

Committee Staff Summary for March 12, 2026 MRC

7. Staff and Agency Updates**Today's Item**Information Action

Receive updates from staff and other agencies, including the California Ocean Protection Council and the Department.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

This is a standing agenda item for staff and agencies to provide an update on marine-related activities. To promote meeting efficiency, the work plan topic updates are provided in written format only. Members of the public may have an opportunity to share thoughts and questions, although the level of in-meeting discussion will be at the discretion of MRC co-chairs and subject to time availability.

(A) California Ocean Protection Council (OPC)

OPC staff will provide an update on topics of interest to the committee.

(B) Department**I. Law Enforcement Division (LED)**

a. LED's Marine Enforcement District will present the annual marine protected area (MPA) network enforcement statistics report for 2025.

b. LED's assistant chief of technology and education will present an overview of new and future enforcement data collection tools.

II. Marine Region

Staff will provide an overview of the 2025 [Marine Region By the Numbers](#) report (Exhibit B3).

III. Office of Communications, Education and Outreach

The manager of the Department's [California Hunter and Angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation \(R3\) Initiative](#) will present recent trends in sport fishing license sales, as requested by MRC in November 2025.

(C) Commission Staff

Coastal Fishing Communities Project: As recommended by MRC, and directed by the Commission in December 2025, the Commission's 2026 Sea Grant State Fellow, Amanda Specht, is leading the effort to develop options and identify resource needs to advance potential project actions, guided by the 10 original staff recommendations from the [Staff Synthesis Report on California Coastal Fishing Communities Meetings, 2016-2018](#). Amanda will present the options at the July 2026 MRC meeting for discussion and potential committee recommendation.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)

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Recommendation (N/A)

Exhibits

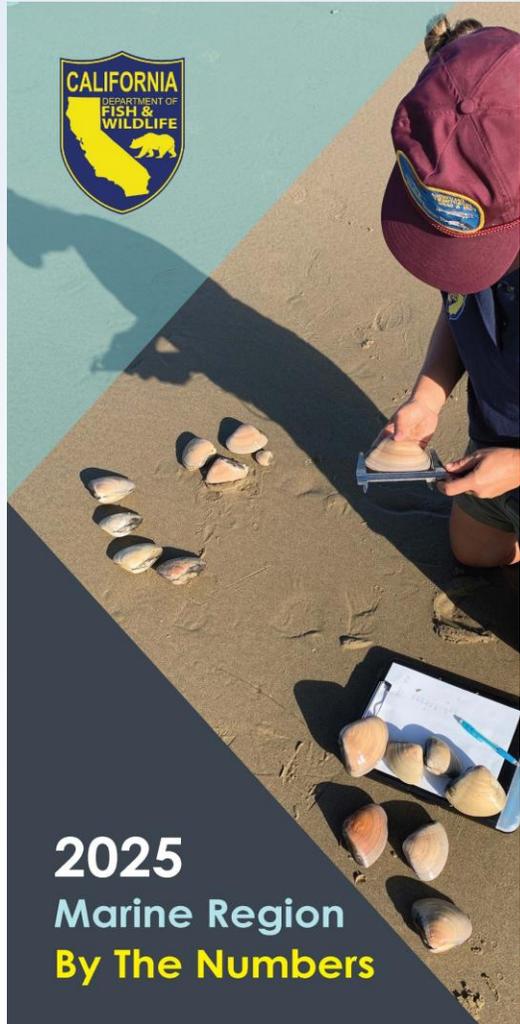
Department Presentations

- B1. LED: 2025 MPA network enforcement statistics (*will be posted separately*)
- B2. LED: New and future enforcement data collection tools (*will be posted separately*)
- B3. Marine Region: Overview of [2025 By the Numbers](#)
- B4. Office of Communications, Education and Outreach R3: [Sport fishing license sales](#)

Motion (N/A)



Marine Region 2025 By the Numbers Report



Commercial Fishing

Weight and Ex-Vessel Value¹ of Commercial Landings by Port Area²

Port Area	Pounds	Ex-Vessel Value
Santa Barbara	83,667,611	\$61,252,689
Los Angeles	86,715,792	\$49,500,651
Eureka	9,150,963	\$41,531,813
San Francisco	7,928,538	\$19,427,418
Monterey	16,686,737	\$11,472,086
San Diego	4,694,616	\$10,179,073
Bodega Bay	1,498,737	\$7,257,252
Fort Bragg	4,996,673	\$7,173,729
Morro Bay	1,552,849	\$4,530,552
TOTAL	216,892,517	\$212,325,262

¹Ex-Vessel Value is the amount paid to the fishermen at the dock.
²Port Area includes multiple ports in the same geographic region. A full list of the ports included in a given Port Area can be found in the Port Reference Table.
Data as of 02/12/2024. Data Source: Department's Marine Region, Marine Fisheries Statistical Unit

