

Shorebird Surveys in the Rakahuri or Ashley Riverbed

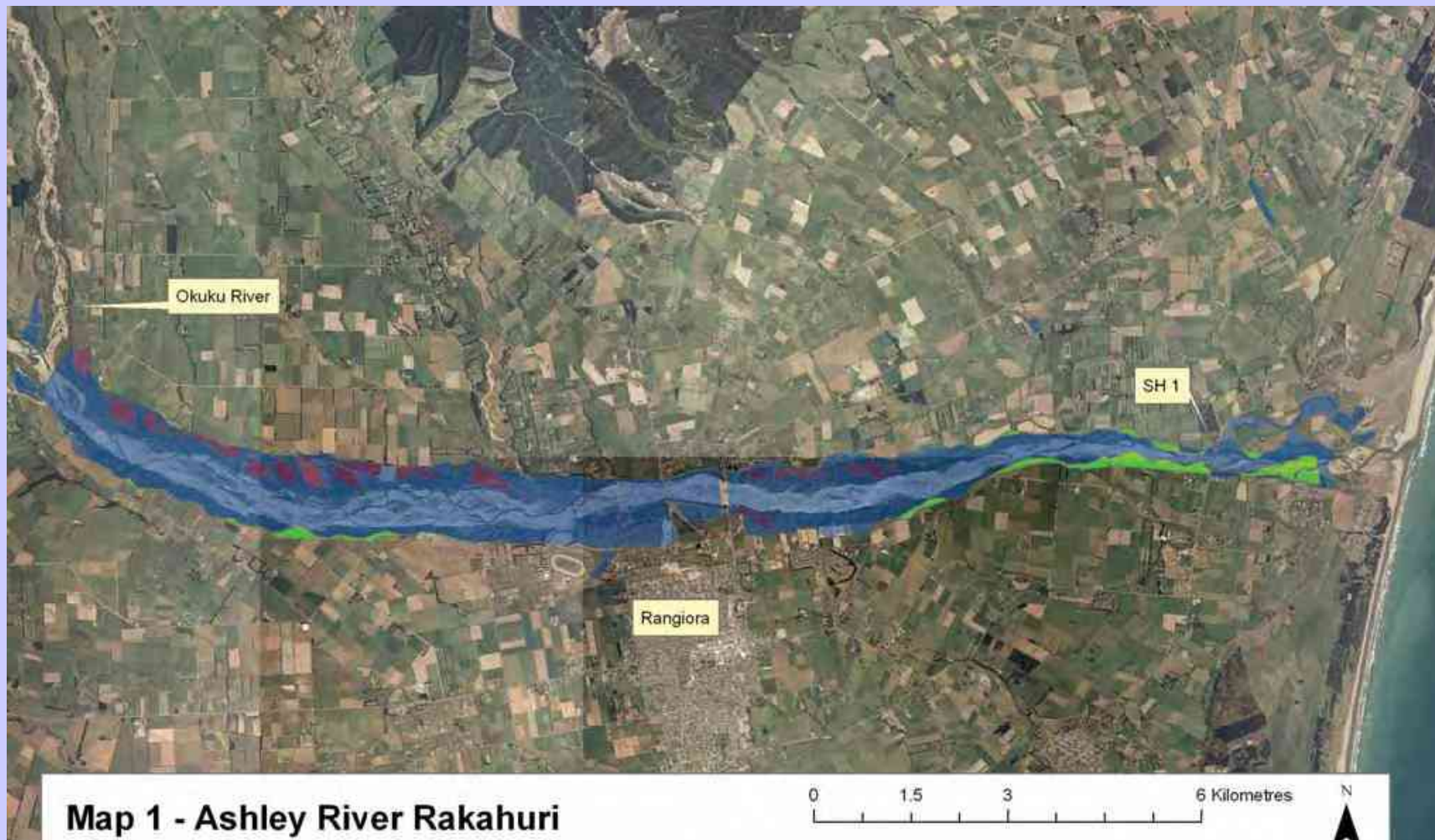
Eric Spurr

Ashley/Rakahuri Rivercare Group



Rakahuri or Ashley River

Small braided river, about 65 km long, flows from foothills to the sea at Waikuku Beach



Birds Breeding in Riverbed

É Three threatened shorebird species ó
wrybill, black-fronted tern, black-billed gull

É Plus banded dotterel, SI pied oystercatcher,
pied stilt, spur-winged plover, Caspian tern,
black-backed gull



Ashley/Rakahuri Rivercare Group

É Formed in 1999 to protect the threatened shorebirds and their habitat

É Surveys to monitor population trends of birds breeding in the riverbed

É Methods and Results of these surveys

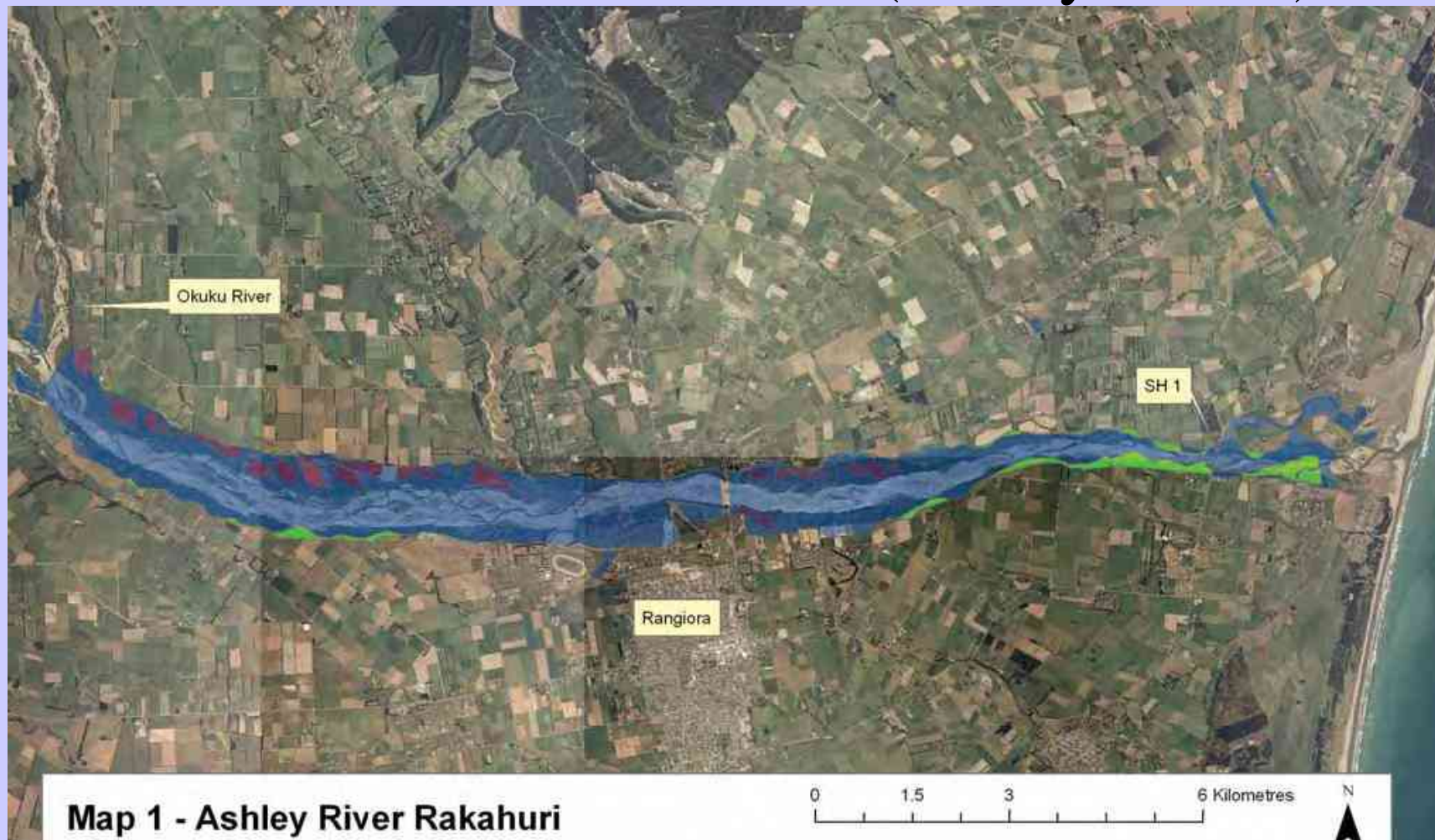
Bird Surveys

- É First survey in year 2000, now completed 10 annual surveys
- É Each year attempted to do two surveys (early October and mid November)
- É October surveys done in only 3 of 10 years (2000, 2002, and 2005)
- É November surveys done in 9 of 10 years (not 2002, not until December in 2 years)

Survey Area

É Okuku River to SH1 (total 18 km)

É Riverbed 200ó500 m wide (mostly 300 m)



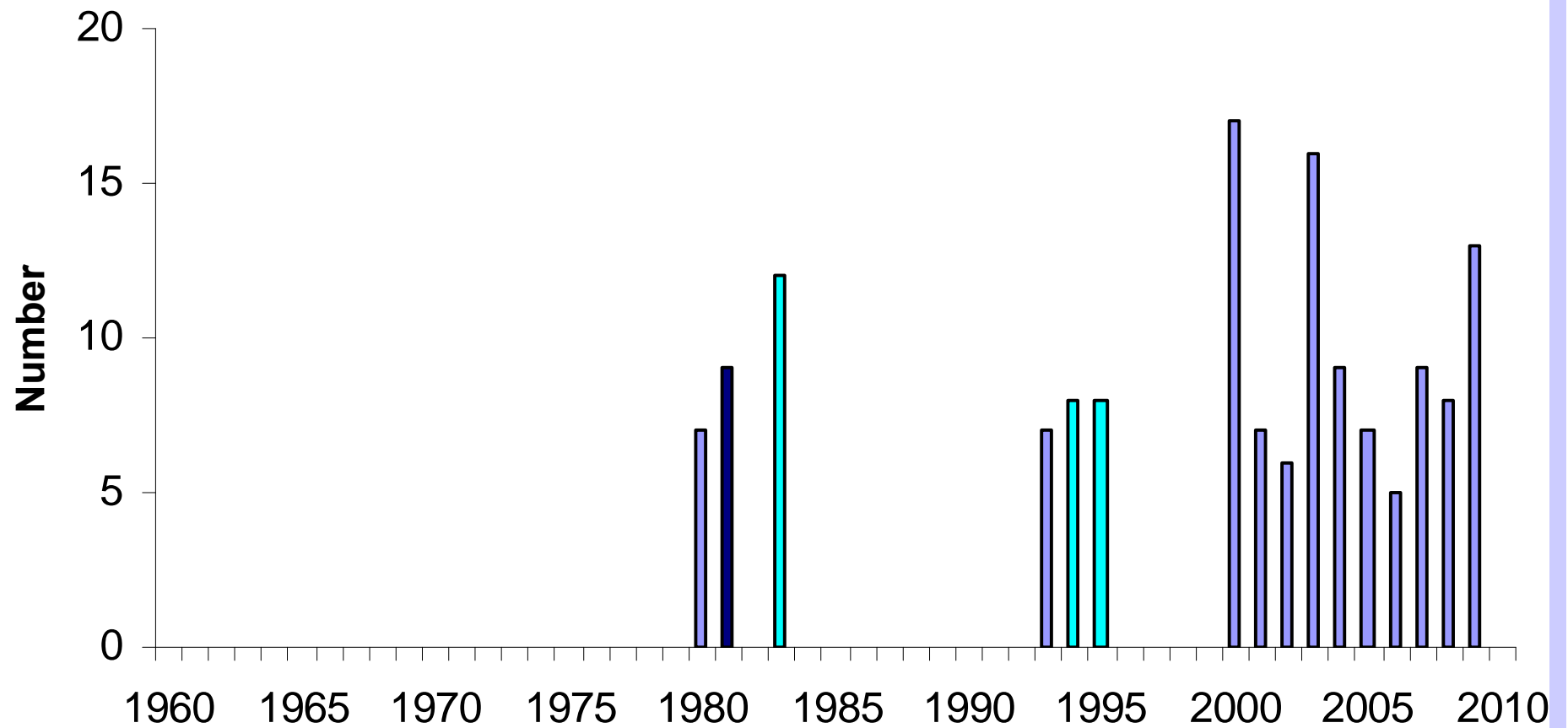
Method

- É Surveyed three or four sections concurrently
- É Teams of 3-5 observers, spaced evenly across riverbed, 50-100 m apart
- É Walked slowly downstream, keeping in line and in communication with each other
- É Counted birds as they passed them

