



Trends in Harvest and Escapement for Southeast Alaska Pink and Chum Salmon Stocks



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Abundance of Pink and Chum Salmon

Annual commercial harvests of pink and chum salmon in Southeast Alaska increased dramatically in the 1980s and reached their highest levels in the 1990s: pink salmon harvests averaged 49 million, and chum salmon harvests averaged 11 million, including peak harvests of 16 million chums in 1996 and 78 million pinks in 1999. Nearly all of the pink salmon harvested in Southeast Alaska are of wild origin: hatchery-produced pink salmon contributed an average of only 3% of the annual harvest since the late 1970s. In contrast, however, the harvest of chum salmon has been composed primarily of hatchery fish (average 73% over the last 10 years).

Estimated harvests of wild chum salmon did not rebound to the same degree as pink salmon in the 1980s and 1990s, and have recently declined to levels similar to those of the 1970s.

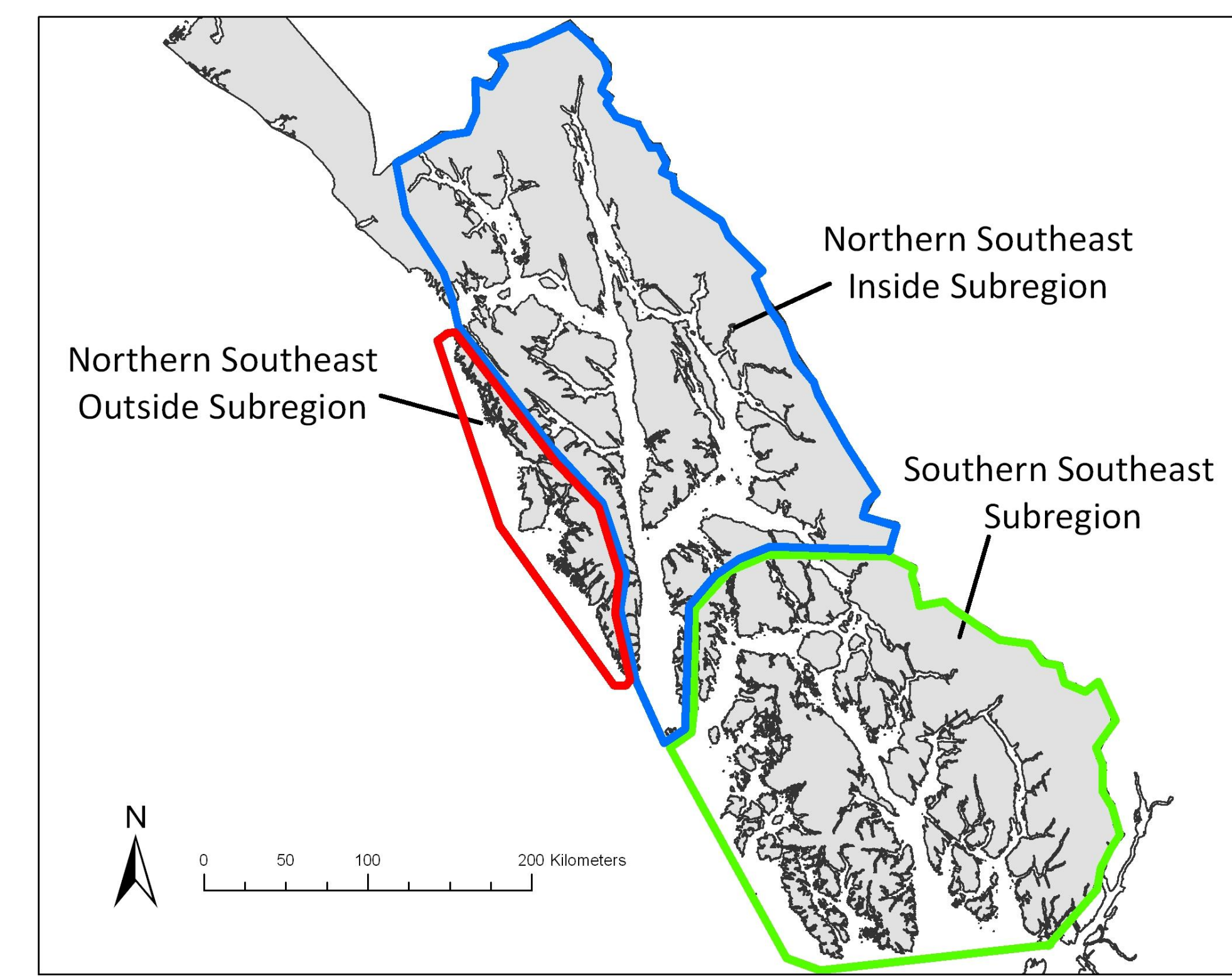
Pink salmon harvests have also declined over the most recent 10 years, from an average of 49 million per year in the 1990s, to an average of 40 million fish per year since 2001, but remain at historically high levels. The decline in overall pink salmon harvest during the past decade was due primarily to very poor even-year runs in 2006 and 2008, and a below average run in 2010.

Pink salmon escapements in all three subregions increased dramatically from low levels in the 1960s and 1970s and have generally remained at high levels since the mid-to-late 1980s; the notable exception was a very poor escapement to the Northern Southeast Inside Subregion in 2008.

Escapement indices for chum salmon increased in the late 1980s and 1990s and remained stable through the mid-2000s, but have recently dropped to low levels similar to those of the 1970s. (Preliminary 2011 escapement index value for southern Southeast Alaska is well above average.)

