

# **JUNEAU WE HAVE A PROBLEM: Science Based Research is at Risk**

Borough Fish Commissioner, Larry Engel

Legislative Information Office, Jan. 3, 2019





# Many Residents Dissatisfied: Want Fisheries Management Changes





# Angler days dropped

from more than 400,000 to 160,000 during recent years





10 years ago

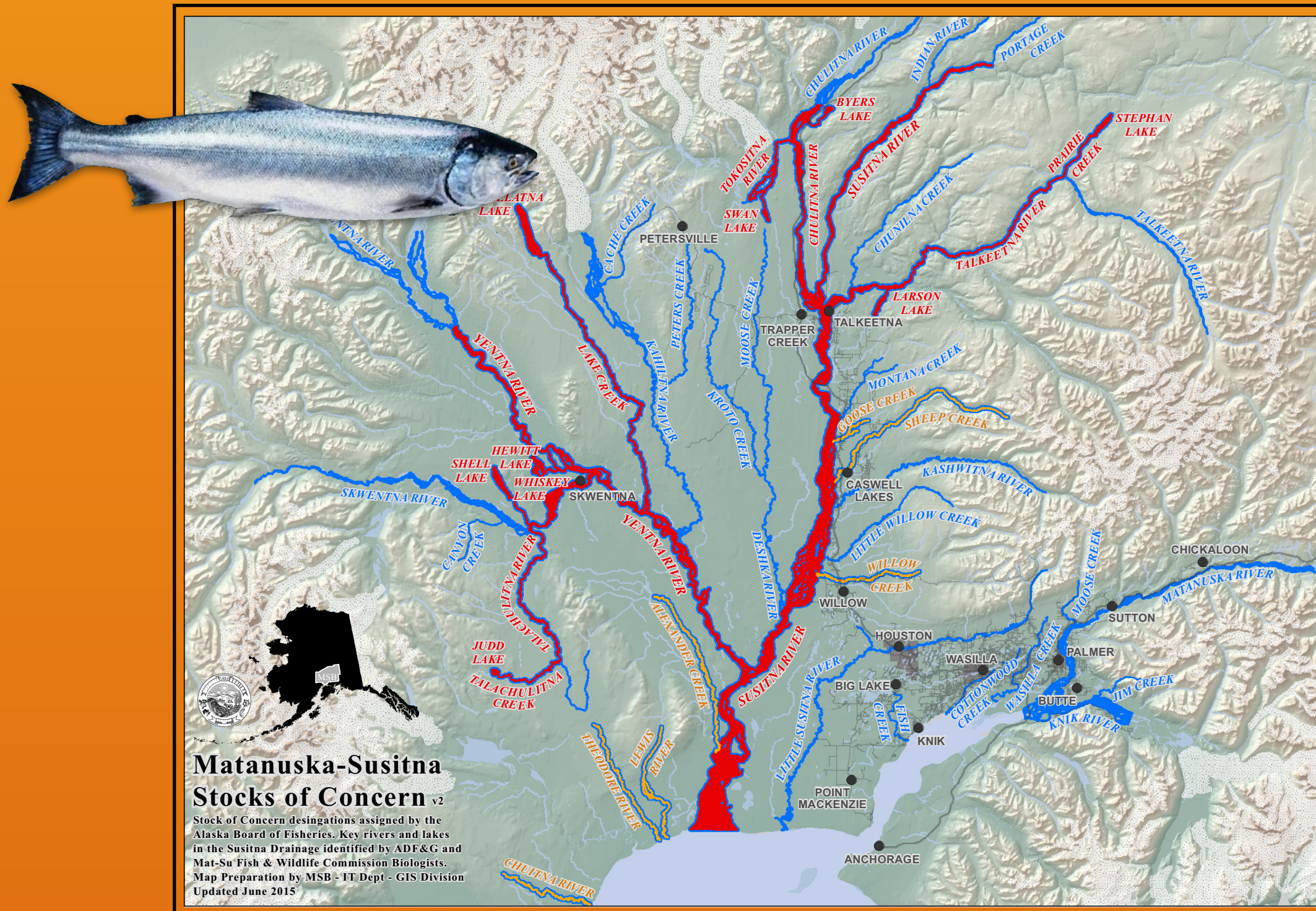
**\$118 million**  
spent by sport anglers