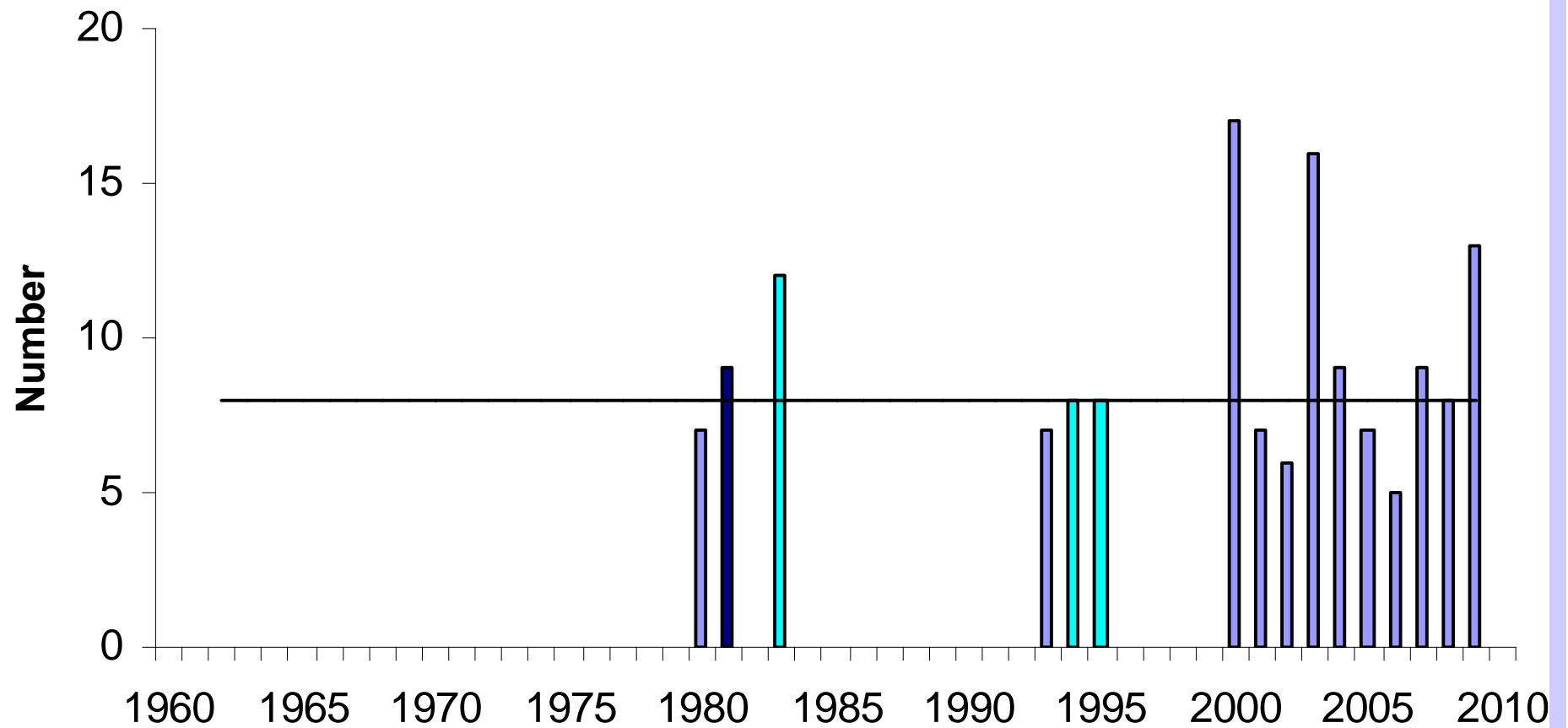
Earlier Surveys

- É Oct 1963 Gorge ó SH1 (41 km)
- É Oct 1980 Okuku ó Sea (21 km)
- É Nov 1981 Gorge ó Okuku (22 km)
- É Oct 1983 Airport ó Rangiora (4 km)*
- É Nov 1993 Okuku ó Estuary (21 km)
- É Nov 1994 Airport ó Railway (4 km)
- É Nov 1995 Airport ó Railway (4 km)