Escapement Indices

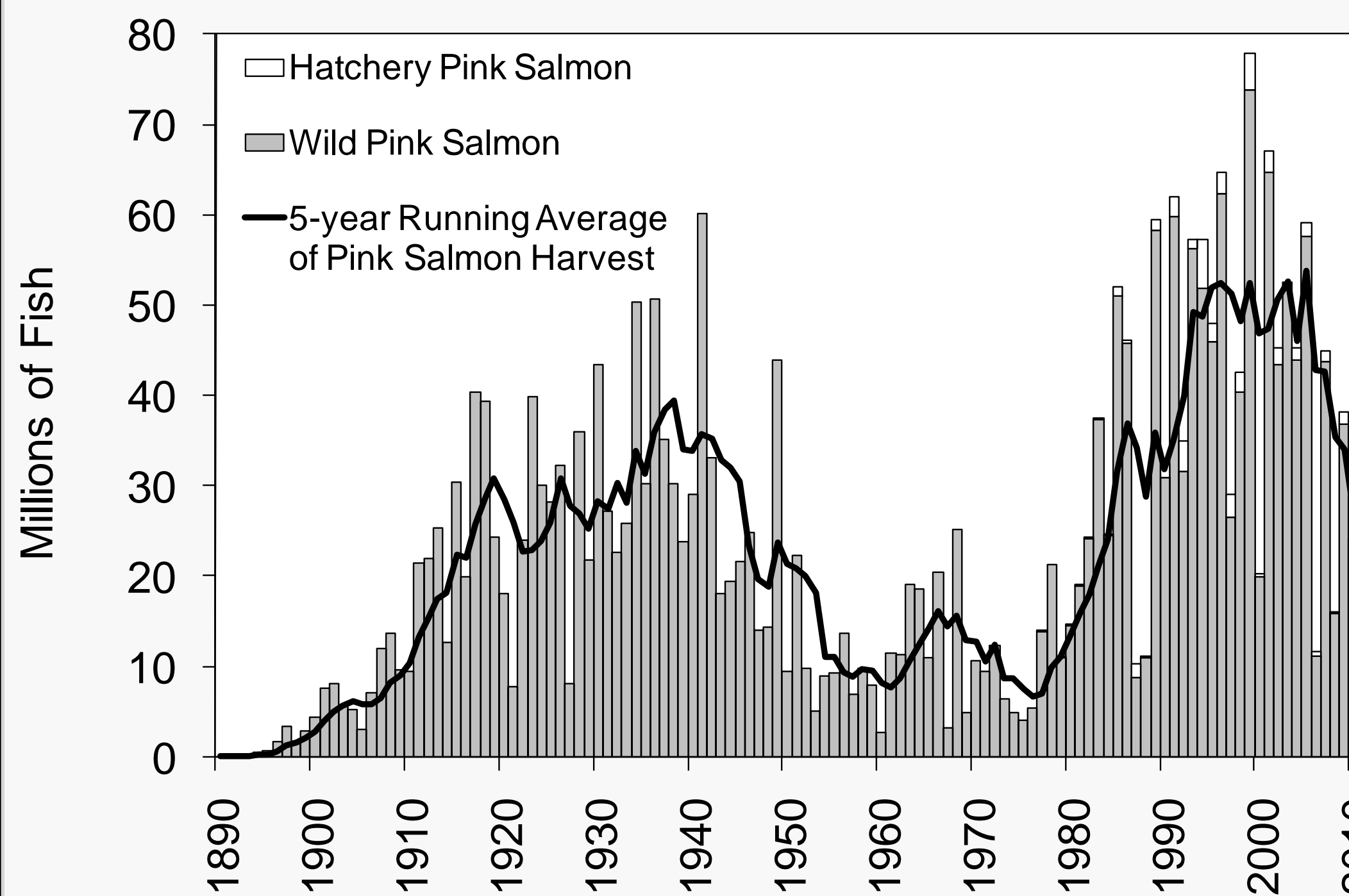
The Alaska Department of Fish and Game maintains escapement indices for aggregates of pink and chum salmon runs in three broad subregions in Southeast Alaska: Southern Southeast Subregion, Northern Southeast Inside Subregion, and Northern Southeast Outside Subregion. Escapement indices are based on peak aerial survey estimates and do not provide estimates of total escapement, but rather an index of abundance useful for assessing trends.



