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Sustainability of the Alaska Salmon Fishery

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Alaska salmon: over three decades of sustained harvest above 100M salmon

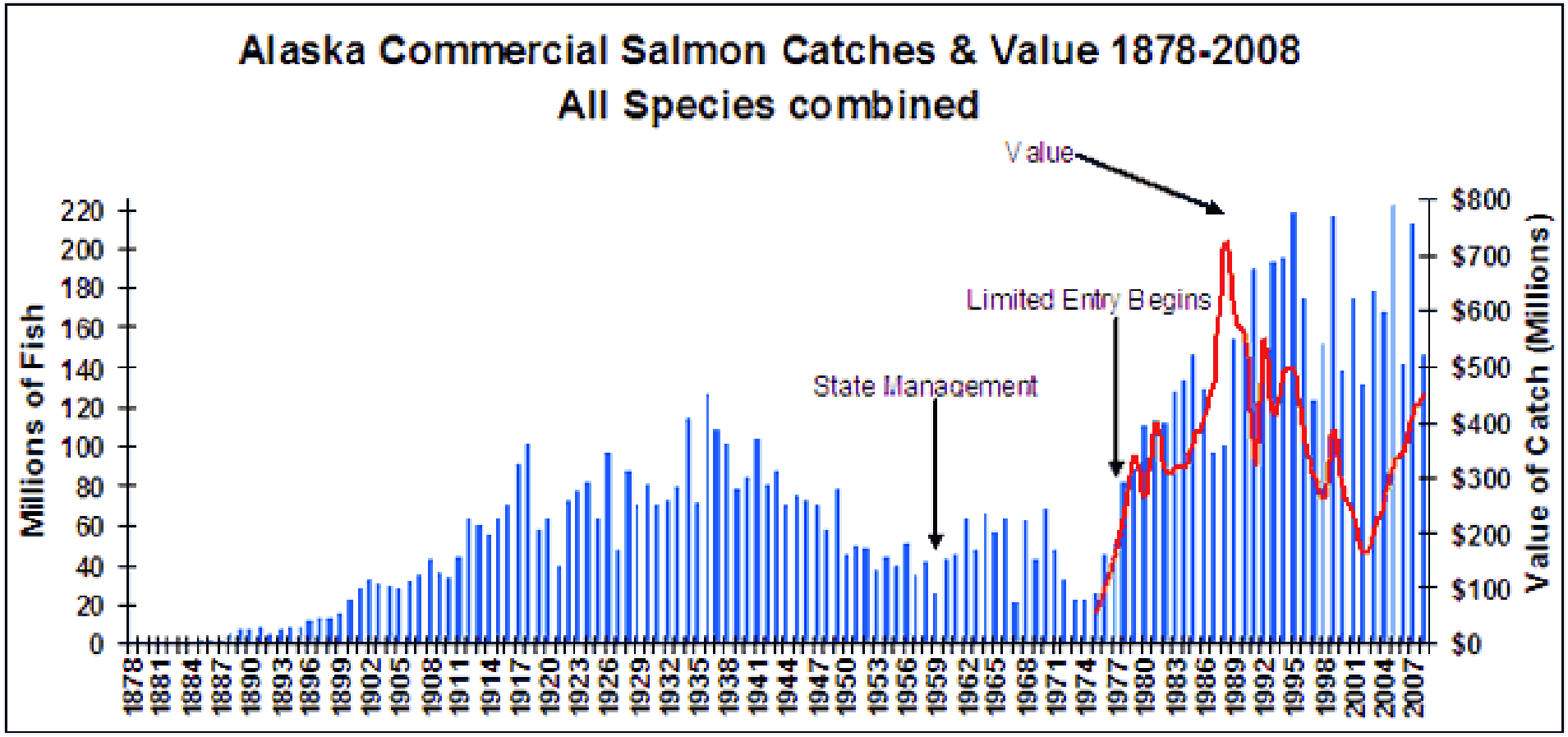
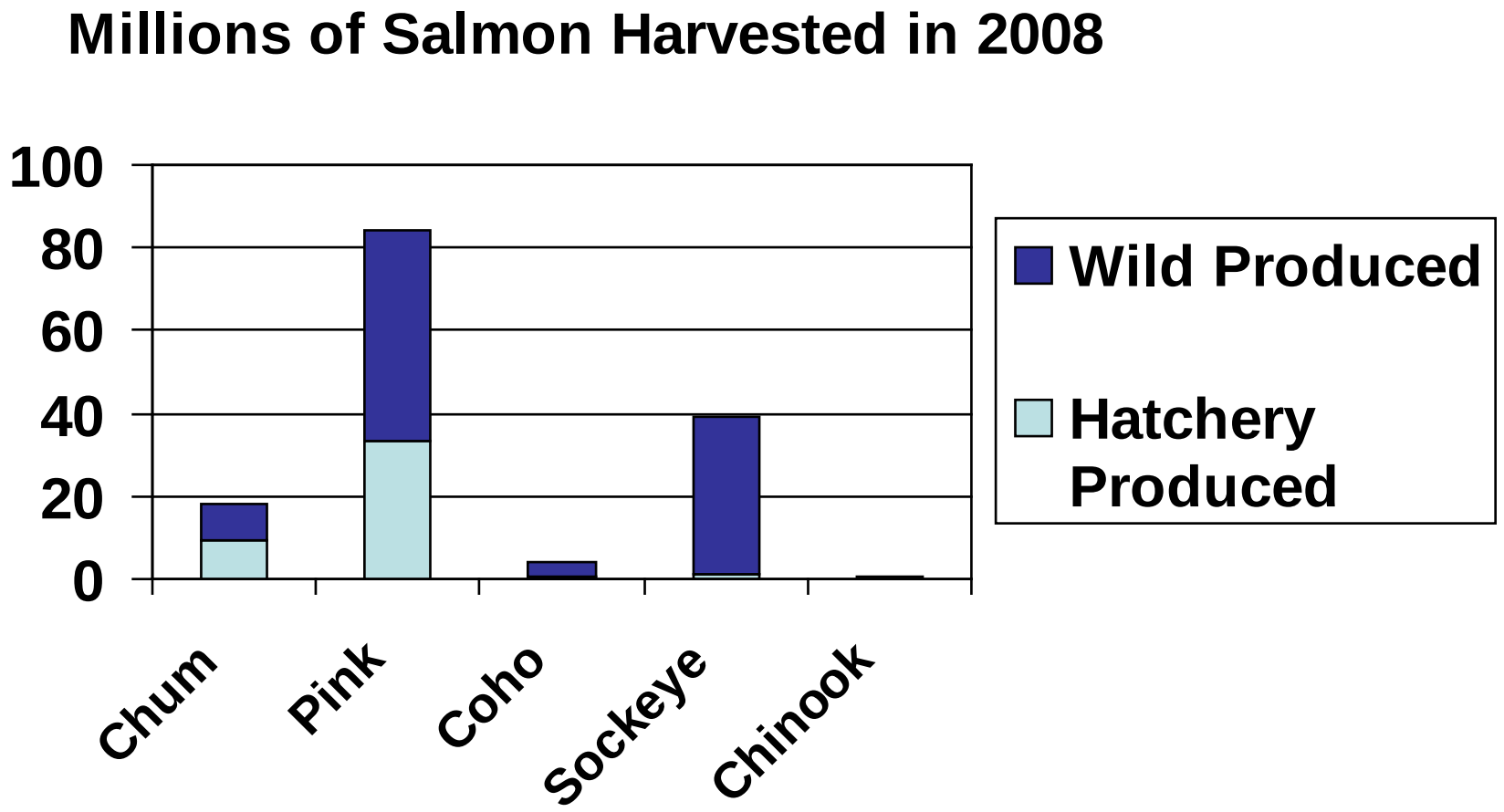


