



Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

8 February 2019

Exhibit B



# Lower Columbia River White Sturgeon Population Status Update

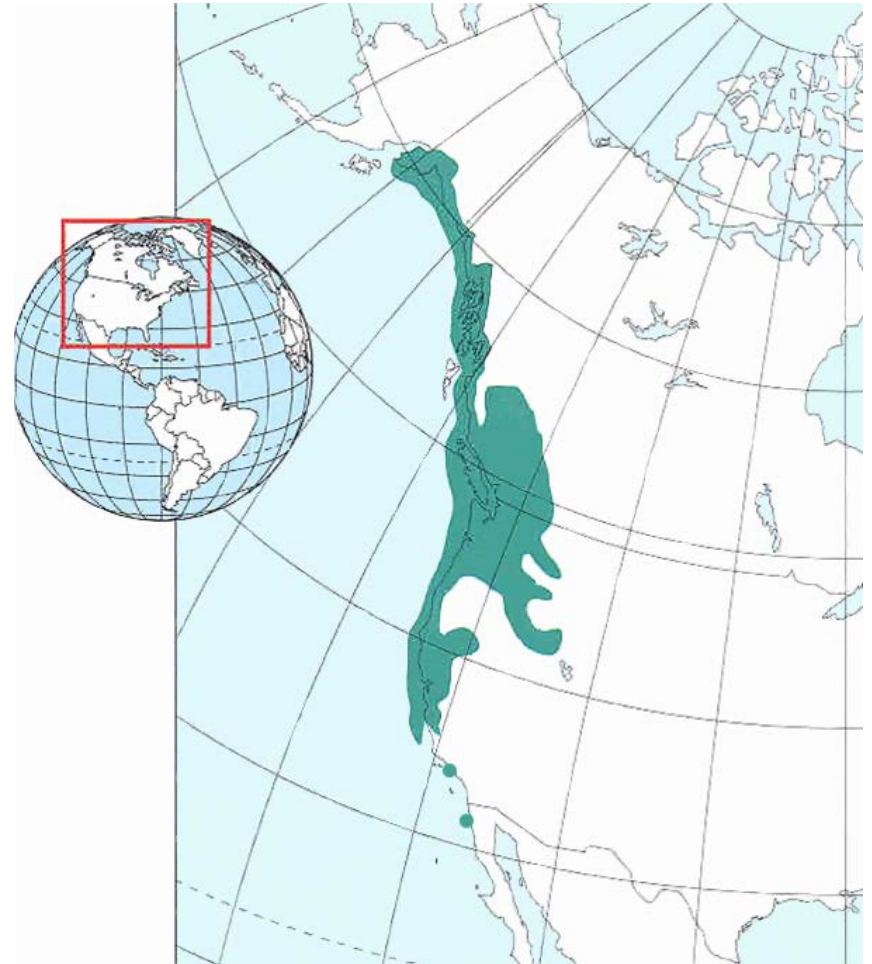
Tucker Jones

Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program Manager



