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Northwest Power and Conservation Council

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April 1, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Kate Self

SUBJECT: Briefing on Columbia River Basin salmon and steelhead returns for 2024 and forecasts for 2025

BACKGROUND:

Presenter: Dr. Charlene Hurst, Columbia River Division Manager (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), Stuart Ellis, Deputy Manager, Fisheries Management Department (Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission), and Dr. Sarah Maher, Columbia River Program Coordinator (Idaho Department of Fish and Game).

Summary: Presenters will provide an overview of adult Chinook, coho, sockeye, and chum salmon and steelhead run forecasts for the Columbia River and expectations for the 2025 fisheries. The presentation will include a retrospective review of the 2024 adult salmon and steelhead returns and an overview of non-treaty fisheries. A summary of information regarding treaty fisheries for 2024 and expectations for 2025 will also be provided.

Dr. Maher will provide additional information for the Snake River Basin for salmon and steelhead returns along with the forecasted returns for 2025, focusing on the species/run groupings¹ of spring, summer, and fall Chinook salmon; summer steelhead; and sockeye salmon.

¹ Numbers of fish passing Lower Granite Dam comprise the aggregate count of adult salmon and steelhead destined for eastern Oregon's Grande Ronde and Imnaha river drainages and Idaho's Clearwater and Salmon River drainages.

Relevance: This information is relevant to the Council's Anadromous Salmon and Steelhead Goal and Objectives and the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program objectives. These are tracked via the strategy performance indicators available on the Program Tracker. It gives the region a comprehensive preview of what is expected for adult salmon and steelhead returns in the current year.

Workplan: Fish and Wildlife Division work plan 2025; Program planning & Coordination.

More Info:

- [2025 Joint Staff Report](#) – Stock Status and Fisheries for Spring Chinook, Summer Chinook, Sockeye, Steelhead, and Other Species.
- [Columbia River reports, forecasts, returns, and fishery plans](#)
- Data Access in Real Time (DART). Interactive, timely access to integrated Columbia Basin salmonid, environmental, hydrosystem operations, riverine, ocean and climatic data resources. <http://www.cbr.washington.edu/dart>

Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead returns, forecasts and fisheries

Stuart Ellis, Fisheries Management Department Deputy Manager, CRITFC

Dr. Charlene Hurst, Columbia River Division Manager, WDFW

Dr. Sarah Maher, ESA Program Coordinator, IDFG

Art Martin, Columbia River Coordination Section Manager, ODFW



Washington Department of
FISH and *WILDLIFE*

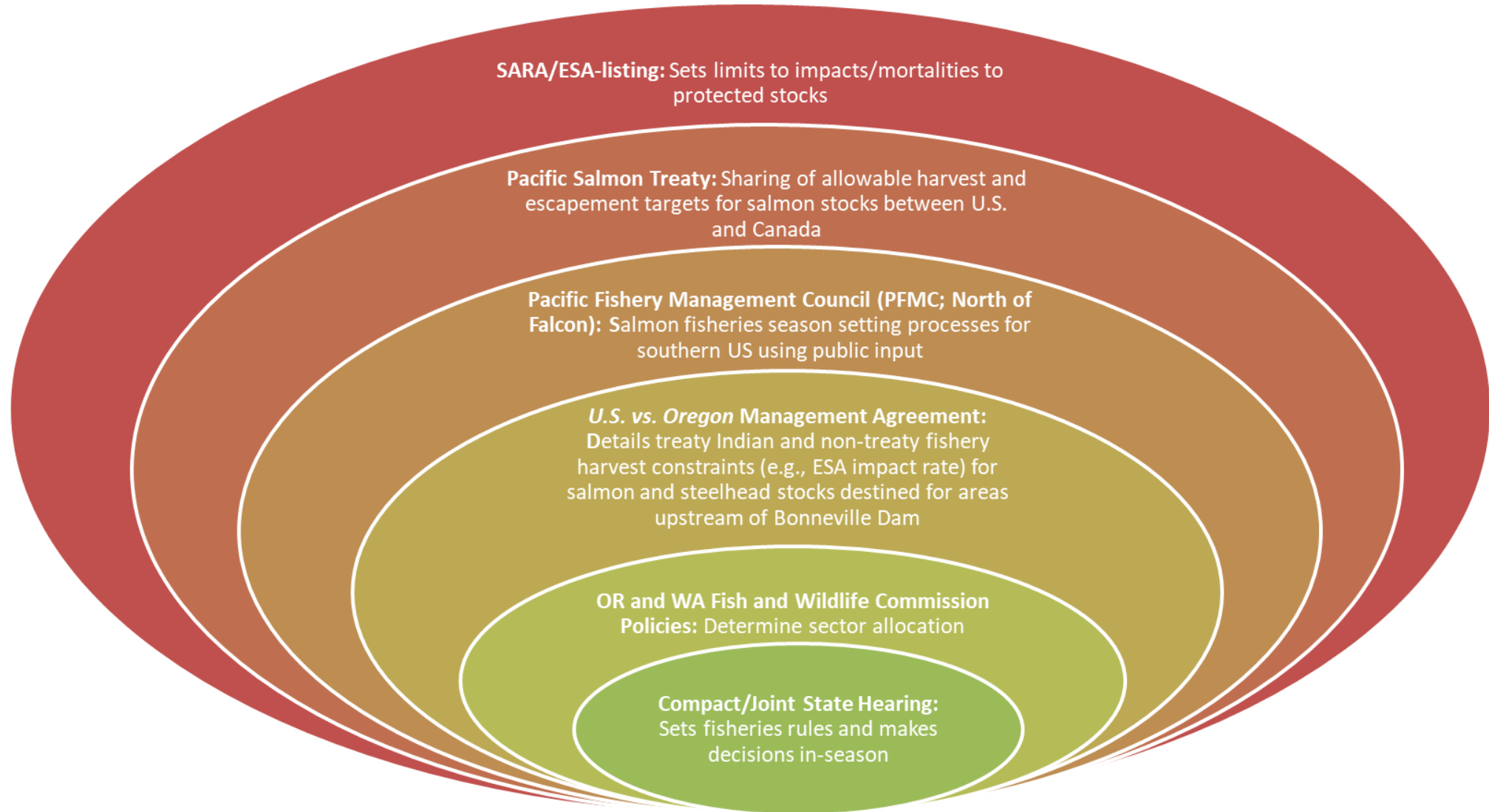


Northwest Power and Conservation Council

April 8, 2025

Fisheries Overview

Management Framework



Mainstem Fishery Management Framework for Treaty and Non-Treaty Fisheries

Mainstem Fisheries affecting upriver stocks are managed under the terms of the 2018-2027 *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement

Seasonal based management structure

- Uses management stocks in different time periods as indexes for impacts to stocks of concern and ESA-listed groups

Abundance based harvest rate schedules

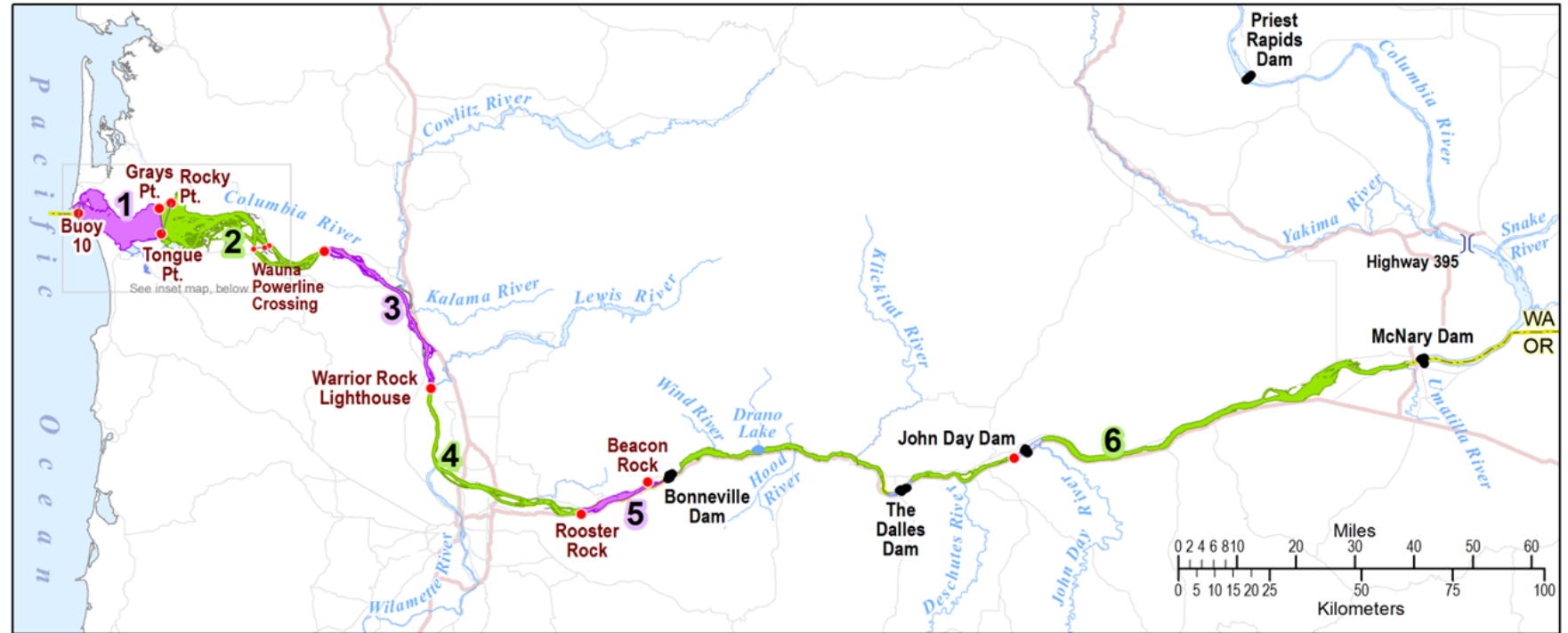
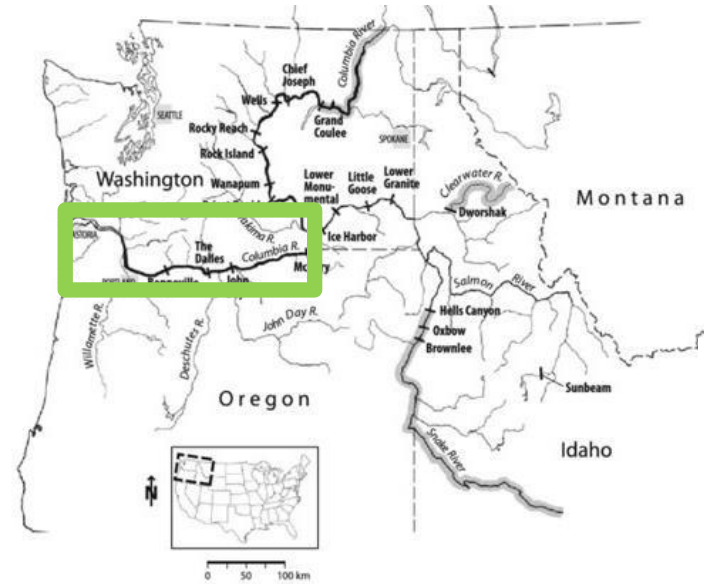
- Some schedules have additional weak stock constraints

In-season run updates

- Management of most groups on actual run sizes, not just forecasts

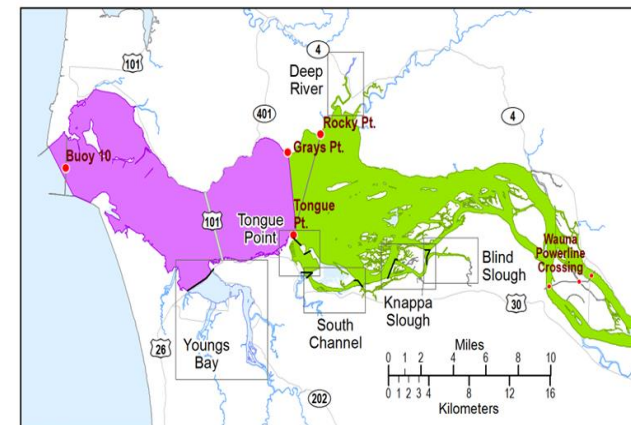
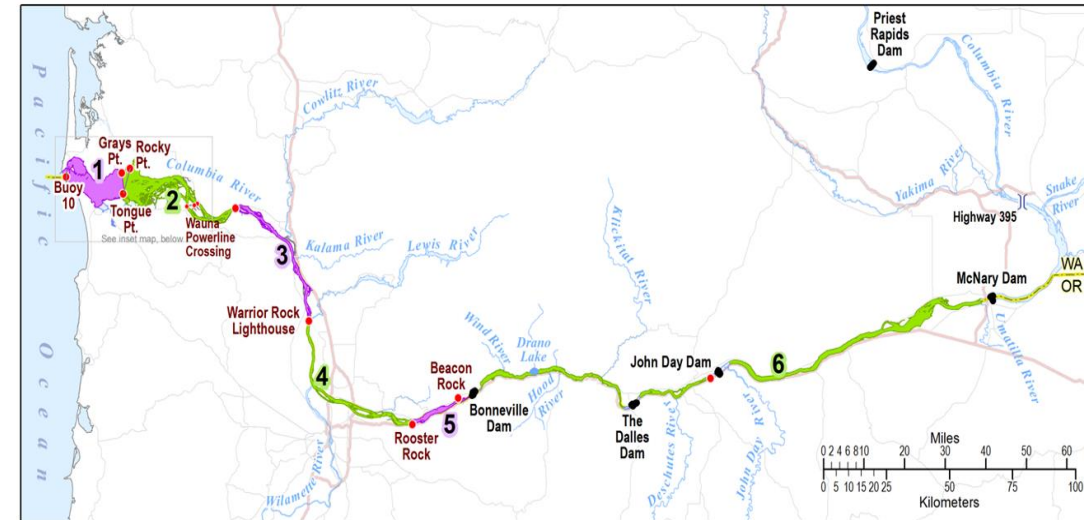
Intensive monitoring and reporting of fishery impacts

