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April 7, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Kate Self

SUBJECT: Briefing on Columbia River Basin salmon and steelhead returns for 2025 and forecasts for 2026

BACKGROUND:

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

Summary: Presenters will provide an overview of adult Chinook, coho, and sockeye salmon and steelhead run returns for the Columbia River and expectations for the 2026 fisheries. The presentation will include a retrospective review of the 2025 adult salmon and steelhead returns and an overview of non-treaty and treaty fishery frameworks.

John Cassinelli will provide additional information for the Snake River Basin for 2025 salmon and steelhead returns along with the forecasted returns for 2026, 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 and well as the mainstem Snake River below Hells Canyon Dam.

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 2026; Program planning & Coordination.

More Info:

- [2026 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, hydropower system operations, riverine, ocean and climatic data resources.
<http://www.cbr.washington.edu/dart>

Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead returns, forecasts and fisheries

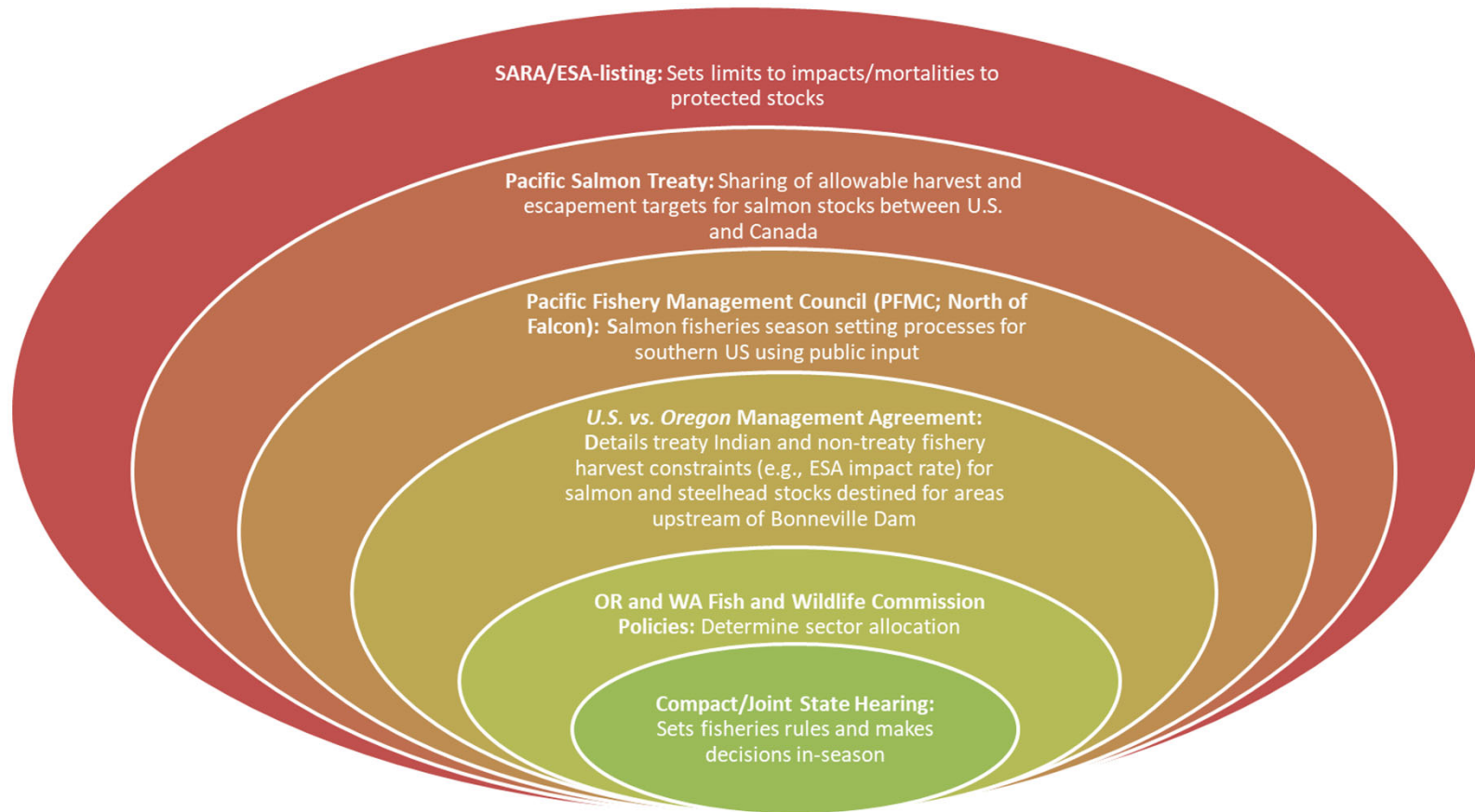
Stuart Ellis, Fisheries Management Department Deputy Manager, CRITFC
Dr. Charlene Hurst, Columbia River Division Manager, WDFW
John Cassinelli, Anadromous Fisheries Manager, IDFG



Northwest Power and Conservation Council
April 14, 2026

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

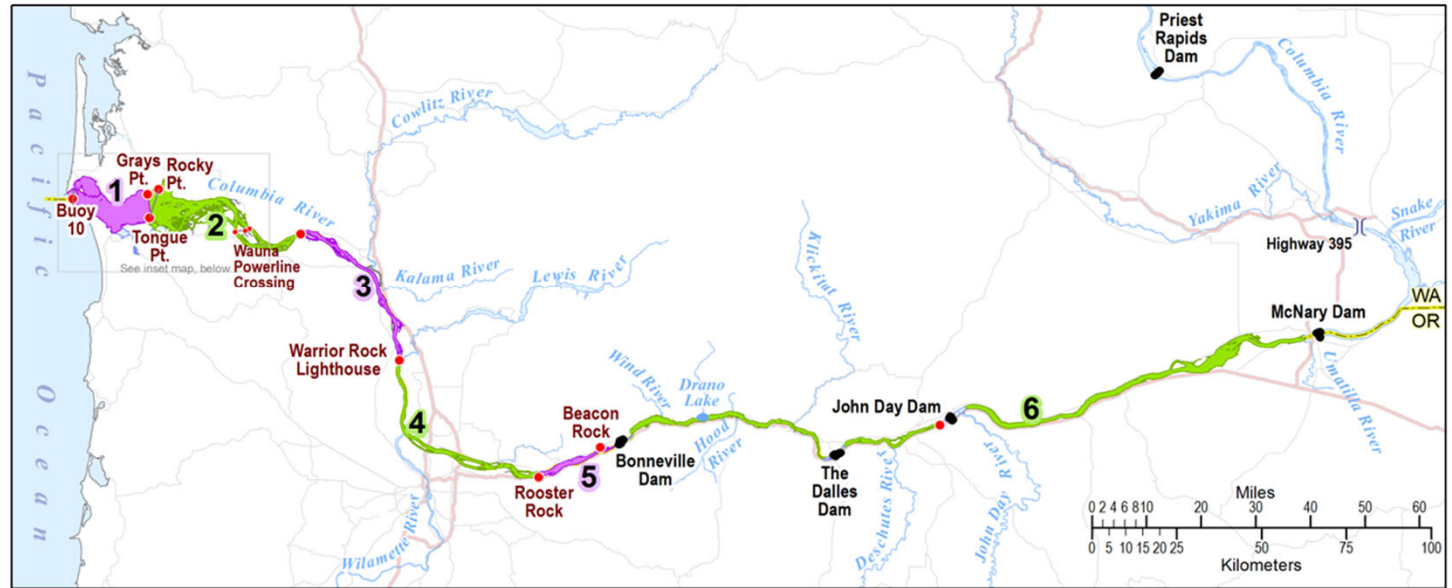
- Some schedules have additional weak stock constraints

