

# Coho In-season Salmon Management 2015 Season



Coho - Male

**Steve Thiesfeld & John Long - Fish Program  
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting  
November 13, 2015**

# Purpose

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- **Brief Commission on status of coho stocks throughout the state**
- **Discuss in-season fishery actions**
- **Focus on Grays Harbor**
- **Discuss opportunities to re-open**

# Indicators

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- **Pink salmon returned with small body size and low abundance**
- **Puget Sound coho were small, but catch rates were average in marine areas**
- **Area 5 in-season update suggested good abundance**
- **WA/OR-wide, returning below pre-season forecast**

# Fishery Actions

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- **Closed salmon fishing in:**
  - Skagit (except Cascade River)
  - Stillaquamish
  - Snohomish and tributaries
- **Coho non-retention**
  - Green
- **Closed salmon and gamefish in Grays Harbor, and all fishing in tributaries.**
- **Reduced daily limit on Lower Columbia and tributaries**

# Fishery Actions

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- **Closed salmon fishing in Willapa Bay and most tributaries**
  - Retained hatchery coho fisheries near hatcheries and chum in Nemah
- **Tribal fisheries closed on Queets River**
- **Re-opened hatchery coho and gamefish in select Grays Harbor tributaries near hatcheries**
- **Tribal fisheries closed on Hoh River**

# Grays Harbor



# Traditional Management

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- **Pre-season planning based on a harvest-rate model**
- **Predict weekly harvest from pre-season forecast multiplied by the weekly harvest rate**
- **Traditionally attributed variation in weekly catch with variation in run-size, but expected to meet conservation objective**
- **In-season actions seldom taken**

# In-Season Updates

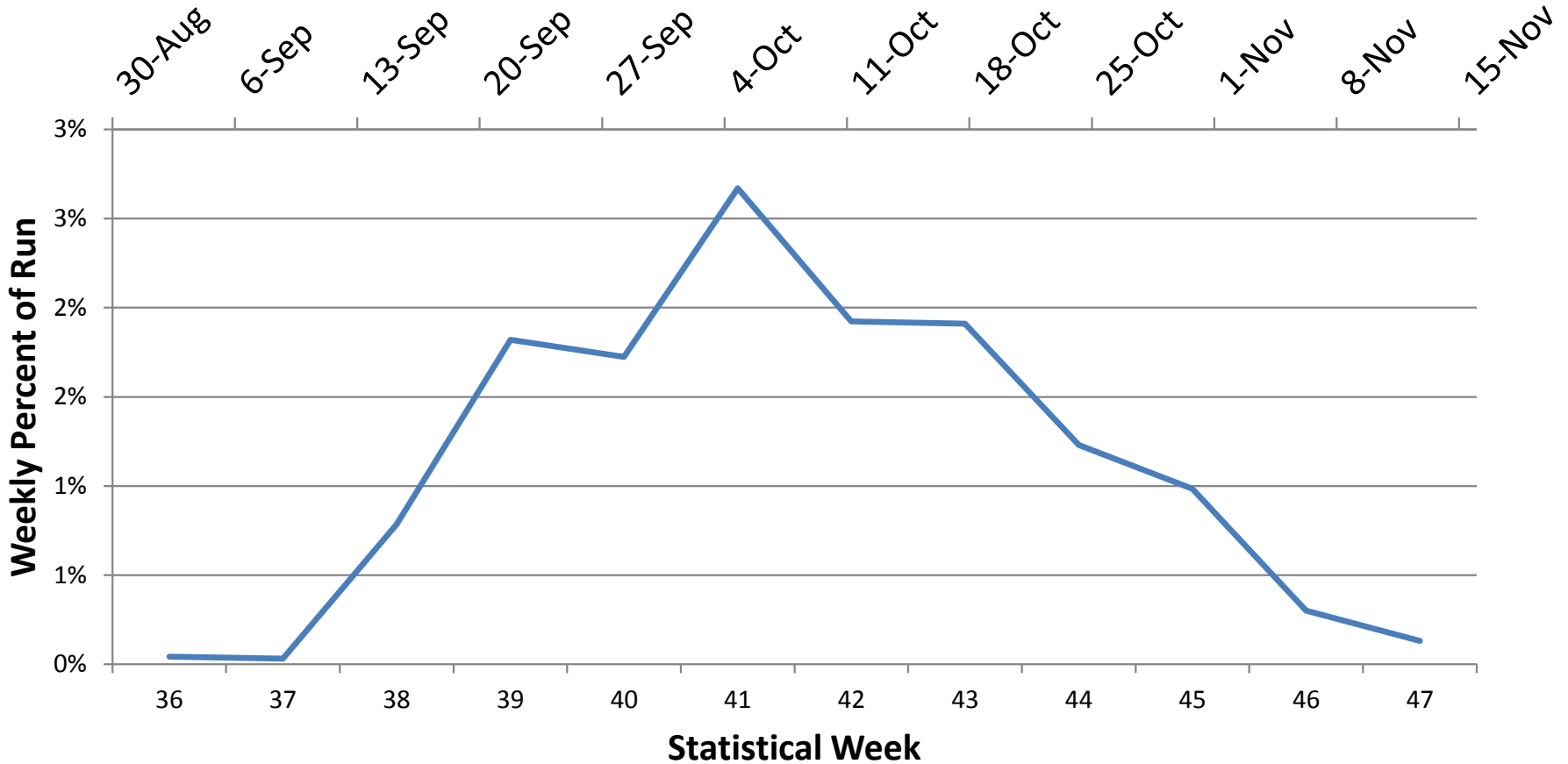
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- **Annual dilemma:**
  - Is the run early or big?
  - Is the run late or small?
  