**We need to restore  
that economic driver**



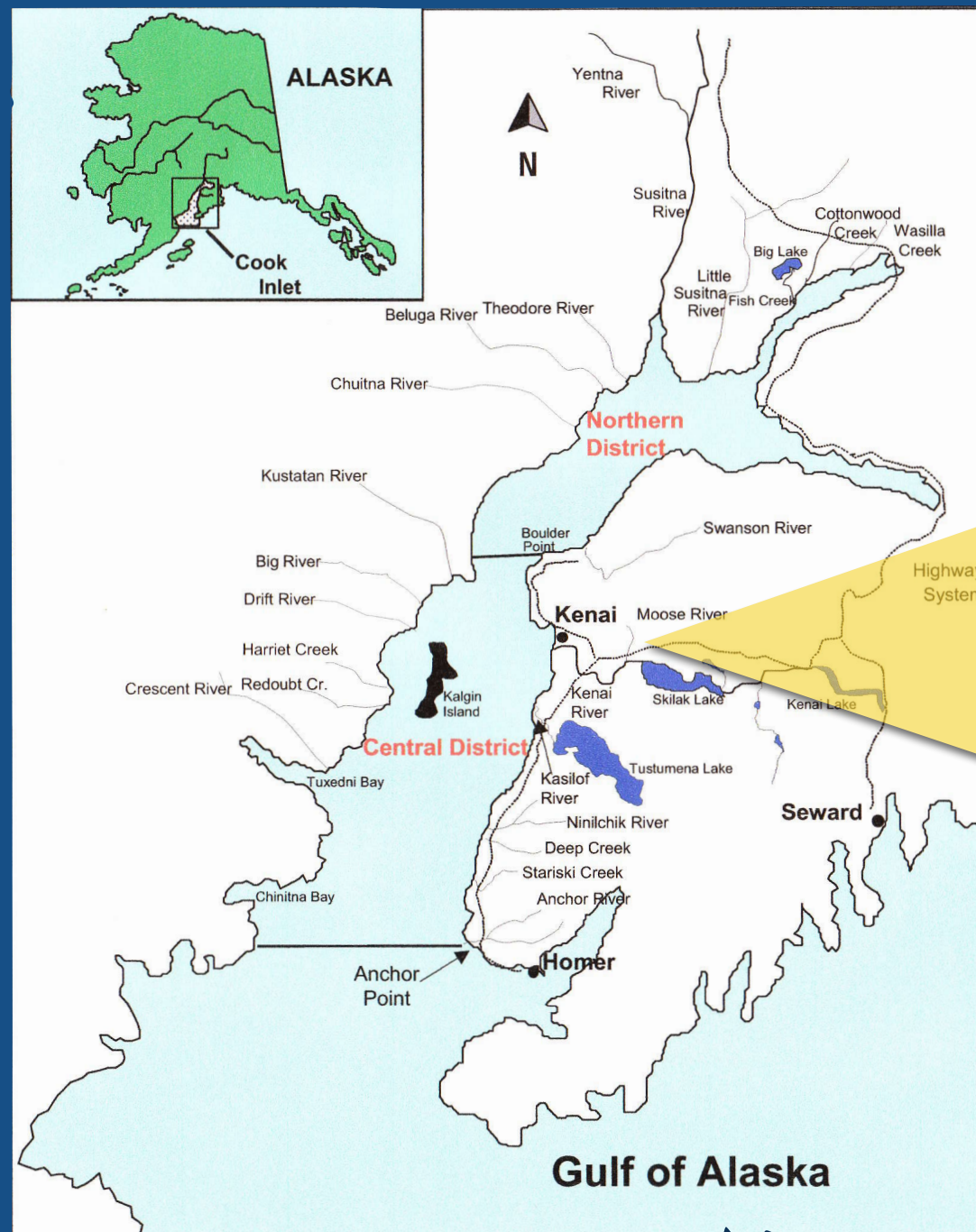
# Stocks of Concern



8 of the state's 18 are here in Northern Cook Inlet

