

**NORTHERN SOUTHEAST REGIONAL AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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January 29th, 2025

Alaska Board of Fisheries
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811

Re: PC526 relating to hatchery survivals of chum salmon at Hidden Falls Hatchery

The author of PC526 has provided information pertaining to chum salmon abundance and survivals at Hidden Falls Hatchery that is incomplete. What is shown in PC526 are continuous downward trends in chum salmon abundance and survival since the 1980's. What is not shown are the most recent 5 or more brood years which have seen survivals rebound to levels not seen in decades.

In 2023, the 3-year-old chum return to Hidden Falls showed the highest survival in 30 years. In 2024 this was doubled, with over 250,000 Hidden Falls 3-year-olds returning at rates not seen since 1979. The forecast for this site going into 2025 is 2.8 million adults, which would be the largest return since 2000. In fact, some traditional forecast models produced estimates over 10 million fish, which were deemed unrealistic.

Survival booms and busts are part of NSRAA's history, but it is important to tell the whole history which, at the moment, shows great promise and a functioning hatchery program.

The figures provided below speak for themselves.

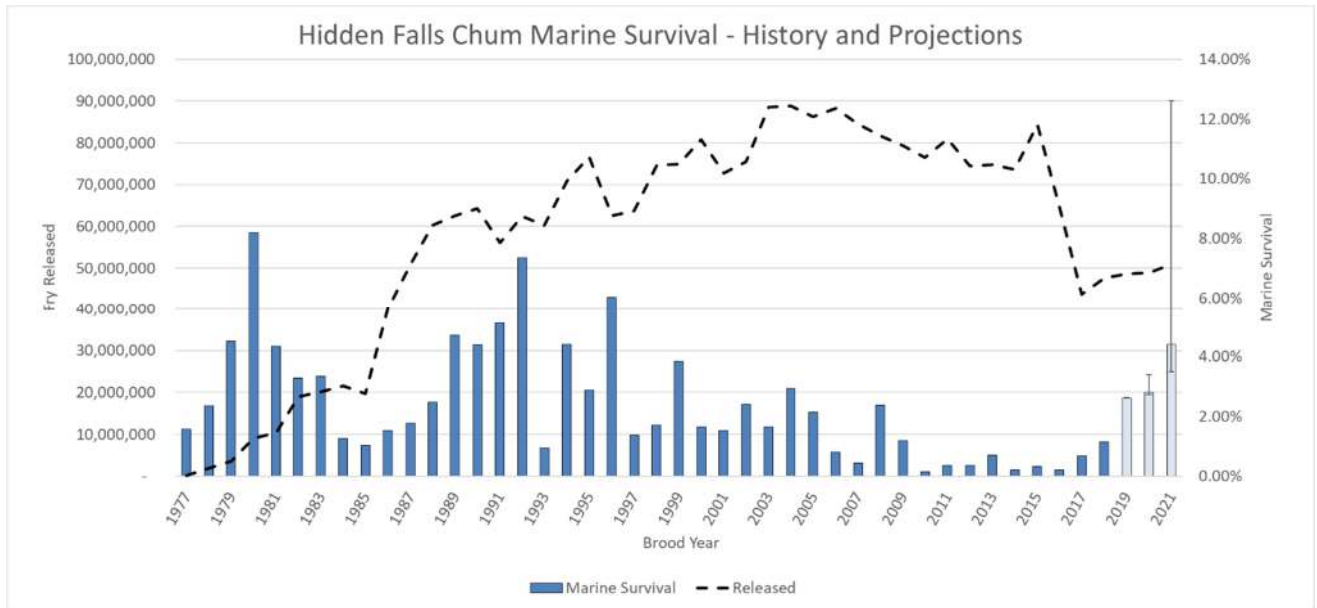


Figure 1: Marine survival relative to release volume by brood year for Kasnyku and Takatz Bay (Hidden Falls) chum production. Error bars are projected survival range estimates based on younger returning age classes and historical data for age class structure.

