

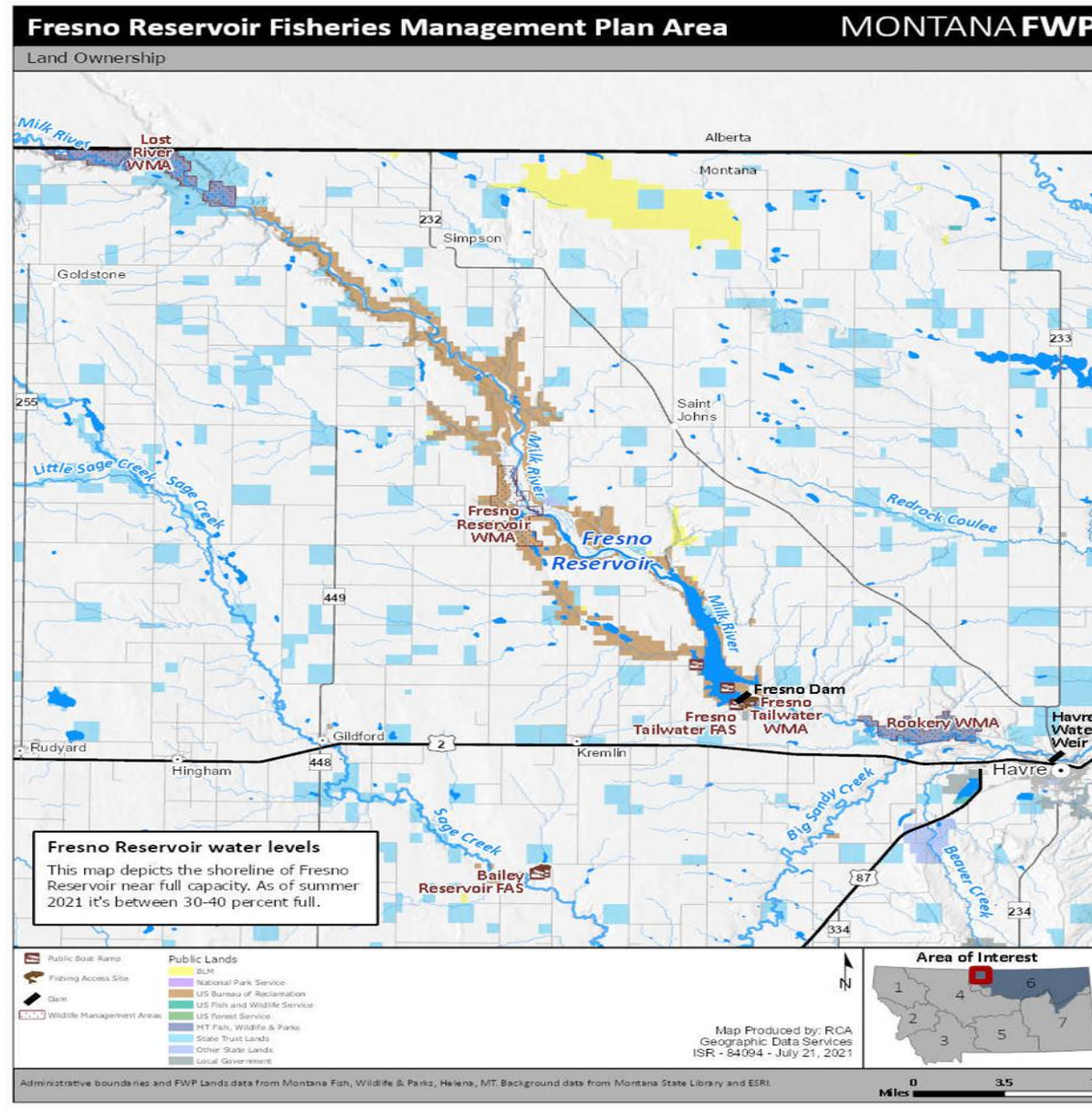
Fresno Fisheries Update

An aerial photograph showing a wide river winding through a vast agricultural landscape. The fields are a patchwork of green and brown, indicating different crops and stages of growth. The river is dark blue and flows from the upper center towards the lower right. The sky is a clear, light blue.

Cody Nagel

Havre Area Fisheries Biologist

Fresno Fisheries Management Plan



Plan Development and Direction

Brian Albrecht	Local Walleye Angler / General Angler (Kids Fishing) / Local Business
Jeff Dibblee	Local Walleye Angler / General Angler (Kids Fishing)
Dale Gilbert	Out of Area Walleye Angler / General Angler (Kids Fishing)
Don Groven	Local Walleye Angler
Chris Johnsrud	General Angler (Kids Fishing)
Nate Molstad	Local Walleye Angler / General Angler (Kids Fishing)
Todd O'Leary	Local Business
Mark Peterson	General Angler (kids) / Local Government

Plan Goal Statement- The Fresno Reservoir fisheries will be managed as a walleye fishery with the primary goal of high angler catch rates for Stock (10-15") and Quality (15-20") walleye. This will be accomplished by stocking hatchery walleye to augment the wild walleye population. An emphasis will be placed on habitat enhancement efforts to support other species of interest (yellow perch, black crappie and forage species).



Plan Sections

- Management Objectives (species specific)

- Walleye
- Northern pike
- Yellow perch
- Black Crappie
- Shoreline forage fish
- Rainbow trout

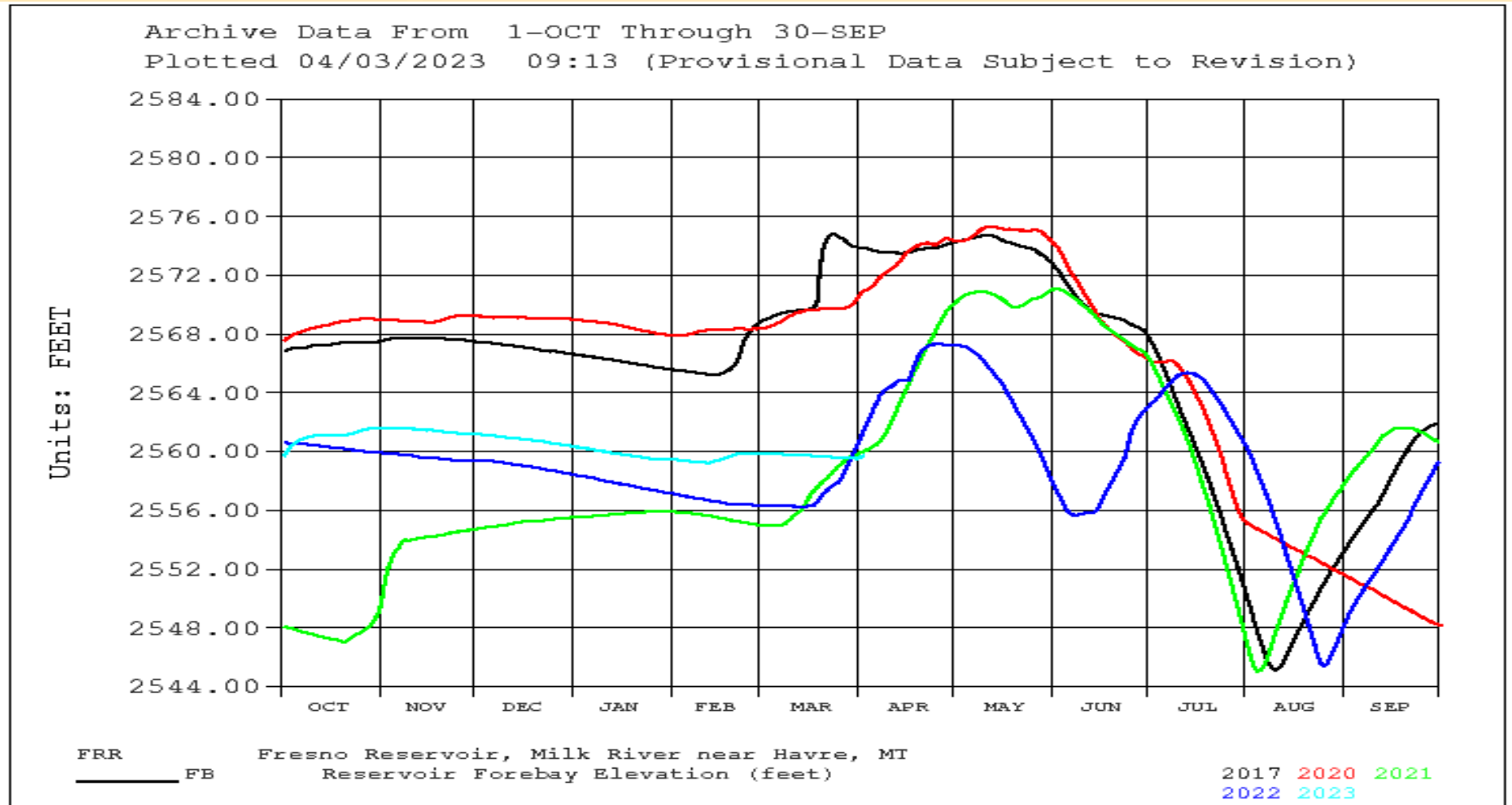
- Management Objectives (Other)