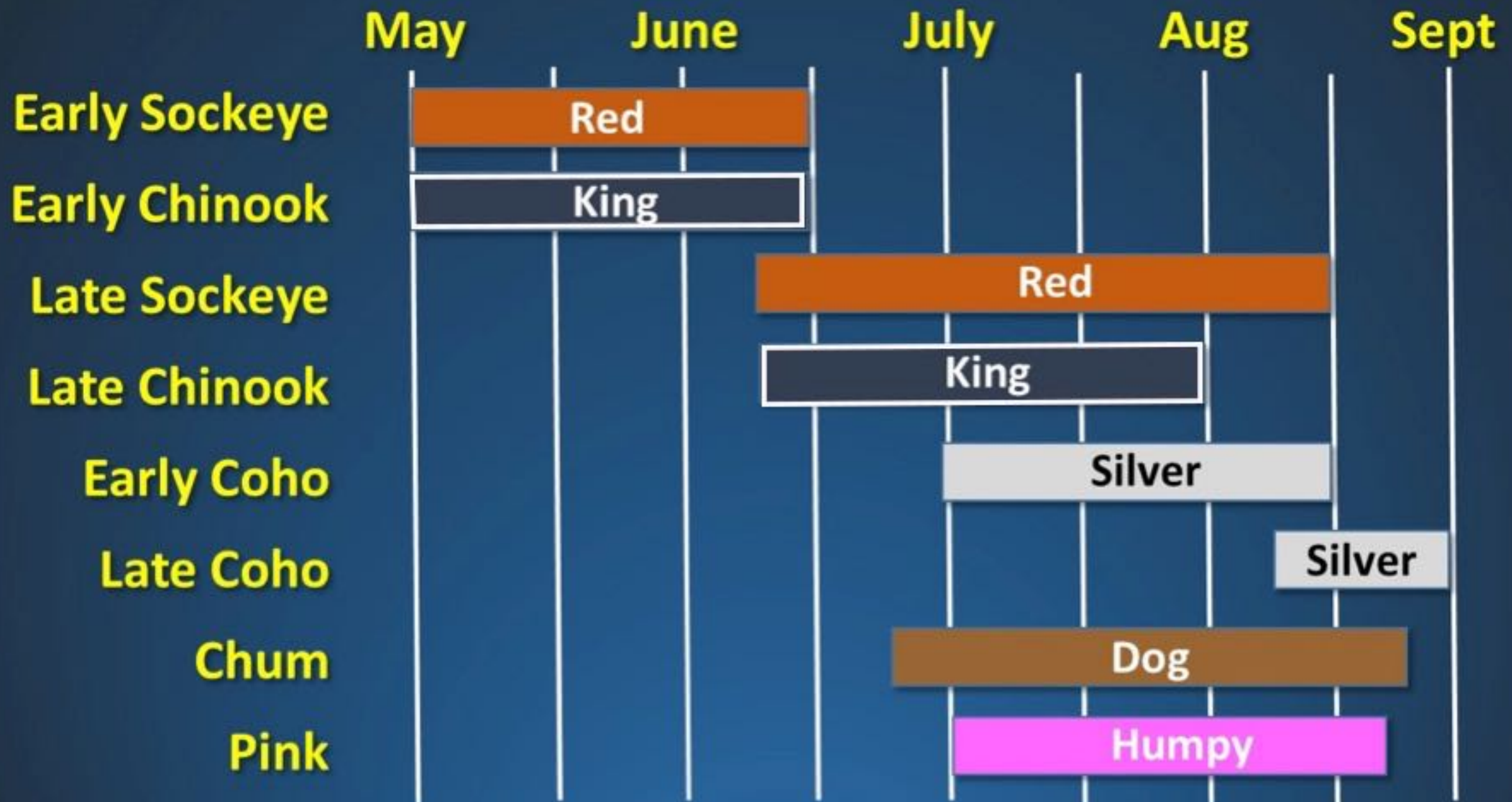


# Kenai is driving it



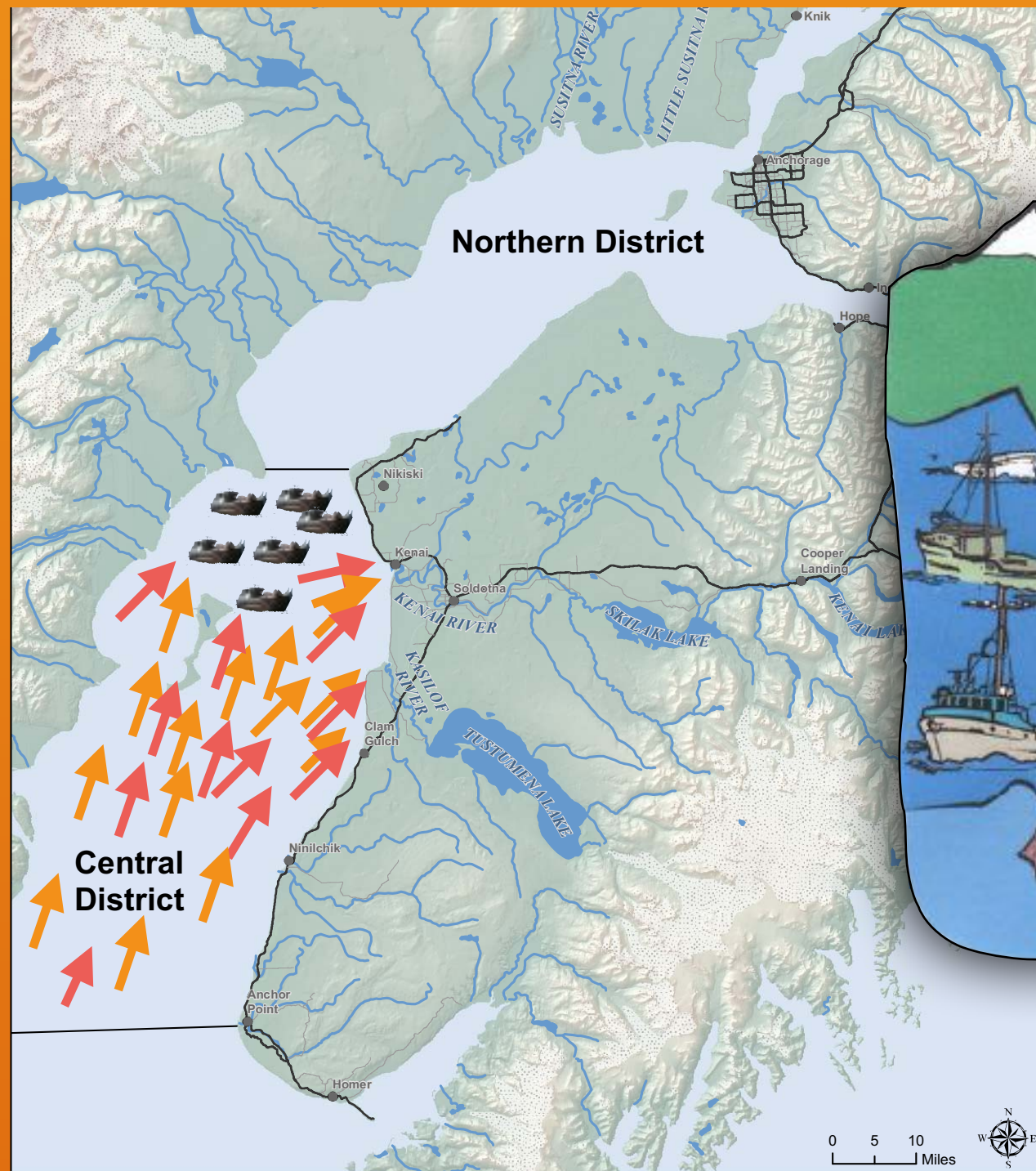
**Managed to maximize the harvest of Kenai River sockeye to the detriment of northern salmon**