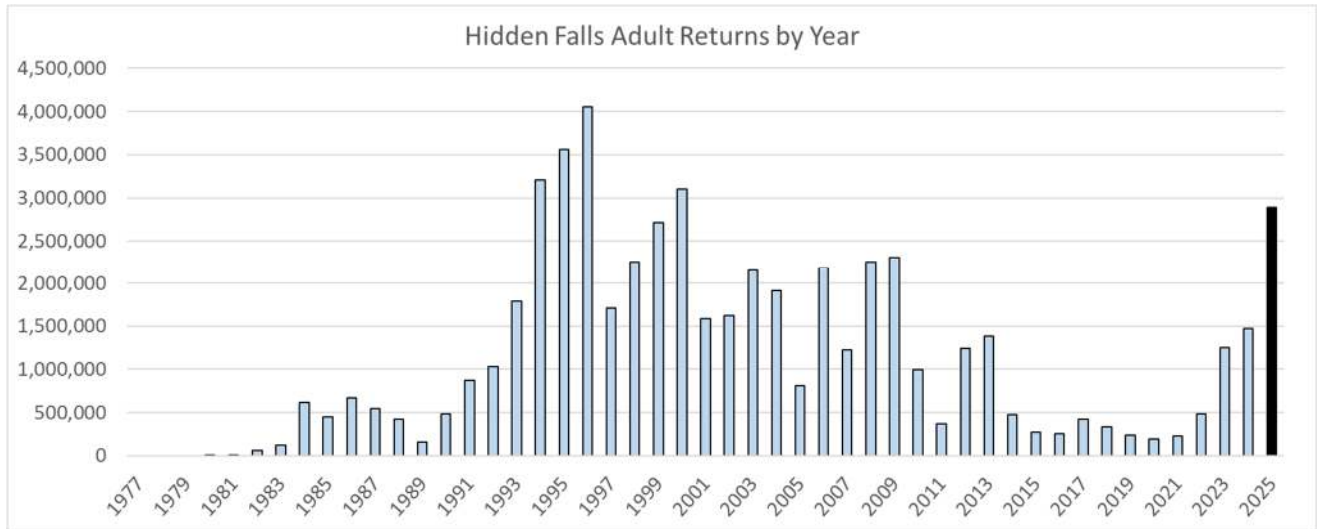


Figure 2: Return totals by fishing year for Kasnyku and Takatz Bay (Hidden Falls) chum production. Dark bars are projected estimates based on younger returning age classes.

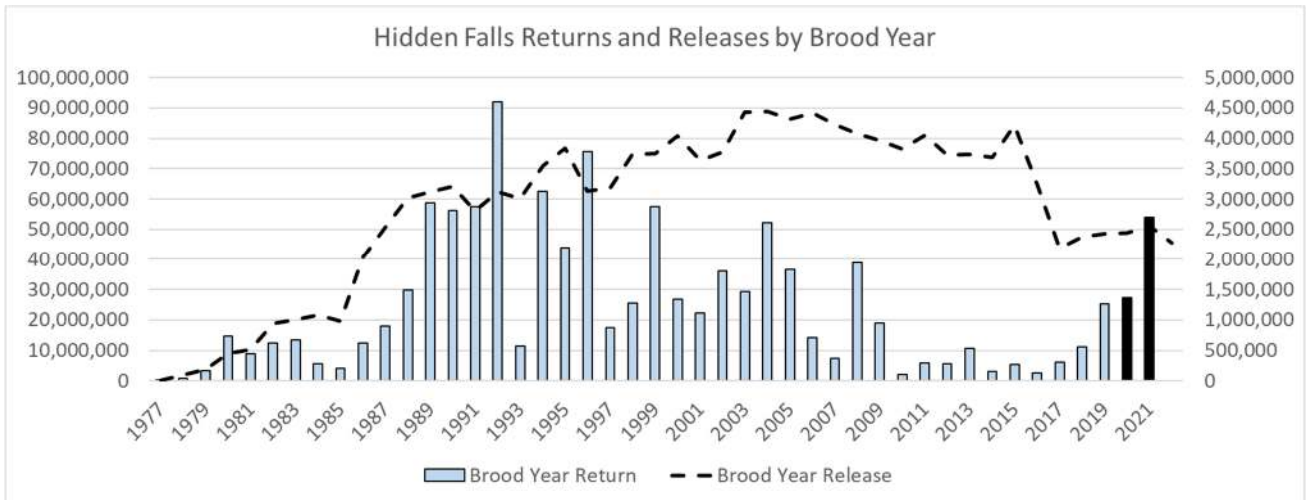


Figure 3: Return totals relative to release volume by brood year for Kasnyku and Takatz Bay (Hidden Falls) chum production. Dark bars are projected estimates based on younger returning age classes.