Columbia River Fishery Zones



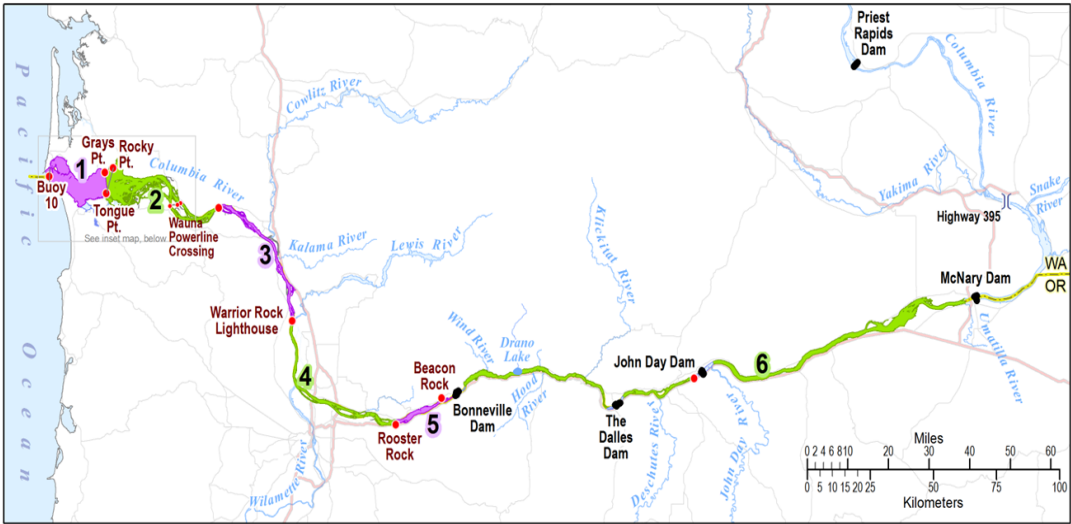
Non-Treaty Commercial Fisheries

Season	Location	Target Fish species
Winter/Spring	Mainstem	Closed
	Select Areas (off-channel areas)	Local hatchery released spring Chinook salmon
Summer	Mainstem	Closed
	Select Areas	Hatchery spring Chinook
Fall	Zone 1-3 Mainstem	Hatchery coho
	Zone 4-5 Mainstem	Chinook
	Select Areas	Local hatchery released fall Chinook and coho salmon



WDFW Fish Science, 11/23/2021

Non-Treaty Sport Fisheries



Season	Location	Target Species
Spring	Buoy 10 to WA/OR Border (upstream McNary Dam)	Hatchery spring Chinook, Hatchery steelhead
	Snake River (WA)	Hatchery spring Chinook
Summer	Below Bonneville	Sockeye, Hatchery summer Chinook, Hatchery steelhead
	Bonneville to Priest Rapids Dam	Sockeye, Hatchery summer Chinook
	Priest Rapids Dam to Chief Joseph Dam	Sockeye, Hatchery summer Chinook
Fall	Buoy 10	Hatchery fall Chinook, Hatchery coho
	Below Bonneville	Fall Chinook, Hatchery coho
	Bonneville to Priest Rapids Dam	Fall Chinook, coho (except hatchery coho downstream of Hood River Bridge)
	Snake River	Chinook, Hatchery steelhead

Treaty Fisheries

- Tribal fishery Goals Remain the same
 - Meet ceremonial needs in spring
 - Strive to allow subsistence platform fisheries entire year
 - Provide as much commercial opportunities for as many fishers and in as wide of area as feasible
- Tribes addressing changes in harvest rates especially in platform fishery by assuming platform rates will be much higher than historic rates.
 - We still are not sure of all factors which have changed fishery performance but a more cautious approach to planning is warranted
- Spring will be focused on ceremonial and subsistence – no commercial at this run size
- Summer and fall commercial fishery structure should be fairly similar to last year based on pre-season forecasts

Treaty Mainstem Fisheries

Season	Type/Sector	Target Species
Winter	January Setline	Sturgeon
	February/March gillnet and setline	Sturgeon
Spring	Ceremonial Permit fisheries	Spring Chinook salmon
	Subsistence Platform and Hook and Line	Spring Chinook salmon and steelhead (some shad in late spring)
Summer	Commercial Gillnet	Summer Chinook salmon, sockeye and steelhead
	Commercial and Subsistence Platform and Hook and Line	Summer Chinook salmon, sockeye and steelhead (some shad in early summer)
Fall	Commercial Gillnet	Fall Chinook salmon, coho and steelhead
	Commercial and Subsistence Platform and Hook and Line	Fall Chinook salmon, coho and steelhead
Below Bonneville (under agreements with states)	Very minor permit hook and line in spring, open access platform and hook and line in summer and fall	Chinook, with some sockeye, steelhead, and coho

*Yakama Nation runs mainstem fishery monitoring program

2024 Returns and 2025 Forecasts for the Columbia Basin

U.S. v Oregon

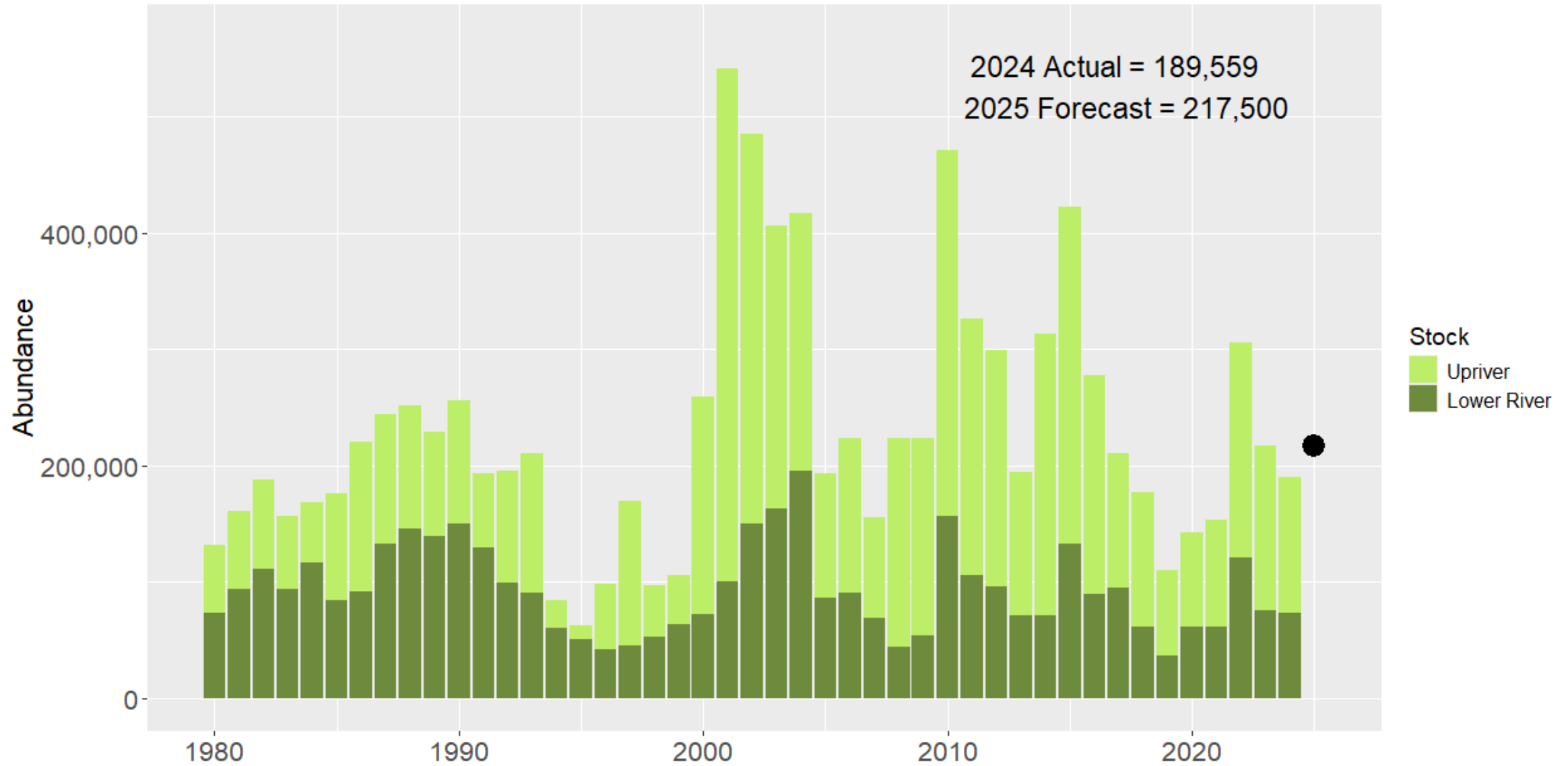
Technical Advisory Committee

- Consists of staff from federal, tribal and state entities
- TAC 'reconstructs' Columbia River salmon and steelhead returns post season and develops pre-season forecasts.
- TAC reviews salmon and steelhead stock status as the runs progress and provides in-season run size updates.
- In-season updates allow fishery managers to adjust fisheries to remain within harvest constraints