- Milk River (upstream)
- Milk River (downstream to Havre Weir)
- Fishing tournaments
- Aquatic invasive species (AIS)
- Recreational access
- Water operations and management
- Habitat availability and enhancement

Plan can be found at: <https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/fisheries-management/fresno-reservoir>



Water Level Trends (2017, 2020-2023)



2017, 2020-2022 Drawdowns (Drought/Infrastructure) on Fresno Reservoir



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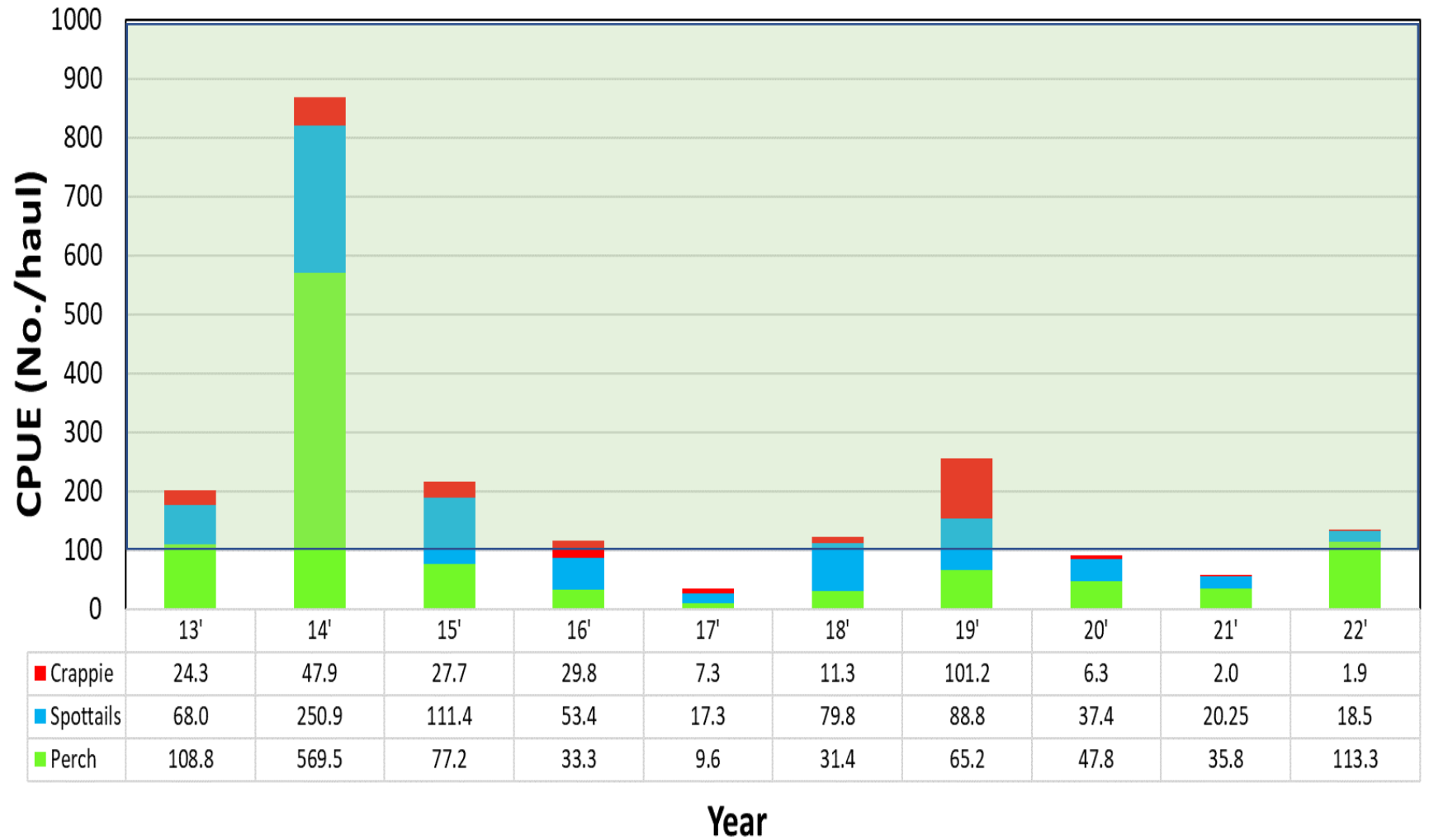


Species Trends

- Adult populations monitored at 12 fixed sites in mid/late September
- Young-of-year populations monitored at 12 fixed sites in early August
- Captured fish are identified, measured and weighed. Stomach and aging analysis is also conducted on walleye



