



Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

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Exhibit E

Lower Columbia River White Sturgeon Population Status Update

Tucker Jones

Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program Manager

Today's Topics

- * Overview of long-term population metrics
- * 2015 stock assessment results and current population status
- * Status of lower Columbia River white sturgeon fisheries



Metrics and Indicators

Lower Columbia River and Oregon Coast White Sturgeon Conservation Plan

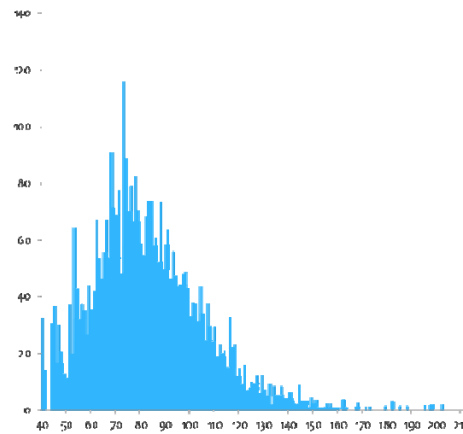
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program

17330 SE Evelyn Street
Clackamas, Oregon 97015

August 2011

Please direct questions and comments at:

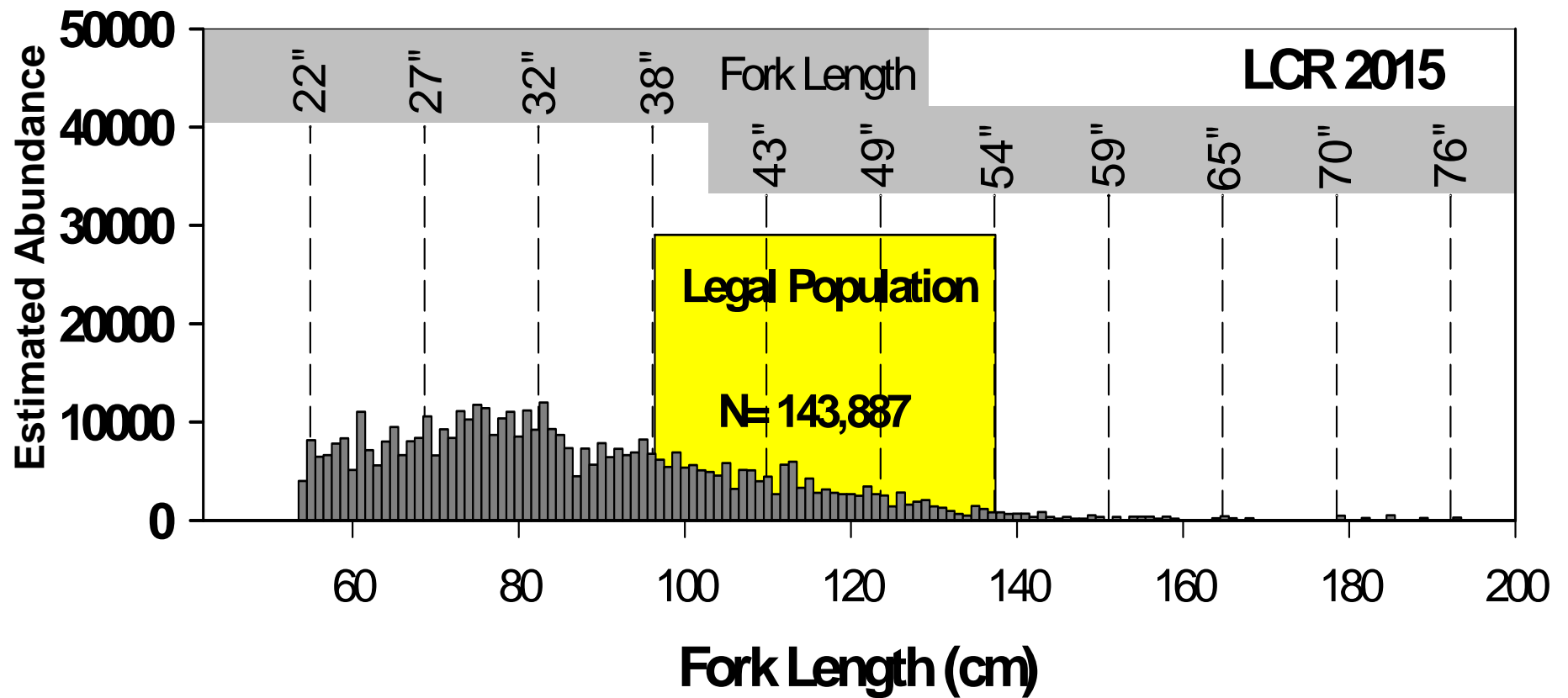
tucker.a.jones@state.or.us (971-673-6067)
christine.mallete@state.or.us (971-673-6053)