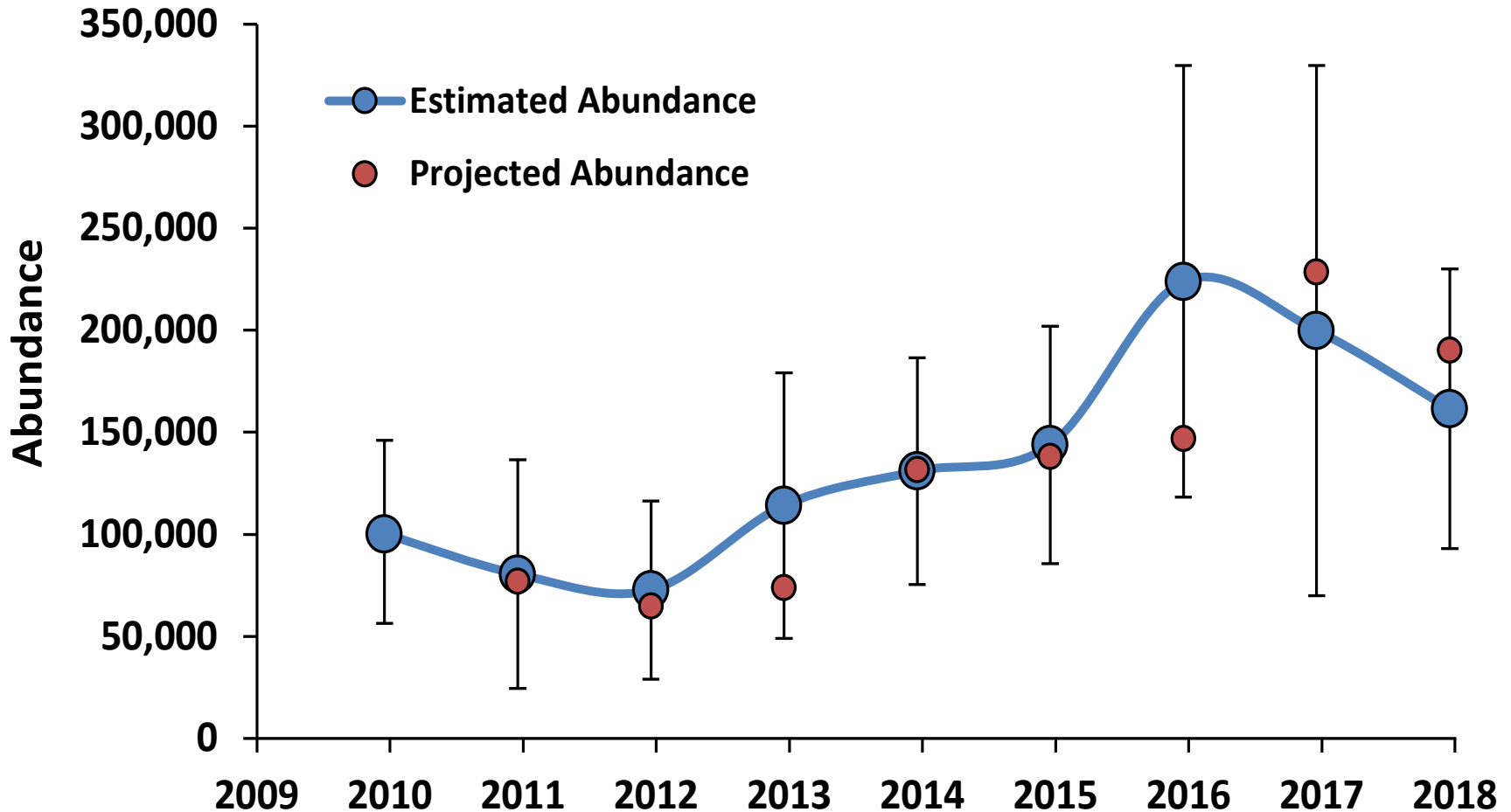
# Today's Topics

- \*2018 stock status
- \*Pinniped Predation
- \*2018 Fisheries



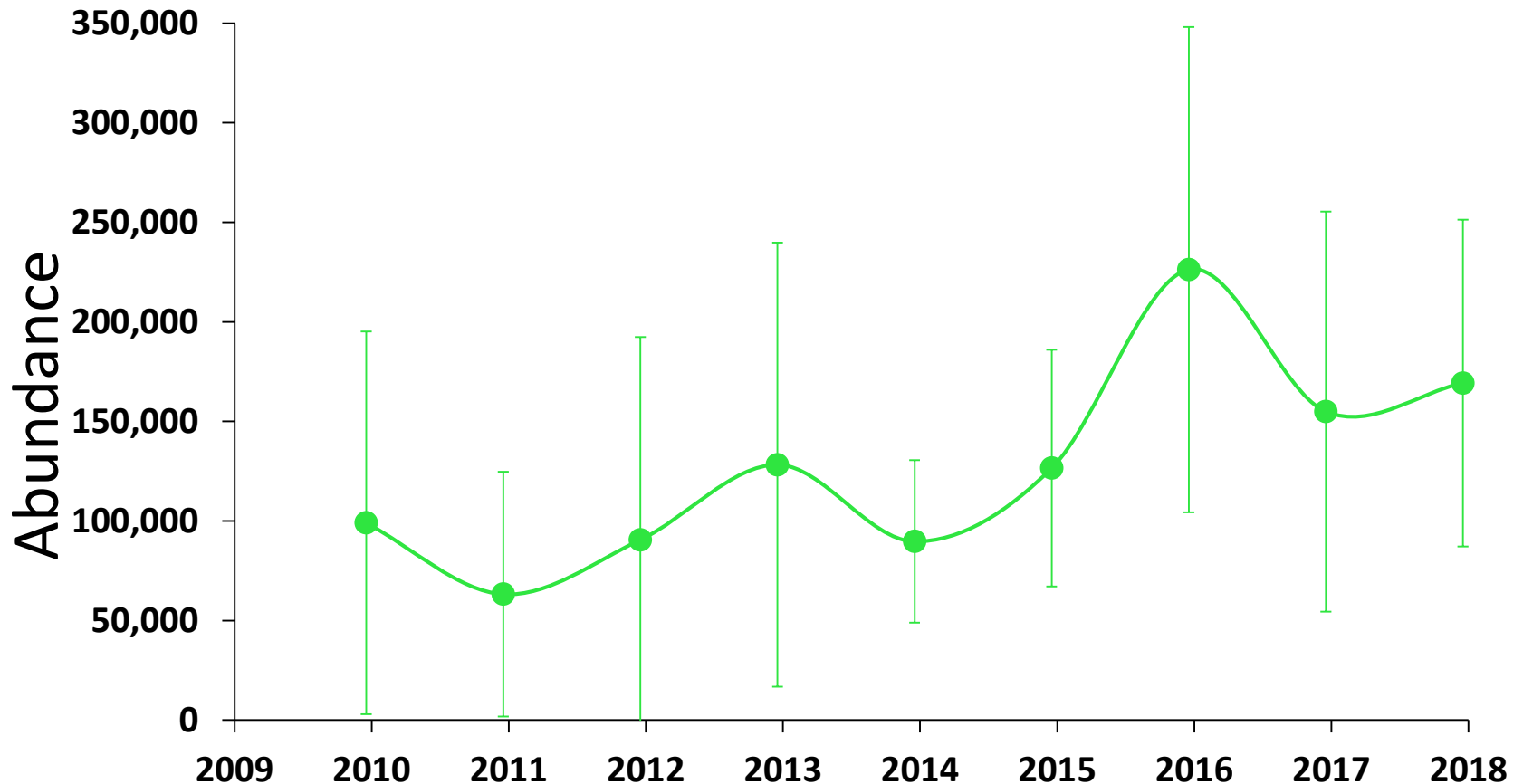
# LCR White Sturgeon Abundance

Estimated Legal Abundance (38" – 54" FL)