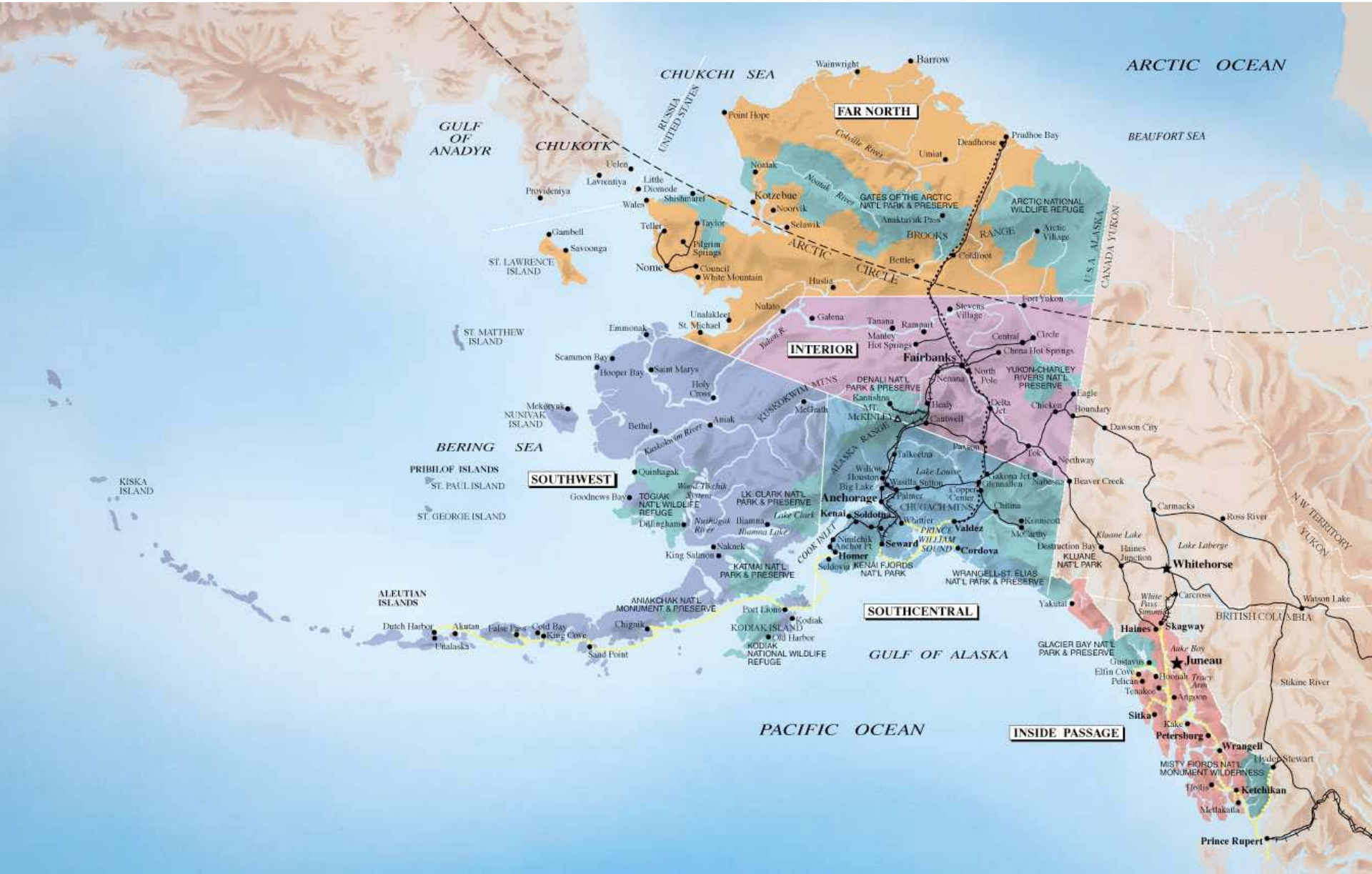
Figure from Alaska Dept of Fish and Game website

