

# Kuskokwim Area Fisheries Oral Report

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AYK Board of Fisheries Meeting  
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Written Report: RC 3; Tab 4  
Oral Report: RC 3; Tab 4

# Outline

Topics to be covered:

1. Area background
2. Stock status and recent fishery performance
3. Management Tools
4. Overview of proposals and issues

# Kuskokwim Management Area



# Kuskokwim Management Area

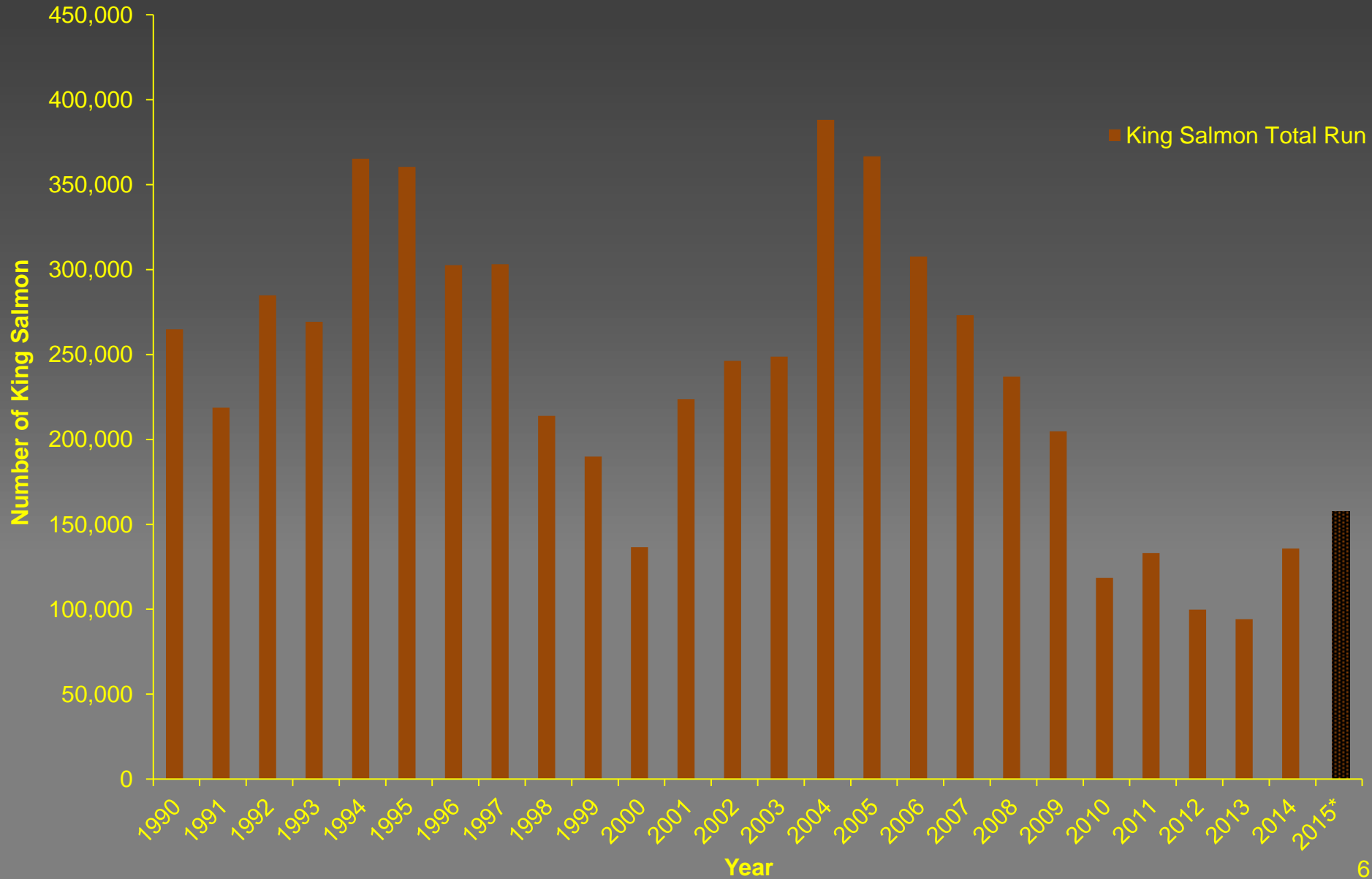


# Stock Status and Recent Fishery Performance

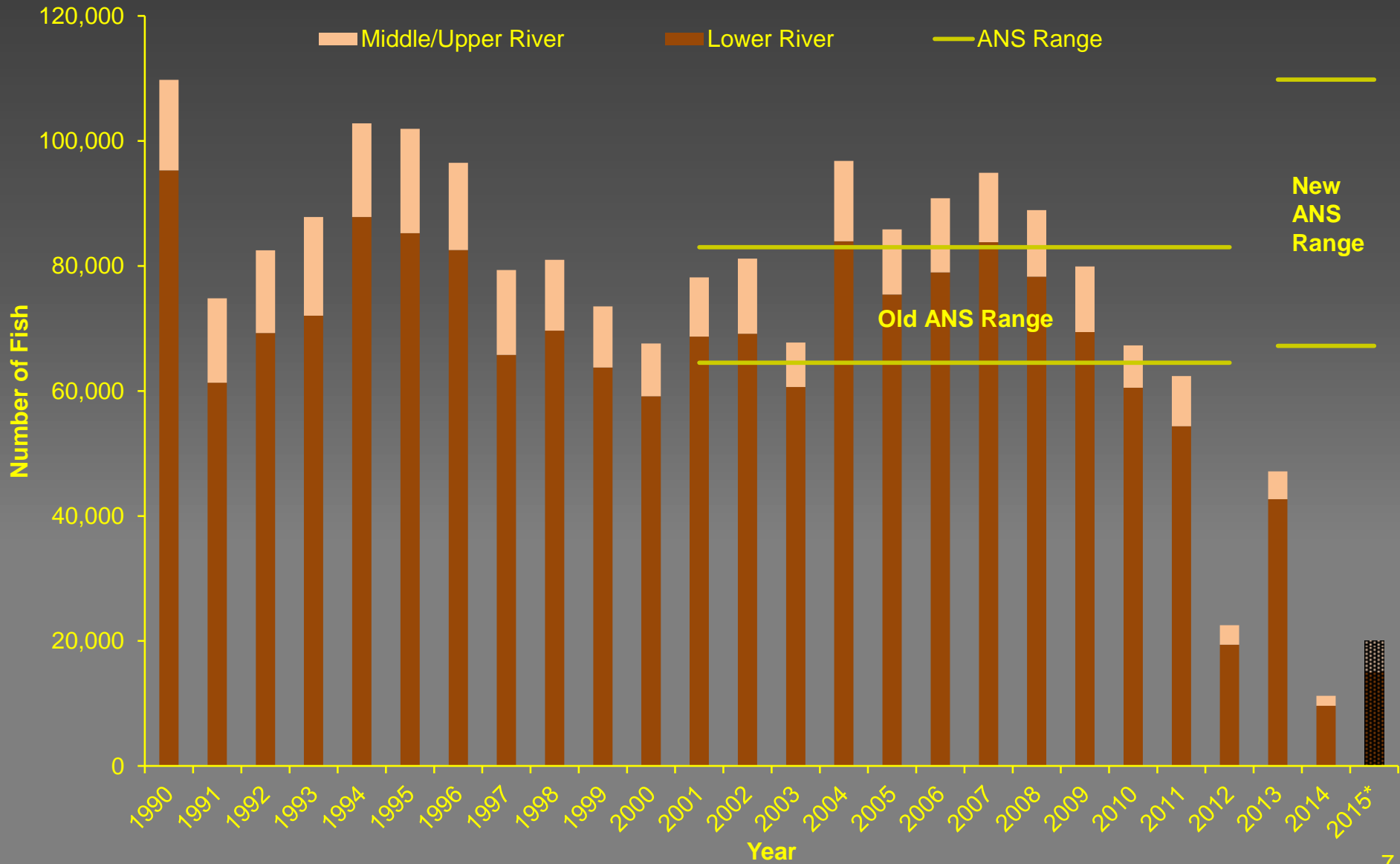
- Kuskokwim River
  - Poor king salmon runs
    - Restricted subsistence fishery (time/area/gear)
    - Subsistence harvests below ANS
    - Exceeded drainagewide escapement goal in 2014 and 2015
  - Chum, sockeye, and coho salmon relatively stable
    - Consistently met escapement goals
    - ANS met for all species except 2013 coho and 2015 chum salmon