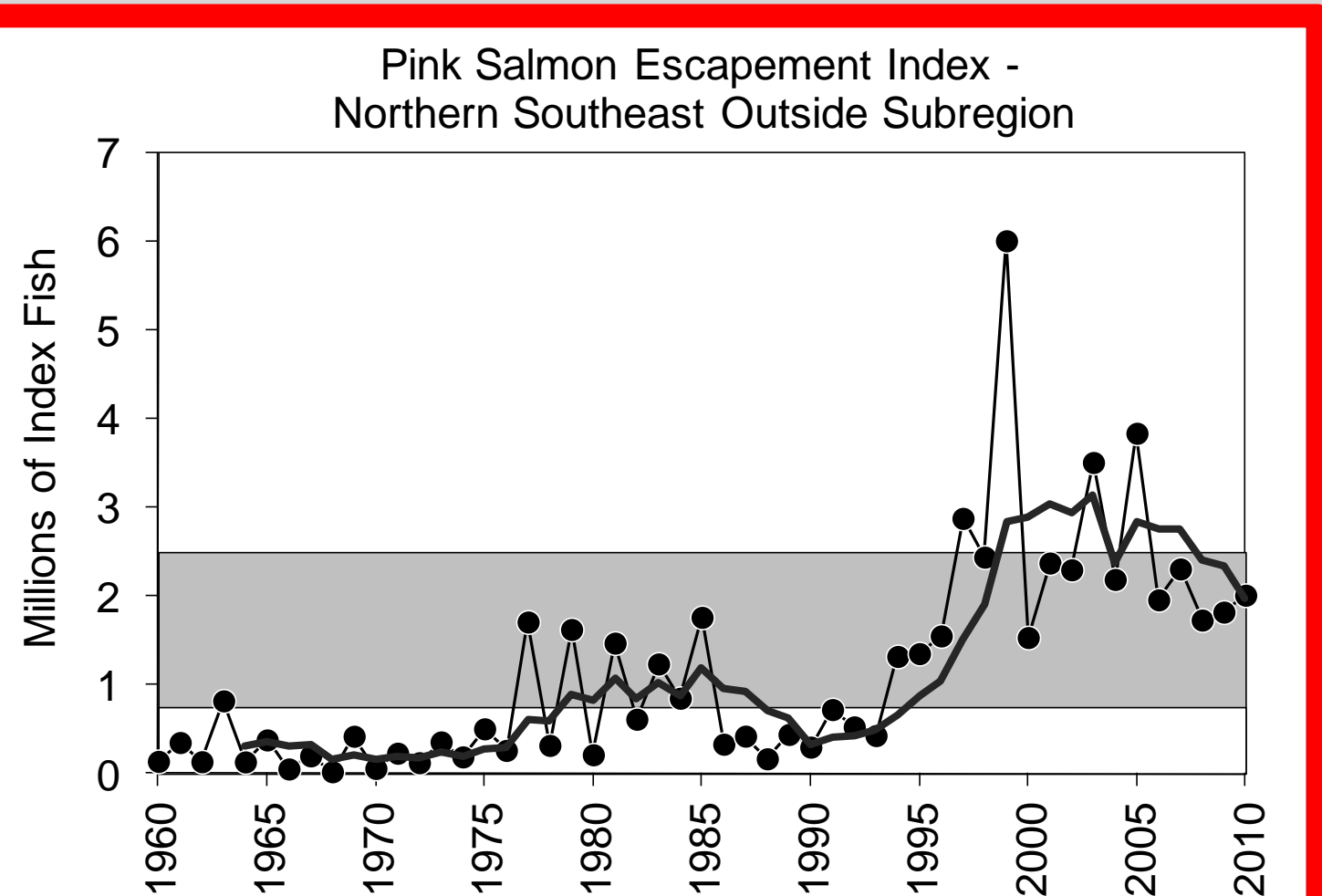
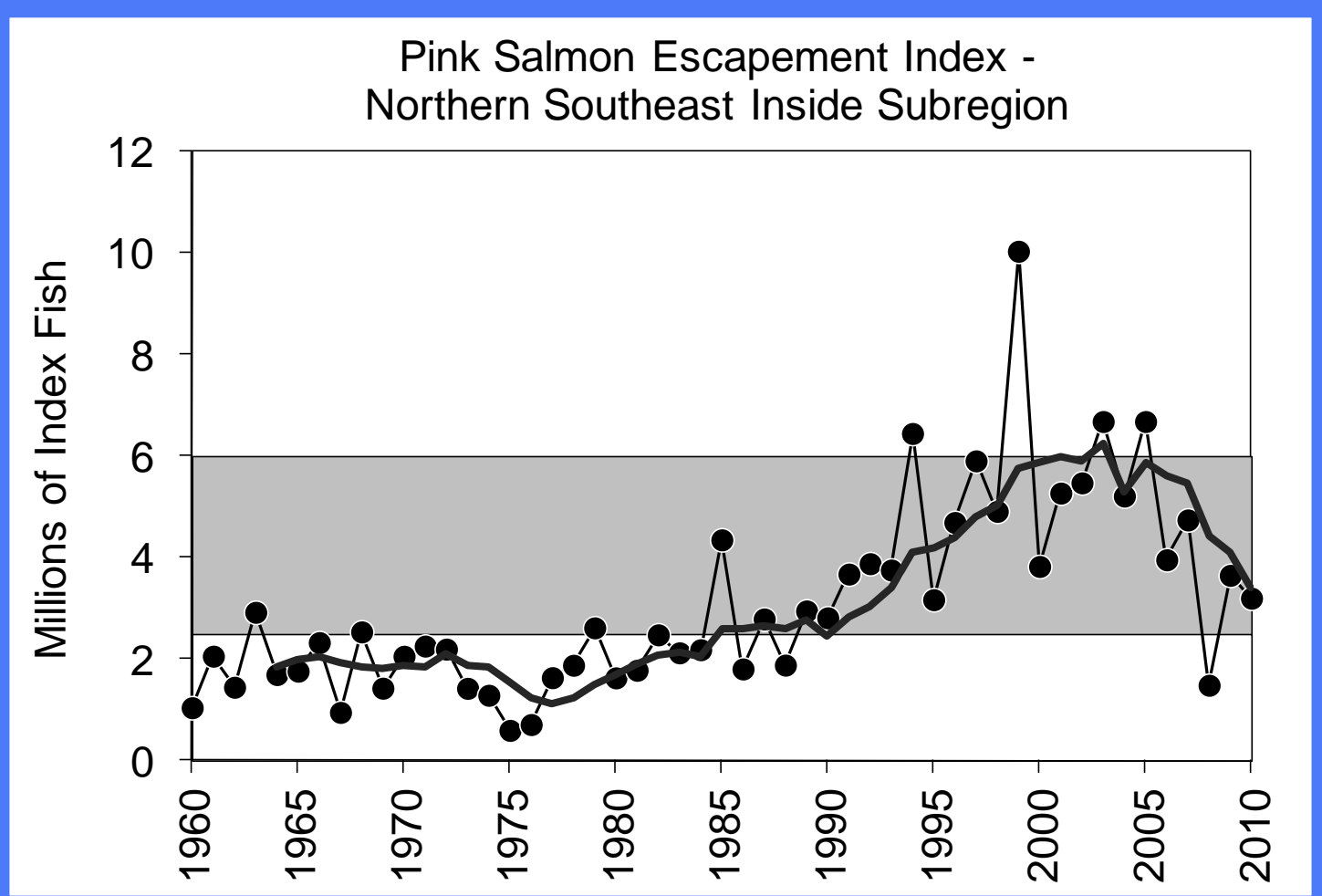
