

Kuskokwim Area Fisheries Oral Report

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AYK Board of Fisheries Meeting
January 2019



Written Report: RC 3; Tab 4

Oral Report: RC 3; Tab 14

Outline

Topics to be covered:

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

Kuskokwim Area

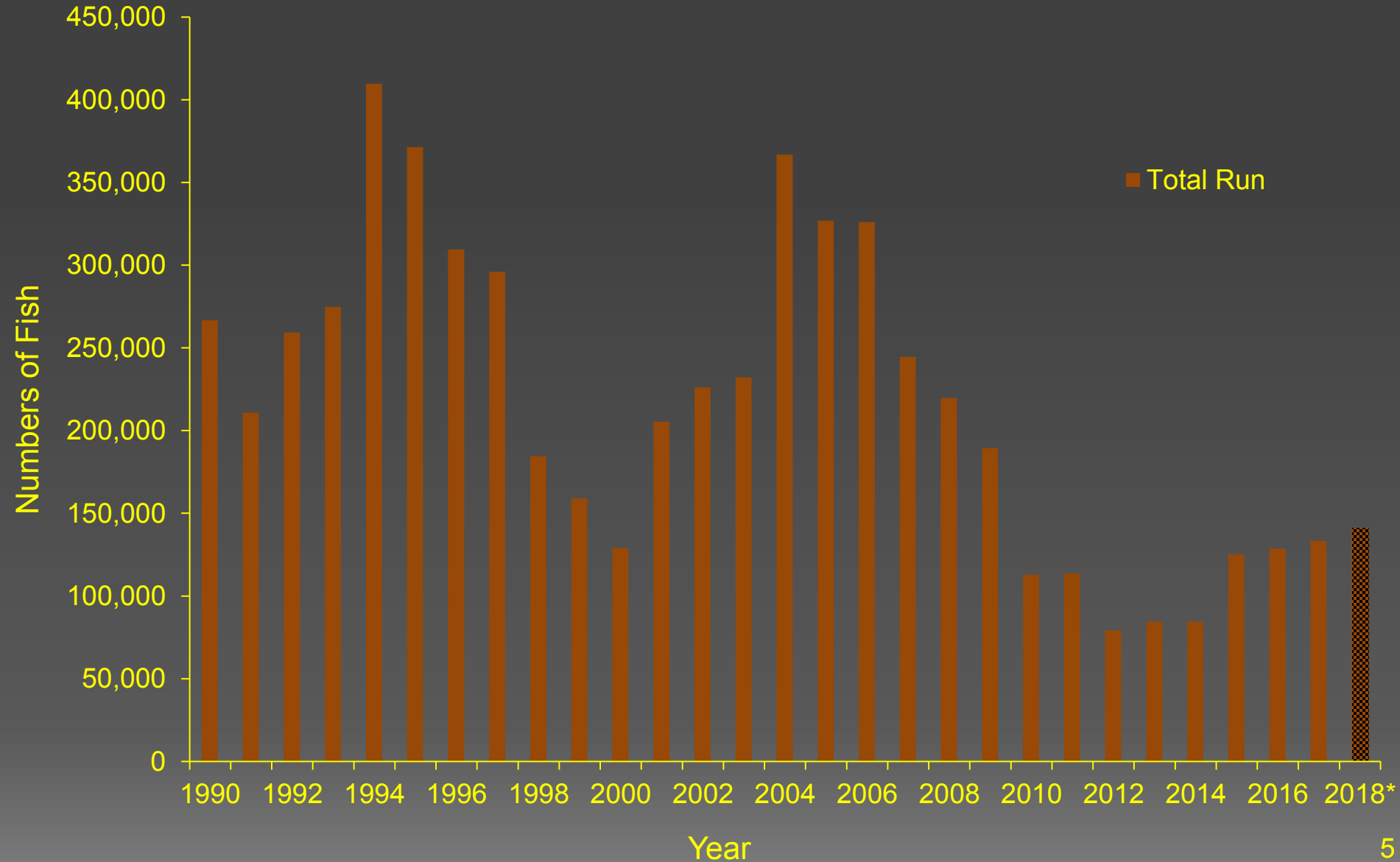


Stock Status and Recent Fishery Performance

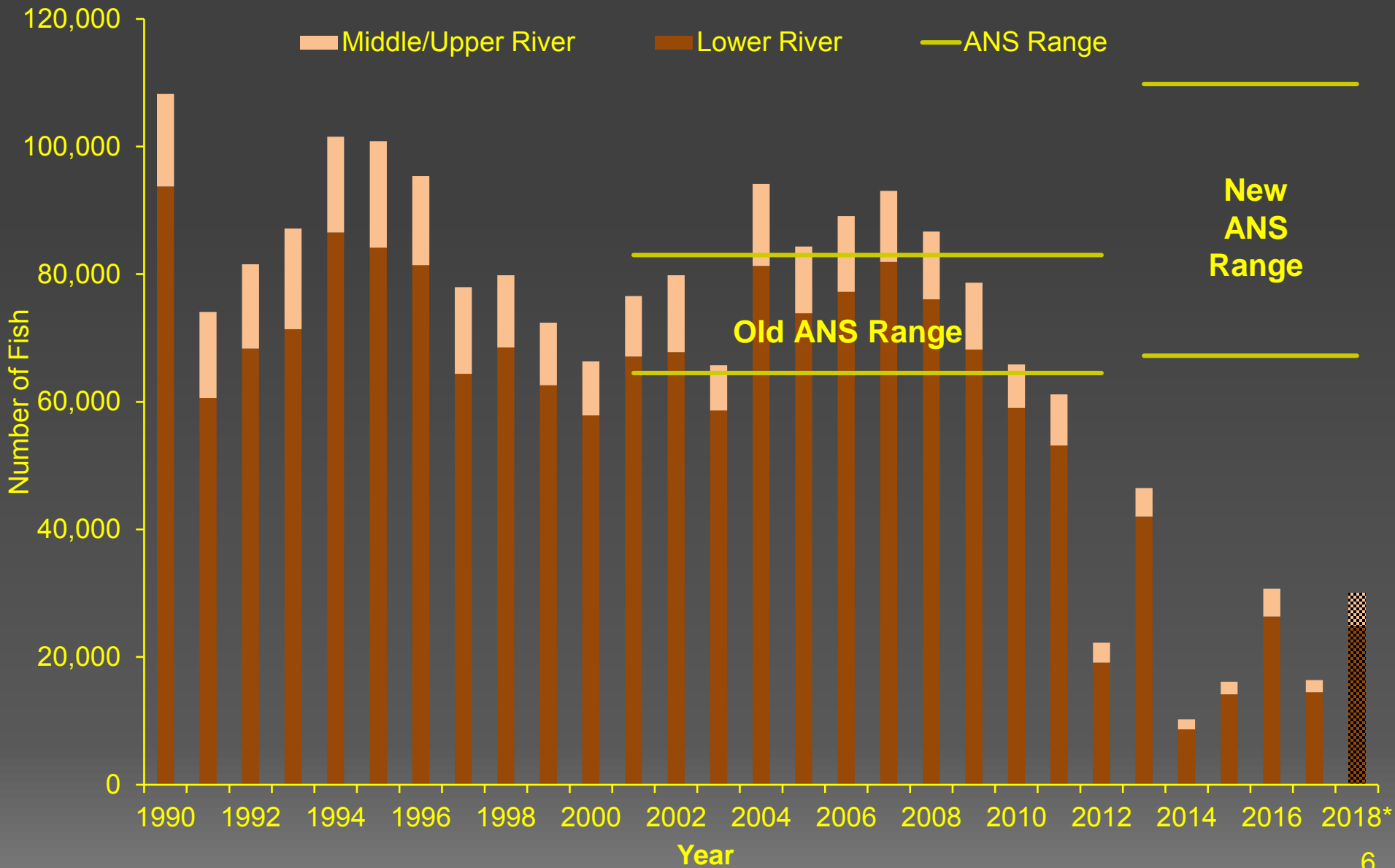
- Kuskokwim River
 - Poor king salmon runs