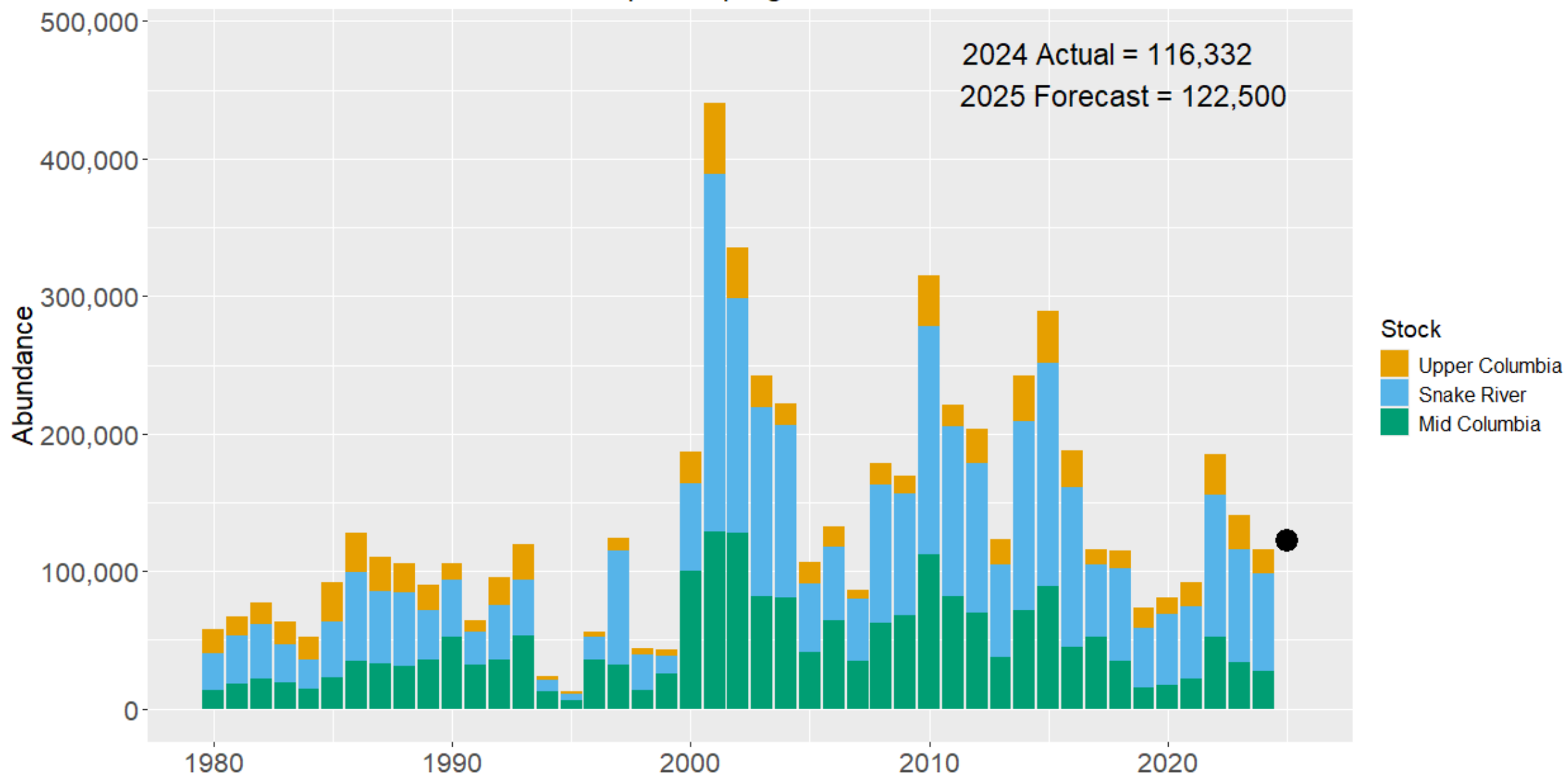
Chinook Salmon



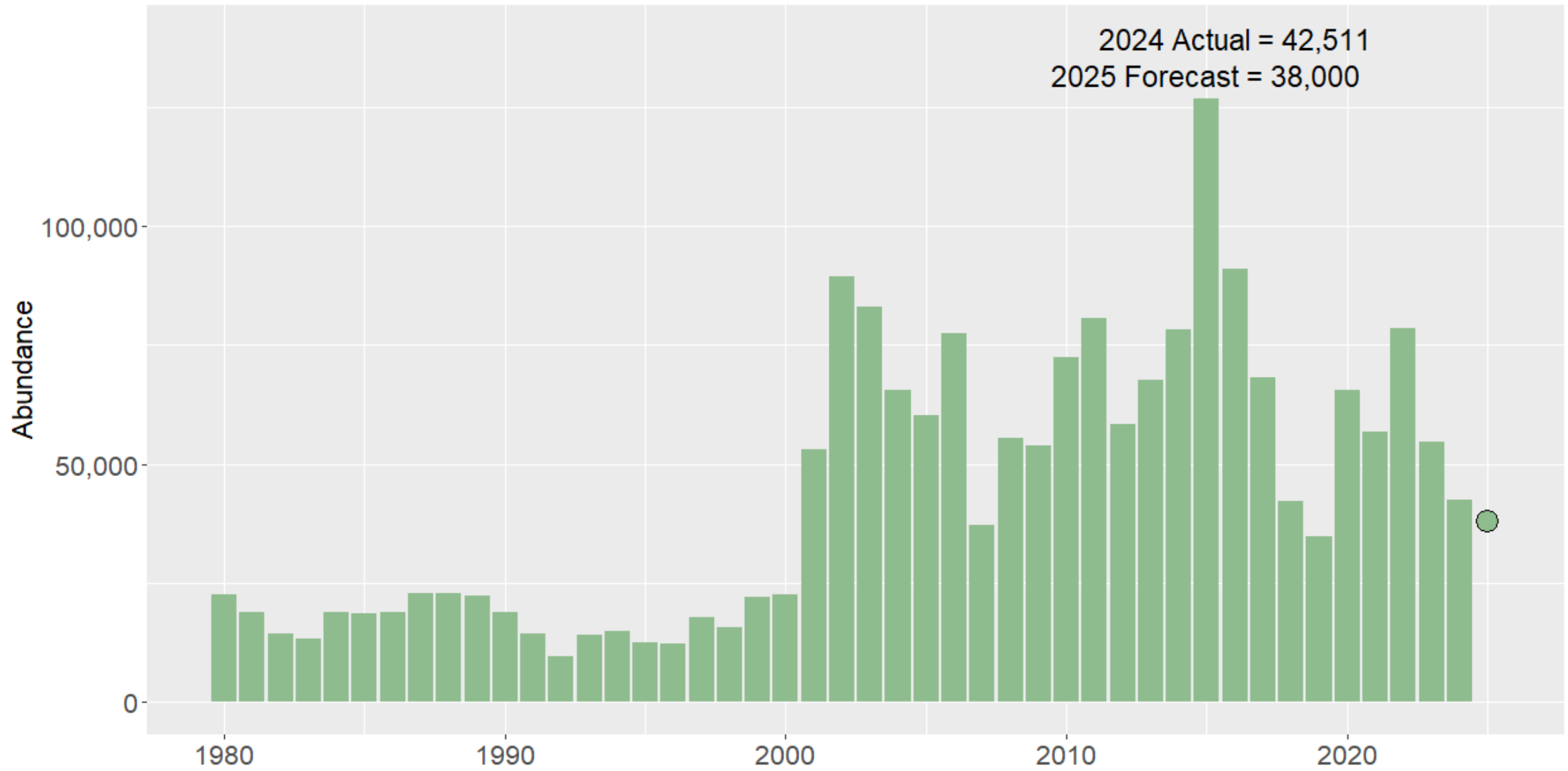
Lower and Upriver Spring Chinook



Upriver Spring Chinook

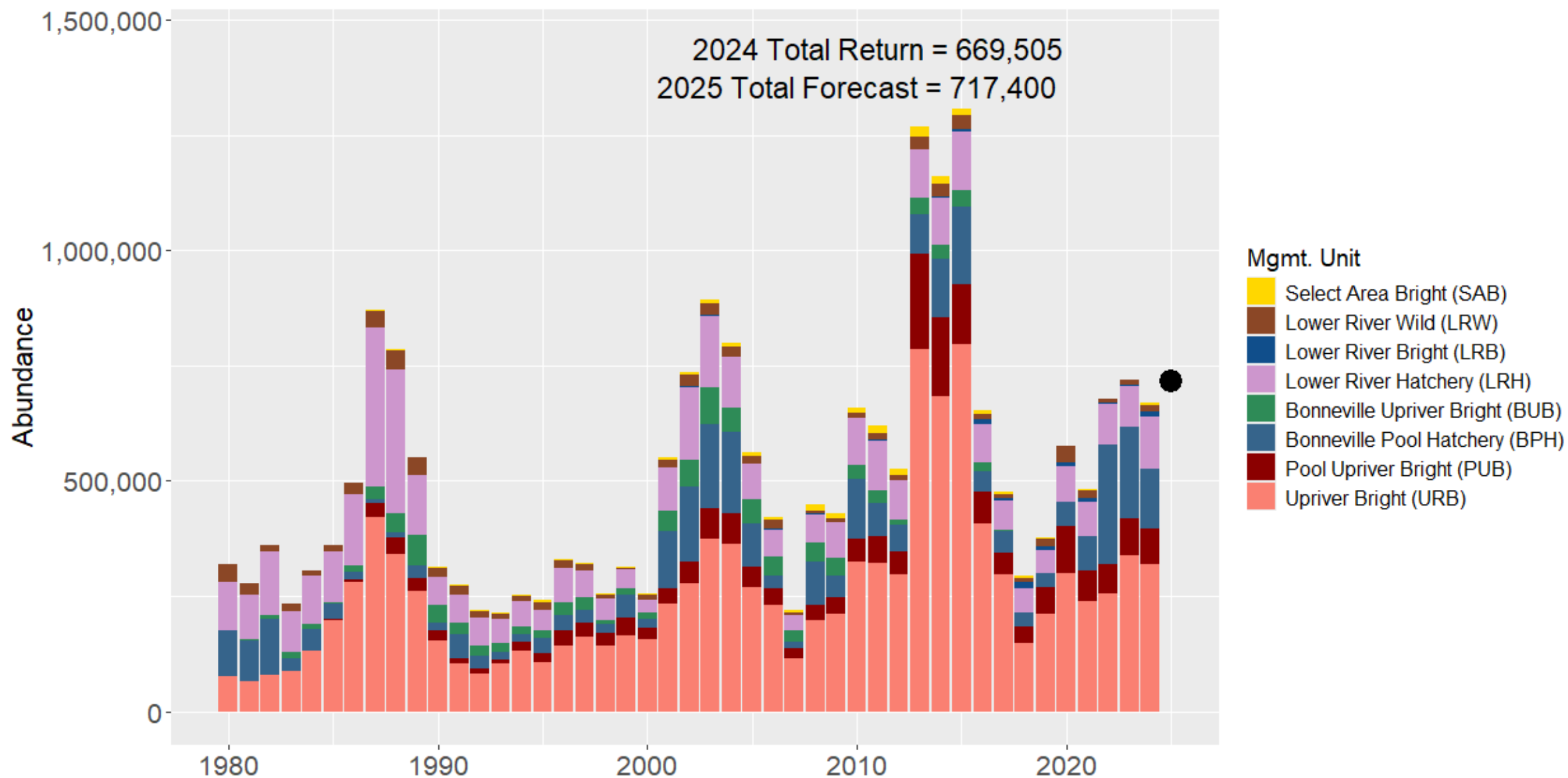


Upper Columbia Summer Chinook

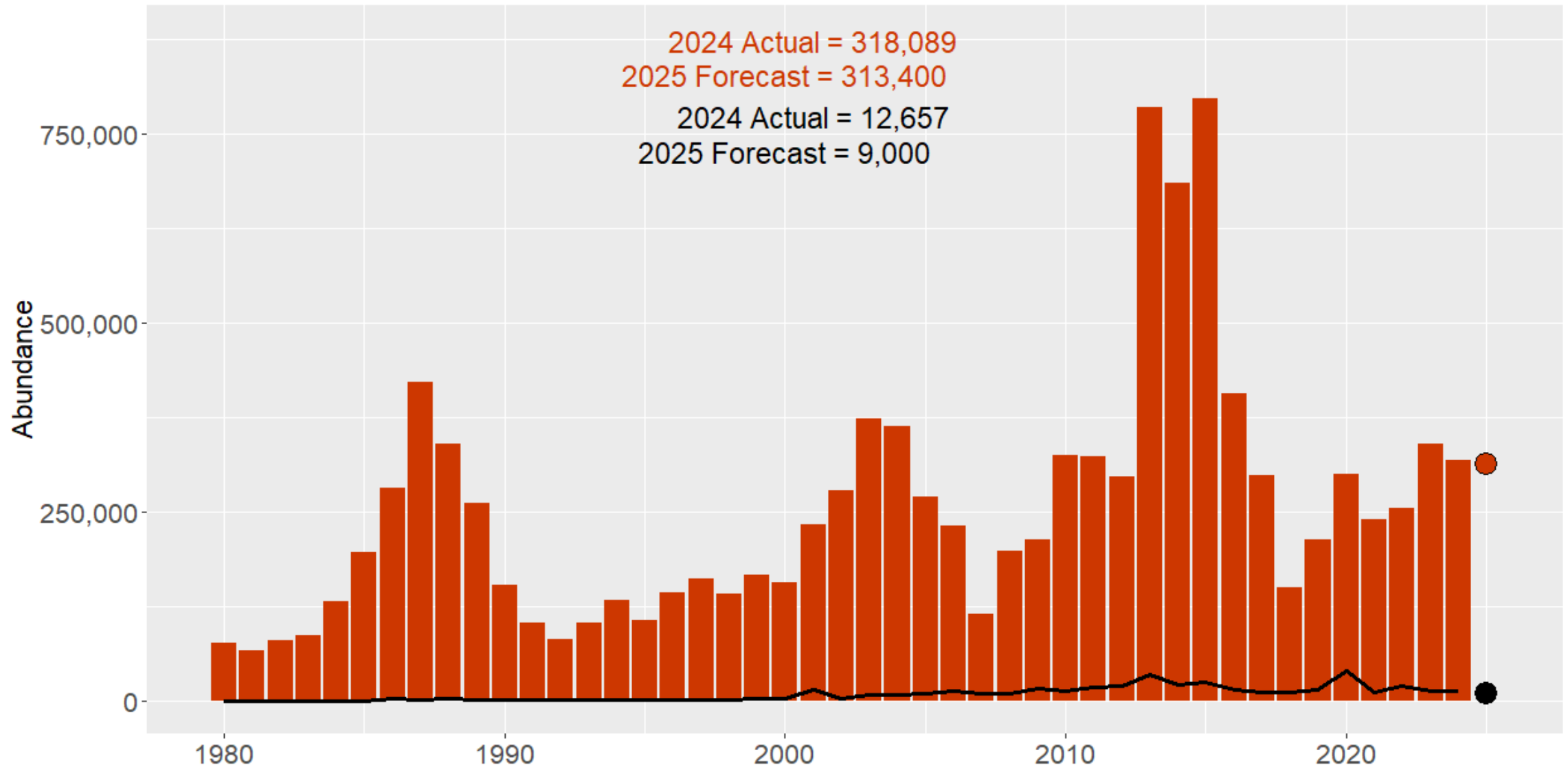


Columbia River Fall Chinook

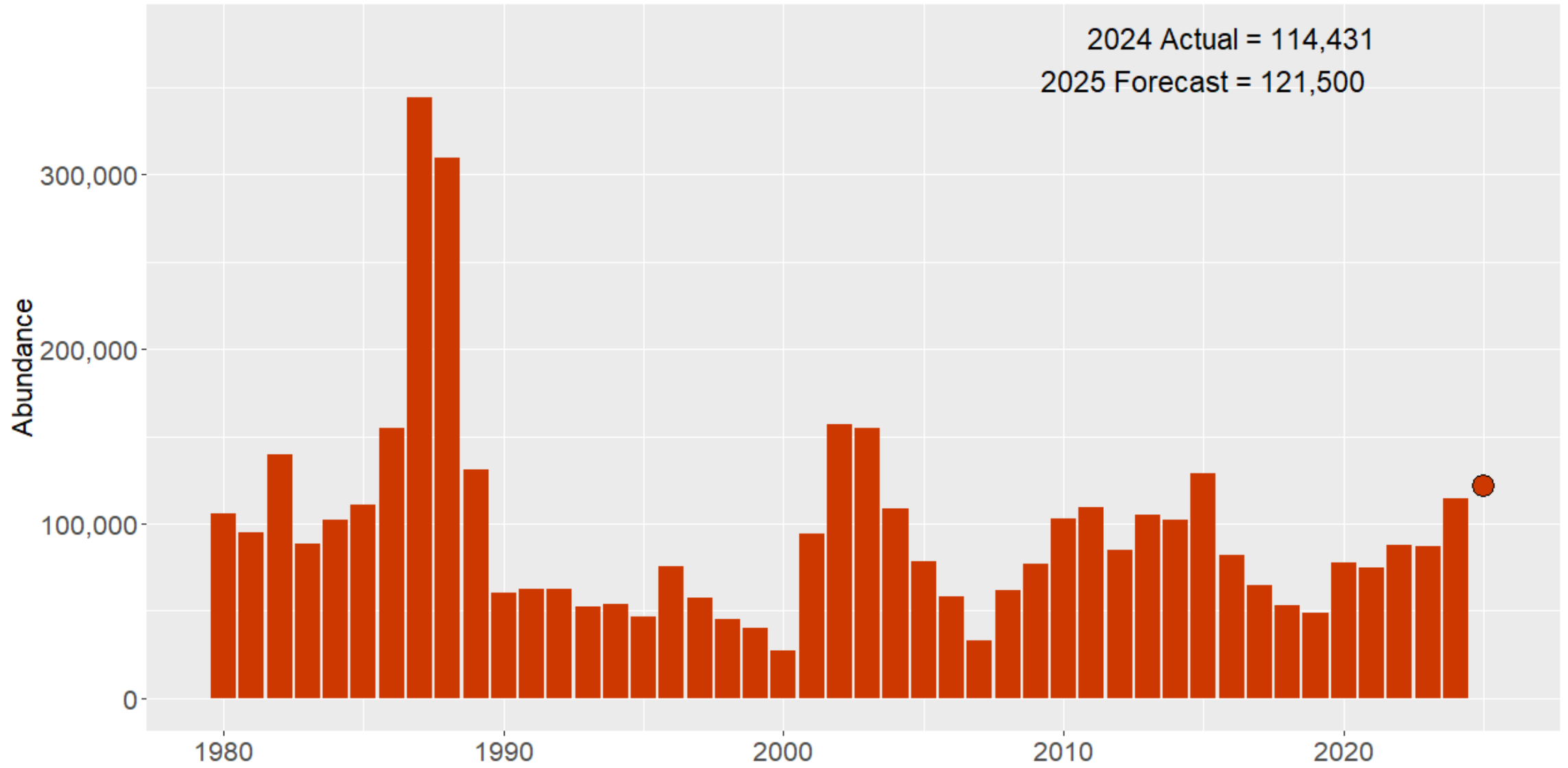
2024 Total Return = 669,505
2025 Total Forecast = 717,400