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



U.S. v Oregon

Technical Advisory Committee

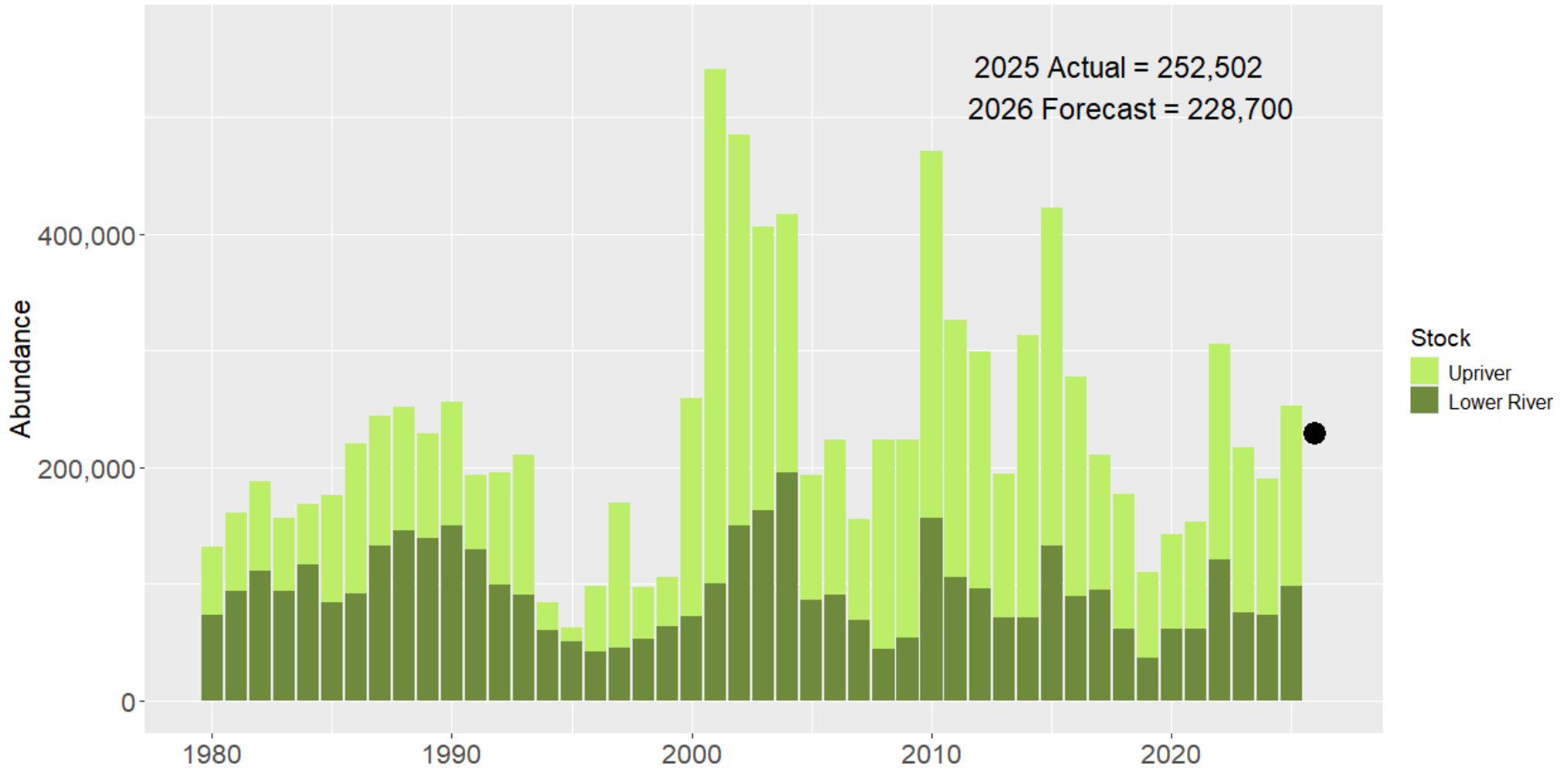
- Consists of staff from federal, tribal and state entities
- TAC 'reconstructs' Columbia River salmon and steelhead returns post season and develops pre-season forecasts.
- TAC reviews salmon and steelhead stock status as the runs progress and provides in-season run size updates.
- In-season updates allow fishery managers to adjust fisheries to remain within harvest constraints
- Data presented here is primarily TAC data
 - Does not include all fish contributing to 5 million fish goal
 - Excludes ocean harvest, except for coho
 - Excludes some species/run components such as chum salmon, winter steelhead, Skamania summer steelhead
 - Coho data is courtesy of the Ocean Production Index Technical Team (OPITT)