 - Restricted subsistence fishery (time/area/gear)
 - Subsistence harvests below ANS
 - Achieved drainagewide escapement goal 2016, 2017, & 2018
 - Chum, sockeye, and coho salmon relatively stable
 - Consistently met escapement goals, except for coho in 2018
 - ANS has been met for all these species since 2015
 - No large scale commercial buyer/processor

Total Run of Kuskokwim River King Salmon, 1990–2018

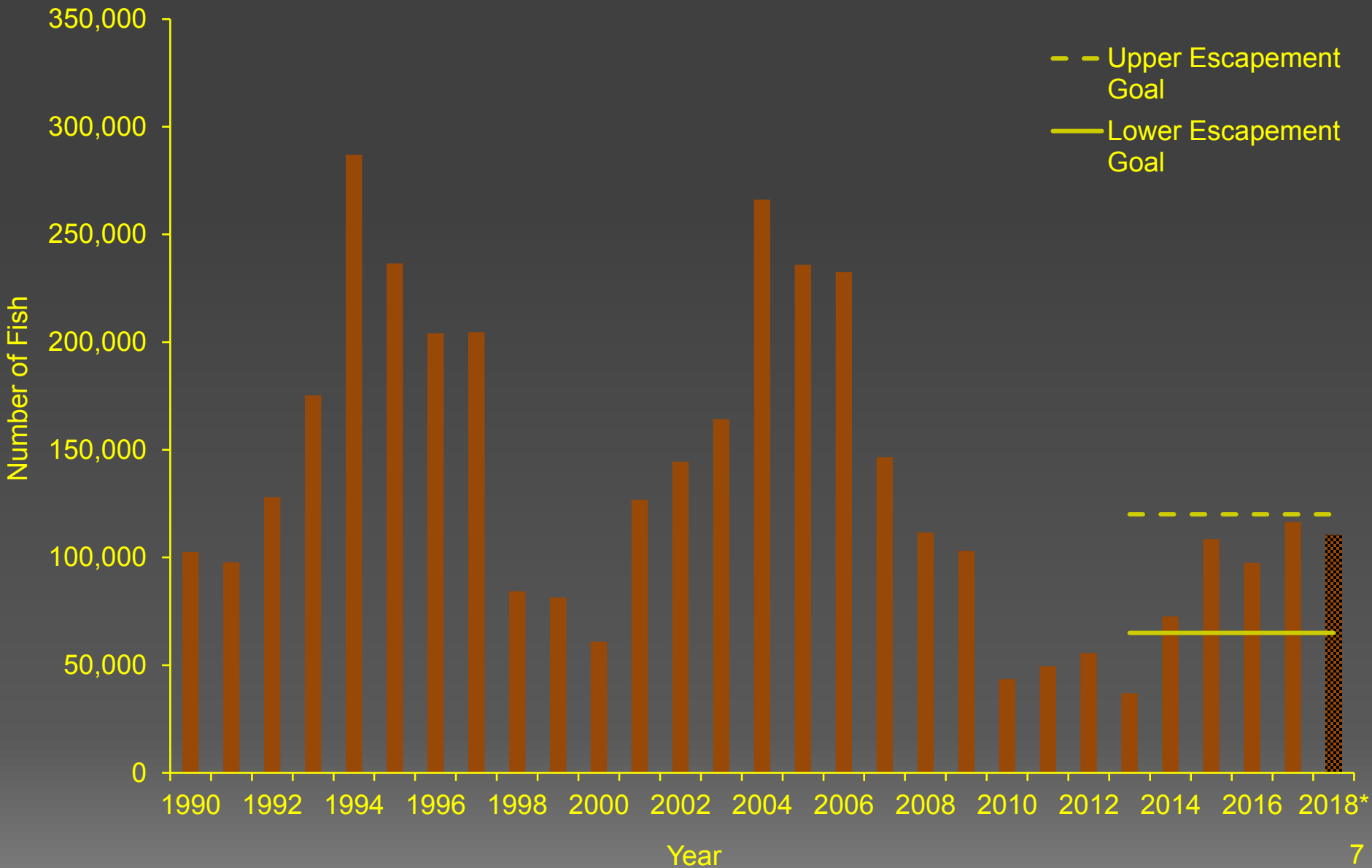
(*2018 is preliminary)



