

# Special Fish Committee Meeting

# Grays Harbor Basin Salmon Management Policy

# Review

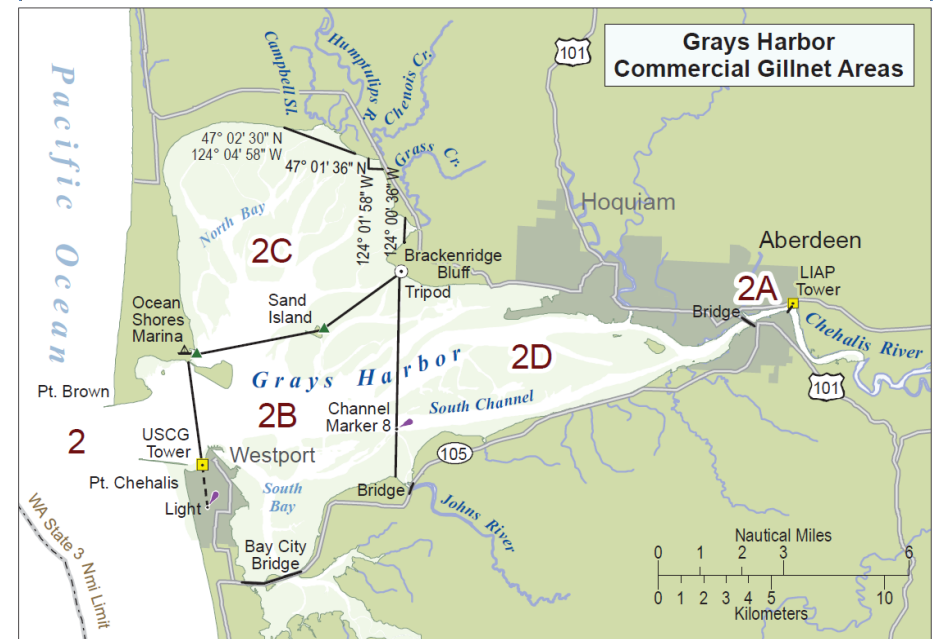
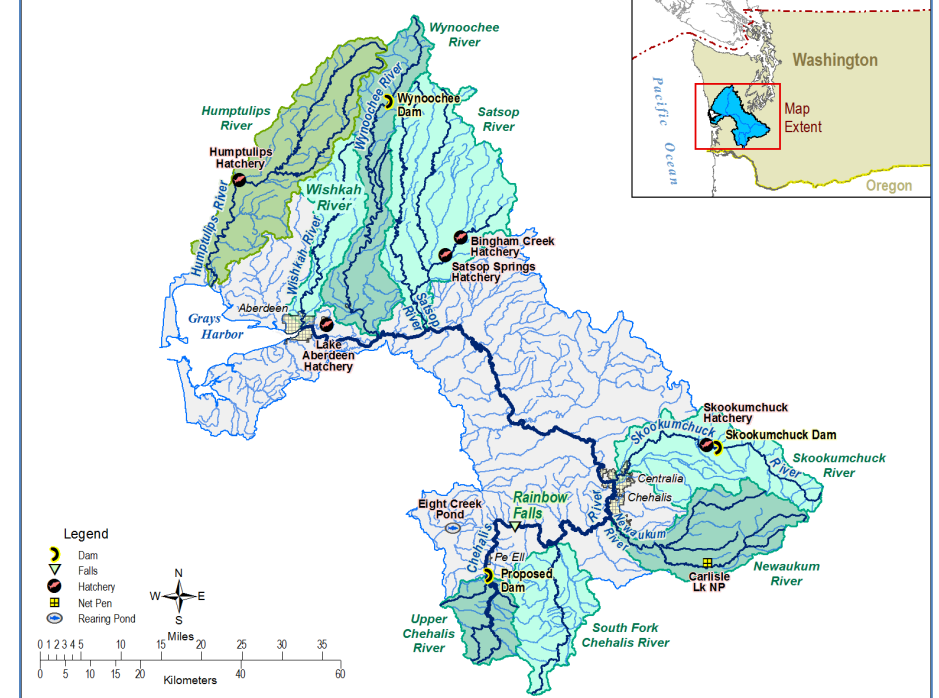
# June 14, 2024