# Run Timing of Salmon in UCI





# Commercial nets intercept northern fish

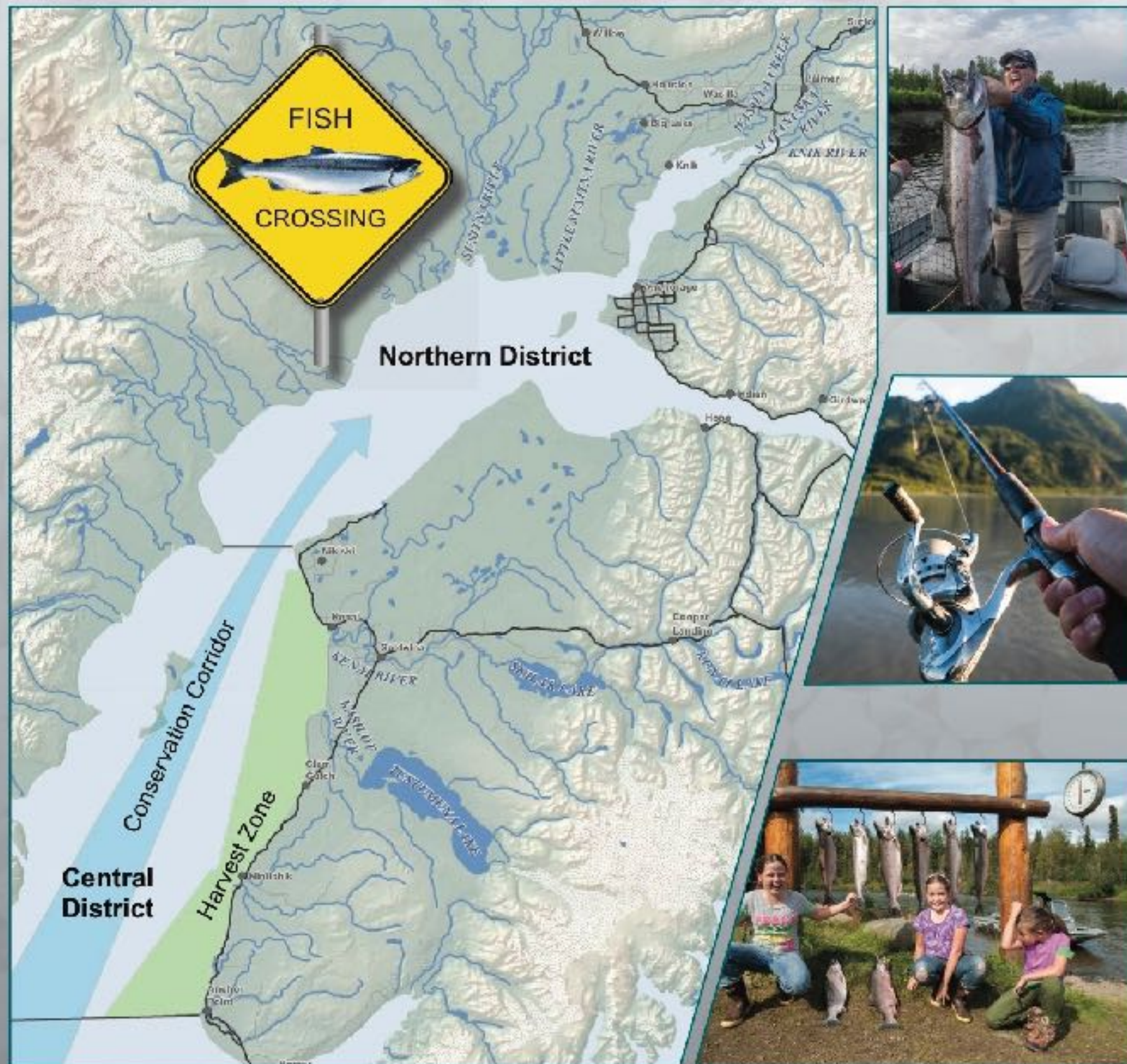


...on three!