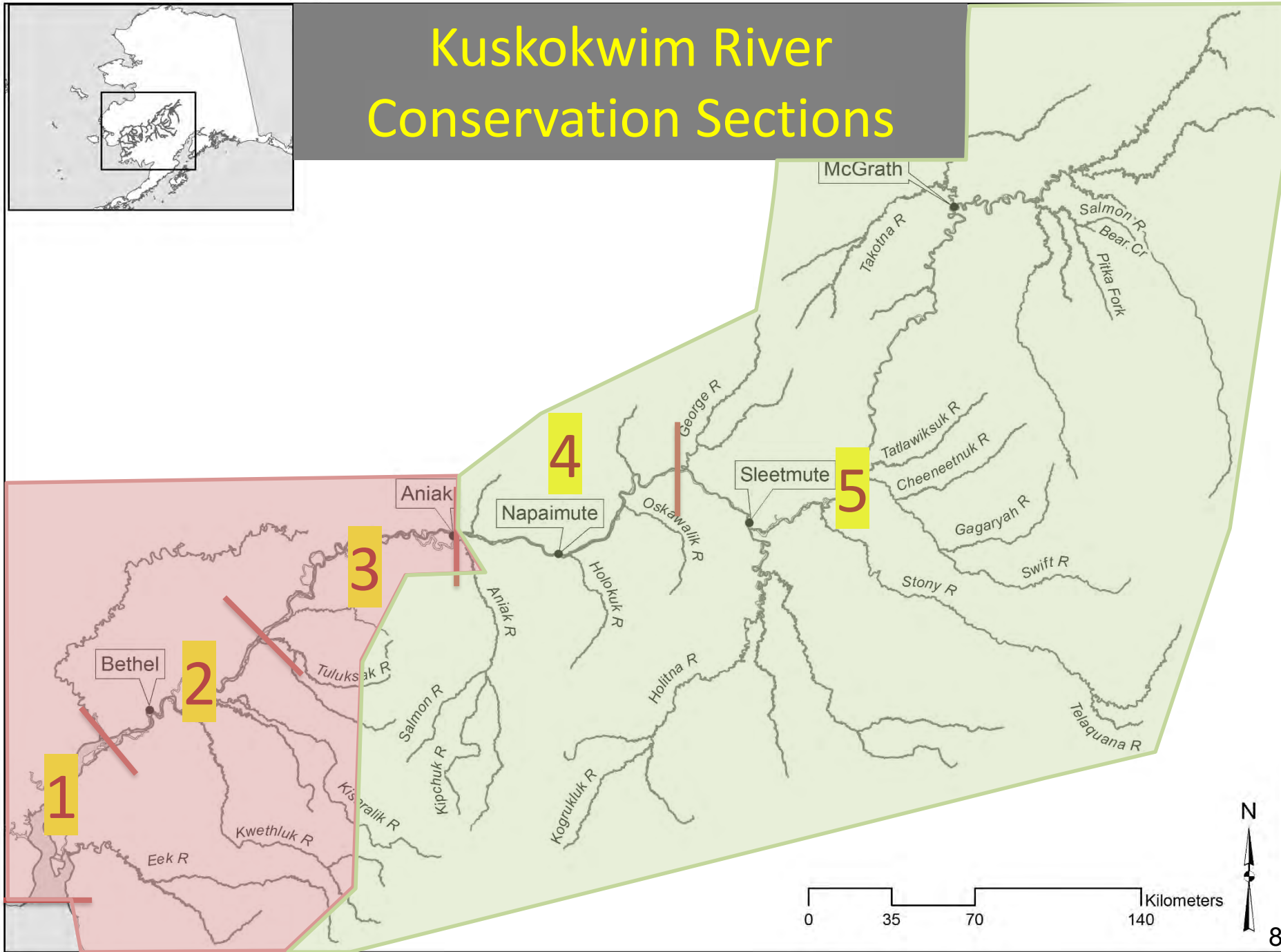
Kuskokwim River King Salmon Subsistence Harvest, 1990–2018 (*2018 is preliminary)