Upriver Bright Fall Chinook and Snake River Wild



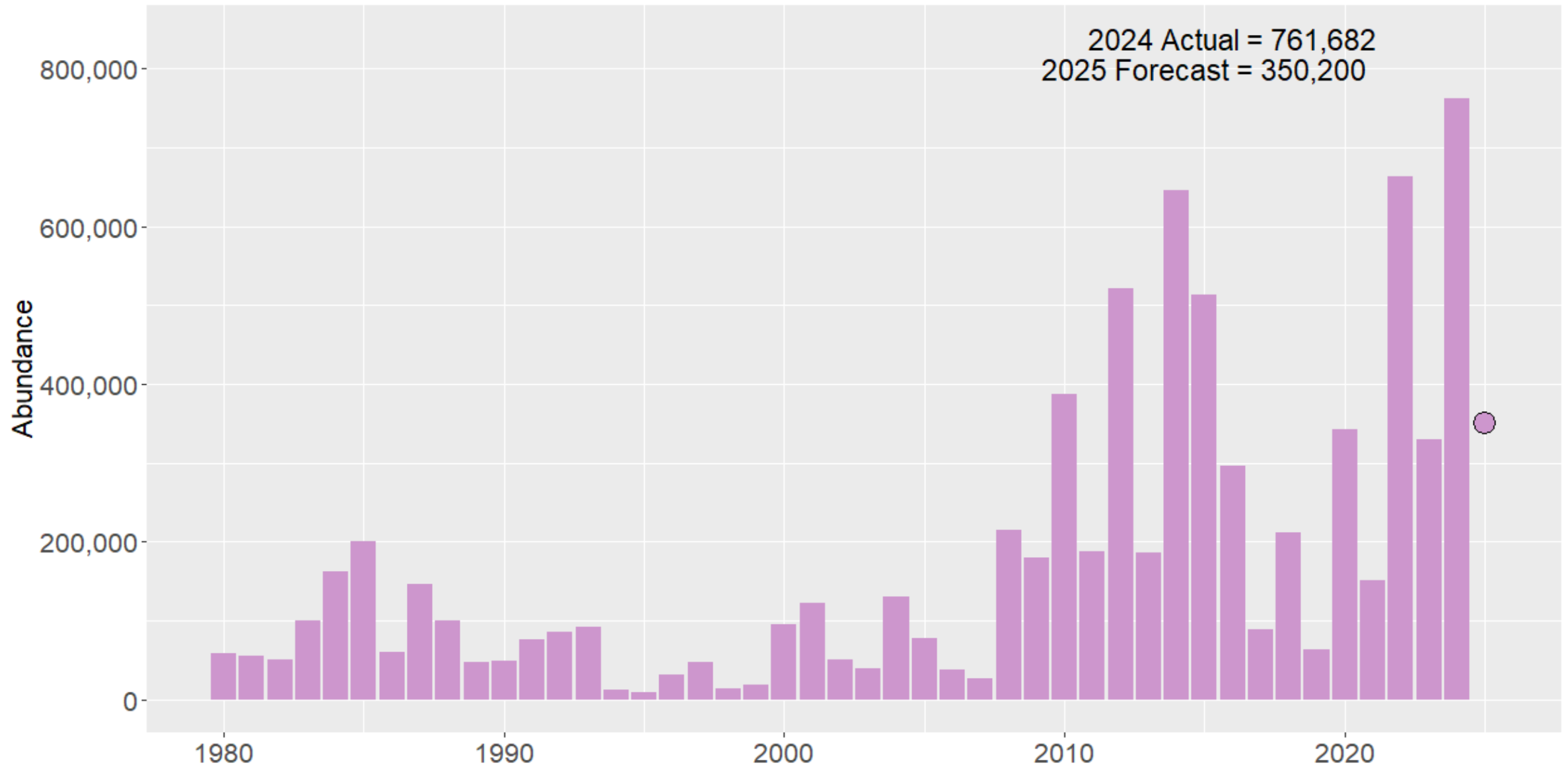
LRH Fall Chinook



Sockeye



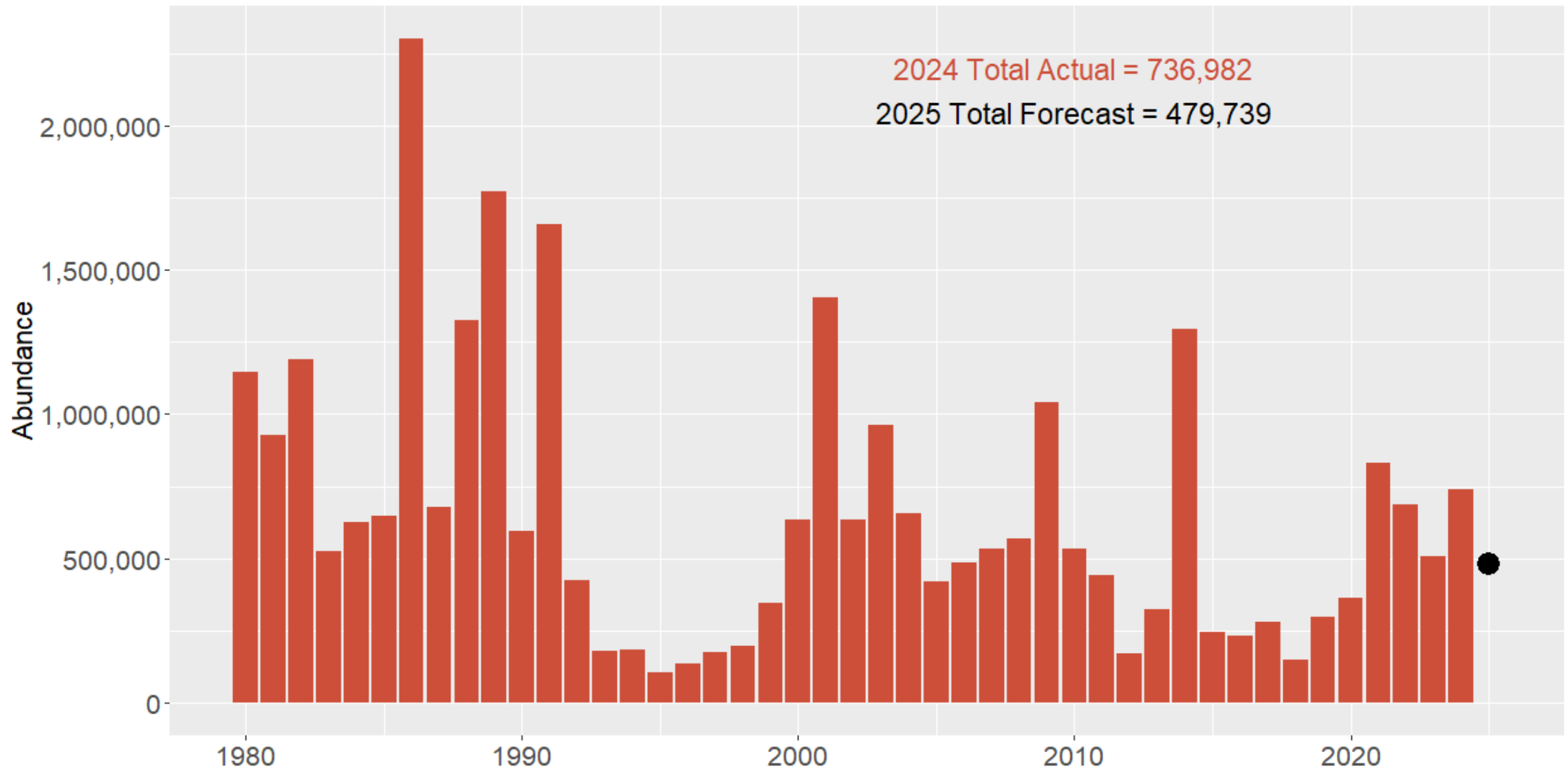
Columbia River Sockeye



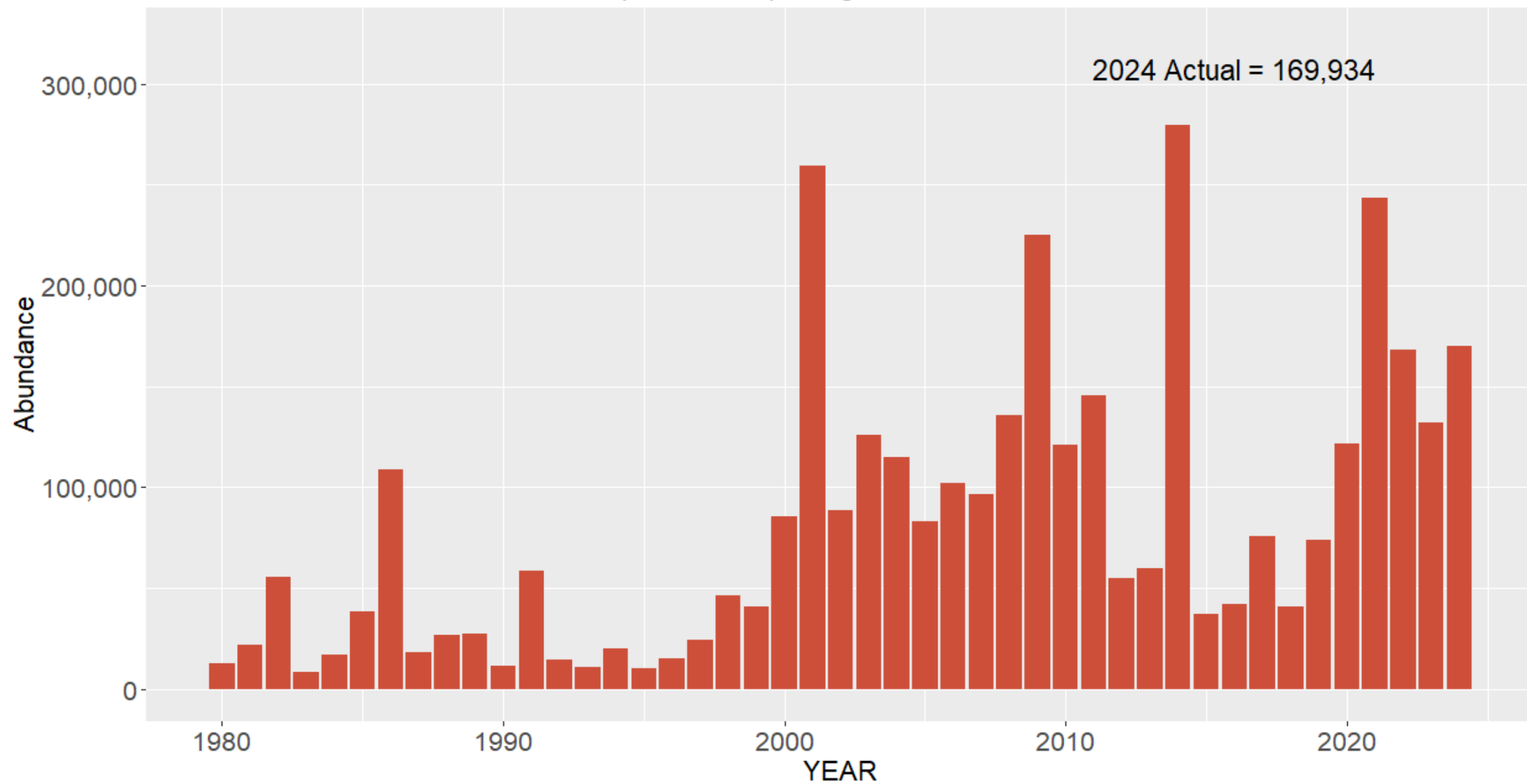
Coho



Columbia River Coho - ocean abundance



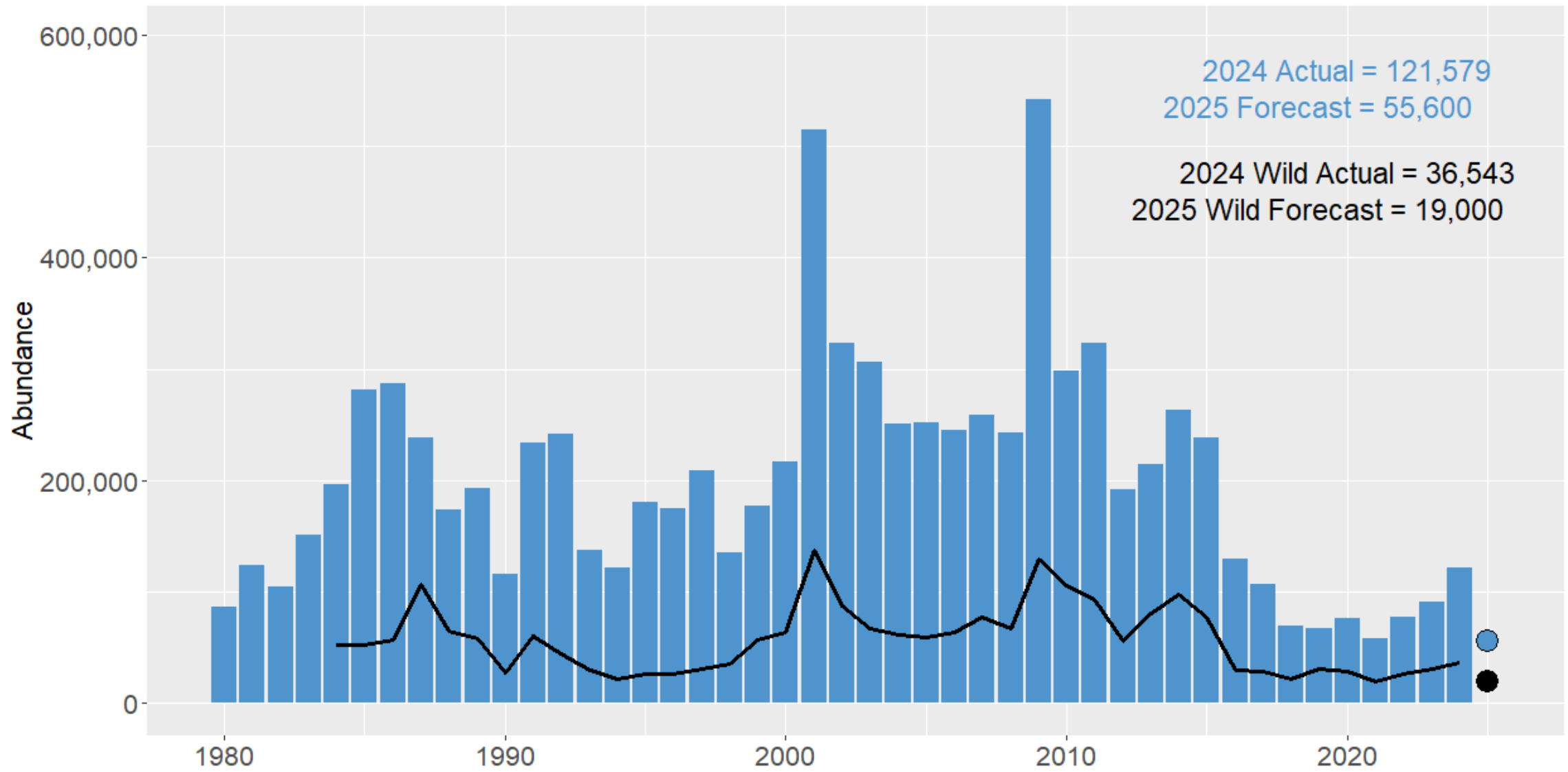
Upriver Coho passage - Bonneville Dam



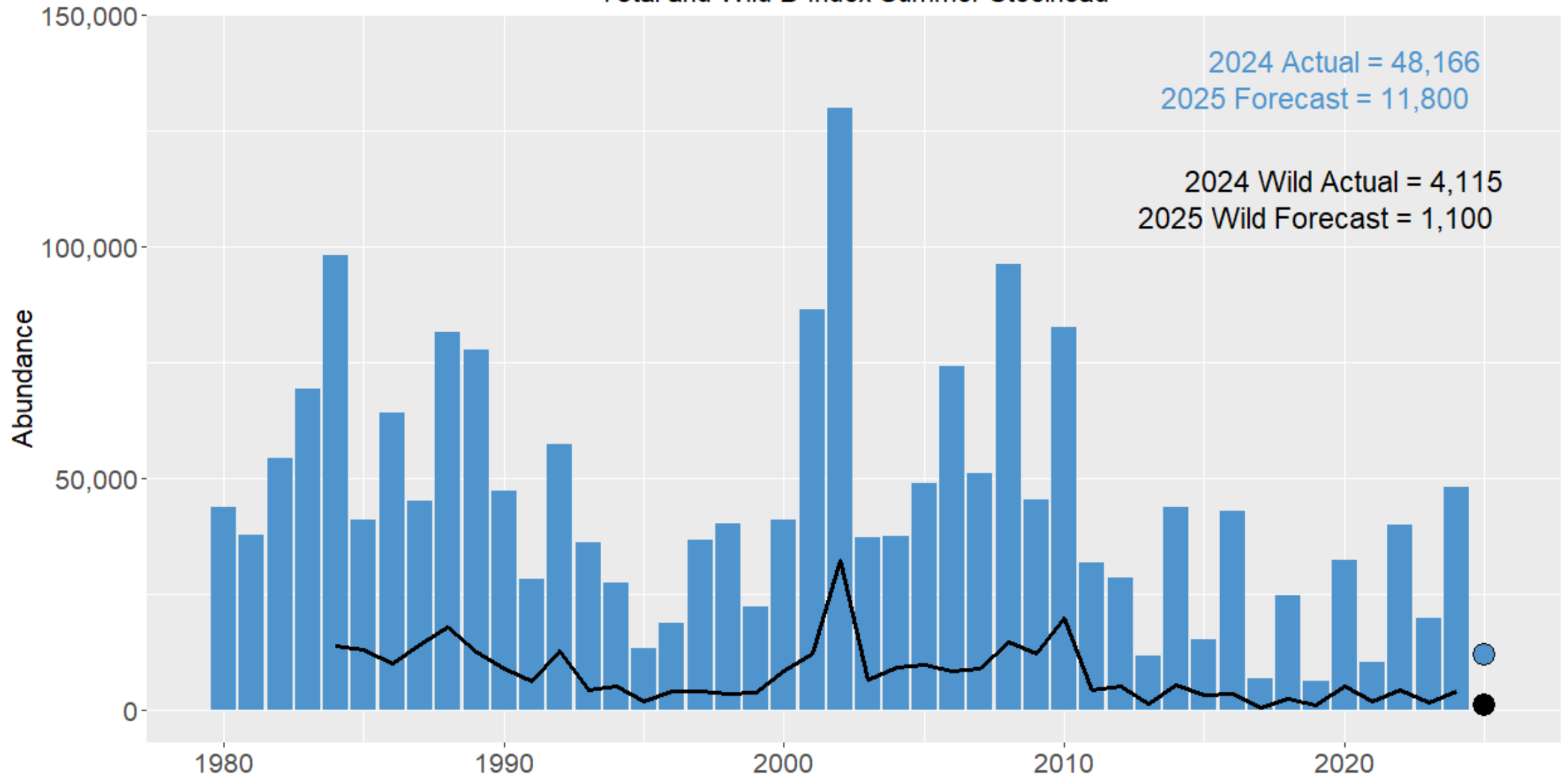
Steelhead



Total and Wild A-Index Summer Steelhead