2025 Returns and 2026 Forecasts for the Columbia Basin

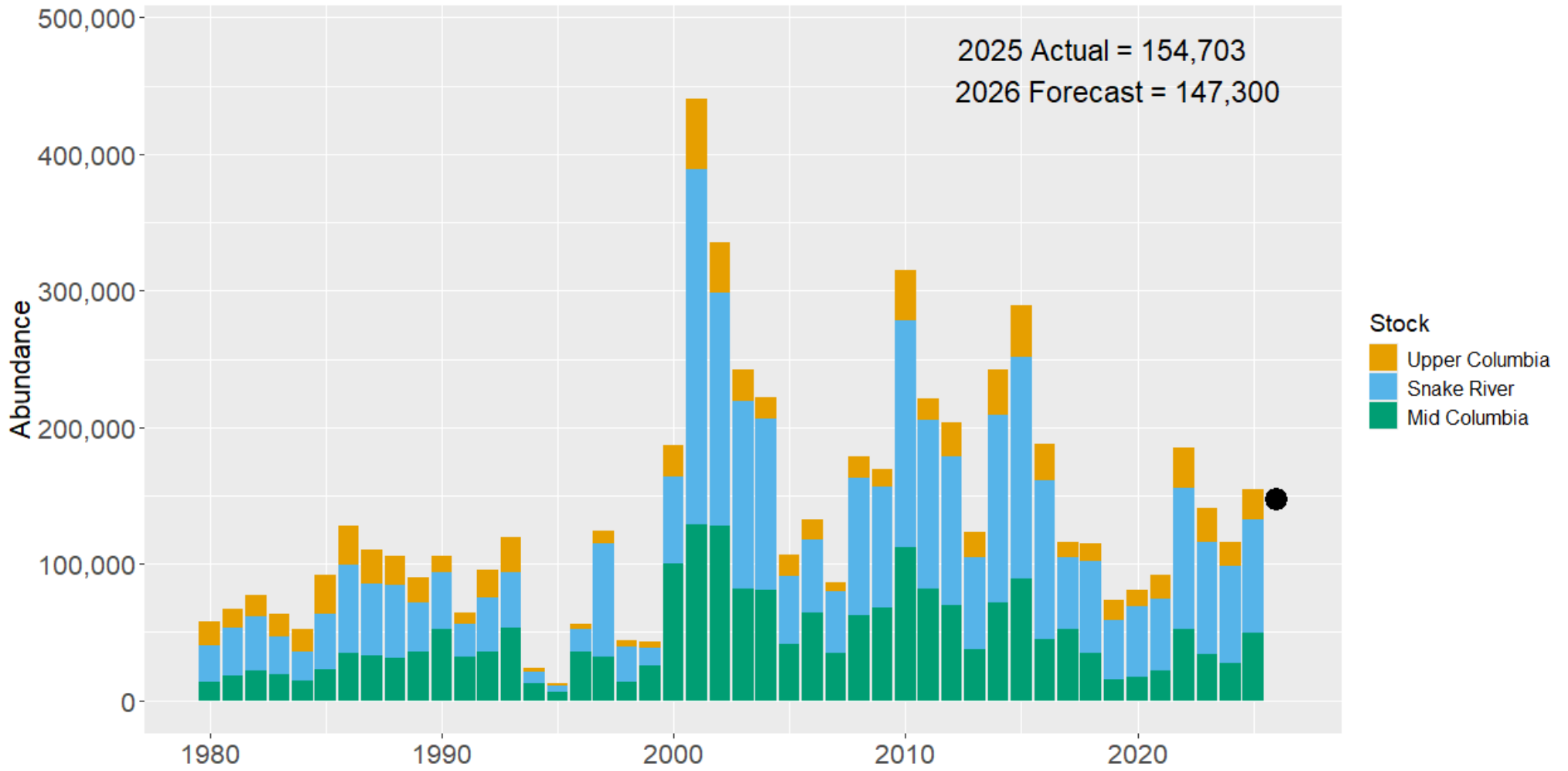
Chinook Salmon



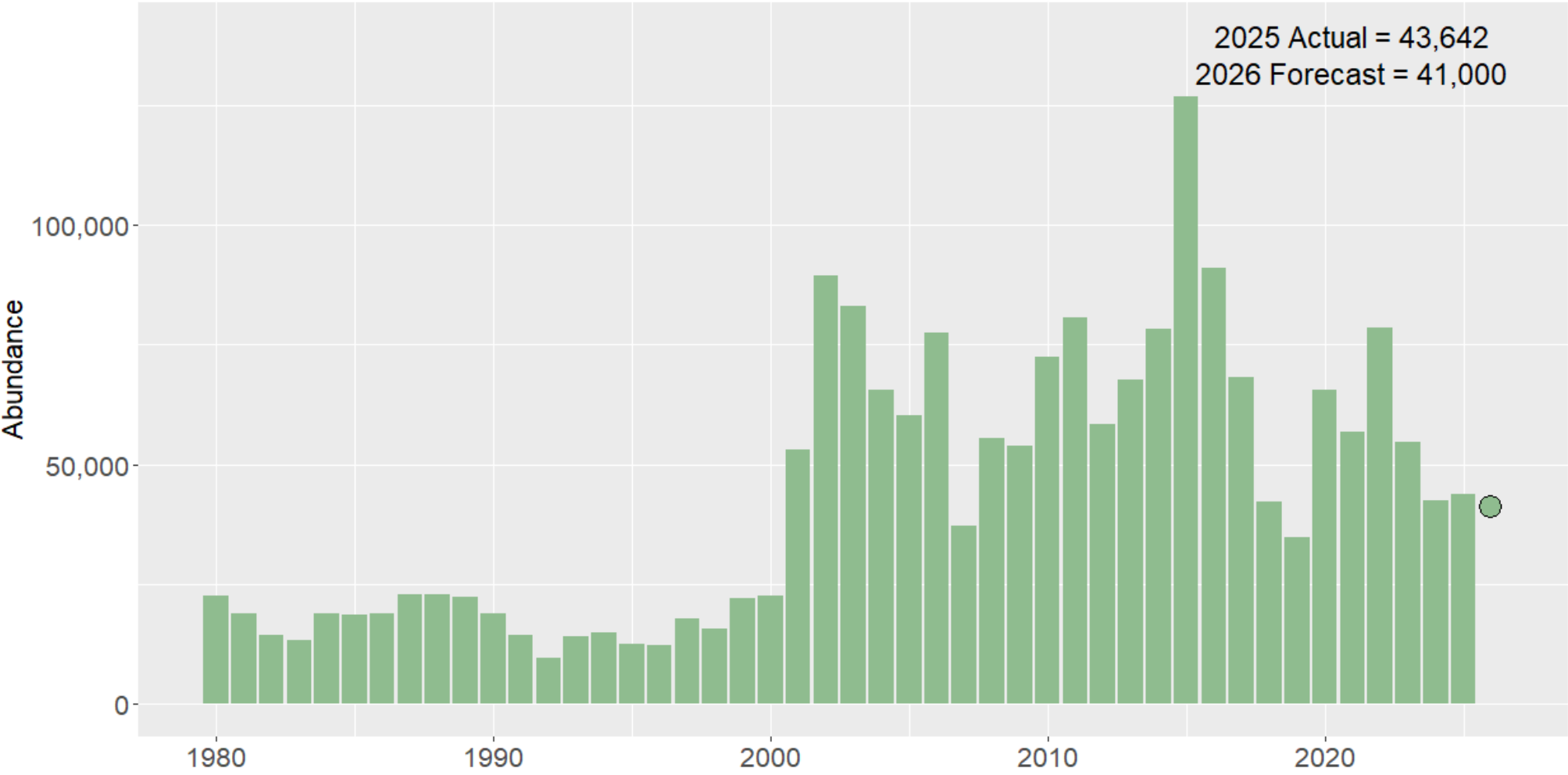
Lower and Upriver Spring Chinook



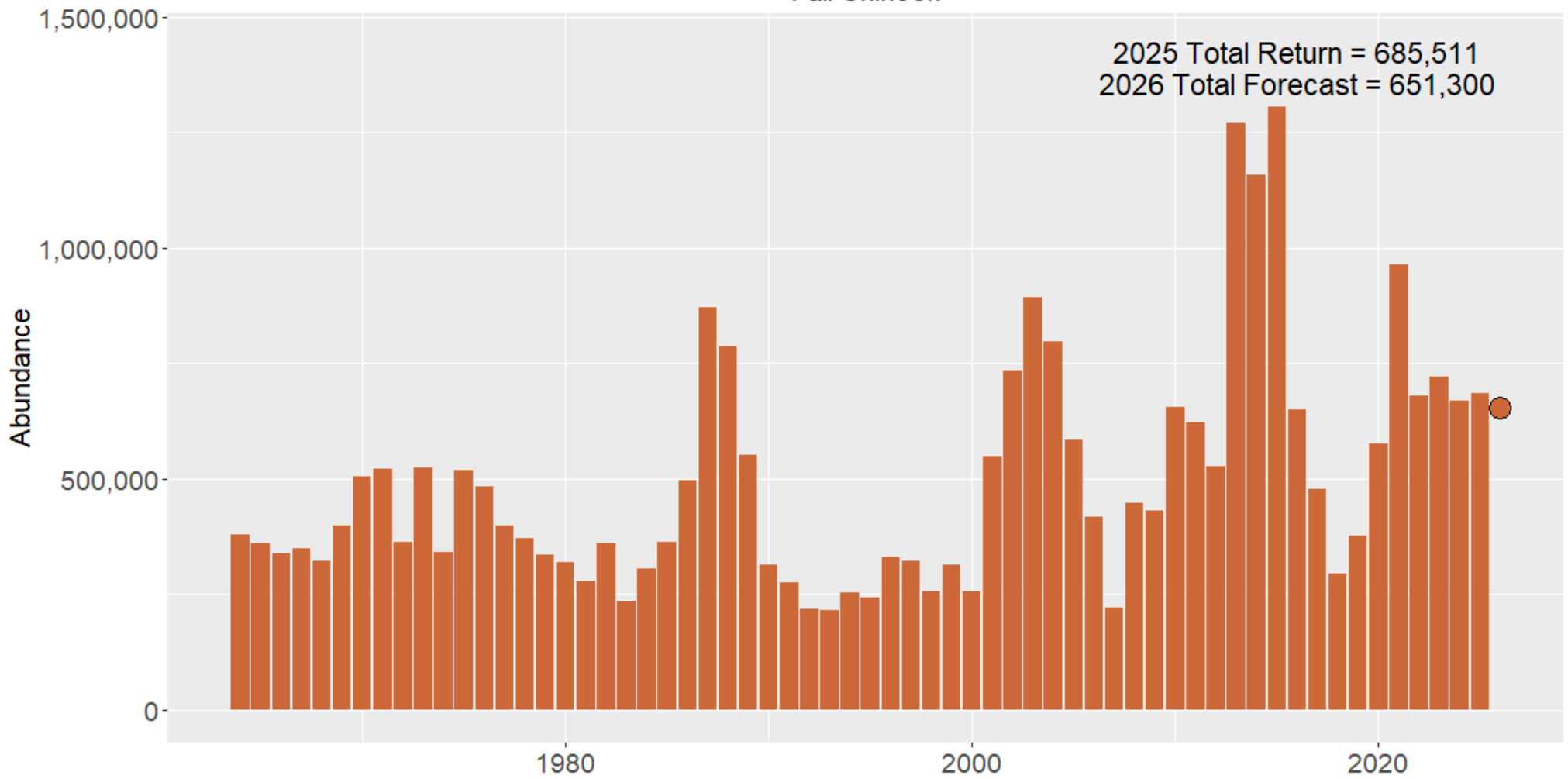
Upriver Spring Chinook



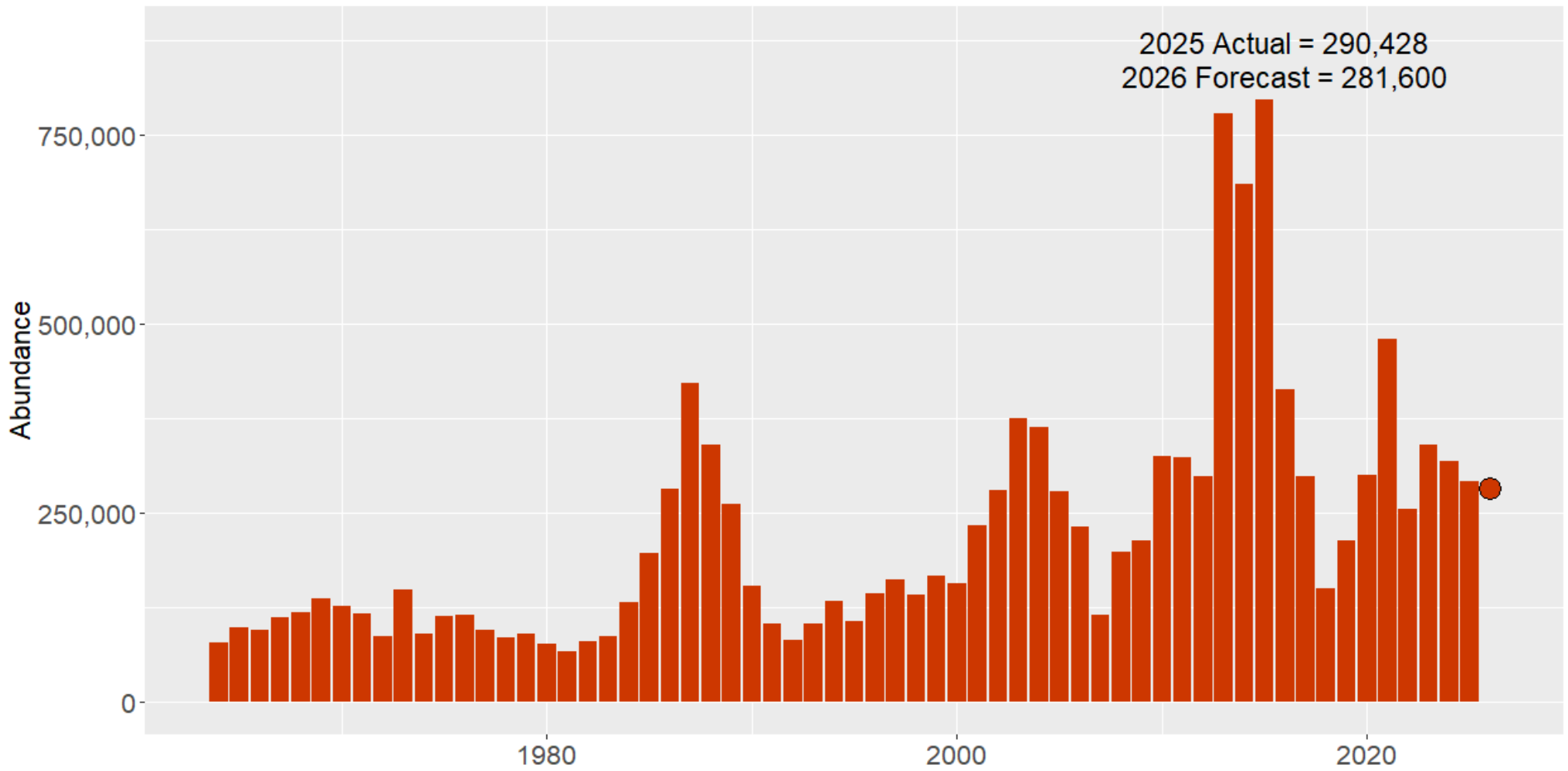
Upper Columbia Summer Chinook