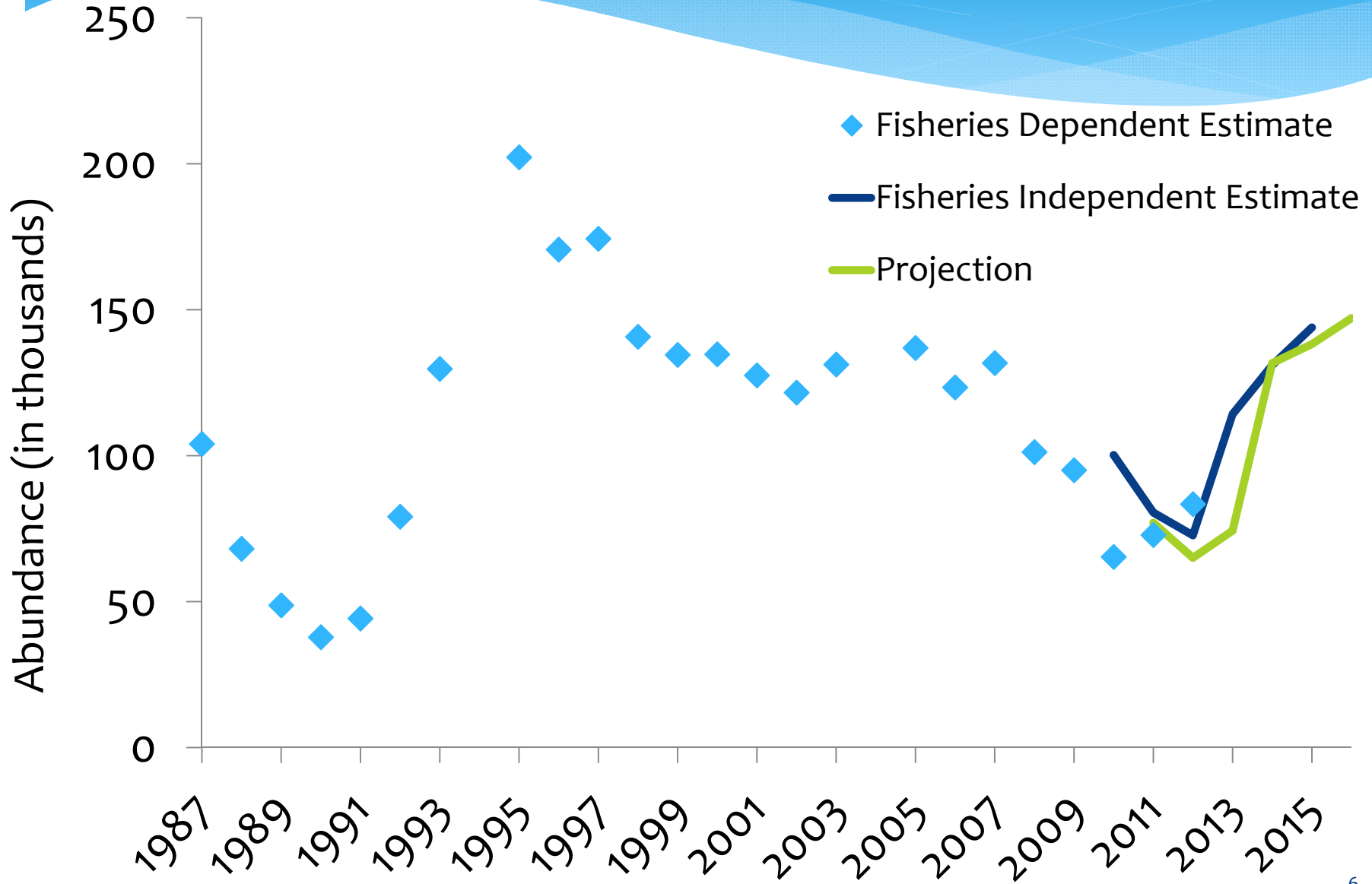
LCR white sturgeon abundance

Size Class (inches FL)	\hat{N}
Juveniles (21" – 38")	347,000
Legal (38" – 54")	144,000
Over-legals (54" – 65")	9,200
Adults (+65")	3,000
Total (+21")	>500,000