Marlene Wagner & Mike Scharpf  
Fish Program



# Outline of Presentation

- Purpose & overview
- Grays Harbor salmon stocks
- Review previous policy language
- Policy performance
- Staff recommendations
- Policy development timeline





# Purpose and Overview

# Overview of Grays Harbor Basin Salmon Management Policy

- Adopted in February 2014, expired December 30, 2023
- Fisheries are developed by working in concurrence with:
  - North of Falcon
  - Pacific Fisheries Management Council
  - Terms of *U.S. v. Washington*
  - Treaty co-managers: Quinault Indian Nation
  - Collaboration with Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation

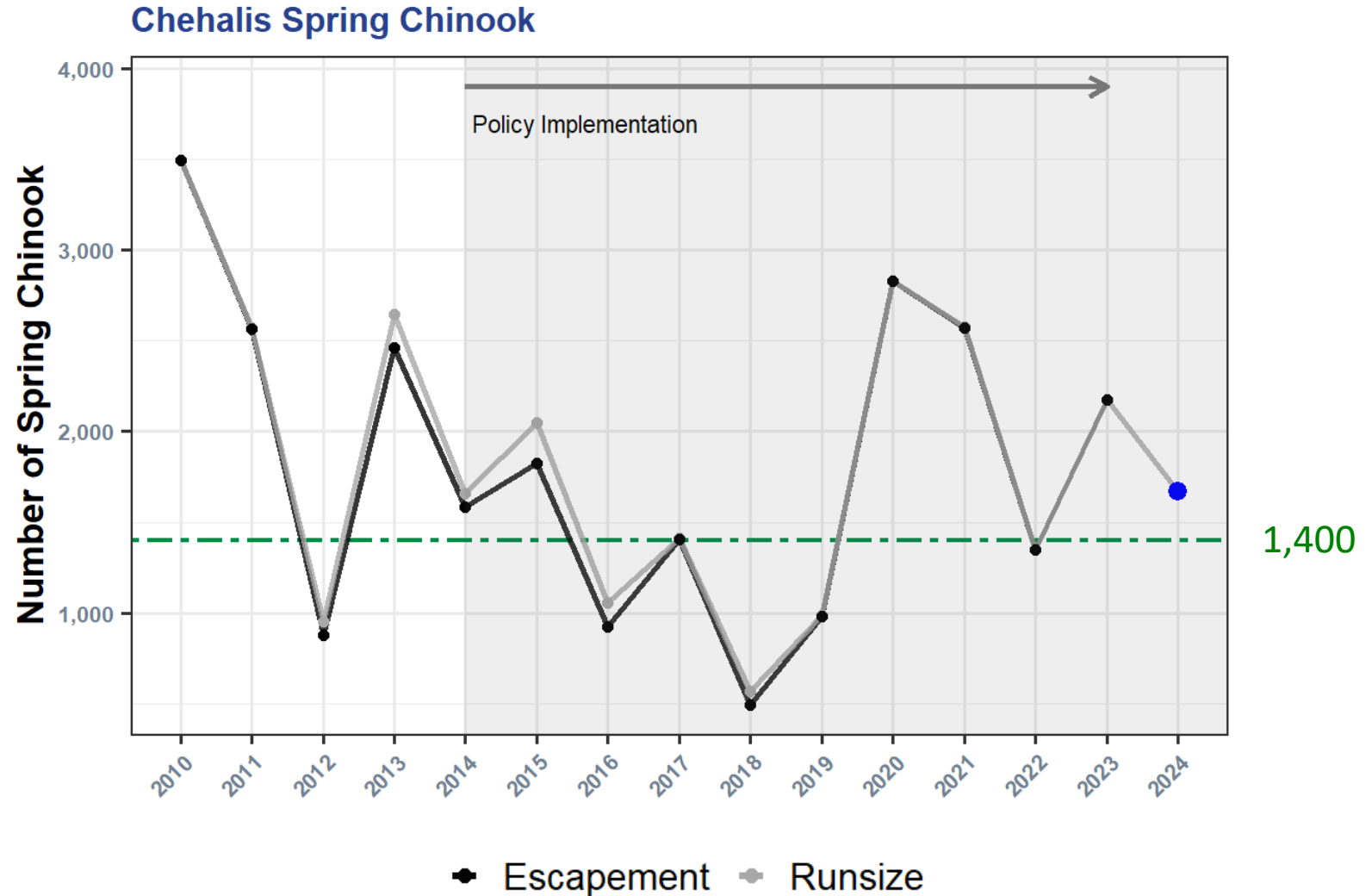