Total and Wild B-Index Summer Steelhead

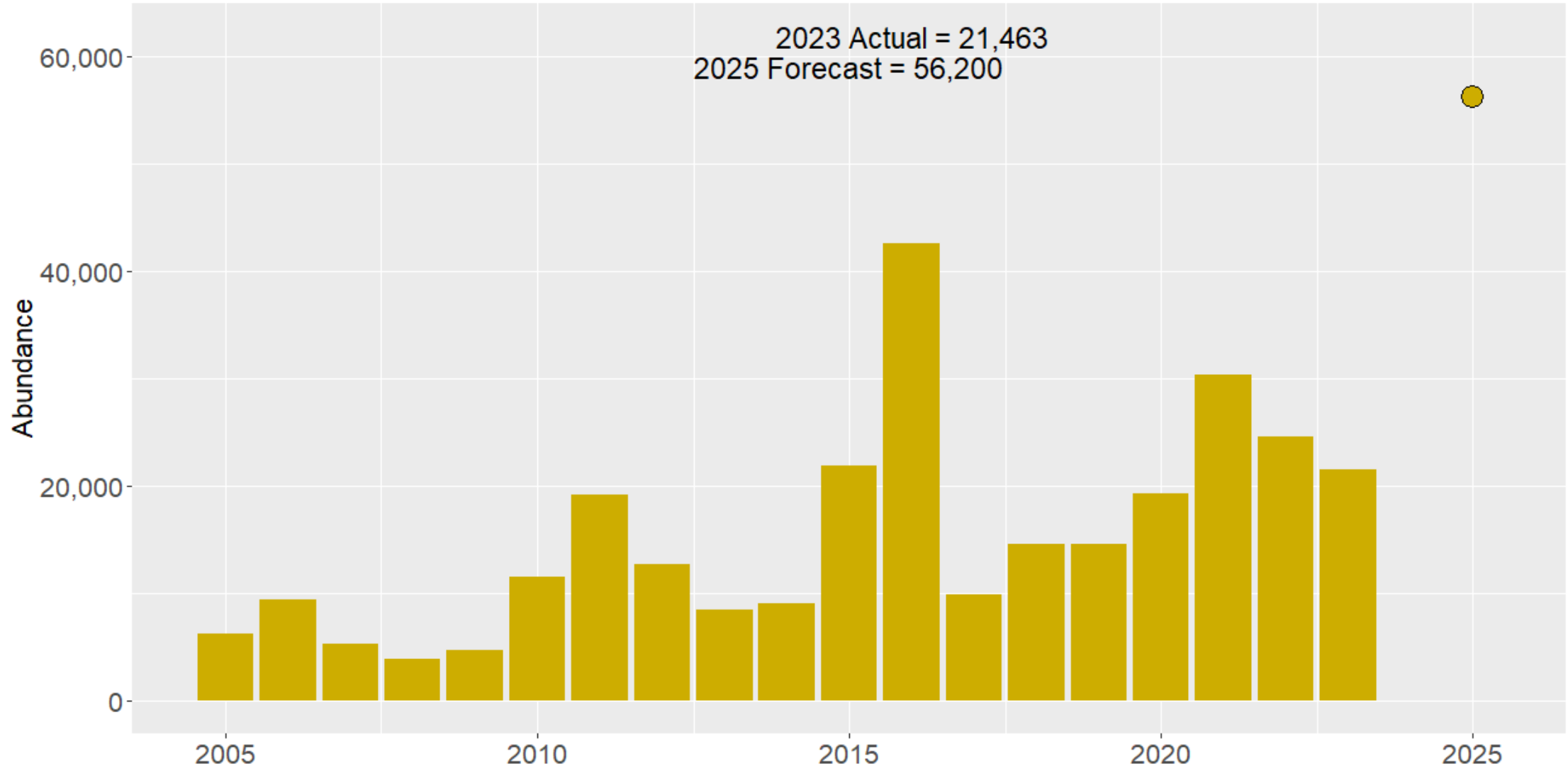


Chum



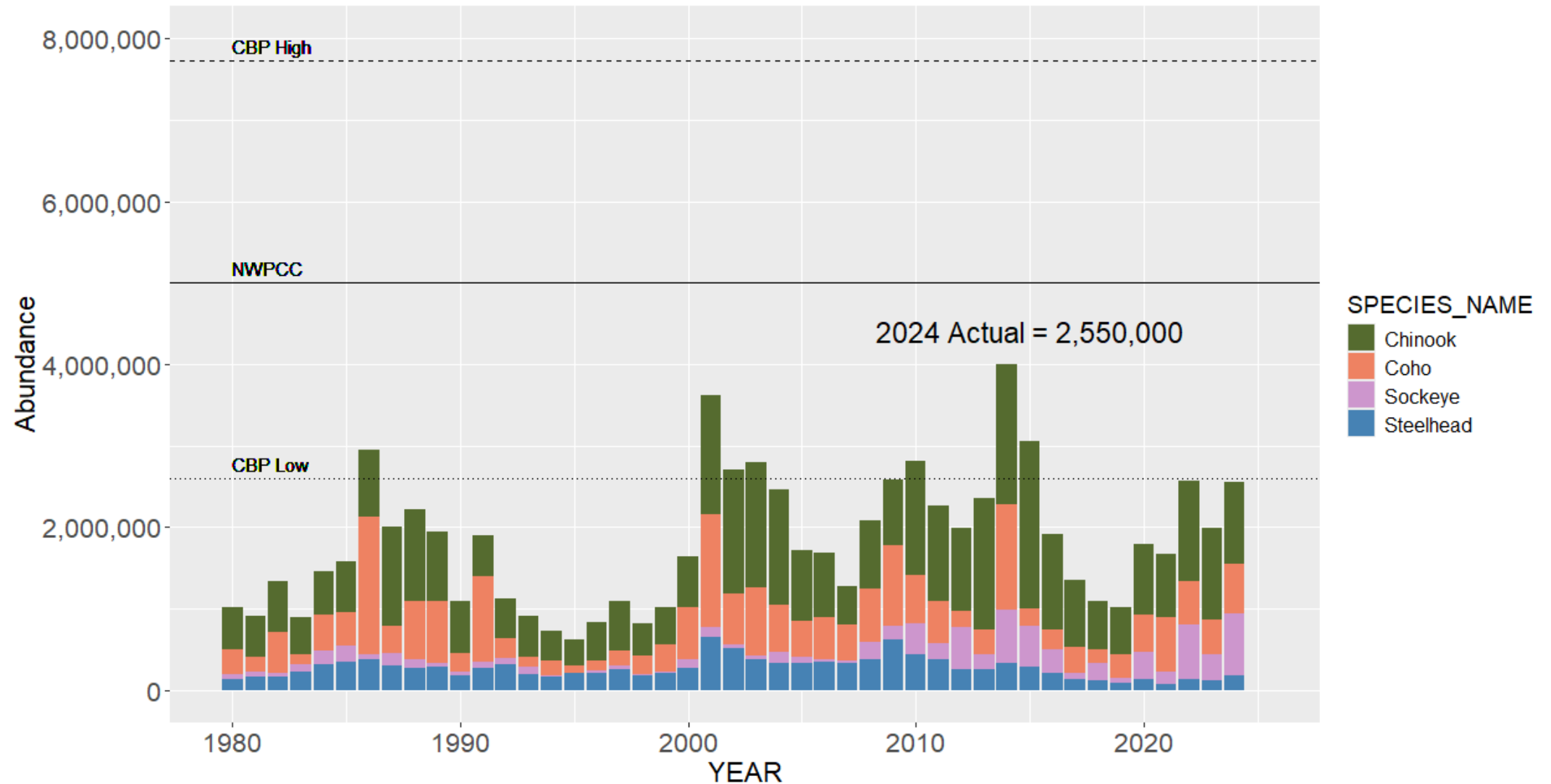
Columbia River Chum

2023 Actual = 21,463
2025 Forecast = 56,200



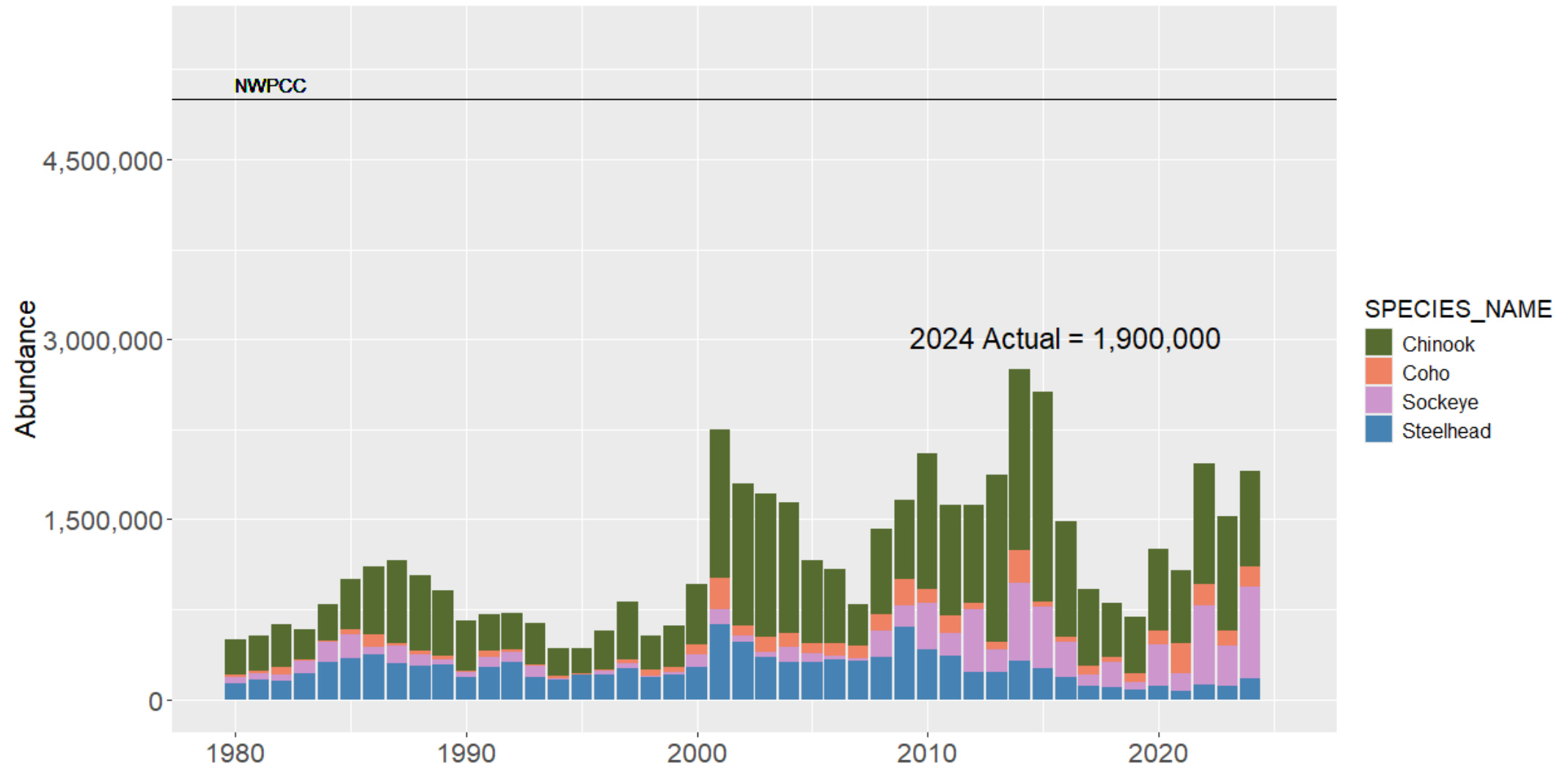
Total salmonid returns to the Columbia River

Columbia River Salmonids



Columbia Basin Partnership Goals: 2,603,600 (low); 7,724,600 (high)

Upriver Salmonids

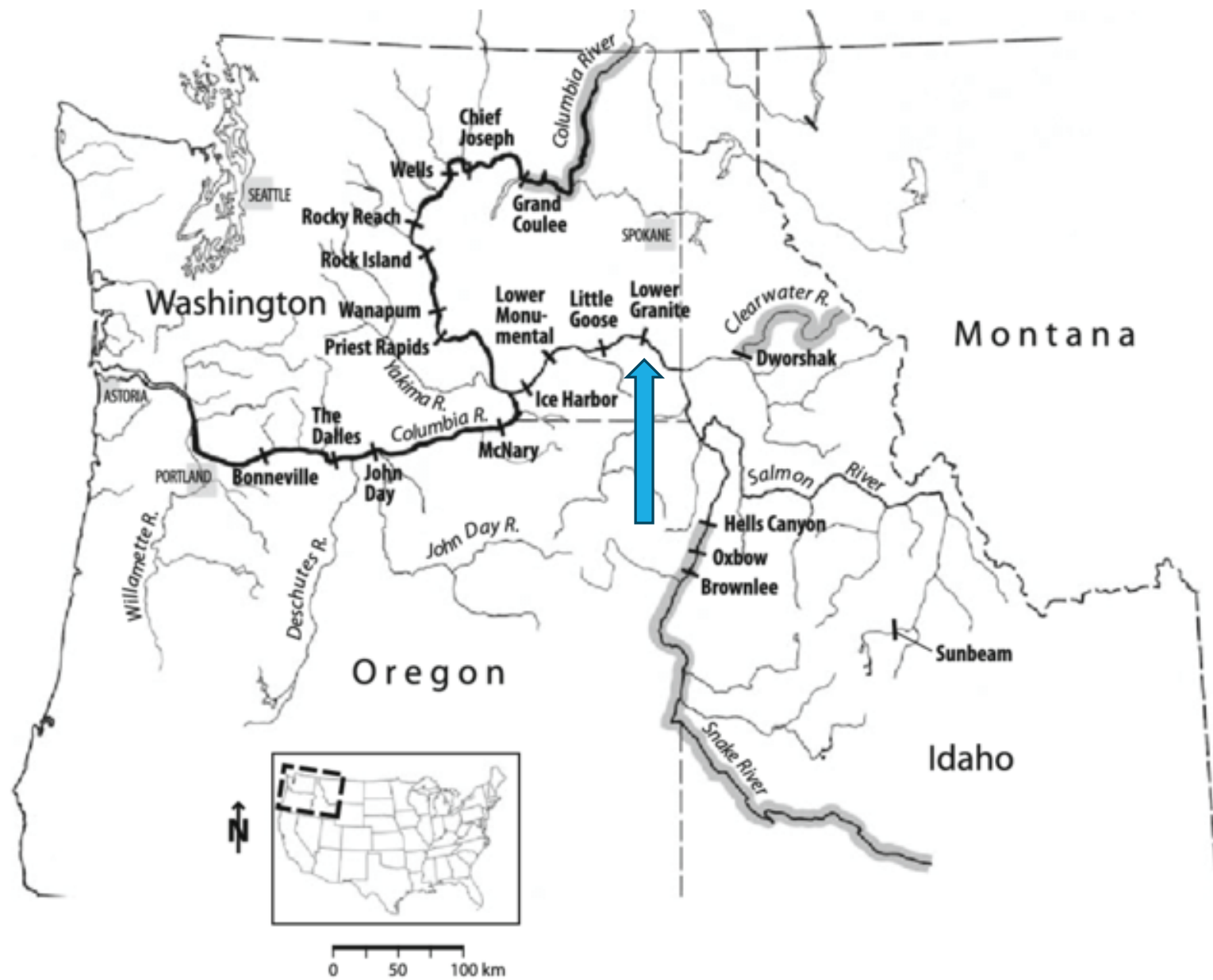