Running the UCI gauntlet



# The Solution is the Conservation Corridor





# Just Like Bristol Bay Fisheries

Commercial fishery subdistricts

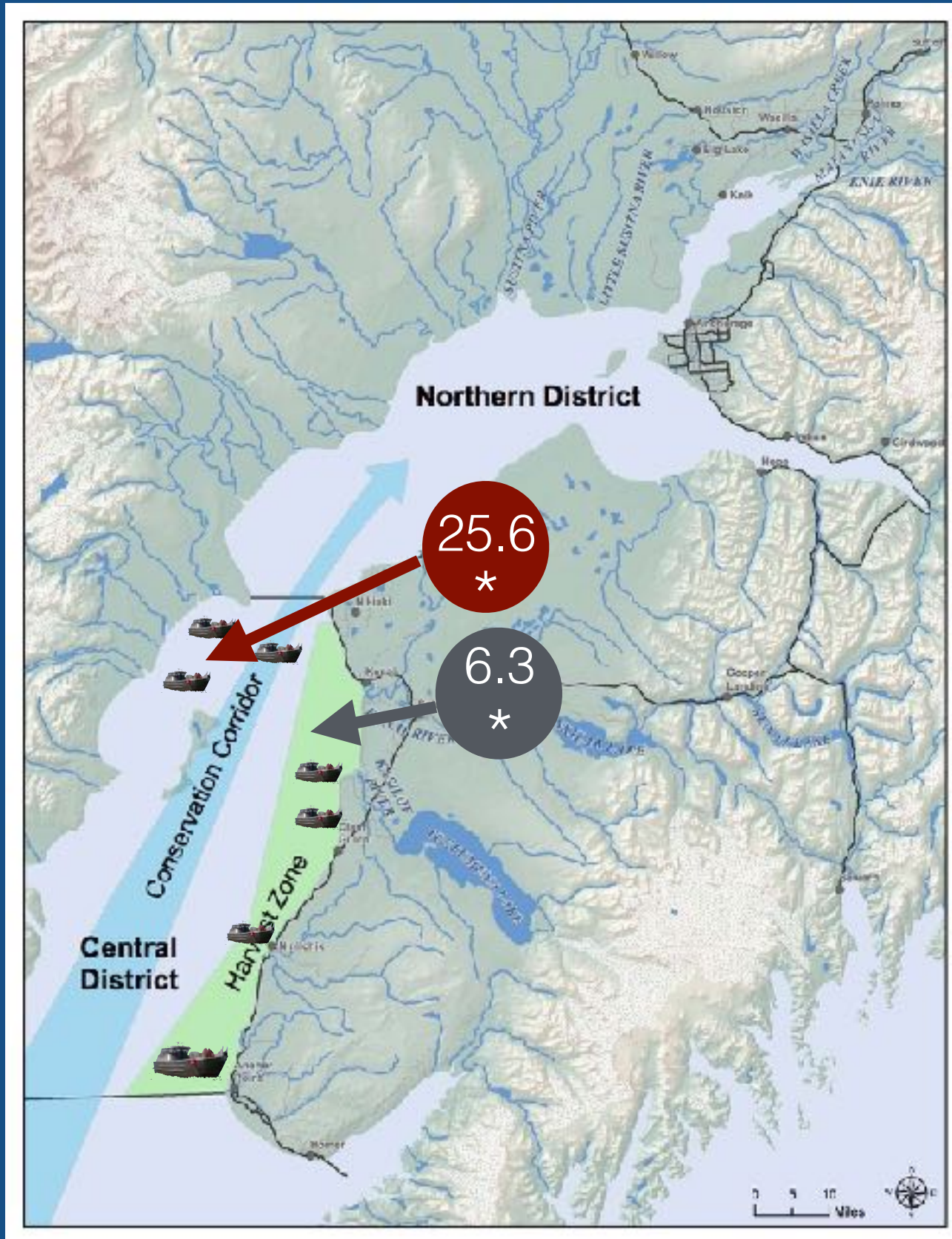


Discreet stock harvest zones

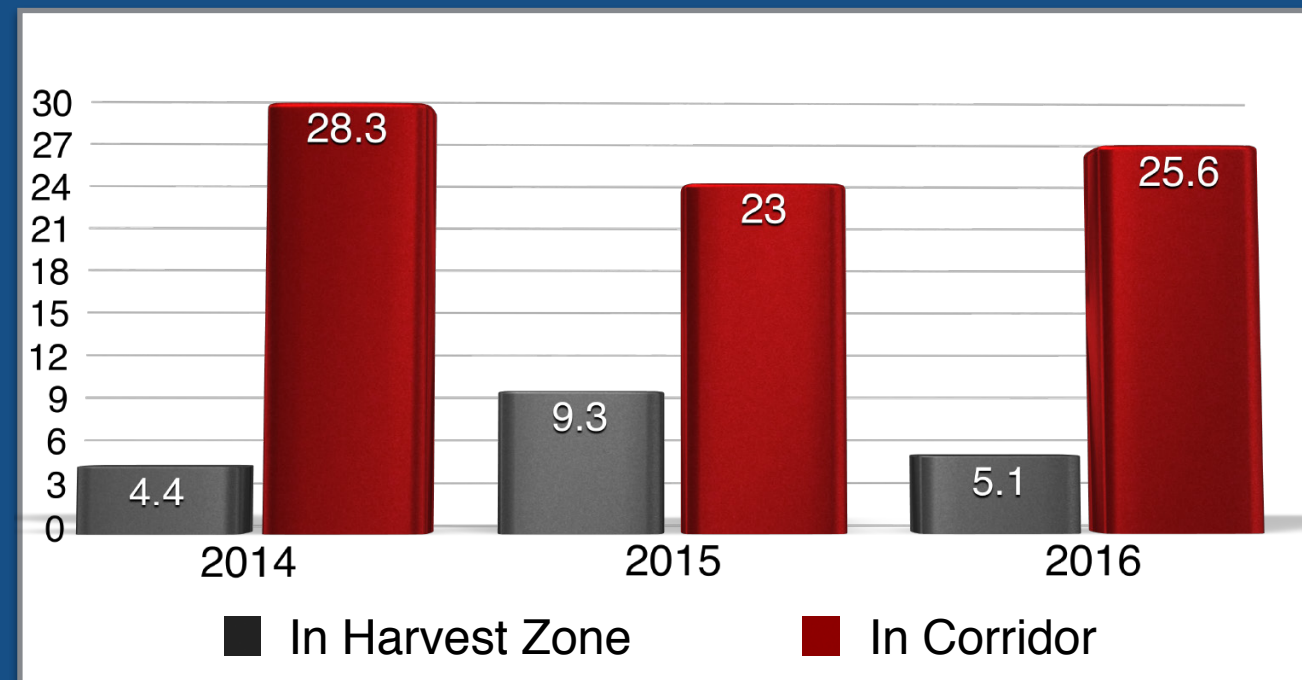
World's most successful salmon fishery



# Data collected since 2014 shows Corridor is working



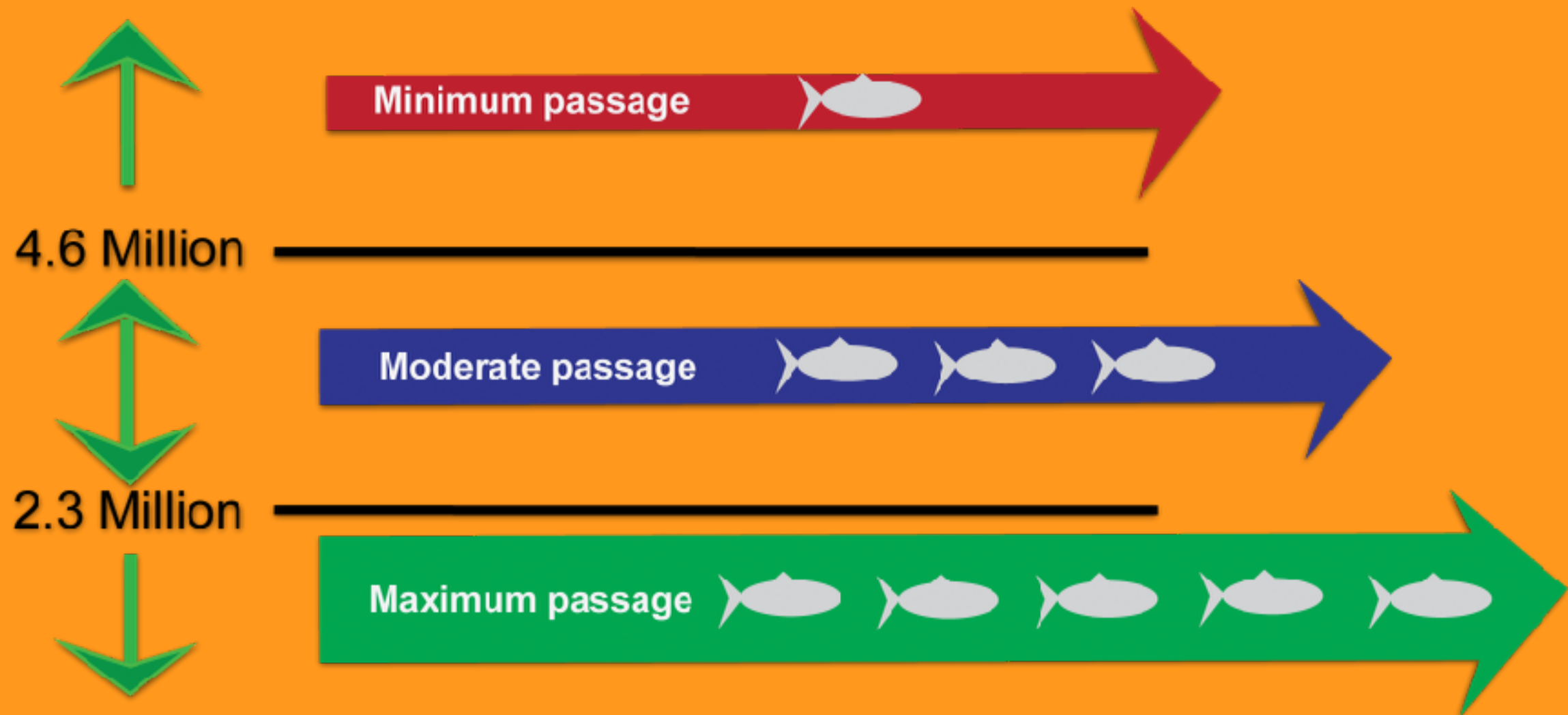
## Coho



\* From 2014-2016, drifters harvested an average delivery per vessel of 25.6 coho in the corridor versus 6.3 coho in the harvest zone from July 16-31



# Kenai Drives Management



**Larger Kenai sockeye projections = less protection for Northern Cook Inlet salmon**



# Ongoing Issues

North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) rewriting federal management plans is a big uncertainty and could undo all previous gains

