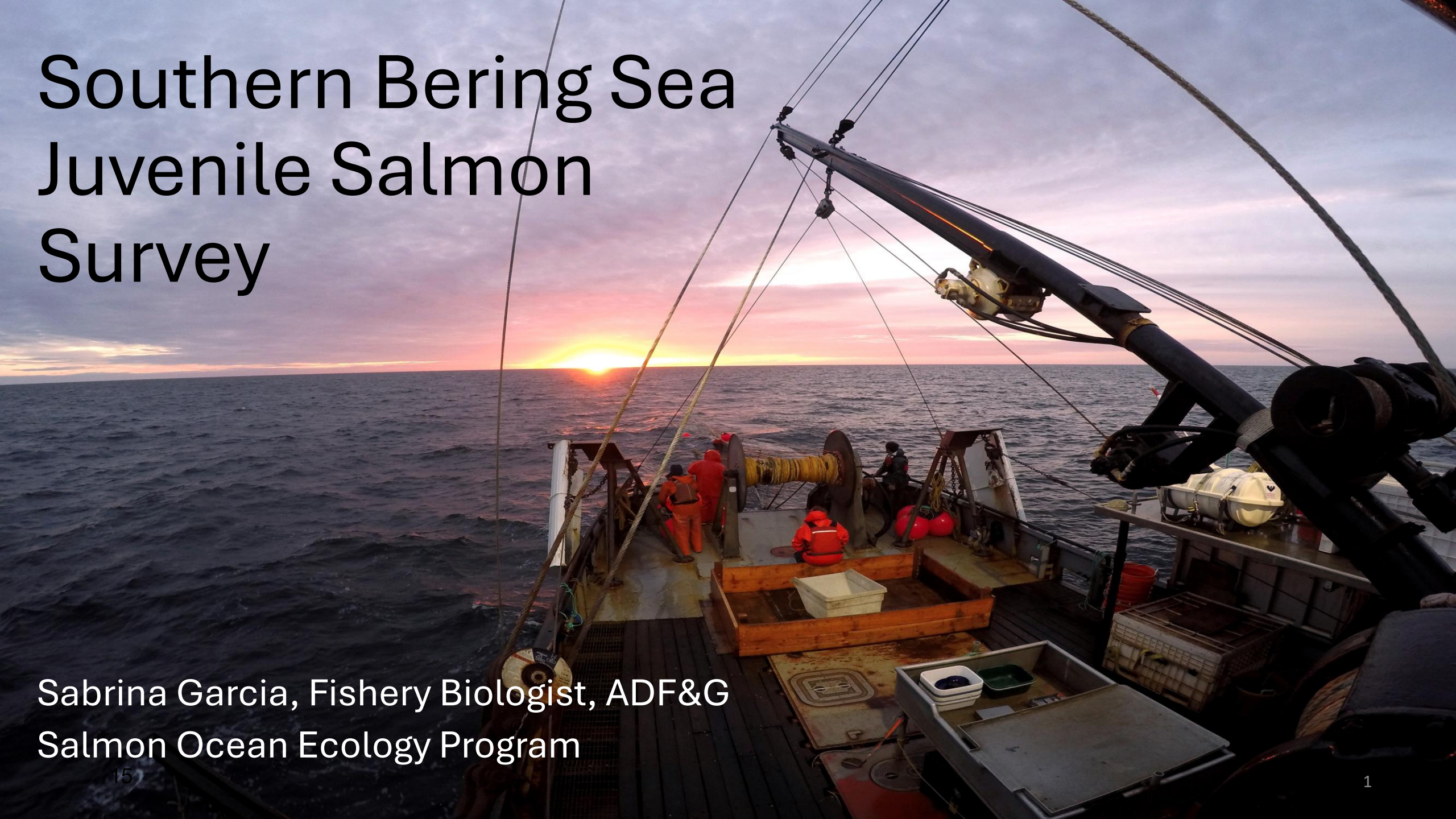
New and Noteworthy in 2026

- 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

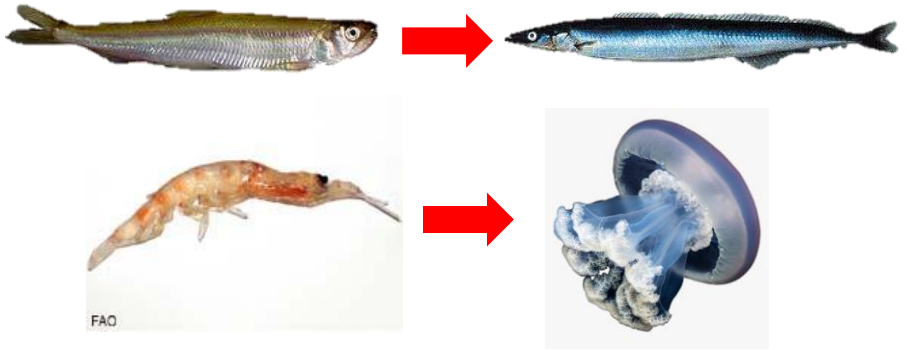
Northern Bering Sea Survey

Southeast Alaska Coastal Monitoring Survey

Early marine ecology

Stocks moving north

Different food available

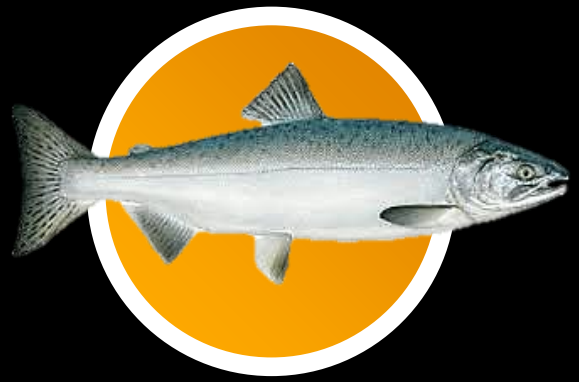


Increasing ocean temperatures = Emptier stomachs

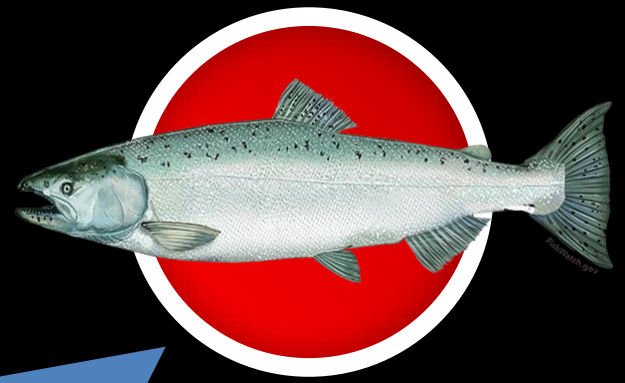
Increasing ocean temperatures = poorer condition