Nearshore Forage



Plan CPUE Goal- 100-200+/net

2022 CPUE- 133.8/net

3-yr Avg. CPUE- 94.4/net



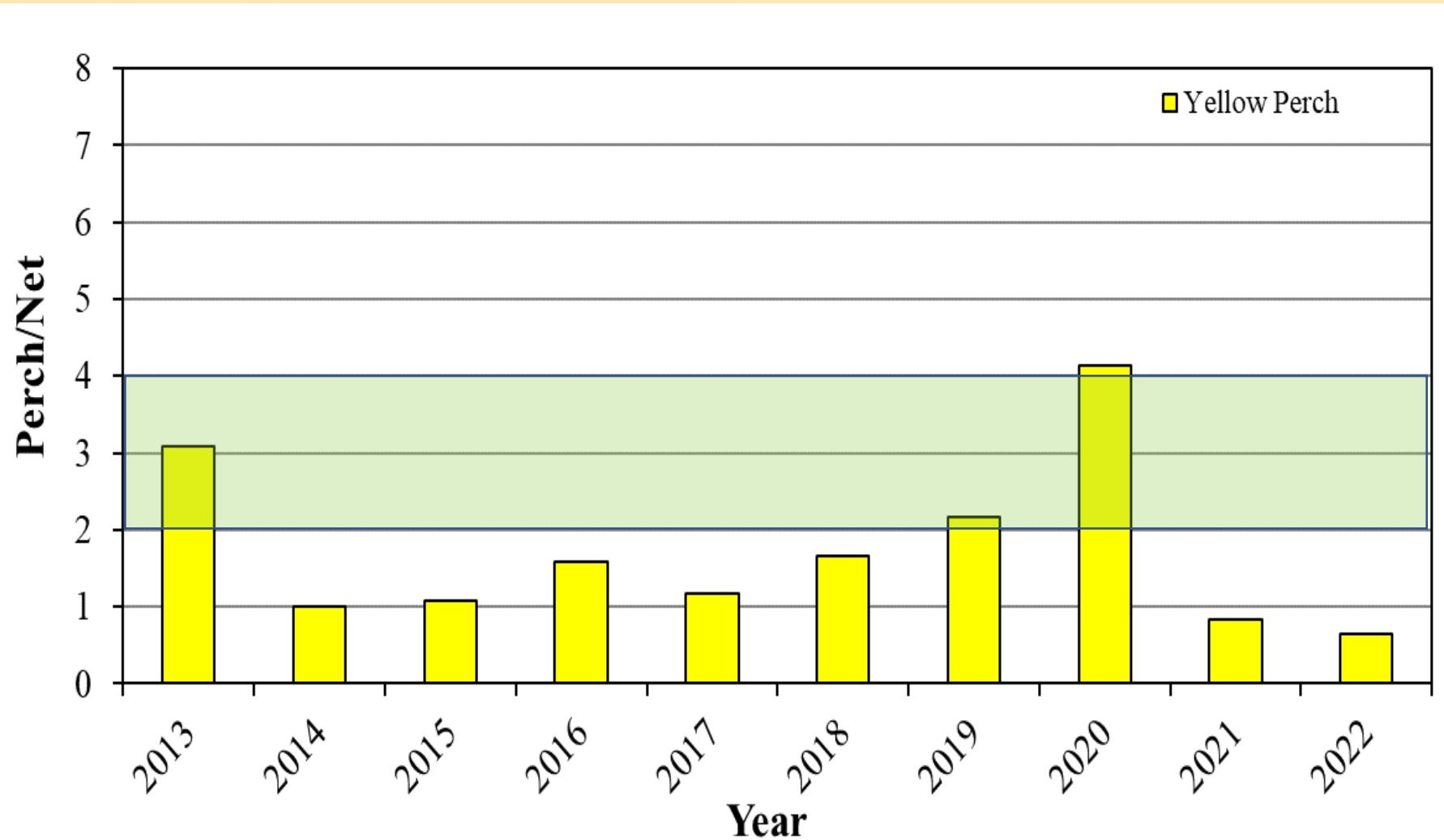
Species Trends (adult Yellow Perch)



Plan Goal- 2-4 YP/net

2022- 0.64 YP/net

3-yr Avg.- 1.87 YP/net

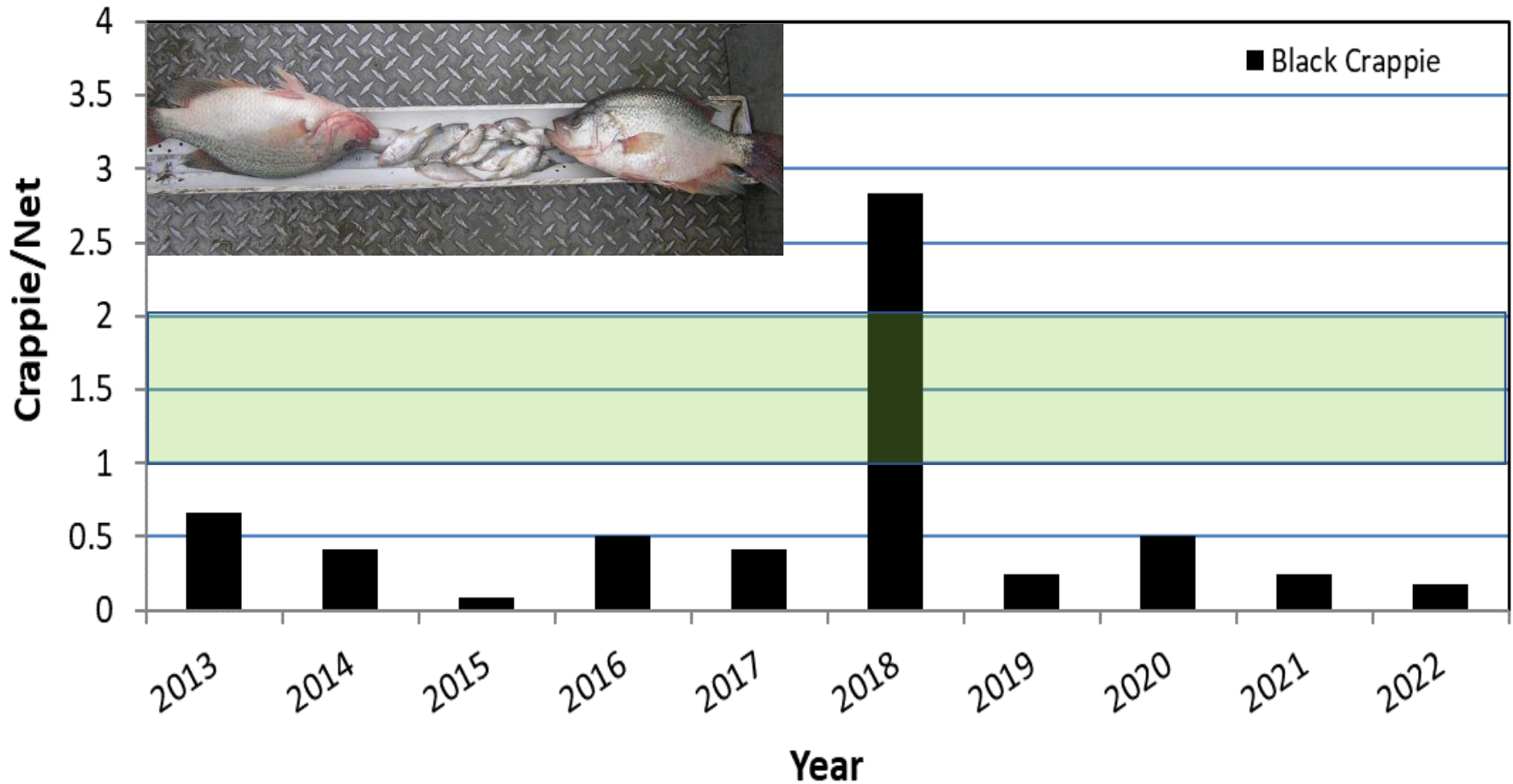


Species Trends (adult Black Crappie)