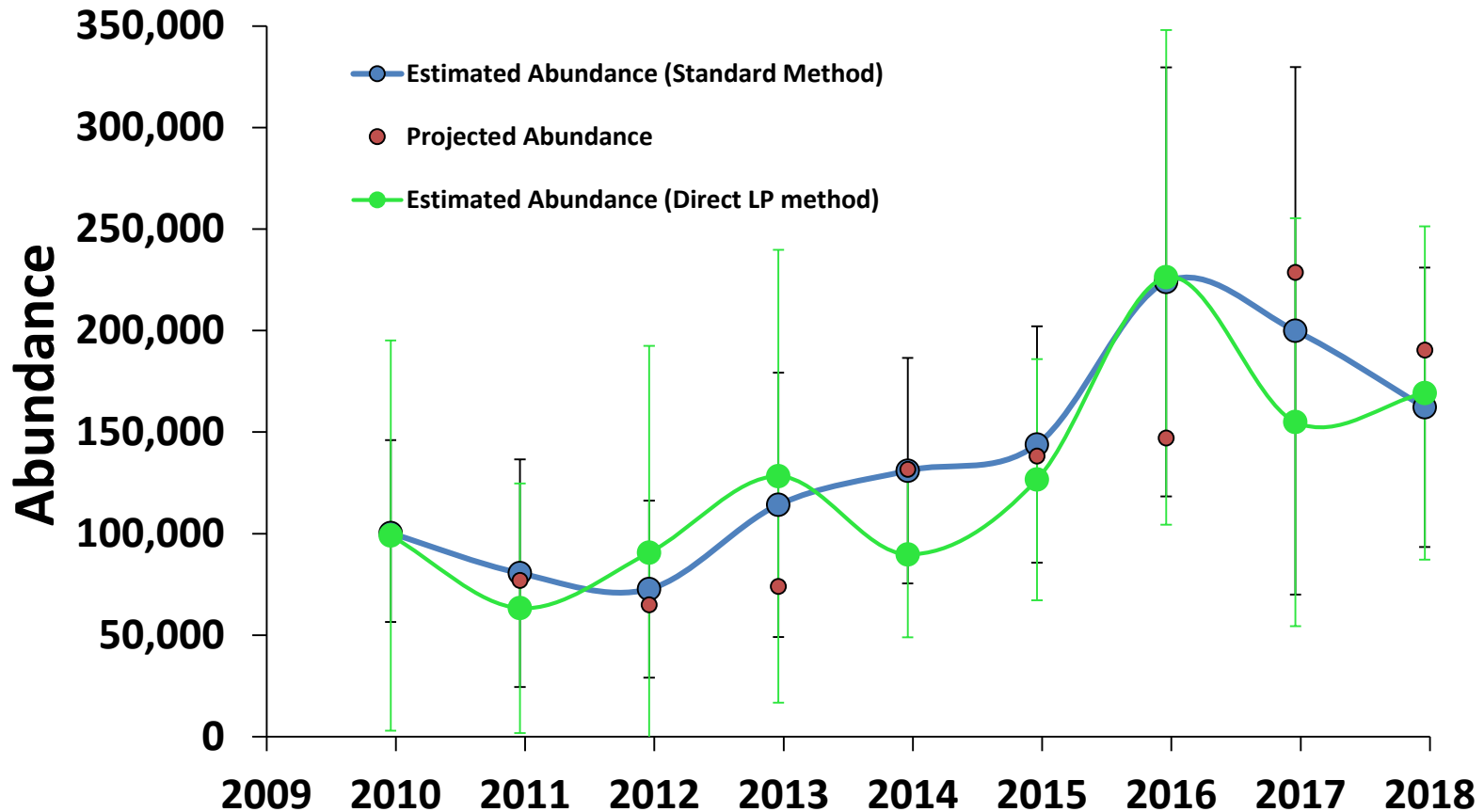
# LCR White Sturgeon Abundance

Estimated Legal Abundance (38" – 54" FL)  
Direct Lincoln-Petersen Method



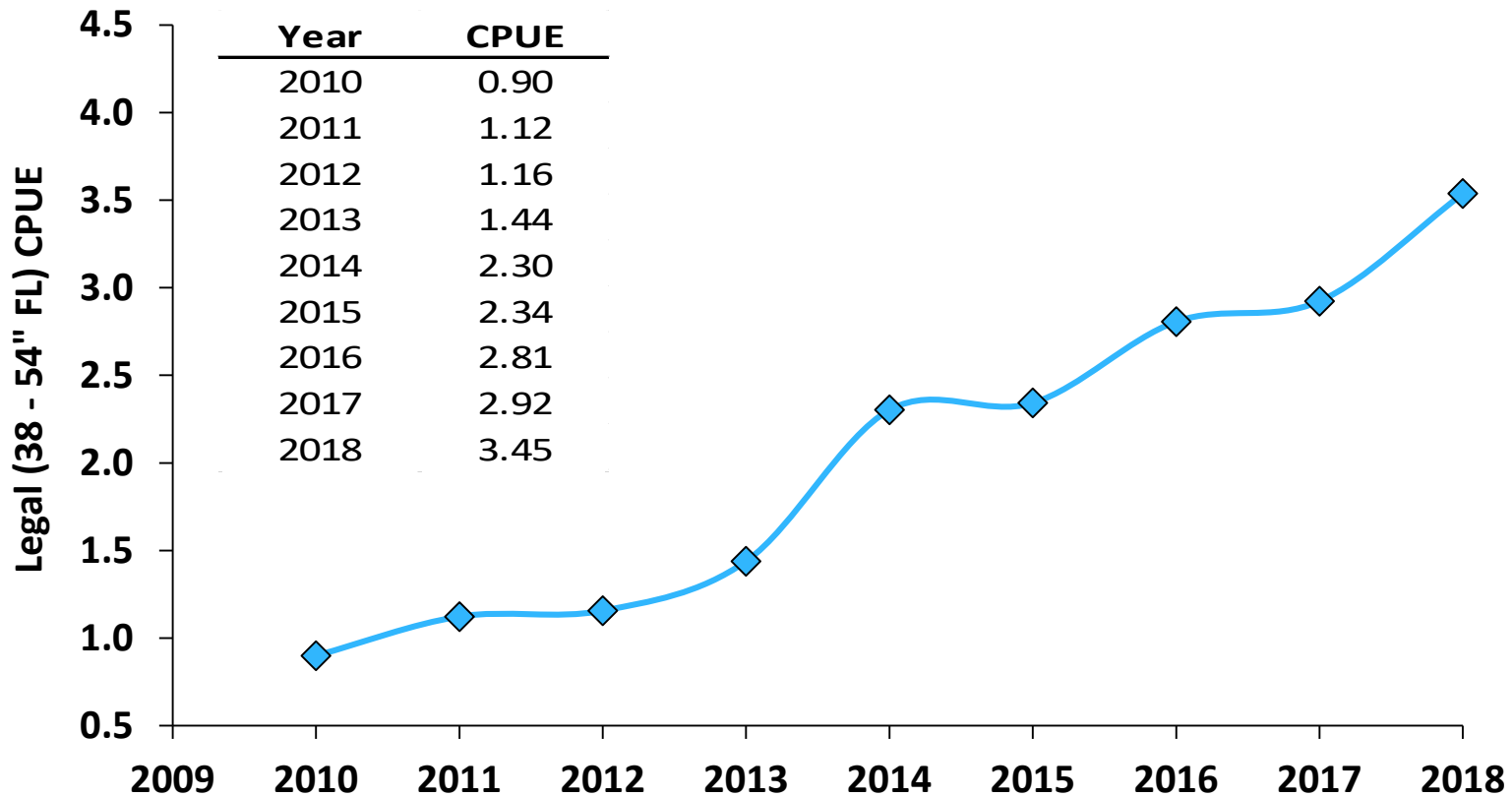
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Estimated Legal Abundance (38" – 54" FL)