- **How did low water effect run timing?**

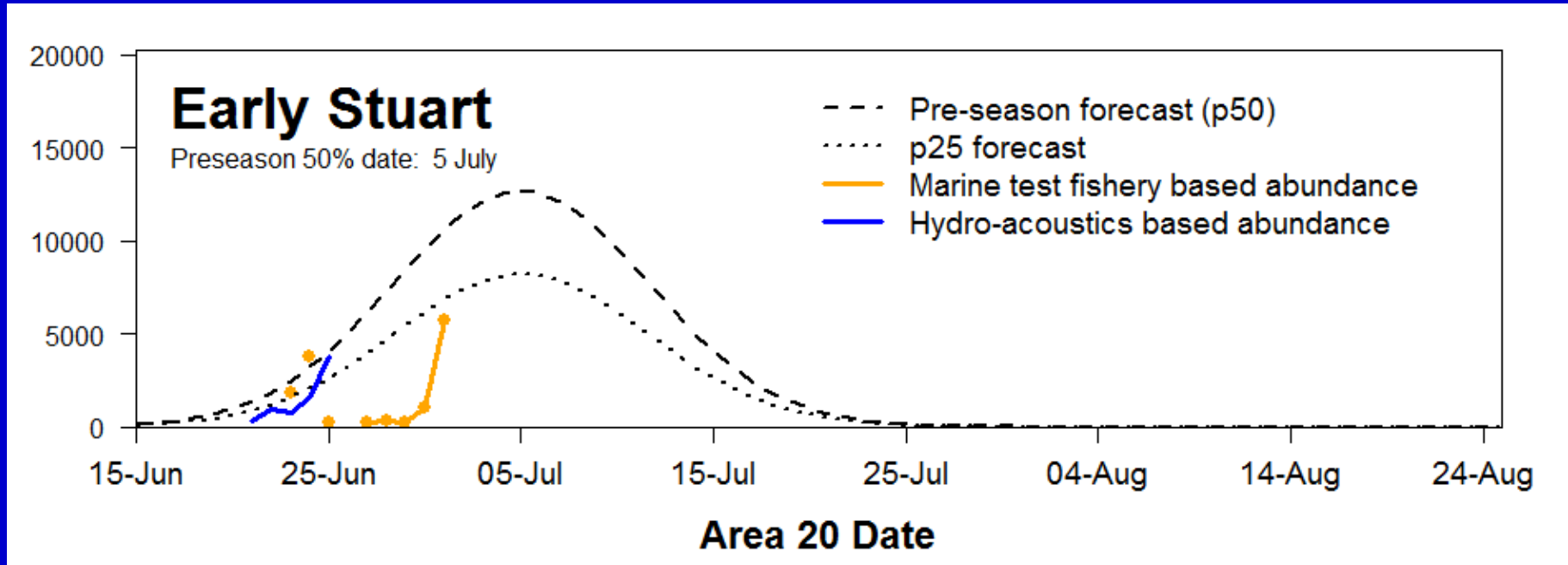


# In-Season Updates

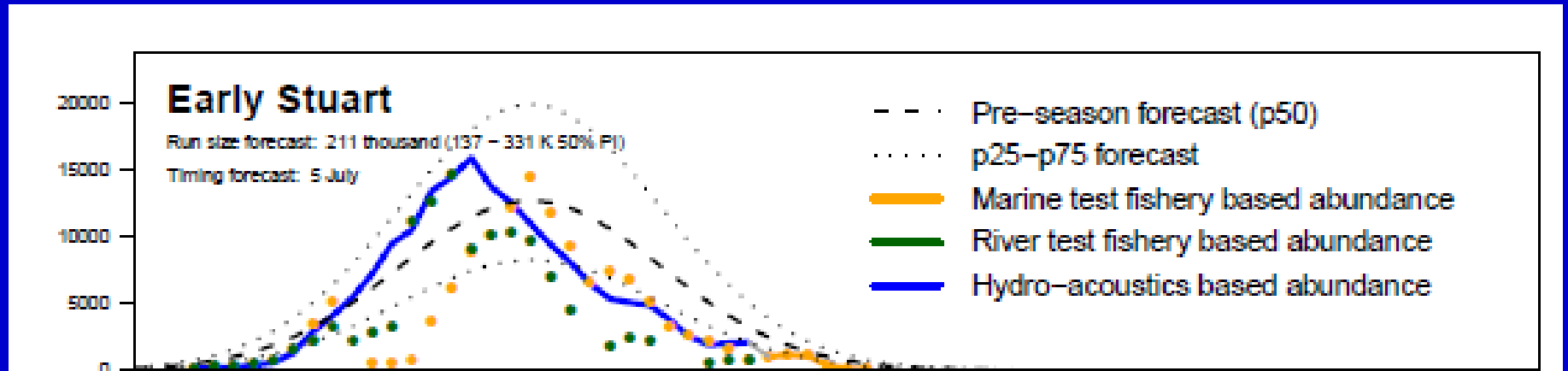
## Average Daily Catch as Percent of Run