# Total Run of Kuskokwim River King Salmon, 1990–2015

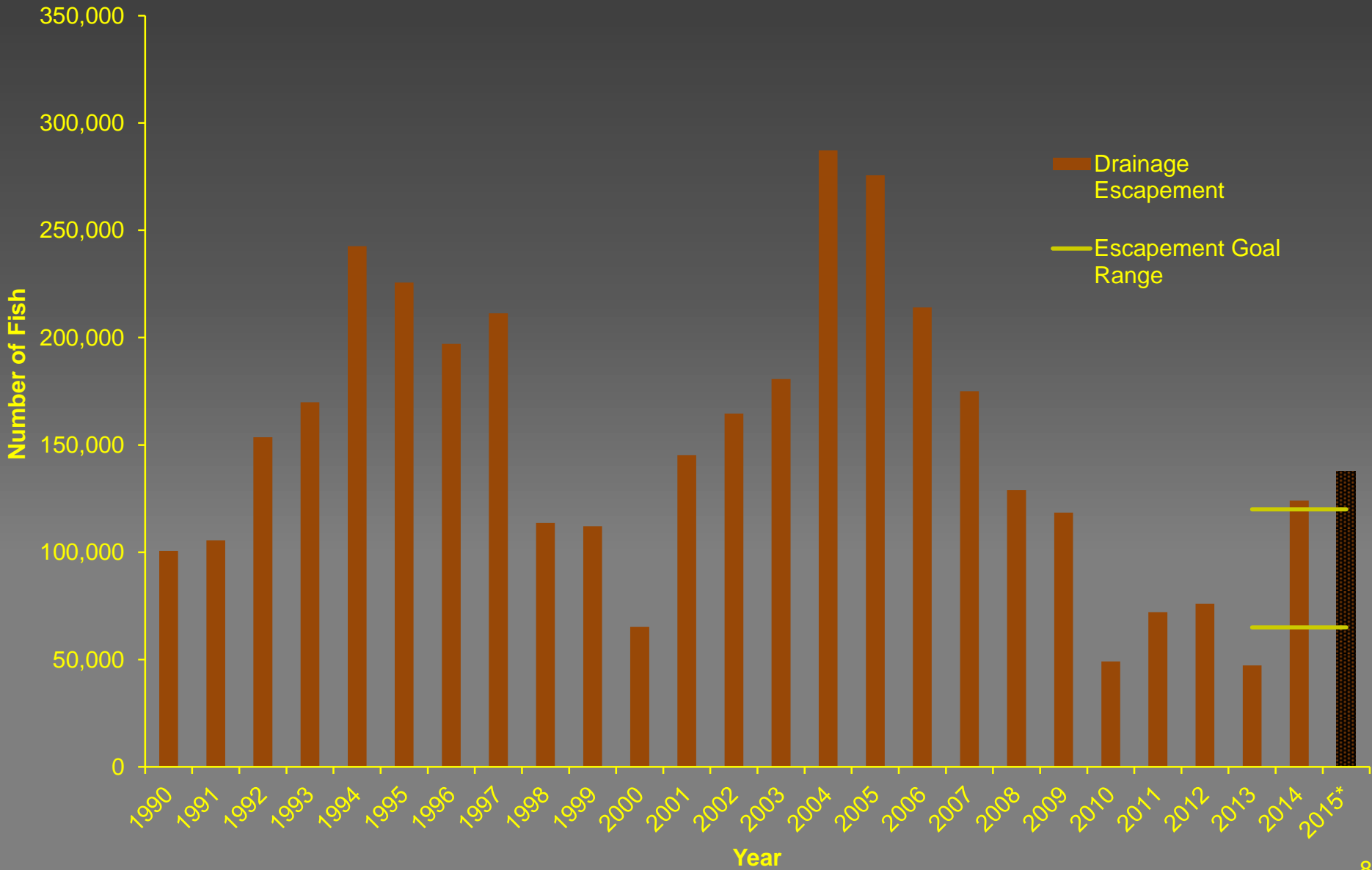
(\* 2015 is preliminary)



# Kuskokwim River King Salmon Subsistence Harvest, 1990–2015 (\* 2015 is preliminary)



# Kuskokwim River King Salmon Escapement, 1990–2015 (\* 2015 is preliminary)





# Kuskokwim Management Area



# Stock Status and Recent Fishery Performance

- Kuskokwim Bay
  - Poor king salmon runs
    - Restricted subsistence fishery (time/gear)
    - Chum and coho salmon relatively stable
  - Sockeye salmon runs above average
  - Salmon ANS met or exceeded annually