Top 2025 Commercial Fishery Numbers

Total Commercial Landing Fees Collected for all Fisheries:
\$1,373,425

Top Ex-Vessel Value:
\$82,883,790 Market squid

Top Weight:
174,231,738 lbs Market squid




Freshly landed market squid (*Doryteuthis (Loligo) opalescens*). CDW J. Sellen. Illustrations by CDW C. Makeyev



<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Regions/Marine/By-the-Numbers>



Recent Trends in Sport Fishing License Sales

MARCH 12, 2026

California Department of Fish and Wildlife



Recruit | Retain | Reactivate

Taylor Williams
R3 Manager



Recruit | Retain | Reactivate

What is R3?

Recruit.

Retain.

Reactivate.

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CDFW's R3 Initiative aims to increase statewide participation in hunting, fishing, foraging and shooting sports by transforming barriers into opportunities.



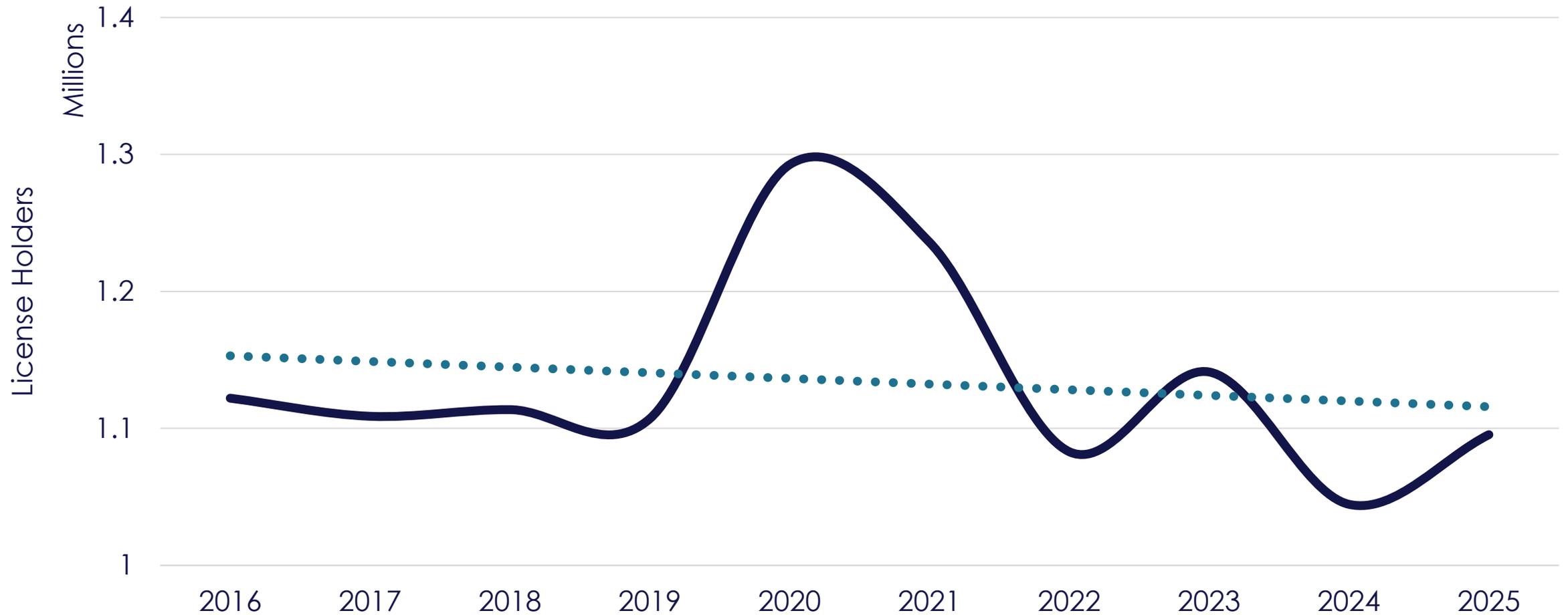
What We'll Cover

- Multi-year license sales trends
- Regional participation patterns
- Cost trends
- R3 metrics
- Auto-renewal
- Marine participation indicators
- Pier & jetty fishing
- National context