# Overview of Grays Harbor Salmon Stocks

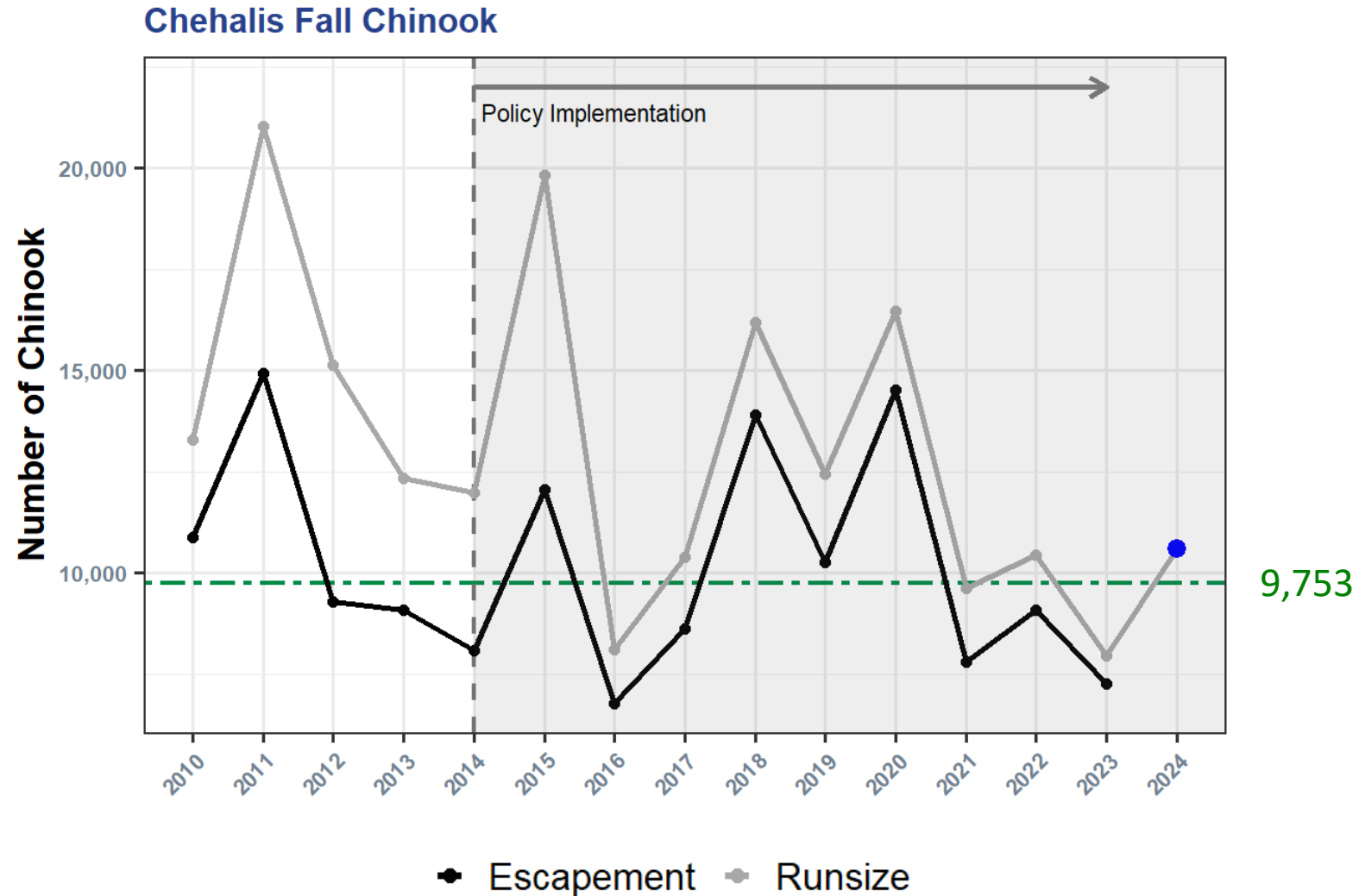
# Natural-origin Spring Chinook Trends

- Stock declined 2014 to 2019
- Management action: No fishing since 2018
- Recent increase in production, but highly variable
- Escapement goal was created sometime before 1984



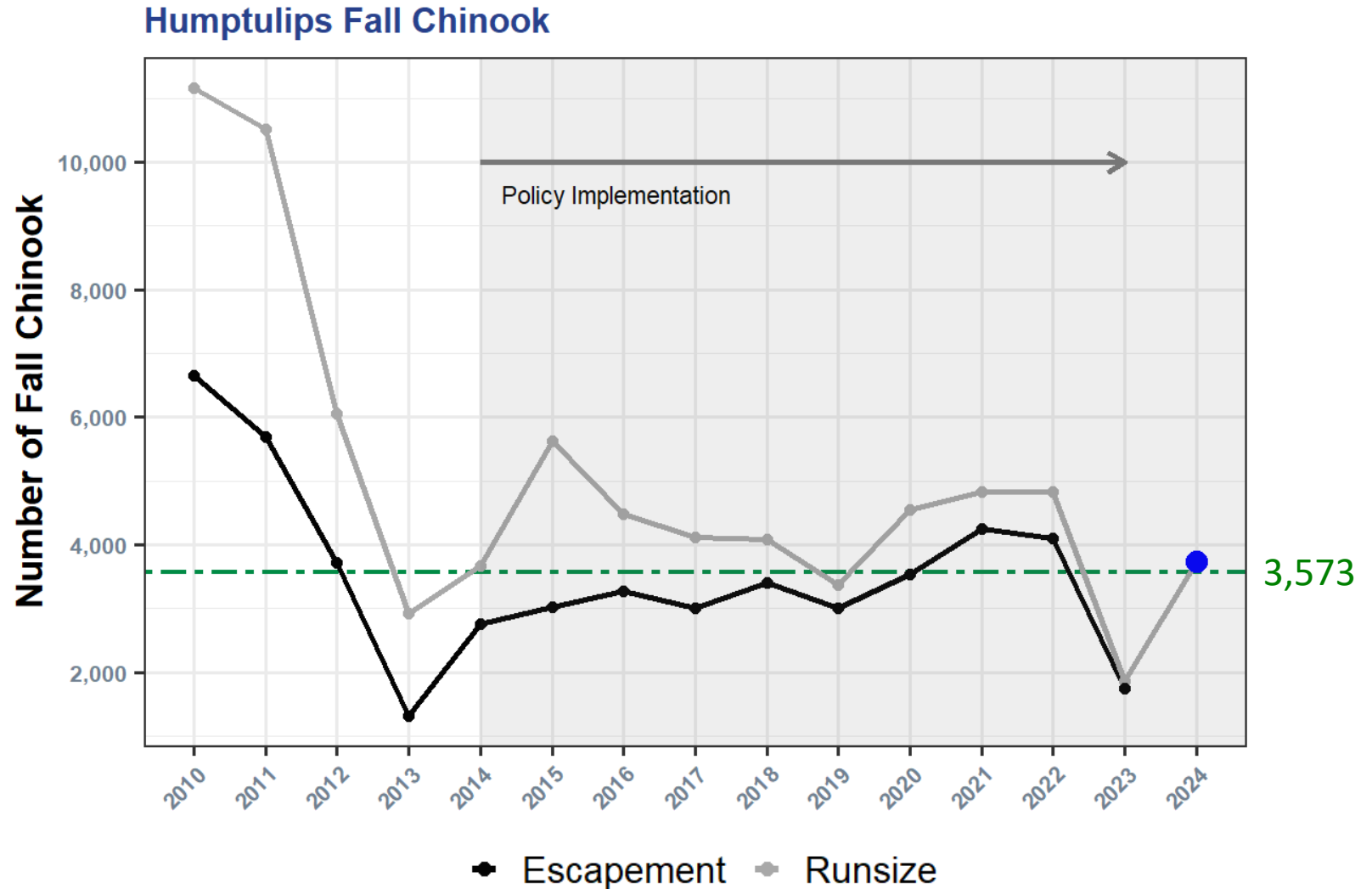
# Natural-origin Chehalis Fall Chinook Trends