Species	Stock	2025 Forecast vs. 2024 Return
Spring Chinook		↑
Summer Chinook		↓
Fall Chinook	Total	↑
	URB/SRW	=
	LRH	=
Coho		↓
Summer Steelhead	A-index	↓
	B-index	↓
Sockeye Salmon		↓
Chum salmon		↑

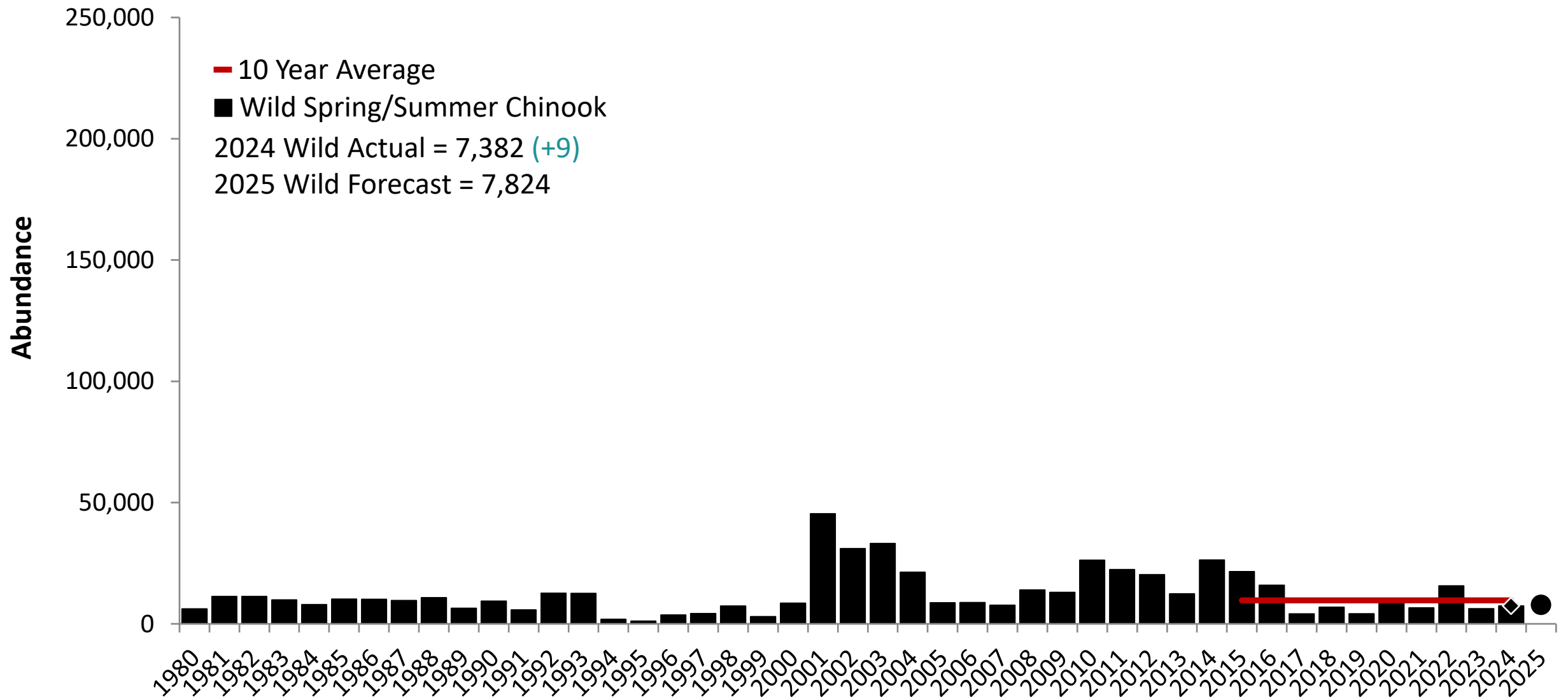
Summary

- About 70% of the Columbia Basin Partnership low abundance goal
- Less than 50% of the NWPCC Goal

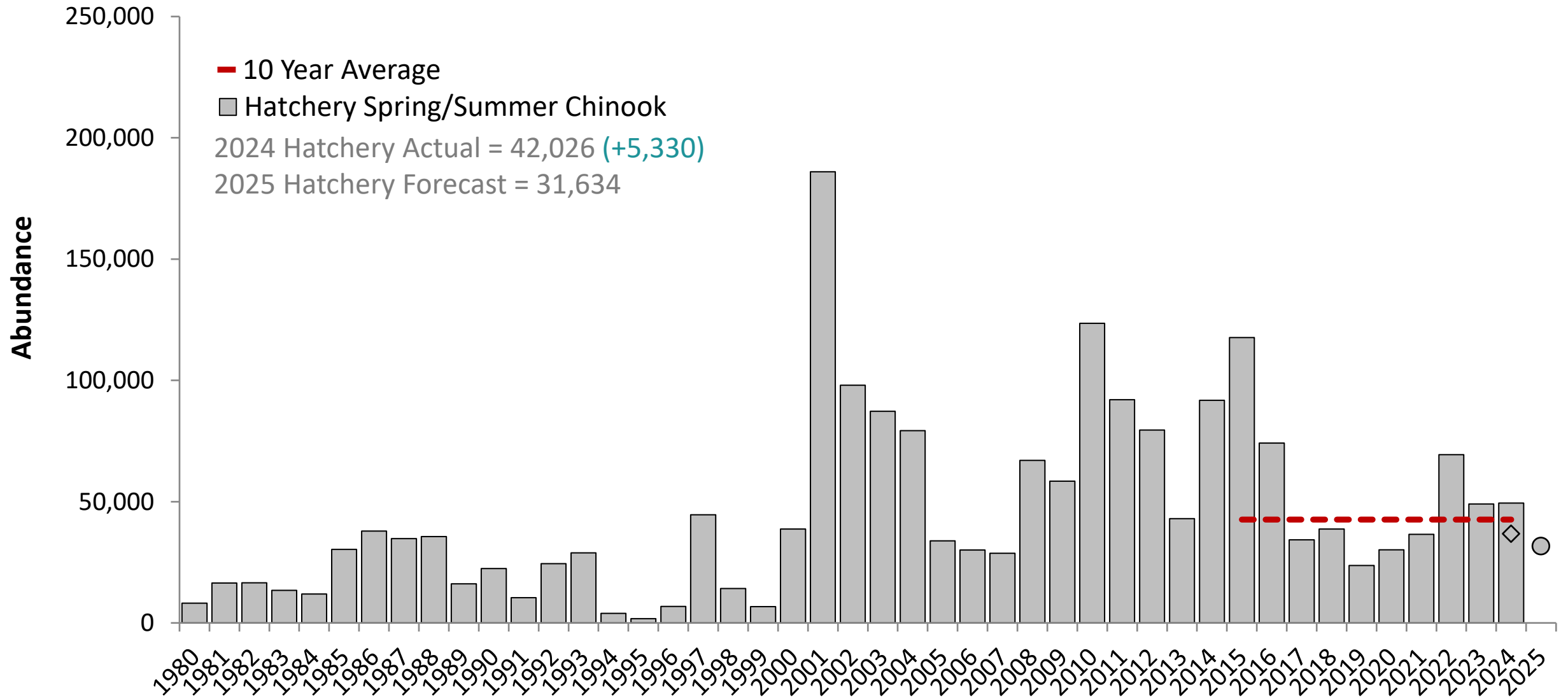
2024 Returns and 2025 Forecasts for the Snake River Basin