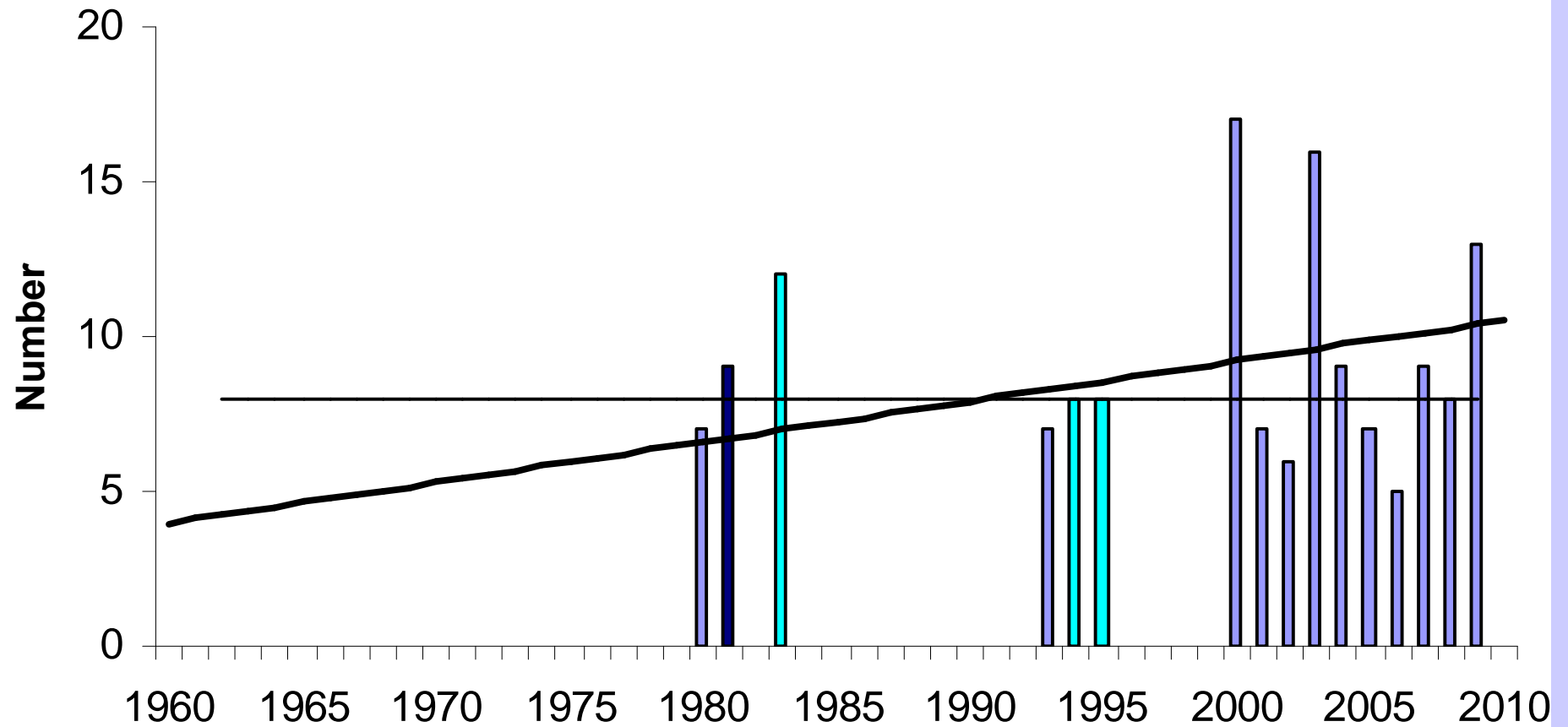
Wrybill



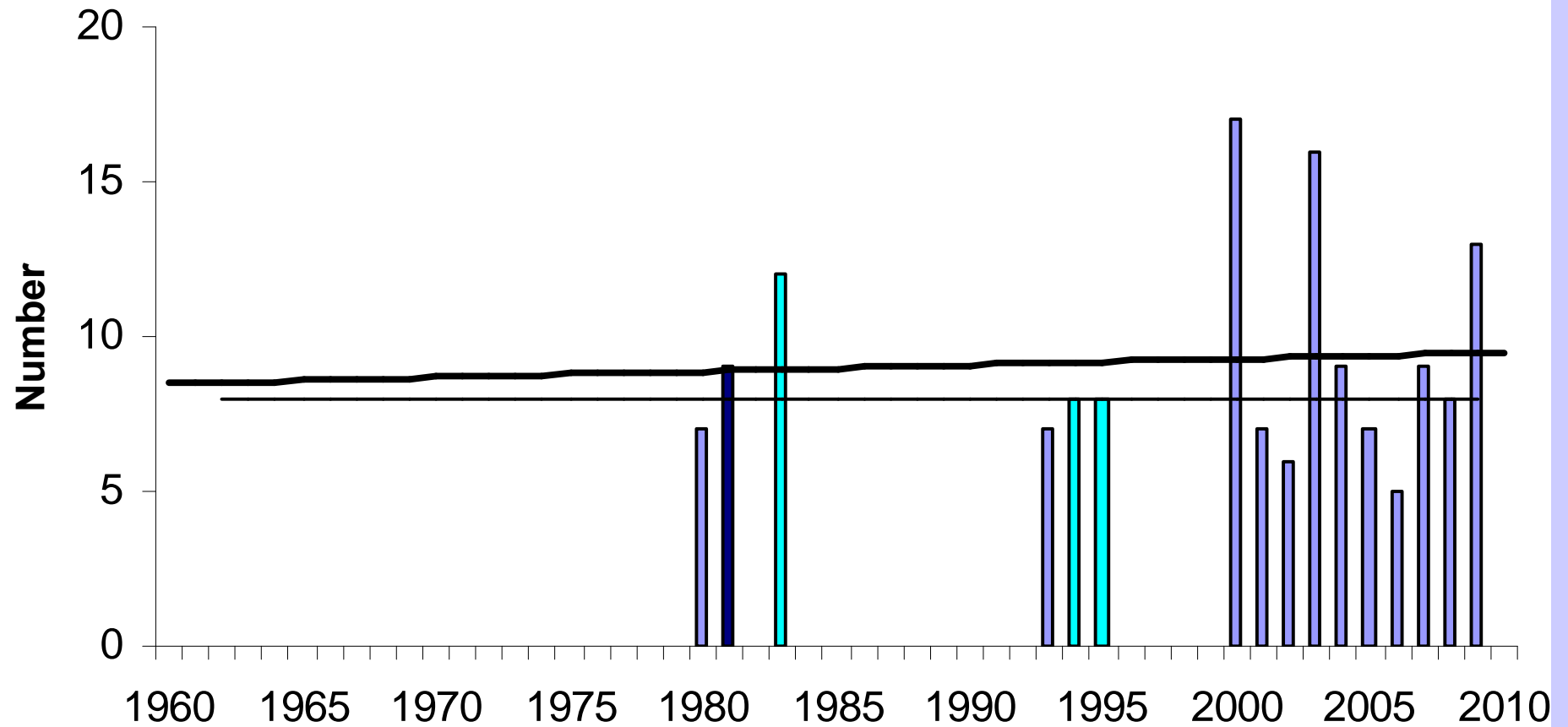
Wrybill



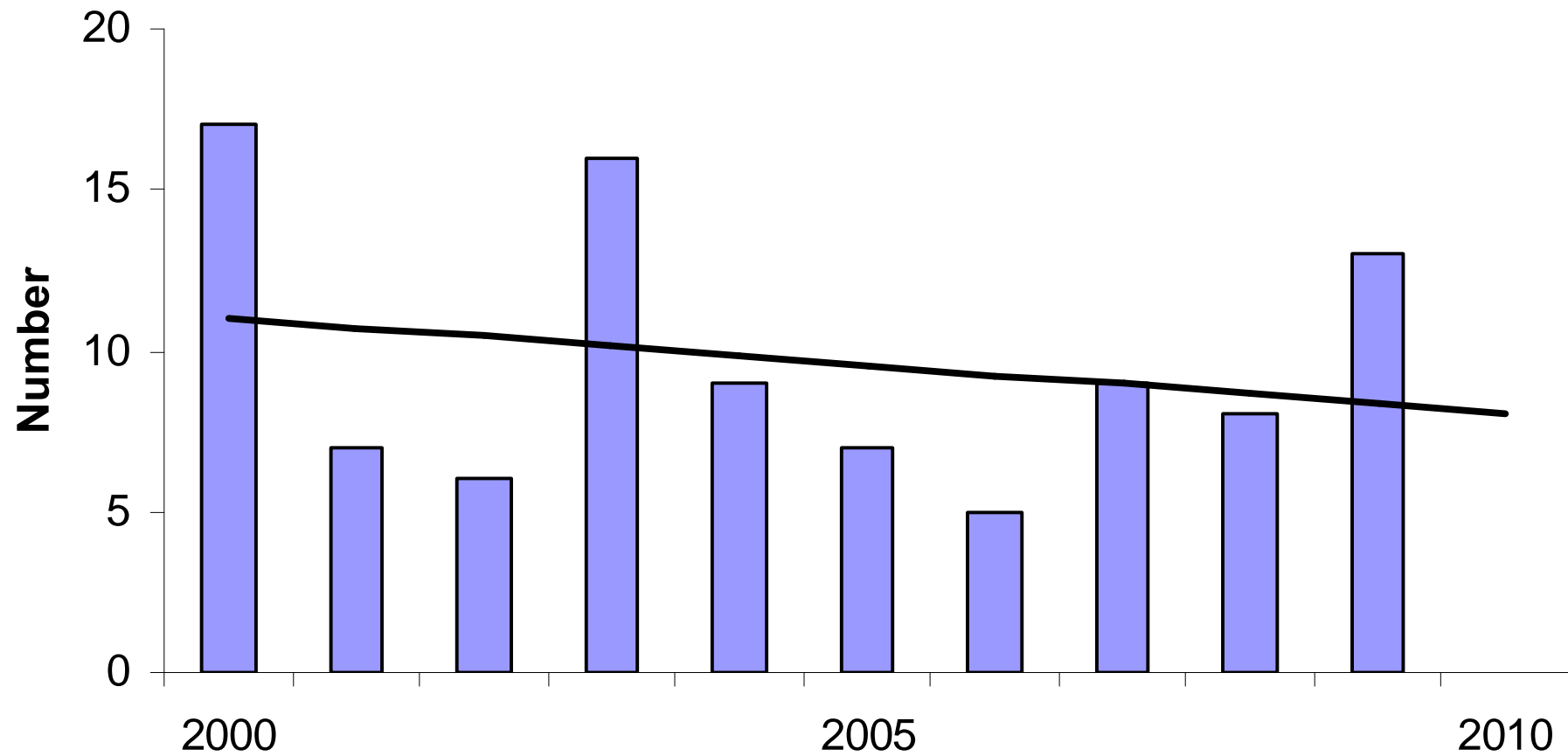
Wrybill



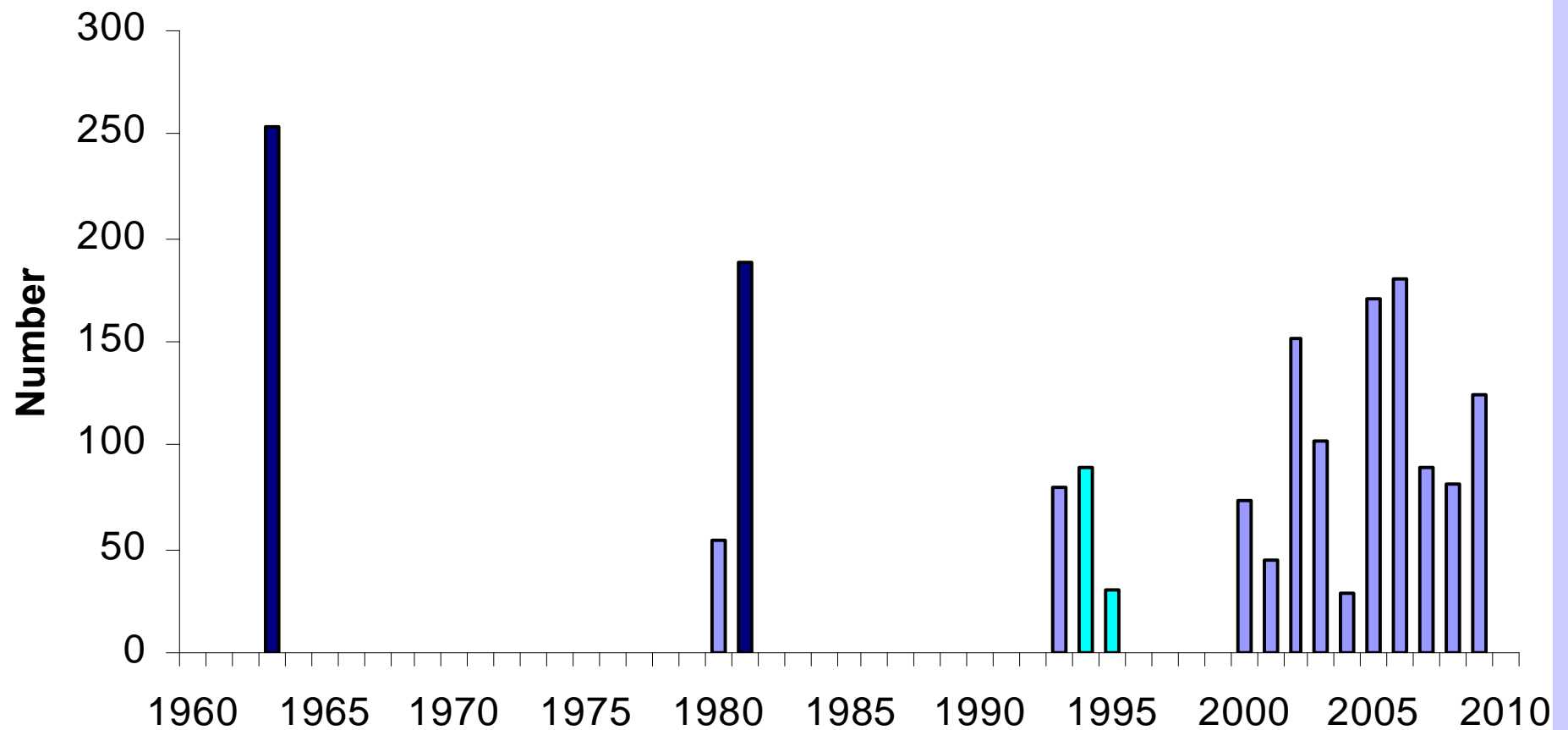
Wrybill



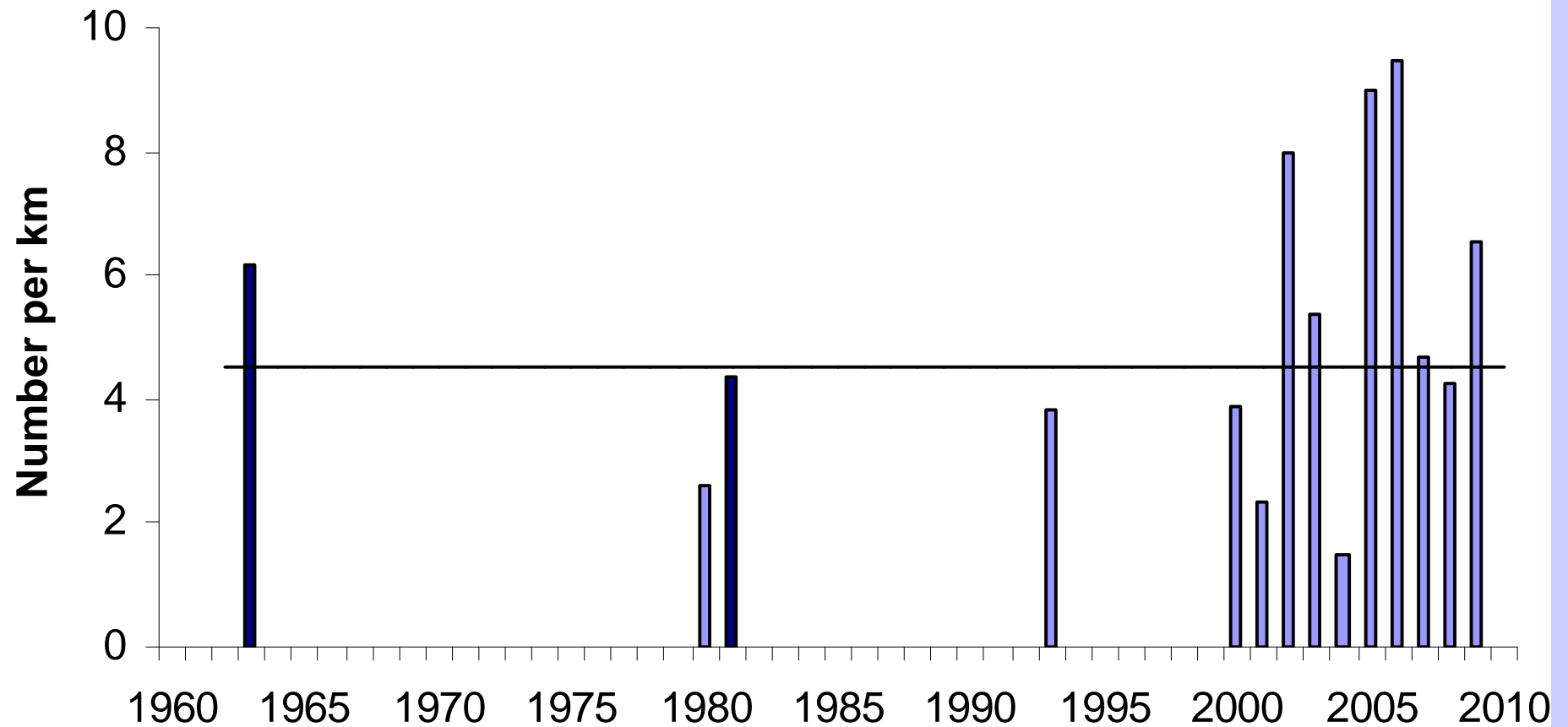
Wrybill



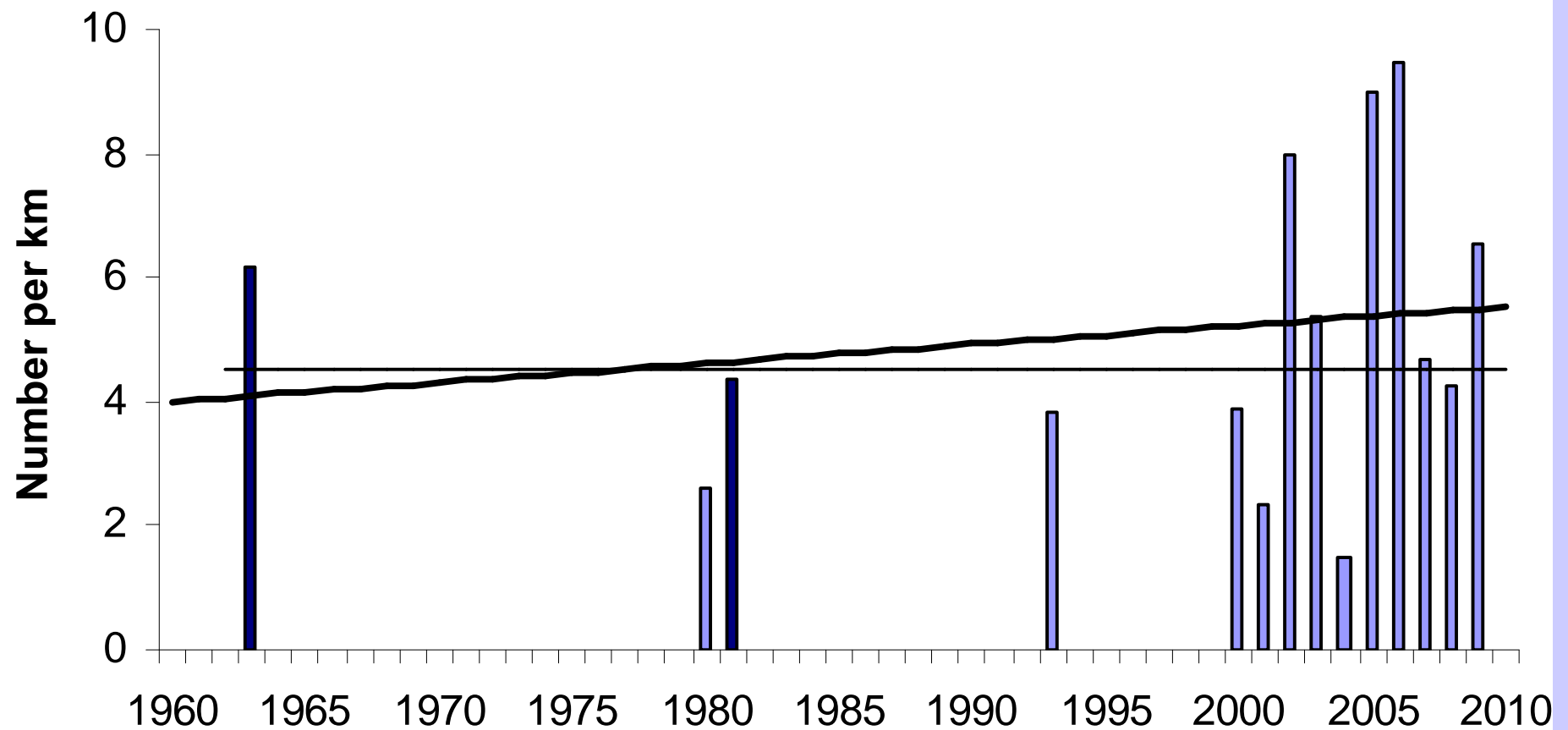
