



Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

7 February 2020

Exhibit B



Lower Columbia River White Sturgeon Population Status Update

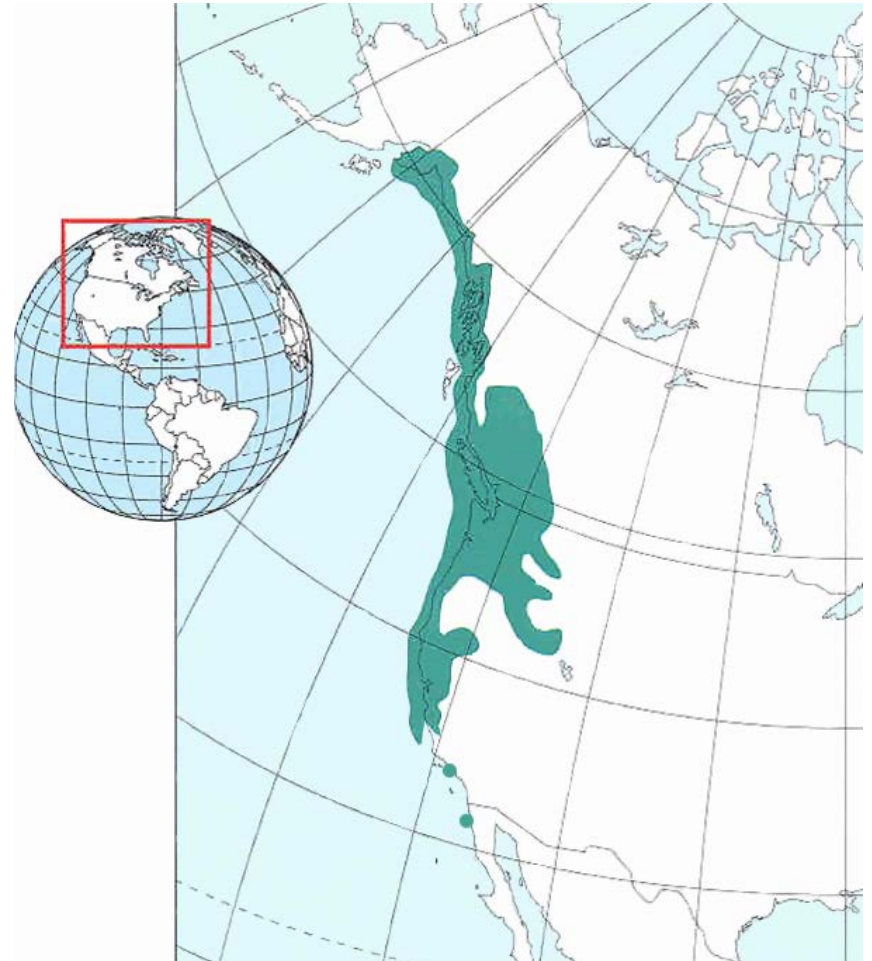
Tucker Jones

Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program Manager

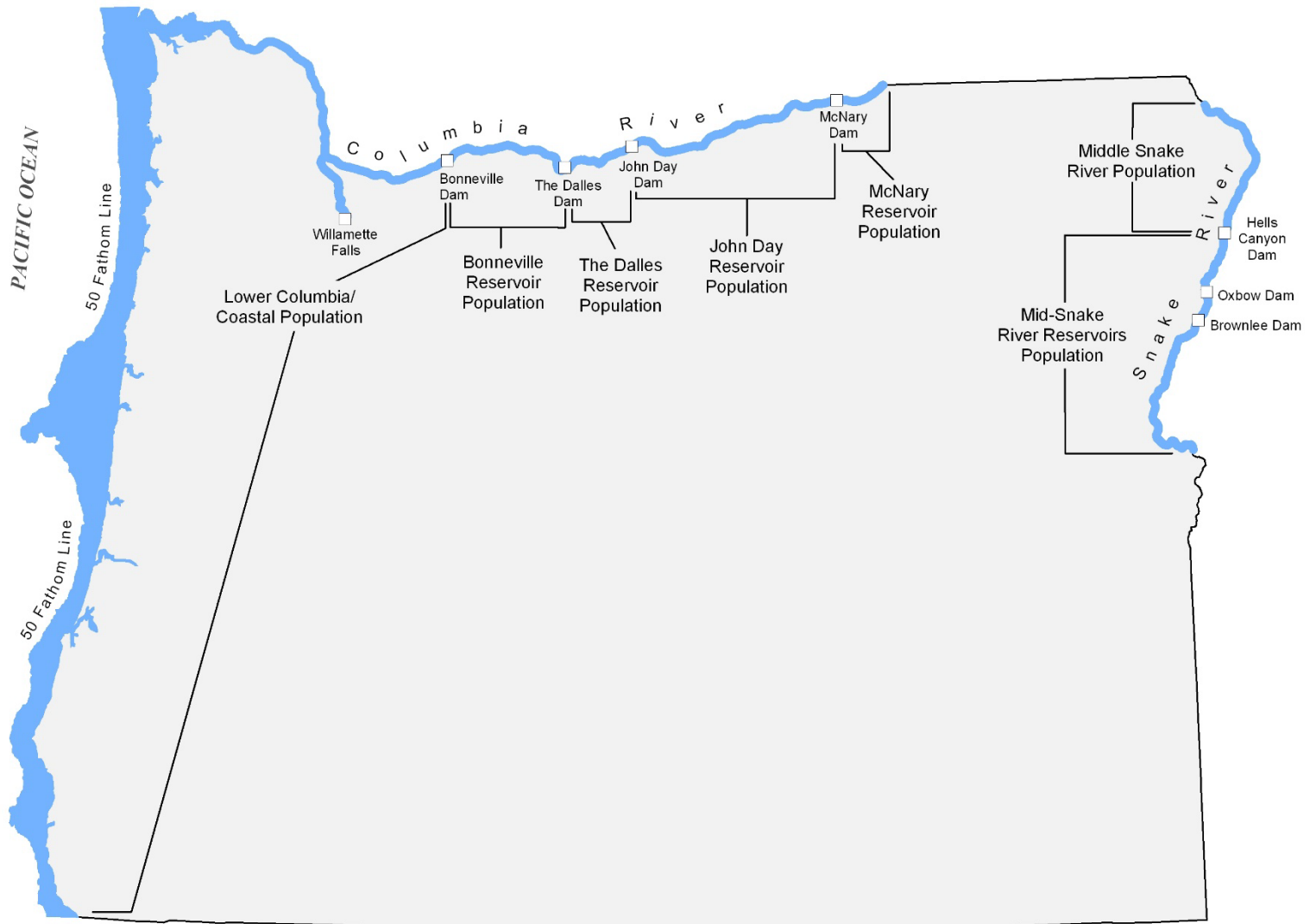


Today's Topics

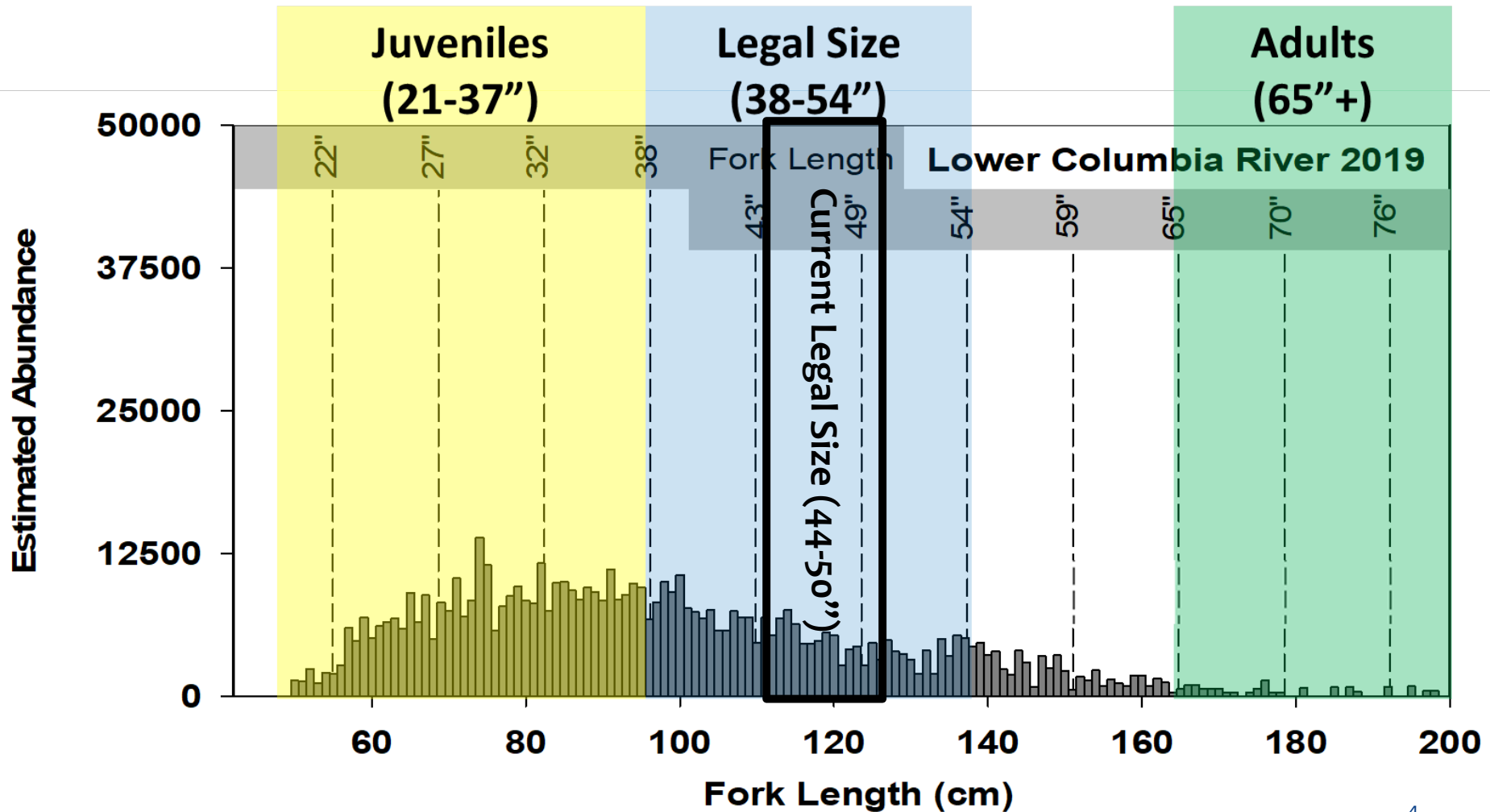
- 2019 Stock Status
- Pinniped Predation
- 2019 Fisheries