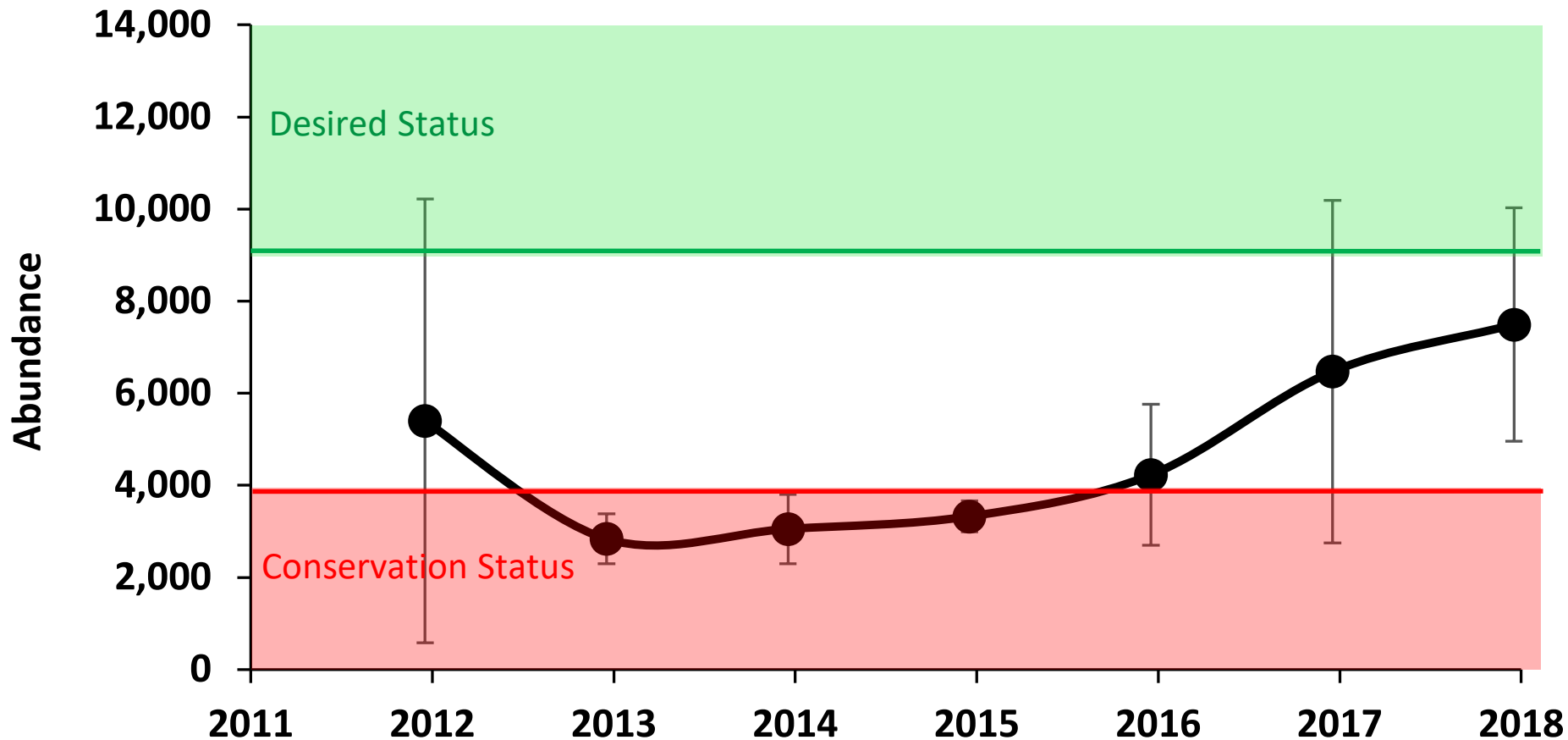
# LCR White Sturgeon CPUE

Legal-Size Relative Density (38" – 54" FL)