# In-Season Updates



# In-Season Updates

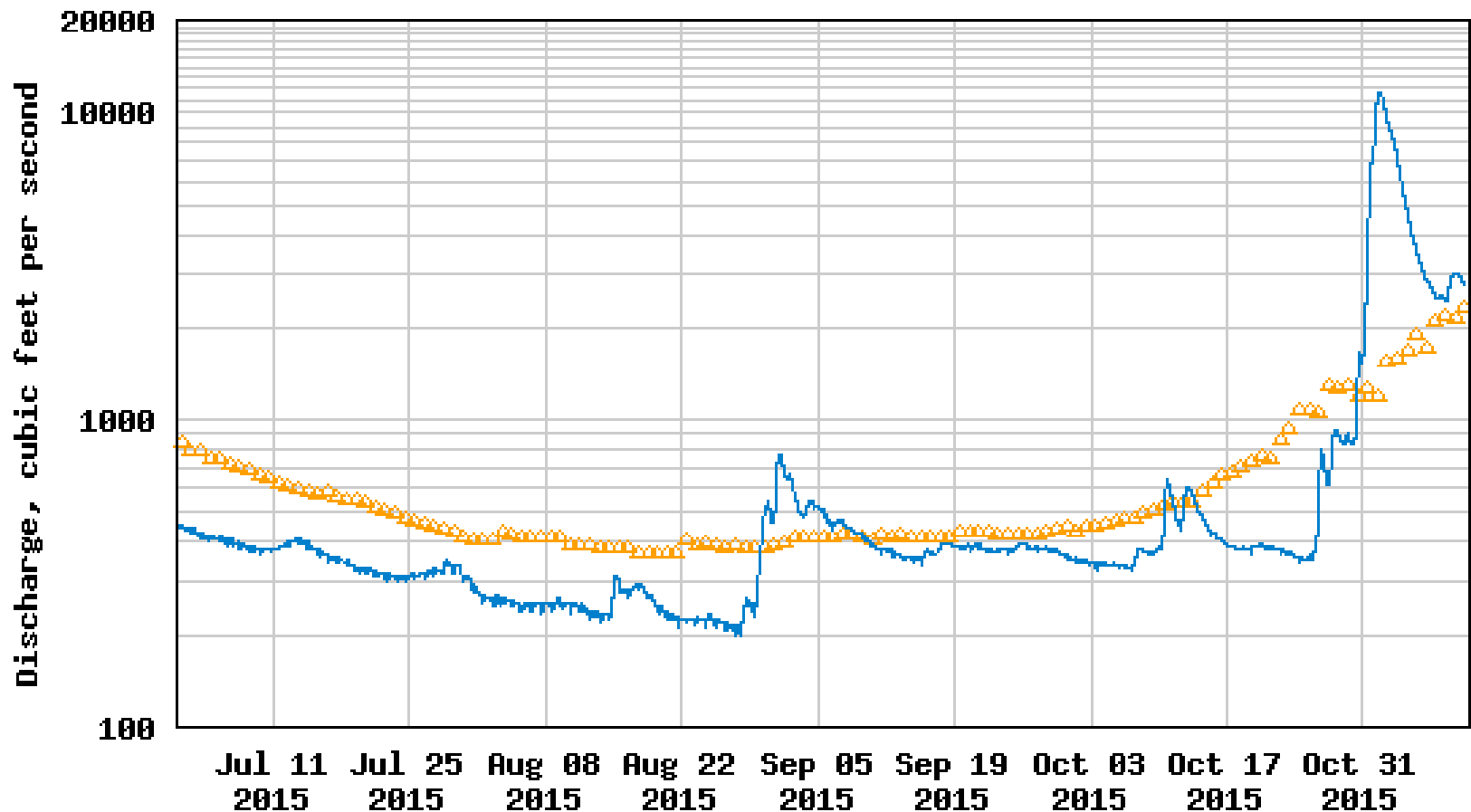


# 2015 Management

- **Concern about low catches in commercial and tribal fisheries**
- **Low river levels problematic**
- **Examined whether the run could be updated in-season**
  - **Significant advancement over recent years**