Lower Columbia River Status

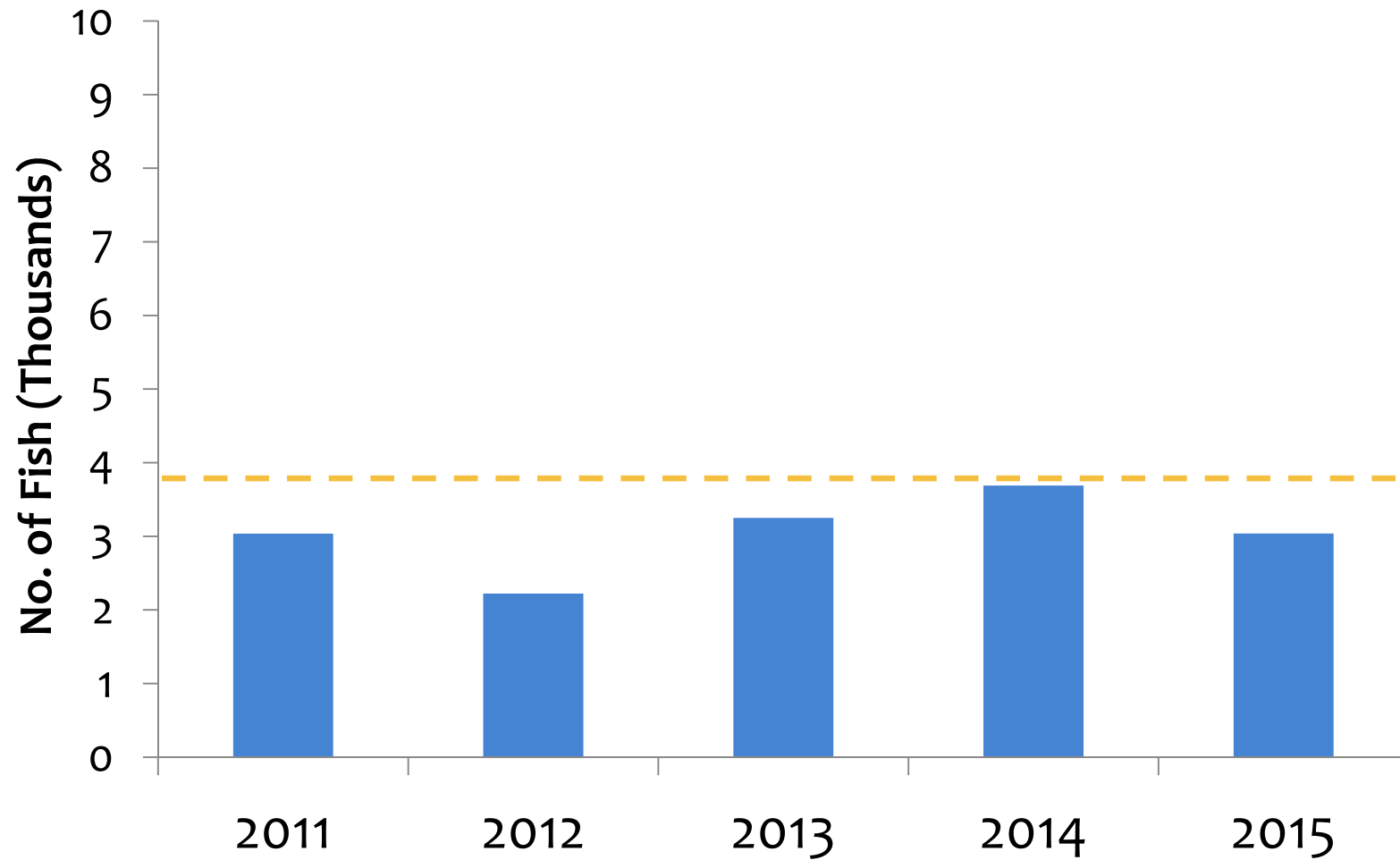