# Districts 4 and 5 Management

- **Subsistence**

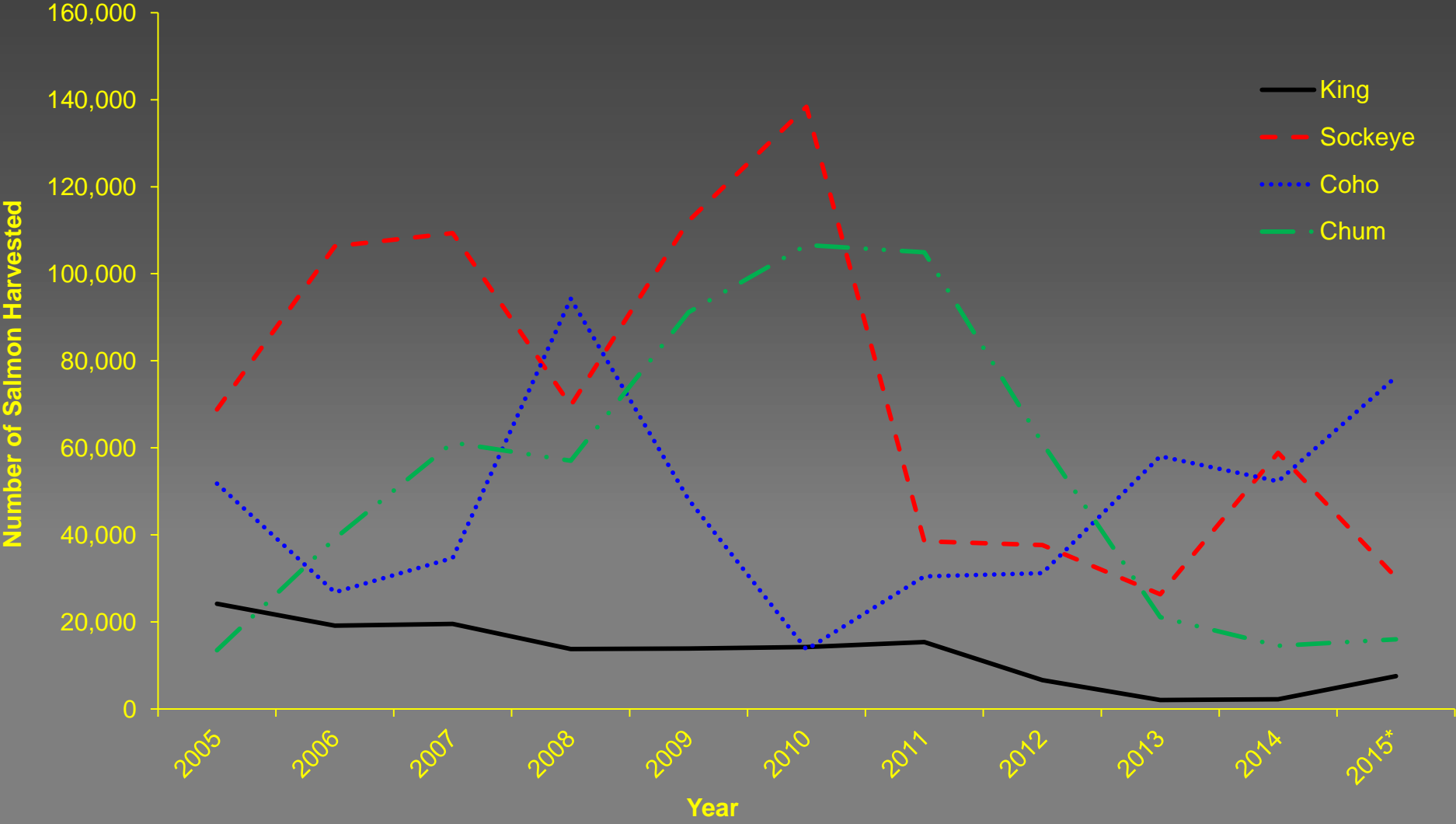
- Subsistence fishing restrictions implemented in Districts 4 and 5
  - Four days a week fishing schedule
  - Gillnets restricted to six inches or less
  - Gillnets restricted to marine waters only
- Subsistence closed during commercial periods

- **Commercial**

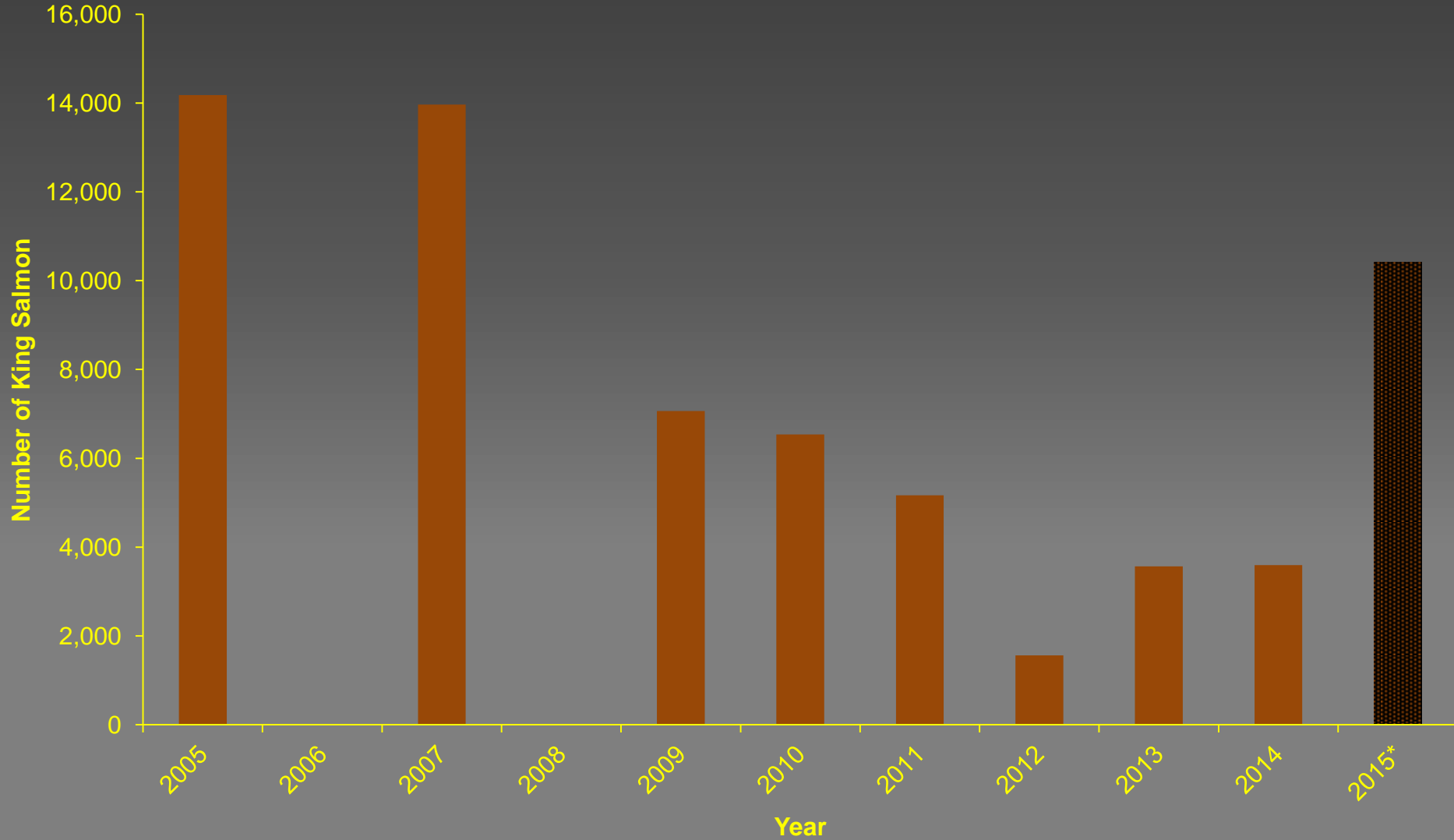
- District 4 Salmon Management Plan
- Delayed first opening until late June or early July, 2013–2015
- Half district closure in Goodnews Bay in 2013 and 2015
- Commercial fishery restricted to 6-inches or less gillnet mesh
- Assessment using catch statistics and weir escapements