Sturgeon in Oregon

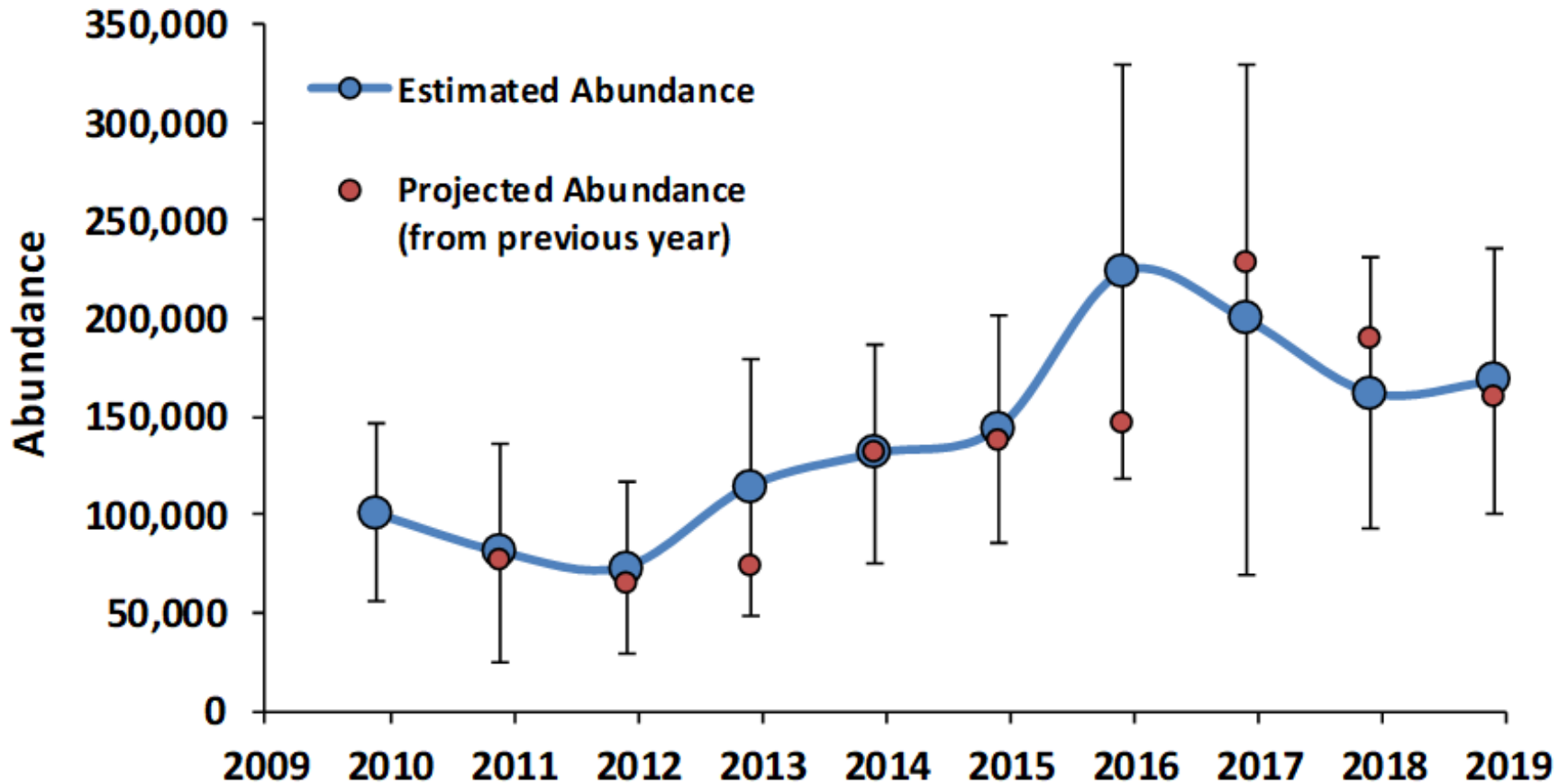


LCR White Sturgeon Abundance



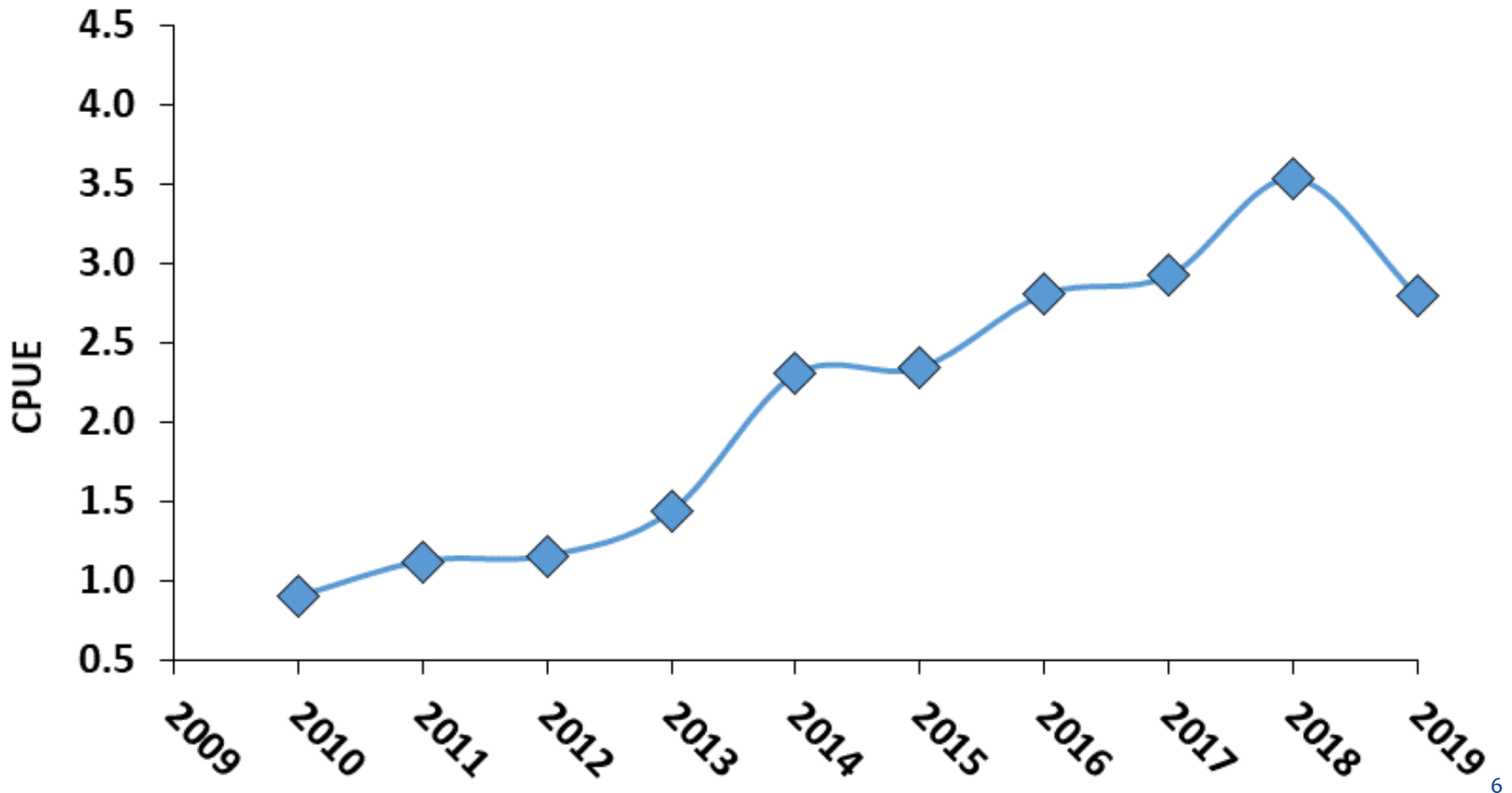
LCR White Sturgeon Abundance

Estimated Legal Abundance (38" – 54" FL)