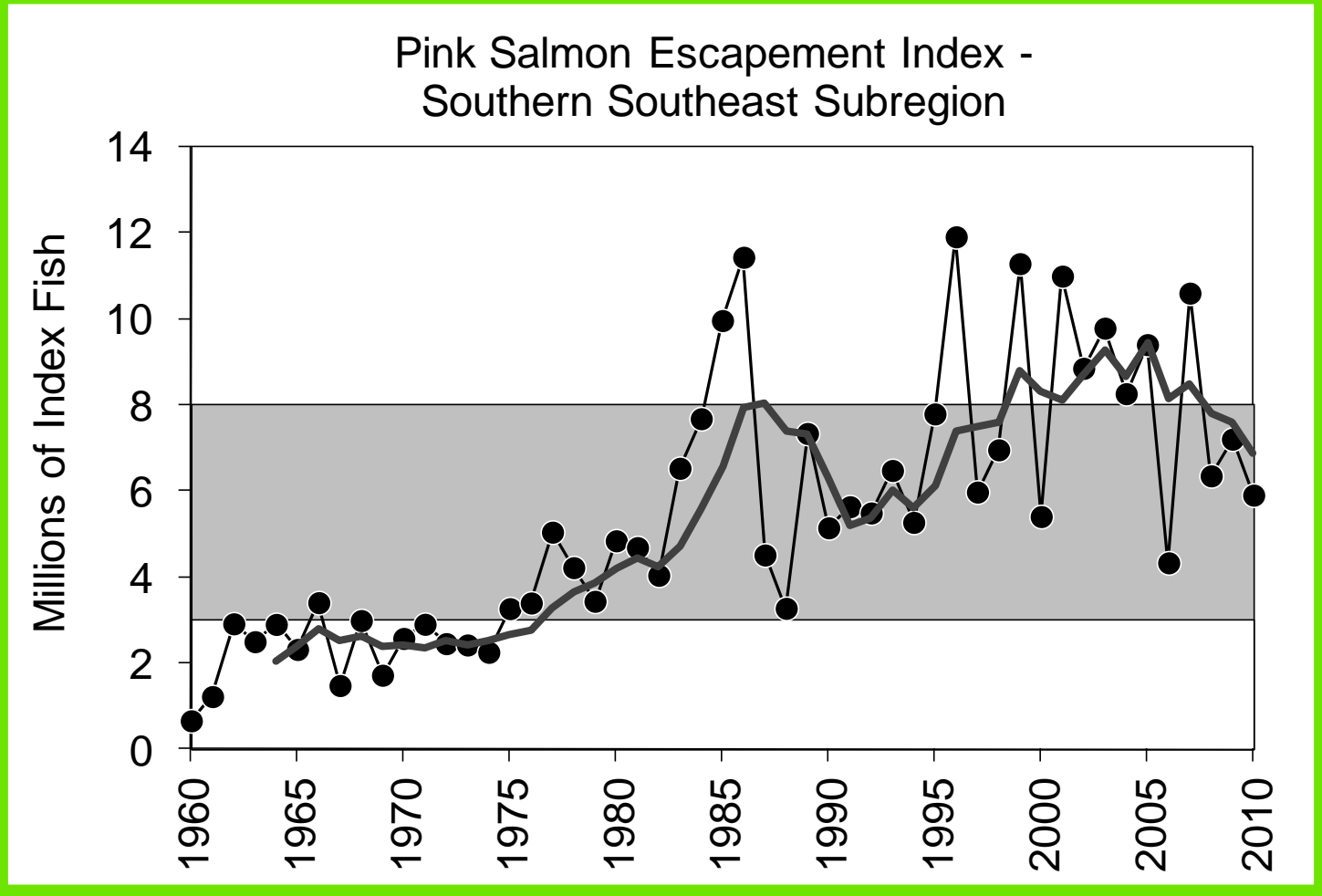
Pink Salmon