- Chehalis fall Chinook exhibit a highly variable return throughout the years
- Escapement goal re-evaluated and updated in 2014 and MSY-based (12,364 to 9,753)



# Natural-origin Humptulips Fall Chinook Trends

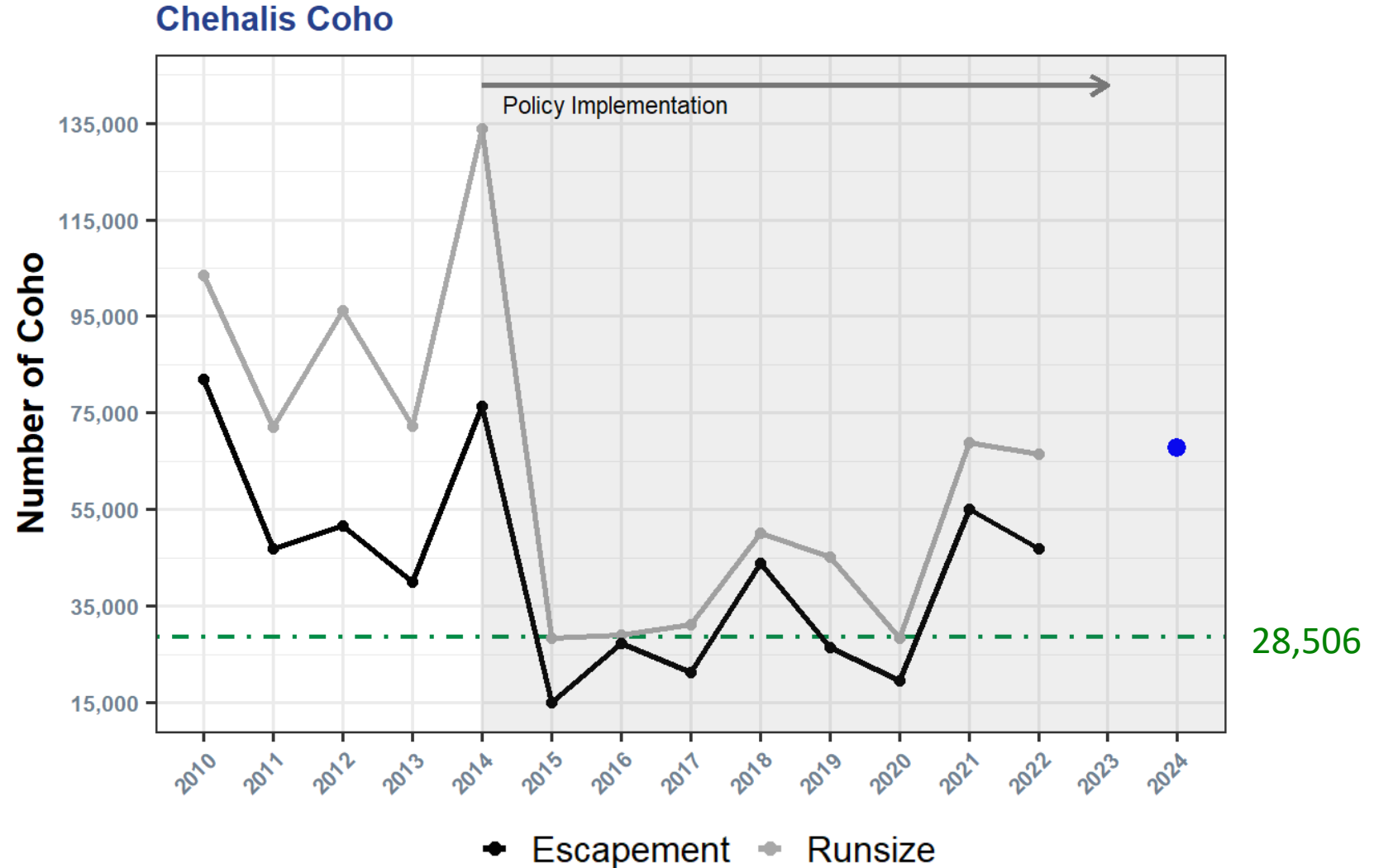
- Population has remained fairly stable since policy implementation, but experienced a decline in 2023
- Escapement goal re-evaluated and updated in 2014 and is MSY-based (2,236 to 3,573)