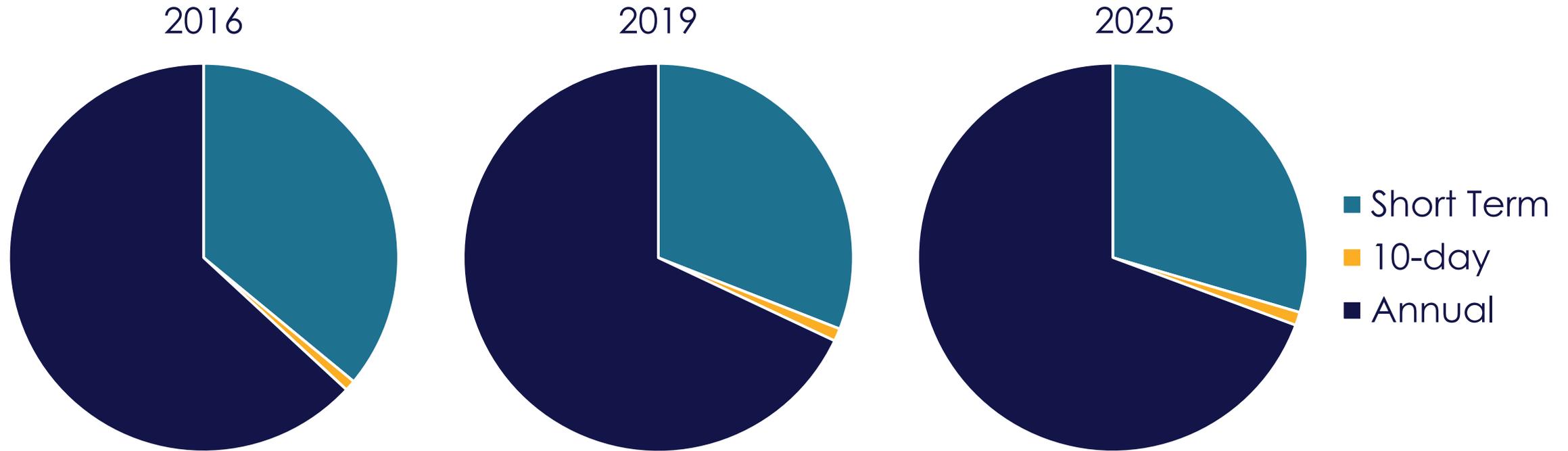


Fishing License Sales

Annual Fishing License Sales

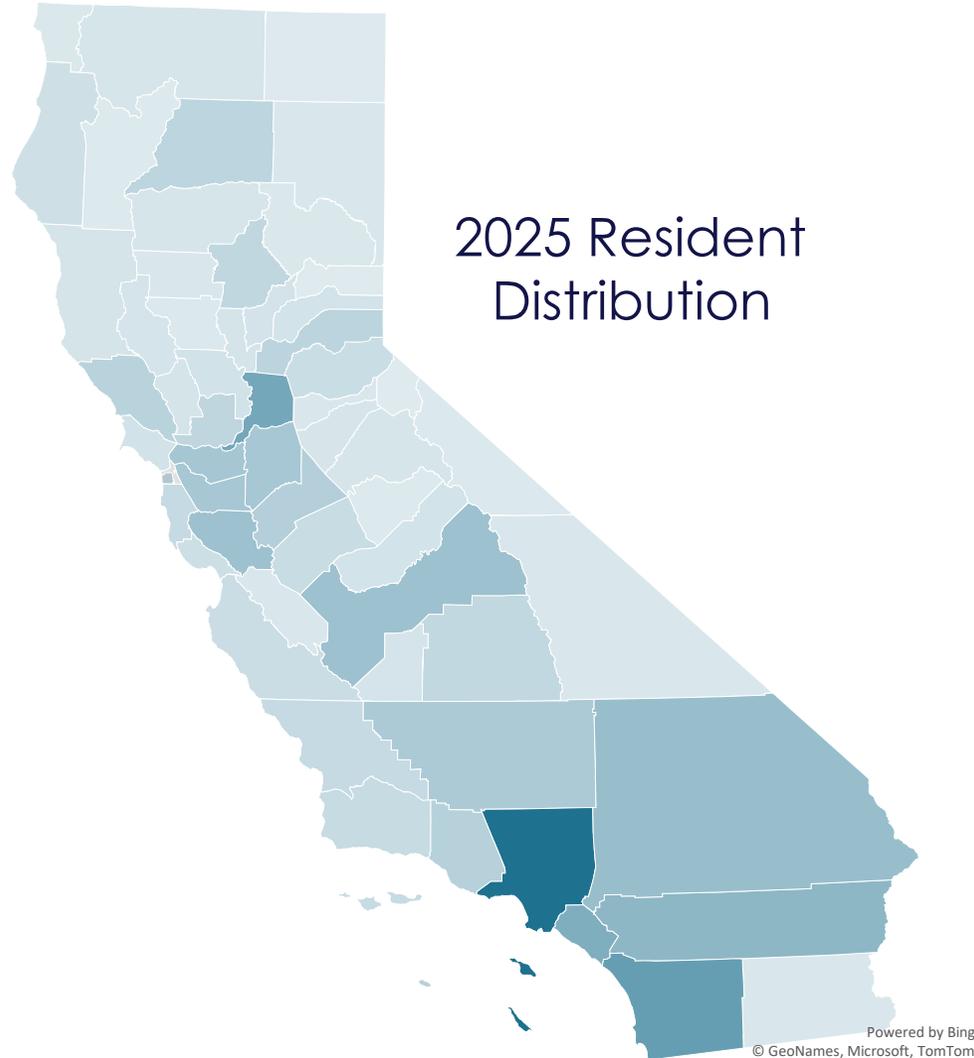


Annual vs. Short-Term



- The **introduction of 365-day licenses** brought a **3% increase** in annual sales in 2023, compared to 2019 (pre-pandemic).
- Approximately **one third of all short-term license purchasers** are nonresidents.

Annual License Distribution



- Over the last 10 years, an average of **2.2% of annual sport fishing license purchasers were non-residents.**
- There has been a **~4% increase in Southern California anglers** since 2016.

Sport Fishing License Cost Trends

Annual Licenses

- Annual Resident License:
 - \$43.50 in 2016 → \$58.25 in 2025 (+34%)
- Annual Non-Resident License:
 - \$117 in 2016 → \$157.25 in 2025 (+34%)

Short-Term Licenses

- 1-Day:
 - \$14 in 2016 → \$19 in 2025 (+36%)
- 2-Day:
 - \$21.75 in 2016 → \$29.25 in 2025 (+34%)



Are Licenses More Expensive?

- From 2016-2025 **license prices increased ~34%**, across resident, non-resident and short-term license types.
- Over the same period, **California's cost-of-living and inflation increased by 38%**.
- Licenses are not outpacing the cost of living. Adjusted for inflation, **they cost about the same or slightly less than in 2016**.
- For less than the price of a tank of gas or trip to the grocery store, anglers can get a full year of fishing access and contribute to conservation.

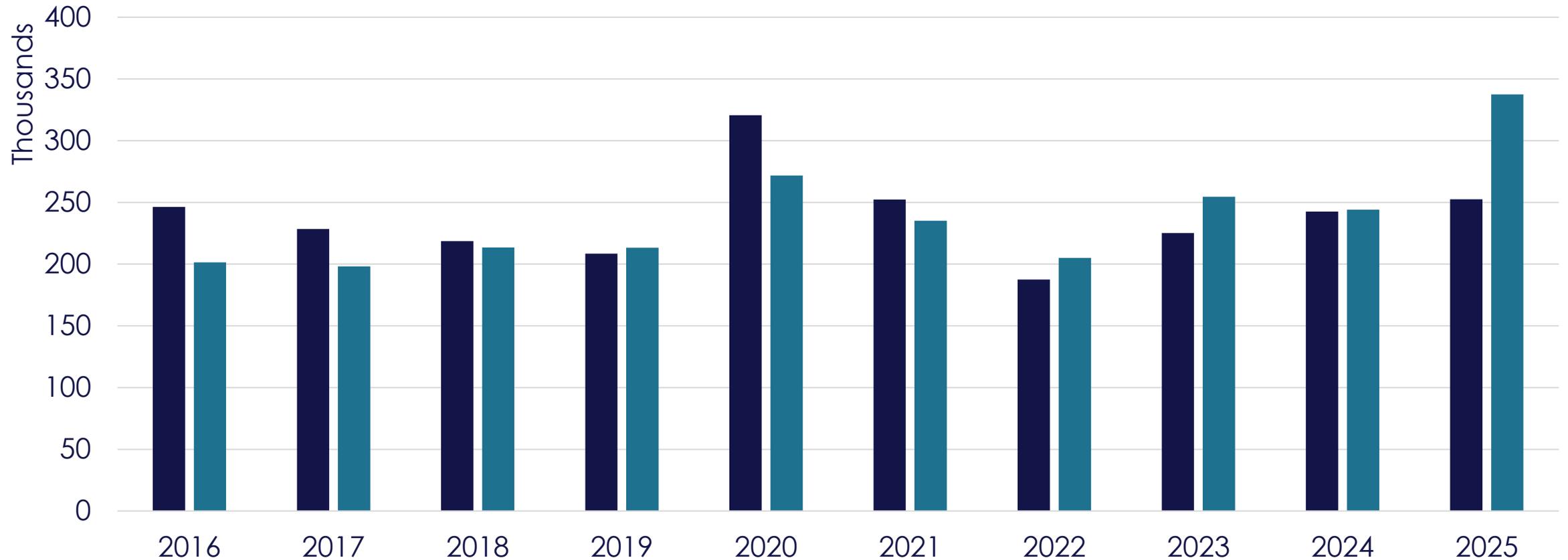


Source: California Consumer Price Index, California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), Research Unit. "California Consumer Price Index 1955-2025 (All Urban Consumers)."