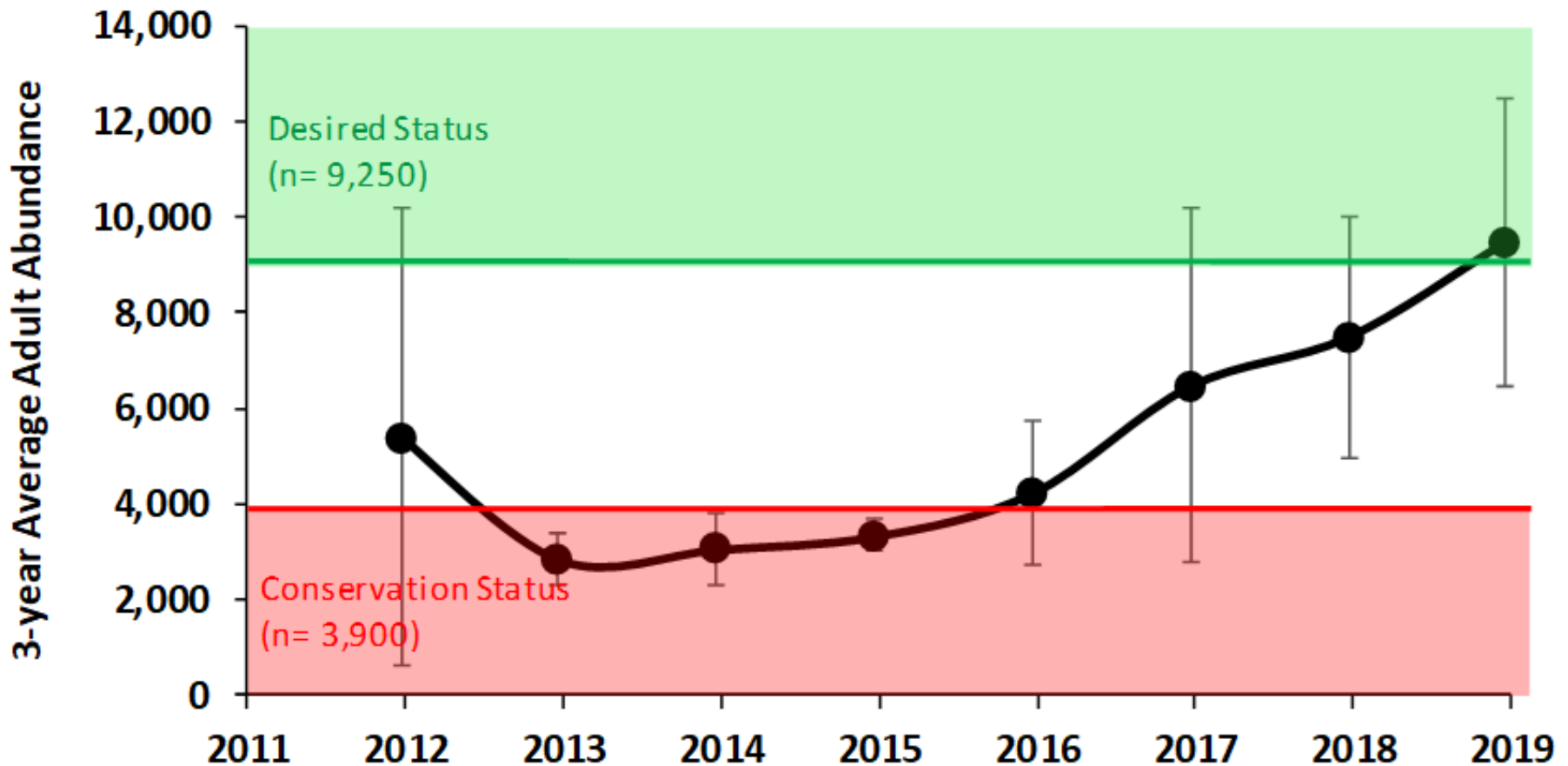
LCR White Sturgeon CPUE

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



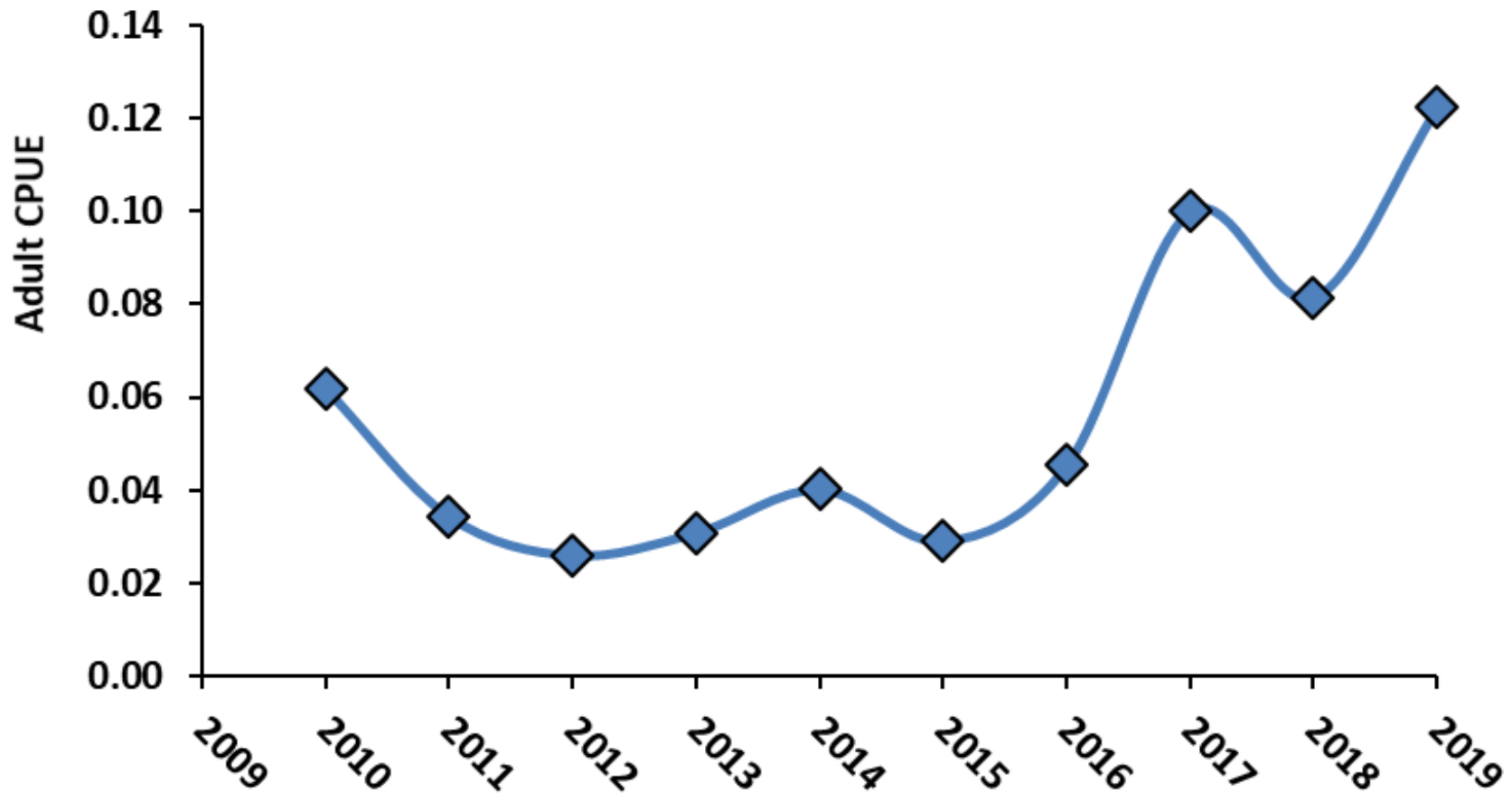