Plan Goal- 1-2 BLCR/net

2022- 0.18 BLCR/net

3-yr Avg.- 0.31 BLCR/net



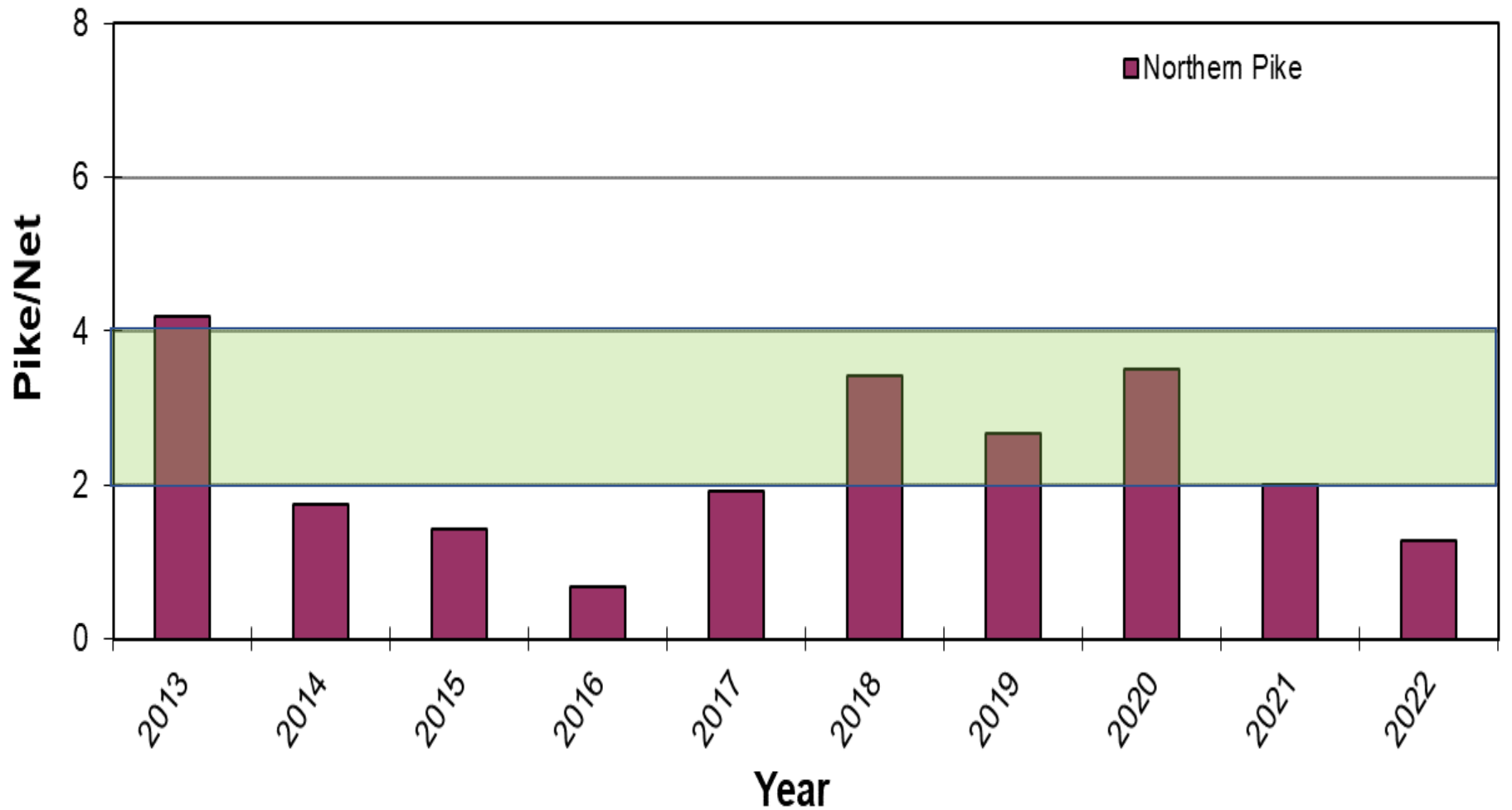
Species Trends Northern Pike



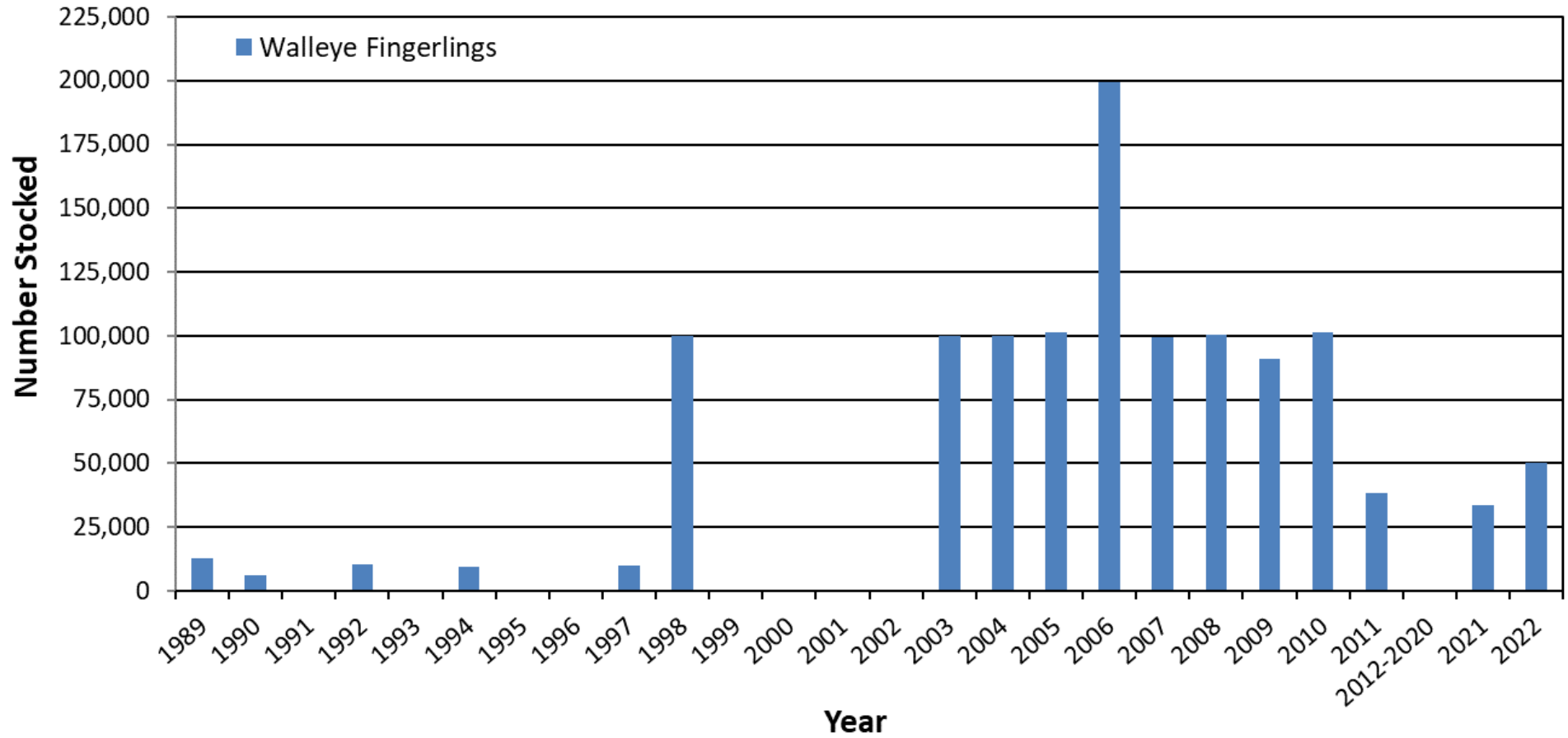
Plan Goal- 2-4 NP/net

2022- 1.27 NP/net