Black-fronted Tern



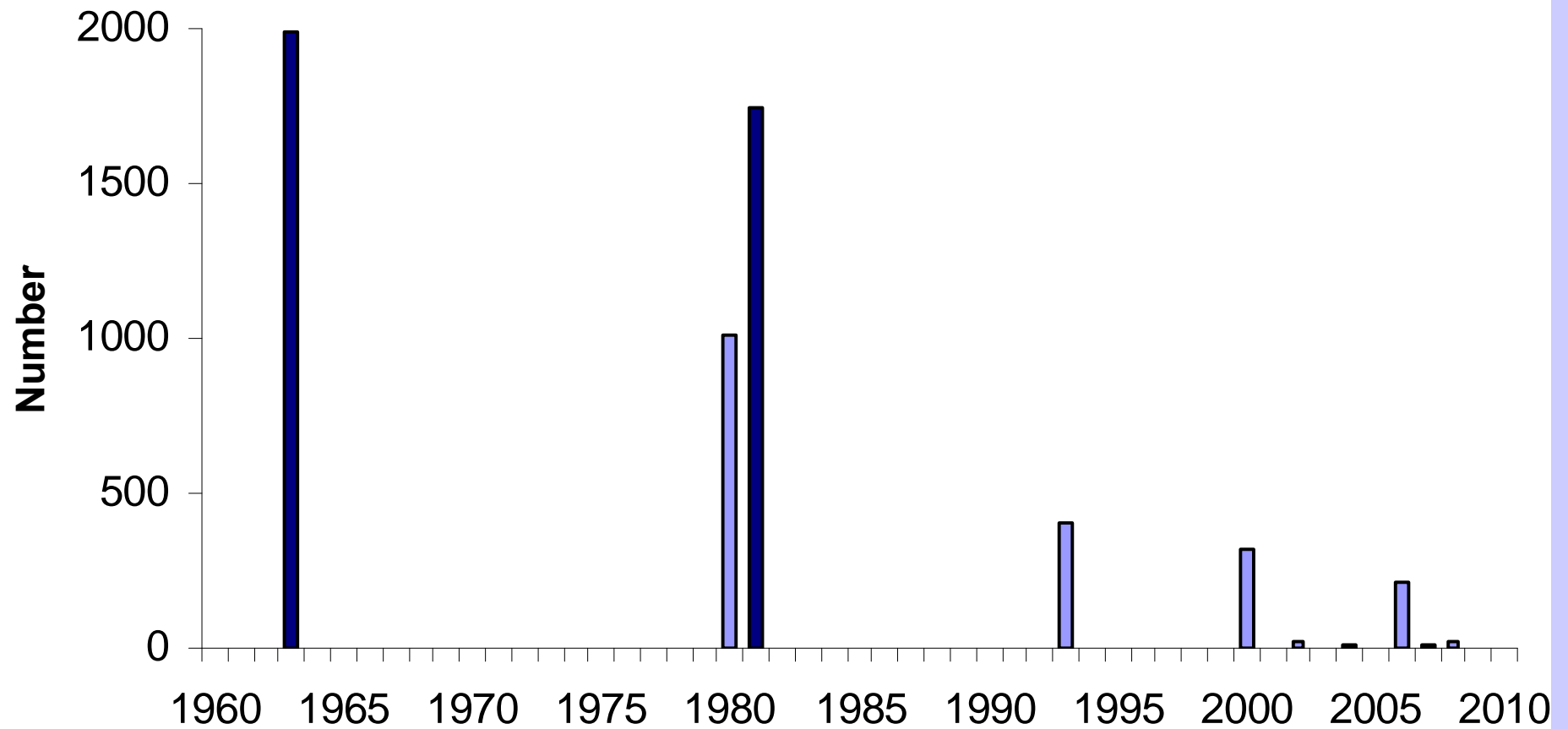
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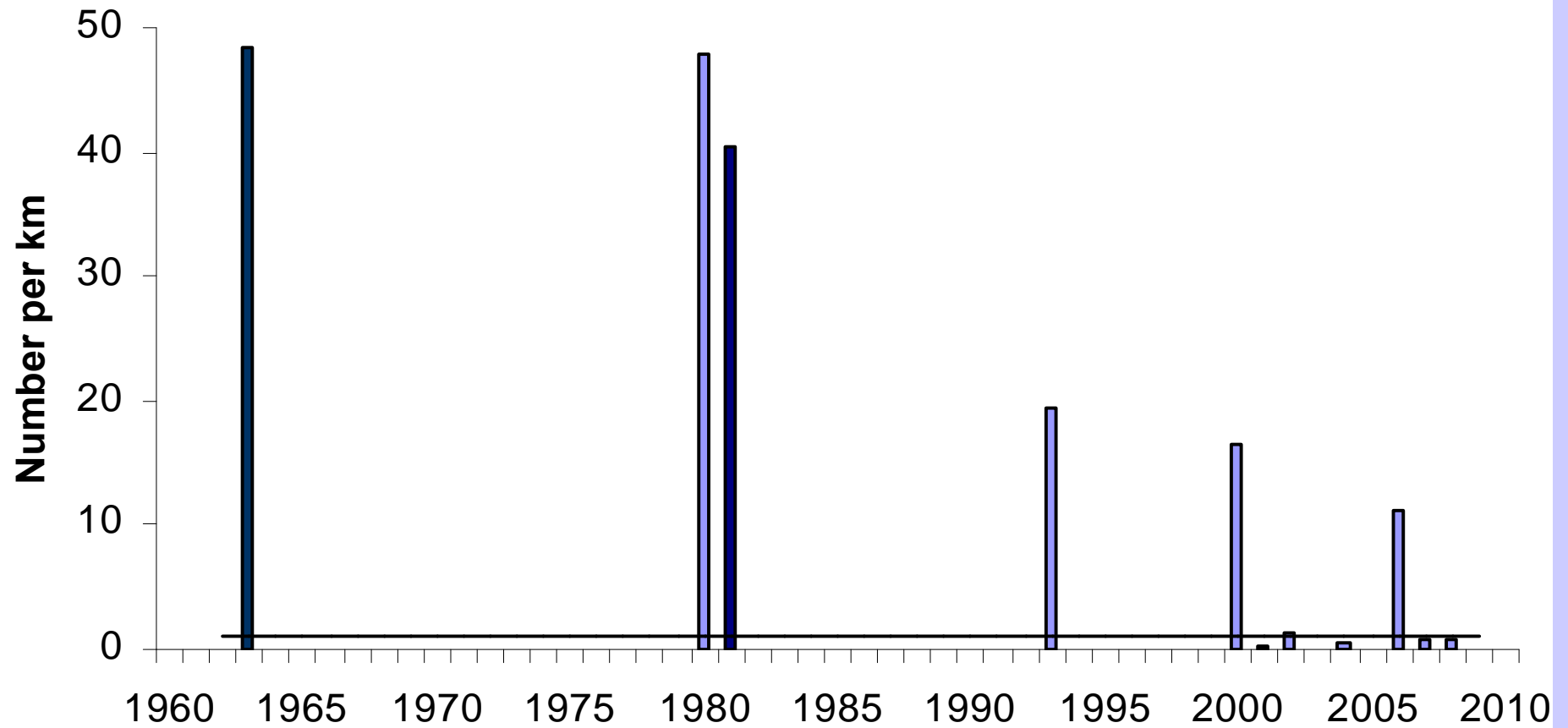
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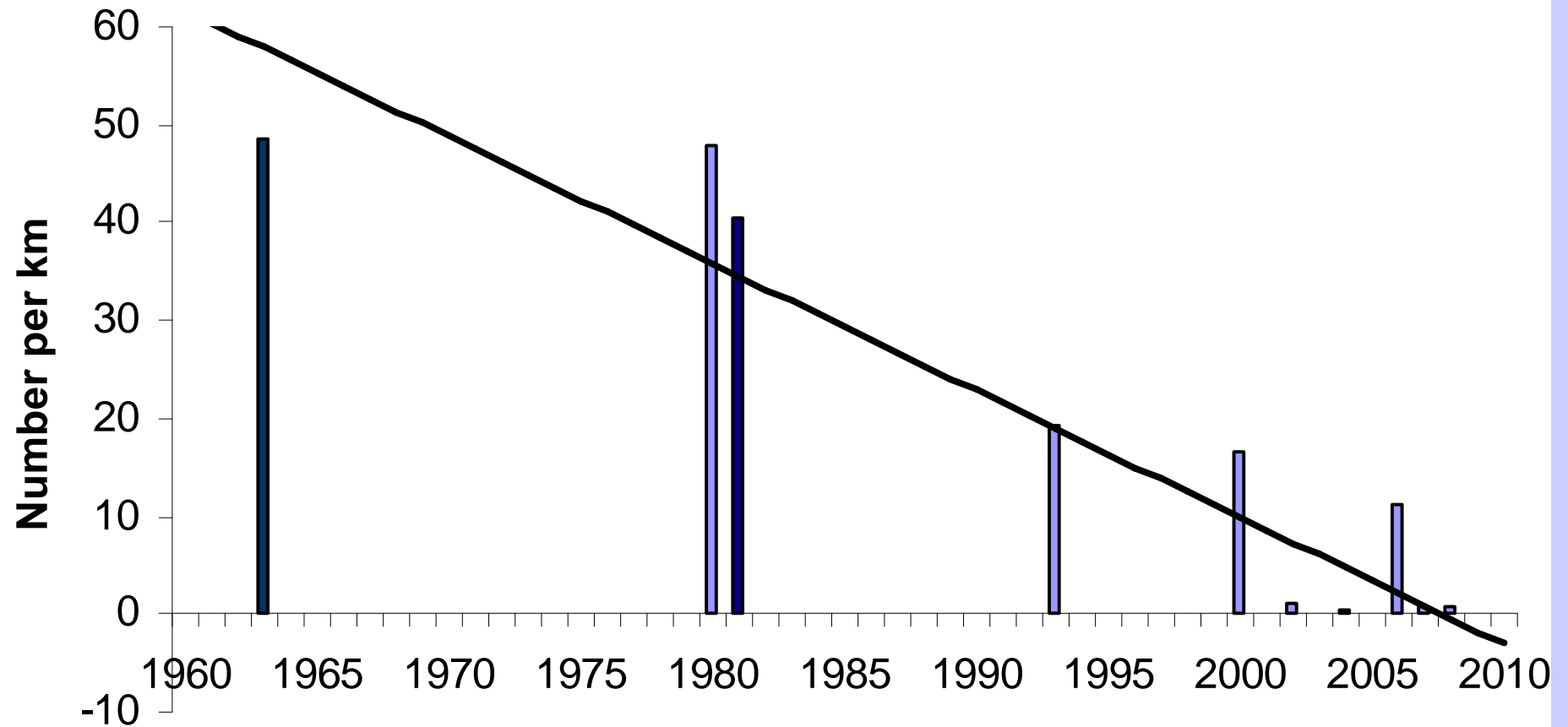
Black-billed Gull



