

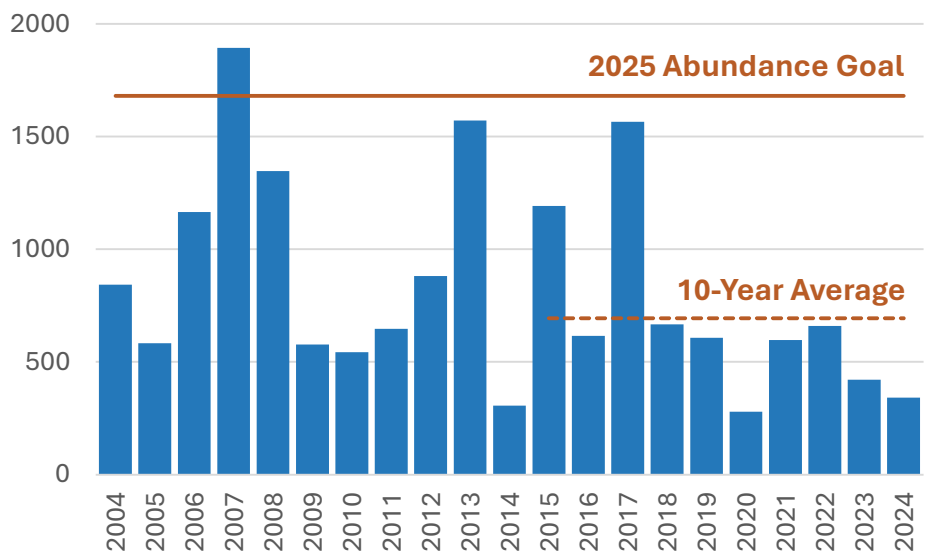
Status of Chinook in the Watershed

WRIA 8 tracks the status and trends of the Cedar River and Sammamish River Chinook salmon populations. Cedar River Chinook are not meeting our adult abundance goal for wild, natural-origin spawners. However, in recent years Chinook returning to the Sammamish Basin consistently meet and exceed the abundance goal for total spawners. Most of the naturally spawning Sammamish Chinook are hatchery salmon.



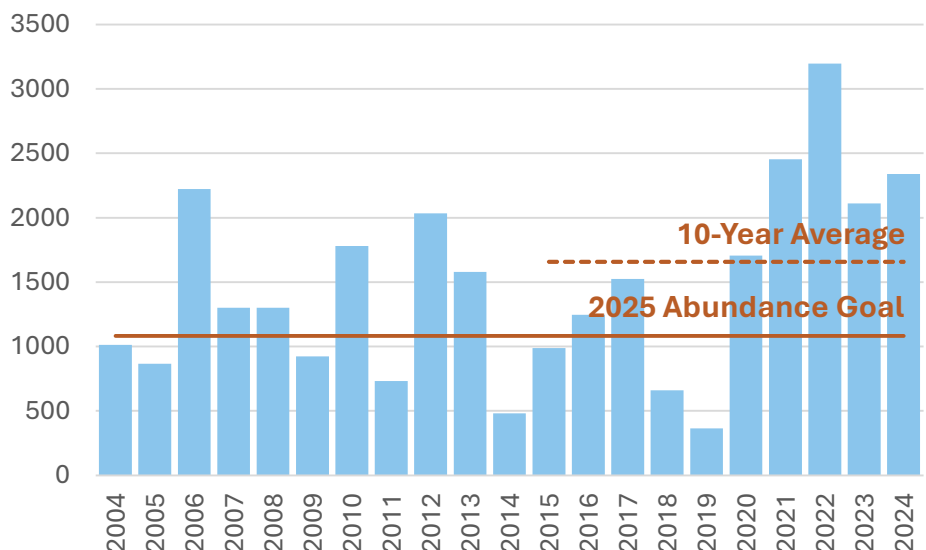
Cedar Population Adult Spawner Abundance

341* natural-origin Chinook salmon returned to the Cedar River mainstem to spawn in 2024. Only half of the total Cedar spawners were natural-origin in 2024 (53% in 2024; 73% average since 2004).



Sammamish Population Adult Spawner Abundance

2,340* total Chinook salmon returned to the Sammamish basin to spawn in 2024. Most Sammamish spawners are hatchery-origin (93% in 2024; 88% average since 2004).



*Annual escapement estimates from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2024 estimates are preliminary and subject to review.

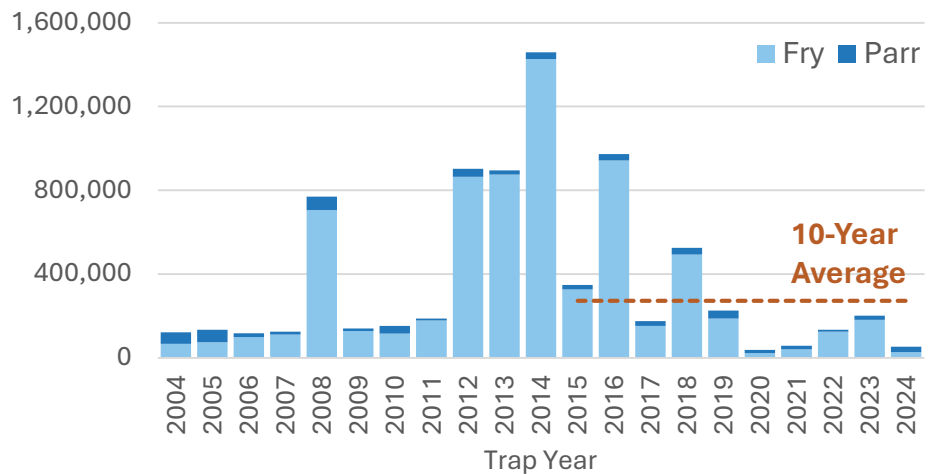
Status of Chinook in the Watershed

The number of young Chinook migrating down the Cedar River and Bear Creek (offspring of the previous year's spawning run) declined in 2024. Our goal is to increase the number and proportion of parr (late-season) outmigrants as an indicator of instream rearing capacity.