Sustainable fishery relies on both wild and hatchery production

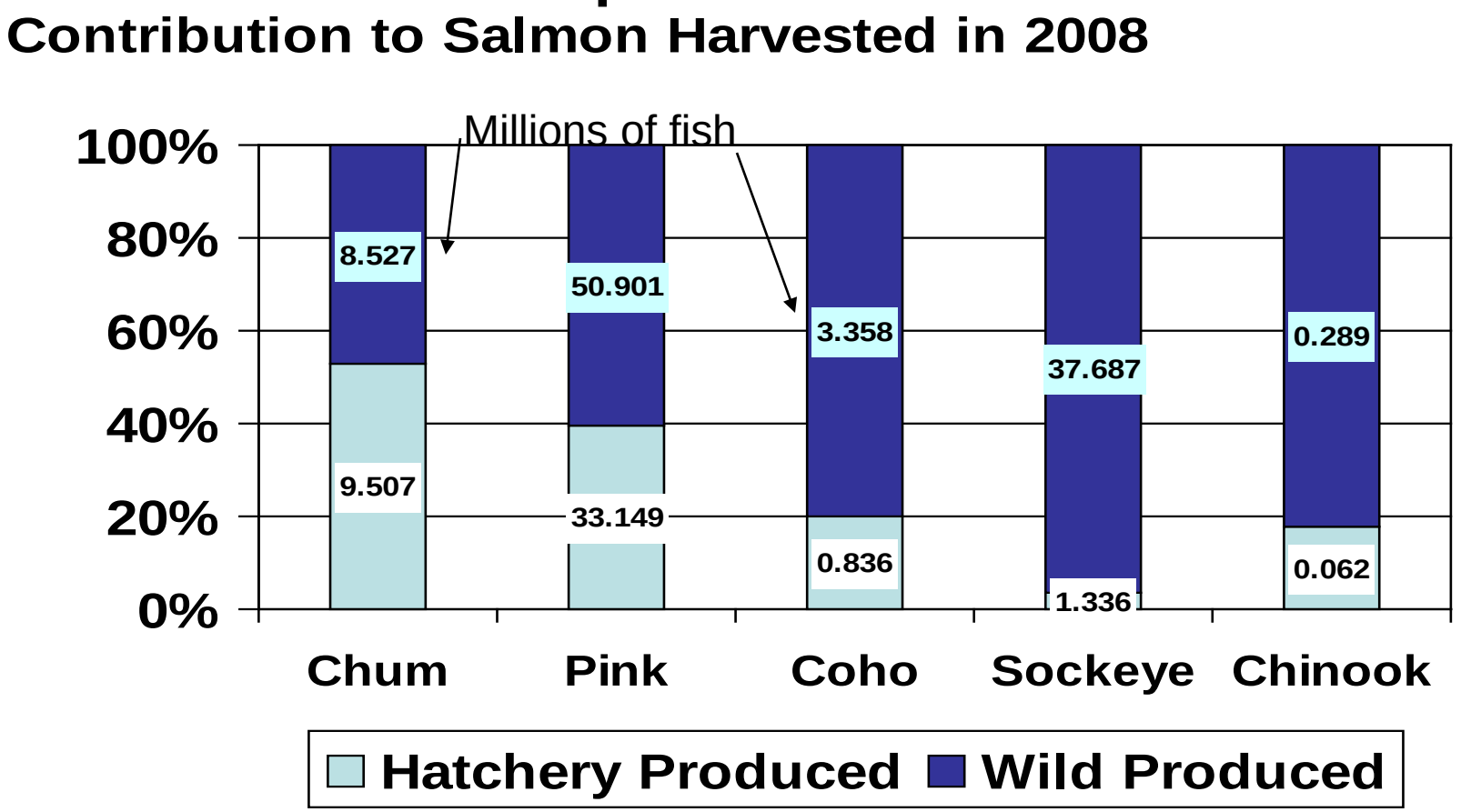


Alaska Dept of Fish & Game data

Most hatcheries are in Southeast and Prince William Sound



Contribution of hatcheries varies by species



Alaska Dept of Fish & Game data

Eco label: Marine Stewardship Council

- Alaska Salmon one of first certified as Sustainable in 2000
- Certification is renewed every 5 years (Alaska salmon renewed in 2005)
- Requires annual performance audit

Single Certification for All Alaska Salmon

- Required by Alaska because markets may not discriminate among species, areas
- Application process based on review of 16 ‘Units’

Certification Process Involves ‘Client’ applying to ‘Agent’ of MSC

- Agent is a private firm
- Client is Alaska Dept of Fish and Game
- MSC has ‘Standards’ that must be met
- The Agent’s Assessment Team uses ‘Standards’ to establish Performance Indicators and Scoring Guideposts and requires Report from Client
- The Team scores each Performance Indicator and drafts a report.
- The Team then chooses Peer Reviewers. After Peer Review and Public Comment a Final Report is written with a recommendation for or against Certification. The fishery must obtain a minimum score in each of the 16 Units to get Certification
- The Team also identifies Conditions which the Client is required to satisfy in order to pass the annual audit

Compliance with MSC has been difficult process

The Recertification Report says: “The general 'Conditions' set for the Alaska salmon fisheries are:

•ADF&G must recognize that MSC standards require regular … inspections … on compliance with the 'Conditions' … ...

•ADF&G must agree by contract to be responsible financially and technically for compliance with required surveillance audits …

•ADF&G must recognize that MSC standards require a full re-evaluation … every five years.