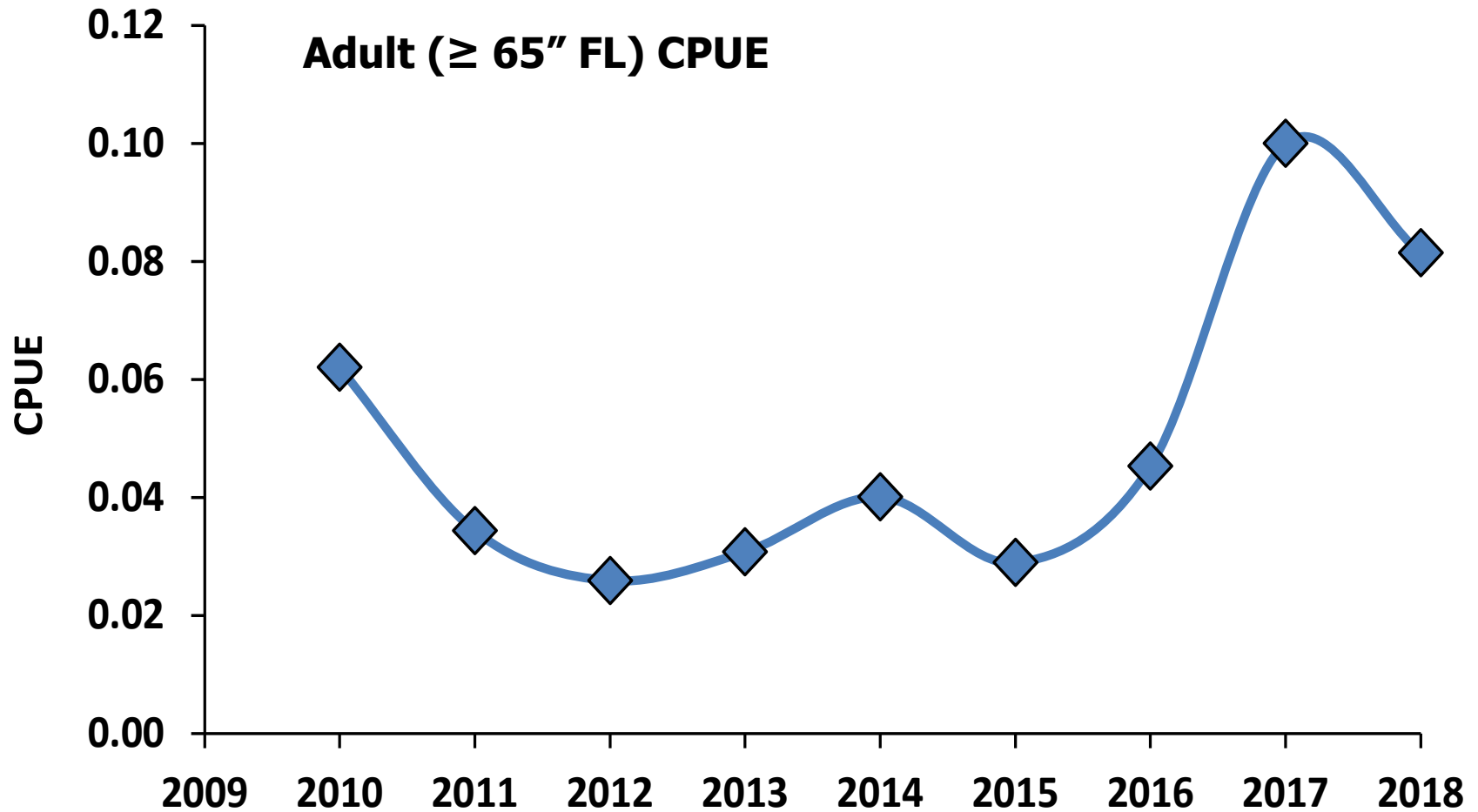


# LCR White Sturgeon Abundance

Estimated Adult Abundance ( $\geq 65$ " FL)