Cedar

Juvenile Abundance

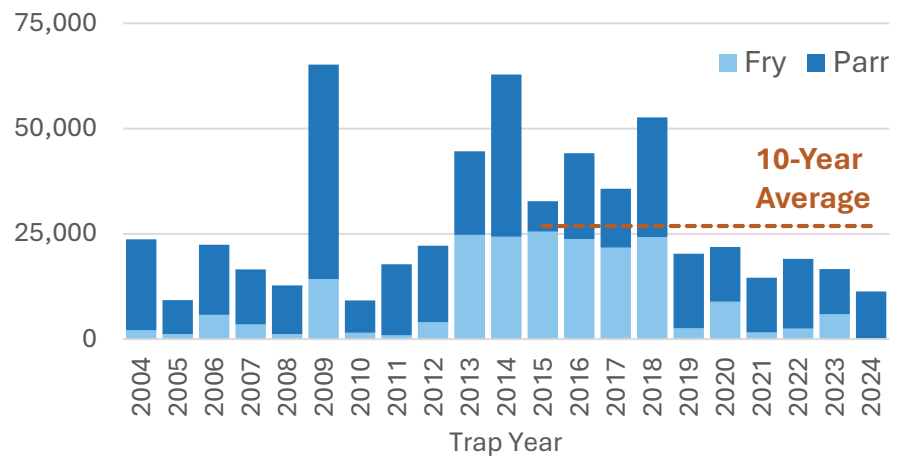
About 52,400* wild juvenile Chinook migrated down the Cedar River in 2024. While the abundance estimate is low and below average, nearly half (49%) of the juveniles were parr migrants, meeting the instream rearing goal for the first time since 2000.



Bear Creek

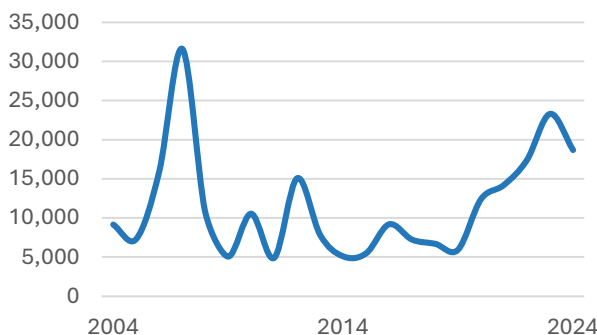
Juvenile Abundance

About 11,300* wild juvenile Chinook migrated down Bear Creek in 2024. Nearly all (99%) were parr migrants.



*Wild juvenile salmon abundance estimates from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2024 estimates are preliminary and subject to review.

Adult Chinook Return: Count at the Ballard Locks



Each year WDFW and Muckleshoot Indian Tribe biologists count Lake Washington salmon as they enter freshwater at the Ballard Locks. 18,717 Chinook were counted at the Locks in 2024, the third highest count in 20 years. However, we have seen a growing discrepancy between salmon counted at the Locks and those making it to spawning grounds or the hatchery.

Science Foundation of the WRIA 8 Chinook Conservation Plan

A set of clear strategies based on the best available science guides salmon recovery in WRIA 8. Implementation of strategies should result in measurable improvements in key habitat elements such as: floodplain connectivity, wood in rivers and streams, natural lake shorelines, and areas of cool water refuge. The Technical Committee identifies priority research and monitoring needed to address the greatest stresses and constraints on Chinook salmon and to support key life stages.



Scientist conducts a snorkel survey of juvenile salmon.

Key Constraints to Salmon Recovery in WRIA 8

- Lack of quality floodplain and side channel habitat for instream rearing and refuge.
- Predation by native and non-native fish in lakes Washington and Sammamish and the Ship Canal, with impacts exacerbated by habitat degradation and artificial light at night.
- Physical passage through the Ballard Locks and lethal and sublethal temperatures in the Ship Canal and Sammamish River during adult migration.

WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Strategies

- **Protect and restore floodplain connectivity**
- **Protect and restore functional riparian vegetation**
- **Protect and restore channel complexity**
- **Restore shallow-water rearing and refuge habitat**
- **Reconnect and enhance creek mouths**
- **Protect and restore cold-water sources and reduce thermal barriers to migration**
- **Improve juvenile and adult survival at the Ballard Locks**
- **Reduce predation on juvenile migrants and lake-rearing fry**
- Remove or reduce impacts of overwater structures
- Remove fish passage barriers
- Protect and restore forest cover and headwater areas
- Provide adequate streamflow
- Restore sediment processes necessary for key life stages
- Restore natural marine shorelines
- Reconnect backshore areas and pocket estuaries
- Protect and restore marine water and sediment quality
- Improve water quality
- Integrate salmon recovery priorities into local and regional planning, regulations, and permitting
- Continue existing and conduct new research, monitoring, and adaptive management on key issues
- Increase awareness of and support for salmon recovery