# District 4 Commercial Salmon Harvests, 2005–2015

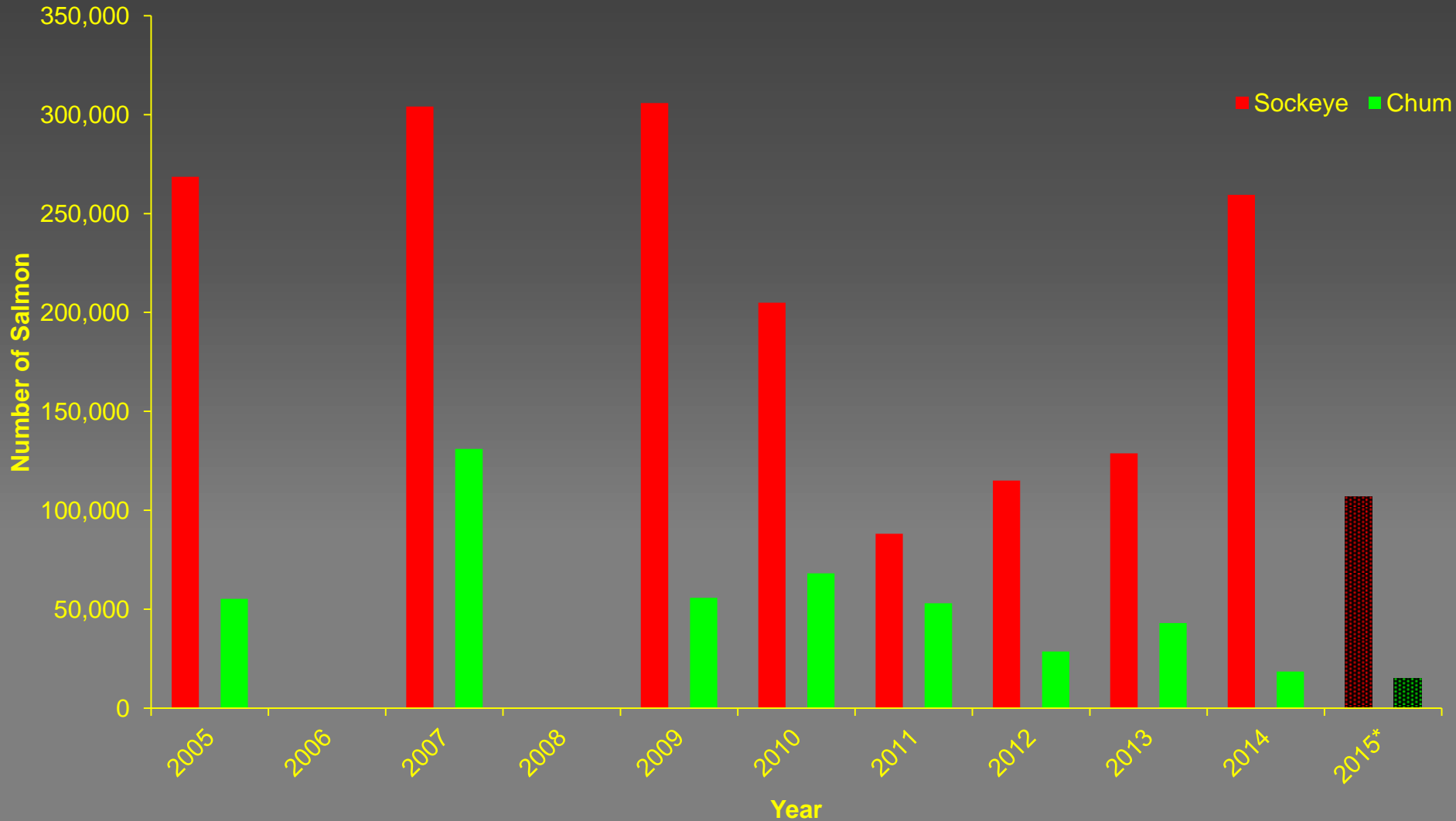
(\*2015 is preliminary)