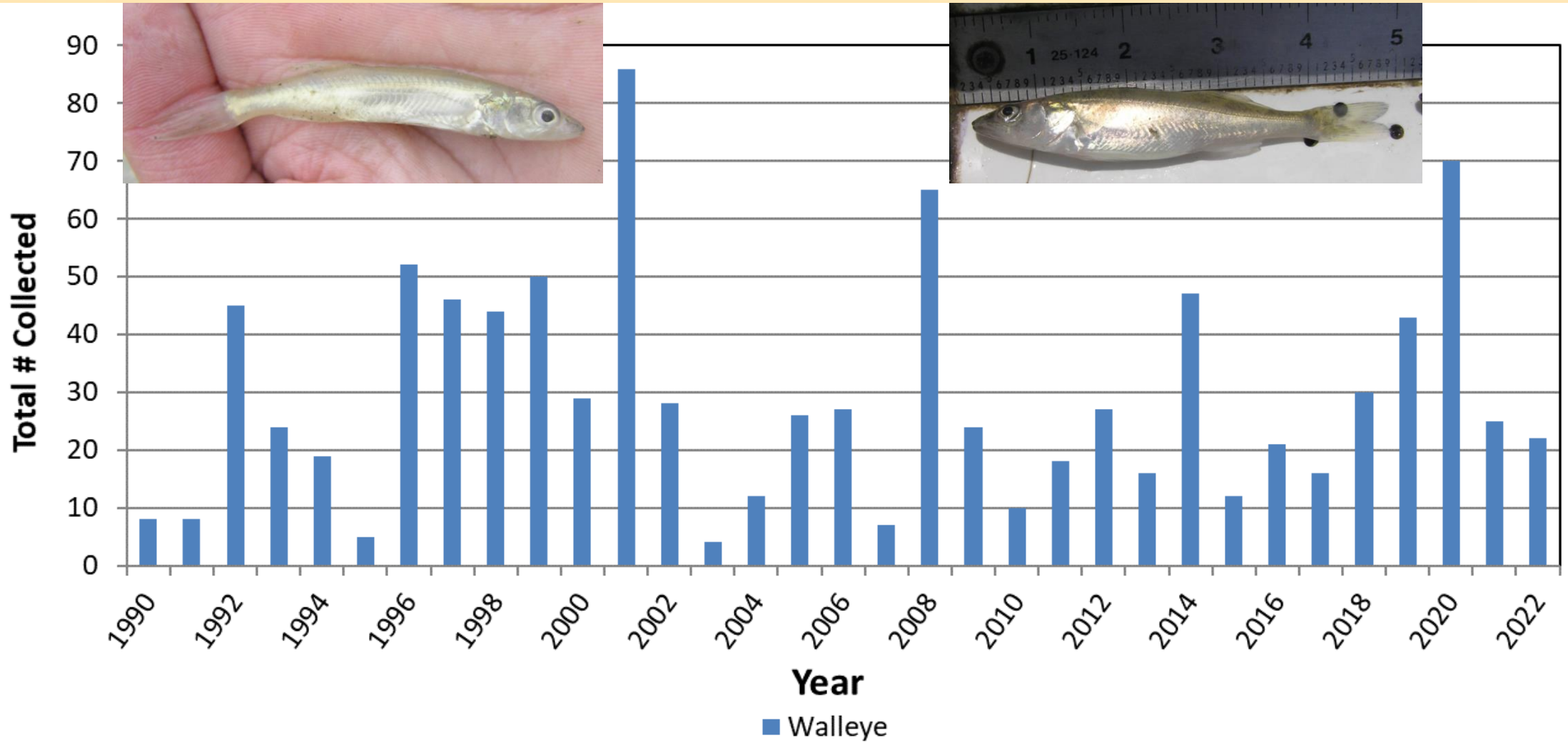
3-yr Avg.- 2.26 NP/net



Species Trends (Historic Walleye Stocking)



Species Trends (YOY Walleye)



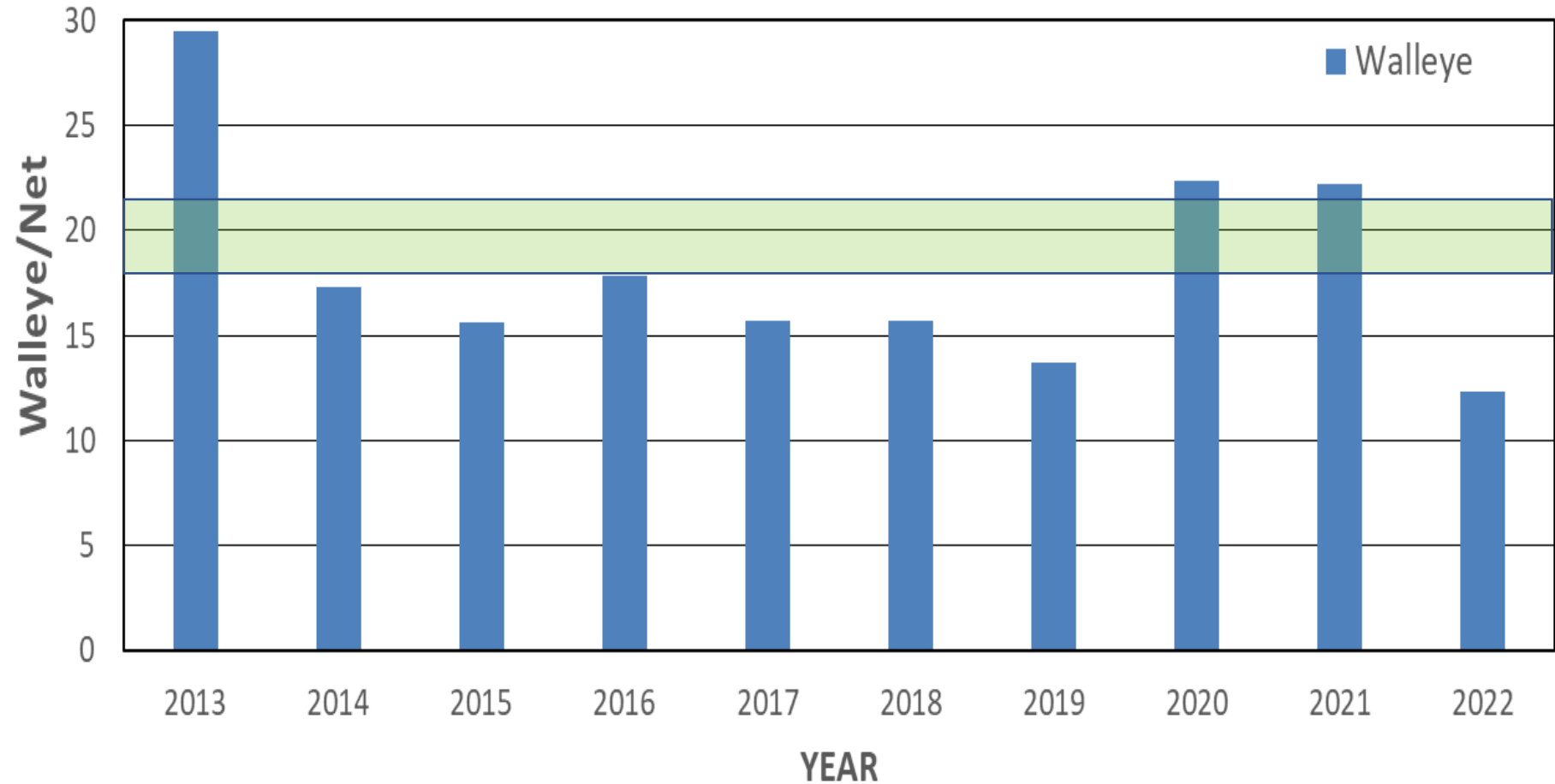
Species Trends- Walleye Relative Abundance