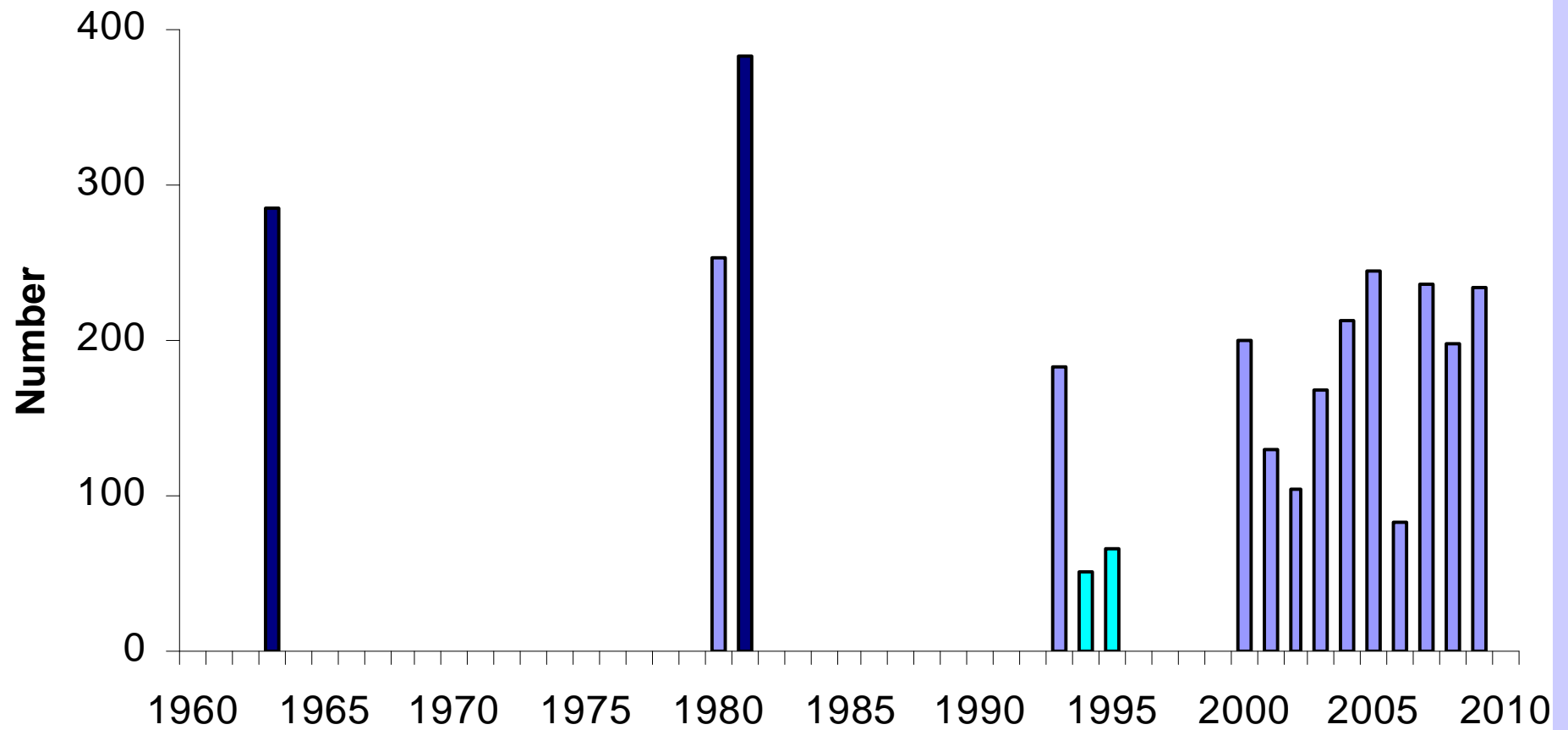
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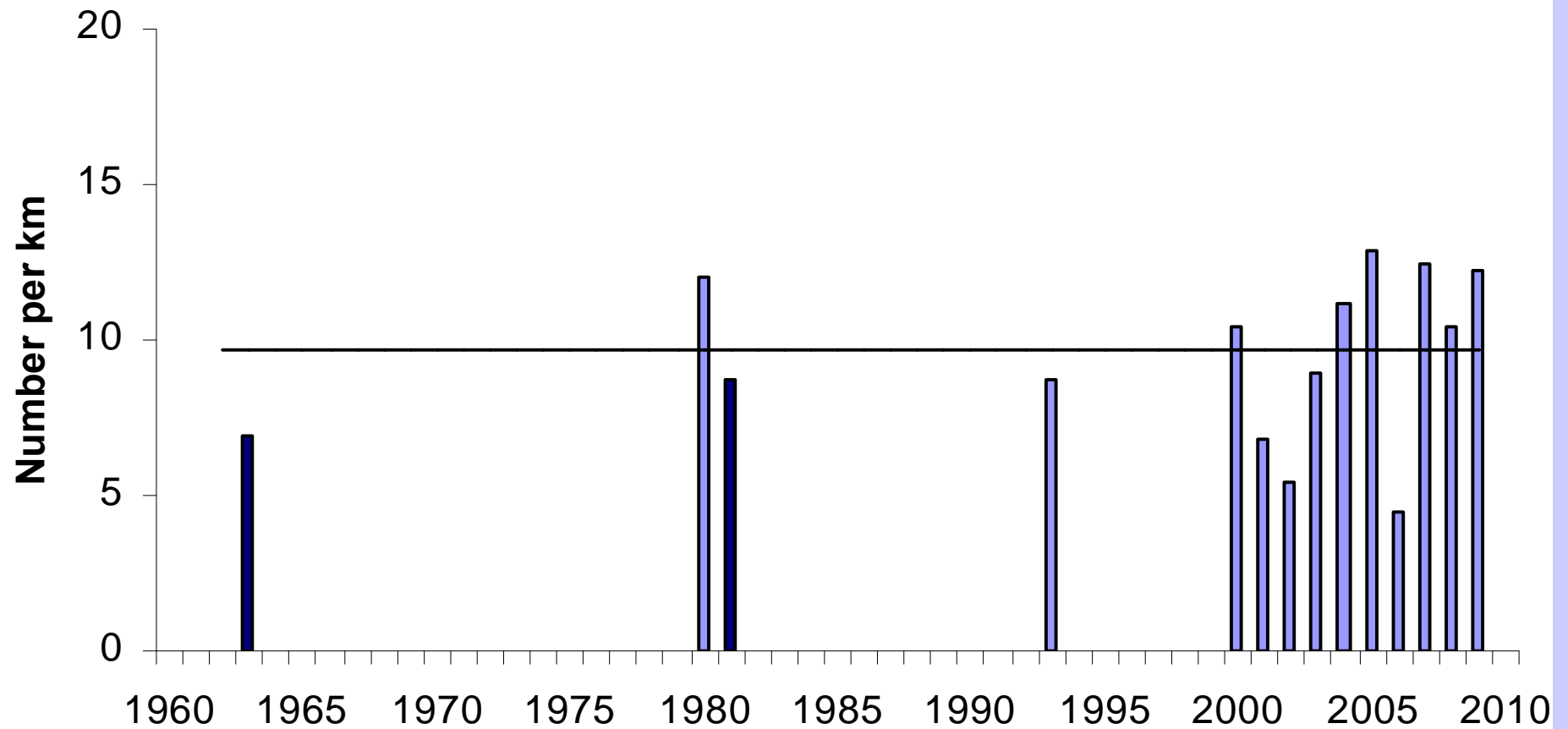
Black-billed Gull