Forecasting tools

Pink salmon



Chinook salmon



Southeast Alaska

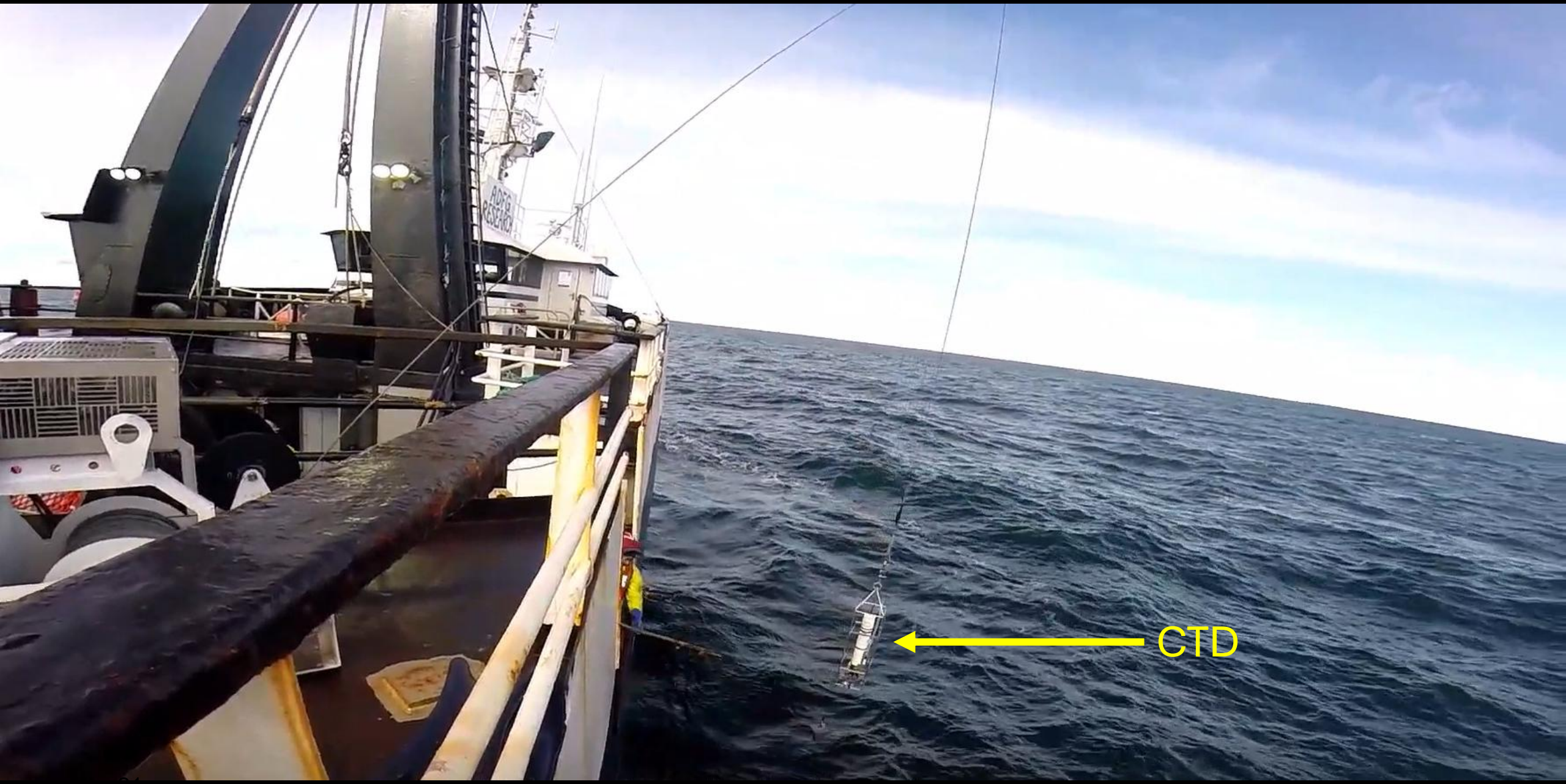
Northern Bering Sea

Northern Bering Sea Survey

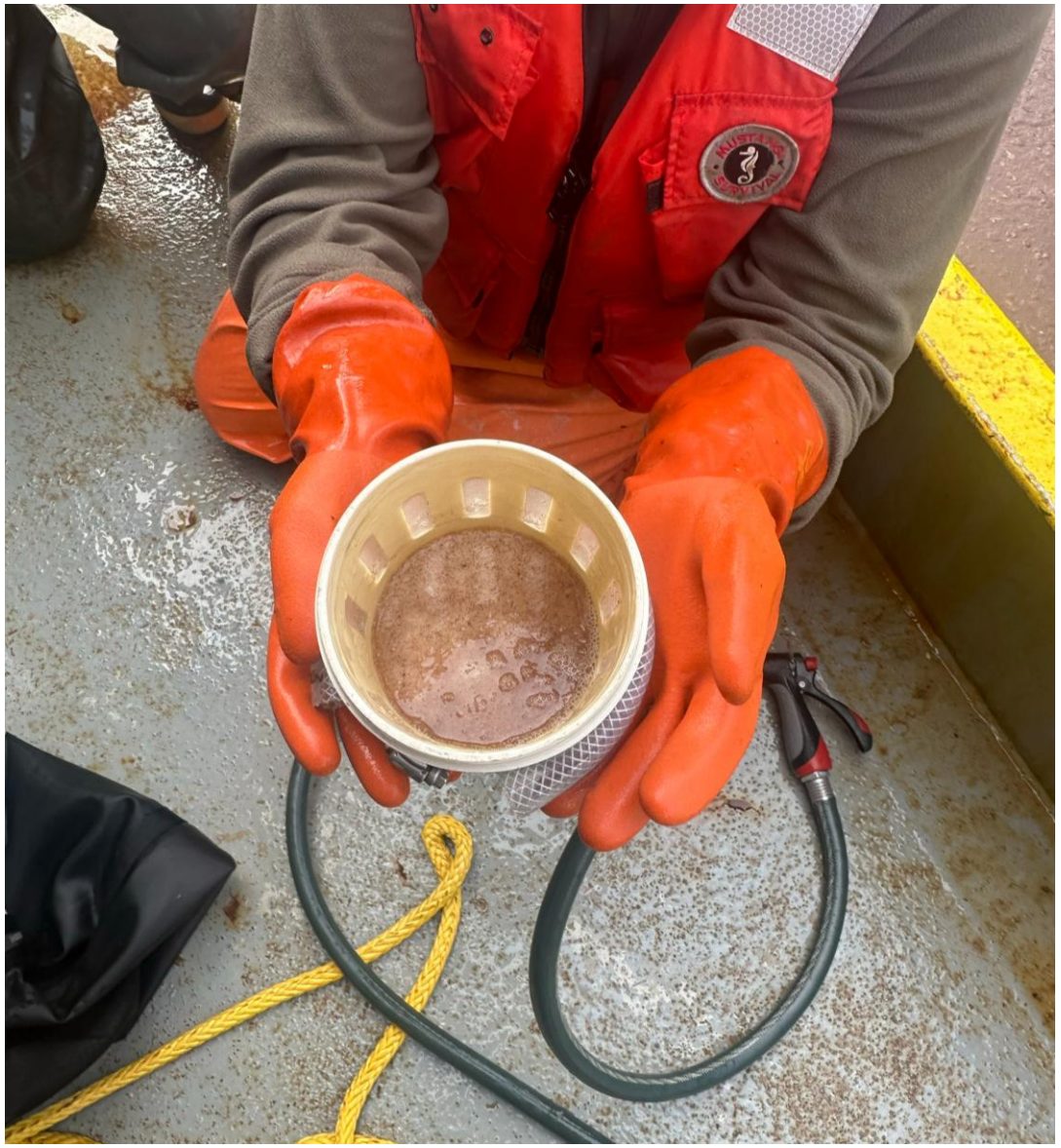