•… ADF&G shall develop an 'Action Plan for Meeting the Condition for Continued Certification' ….

From the Final re-certification Report to MSC in 2007

Alaska Dept of Fish & Game has Withdrawn as Client

- Beneficiary should be Client—not state regulatory agency
- Misguided analysis of fishery *(by MSC)*
- MSC Conditions have limited use

Personal communication Asst Commissioner D Bedford

Some markets require MSC label

- Particularly European markets demand MSC label
- Most domestic markets for Alaska salmon do not require MSC but sustainability is important and MSC label may be required in future

New Client for Alaska Salmon: Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

- ASMI has made a provisional commitment to assume responsibility as Client
- Decision to be made in December 09

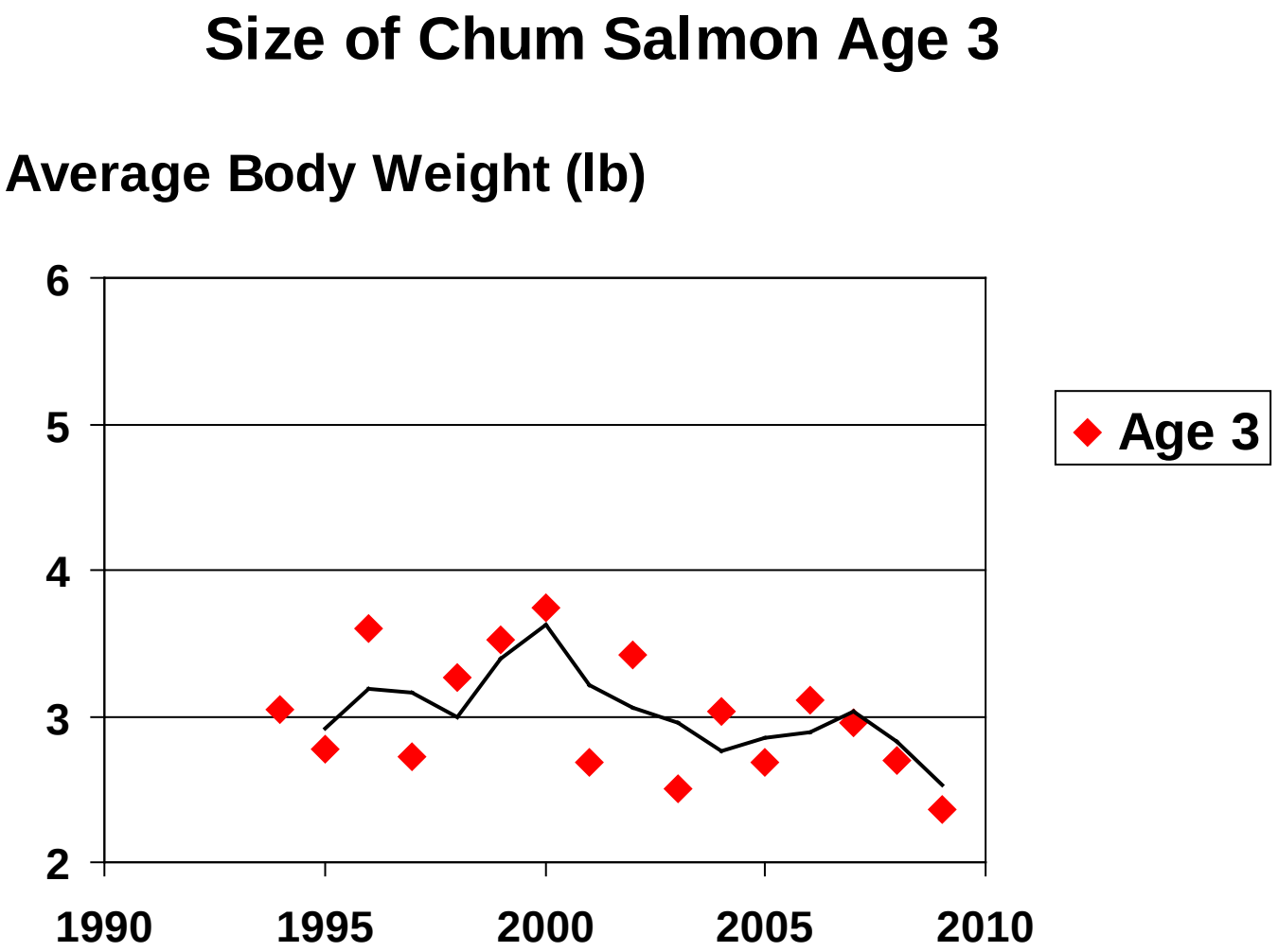
Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