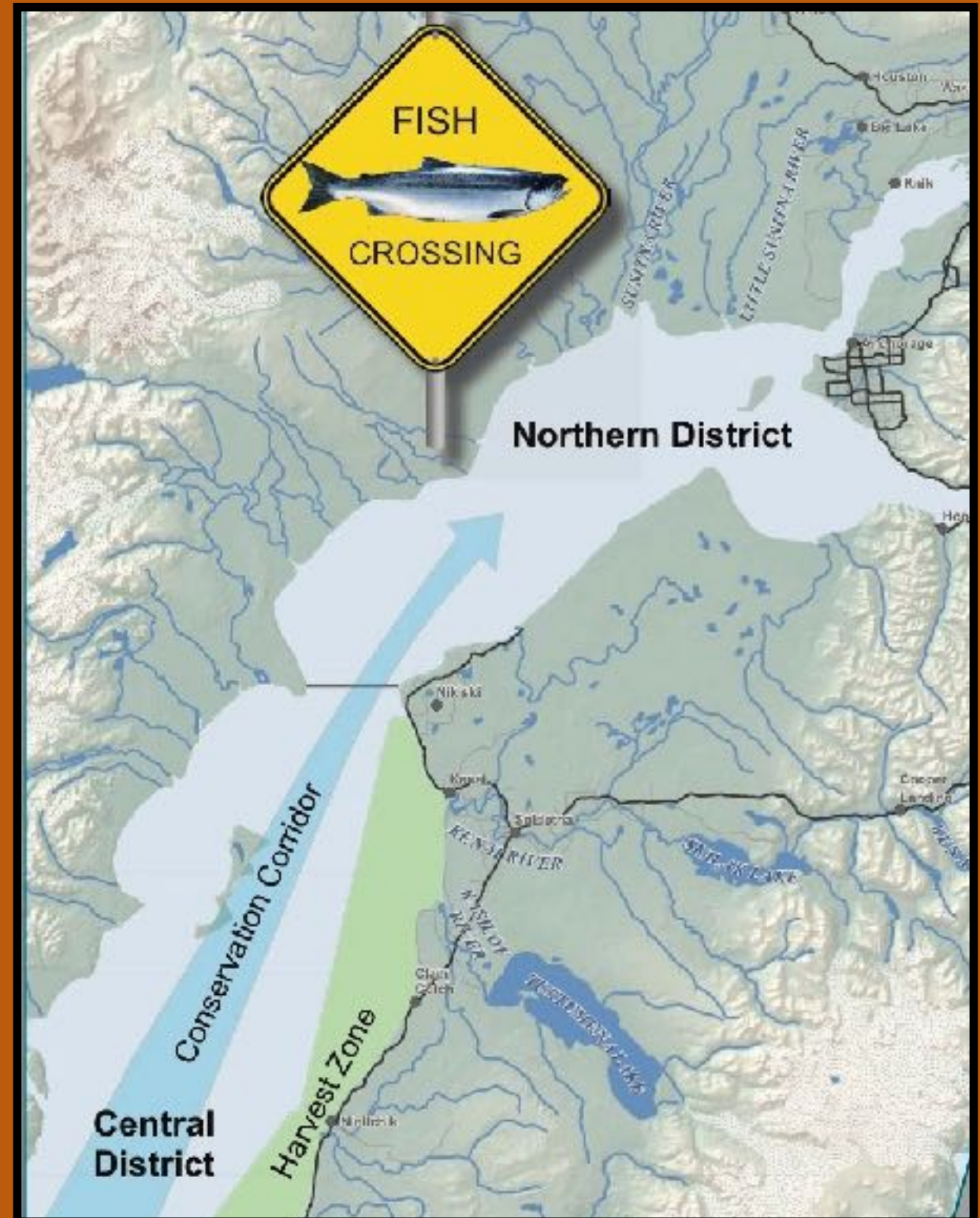
*Budget concerns with the State's lower revenue is a threat to maintaining essential management tools*





# Conservation Corridor Depends on Scientific Research

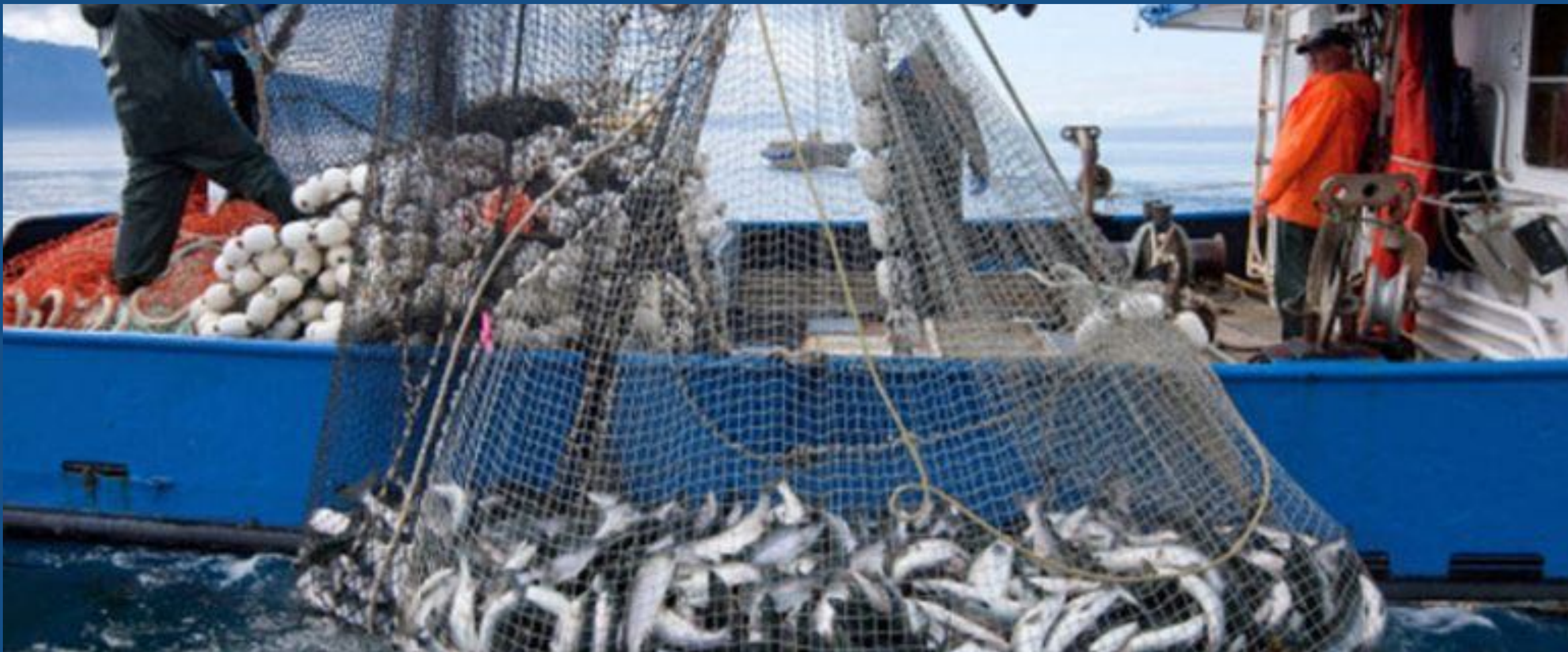
- Migration patterns and timing
- Escapement goals
- Exploitation rate
- Return per spawner