LCR White Sturgeon Abundance

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

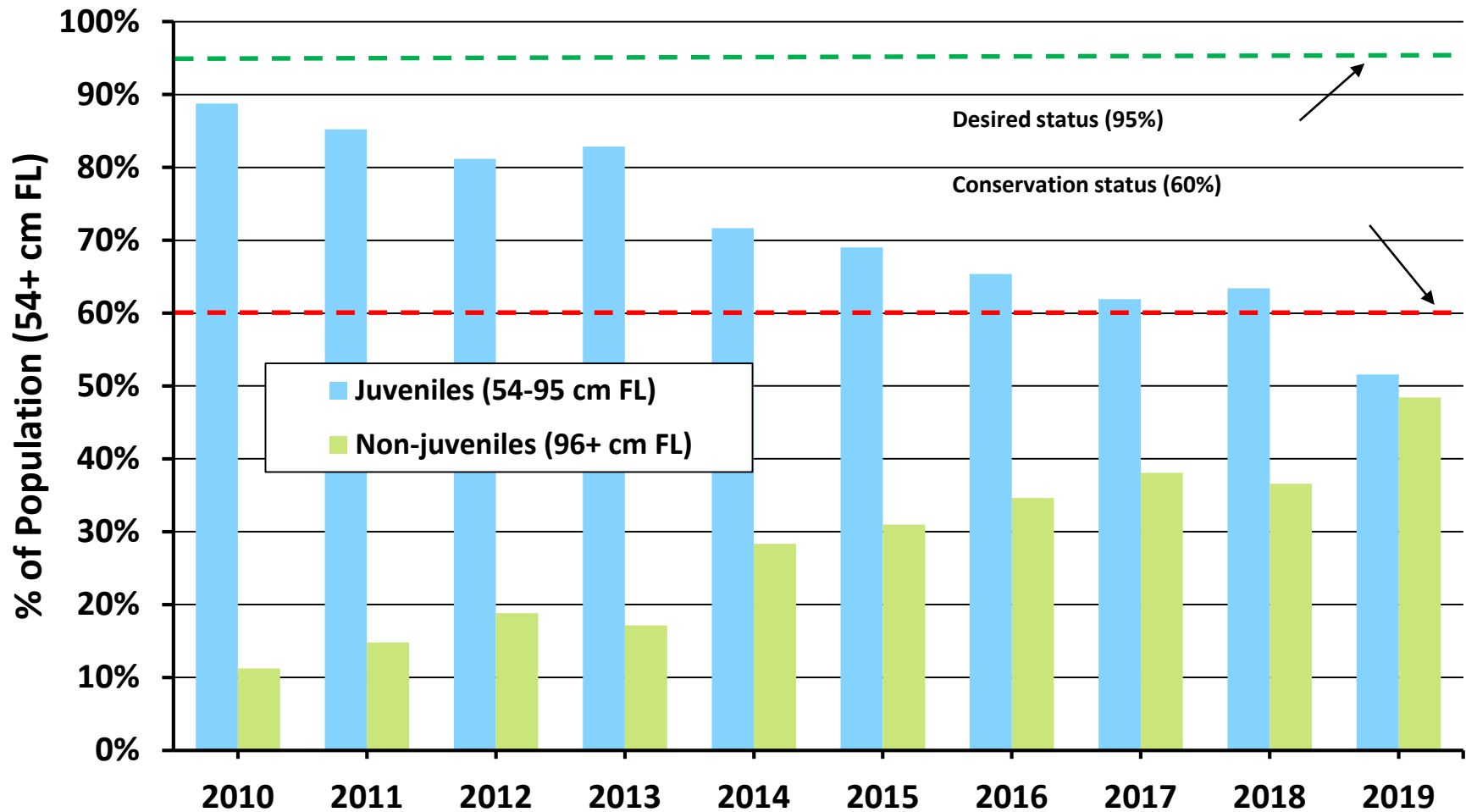


LCR White Sturgeon Abundance