Southern Bering Sea Survey

Southeast Alaska Coastal Monitoring Survey

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


CTD


Bongo nets




SBSSS-24
chinook
1773
SBSSS-24
chinook
1774
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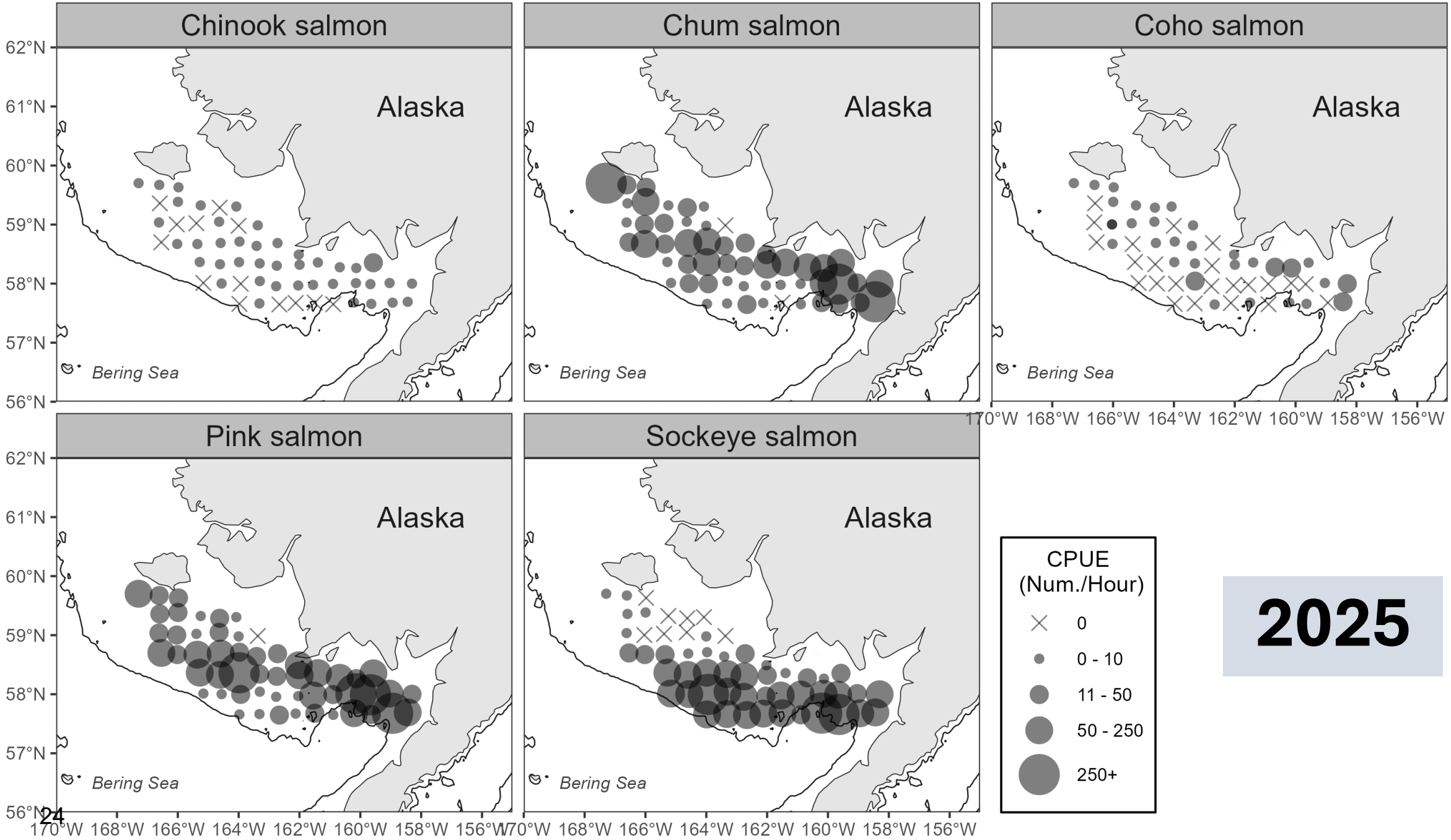
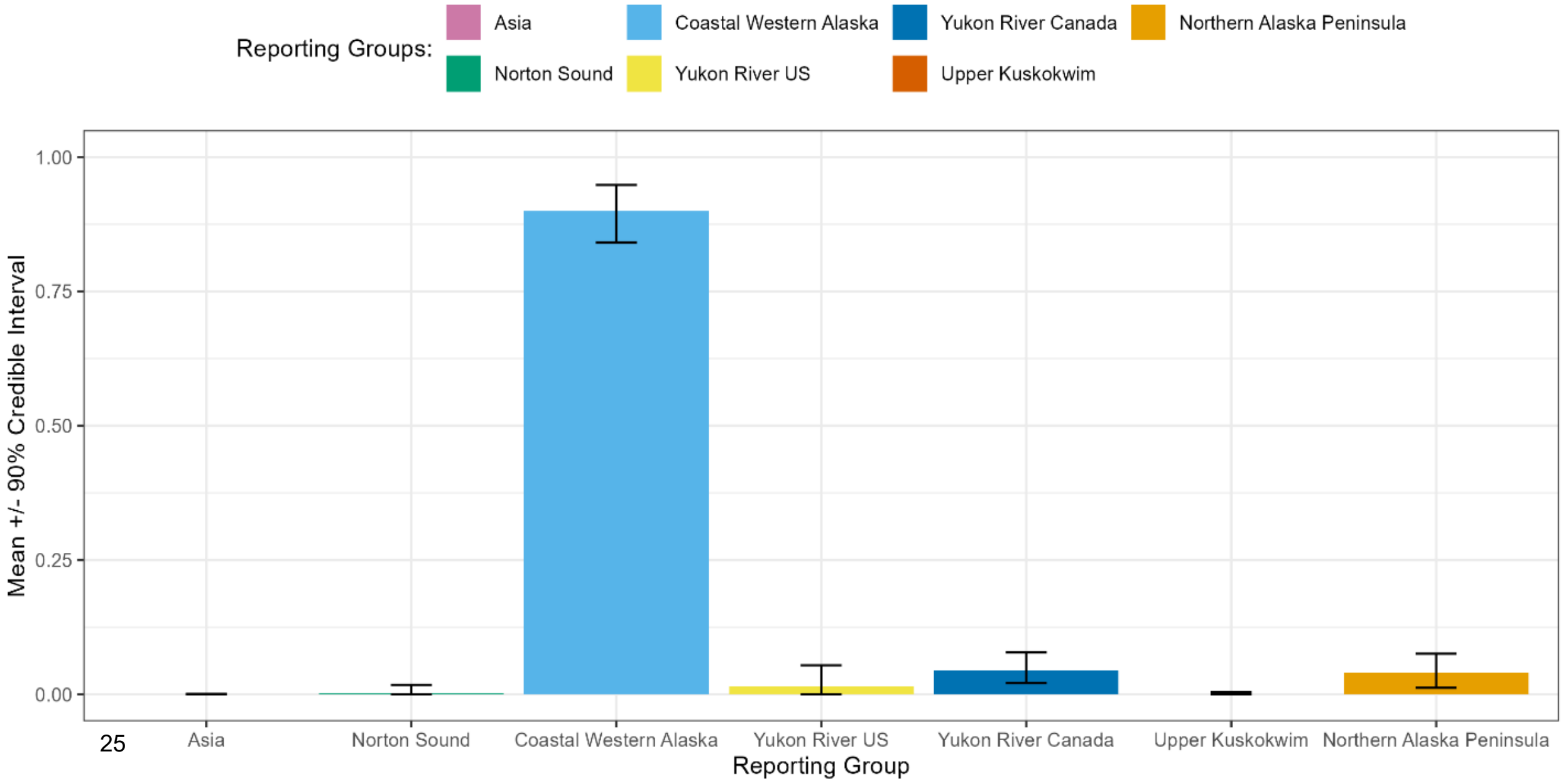
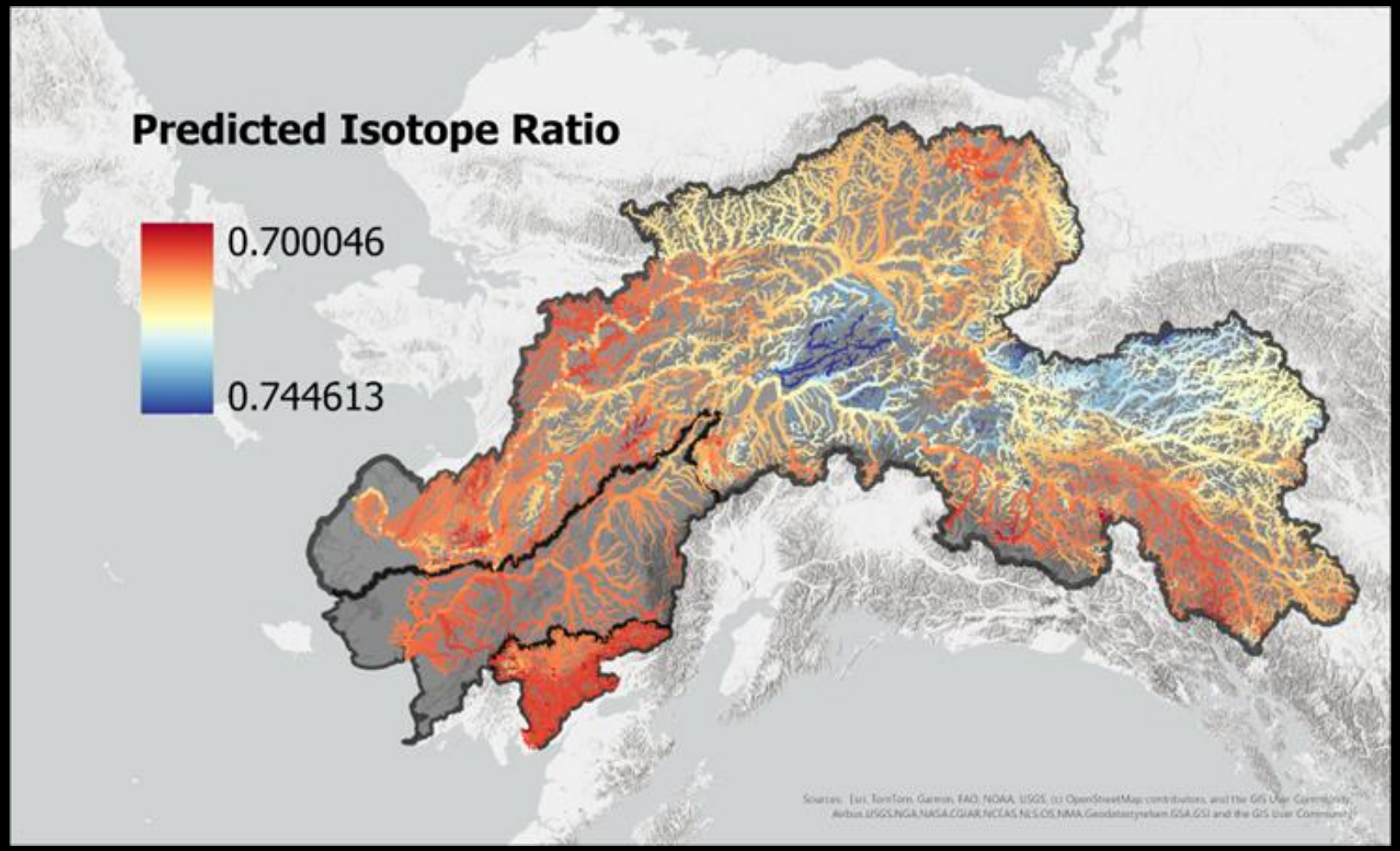
chinook
1777