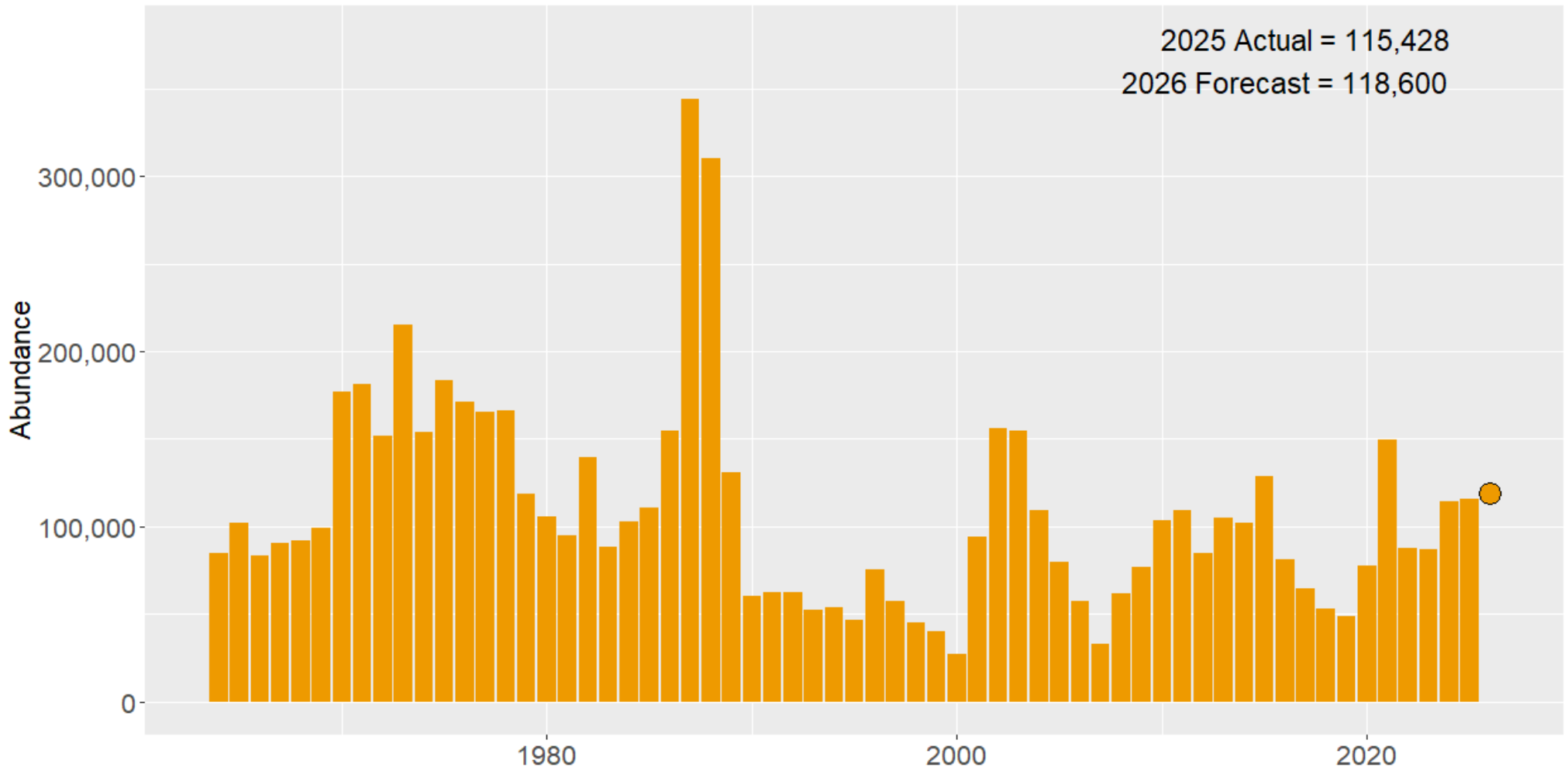
Fall Chinook



Upriver Bright Fall Chinook



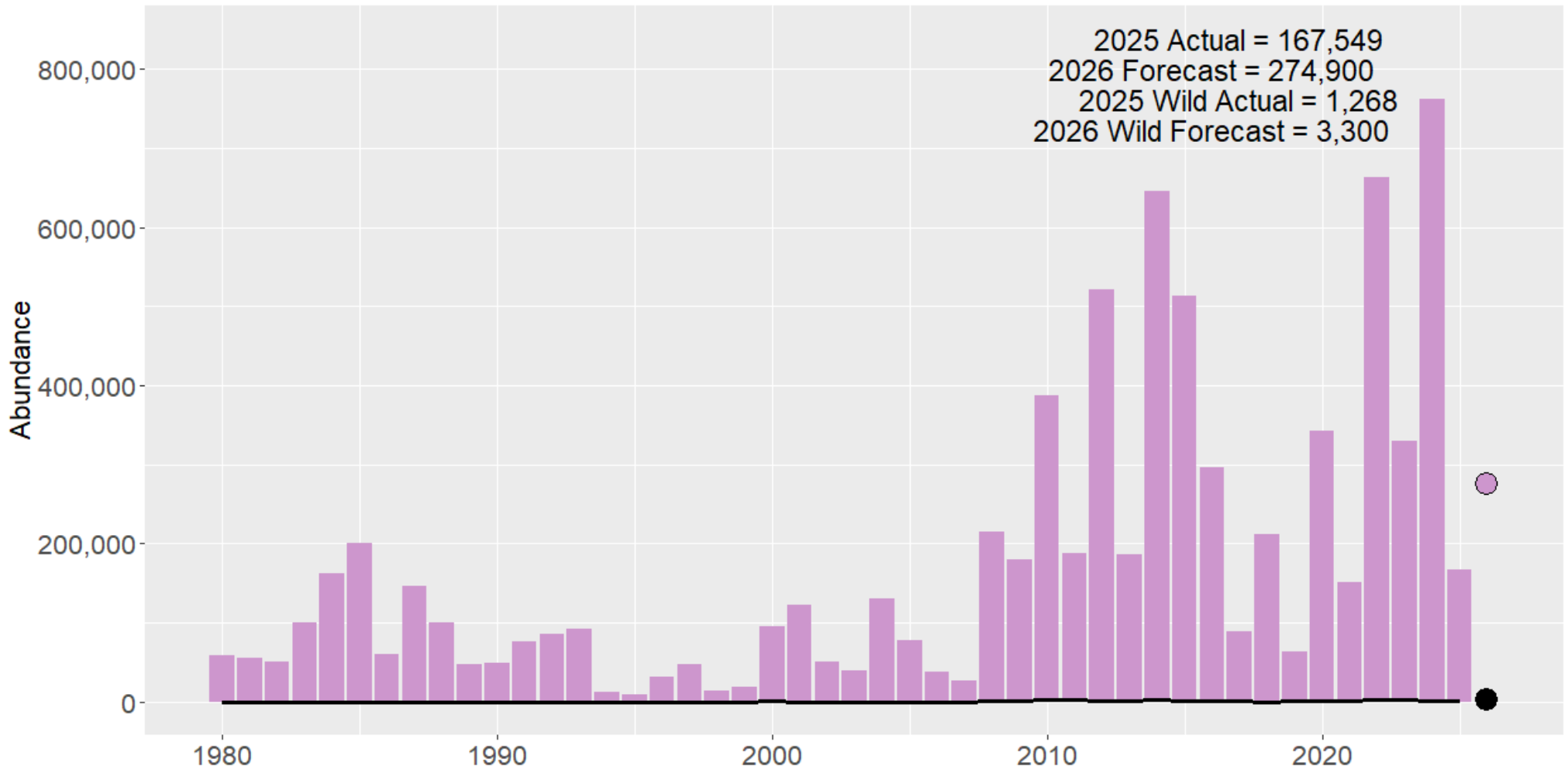
LRH Fall Chinook



Sockeye



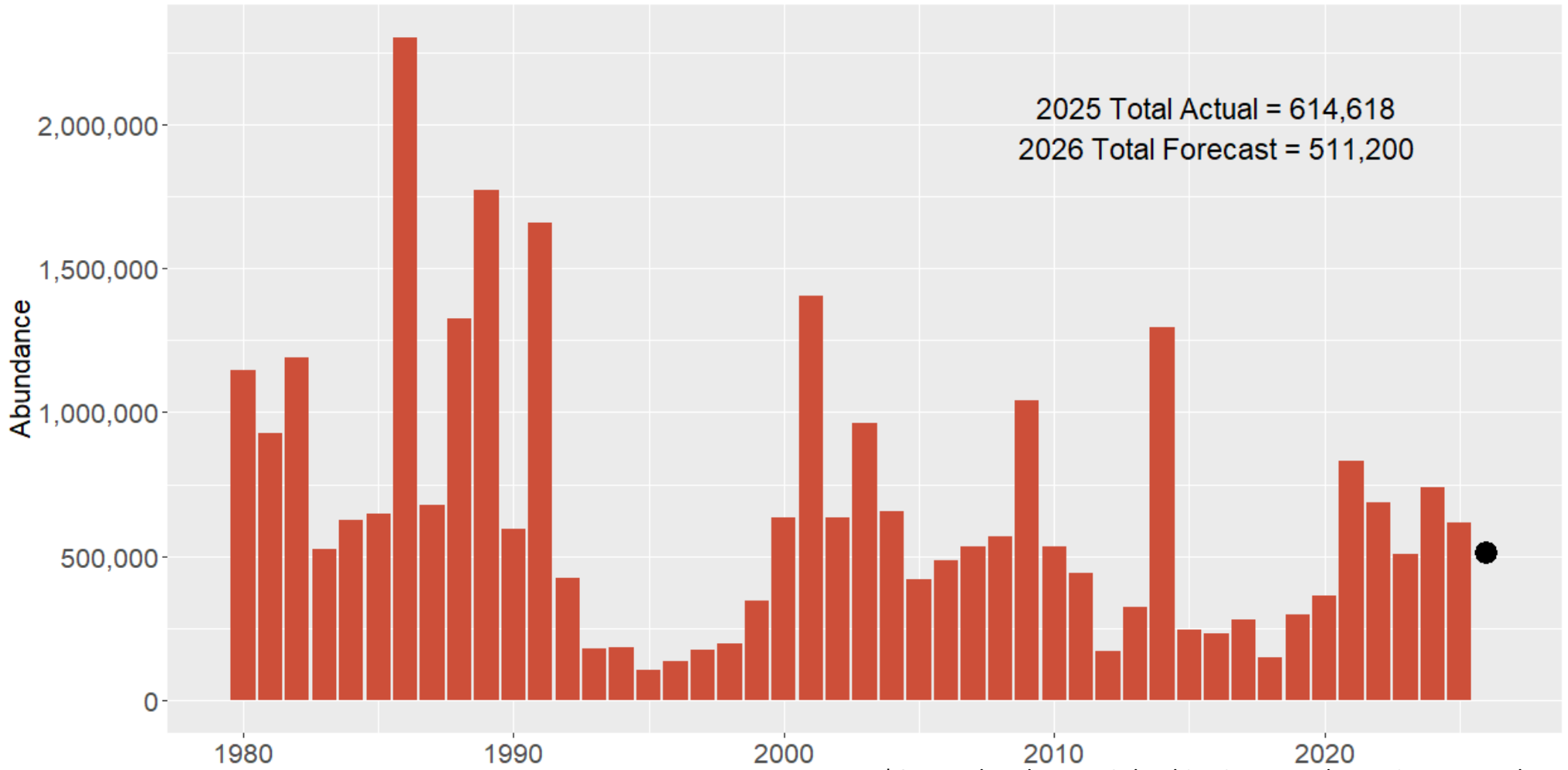
Columbia River Sockeye



Coho



Columbia River Coho - ocean abundance *

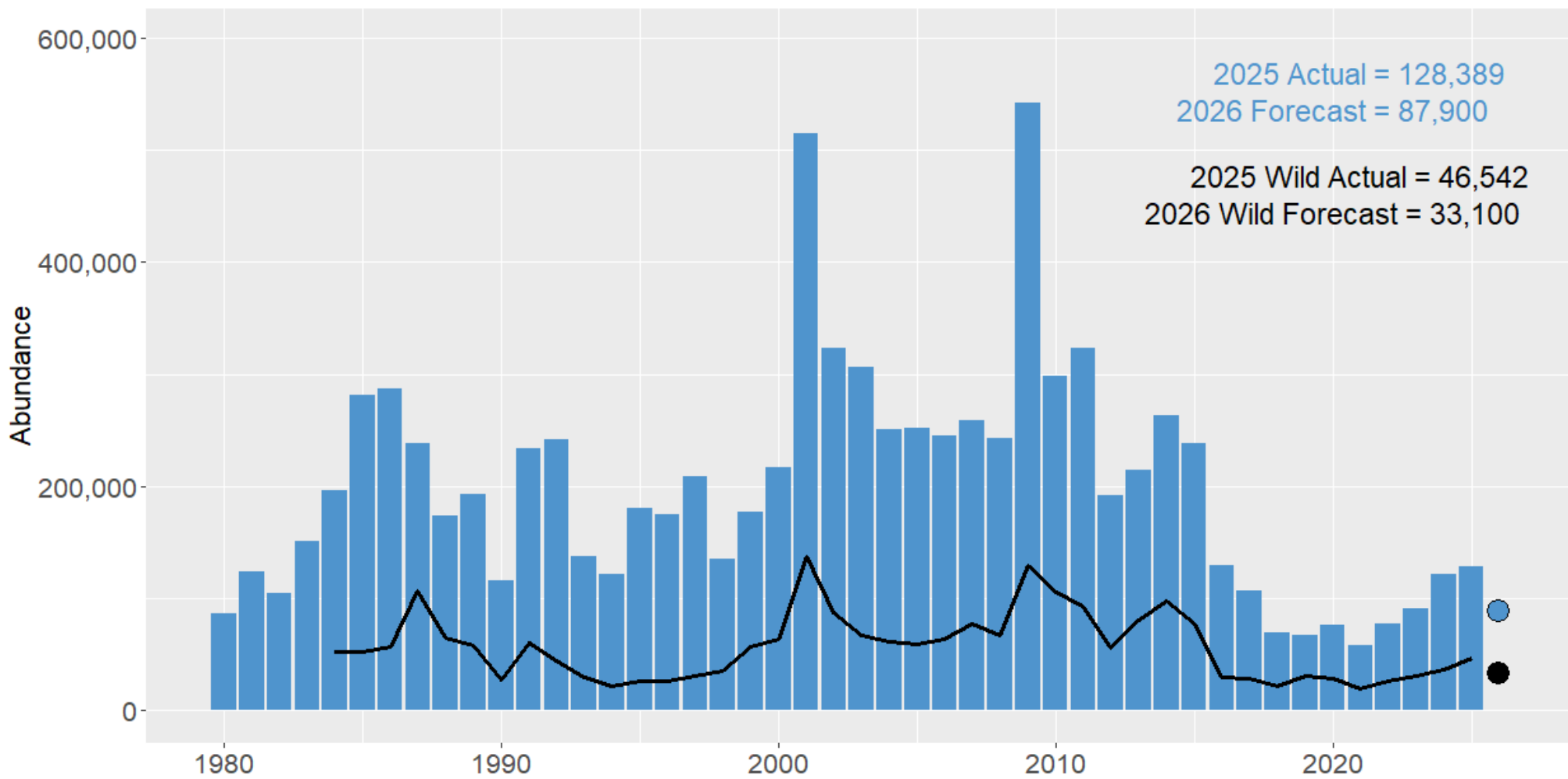


*Ocean abundance = Columbia River Mouth run size + ocean harvest