# Kanektok River Weir King Salmon Escapement, 2005–2015 (\* 2015 is preliminary)

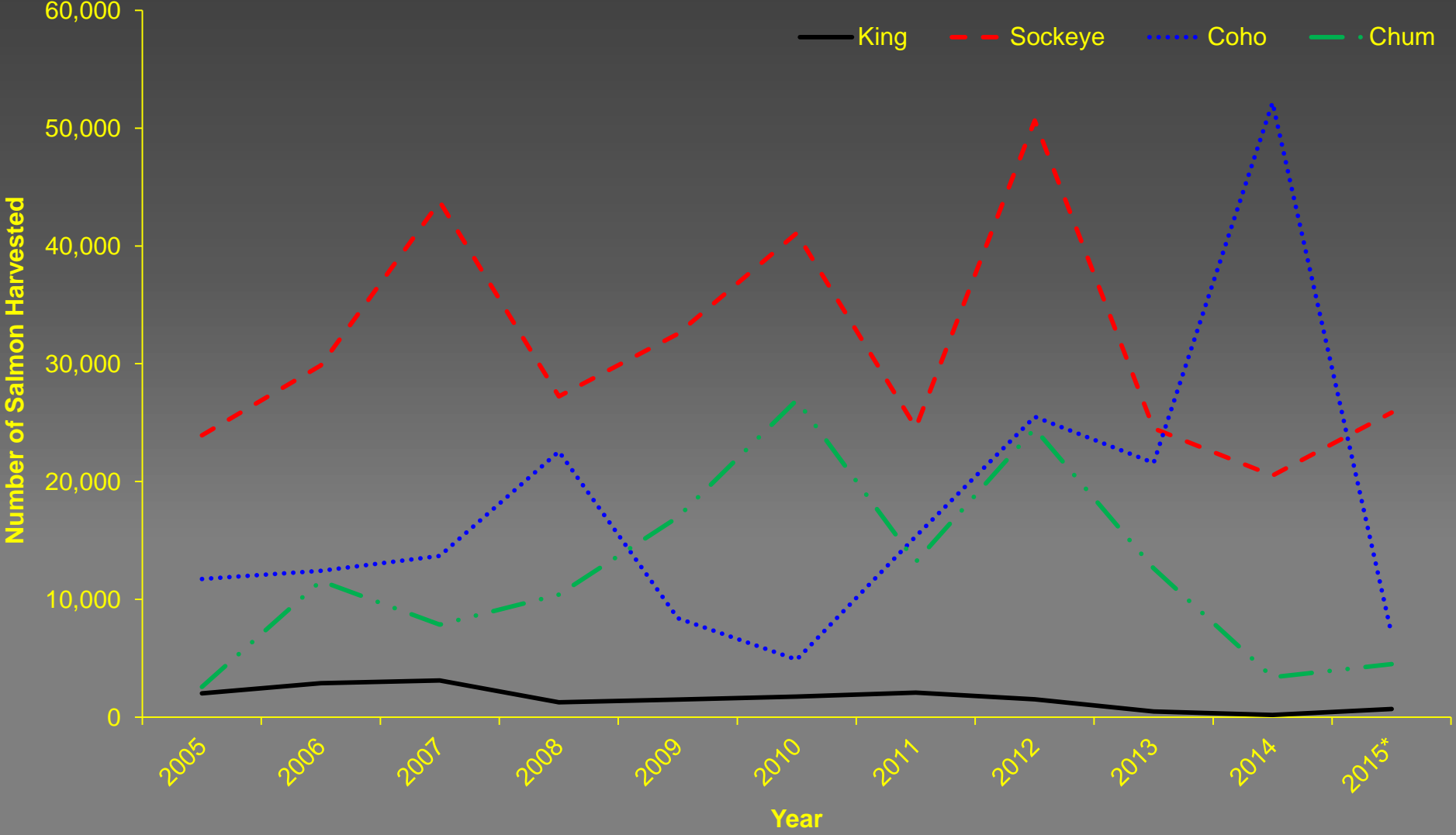


# Kanektok River Weir, Sockeye and Chum Salmon Escapements, 2005–2015 (\*2015 is preliminary)

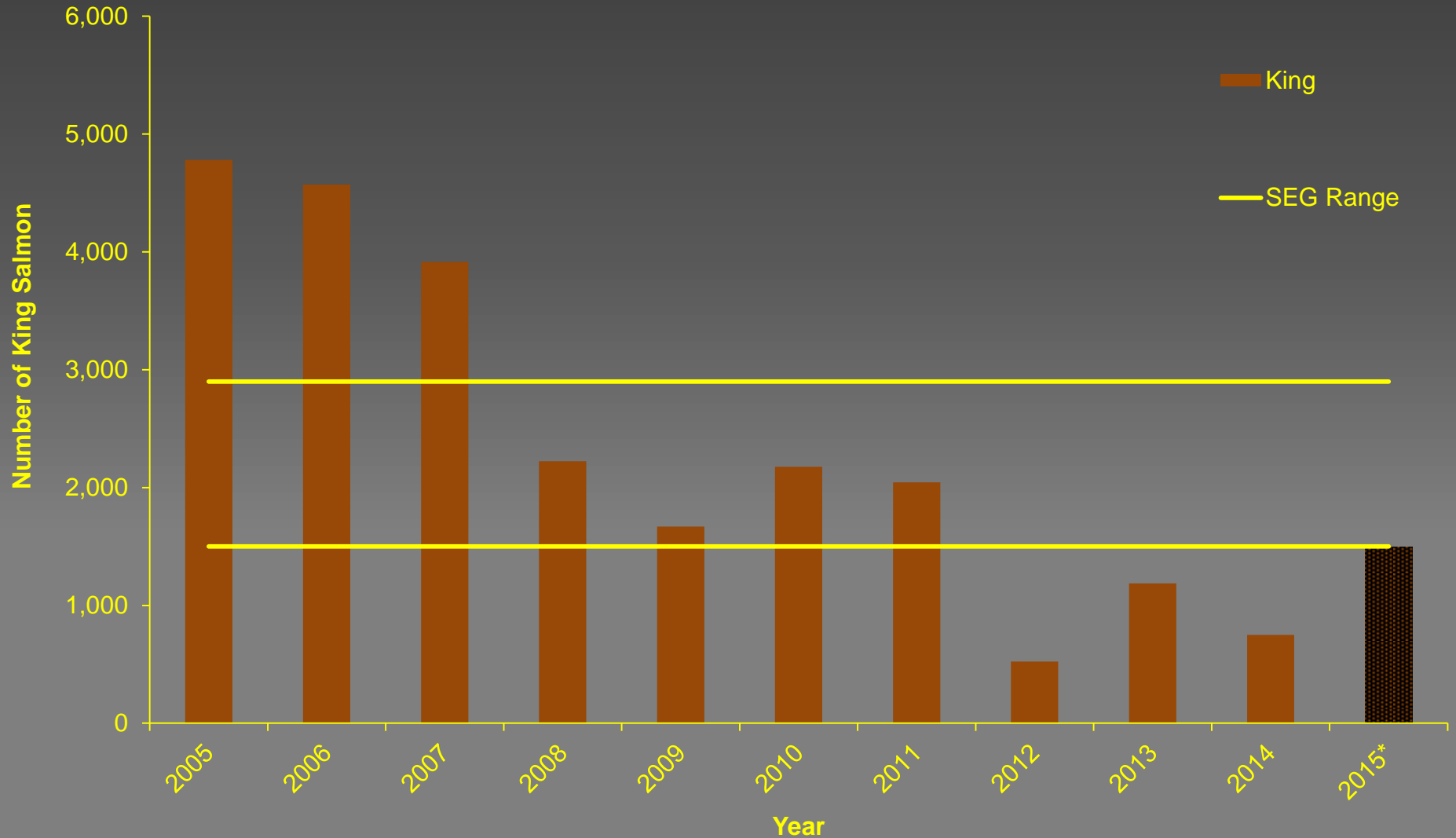


# District 5 Commercial Salmon Harvests, 2005–2015

(\* 2015 is preliminary)