Chinook salmon
Chum salmon
Coho salmon
Pink salmon
Sockeye salmon
Alaska
Bering Sea
62°N
61°N
60°N
59°N
58°N
57°N
56°N
170°W 168°W 166°W 164°W 162°W 160°W 158°W 156°W
CPUE
(Num./Hour)
0
0 - 10
11 - 50
50 - 250
250+
2025

Chinook salmon stock compositions - 2025



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



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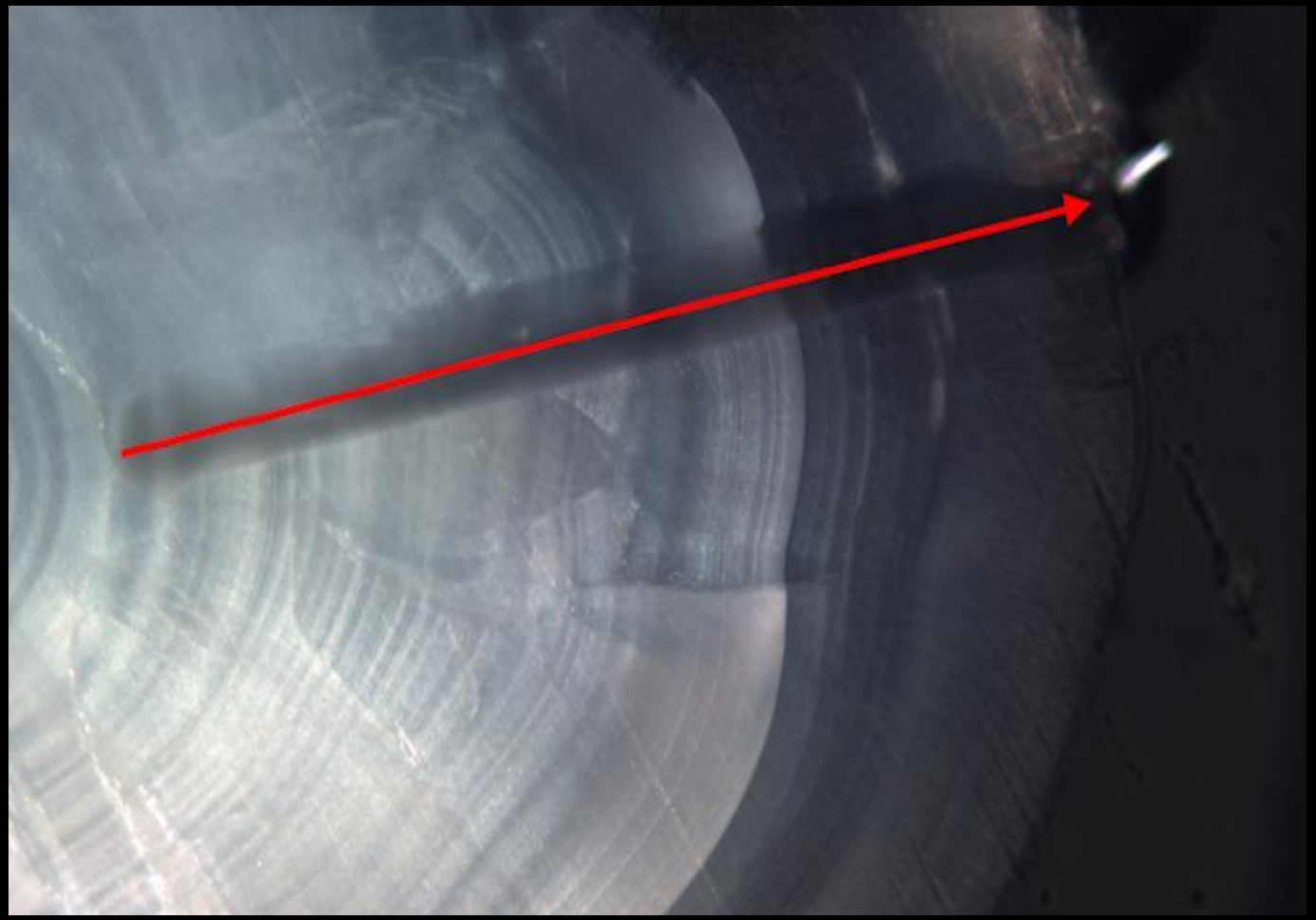
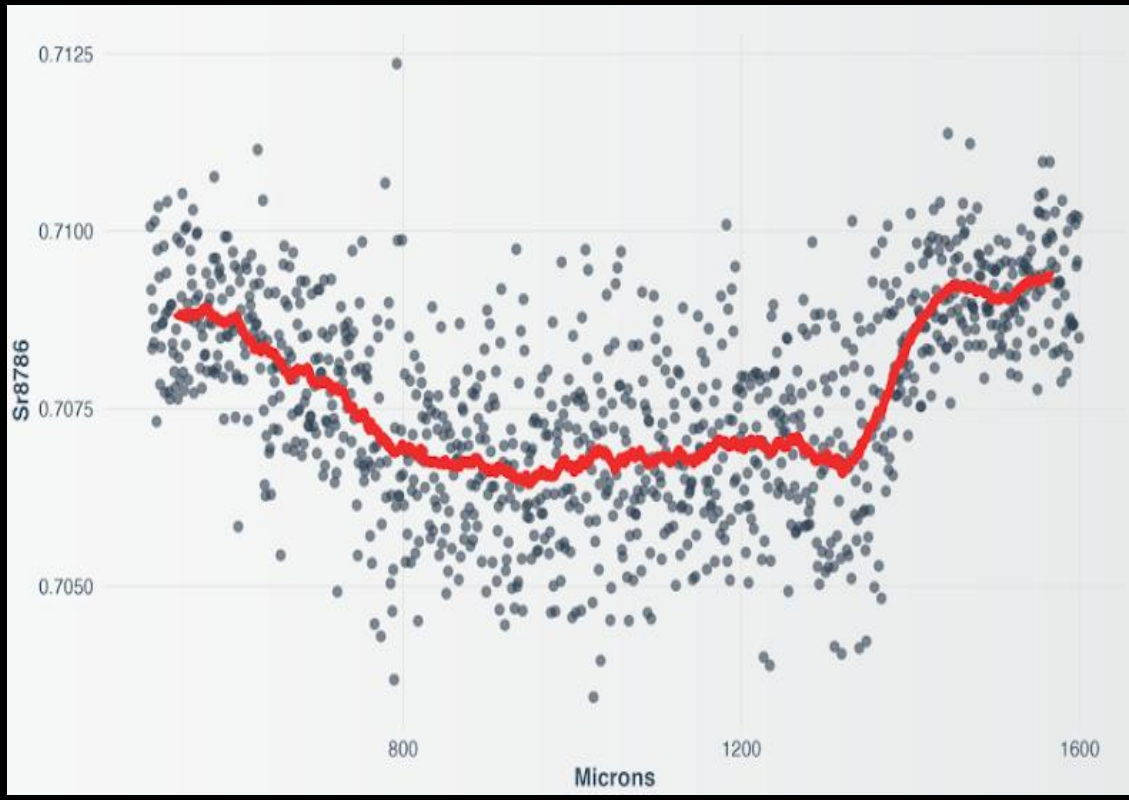
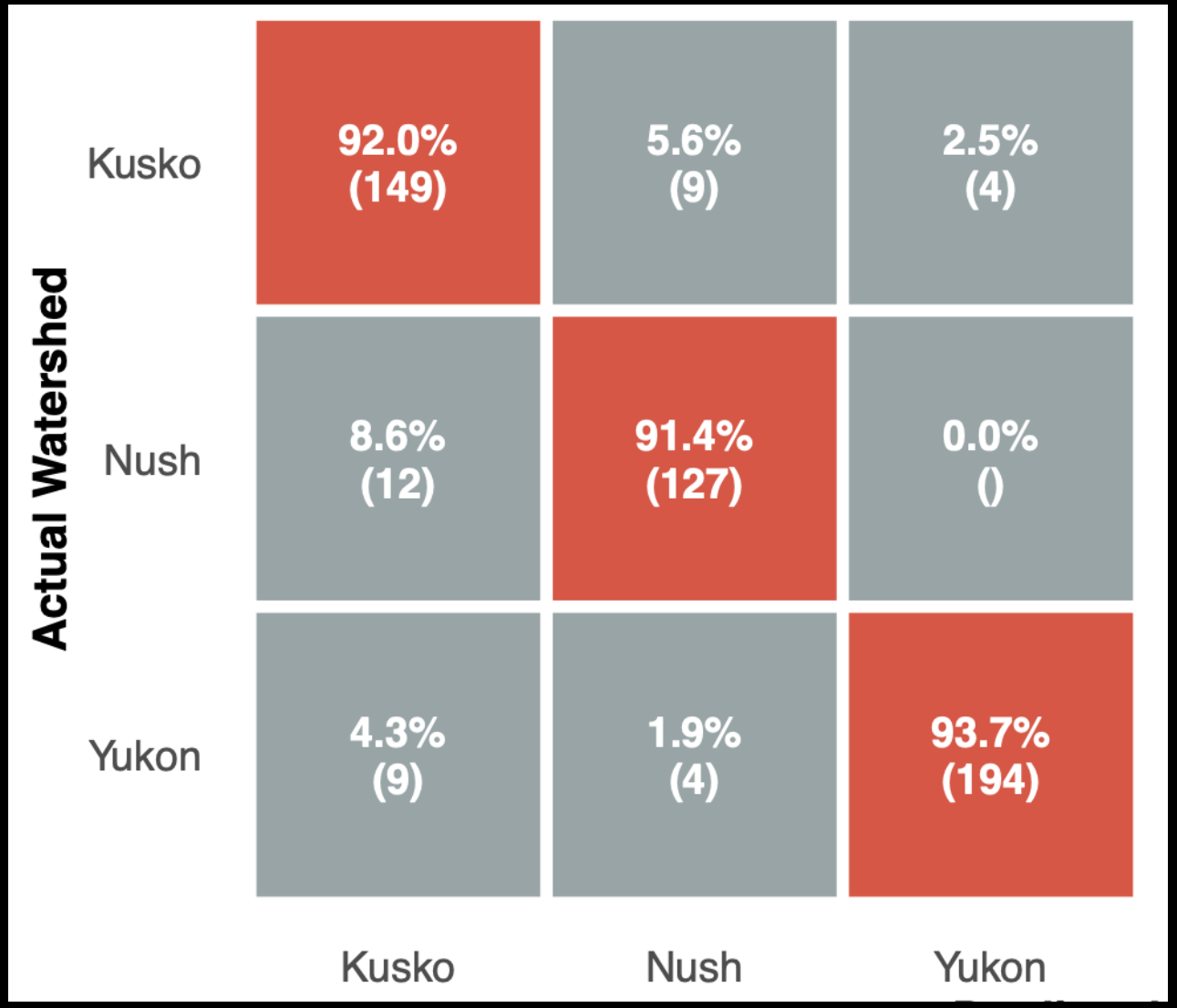