# Low Water In Rivers

USGS 12031000 CHEHALIS RIVER AT PORTER, WA

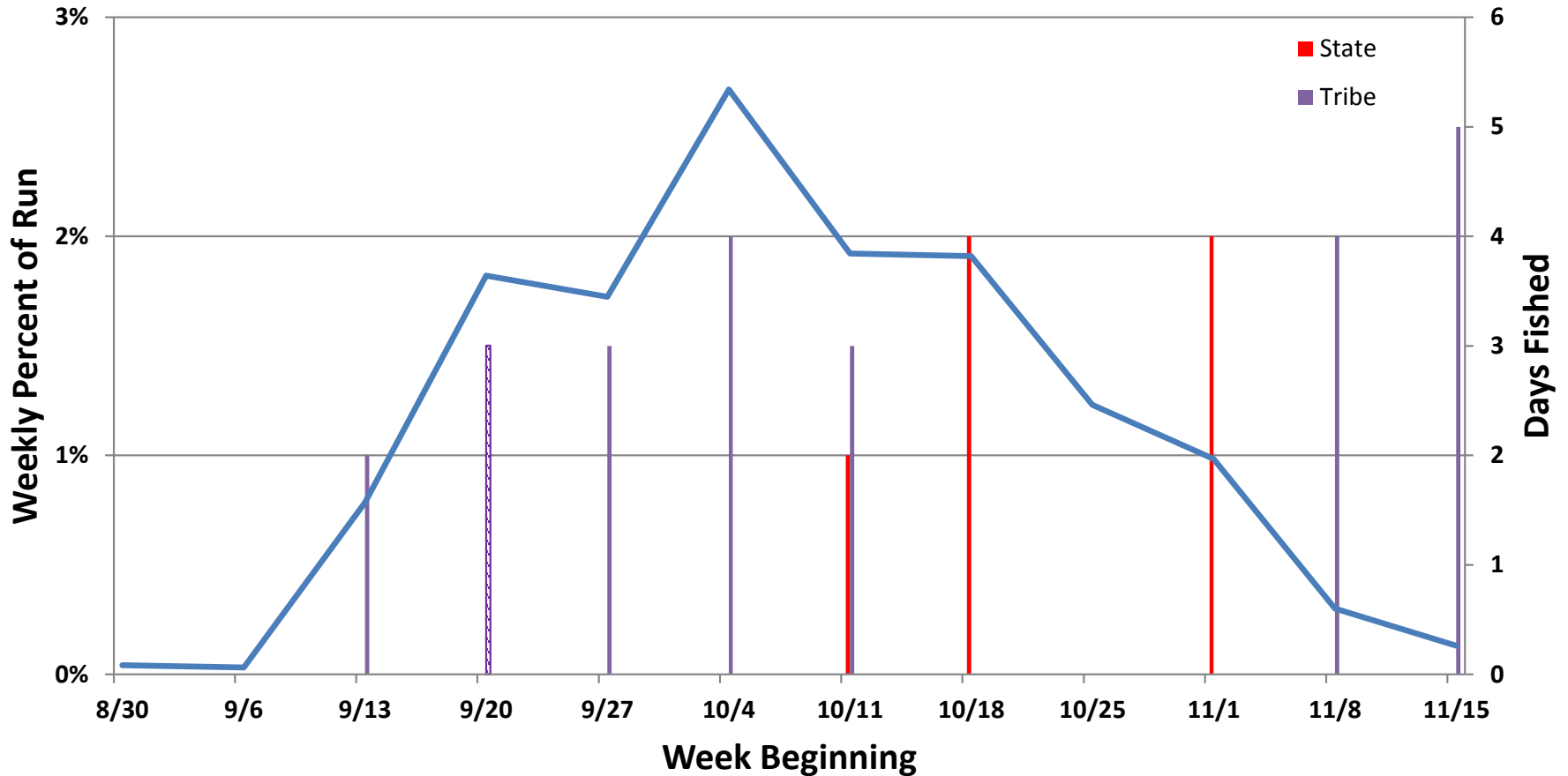


---- Provisional Data Subject to Revision ----

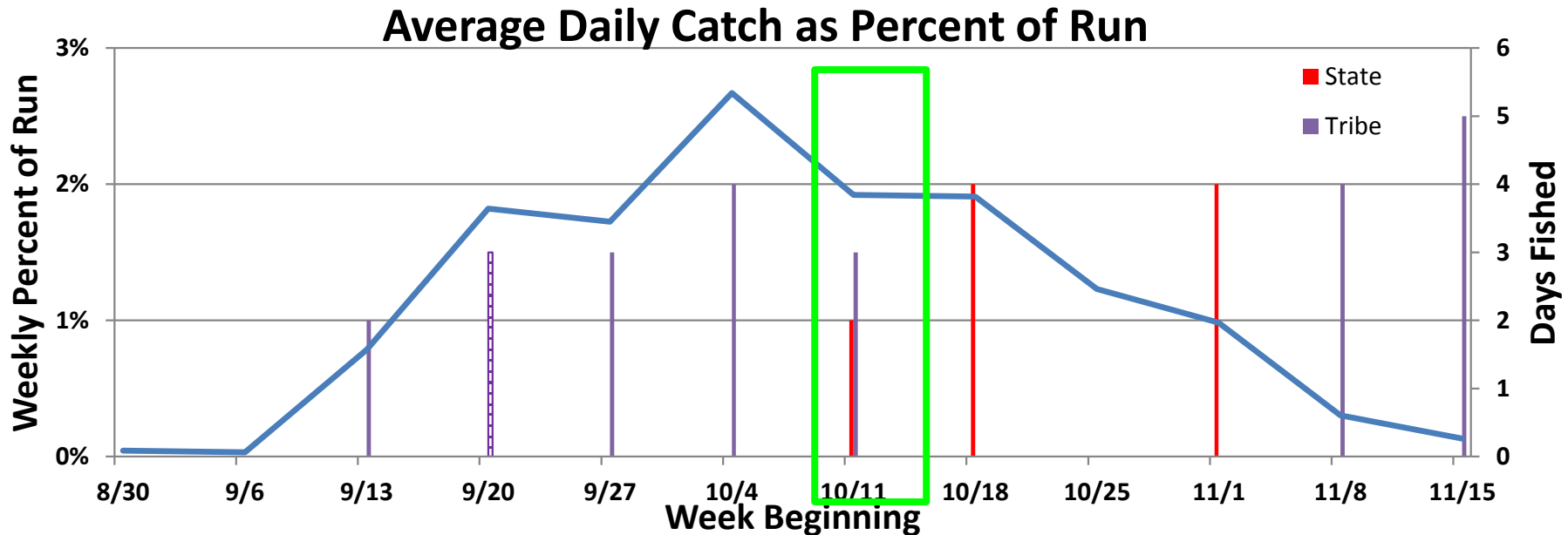
△ Median daily statistic (59 years) — Discharge