White sturgeon legal abundance

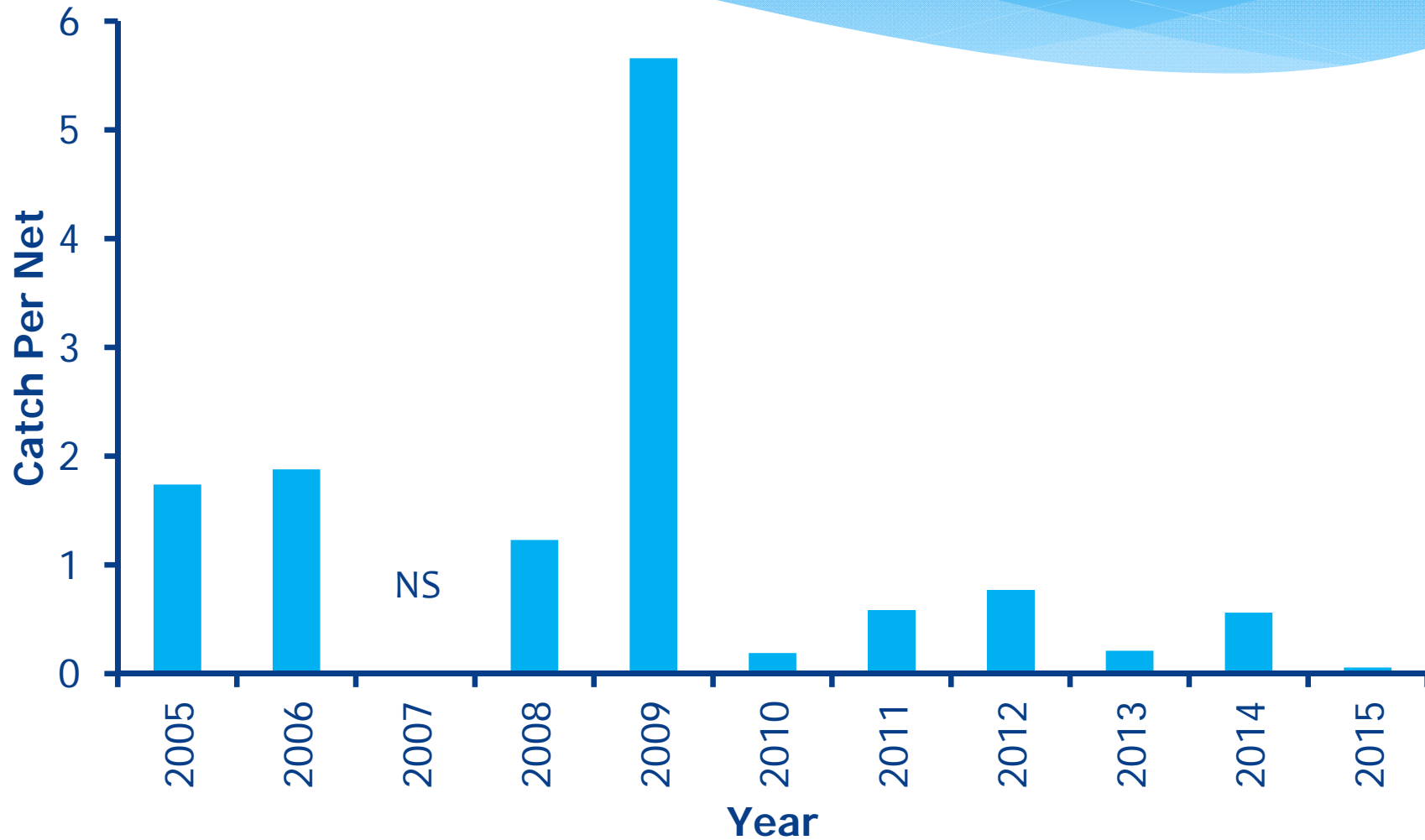


LCR white sturgeon abundance