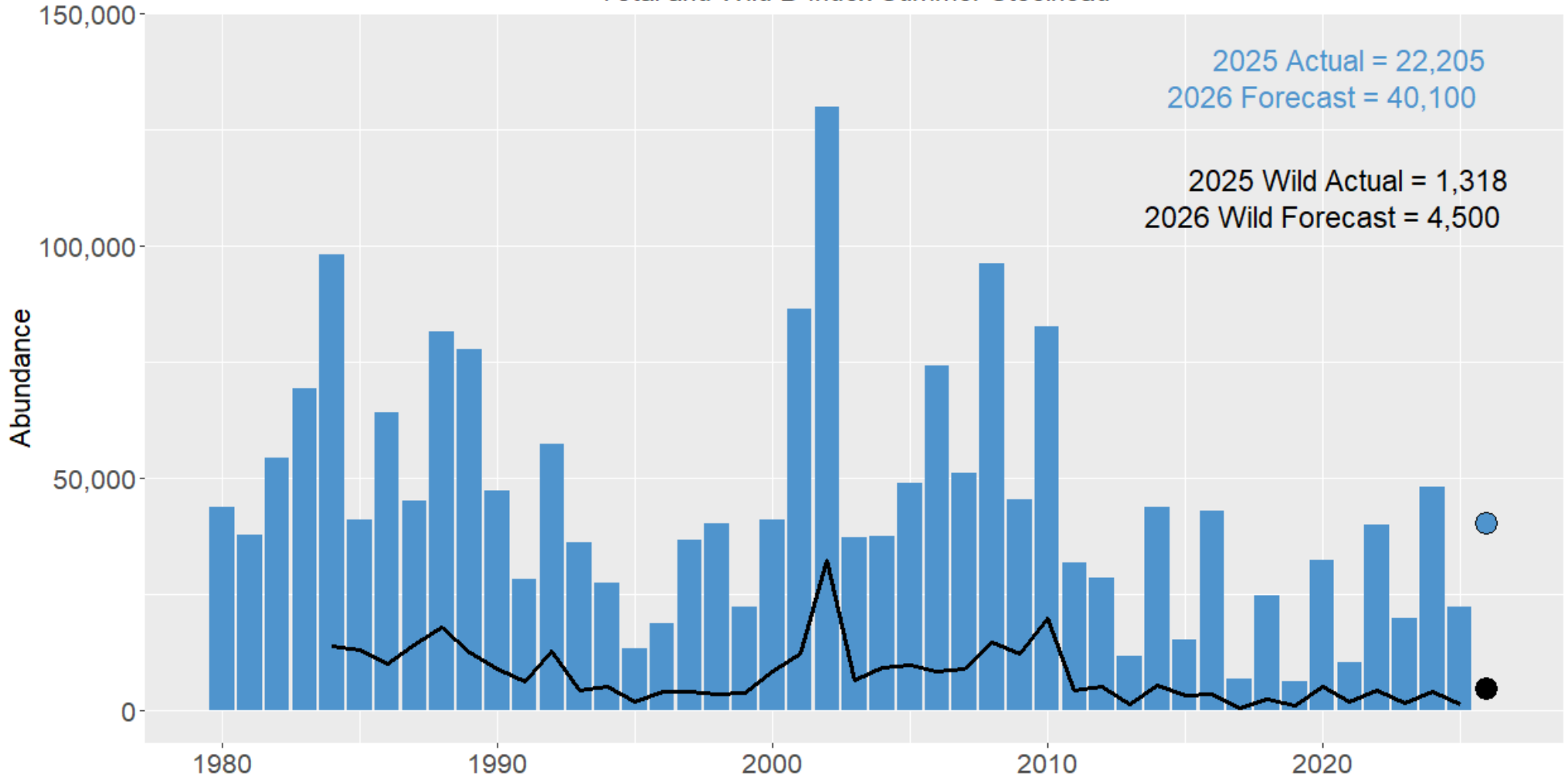
Steelhead



Total and Wild A-Index Summer Steelhead

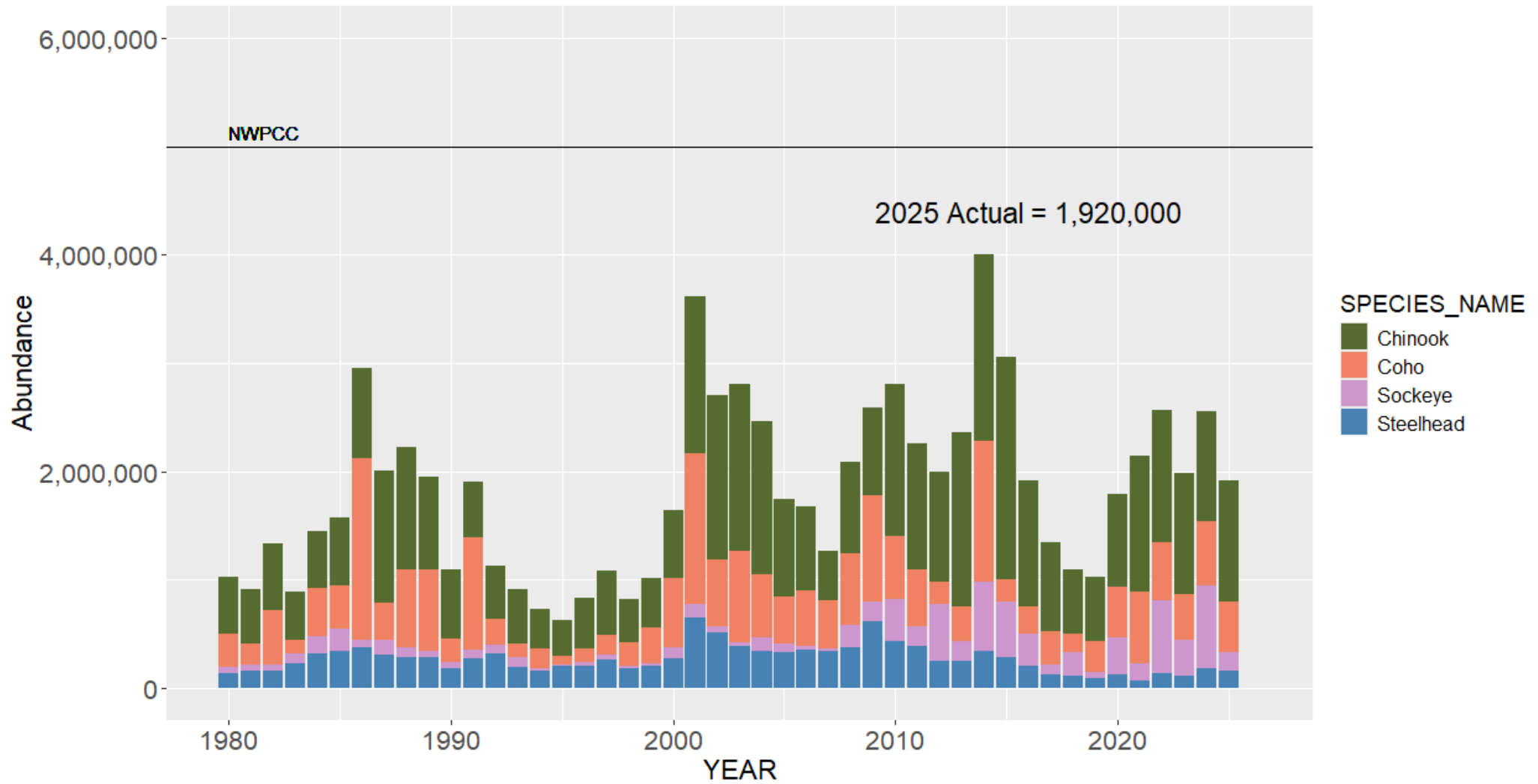


Total and Wild B-Index Summer Steelhead

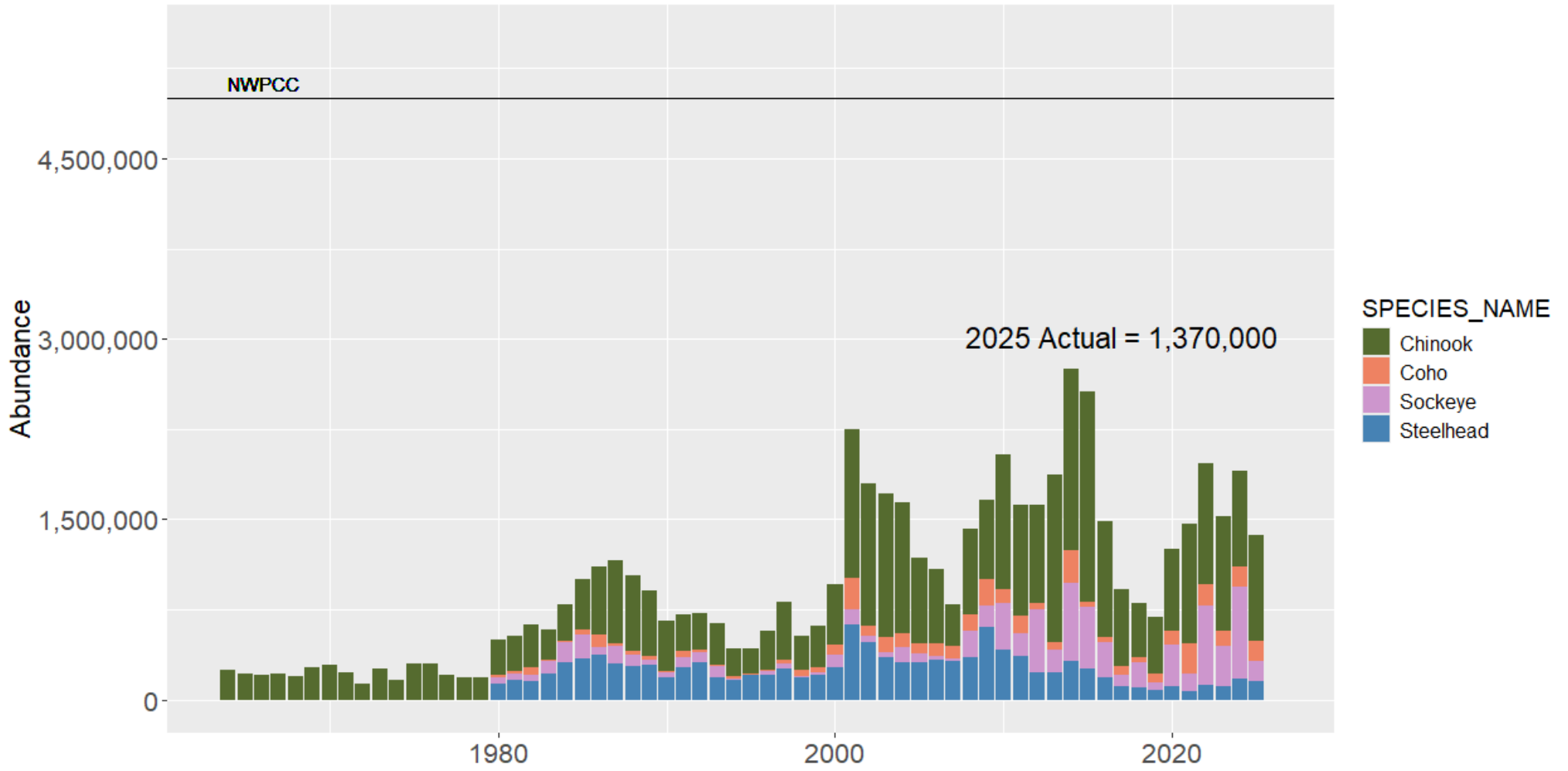


Total salmonid returns to the Columbia River

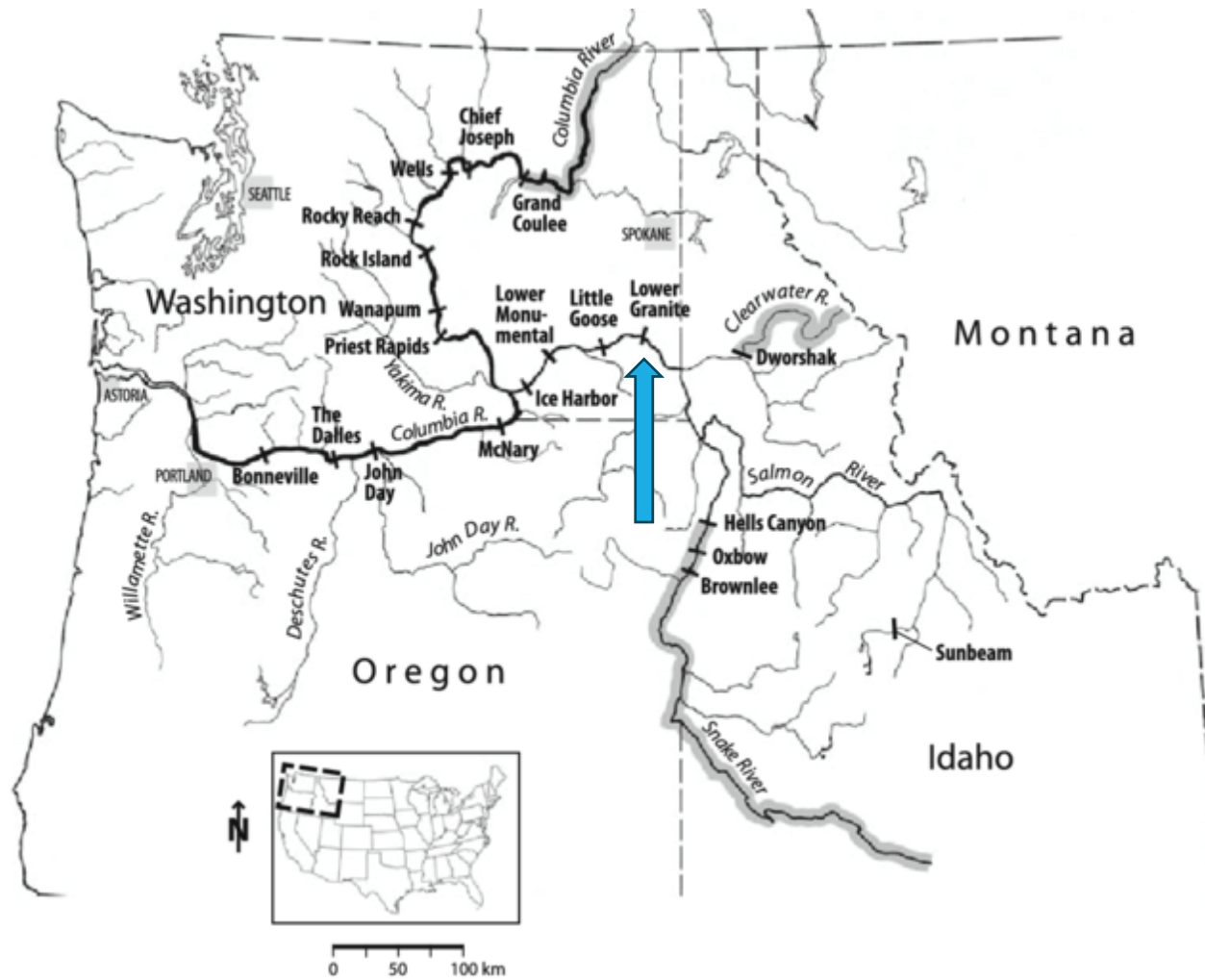
Columbia River Salmonids



Upriver Salmonids



2025 Returns and 2026 Forecasts for the Snake River Basin



Snake River Fishery Management Framework for Treaty and Non-Treaty Fisheries

Above LGD fisheries managed by states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho and Nez Perce, Umatilla, and Shoshone-Bannock tribes (depending on location)