# 2015 Timeline

## Average Daily Catch as Percent of Run

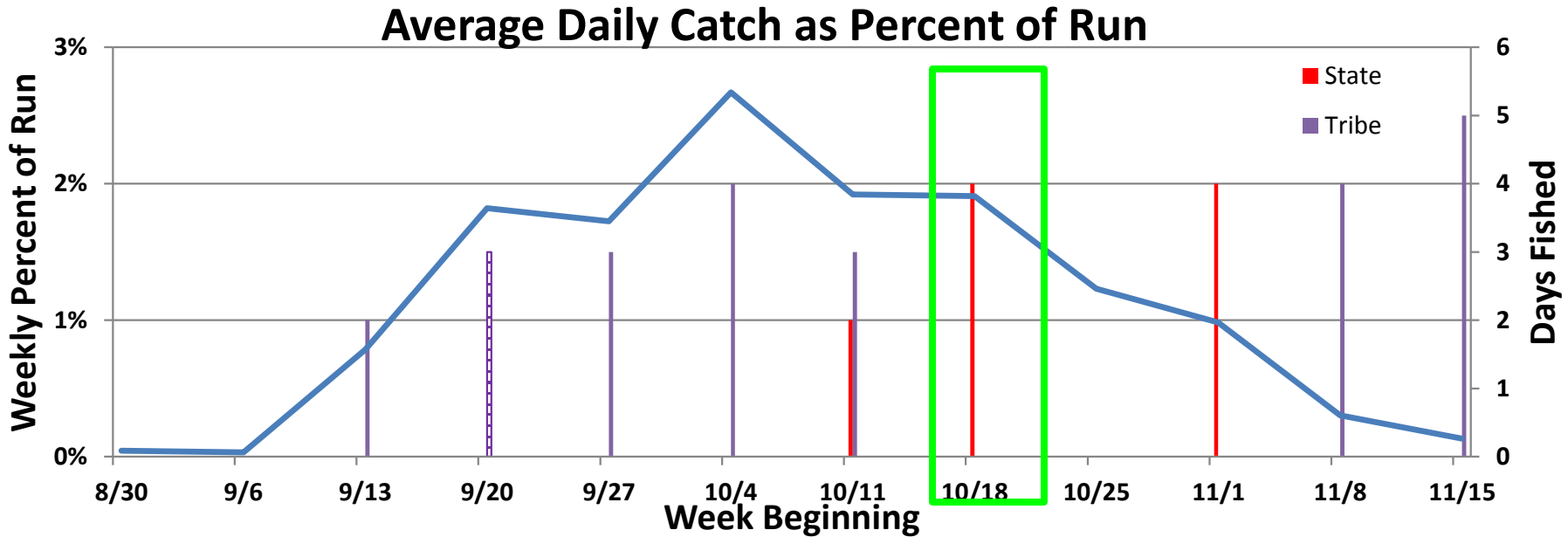


# 2015 Timeline



- **Notified advisors of potential changes**
- **Commercial catch = 516**
- **Need to examine upcoming fishery**