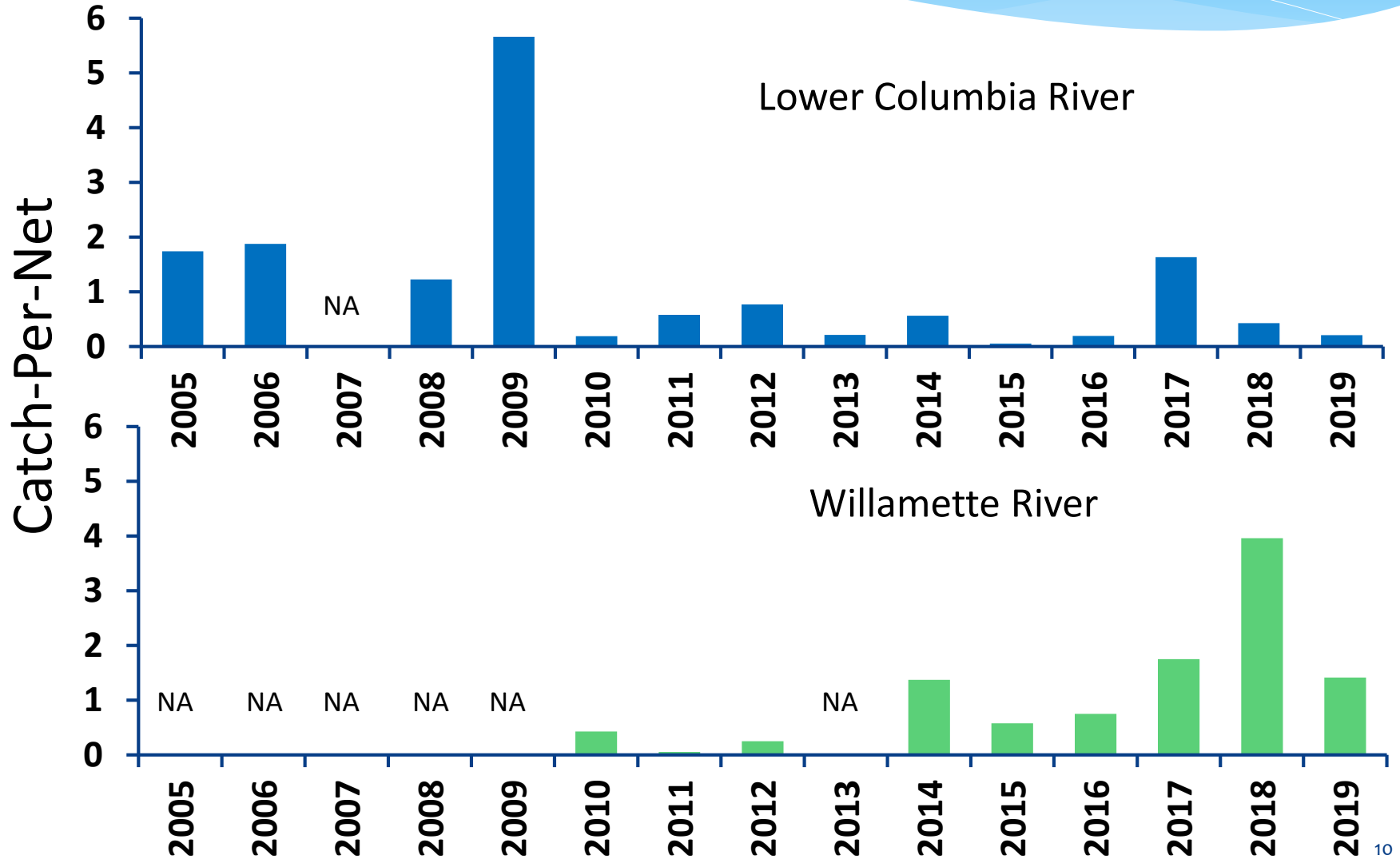
Adult (≥ 65 " FL) CPUE



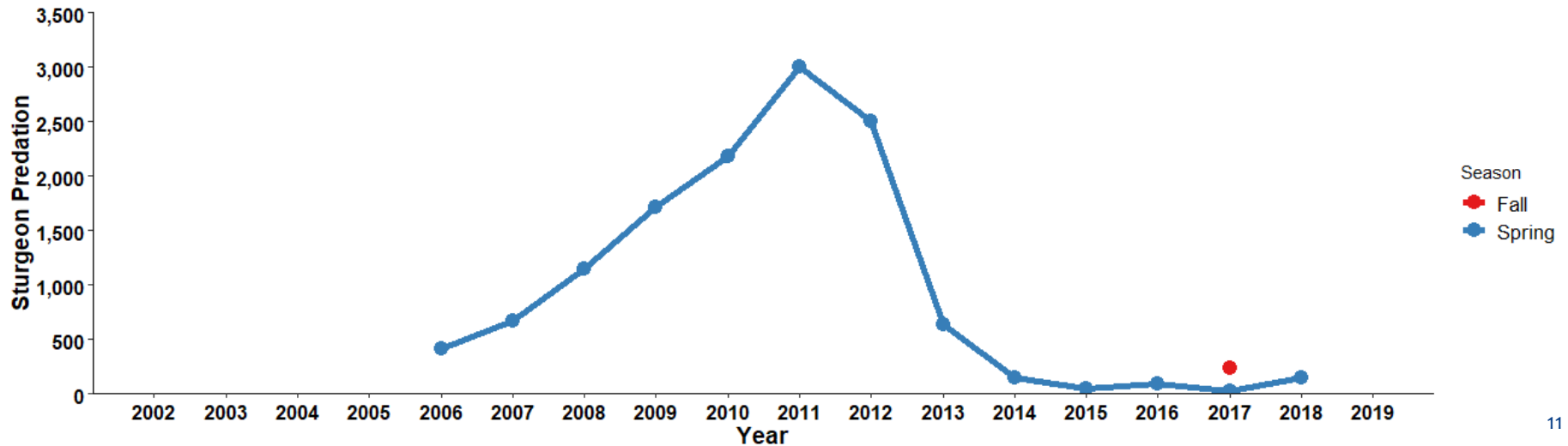
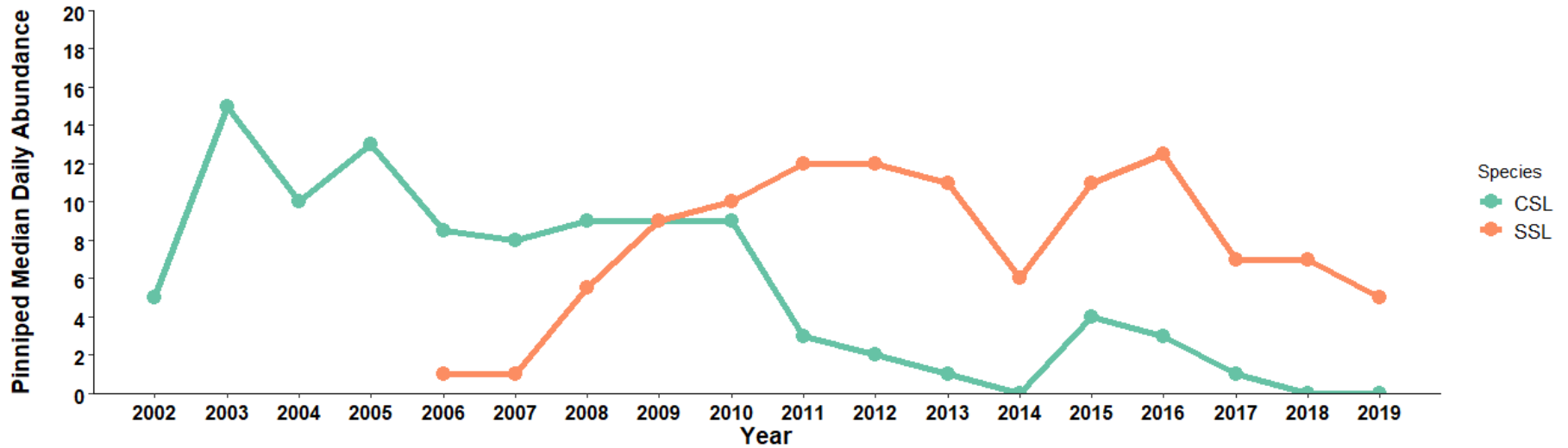
LCR length frequency distribution