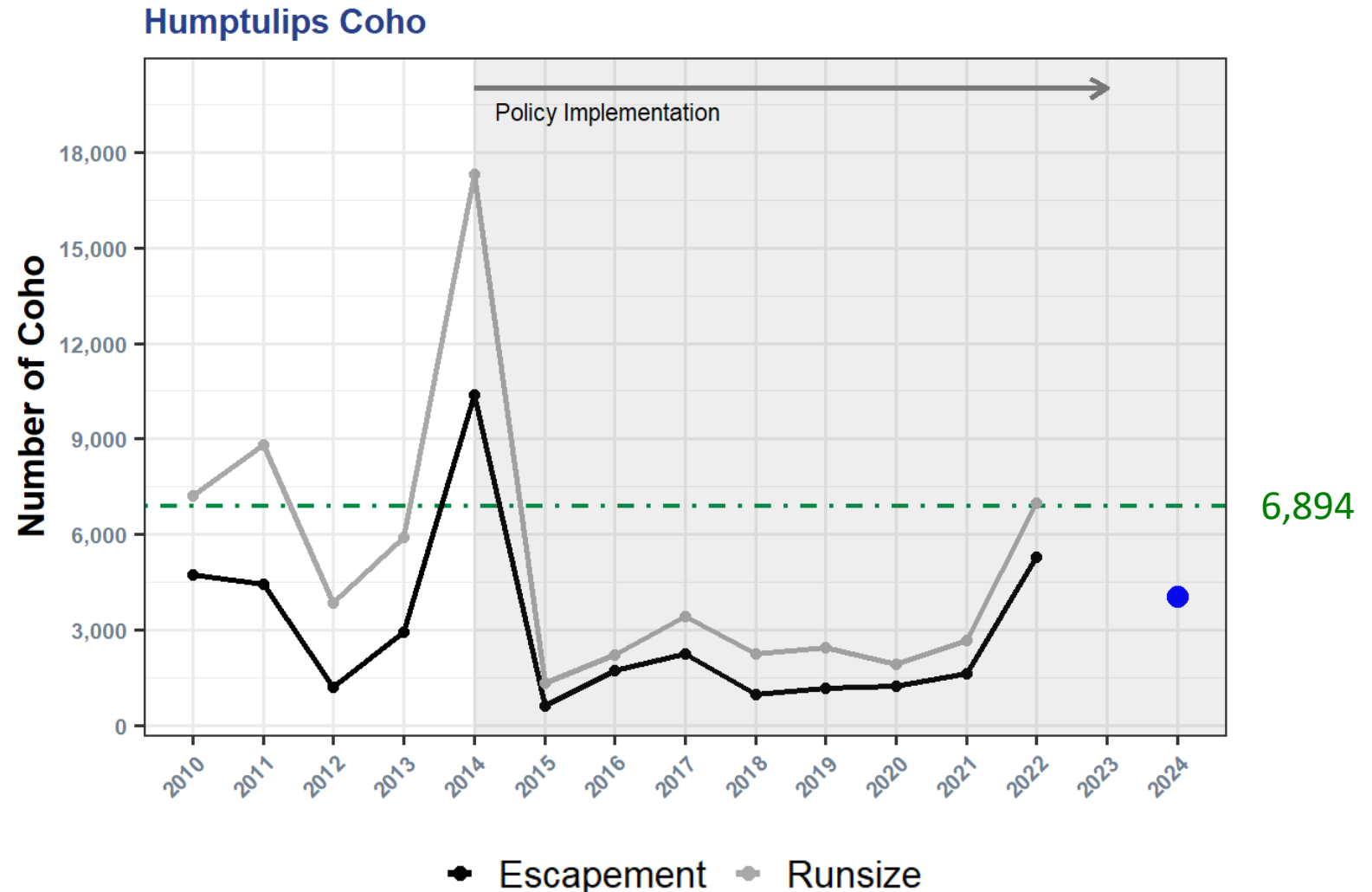
# Natural-origin Chehalis Coho Trends

- Decline starting in 2015
- Stocks across the state showed similar drop in numbers
- Likely due to ocean conditions "the blob"
- Well documented coho decline through much of range