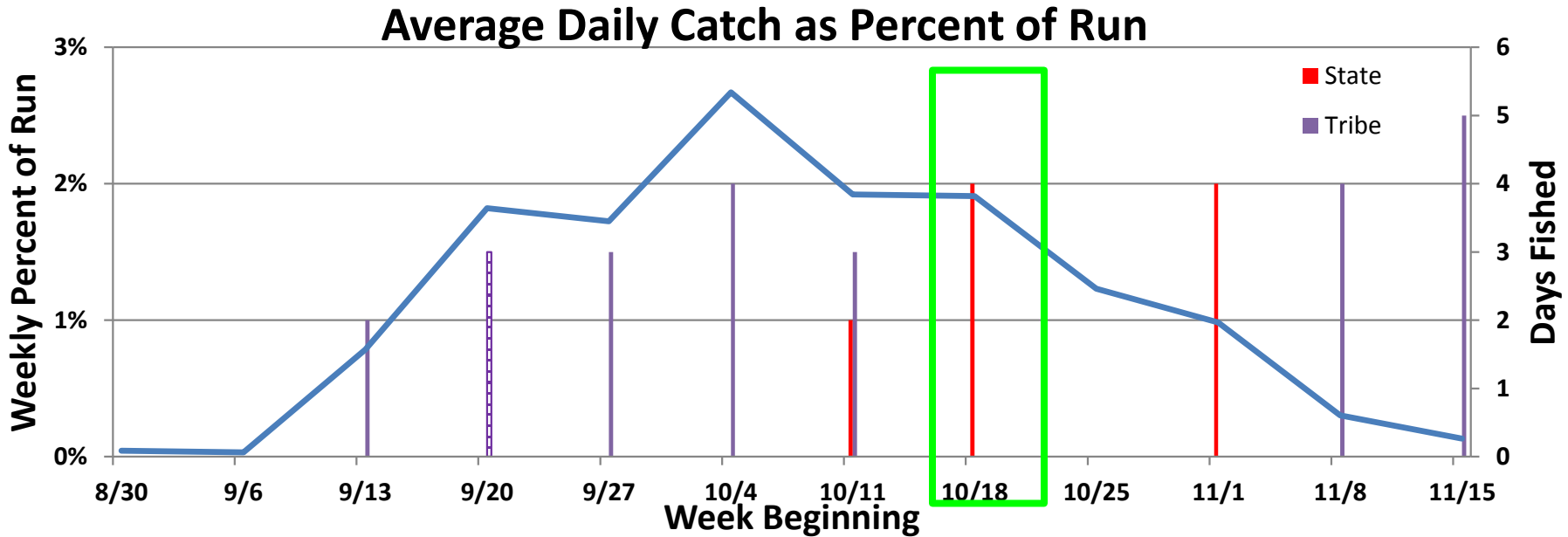
# 2015 Timeline



- **Access to tribal data from previous week**
- **ISU shows below forecast and not likely to meet escapement – about 2500 short**
- **Commercial catch = 682**
- **Closed 4<sup>th</sup> day of commercial, total catch = 1198**