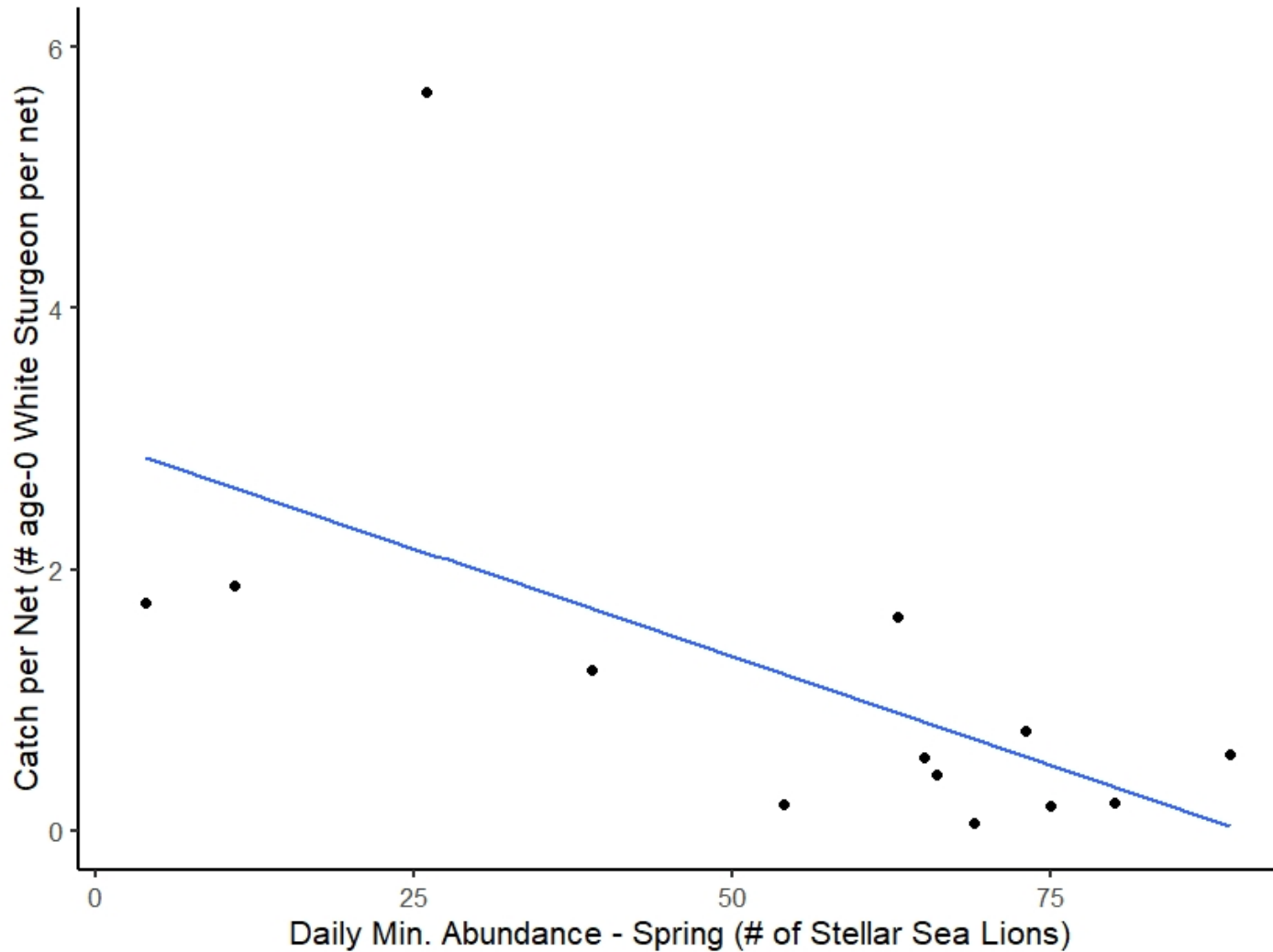
LCR White Sturgeon Recruitment



Sea lion predation



Sea lion predation



Sea lion predation

Willamette River pinniped issues



- Substantial increase in Steller sea lion abundance since 2018
- 98 SSL related white sturgeon predation events observed in the vicinity of Willamette Falls in 2019
- State beginning to mark and transport SSLs in 2020

Fisheries Review

- Per CR policy, 2019 allocation (n=6,160) again split 80:20 sport and commercial
 - Commercial guideline: 1,230 fish
 - Recreational Guideline: 4,930 Sport
 - Sport guideline split:
 - Estuary - 2,960,
 - Mainstem - 1,230
 - Willamette - 740
(No retention fishery set)