Kuskokwim River King Salmon Escapement, 1990–2018 (*2018 is preliminary)



Kuskokwim River Conservation Sections



Recent Kuskokwim River Fisheries King Salmon Management

- Early season closure thru June 11
- Tributary gillnet closures
- Gillnet restrictions
- Limited time and area openings
- Live release gear types
- Federal Special Actions (Sections 1–3)
- State waters subsistence permit (Sections 4 & 5)
- Sport fishing closure

Kuskokwim Management Area



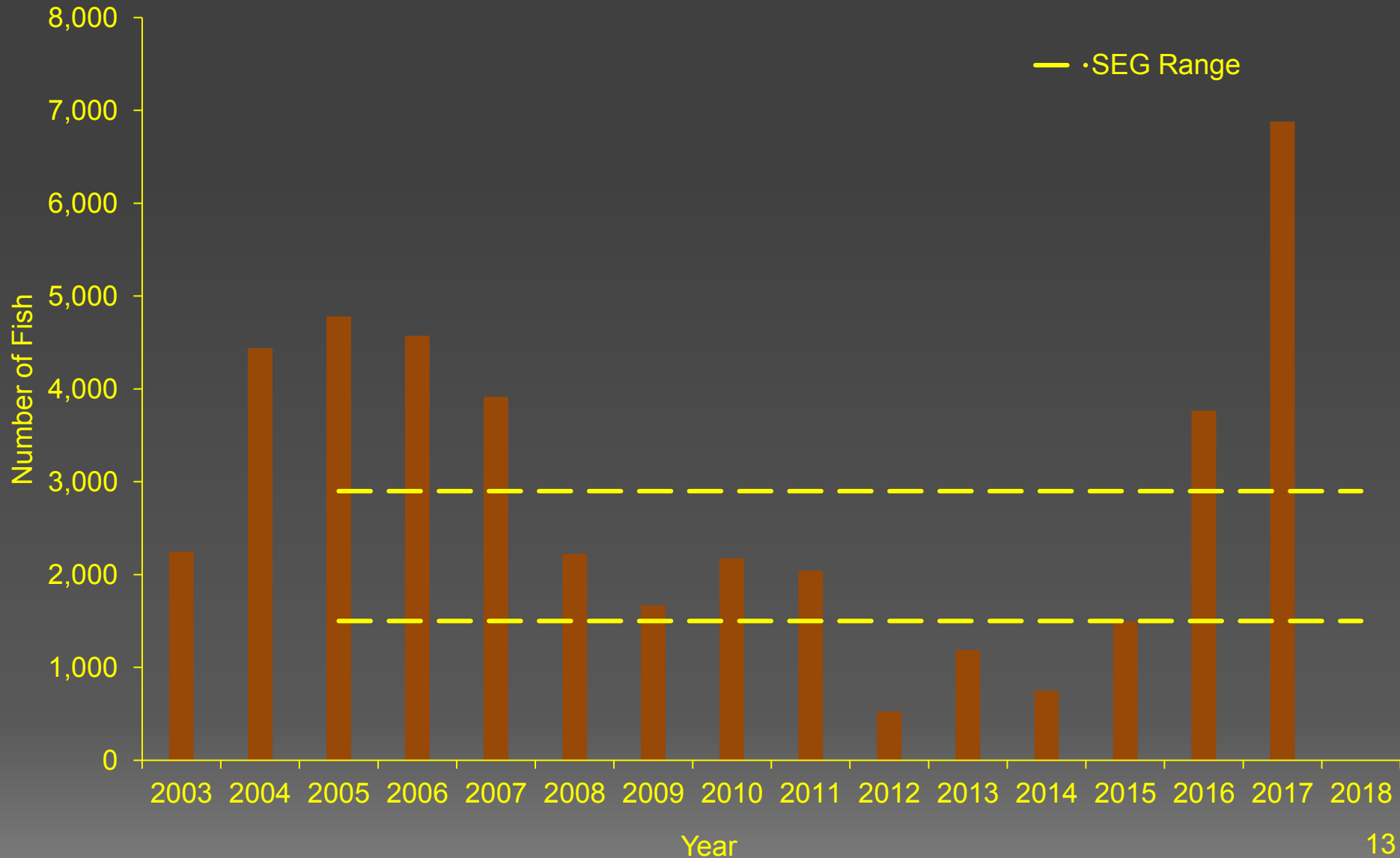
Stock Status and Recent Fishery Performance

- Kuskokwim Bay
 - Below average king salmon runs
 - Sockeye salmon runs above average
 - Chum salmon relatively stable
 - No assessment on coho salmon
 - Salmon ANS met or exceeded annually
 - No large scale commercial buyer/processor