- Partnership of State of Alaska and seafood industry
- Purpose: develop markets for all seafood harvested in Alaska
- Emphasizes sustainability of Alaska fisheries
- Has its own label

AMSI's Conditions for Being Client

- Cost must be born by users
- Alaska origin of salmon must be clear
- Do not interfere with fishery management
- One certification for all Alaska salmon
- Reduce administrative burden
- Don't change definition of 'sustainable'
- Recognize Alaska expertise

There may be a recent trend toward smaller size



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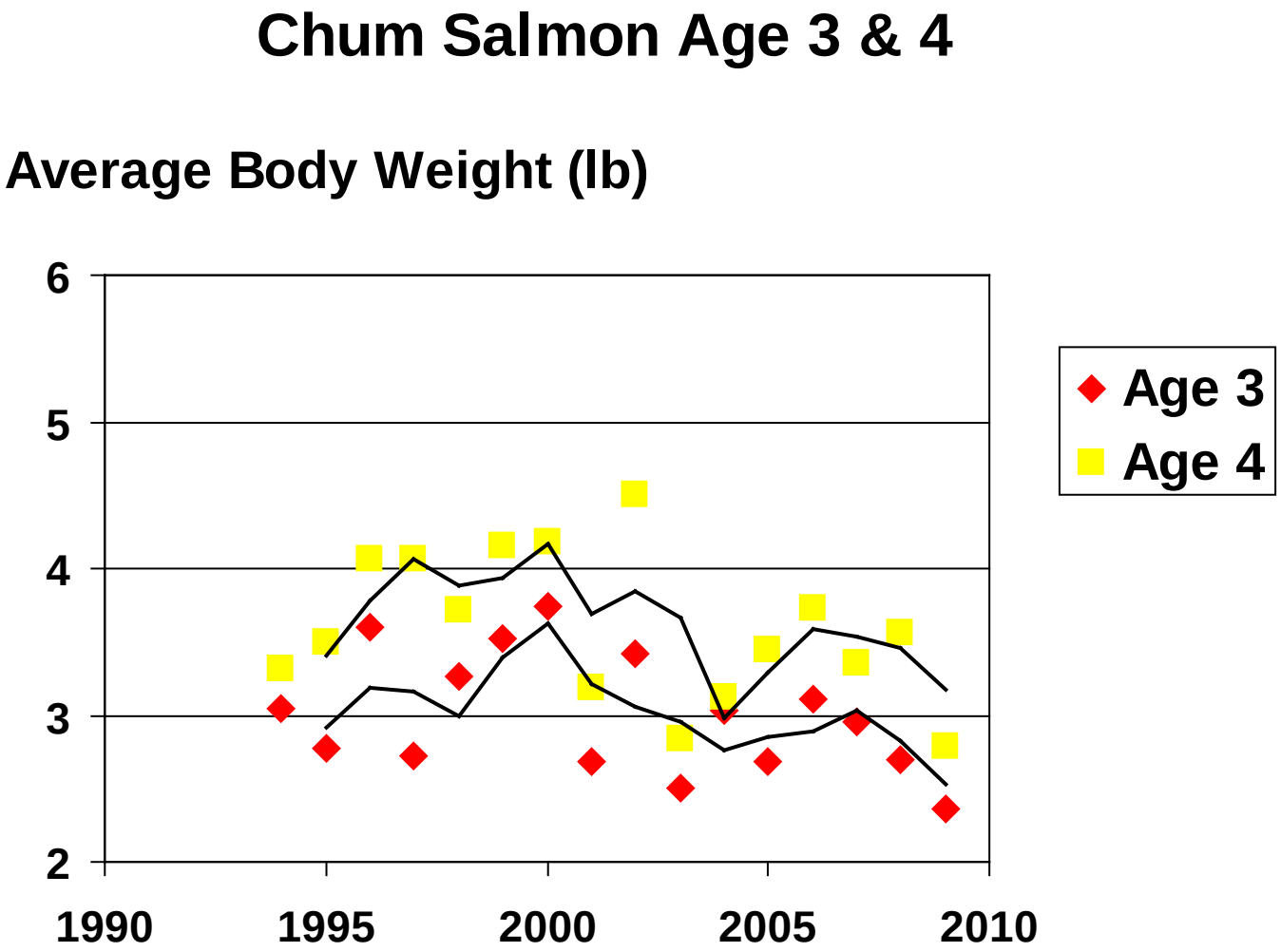
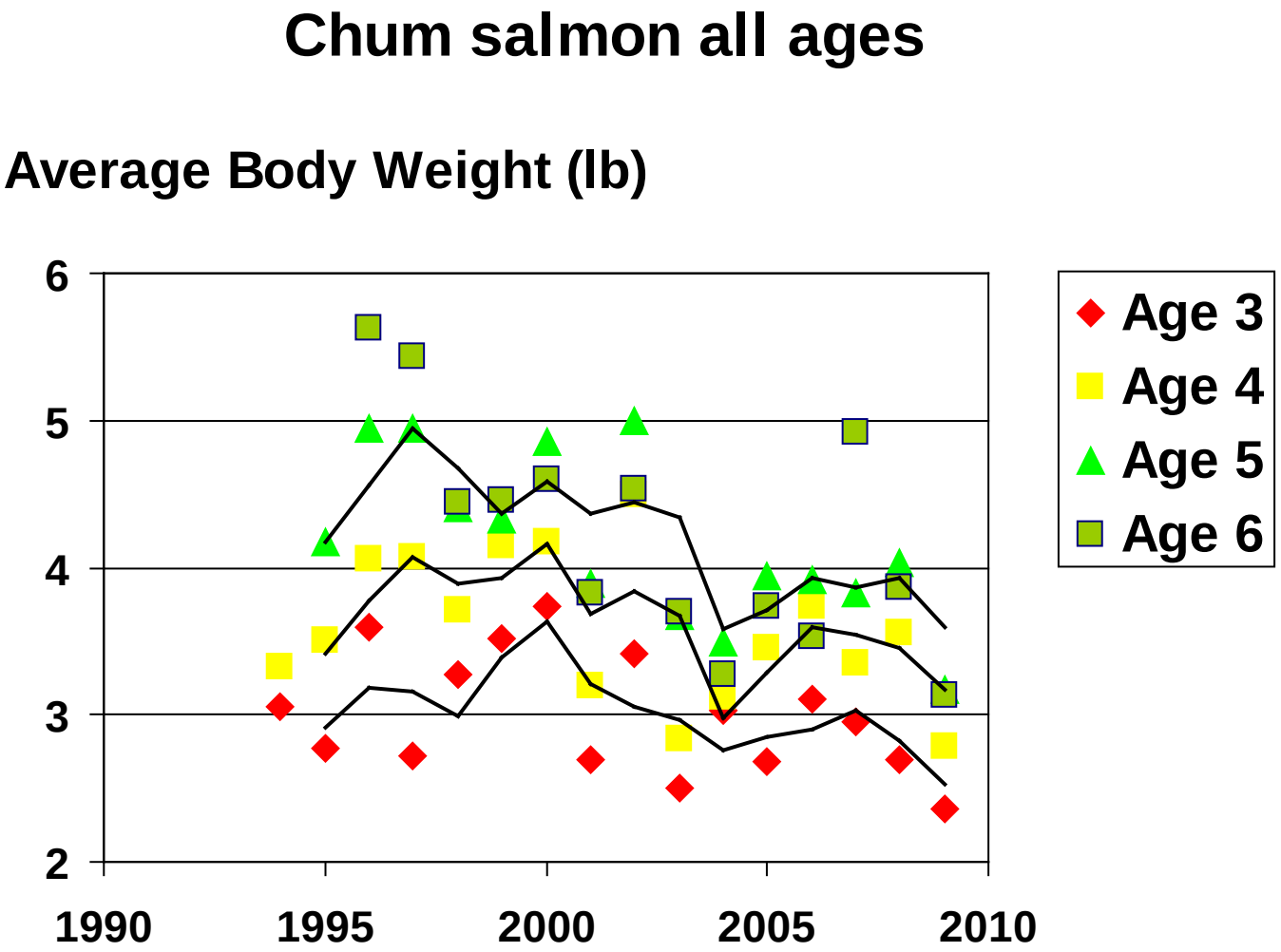
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