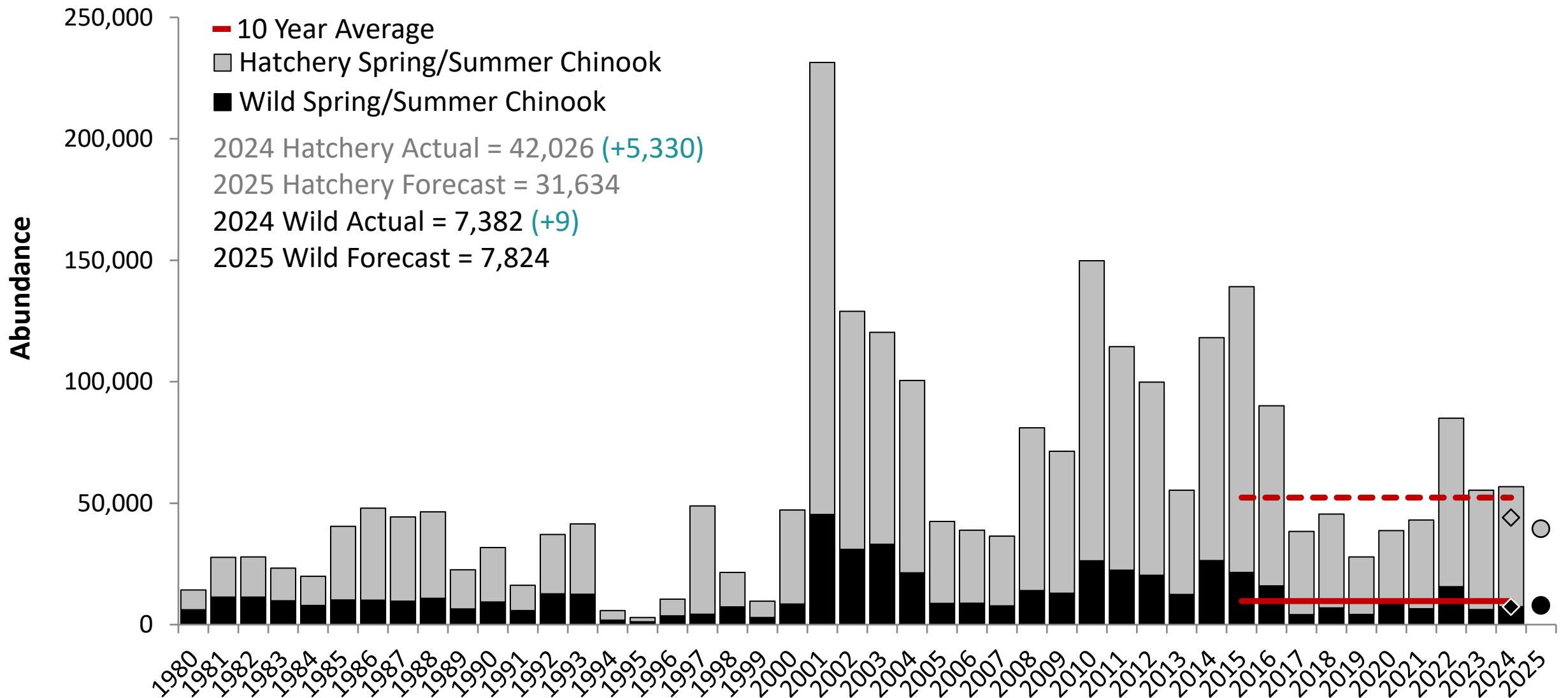
Snake River spring/summer Chinook salmon at Lower Granite Dam



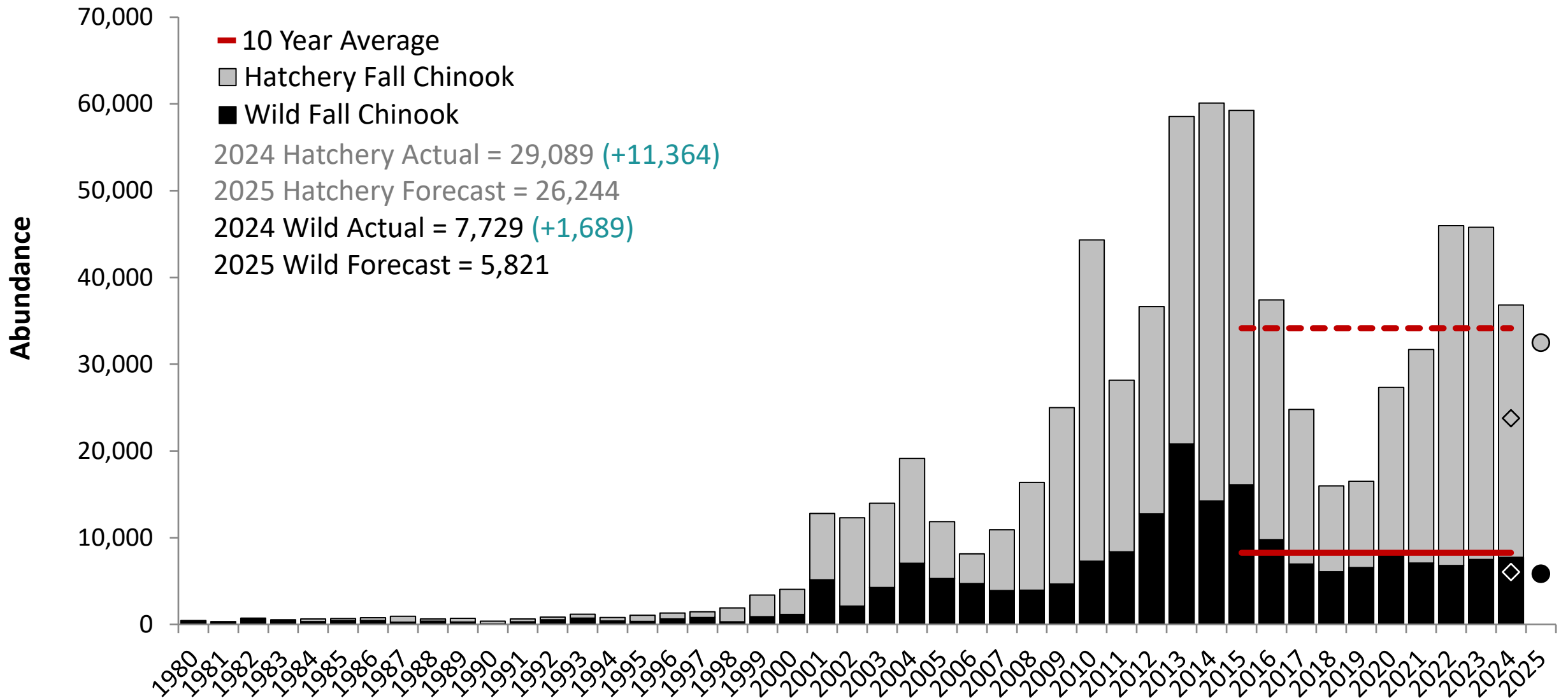
Snake River spring/summer Chinook salmon at Lower Granite Dam



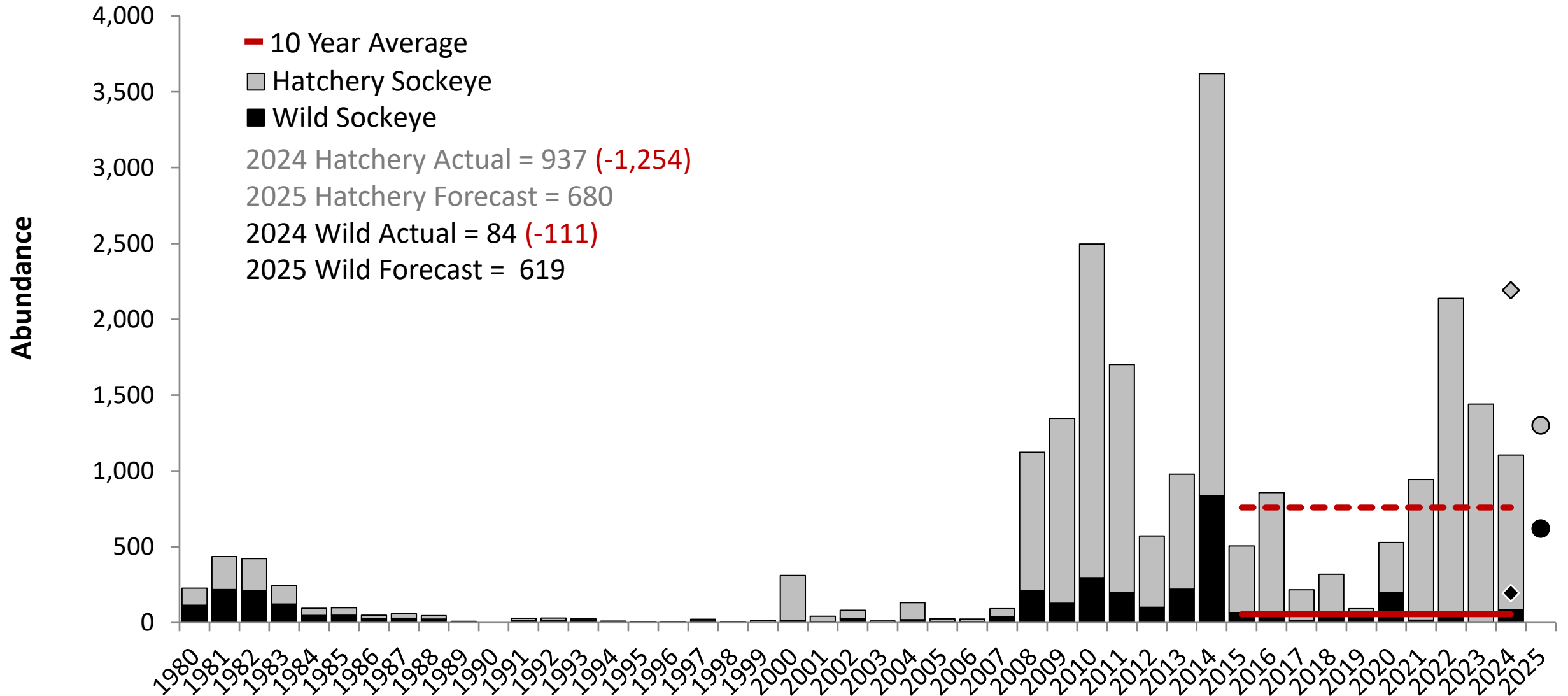
Snake River spring/summer Chinook salmon at Lower Granite Dam



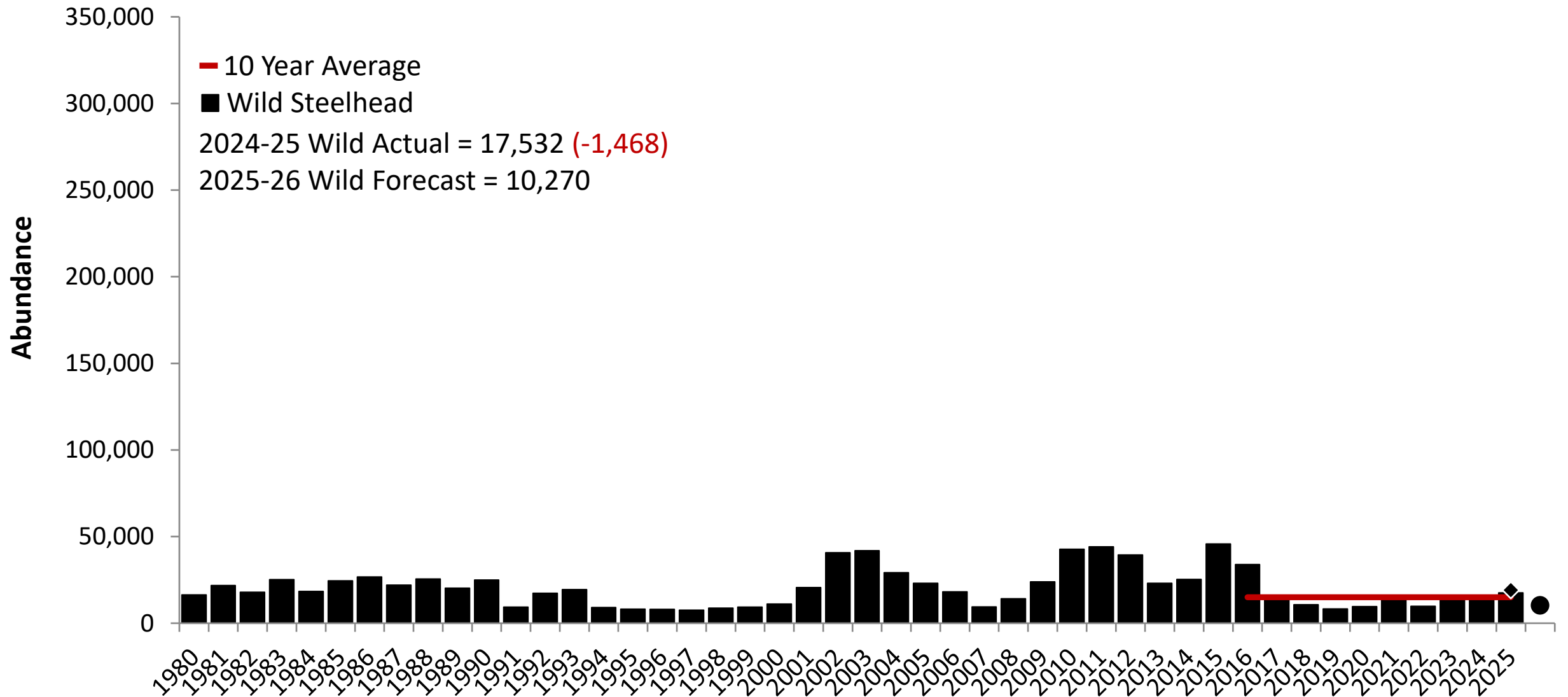
Snake River fall Chinook salmon at Lower Granite Dam