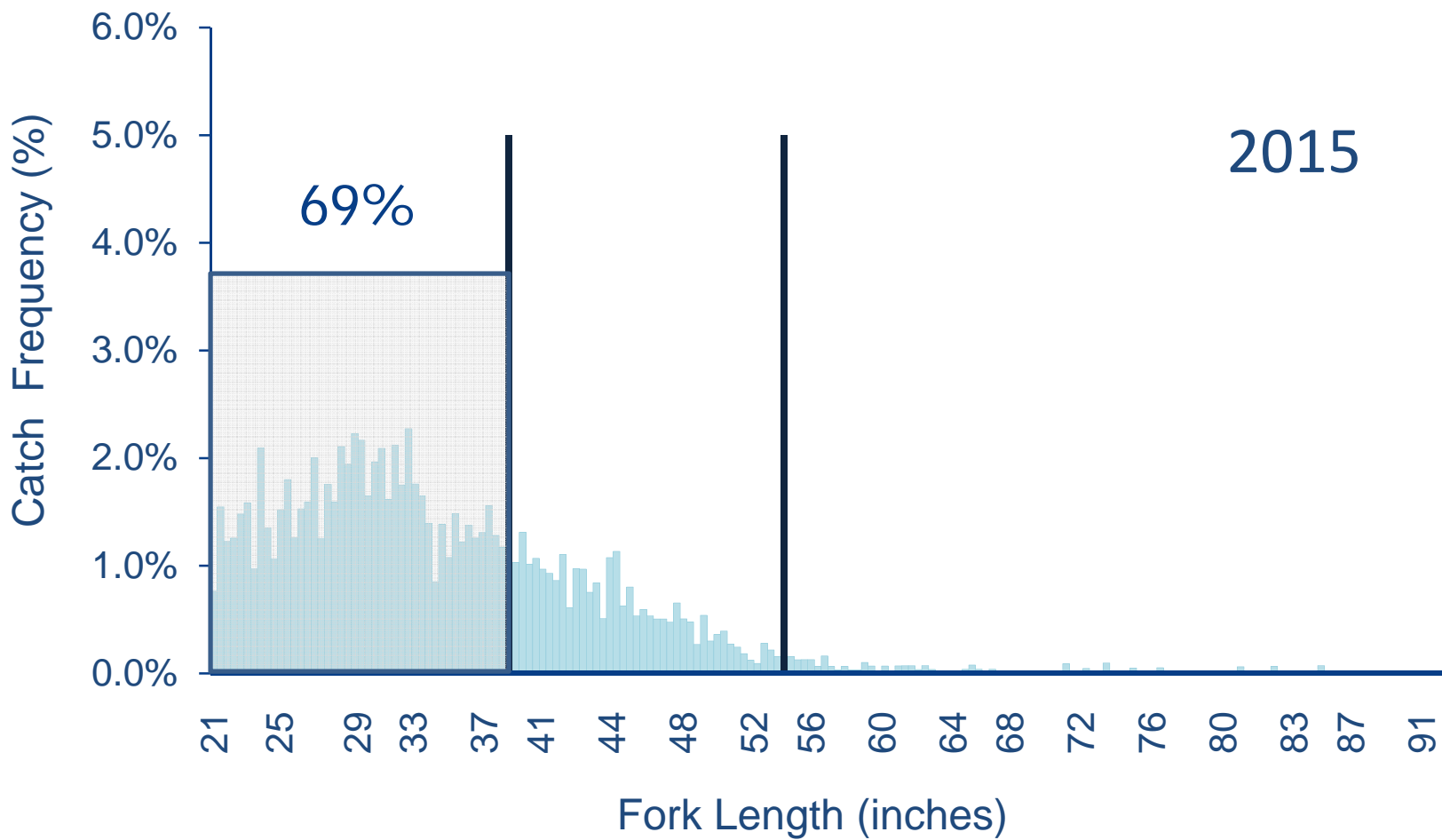
Adult Abundance (>65" FL)