Southeast Alaska Pink Salmon Harvest



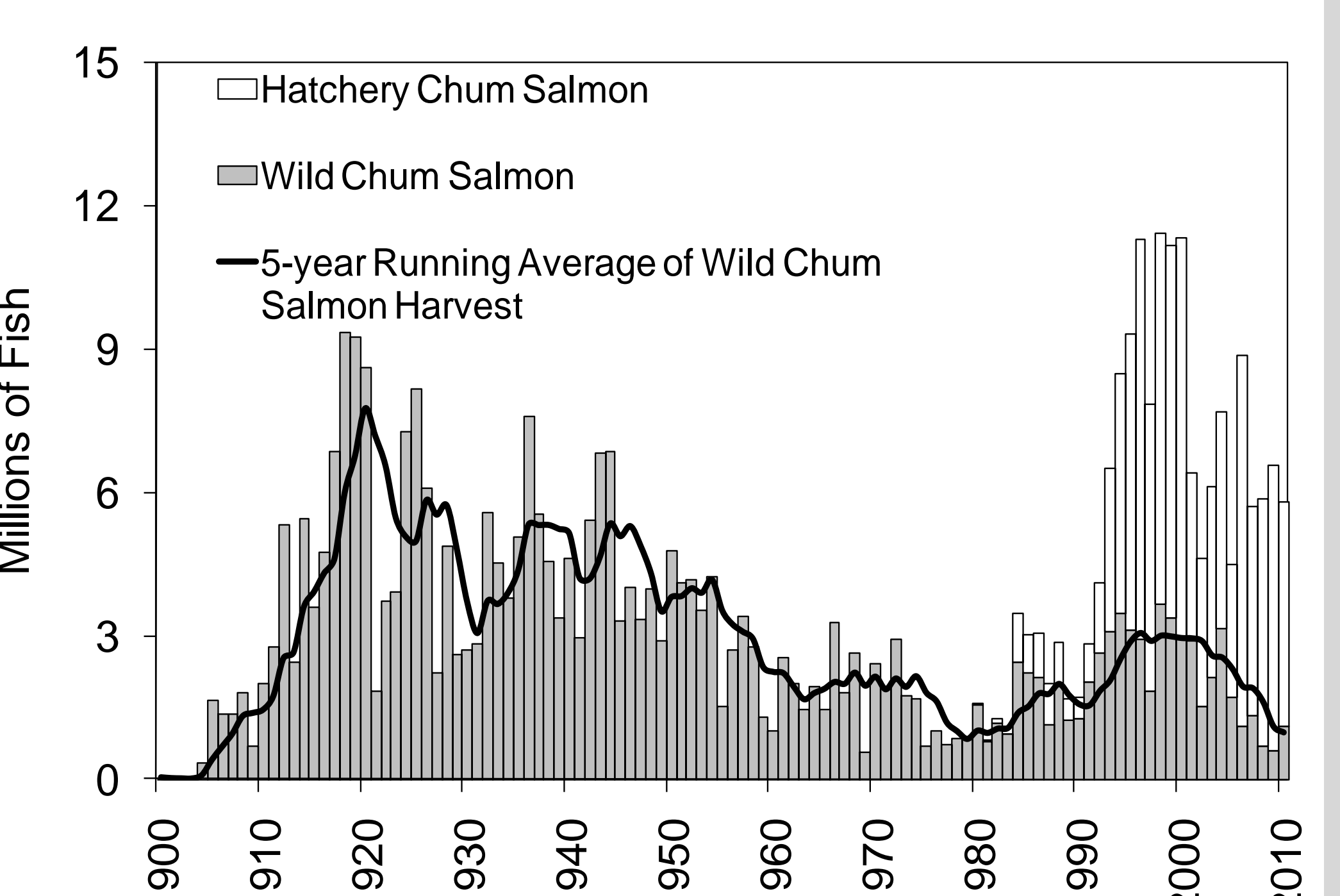