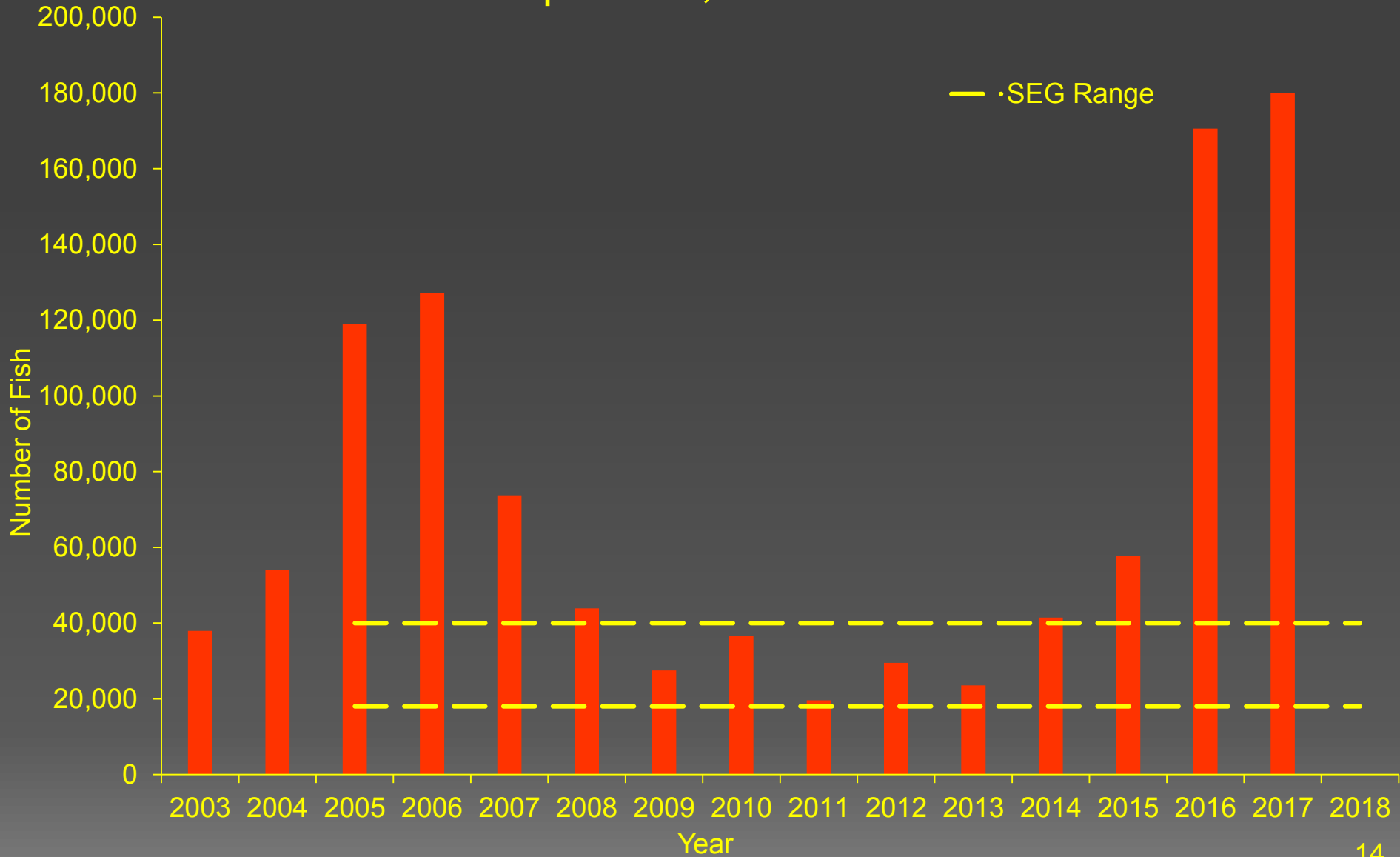
Kanektok River Aerial Survey Escapements, 2003–2018

Year	King	Sockeye
2003	6,206	21,335
2004	28,375	77,780
2005	12,780	95,900
2006		
2007		
2008		
2009		
2010	1,208	16,180
2011		
2012		
2013	2,277	53,002
2014	1,840	136,400
2015	4,919	39,970
2016	5,631	80,160
2017		
2018	4,246	326,200
SEG	3,900–12,000	15,300–41,000