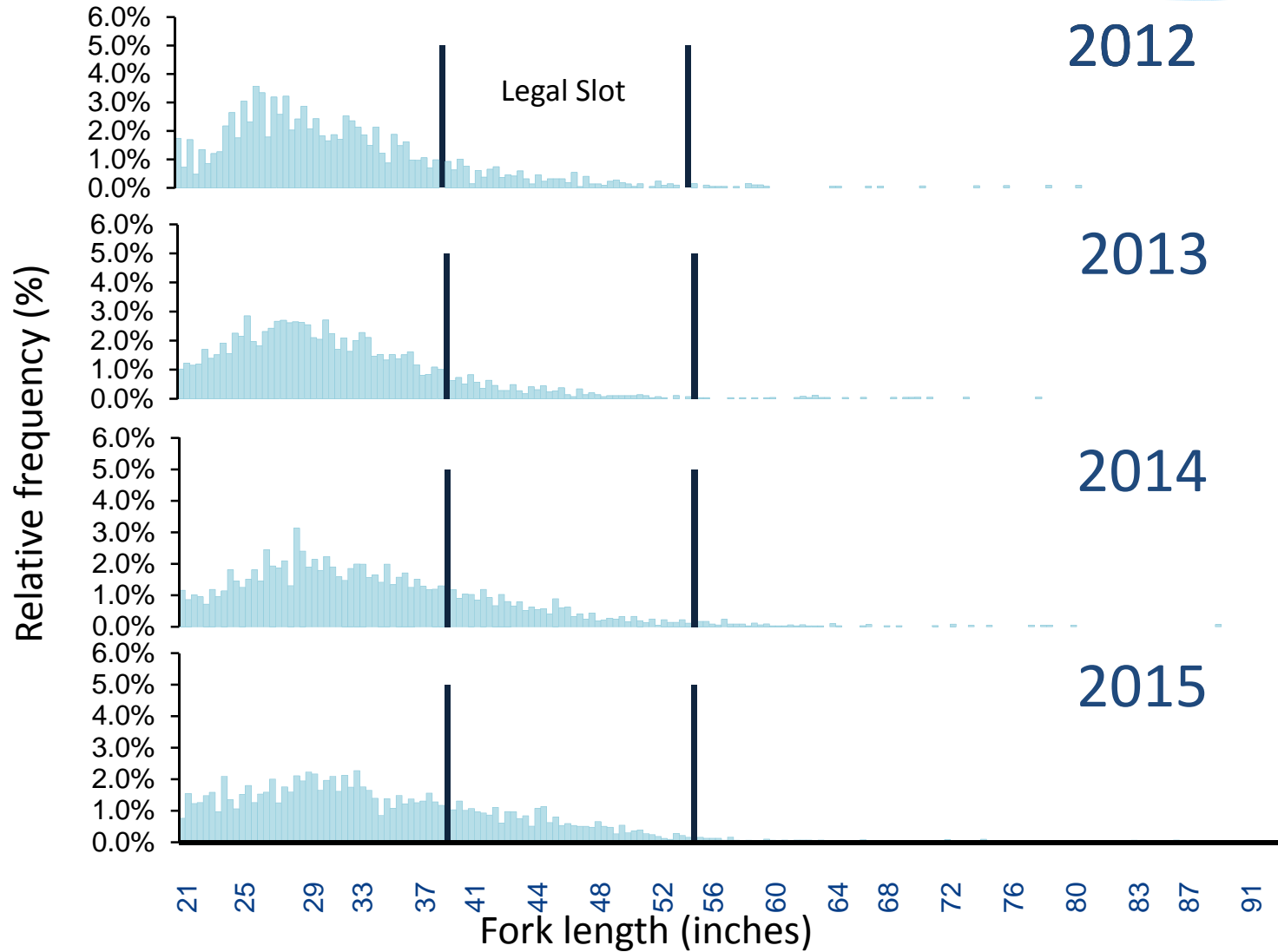
LCR white sturgeon productivity



LCR length frequency distribution



LCR length frequency distribution