Plan Goal- 18-21 WE/net

2022- 12.36 WE/net

3-yr Avg.- 19.0 WE/net

**S-Q size WE made up
86% of catch in 2022**



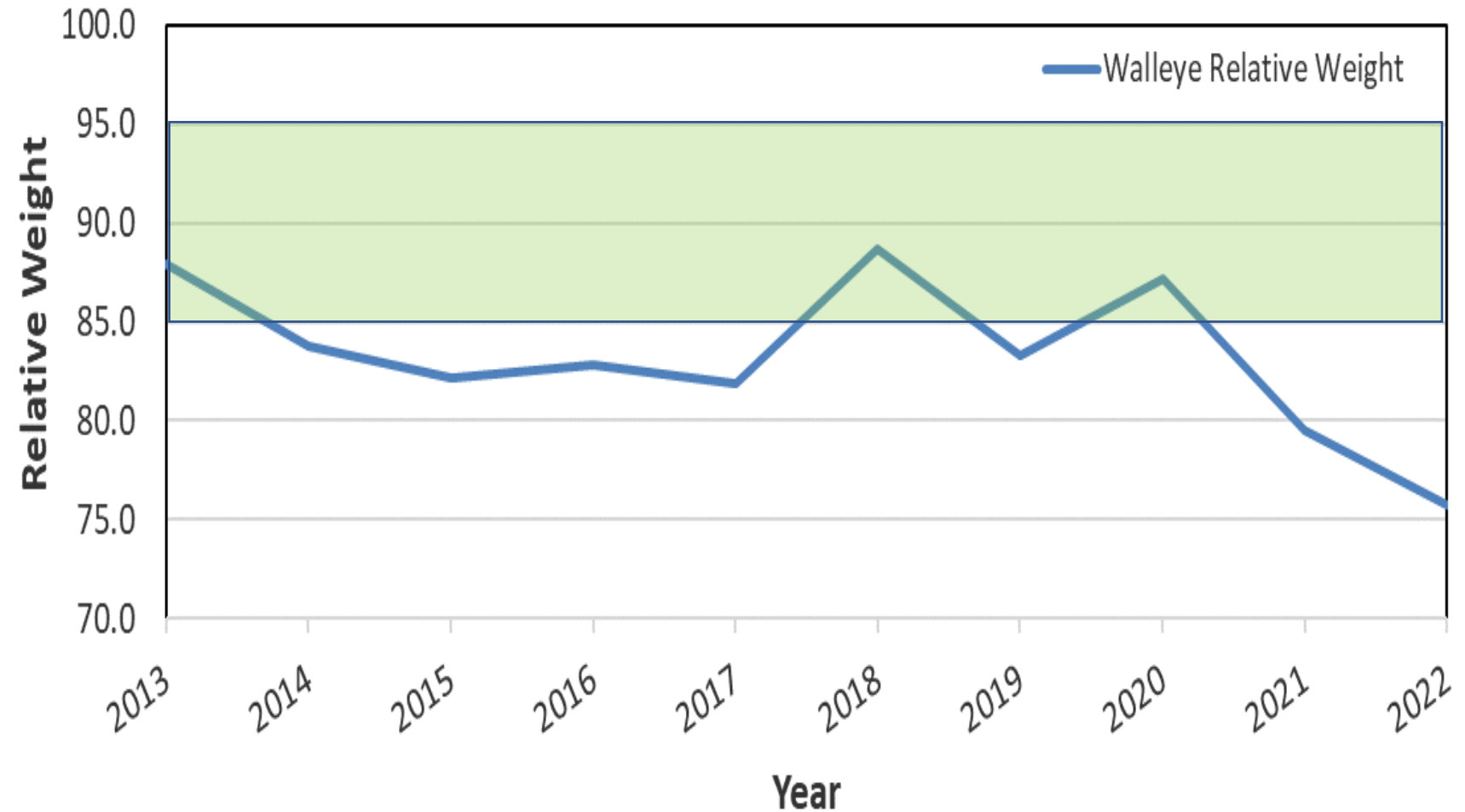
Species Trends- Walleye Relative Weight (Wr)



Plan Goal- Walleye Wr >85

2022- 75.8

3-yr Avg.- 80.8



Fresno Walleye Proportional Stock Distribution (PSD)

Plan Goal- Walleye PSD 30-60

2022- 49

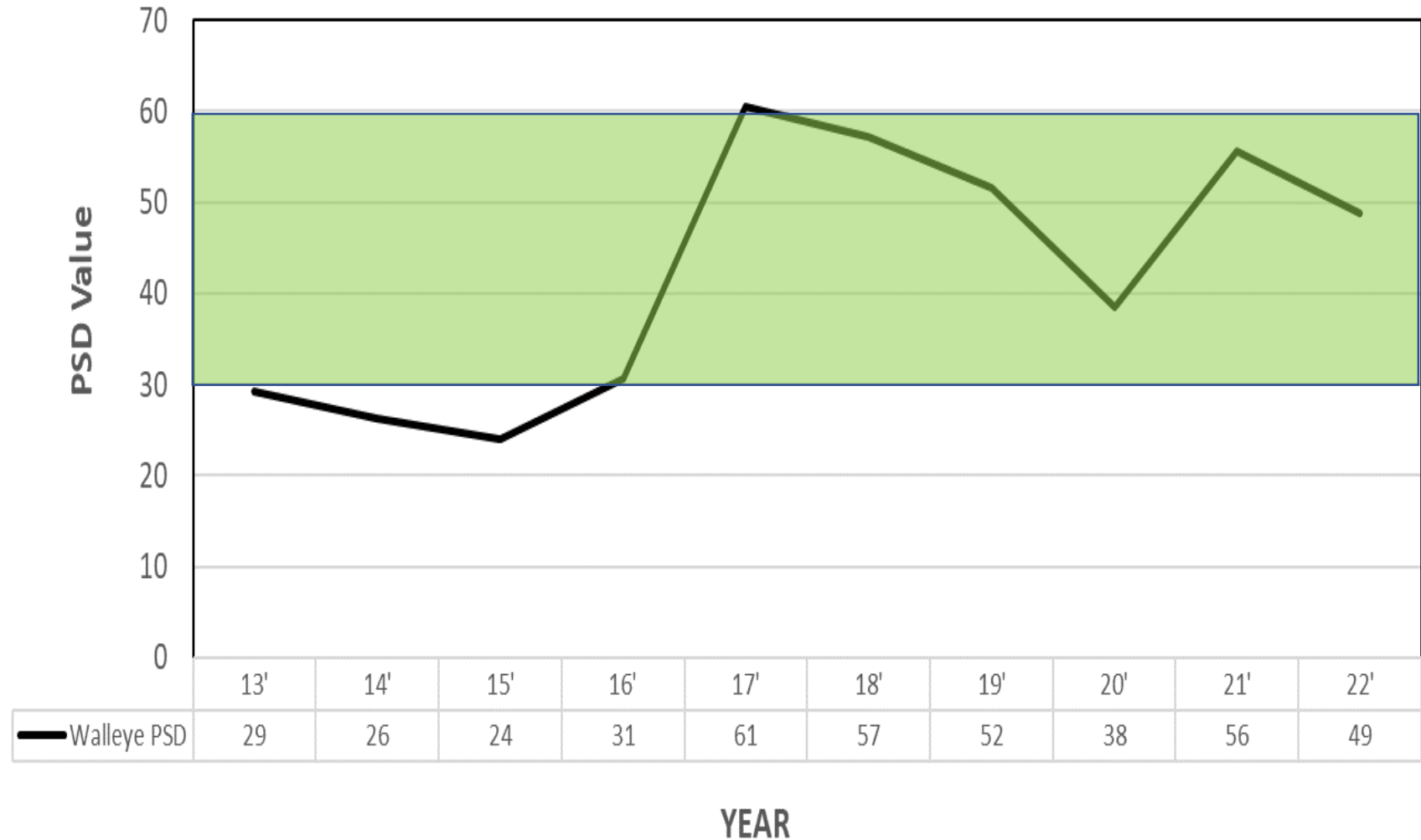
3-yr Avg.- 48

$$PSD = \frac{\text{number} \geq \text{quality}}{\text{number} \geq \text{stock}} * 100$$