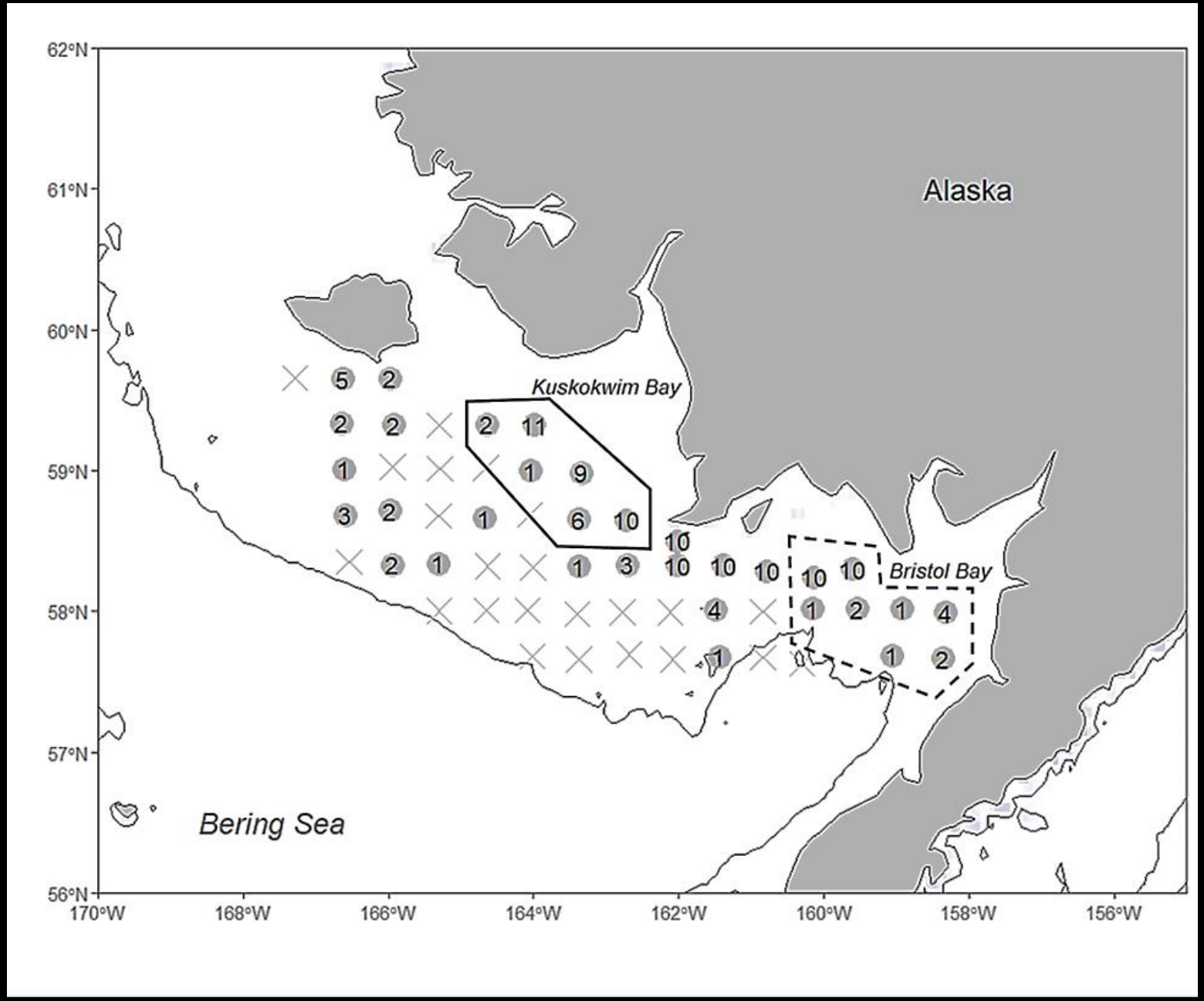


Otolith microchemistry analysis for stock discrimination (Makhlouf et al. 2025)