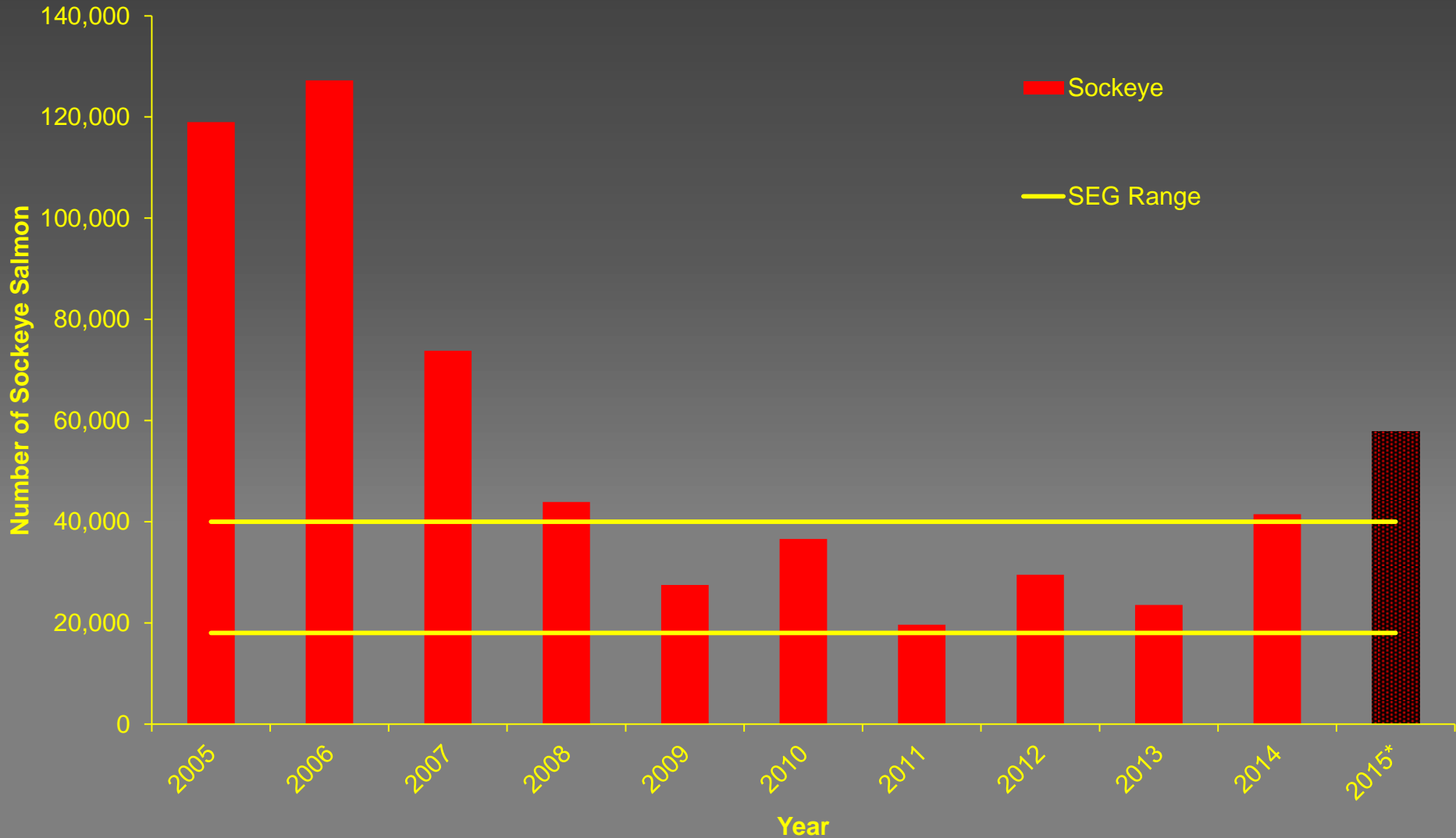


# Middle Fork Goodnews River Weir King Salmon Escapement, 2005–2015 (\*2015 is preliminary)

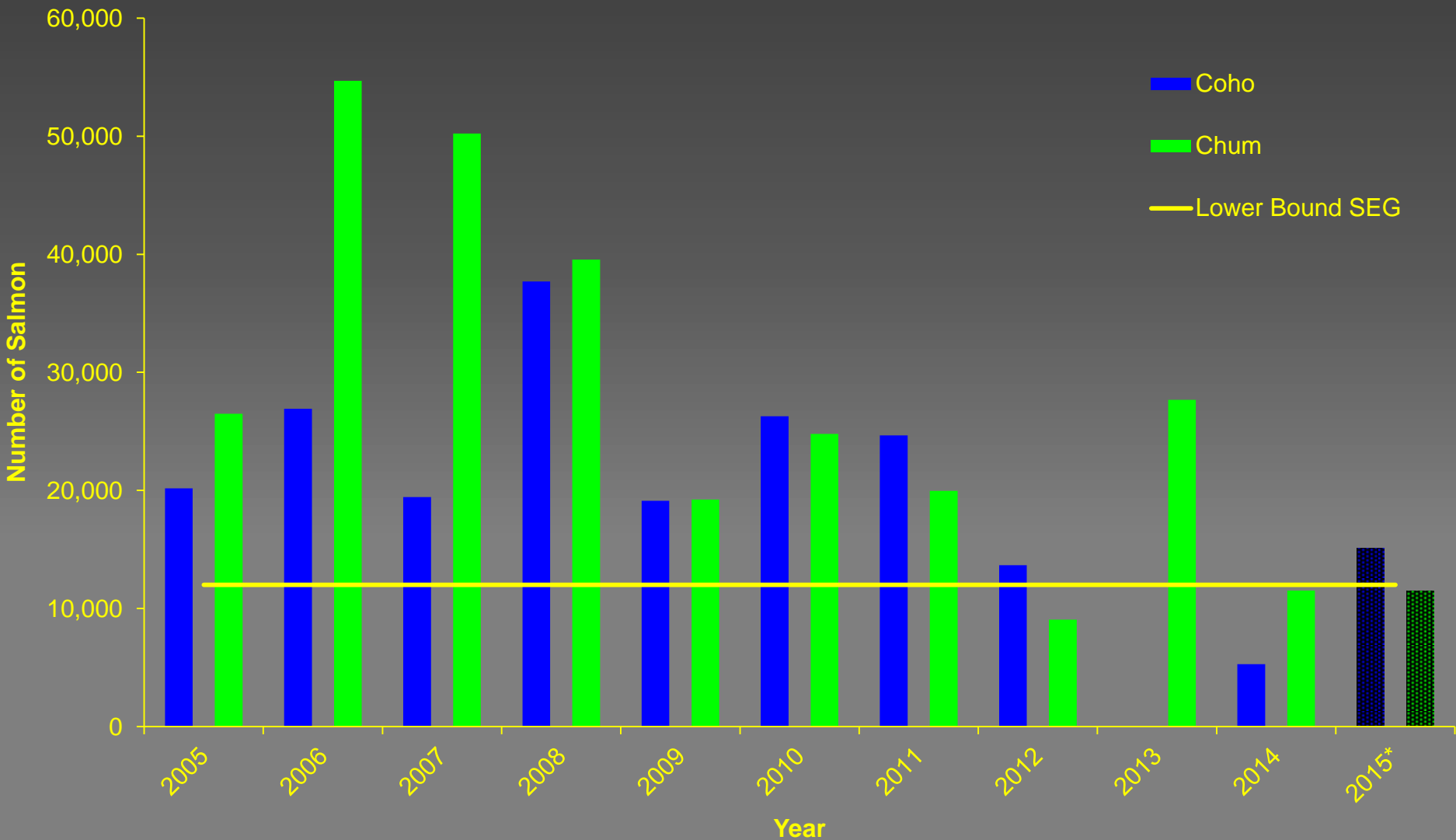




# Middle Fork Goodnews River Weir Sockeye Salmon Escapement, 2005–2015 (\* 2015 is preliminary)



# Middle Fork Goodnews River Weir Coho and Chum Salmon Escapements, 2005–2015 (\* 2015 is preliminary)



# Kuskokwim Bay Aerial Survey Escapements, 2005–2015

Year	Kanektok R.		North Fork Goodnews R.	
	King	Sockeye	King	Sockeye
2005	14,202	110,730		
2006	8,433	382,800		
2007				
2008	3,659	38,900	2,155	32,500
2009				
2010	1,228	16,950		
2011			853	14,140
2012			382	16,710
2013	2,346	64,802		
2014	1,871	148,800	630	
2015	4,919	39,970	992	38,390
	3,500–	14,000–		
SEG	8,000	34,000	640–3,300	5,500–19,500
		Escapement goal was either met or exceeded		

# Current Kuskokwim River Management Tools

- Time and Area (EO authority)
- Gear Restriction
  - Six inch or less mesh size gillnets
  - Live release of king salmon
    - Fish wheels
    - Dip nets
    - Beach seines
  - Four inch setnets with bank orientation
  - Gillnet length as specified by the department
- Alaska residents 60 years of age or older (Elder fishery)

# Kuskokwim Area proposals

## *Kuskokwim Salmon Management Plan*

Proposal 92 – Manage the subsistence salmon fishery based on Bethel Test Fish

Proposals 93 and 94 – Establish inriver run goal for king salmon

## *Subsistence*

Proposal 95, 96, 97, 222 – Subsistence fishery

Proposal 98 – Establish descriptions of subsistence fishing sections

Proposal 99 – Limit four inch mesh gillnets to one per household

Proposal 100 – Beach seine specifications

## Kuskokwim Area Proposals cont.

### *Commercial*

Proposal 101 – Repeal depth specifications for gillnets greater than six inches

Proposal 102 – Reduce gillnet mesh size to five and three quarters inches or smaller in District 4

Proposal 103 – Include District 5 into the *District 4 Salmon Management Plan*

Proposal 104 – Increase the commercial fishing area in District 5

Proposal 106 – Extend the Nelson Island District (Herring)

### *Sport*

Proposal 105 – Modify sport fishing gear specifications in the Kanektok and Arolik rivers

# Acknowledgements

- Kuskokwim River
  - Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group
  - National Park Service
  - Office of Subsistence Management
  - McGrath, Takonta, Nikolai, and Telida (MTNT)
  - Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge
  - Native Village of Napimute
  - Orutsaramiut Native Council
  - Association of Village Council Presidents
- Kuskokwim Bay
  - Togiak National Wildlife Refuge
  - Coastal Villages Regional Fund
  - Native Village of Kwinhagak