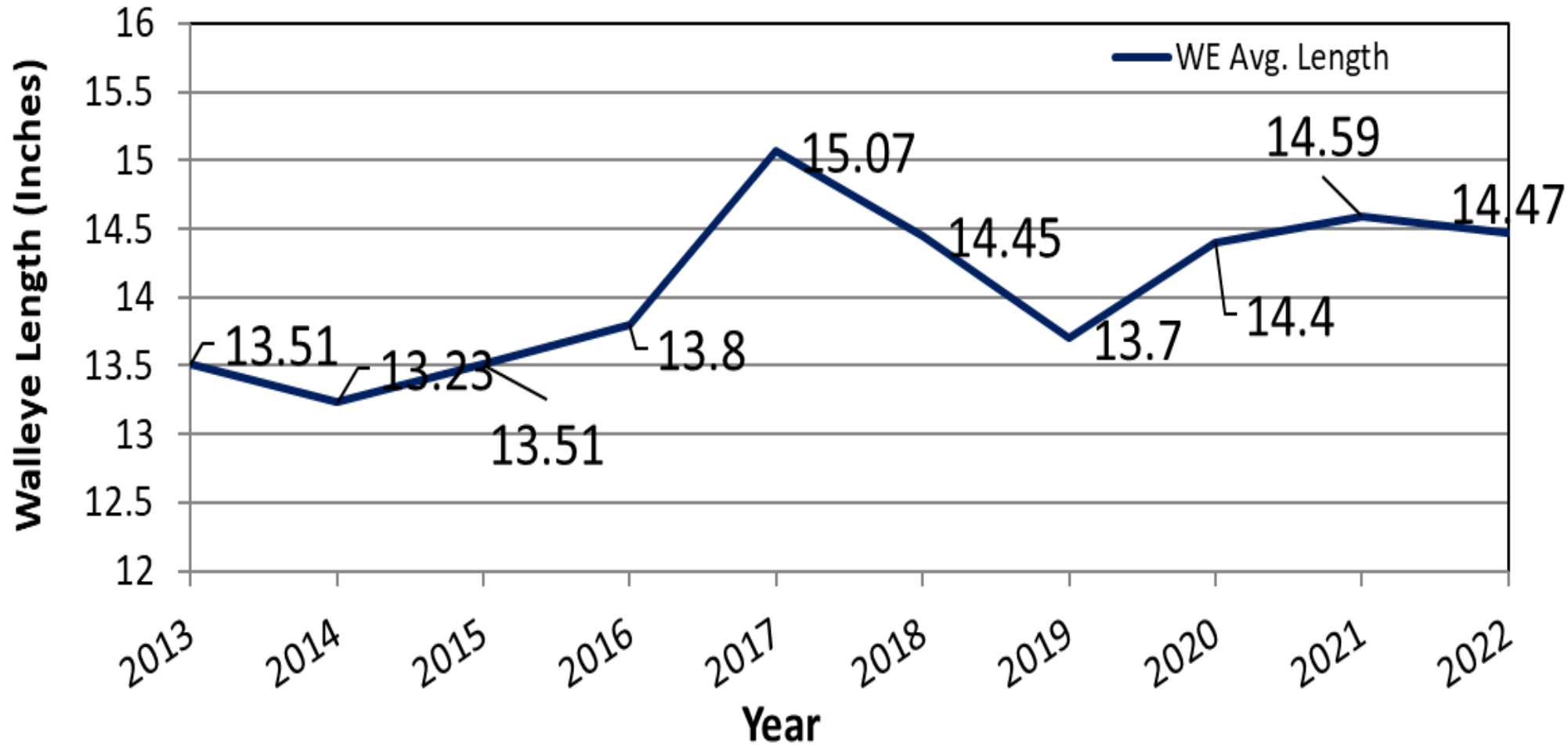
Quality = walleye greater than 15"

Stock = walleye greater than 10"

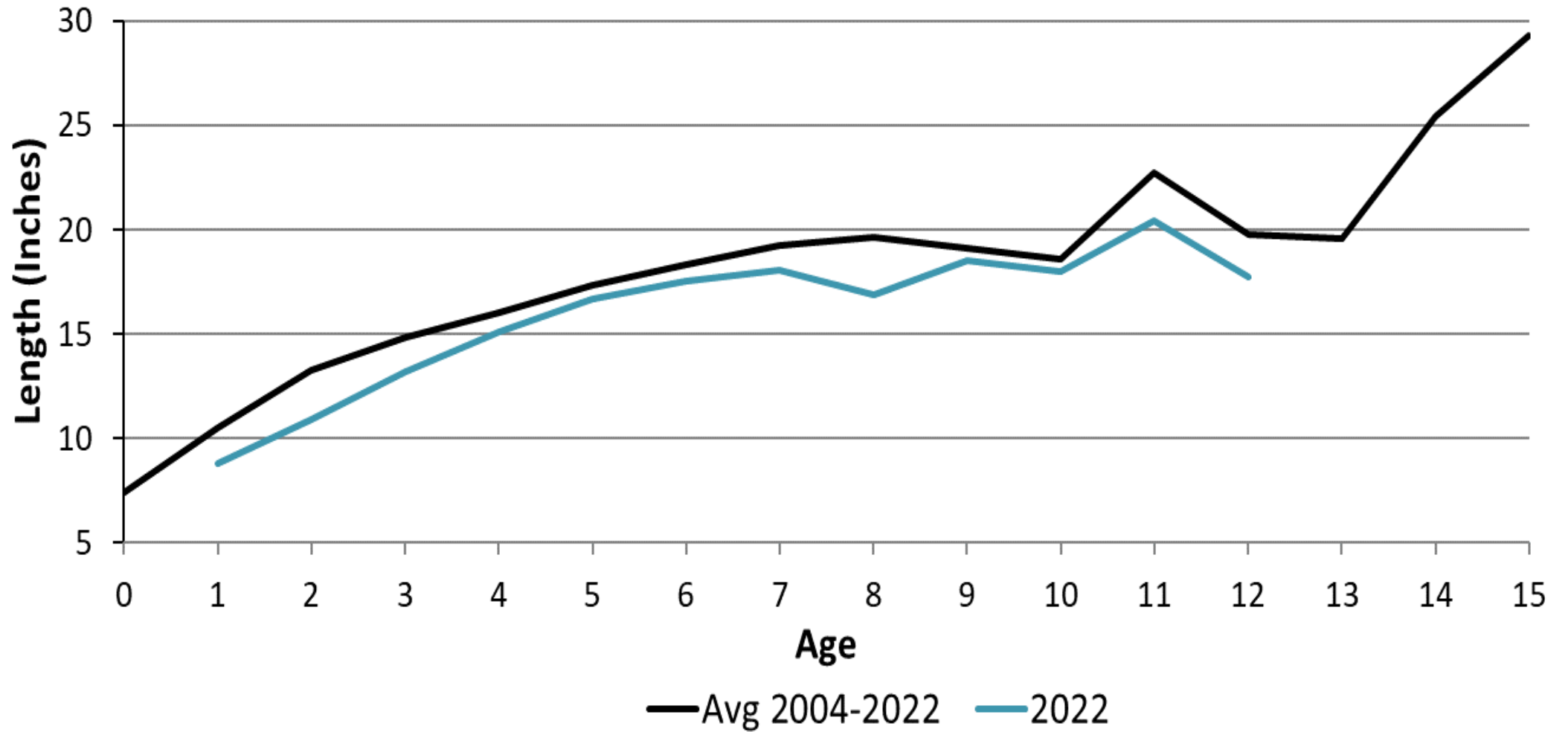
A walleye population between 30-60 is considered "balanced" (Anderson and Weithman 1978)