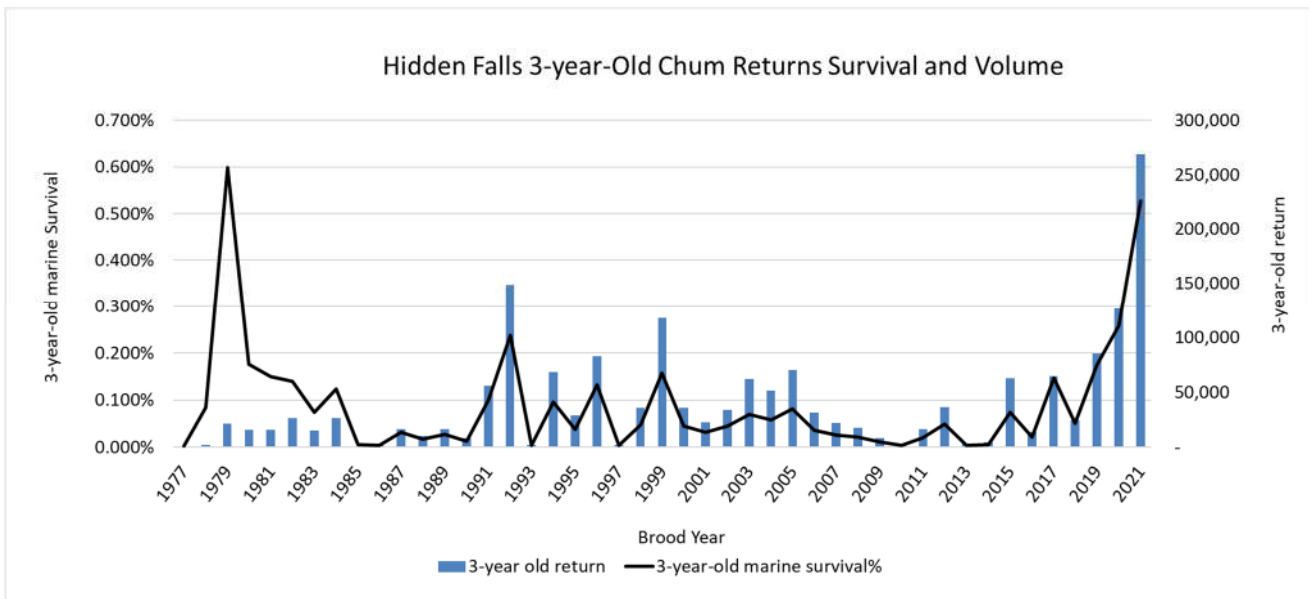


Figure 4: Three-year-old age class survivals relative to release volume by brood year for Kasnyku and Takatz Bay (Hidden Falls) chum production.

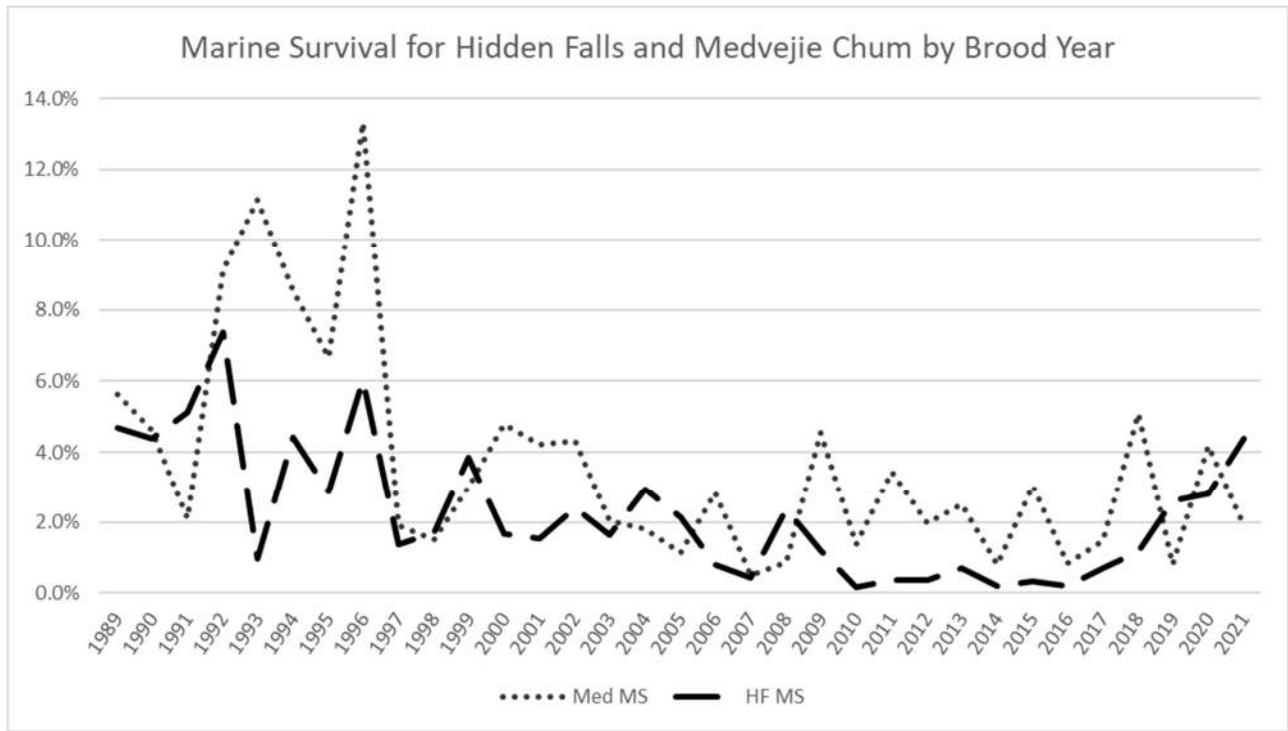


Figure 5: Complete and projected marine survivals for Hidden Falls and Medvejie Chum salmon releases by brood year.