# Kuskokwim Area proposals

## *Kuskokwim Salmon Management Plan*

Proposal 92 – Manage the subsistence salmon fishery based on Bethel Test Fish

Proposal 93 and 94 – Establish inriver run goal for king salmon

# Kuskokwim River total run, subsistence harvest, and drainage escapement of King salmon, 1990–2015

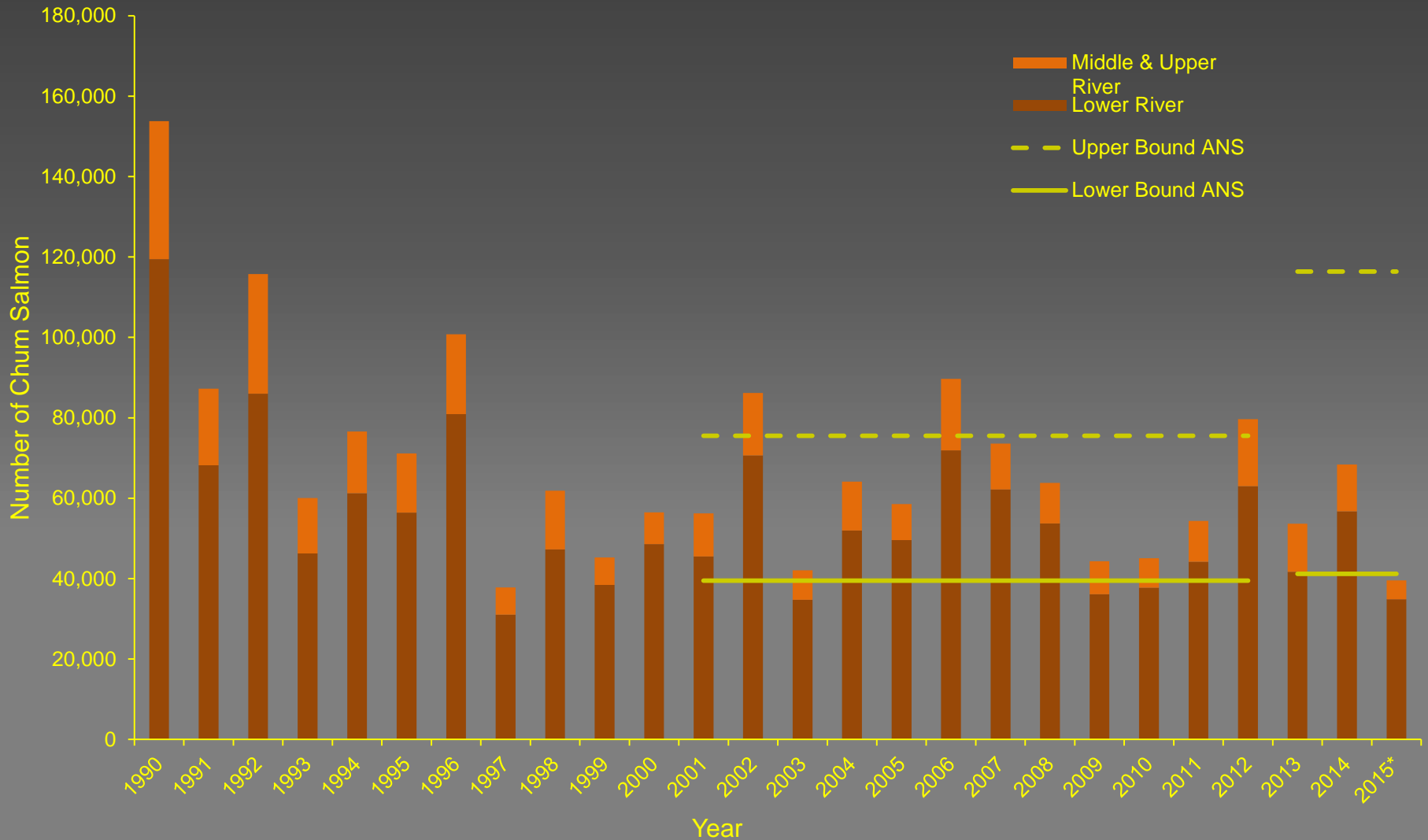
Year	Total Run	Lower River Harvest	Middle River Harvest	Upper River Harvest	Combined Middle & Upper River	Total Harvest	Drainage Escapement
1990	264,802	95,284	9,871	4,623	14,494	109,778	100,614
1991	218,705	61,327	9,613	3,880	13,493	74,820	105,589
1992	284,846	69,276	8,621	4,584	13,205	82,481	153,573
1993	269,305	72,039	11,379	4,412	15,791	87,830	169,816
1994	365,246	87,815	10,111	4,891	15,002	102,817	242,616
1995	360,513	85,248	11,955	4,717	16,672	101,920	225,595
1996	302,603	82,524	9,074	4,879	13,953	96,477	197,092
1997	303,189	65,767	8,888	4,679	13,567	79,334	211,247
1998	213,873	69,649	7,544	3,777	11,321	80,970	113,627
1999	189,939	63,739	7,034	2,765	9,799	73,538	112,082
2000	136,618	59,144	6,306	2,146	8,452	67,596	65,180
2001	223,707	68,694	6,965	2,515	9,480	78,174	145,232
2002	246,296	69,144	8,161	3,864	12,025	81,169	164,635
2003	248,789	60,627	5,126	1,984	7,110	67,737	180,687
2004	388,136	83,956	8,971	3,861	12,832	96,788	287,178
2005	366,601	75,408	6,840	3,615	10,455	85,863	275,598
2006	307,662	78,957	8,362	3,494	11,856	90,813	214,004
2007	273,060	83,779	7,710	3,409	11,119	94,899	174,943
2008	237,074	78,273	8,055	2,584	10,639	88,912	128,978
2009	204,747	69,424	7,228	3,244	10,472	79,896	118,478
2010	118,507	60,502	5,339	1,445	6,784	67,286	49,073
2011	133,059	54,350	5,655	2,361	8,016	62,366	72,097
2012	99,807	19,422	2,117	1,005	3,122	22,544	76,074
2013	94,166	42,667	3,656	790	4,446	47,113	47,315
2014	130,144	9,619	975	640	1,615	11,234	123,987
2015 <sup>a</sup>	157,585	15,000	3,000	2,000	5,000	20,000	137,585
Average							
2000–2009	263,269	72,741	7,372	3,072	10,444	83,185	175,491
Average							
2010–2014	115,137	37,312	3,548	1,248	4,797	42,108	73,709

<sup>a</sup> All 2015 data are Preliminary.