Species Trends- Walleye Average Length

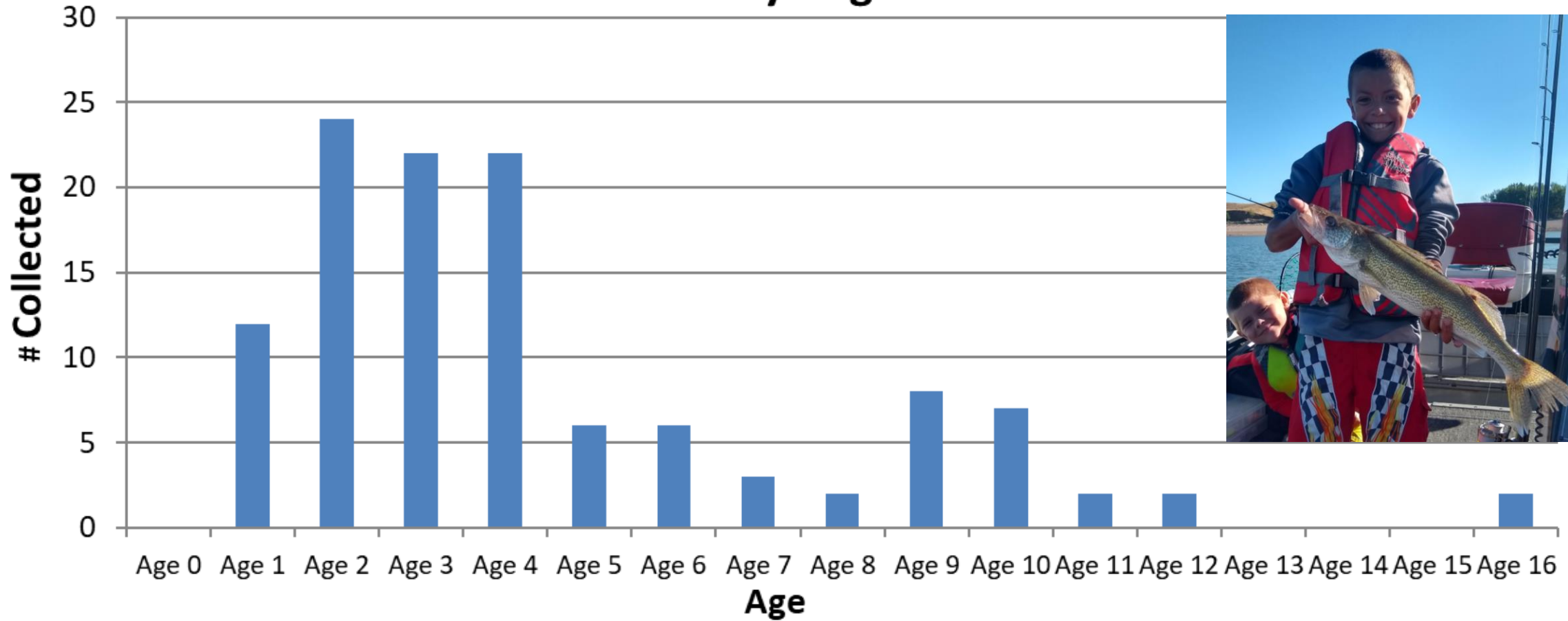


Walleye Growth Trends 2004-2022

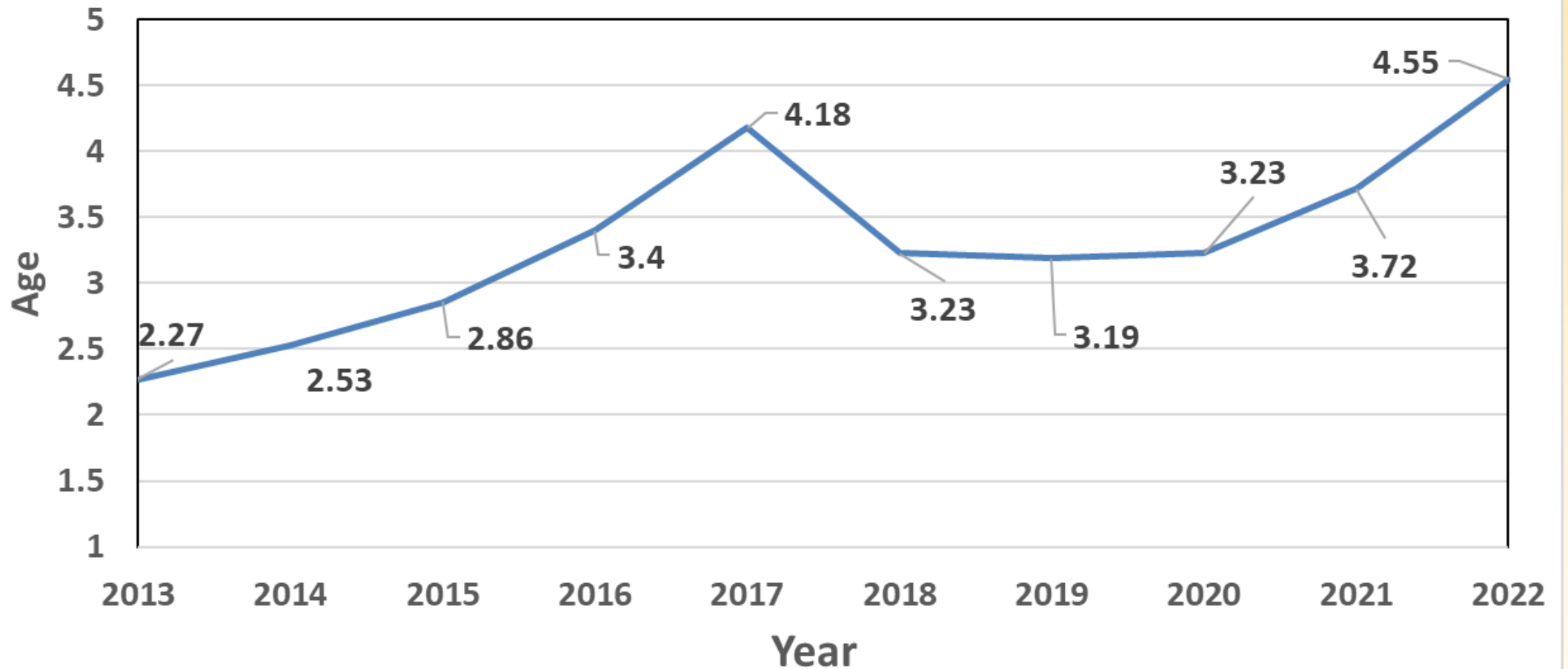


2022 Walleye Age Distribution

Fresno Walleye Age Distribution 2022



Walleye Age Trends 2013-2022



Plans for 2023

- Stock 75,000 walleye fingerlings in June
- Completed habitat enhancement project with FCWU (Christmas trees)
- Summer seining surveys to gauge reproductive success of all fishes
- Fall adult population surveys to monitor abundance of all fishes