Commercial Fisheries Review

Select Area (SAFE):

- Winter: 20 fish
- Spring/Summer: 459 fish
- Fall: 212 fish
- **Total: 691 fish (58%)**

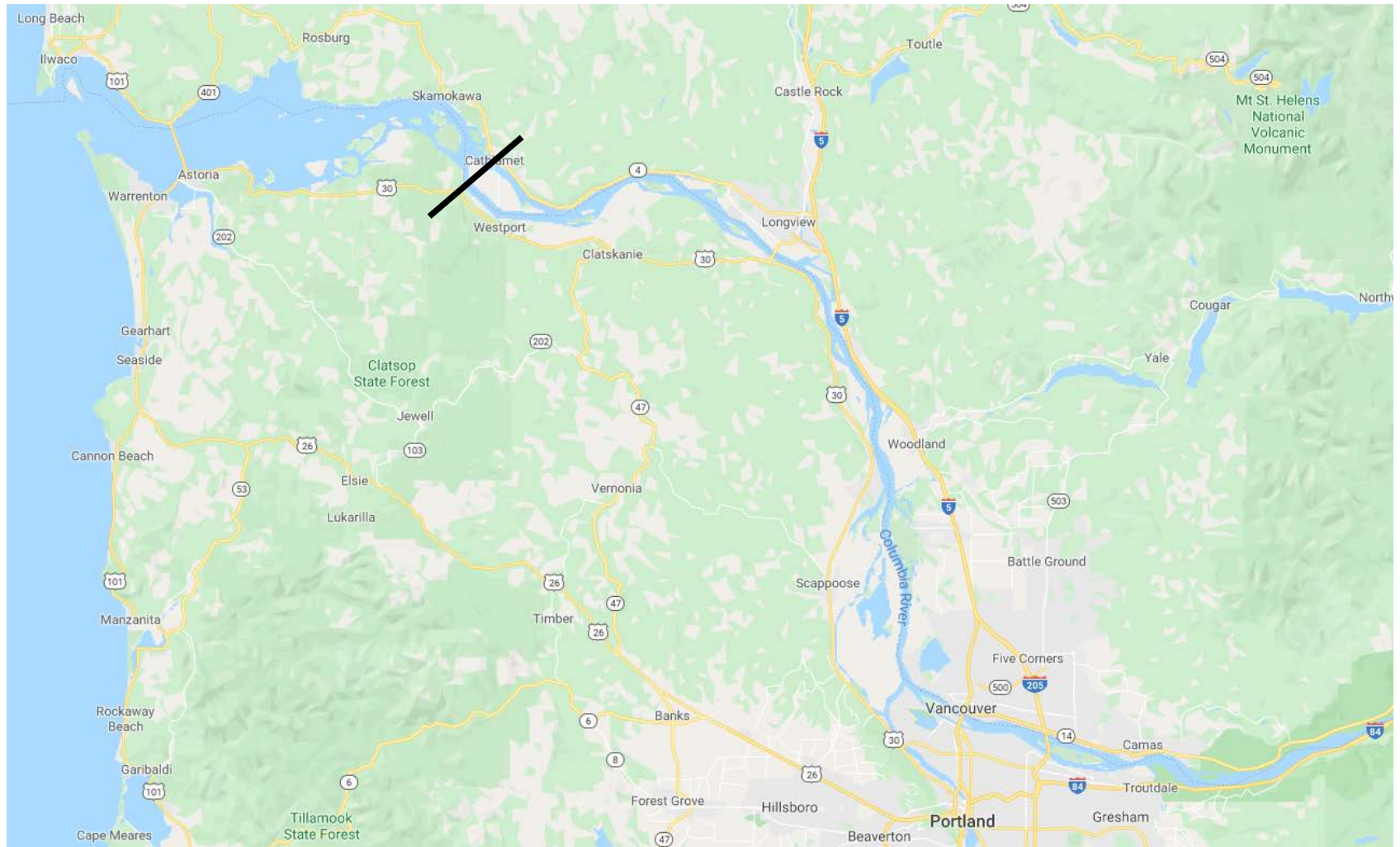
Mainstem:

- Early Fall: 509 fish (42%)

Total Harvest: 1,200 fish

98% of the 2019 commercial guideline

Recreational Fisheries Review



Recreational Fisheries Review

Estuary (below Wauna):

- May 13-June 5 (11 d)
- 22,012 angler trips
- **Total:** 2,838 fish (96%)

Wauna to Bonneville:

- Sept. 21–Oct. 24 (5 d)
- 12,063 angler trips
- **Total:** 685 fish (56%)

Total Harvest: 3,523 fish

71% of the total (4,930) 2019 sport guideline

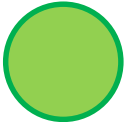
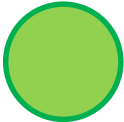
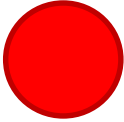

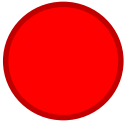
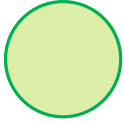
No Willamette Fishery

37,703 total trips for retention and catch-and-release fisheries

Sport Fisheries Response

Year	Total		May - July Estuary	
	Trips (N)	% Change	Trips (N)	% Change
09-13 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%
2019	37,703	-46%	22,012	-27%

Summary

Metric	N	Interpretation	Brief Summary
Legal Abundance	168,200		Stable year over year with continued increasing CPUE trend in setline tagging assessment
Adult Abundance	11,900 3-yr Avg 9,484		2019 3-year average adult abundance estimate is above desired status level (threshold = 9,250 adults)
Population Structure	~52% Juveniles		Proportional abundance of juvenile and sub-legal fish <60% (conservation status)
Recruitment Index (CPN)	CR: 0.33 WR: 1.42		Mixed results. Return to CPNs of <1 after strong 2017 in LCR, but 3 rd highest 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 >10x 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 ~500,000 fish
 - * Adult population on increasing trend
 - * Legal abundance is significant
 - * Population structure at conservation status level, but sturgeon life history strategy guards against periods of low productivity
 - * Sea lions are problematic
- * Believe population is sufficiently robust to support limited fisheries similar to 2017 - 2019



END

Questions/Discussion?