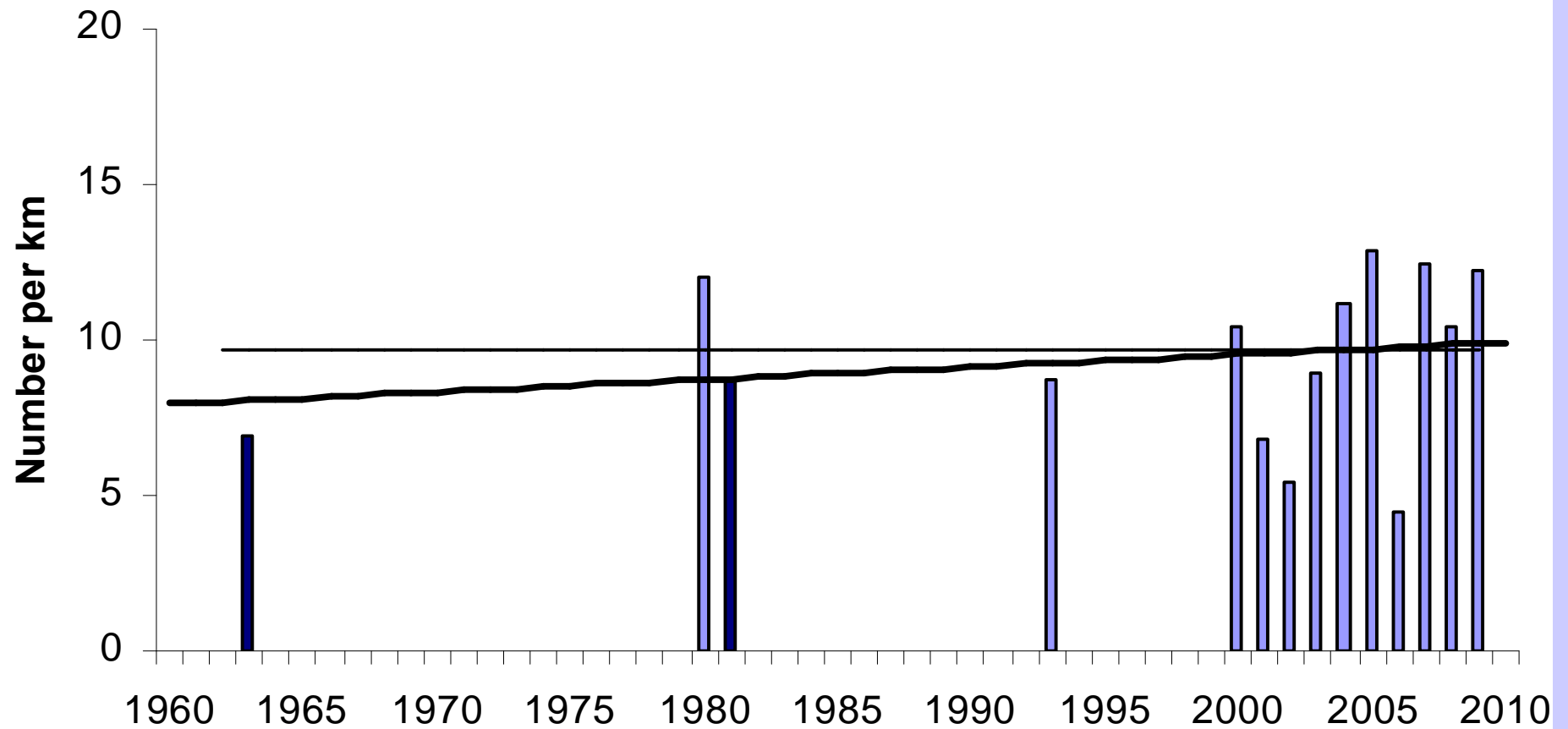
Banded Dotterel



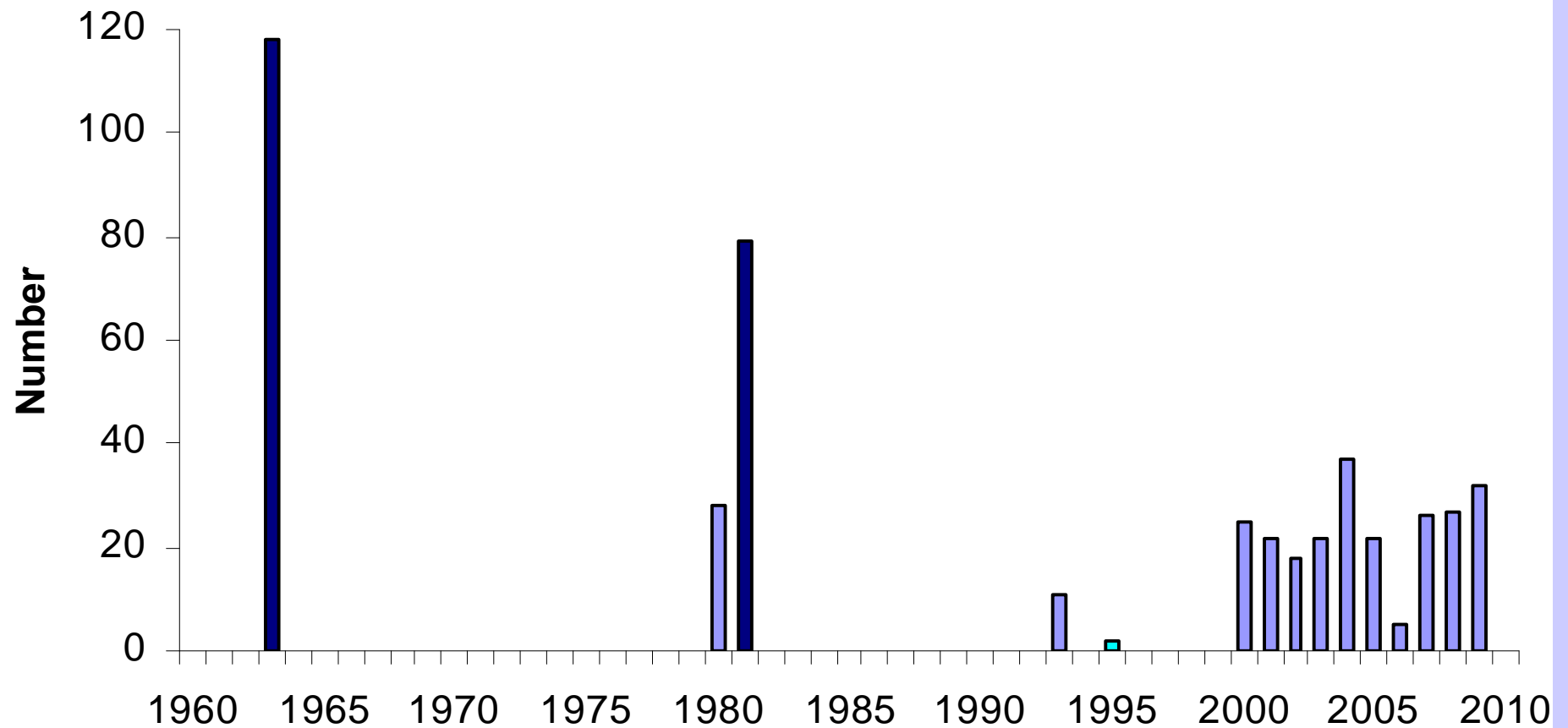
Banded Dotterel



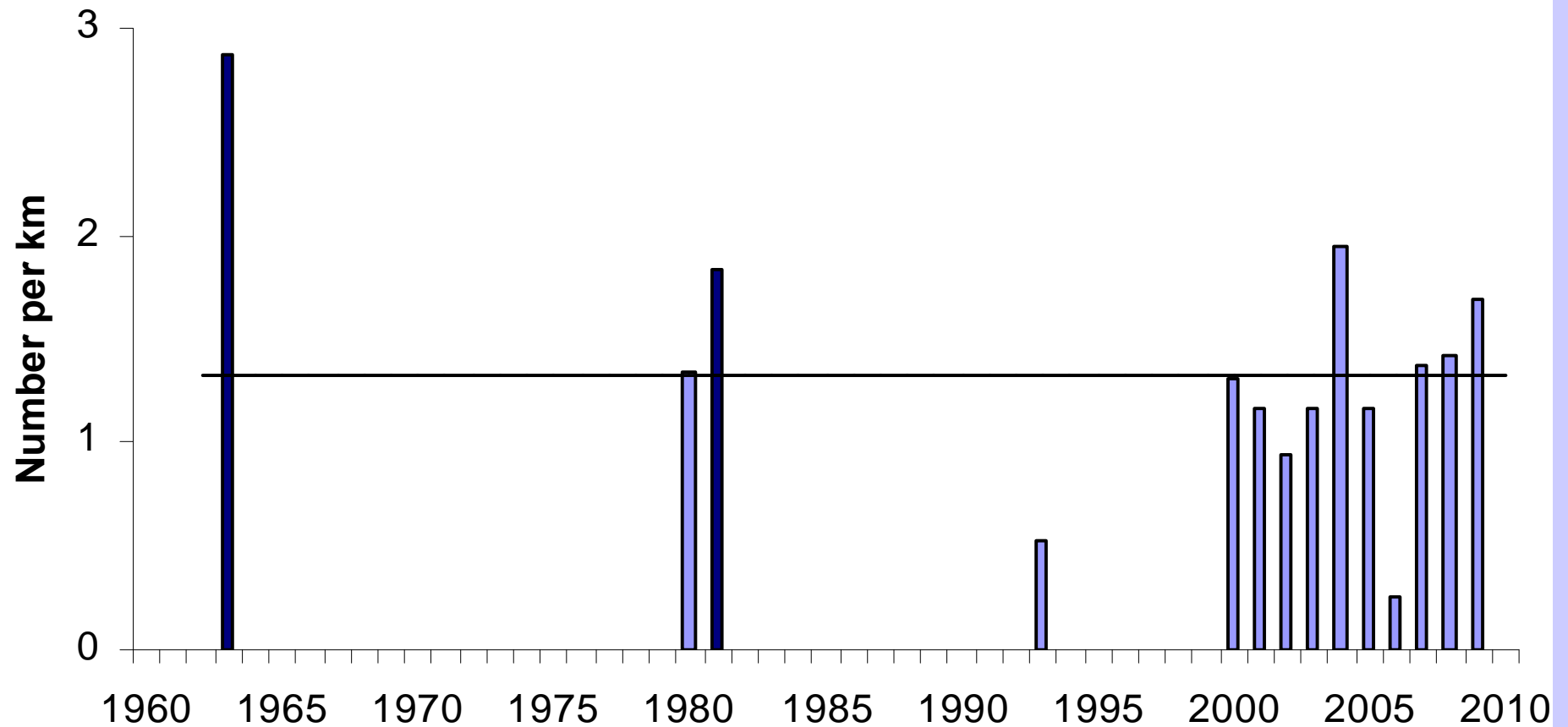
Banded Dotterel



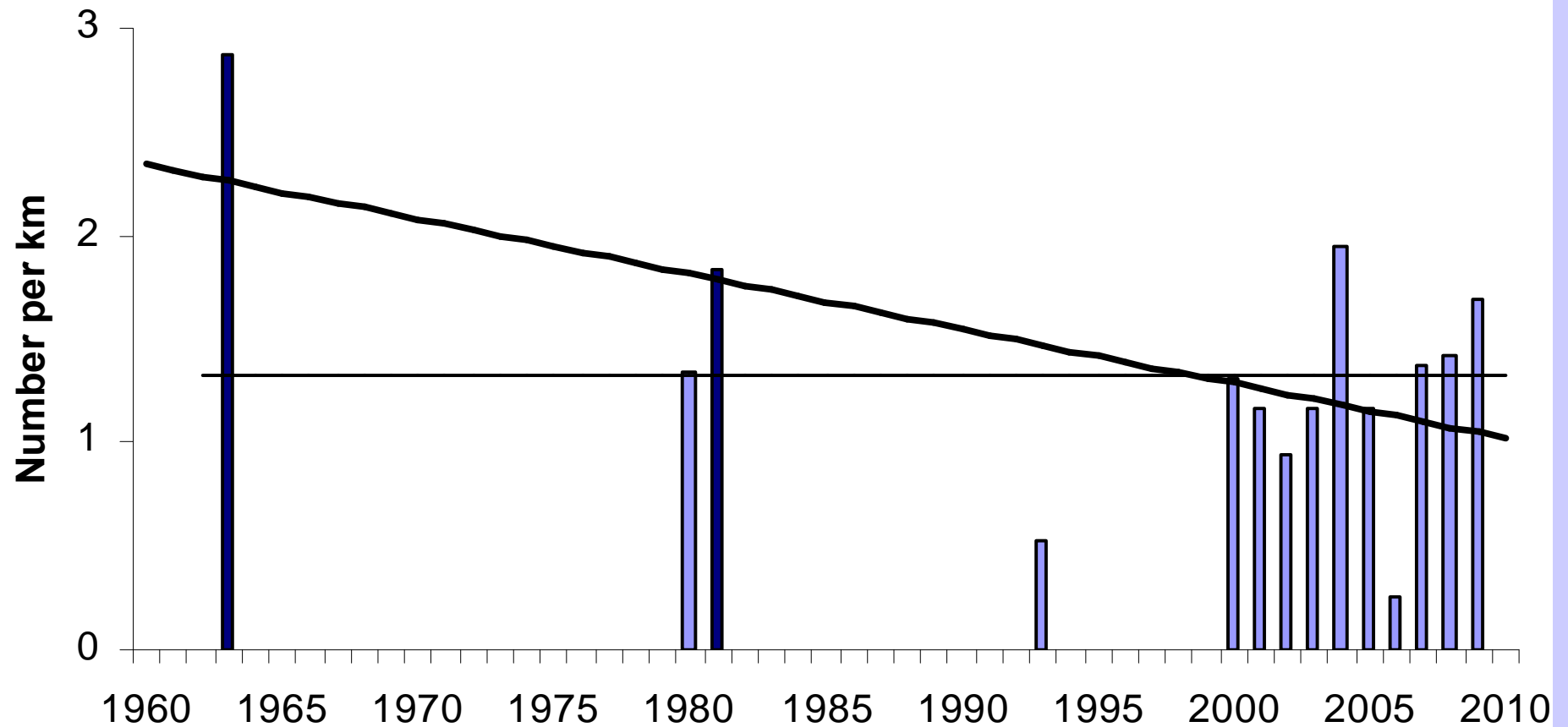
SI Pied Oystercatcher