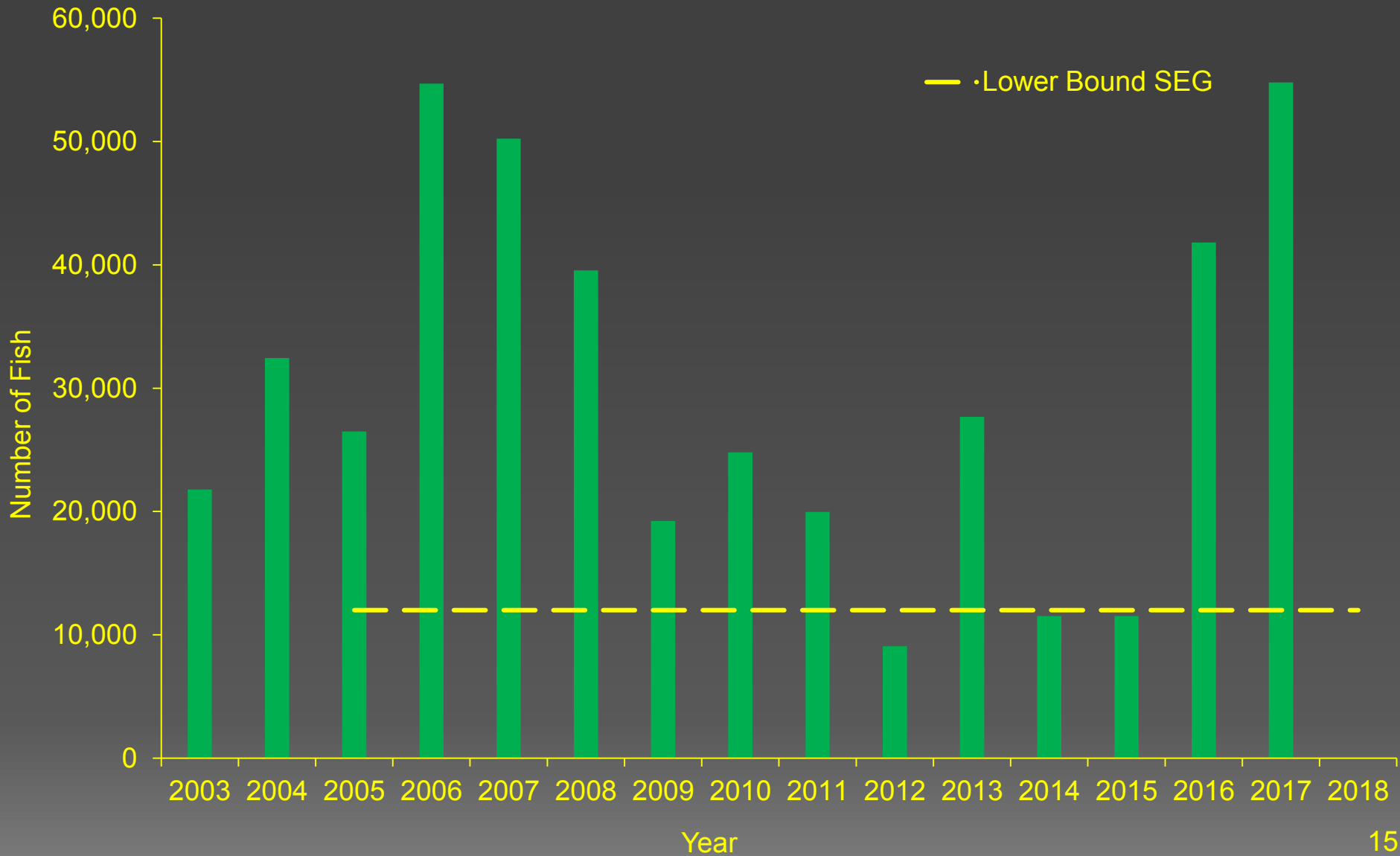
Middle Fork Goodnews River Weir King Salmon Escapement, 2003–2018



Middle Fork Goodnews River Weir Sockeye Salmon Escapement, 2003–2018



Middle Fork Goodnews River Weir Chum Salmon Escapements, 2003–2018



Kuskokwim Area proposals

Gear

- Proposals 105 & 111 – Adjustment to gillnet net mesh size
- Proposal 106 – Allowable distance between set gillnets
- Proposals 107, 108, & 112 – Allow dipnets as legal get type for salmon in the subsistence fishery

Area

- Proposals 110 & 115–117 – Subsistence fishing within non-salmon spawning tributaries
- Proposal 109 – Close subsistence fishing in marine waters

Management Plan

- Proposal 113 – Close subsistence king salmon fishing on June 1
- Proposal 114 – Allow subsistence fishing prior to June 11

Acknowledgements

- Kuskokwim River
 - Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (KRSMWG)
 - National Park Service (NPS)
 - Office of Subsistence Management (OSM)
 - McGrath, Takonta, Nikolai, and Telida (MTNT)
 - Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (YDNWR)
 - Native Village of Napaimute (NVN)
 - Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC)
 - Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC)
 - Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)
- Kuskokwim Bay
 - Togiak National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR)
 - Native Village of Kwinhagak (NVK)

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

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 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 ^a	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

^a All 2015 data are Preliminary.