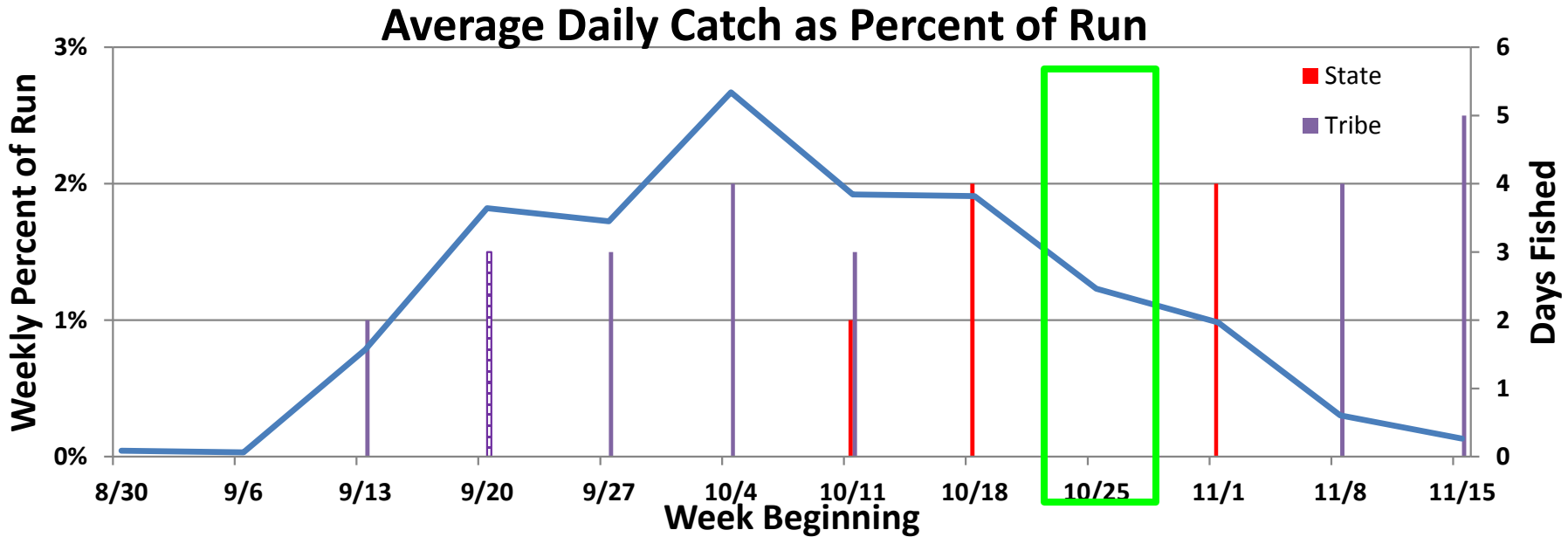


# 2015 Timeline



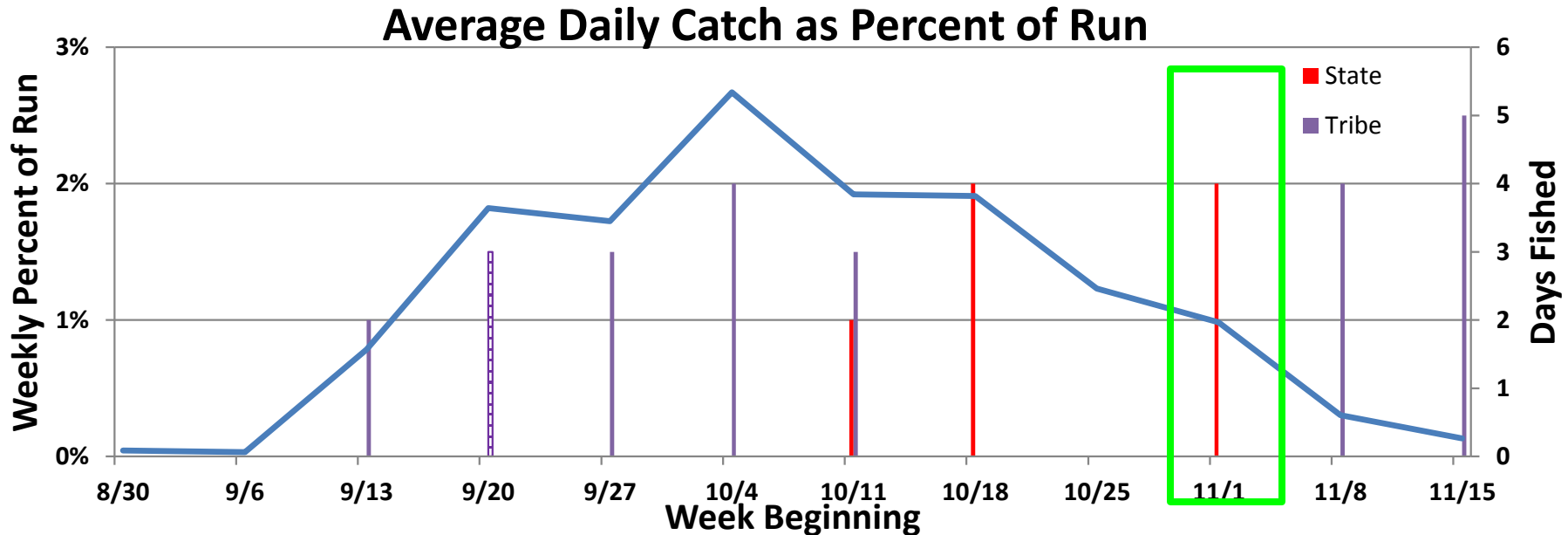
- No agreement on conservation need
- Advisor meeting
- ISU to tribes
- Closed recreational salmon fishing
- Tribes closed fisheries – significant step

# 2015 Timeline



- Tribes express concern about steelhead fisheries
- Closed all recreational fishing
- Kept commercial fishery closed following week