- Escapement goal created in 1983 and was habitat-based



# Natural-origin Humptulips Coho Trends

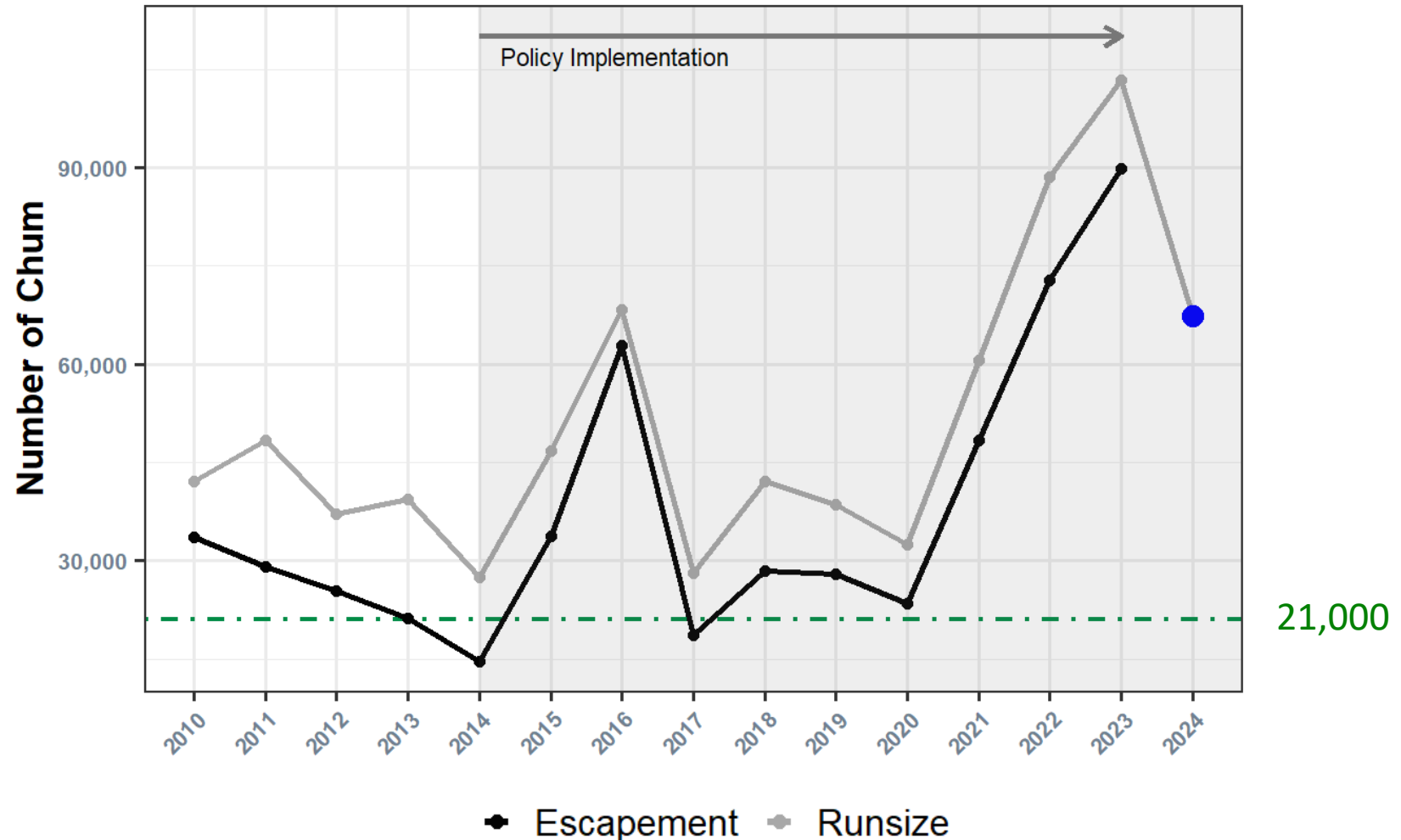
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# Natural-origin Grays Harbor Chum Trends