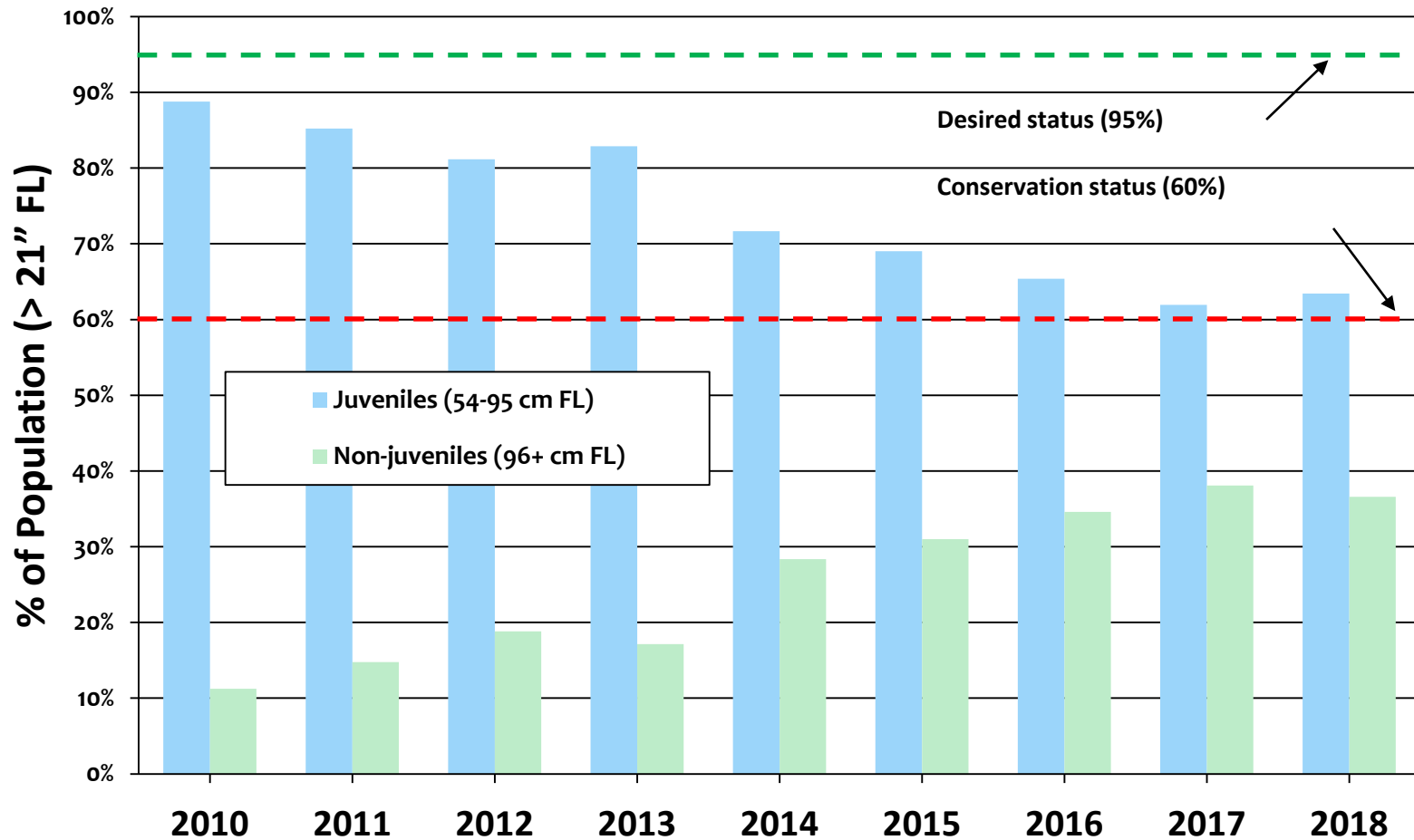


# LCR White Sturgeon Abundance

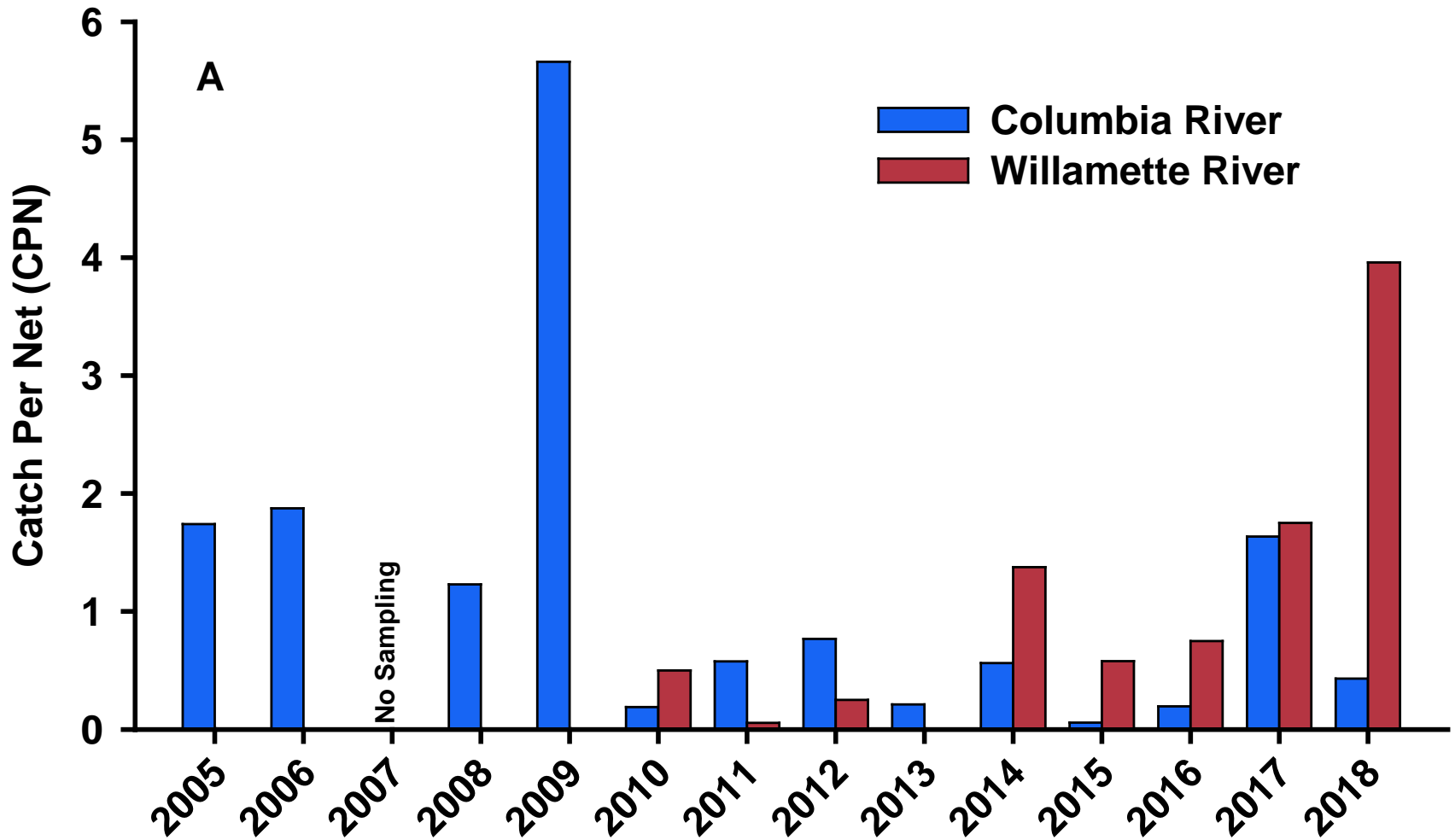