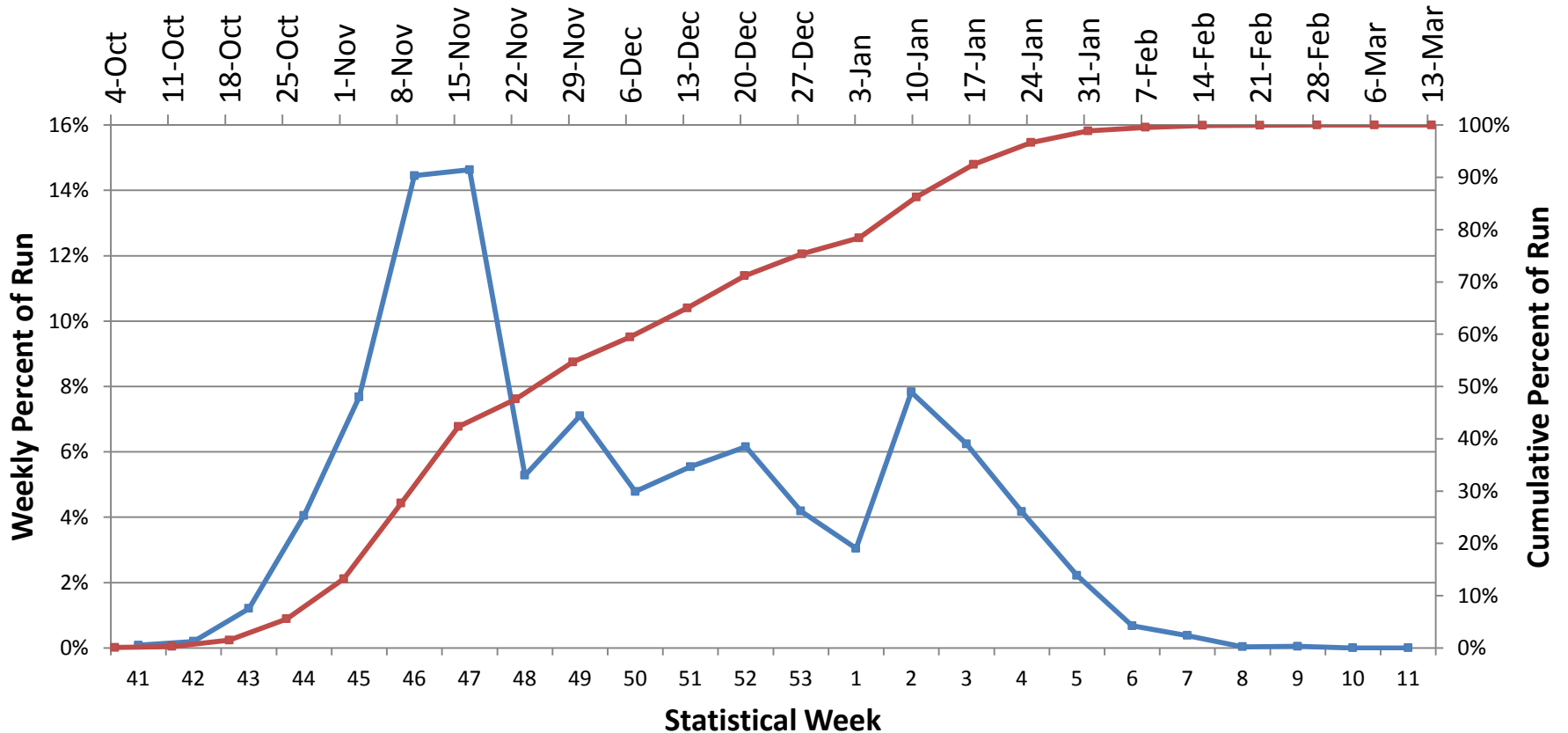
# 2015 Timeline



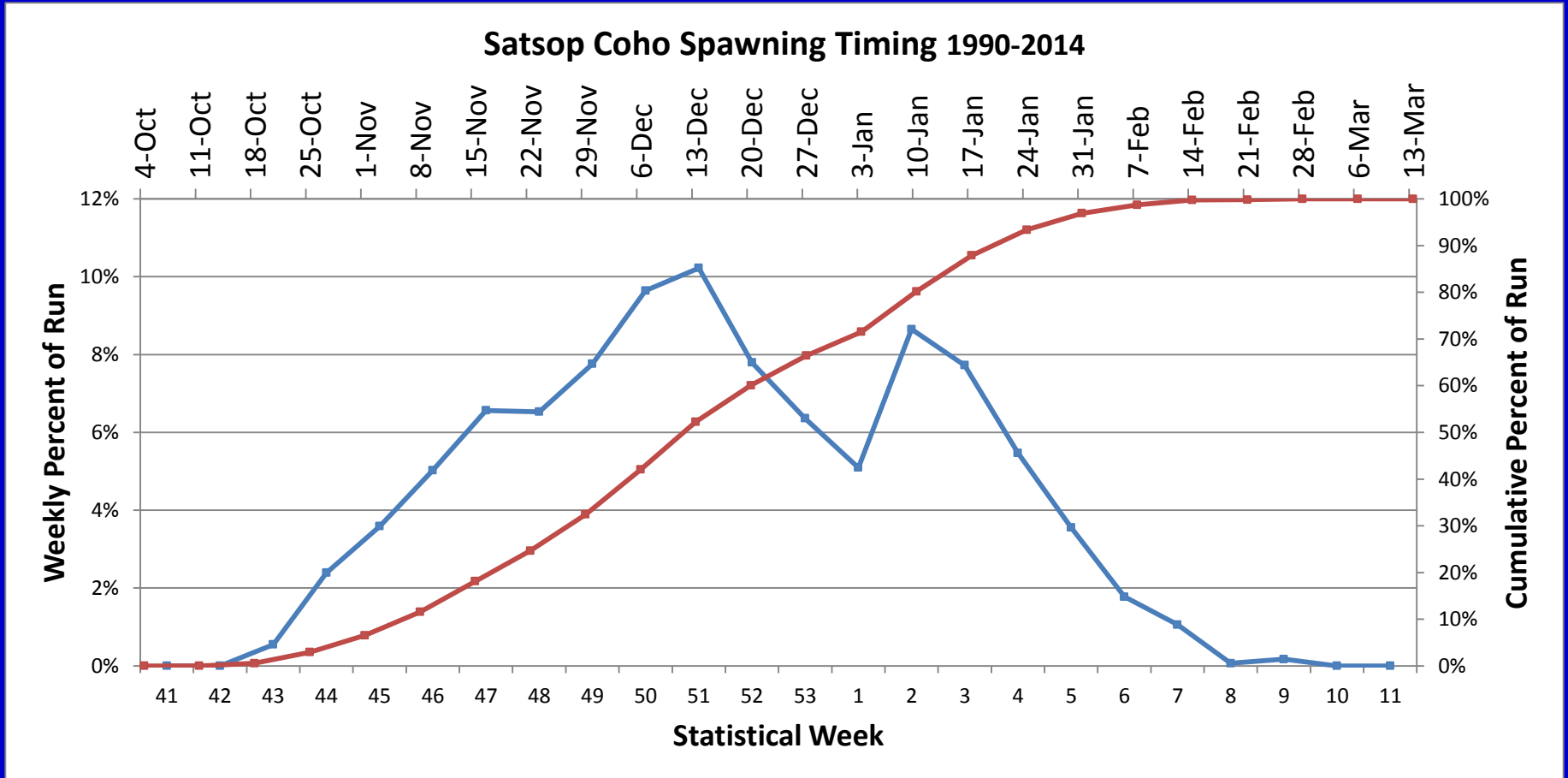
- **Early-timed hatchery coho egg take met**
- **Open specific areas for recreational fishing where hatchery coho likely to be**
- **Tribes not supportive of openings**

# Coho Spawn Timing

Humptulips Coho Spawning Timing 1990-2014



# Coho Spawn Timing



# Next Steps

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## Grays Harbor

- **Continue to refine in-season update models (week 41 is likely earliest possible)**
- **Co-manager discussions about steelhead seasons and potential late-timed coho impacts**

## Statewide

- **Continue to monitor hatchery egg take**
- **Continue to monitor wild coho escapements**