Pink Salmon Escapement Indices



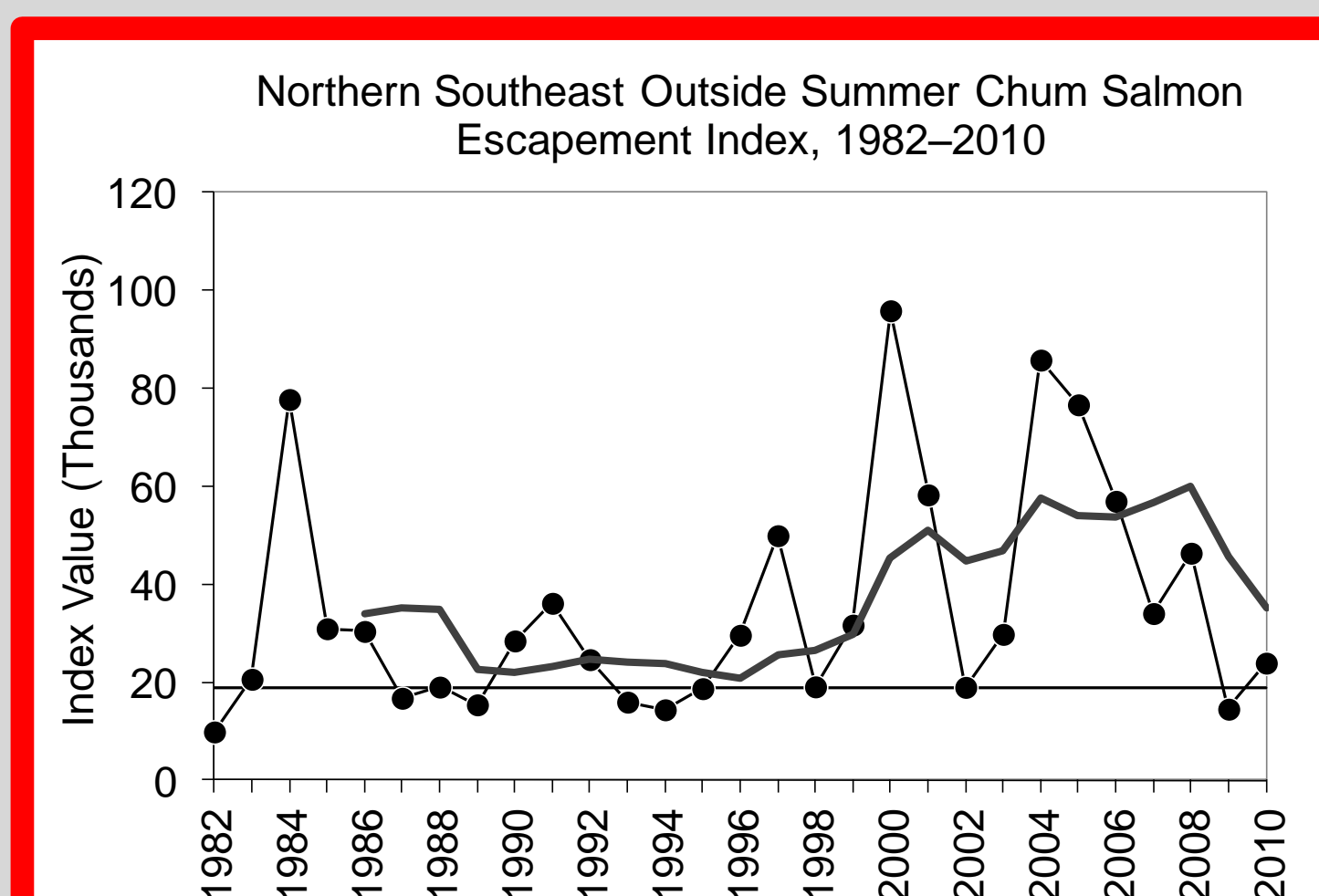