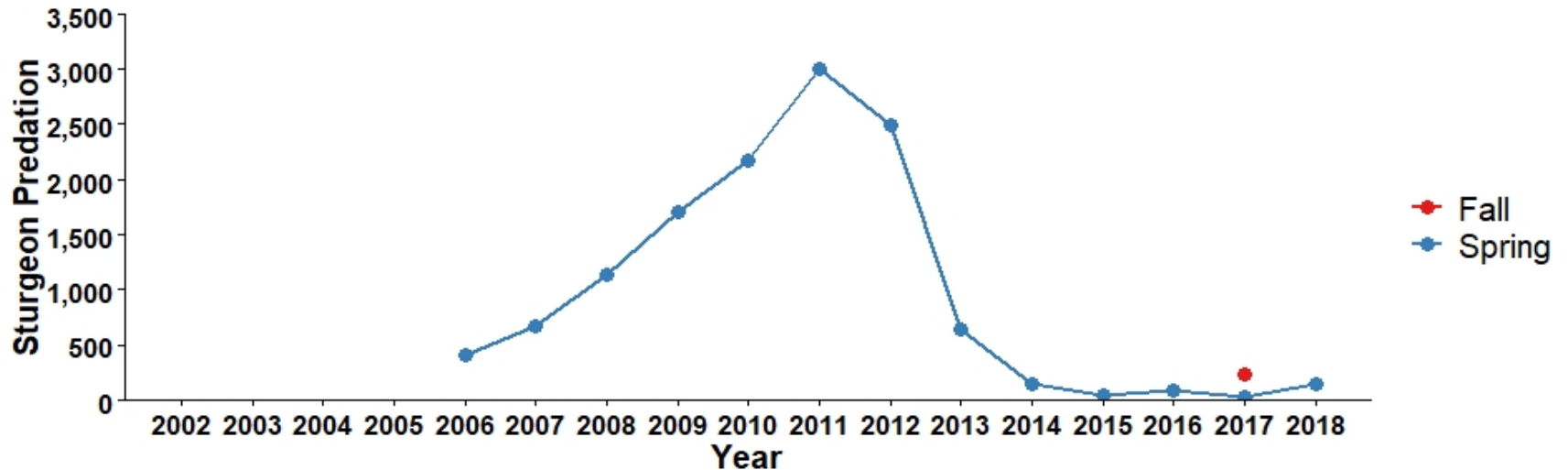
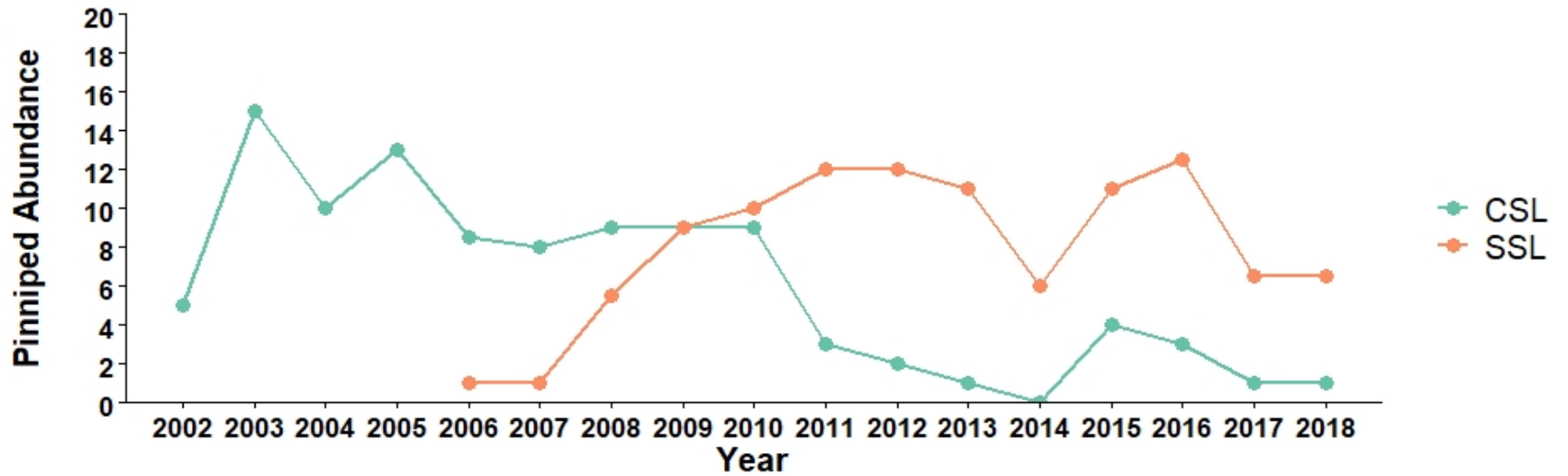
# LCR length frequency distribution