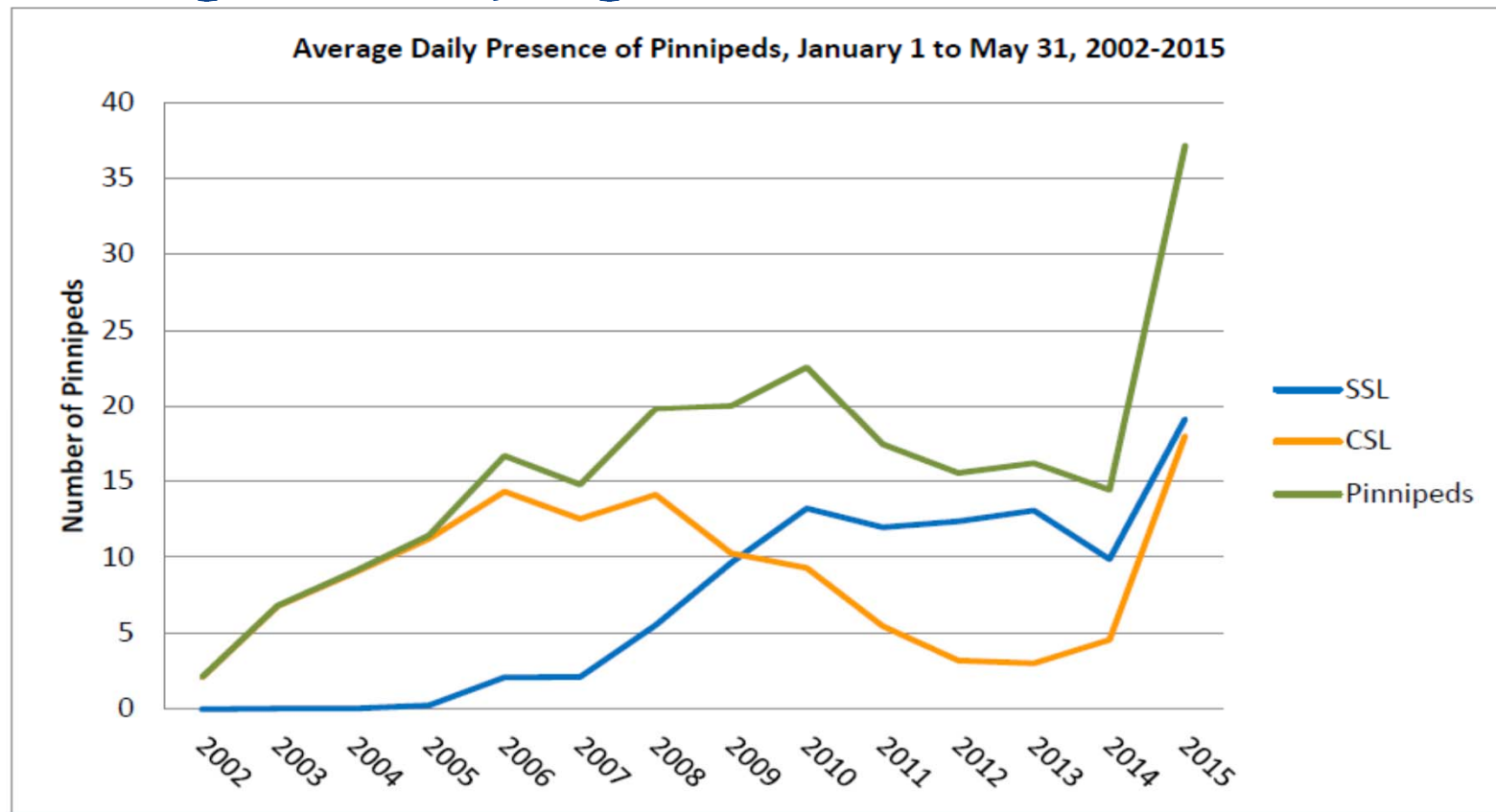
Sea lion predation

- * What is the current pinniped population status?