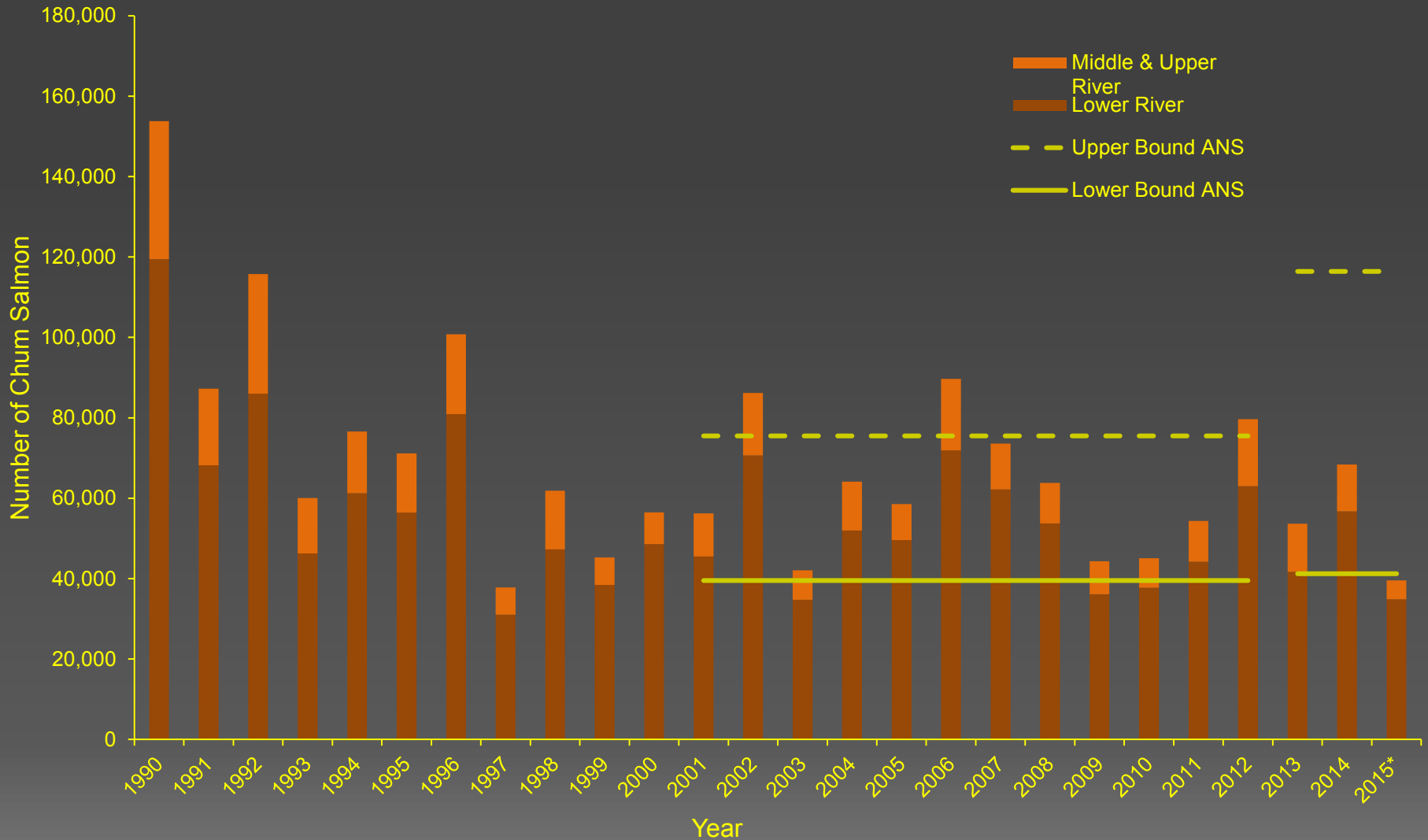
King salmon travel speeds and timing

- 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

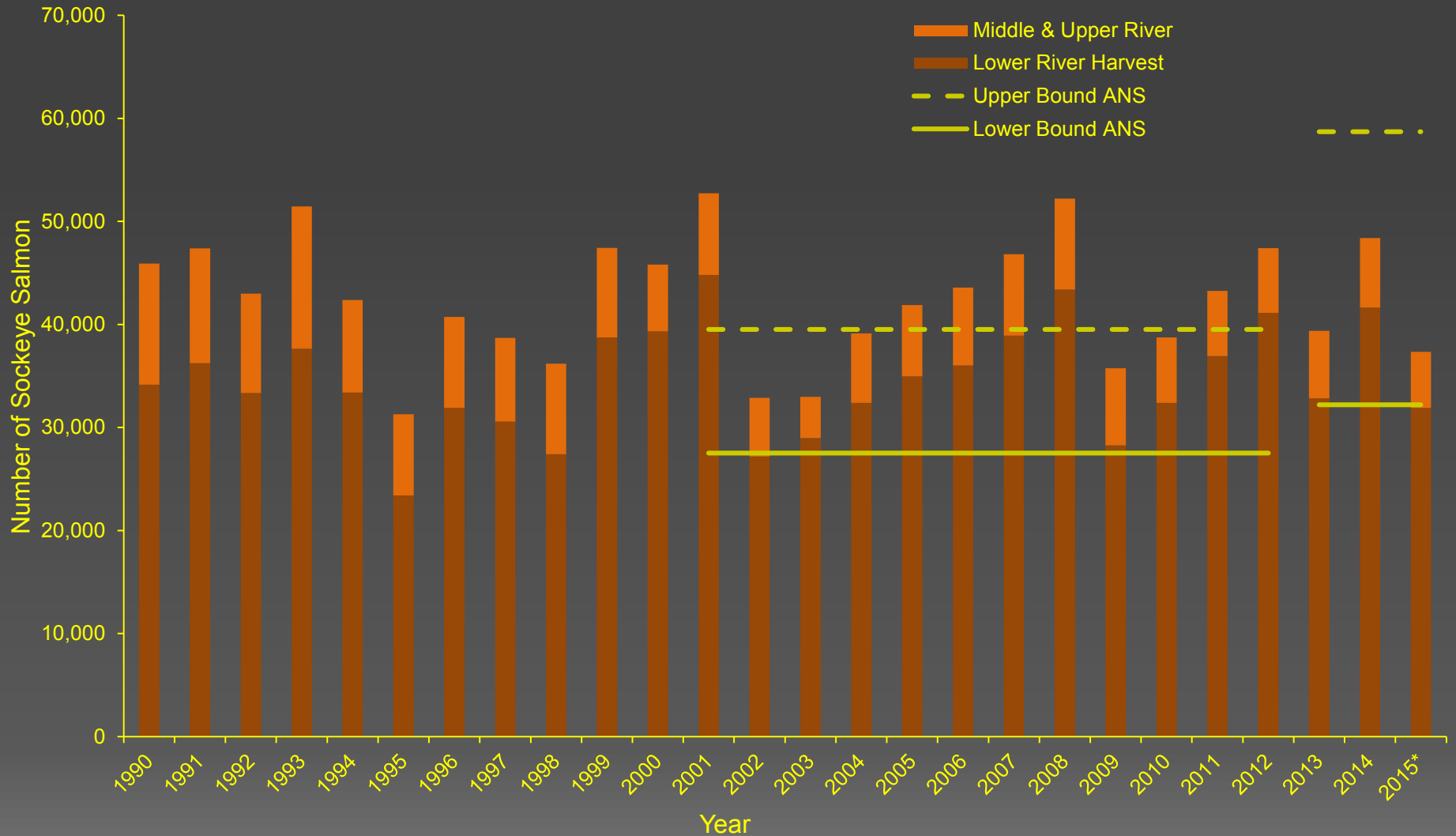