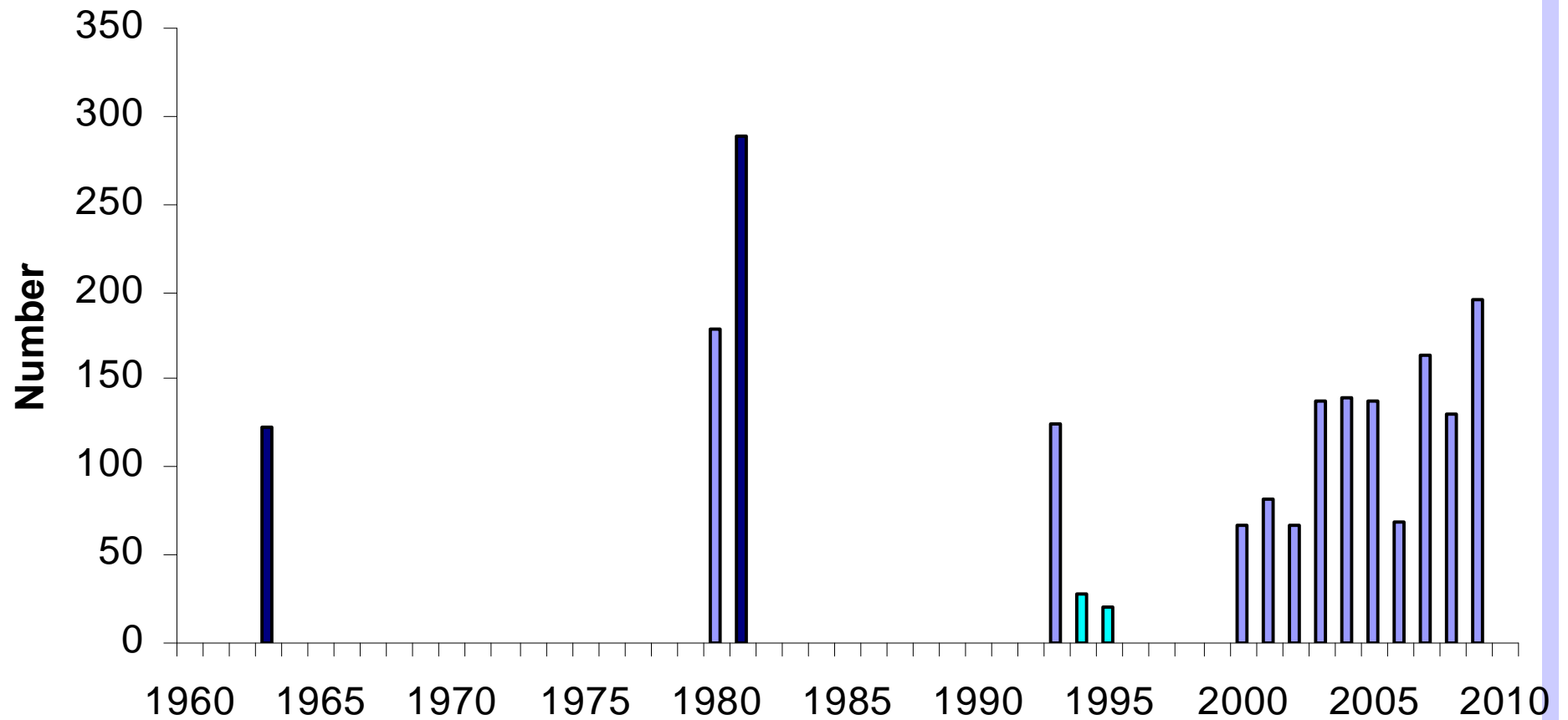
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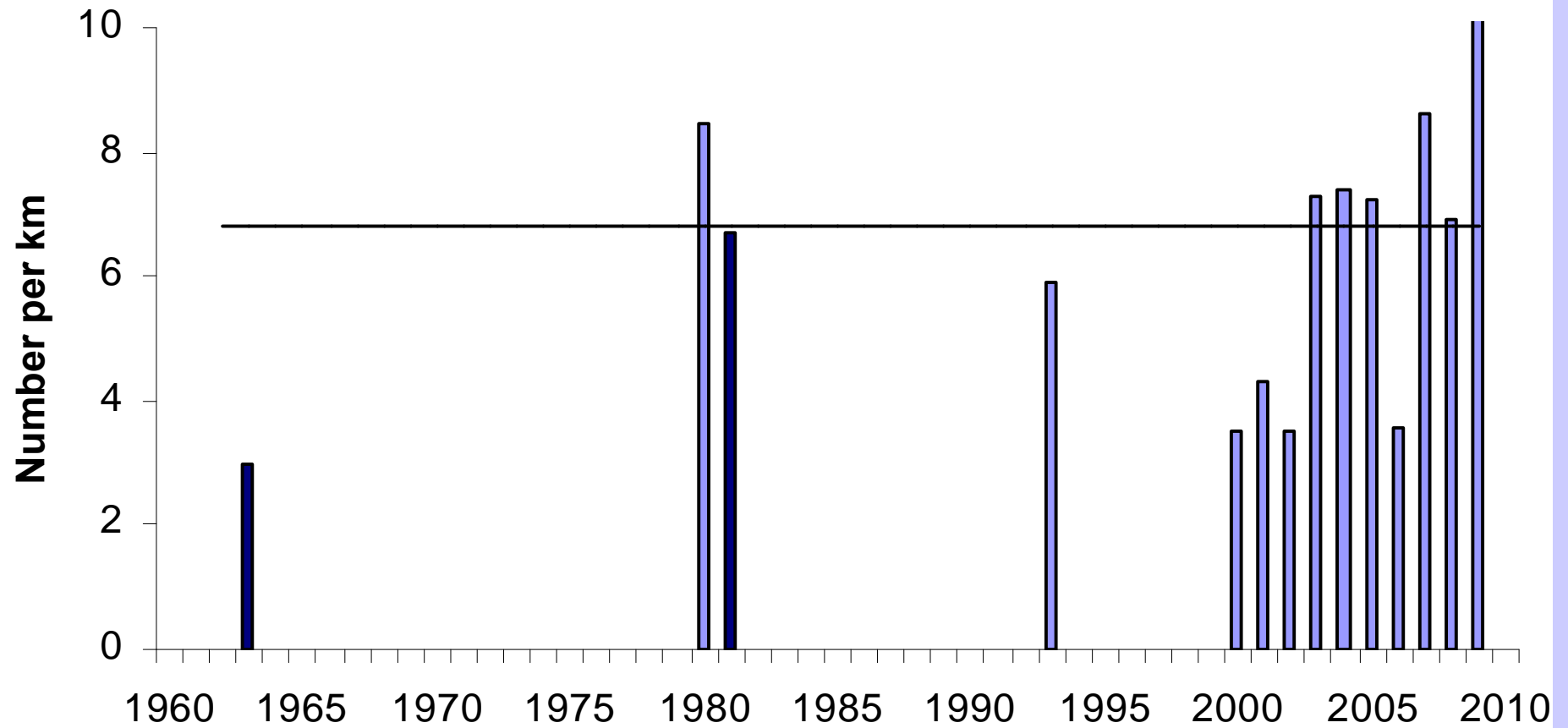
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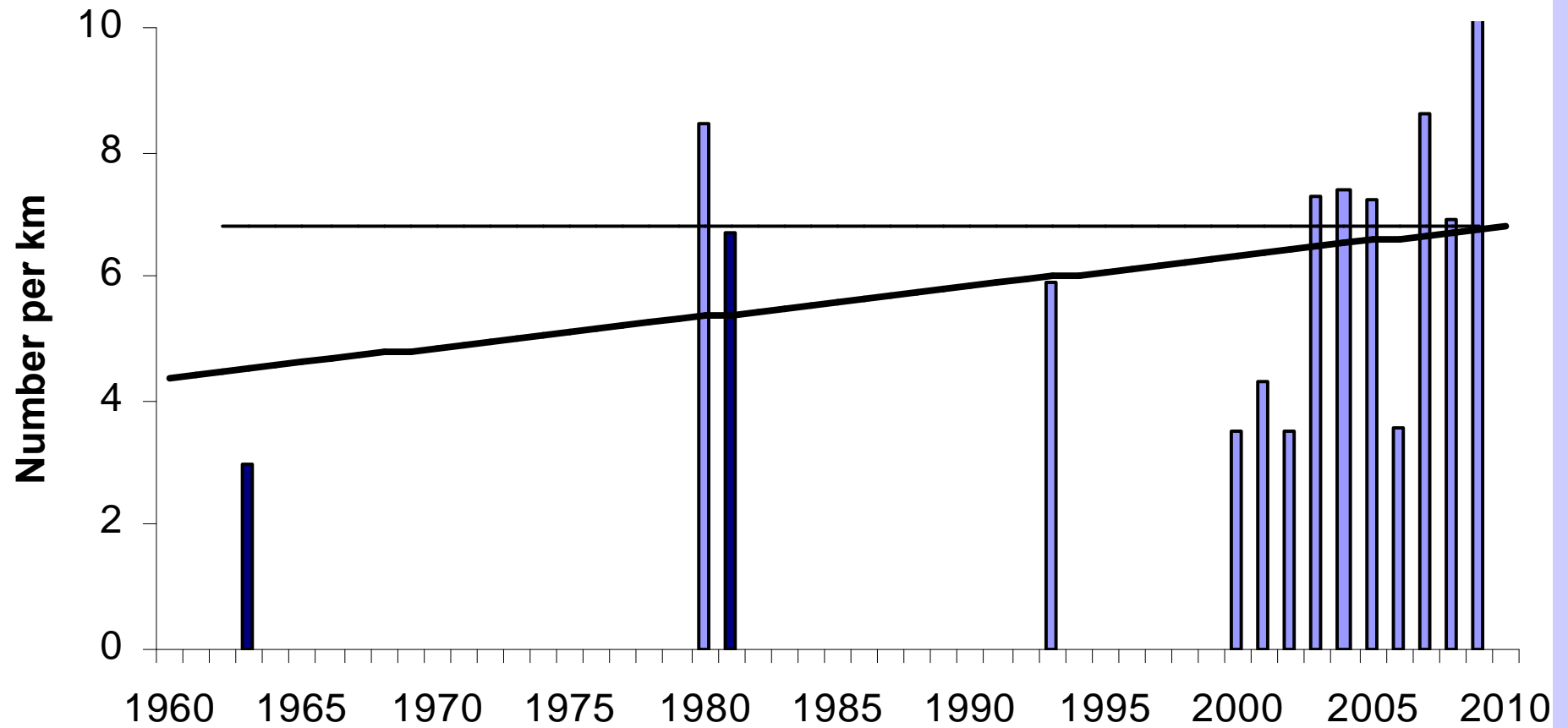
Pied Stilt