# Genetics

Coho program ended after four years

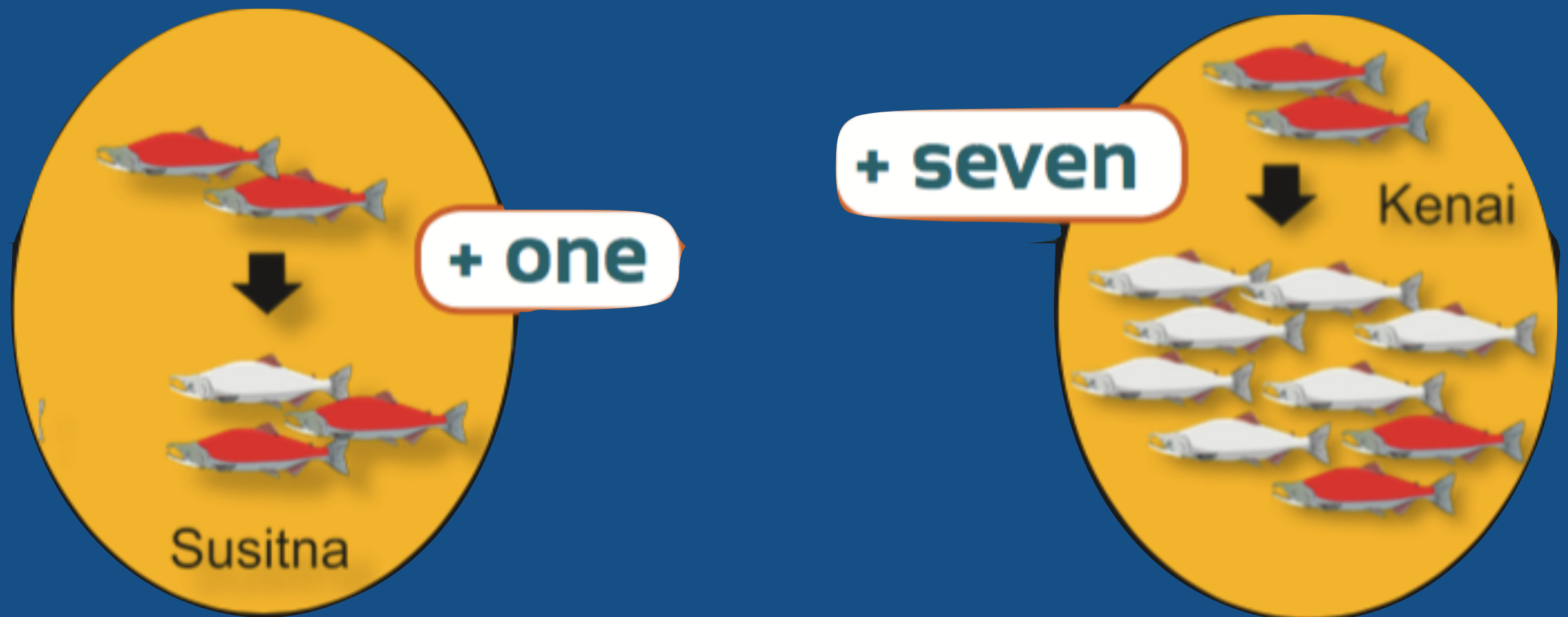




# GENETICS RESEARCH HELPS US DETERMINE PRODUCTIVITY

## PRODUCTIVITY OF STOCKS

*How research helps*

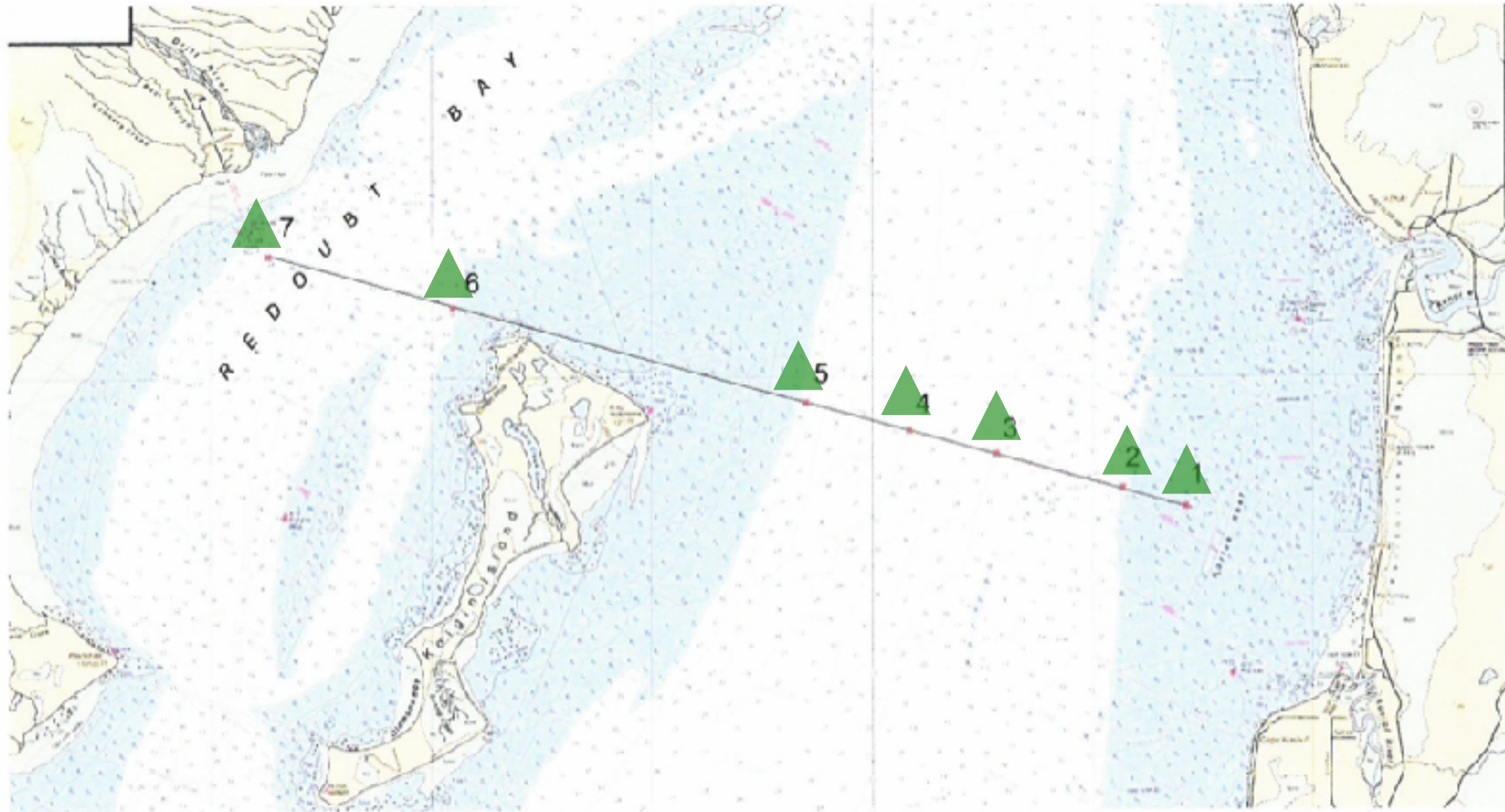


PRODUCTIVITY DETERMINATION IS A KEY FACTOR IN  
SUSTAINABLE MAT-SU FISHERIES MANAGEMENT



# Northern Off-Shore Test Fishery

One of two sources for genetics research



**RESTORE** genetic stock identification

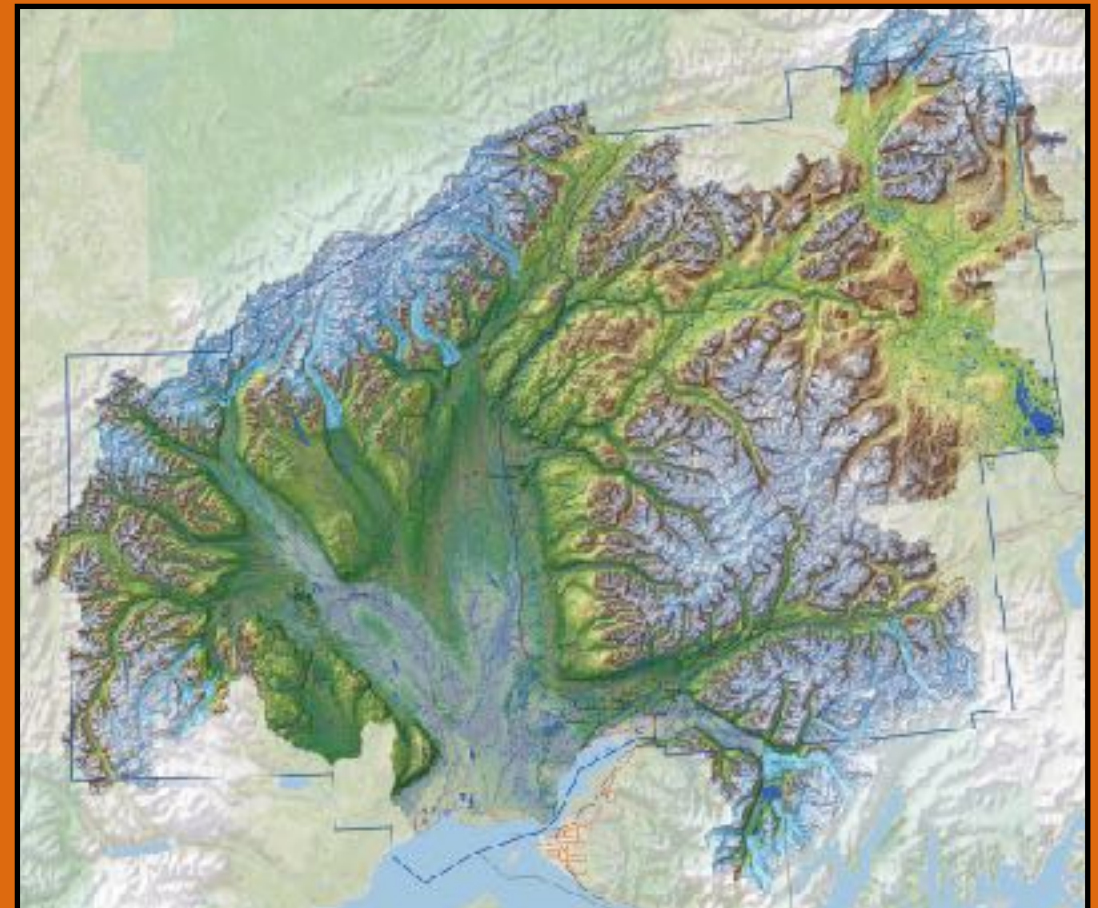


# Defending Coho Escapement Goals



ONLY FOUR COHO ESCAPEMENT GOALS IN ALL OF COOK INLET ARE IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICT

- **DESHKA**
- **LITTLE SUSITNA**
- **FISH CREEK**
- **JIM CREEK**



DESHKA IS IMPORTANT INDICATOR FOR THE REGION



# Habitat Improvement

- 107 Culverts replaced through partnerships
- Funded project to manage Invasive Pike on key systems



**“Unprecedented commitment to fish passage”**

ADF&G



# Requests



- 1) **Ensure the passage of fish north through the Conservation Corridor**—change the ADF&G philosophy from exploiting the maximum commercial harvest at the expense of a reasonable harvest opportunity for sport fisherman in Northern Cook Inlet
- 2) **RESTORE** genetic sampling program of commercially caught coho
- 3) **RESTORE** the test fishery off Kalgin Island to collect data on the mixed-stock fishery.
  - This will show where different species of fish are and when. This data was collected for 3 years out of a 5-year capital project. On the fourth year, the money that was appropriated by the State Legislature at the request of the Mat-Su Borough Fish Commission was absorbed into the Fish and Game budget, and the test fishery was not completed.
- 4) **Appoint Alaska Board of Fisheries members who represent the views of all Alaskans**





"Best use of Alaskan Salmon is on an Alaskan's dinner table"

*Created by Mat-Su Borough Public Affairs 2019*