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

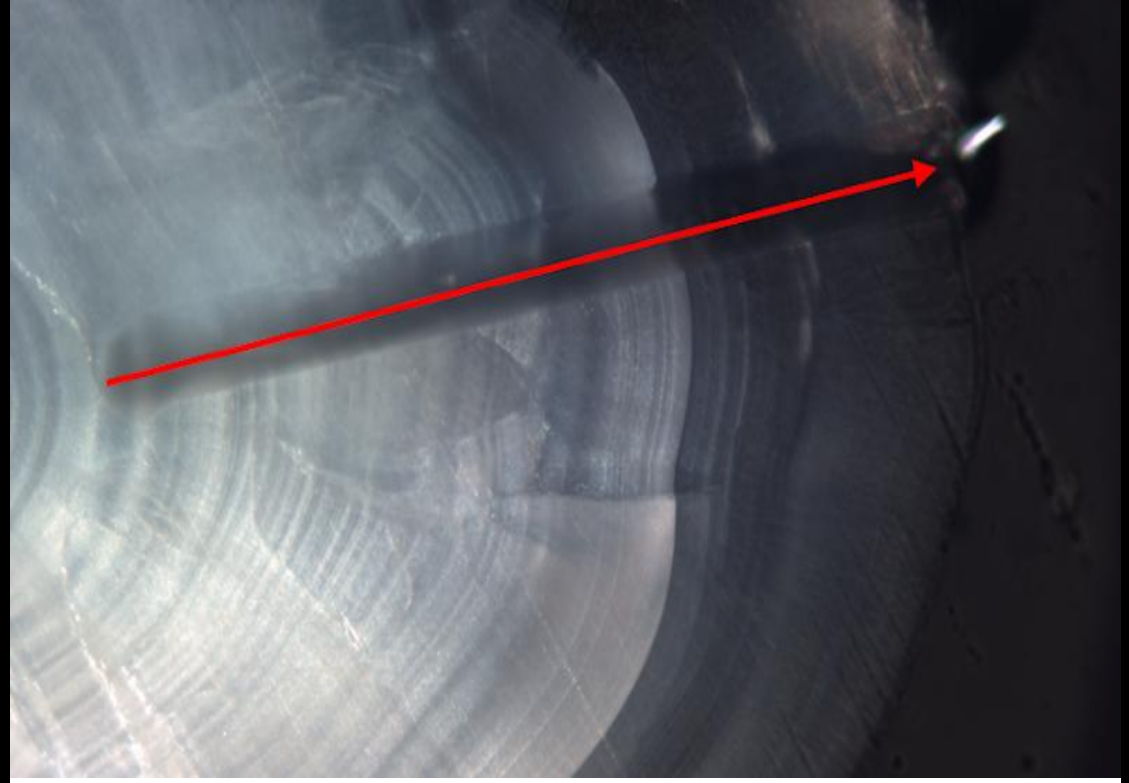
PIs: Sabrina Garcia, Ben Makhlouf (UW), Kevin McNeel (ADF&G MTA Lab), and Mat Wooler (UAF)



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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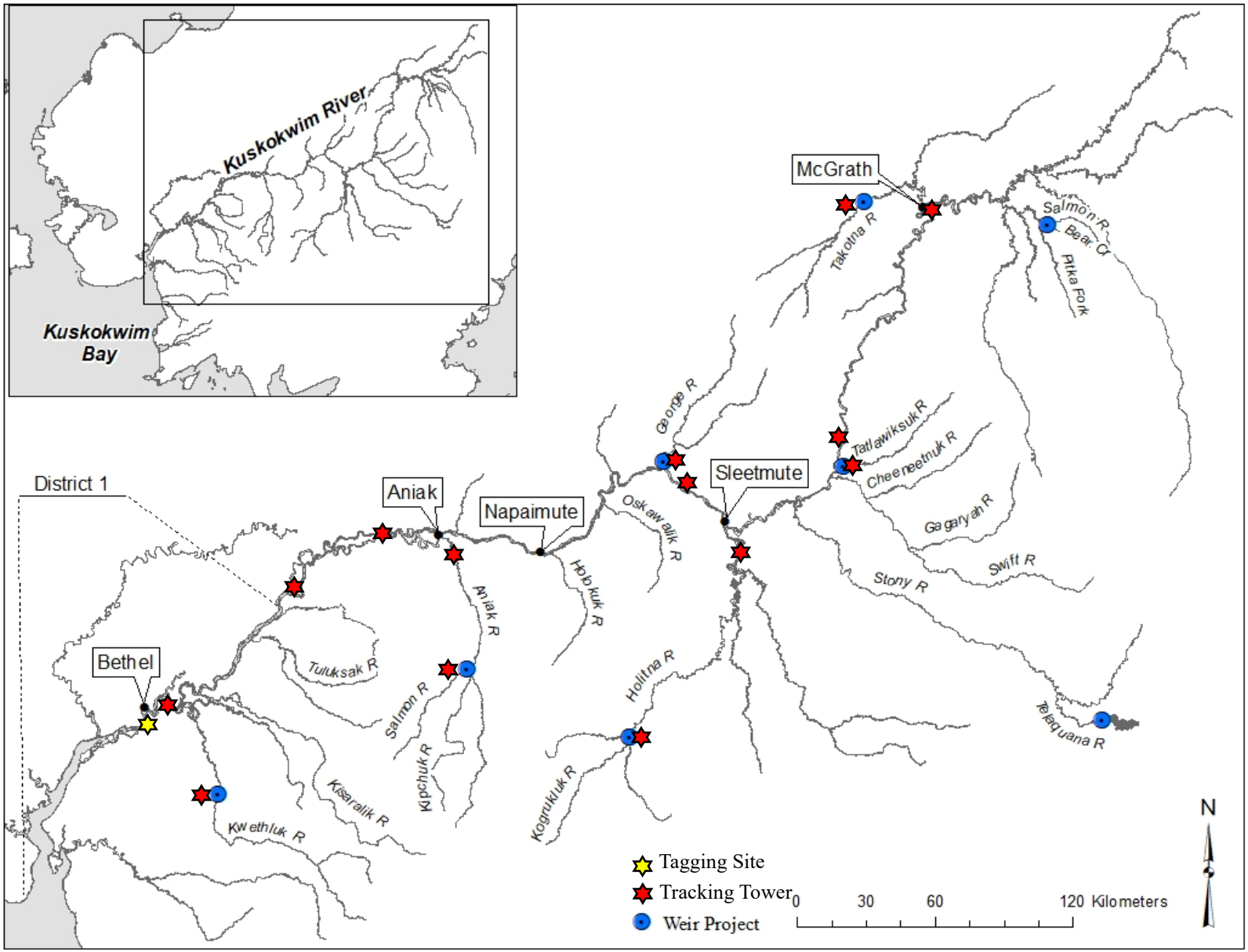
Kuskokwim River
Kuskokwim Bay
McGrath
Takotna R
Salmon R
Bear Cr
Pitka Fork
George R
Tatlawiksuk R
Cheeneetnuk R
Sleetmute
Gagaryah R
Swift R
Stony R
Oskawalik R
Holokuk R
Napaimute
Aniak
Aniak R
District 1
Bethel
Tuluksak R
Salmon R
Kipchuk R
Kisaralik R
Kwethluk R
Holitna R
Kogrukluk R
Telequana R
Tagging Site
Tracking Tower
Weir Project
0
30
60
120 Kilometers
N