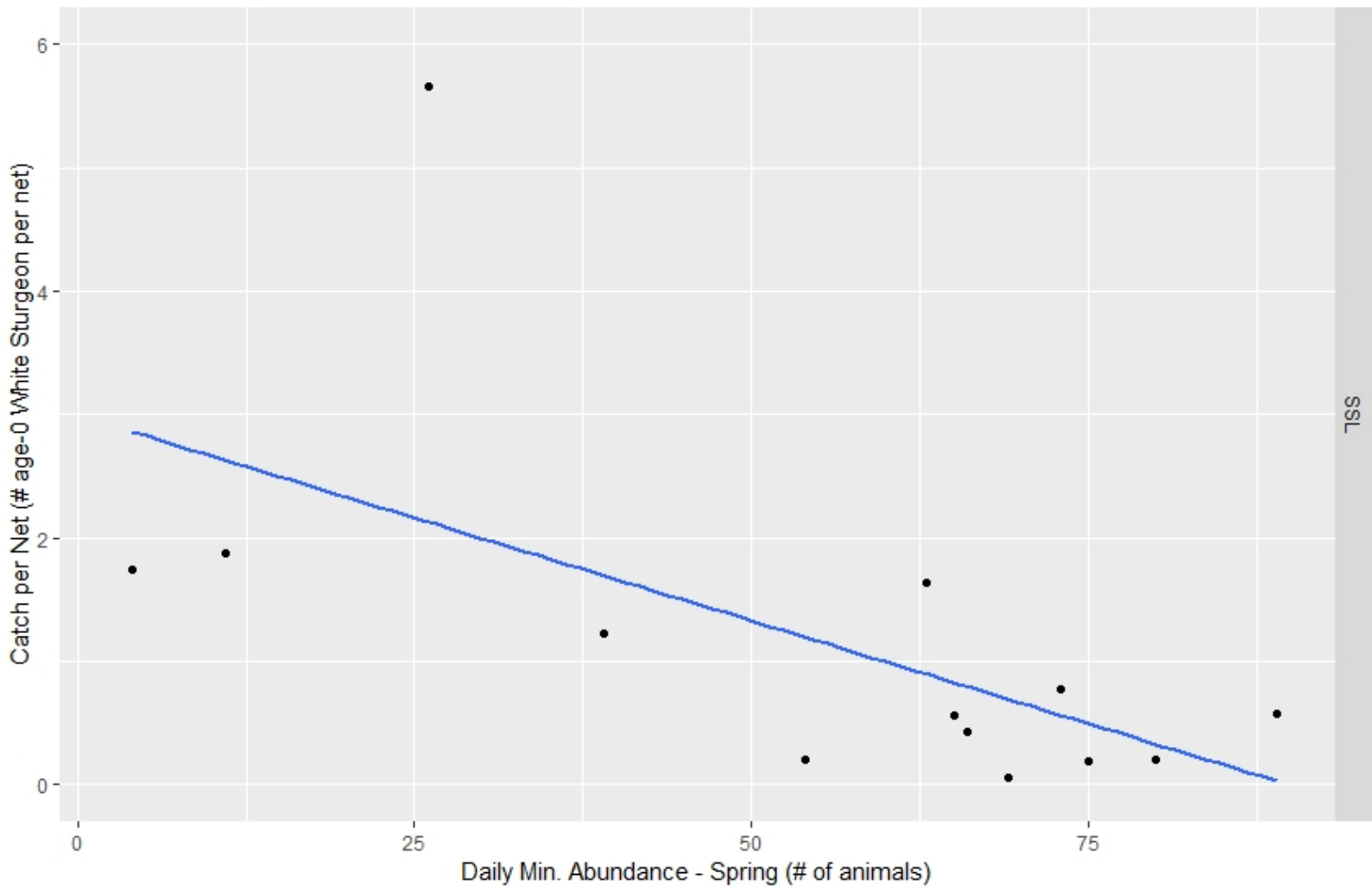
# LCR White Sturgeon Recruitment



# Sea lion predation



# Sea lion predation



# Sea lion predation

## Willamette River pinniped issues



- \* 5 California sea lions removed as of 1 February 2019
- \* We will operate under the existing permit for CSLs until we submit and receive a new permit under the new MMPA revisions
- \* Willamette Falls will increase sea lion removals this year

# Fisheries Review

- \* Per CR policy 2018 allocation again split 80:20 sport and commercial
- \* 11 estuary sport openers mid-May – early-June
  - \* June 5, 7, 10, 12, and 14
- \* 2 open Saturdays upstream of Wauna
  - \* Sept 15 and 22
- \* No fishery in the Willamette
- \* 67% of commercial guideline (826 of 1,230) realized.

# Sport Fisheries Response

Year	Total		May - July Estuary	
	Trips (N)	% Change	Trips (N)	% Change
5yr Avg	69,553		29,955	
2014	3,120	-95%	1,620	-95%
2015	3,004	-96%	954	-97%
2016	4,372	-94%	2,380	-92%
2017	27,550	-60%	15,546	-48%
2018	31,923	-54%	18,735	-37%

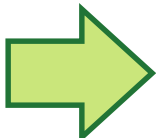
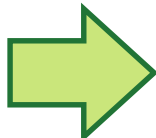


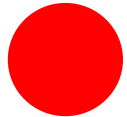

# Sport Fisheries Response

Year	Below Wauna		Above Wauna		Combined	
	Catch	Guideline	Catch	Guideline	Catch	Guideline
Avg: 09-13	6,948	8,026	3,228	4,755	10,176	12,781
2014	0	0	0	0	0	0
2015	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	0	0	0	0	0	0
2017	3,235	3,000	430	1,245	3,665	4,245
2018	2,412	2,960	1,049	1,230		4,930*

\* Includes 740 unfished Willamette guideline



# Summary

Metric	N	Interpretation	Brief Summary
Legal Abundance	162,180		Decrease from 2016 and 2017. However, increasing trend in CPUE setline tagging fishery continues.
Adult Abundance	6,100 3-yr Avg 7,500		2018 3-yr adult abundance estimate is above conservation status level, but not at desired status level.
Population Structure	~62% Juveniles		Continued low relative abundance of juvenile and sub-legal sized fish.
Recruitment Index (CPN)	CR: 0.43 WR: 3.96		Mixed results. CR lower than 2017 but highest (by far) in the LWR since monitoring began in 2010.
Sea Lion Abundance	High		High sea lion abundance is problematic for white sturgeon populations.
Fisheries	15,546 (E) 27,550 (T)		Participation still down from retention fishery levels (pre-2014) but 7x increase from C-N-R only fisheries.

# Conclusions

- \* 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 on increasing trend
  - \* Legal abundance is significant
  - \* Productivity issues, but sturgeon life history strategy guards against short periods of low productivity
  - \* Sea lions are problematic
- \* Believe population is sufficiently robust to support limited fisheries similar to 2017 and 2018



END

Questions/Discussion?