Kuskokwim Management Area



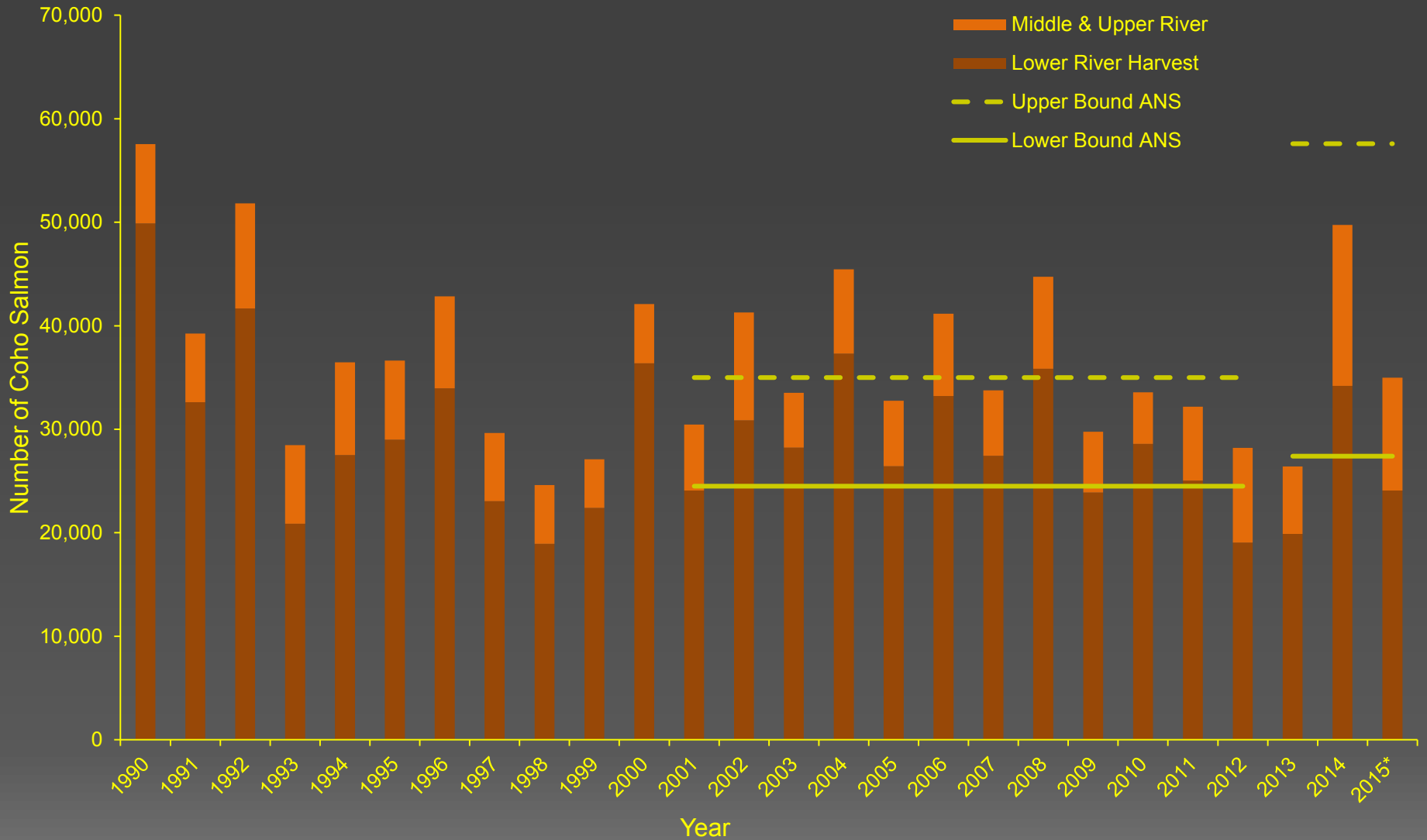
Kuskokwim River Chum Salmon Subsistence Harvest, 1990–2015



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