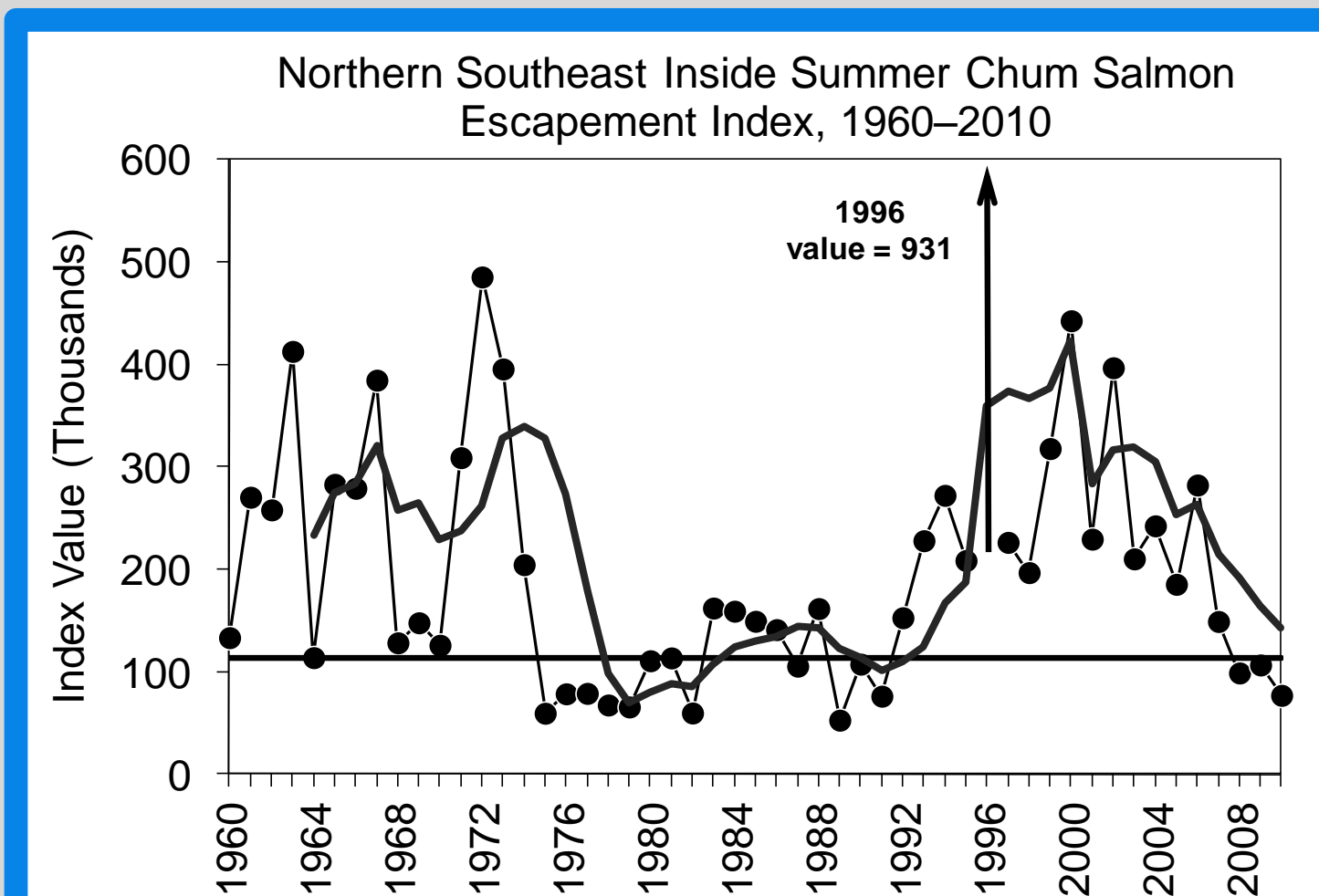
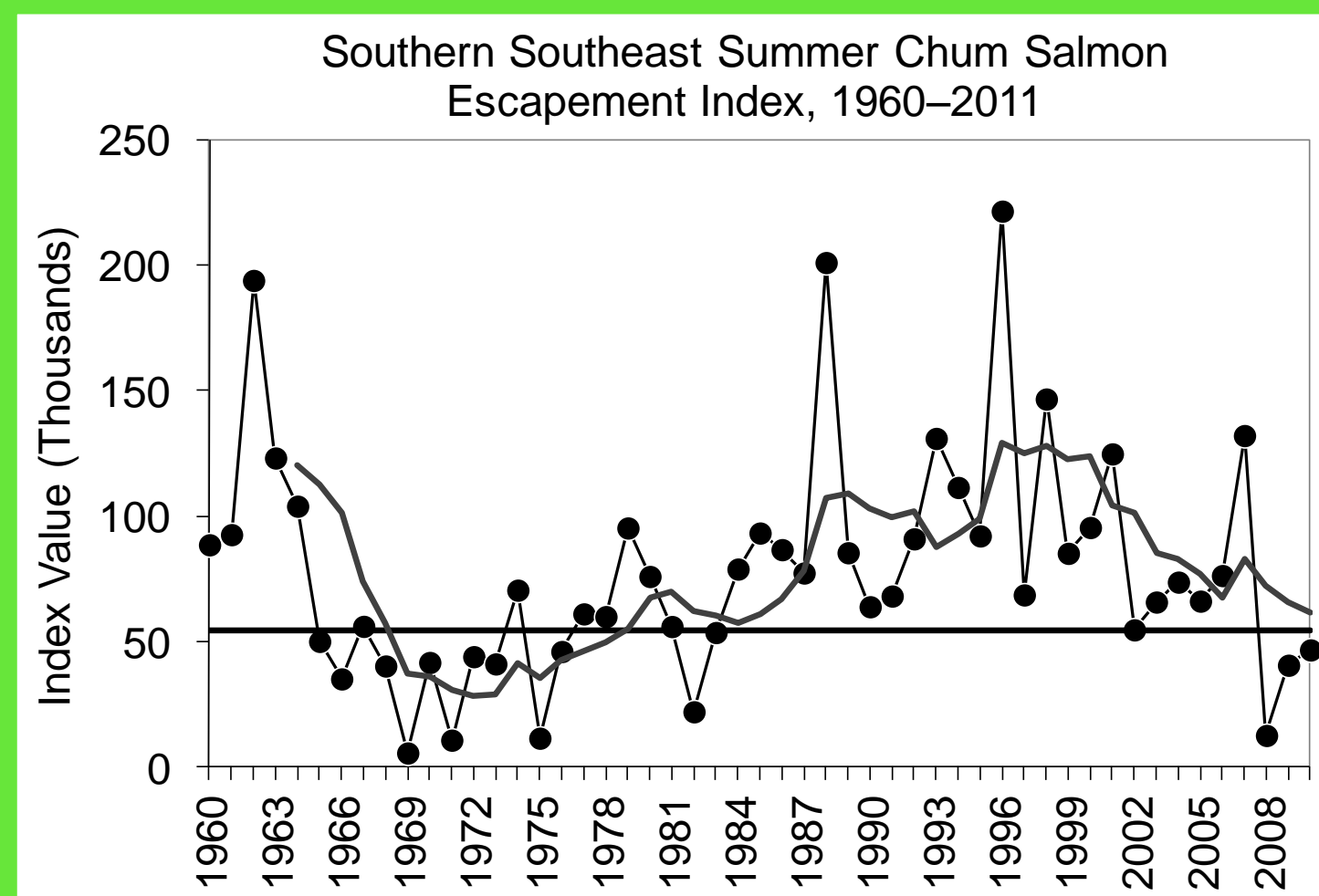
Chum Salmon