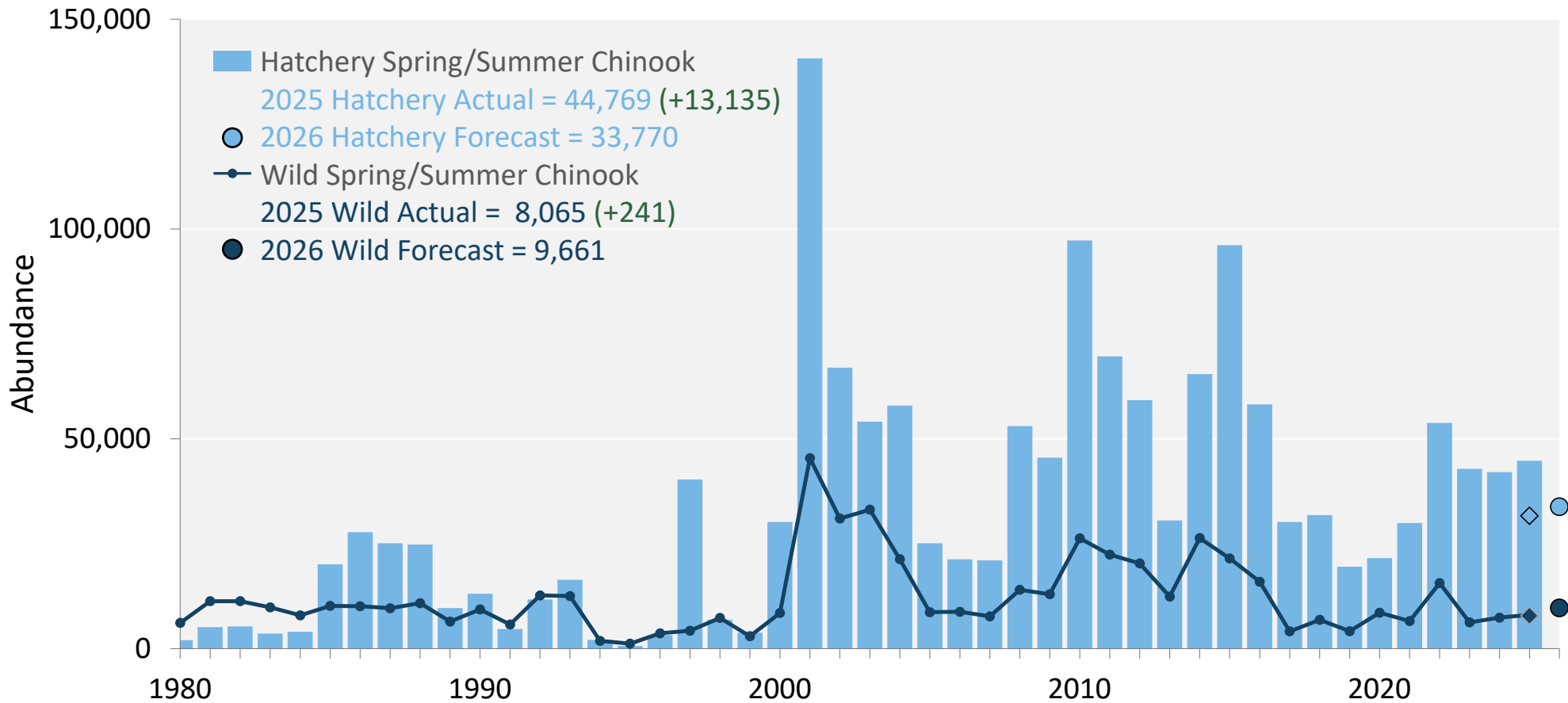
Mark-selective sport fisheries for adipose clipped spring/summer Chinook and steelhead, tribal fisheries are mixed

Fish above broodstock needs are split 50:50 between state and tribal harvest shares

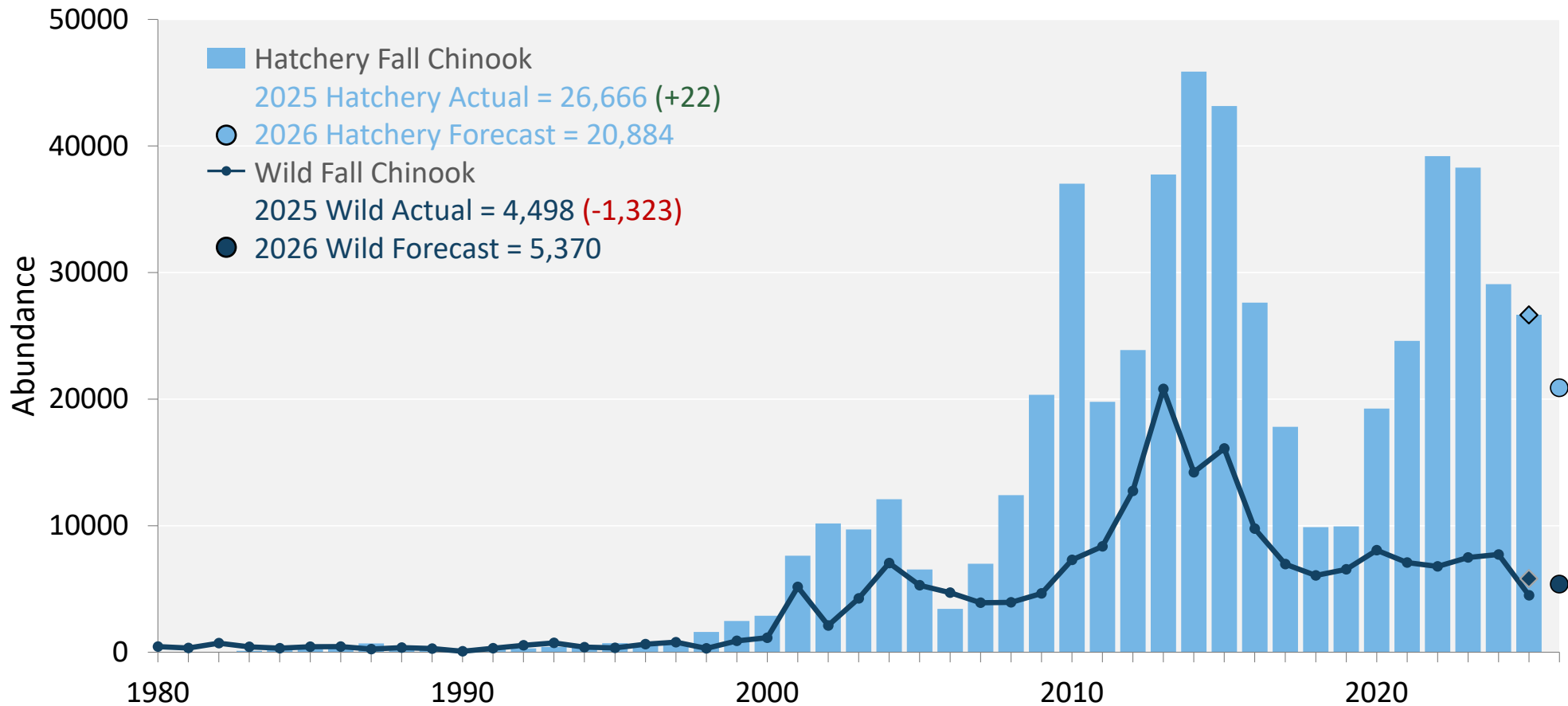
Weekly coordination calls between all parties to update:

- In-season run updates
- Broodstock collection progress
- Harvest by party

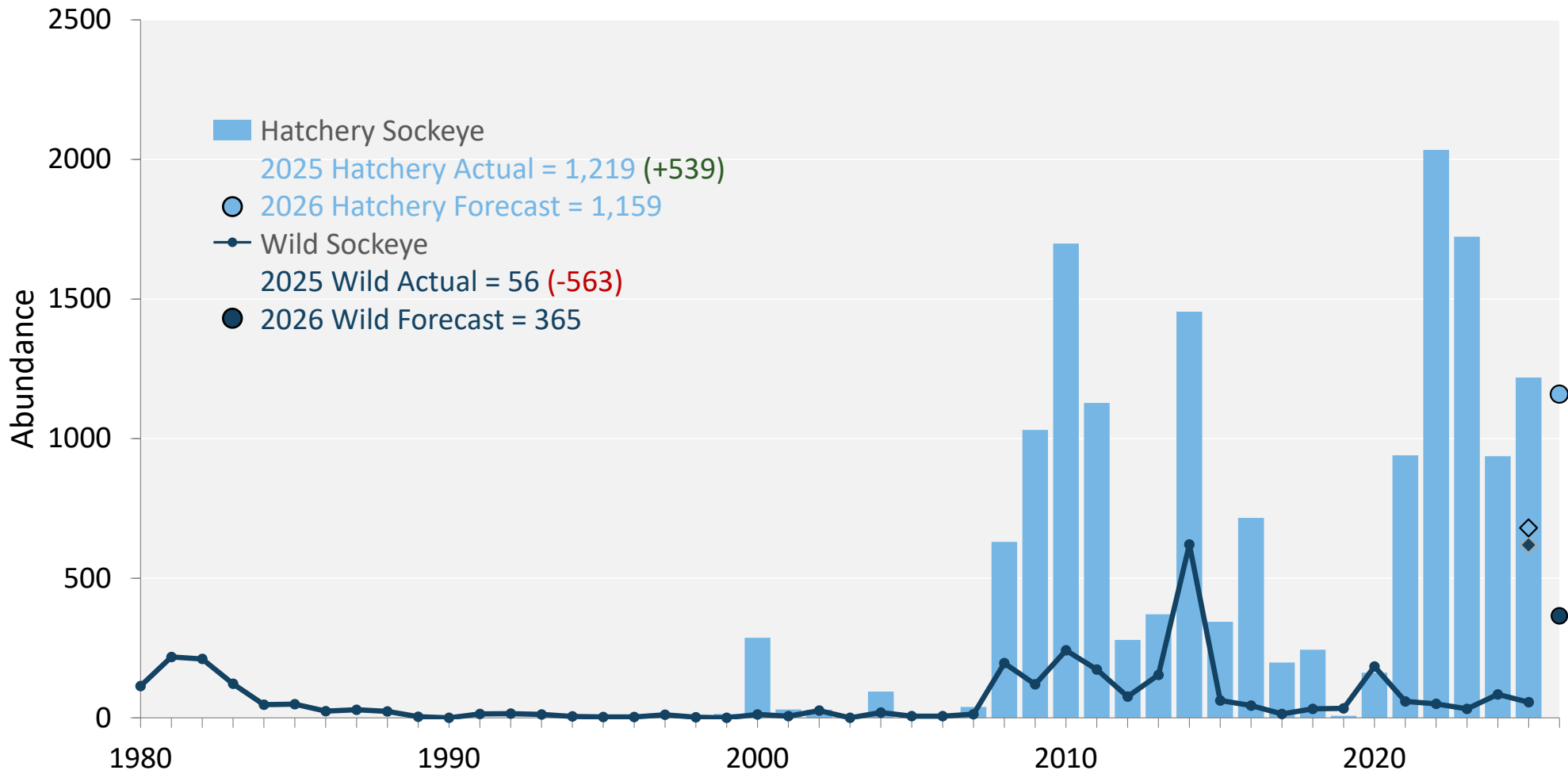
Snake River spring/summer Chinook salmon at Lower Granite Dam



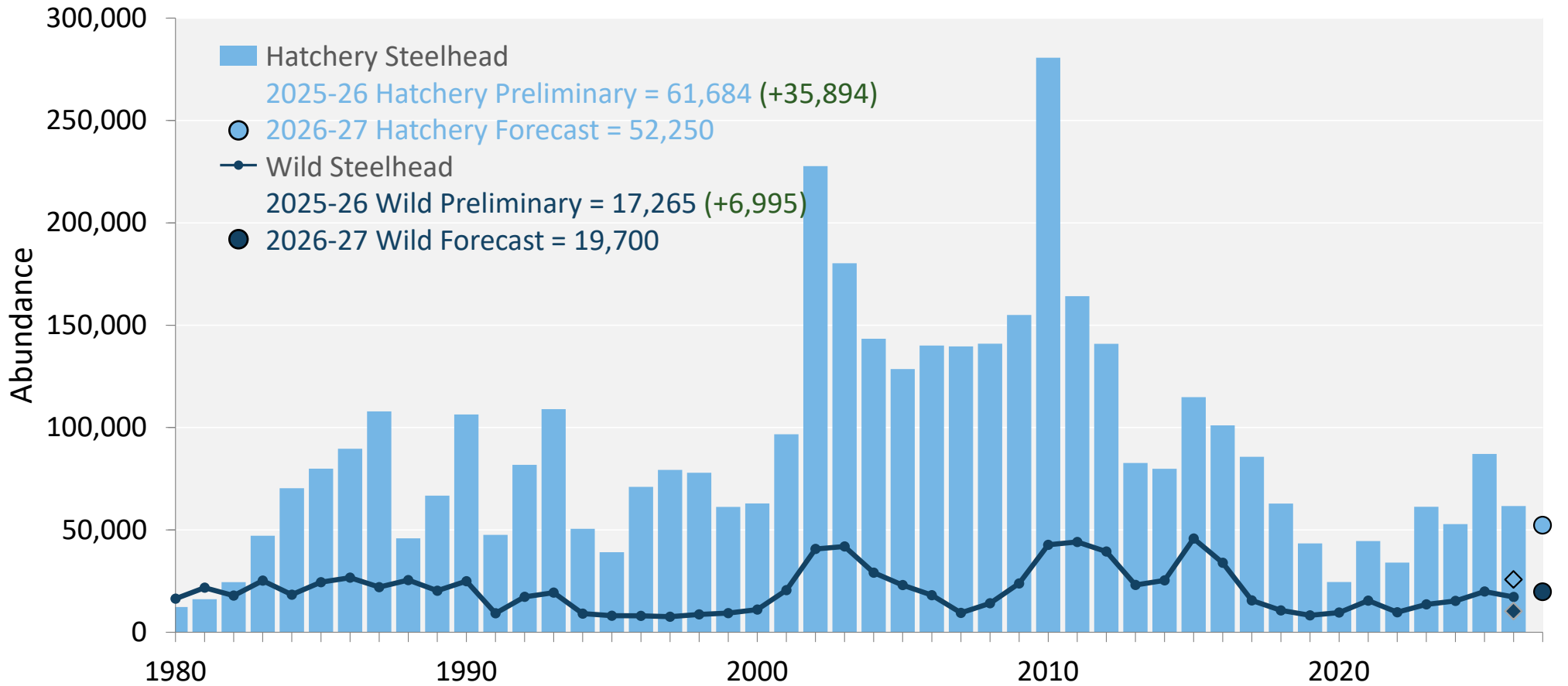
Snake River fall Chinook Salmon at Lower Granite Dam



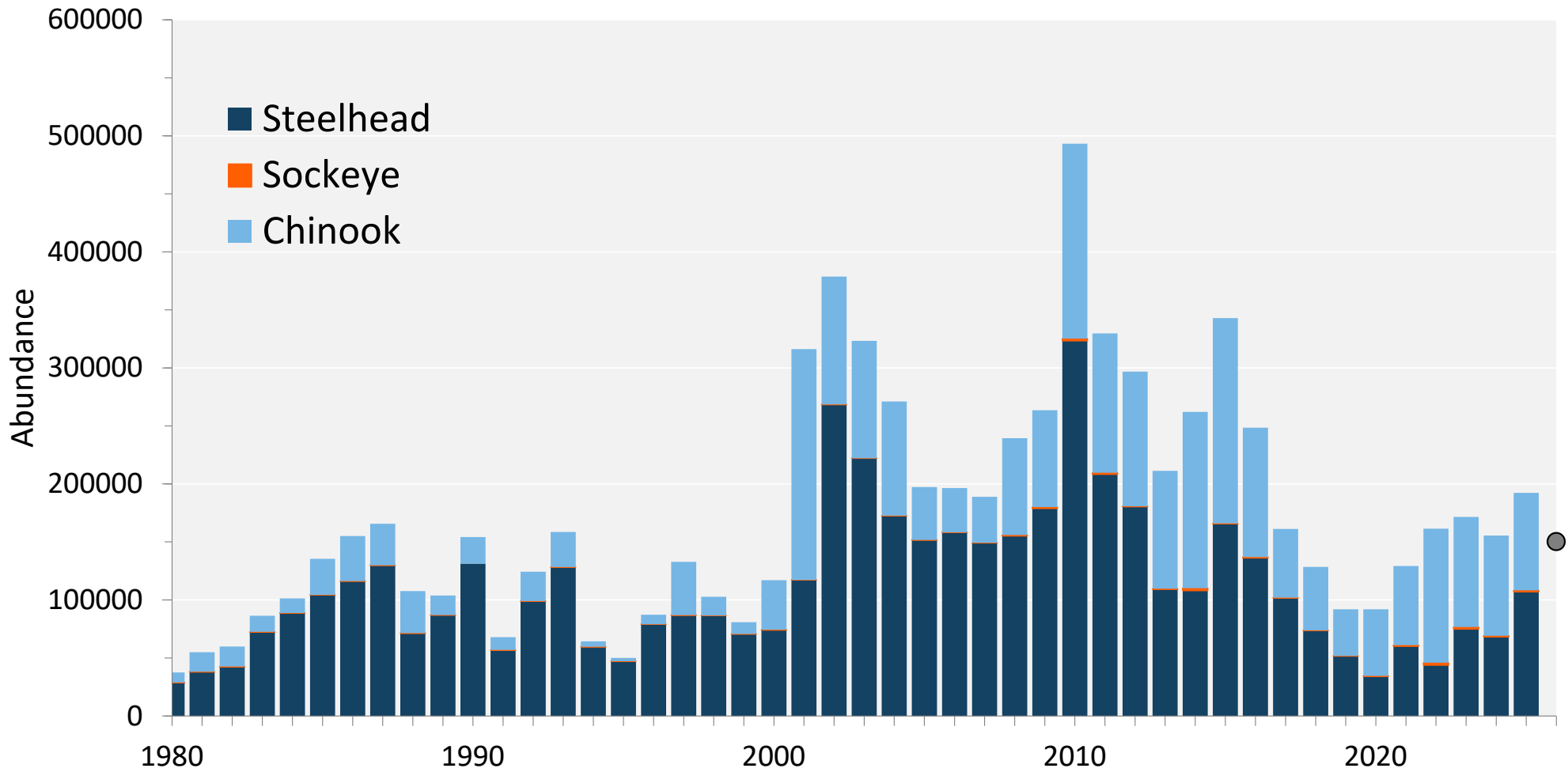
Snake River Sockeye salmon at Lower Granite Dam



Snake River Steelhead at Lower Granite Dam



Salmonids at Lower Granite Dam



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 \(state.or.us\)](#)