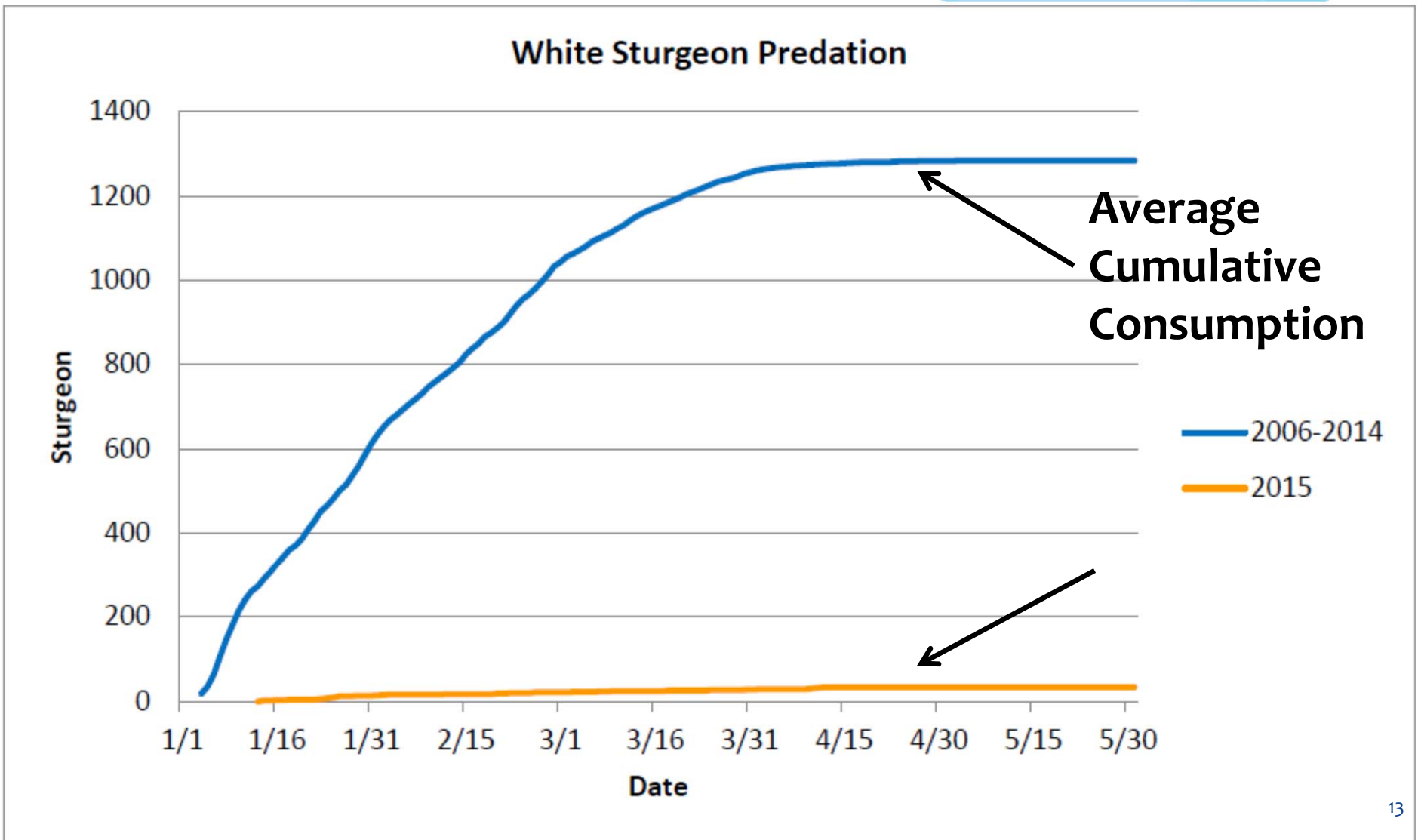


Sea lion predation – Bonneville Dam





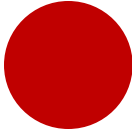
- * Sea Lion presence grew and by 2005 a hazing program was initiated
- * With the arrival that year of the larger Steller Sea Lion, sturgeon were being deliberately targeted



Sea lion predation – Bonneville Dam



Status Summary

Metric	N	Interpretation	Brief Summary
Legal Abundance	143,890		Legal-sized white sturgeon abundance continues to increase and is similar to modeled projections.
Adult Abundance	3,040		Adult abundance metric is below Oregon Conservation Plan conservation status threshold (3-year average of 3,900 adults).
Recruitment Index	0.06 CPN		2015 white sturgeon young-of-year recruitment is low. Continues recent trend.
Length Frequency Distribution	69% Juveniles		Reduced relative abundance of juvenile and sub-legal sized fish over time indicates productivity issues.
Sea Lion Abundance	UP		Continued increases in sea lion abundance in the LCR are problematic for white sturgeon population growth

Washington Actions

- * At Commission request WDFW gave status update w/framework for potential modest estuary fishery
- * Washington did not adopt harvest fishery, did not change current catch and release regulations, requests staff to discuss eliminating catch and release with Oregon.
- * ODFW staff does not recommend a harvest fishery or eliminating catch and release fisheries



Fisheries Response

Year	Total		May - July Estuary	
	N Trips	% Change	N Trips	% Change
2013	33,094		16,569	
2014	3,120	-91%	1,620	-90%
2015	3,004	-91%	954	-94%

Conclusions & Recommendations

- * Status of lower Columbia River white sturgeon, while not where we'd like it, is not in danger.
 - * Still more than 500,000 fish
 - * Adult population has been stable over the last five years and not projected to decline
 - * Legal abundance is $>140,000$ and with no retention we are escaping more every year
 - * Sturgeon life history strategy guards against short periods of low productivity
 - * We are monitoring the population closely
- * Not recommending any changes to fisheries structure at this time



END

Questions/Discussion?