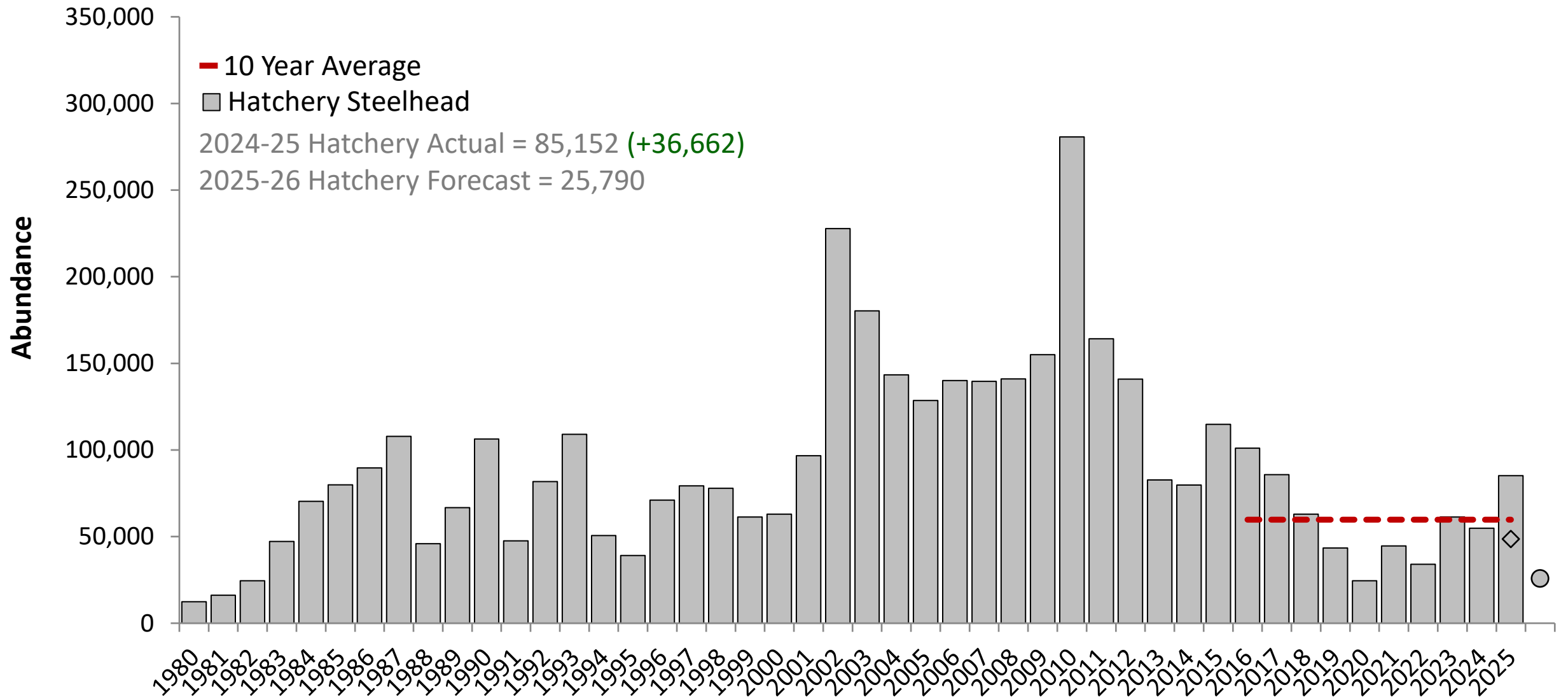
Snake River Sockeye salmon at Lower Granite Dam



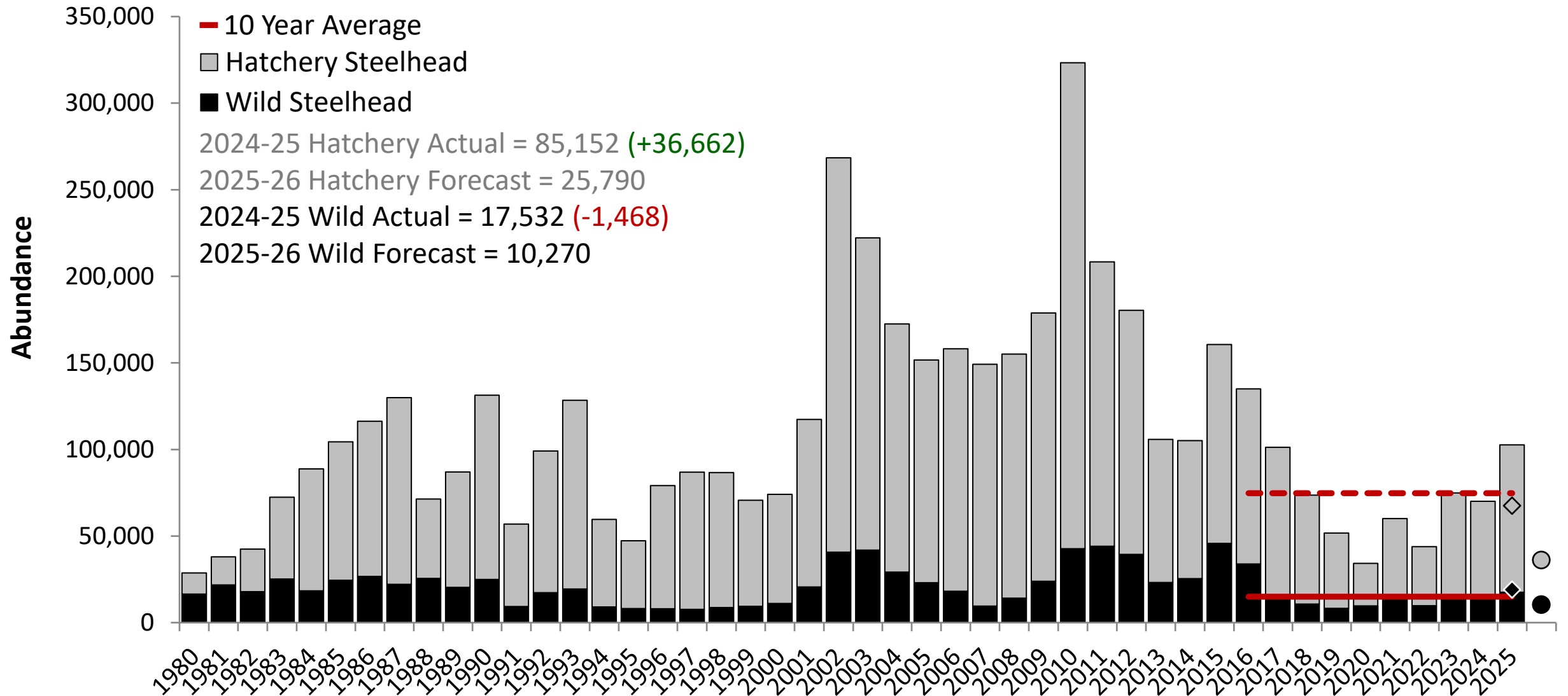
Snake River steelhead at Lower Granite Dam



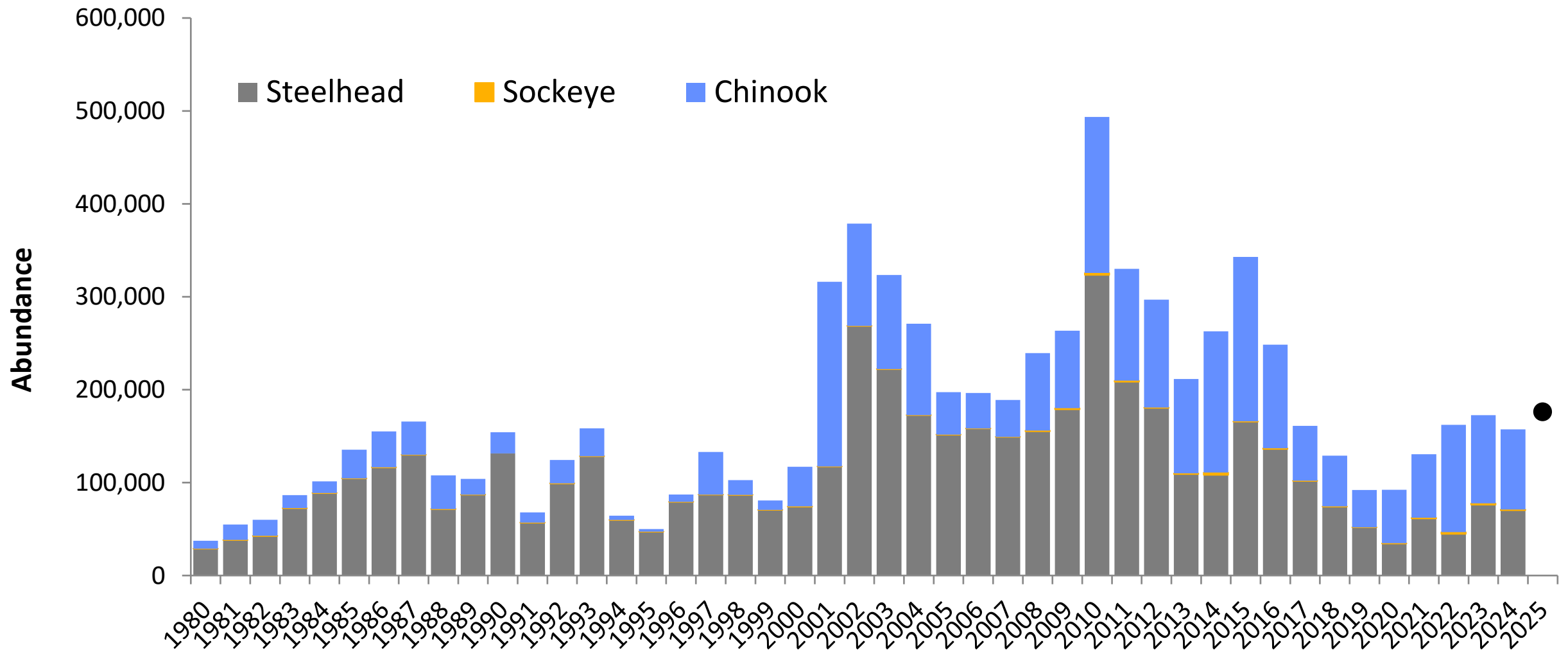
Snake River steelhead at Lower Granite Dam



Snake River steelhead at Lower Granite Dam

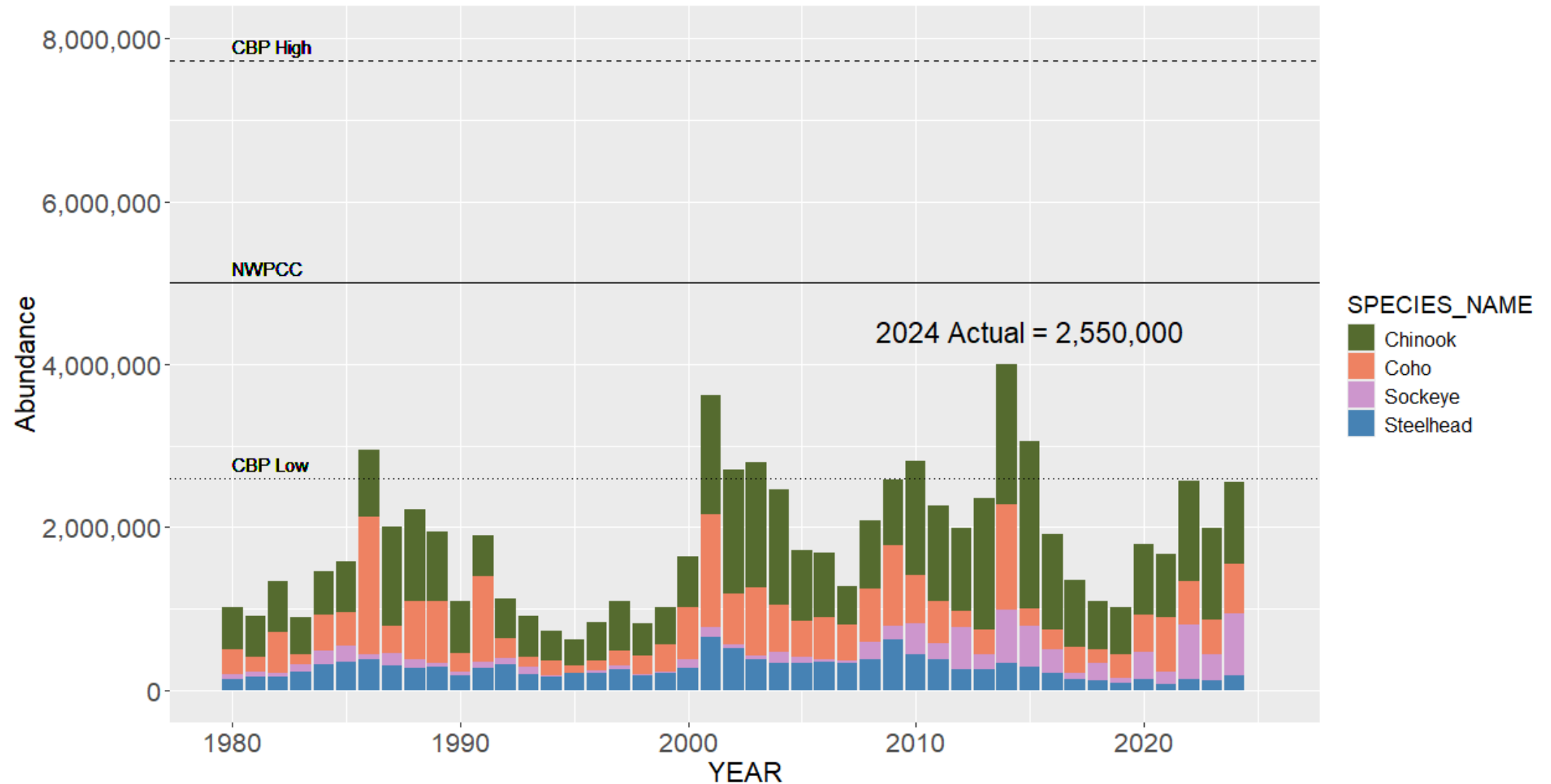


Salmonids at Lower Granite Dam



Columbia Basin Partnership goals: 317,500 (low) - 700,000 (high)

Columbia River Salmonids



Columbia Basin Partnership Goals: 2,603,600 (low); 7,724,600 (high)

Find out More!

WDFW

- [Columbia River fisheries and management | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)
- [WDFW mailing lists | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)

CRITFC

- <https://critfc.org/tribal-treaty-fishing-rights/policy-support/public-documents/>
- <https://critfc.org/fish-and-watersheds/fish-and-habitat-restoration/the-plan-wy-kan-ush-mi-wa-kish-wit-2/>
- <https://critfc.org/harvest/>

IDFG

- [IDFG Main Fisheries page: https://idfg.idaho.gov/fish](https://idfg.idaho.gov/fish)

ODFW

- [ODFW Columbia River Fisheries \(state.or.us\)](https://state.or.us/odfw/columbia-river-fisheries)