R3 Metrics

New & Returning Anglers

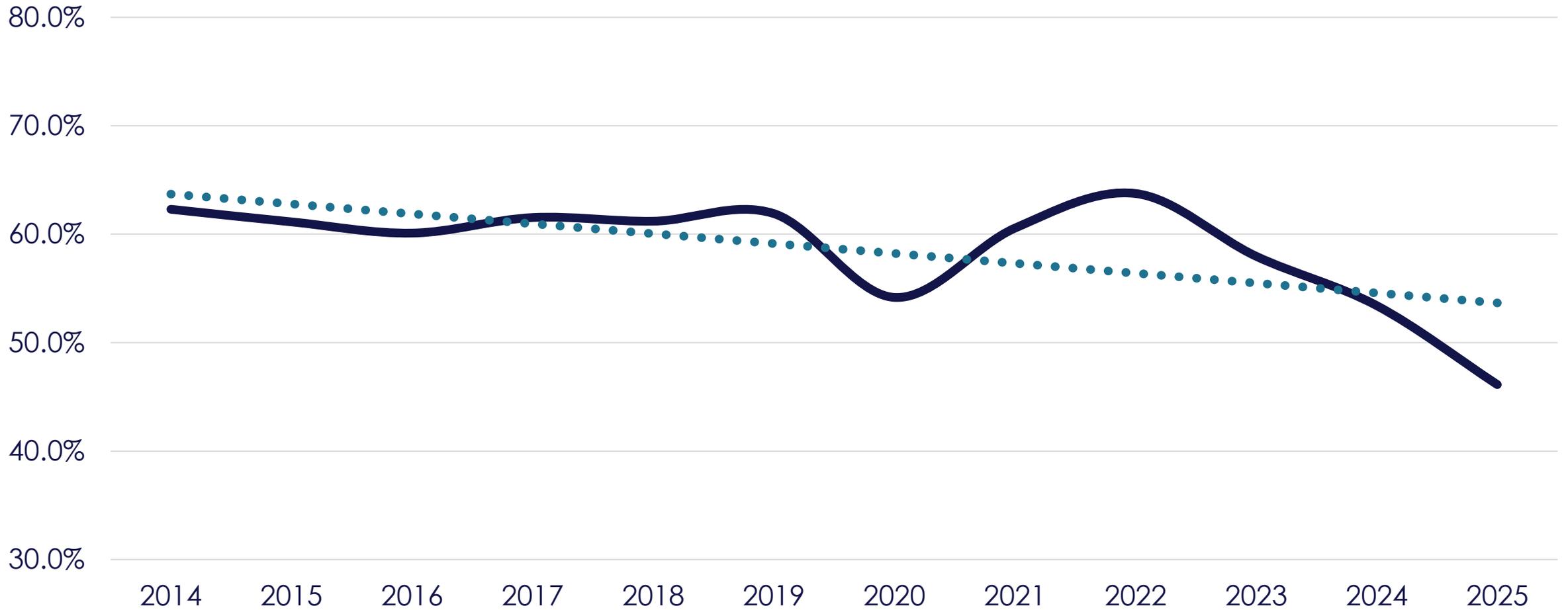
■ Recruitment ■ Reactivation



Data based off annual license sales

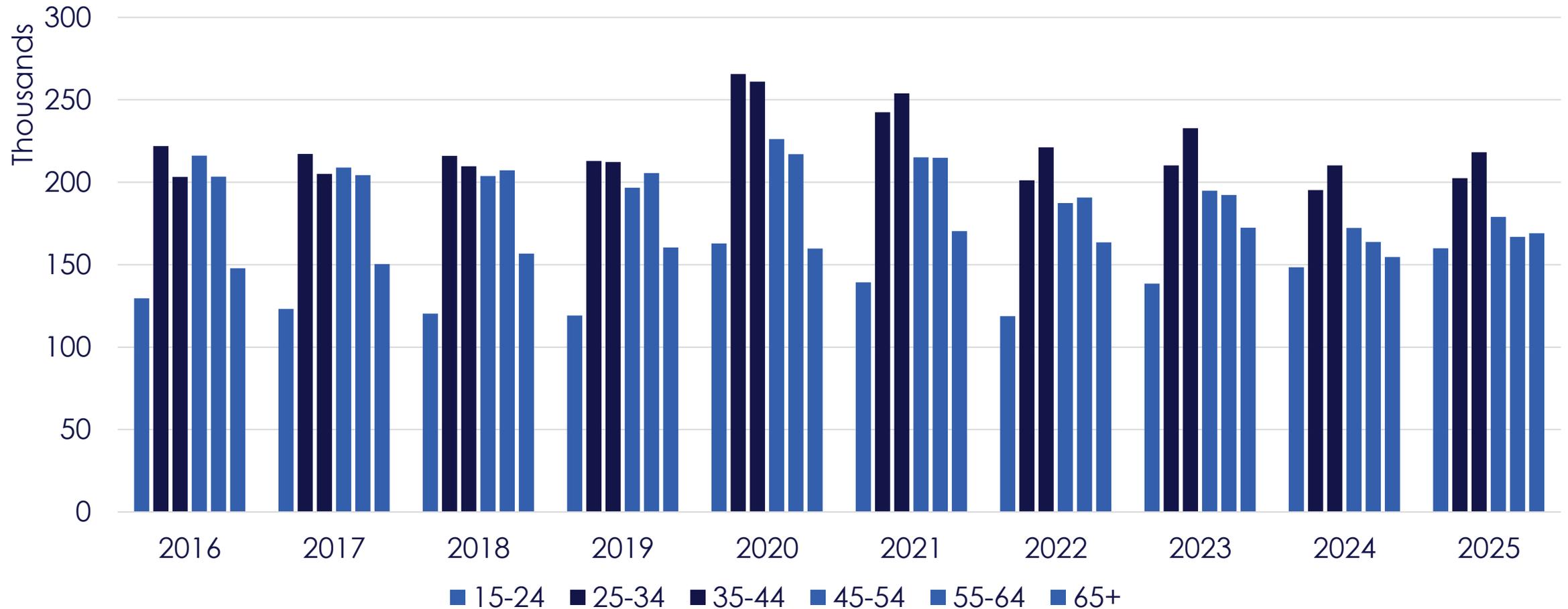
R3 Metrics

Annual Retention Rates

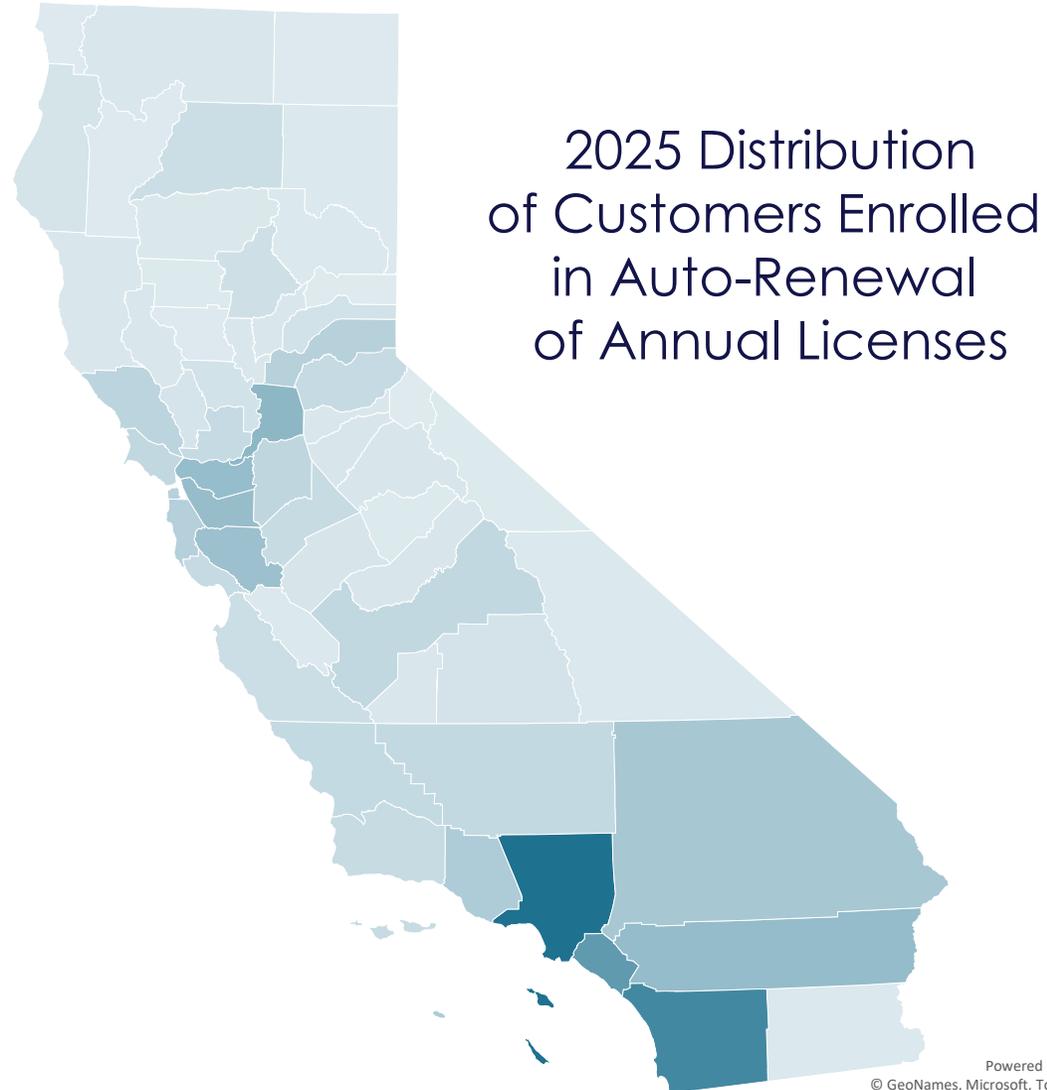


R3 Metrics

Annual Fishing License Sales by Age

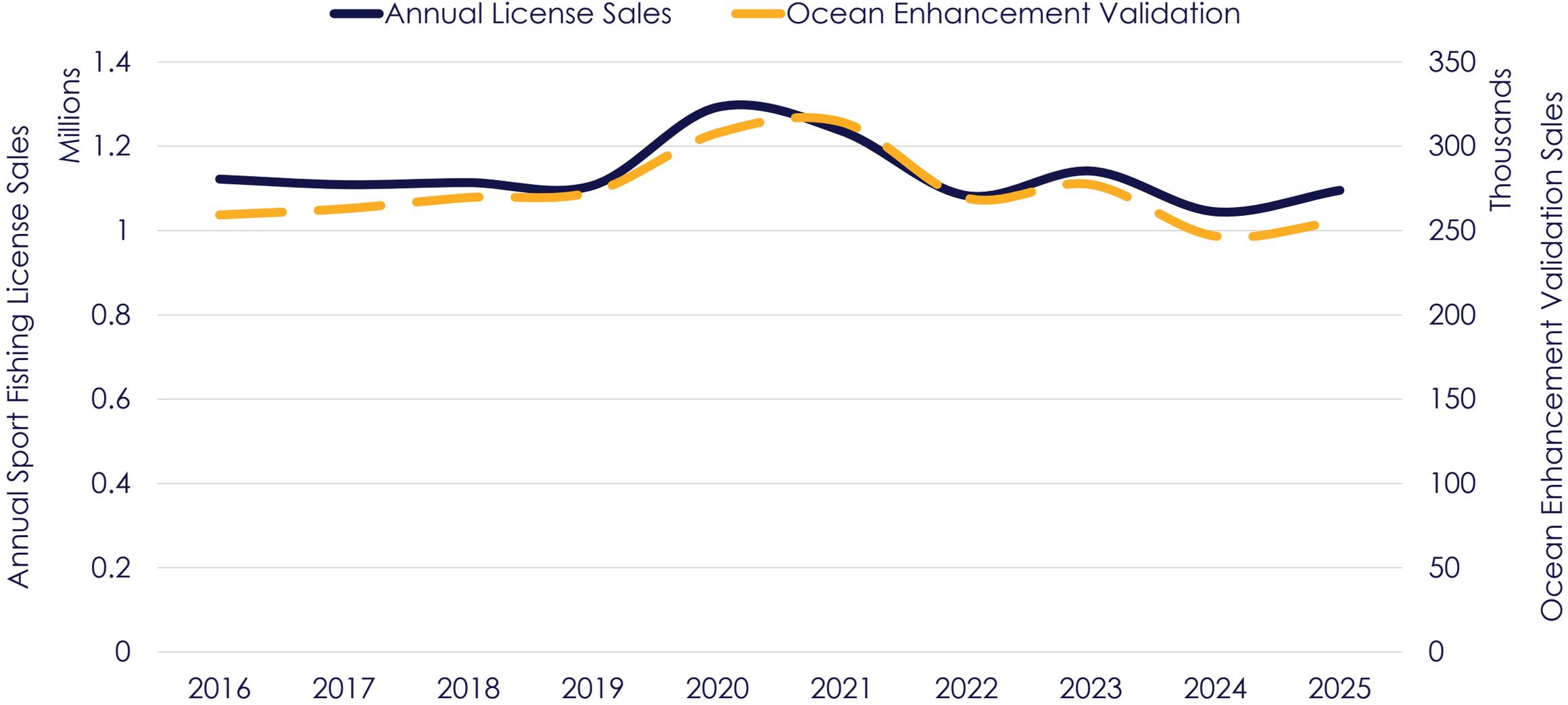


Auto-renewal Density Map



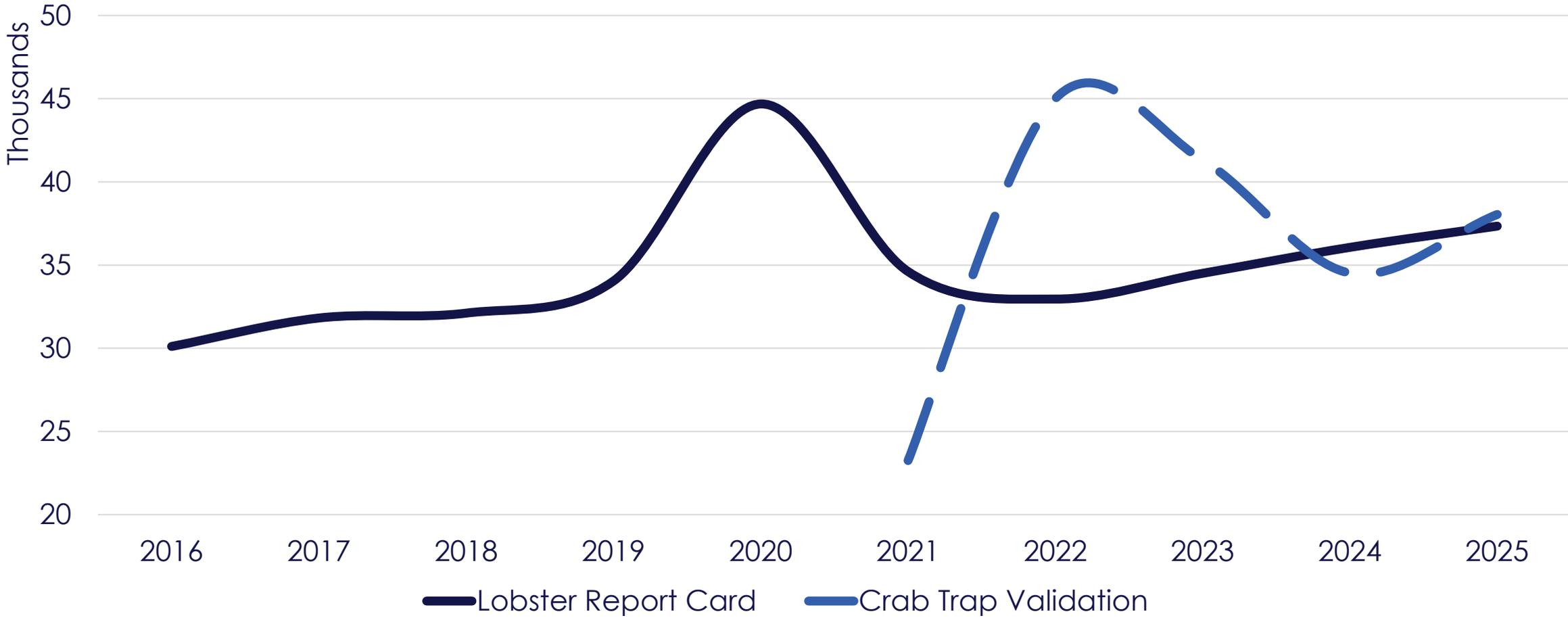
- Various licenses, report cards and validations can be set up for auto-renewal.
- Only ~6% of annual sport fishing license holders are enrolled in auto-renewal.

Marine Participation Indicators



Marine Participation Indicators

Specialty Item Sales



Pier & Jetty Fishing

What we know:

- **24% of U.S. anglers** claim they **fish from piers/jetties**, underlining non-licensed pier use is a major national activity.
- Piers can **attract R3-priority audiences**: families and social groups, newcomers (low-cost access), casual/low-frequency anglers.

What we don't know:

- California is unique in **providing free fishing opportunities** from designated piers and jetties at no cost. Unfortunately, participation cannot be measured through license sales due to design.



Source: "2025 Special Report on Fishing." American Sportfish Association, Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation.

National Trends Reinforce California Participation

- **Fishing participation** nationally reached **57.9M people** in 2024, the **highest on record**, showing sustained interest in the activity (despite economic variability).
- U.S. **angler churn remains high**, with **16.9M new/returning anglers** and **16.6M leaving**.
- **First-time participation** is growing nationally: **5.1M new anglers** in 2024 (up from 4.2M in 2023), aligning with CA's adult-onset recruitment.
- Top motivators for new anglers – family time, nature, relaxation – align with California's R3 focus areas.



Source: "2025 Special Report on Fishing." American Sportfish Association, Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation.

Summary

- License sales are declining at a slow rate, and the impacts of switching to 365-day licenses are still largely unknown.
 - The largest decline seen in the last decade is in short-term license sales.
 - Annual license purchasers make up a majority of all license purchasers.
- License prices have risen *slower* than inflation, adjusted for cost-of-living increases, the cost of a fishing license has remained stable in the last decade.
- R3 Metrics:
 - California has seen a surge in reactivated anglers in recent years.
 - Retention rates are down after the introduction of 365-day licenses.
 - 25–44-year-olds are the largest cohort of license purchasers.
- Ocean specific participation is following similar trends as annual licensing.



Questions?

Taylor Williams
R3 Manager

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