Southeast Alaska Chum Salmon Harvest



Summer Chum Salmon Escapement Indices



2011 Pink Salmon Return

In 2011, pink salmon returned to northern Southeast Alaska in record numbers and the harvest there exceeded 47 million fish.

Pink salmon returns in southern Southeast Alaska, however, were well below average and the harvest of approximately 11 million fish was the lowest odd-year harvest since 1987.

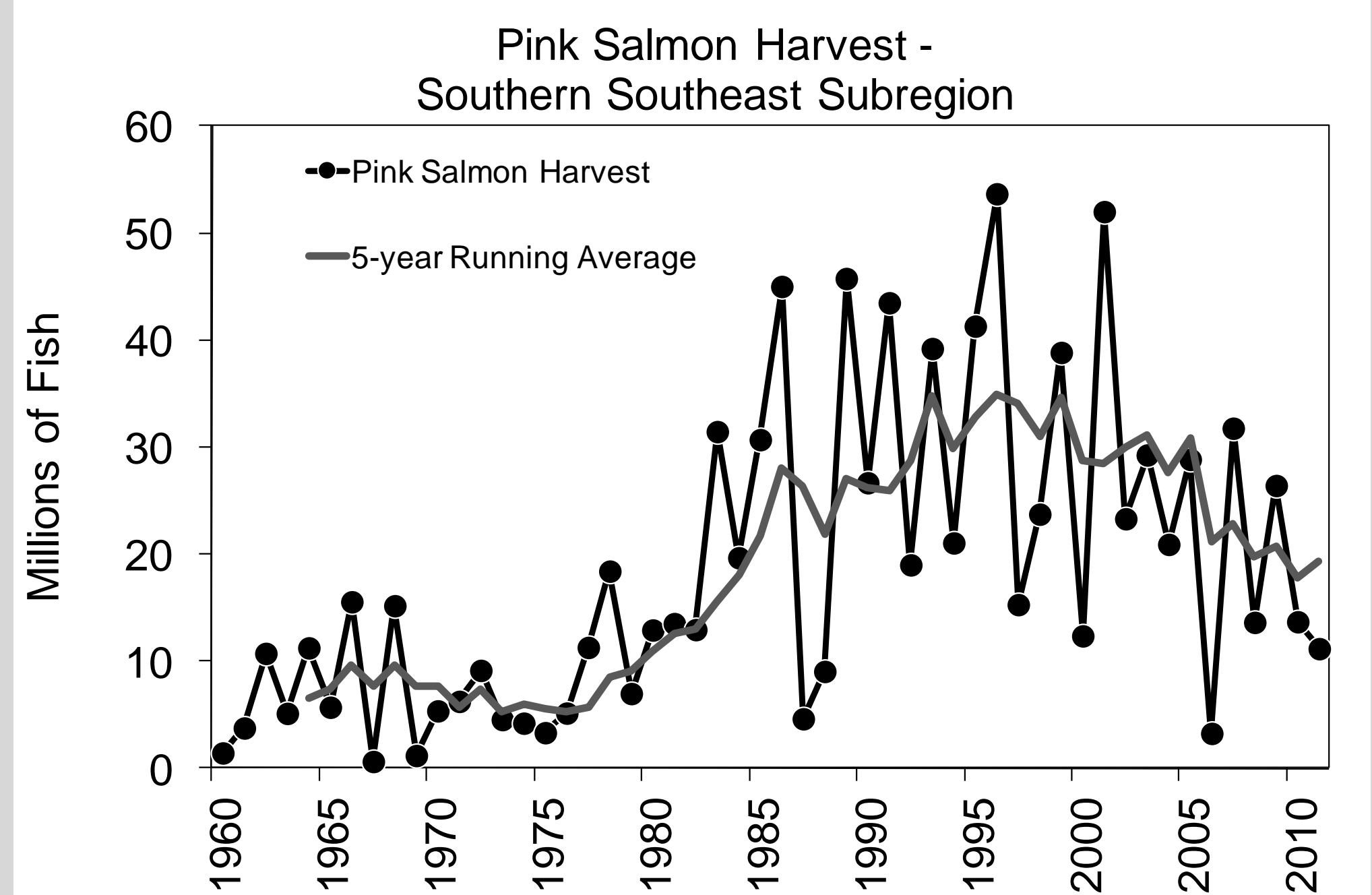
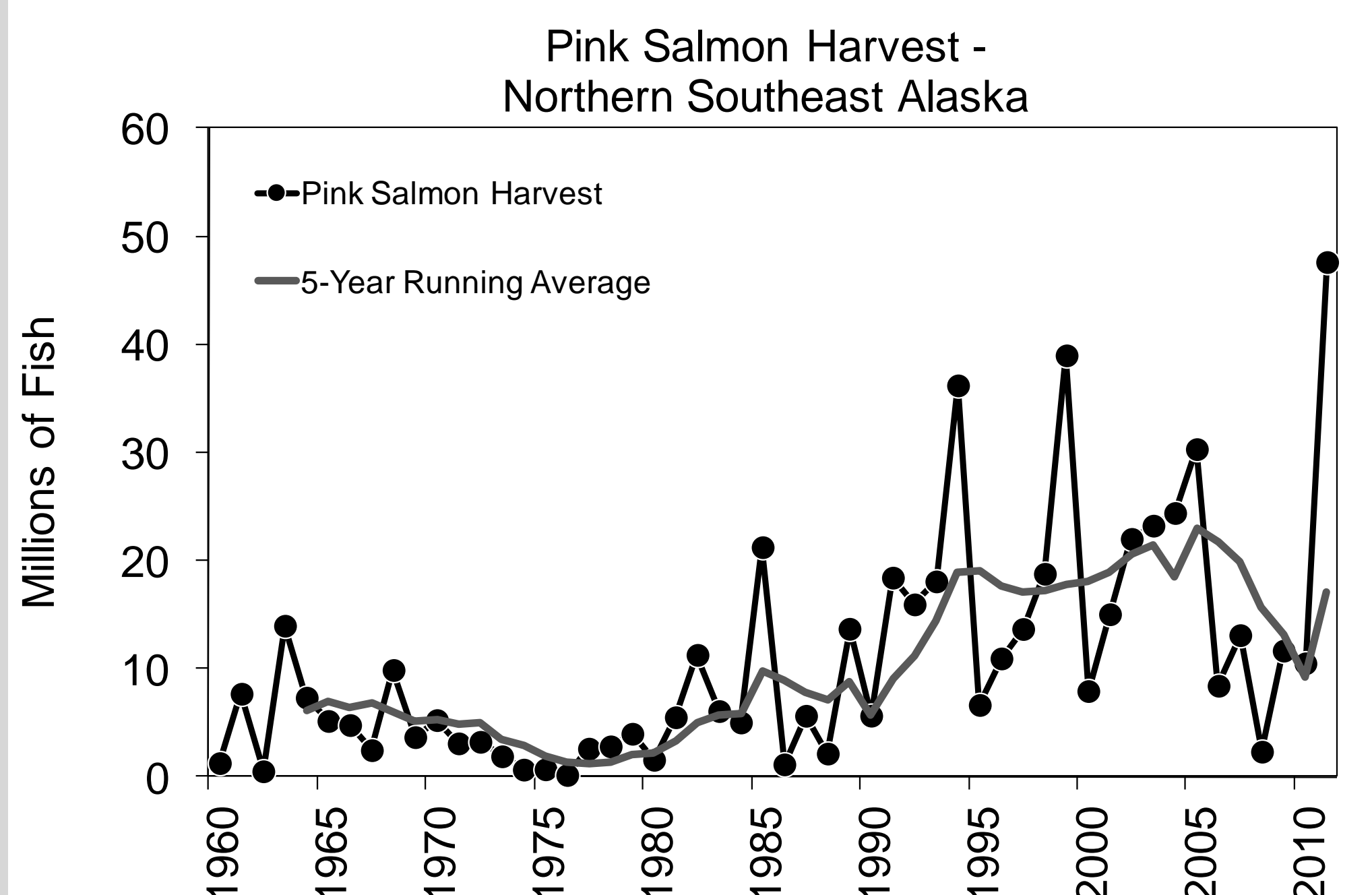


Photo by Scott Walker