- Stock has been increasing since 2020
- 2024 forecast is showing a decrease in returns from 2022 and 2023, but numbers remain relatively high
- Escapement goal created in the 1970s and is based on a relationship between commercial catches both in GH and WB and a WB escapement goal

Grays Harbor Chum





## Walkthrough of Grays Harbor Basin Salmon Management Policy

Link to policy : <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/commission/policies/grays-harbor-basin-salmon-management>



# **Grays Harbor Basin Salmon Management Policy: Policy Performance**

# Grays Harbor Salmon Management Policy Performance

- Increased emphasis on conservation
- Increased transparency on the fishery planning process
- Provided framework for fisheries planning based on forecasts



# Grays Harbor Salmon Management Policy Performance

- Lacked co-manager input
- Guiding Principal (#8) restricts gillnet fishing by calendar week making it difficult to implement meaningful fisheries
- Prescriptive restrictions on commercial fishery impact rates
  - based on an analysis from 2008-2012, and
  - previous escapement goal (14,600) for Fall Chinook
- Policy allocation and impact rates between marine and FW recreational fisheries based on public input





# **Grays Harbor Basin Salmon Management Policy: Staff Recommendations**



# Grays Harbor Salmon Management Policy: Staff Recommendations for Policy Revision

- Define objectives and adaptive management that will be used to meet desired outcomes
- Provide managers with the flexibility needed to achieve the objectives and outcomes based on defensible science and current data
- Remove outdated and prescriptive language



# Grays Harbor Salmon Management Policy: Staff Recommendations, continued

- The Department shall conduct Management Strategy Evaluations for stocks to evaluate alternative harvest control rules
  - Ensure we have the right escapement goals
- Replicate Commission's approach from the Willapa Bay policy in a new Gray's Harbor policy with objectives that include:
  - 1) Productive natural-spawning populations that are locally adapted, diverse genetically to maintain adaptability, and occur in densities appropriate for the local environment.
  - 2) Sustainable fishing levels for both recreational and commercial fisheries that maximize harvest opportunities.
  - 3) Management actions associated with harvest, hatchery production, and natural-origin escapement adhere to ecosystem-based management principles that consider the risks and benefits to species and habitats within the Grays Harbor system, including vulnerabilities to a changing climate.





# **Grays Harbor Basin Salmon Management Policy: Policy Development Timeline**

# Proposed Revision Timeline

<b>June 14</b>	Special Fish Committee	Briefing	Provide an overview of sunset policy. Review policy performance. Staff recommendations for possible revisions.
<b>July</b>			Staff meetings with co-managers
<b>August 8-10</b>	Fish Committee; Fish and Wildlife Commission	Briefing	Brief Commission on Draft Policy revisions.
<b>August – September</b>	Public Comment on WDFW website portal	Public comment period	Conduct public meeting to collect input on draft policy revisions and analyses.
<b>September 26-28</b>	Fish Committee; Fish and Wildlife Commission	Briefing; Public input	Briefing on public comment
<b>October 24-26</b>	Fish and Wildlife Commission	Decision	Commission final decision



# Questions & Discussion