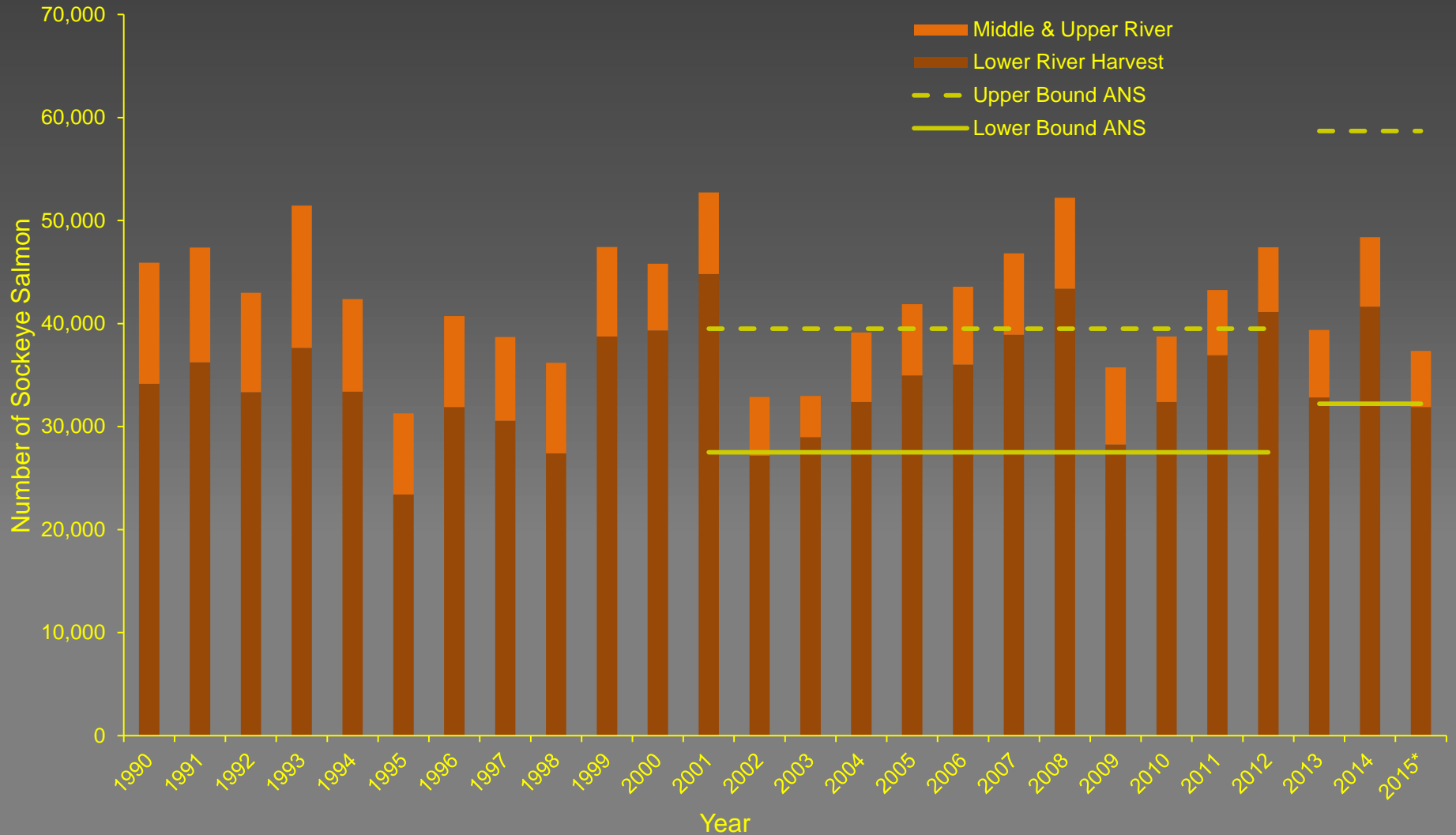
# King salmon travel speeds and timing

- Chinook salmon speed is variable
  - Lower River tagging project
  - Travel speed increases as they move up river
  - Five days from Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) to Kalskag tagging site
- Run timing is assessed at BTF
  - Chinook begin entering the river in late May and early June
  - Second week of June abundance increases
  - Run tails off in mid July

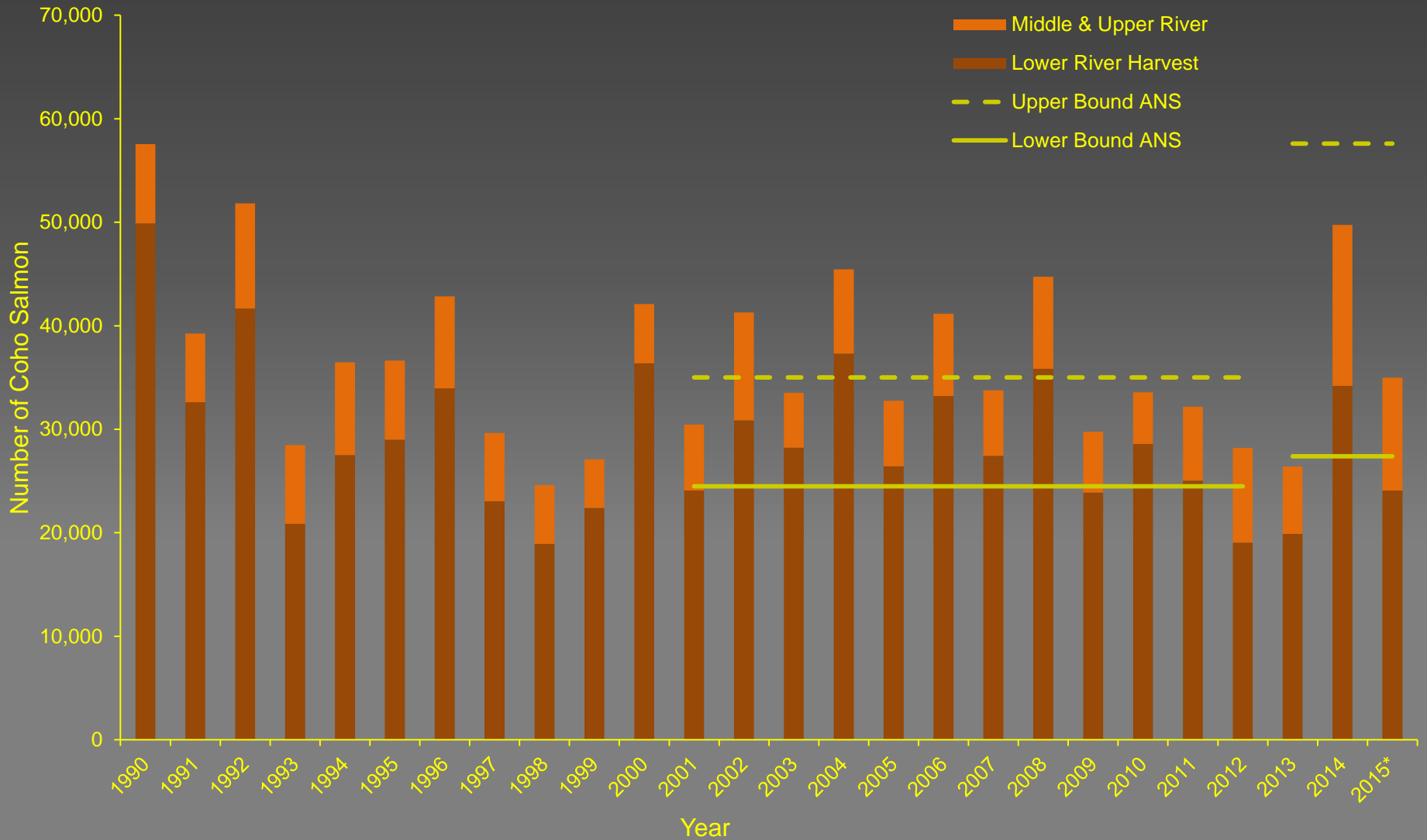
# Kuskokwim River Chum Salmon Subsistence Harvest, 1990–2015



# Kuskokwim River Sockeye Salmon Subsistence Harvest, 1990–2015



# Kuskokwim River Coho Salmon Subsistence Harvest, 1990–2015



# Early Season Closure

Median Percent of the King Salmon Run  
Past Bethel Test Fishery by Date, 1984–2015