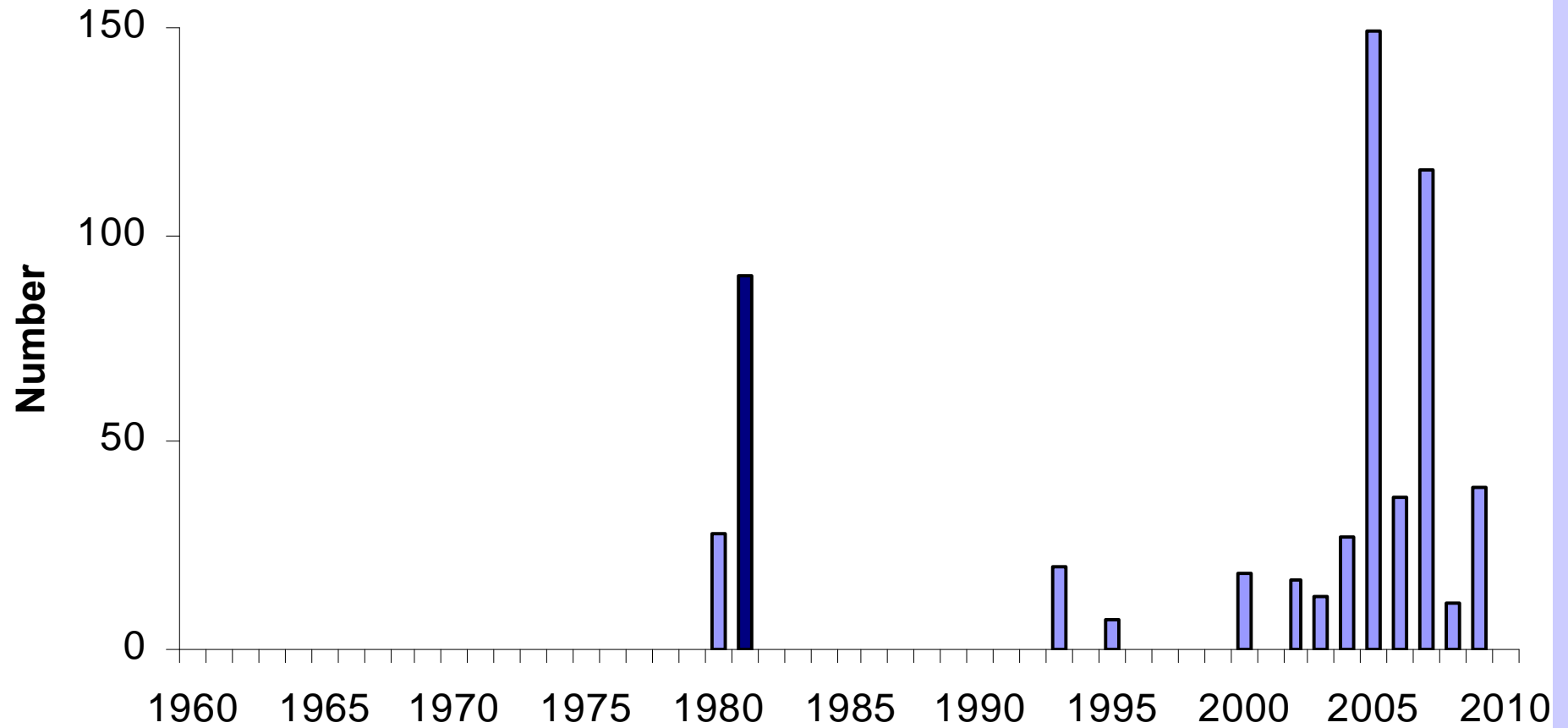
Pied Stilt



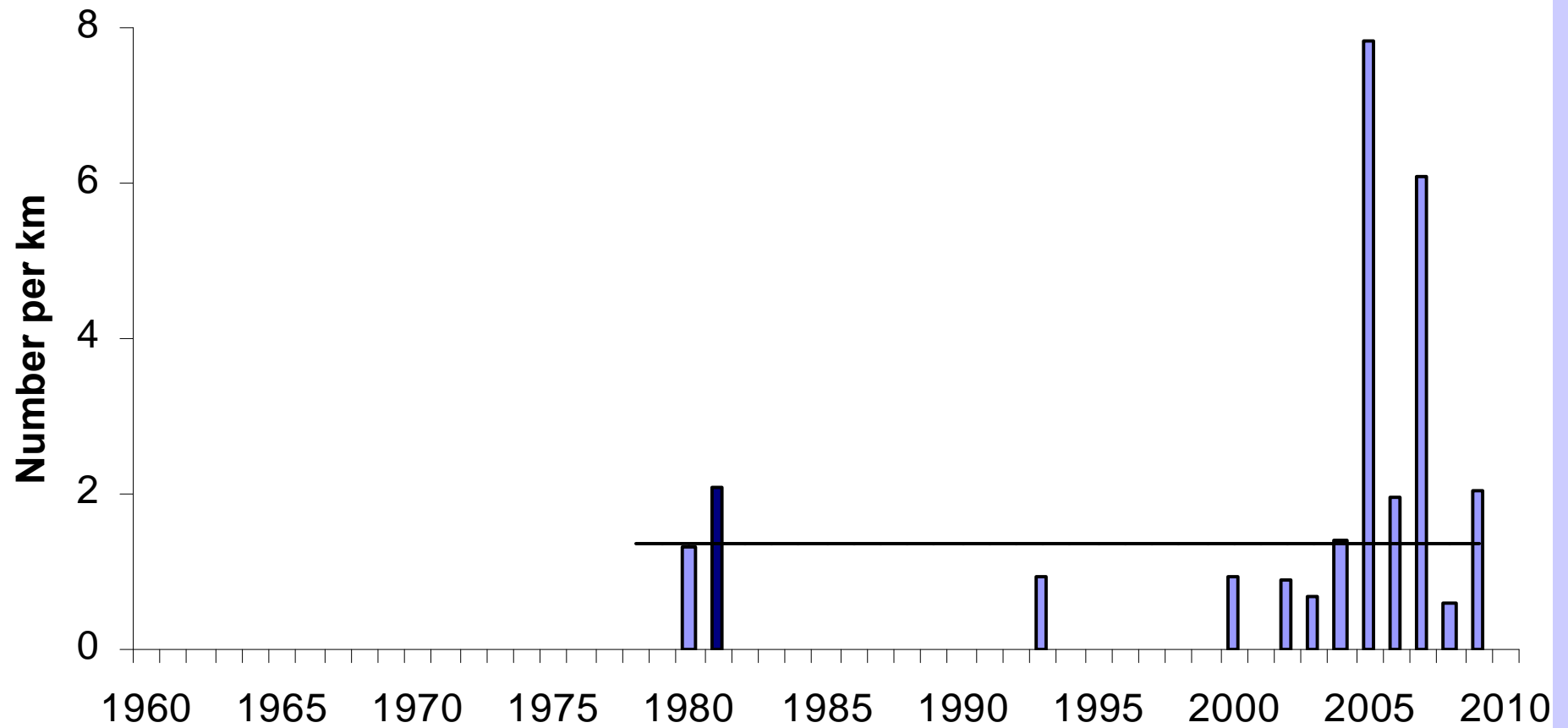
Pied Stilt



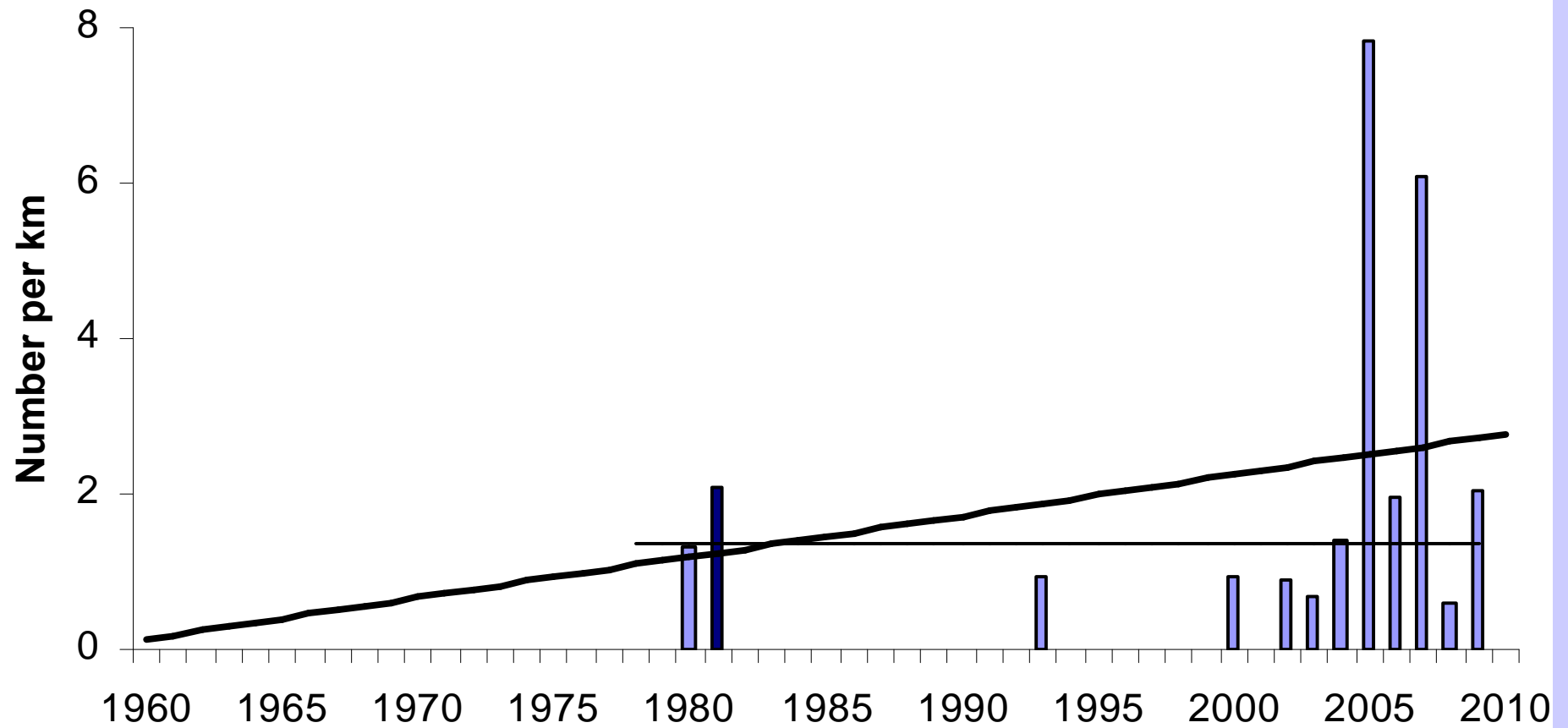
Spur-winged Plover



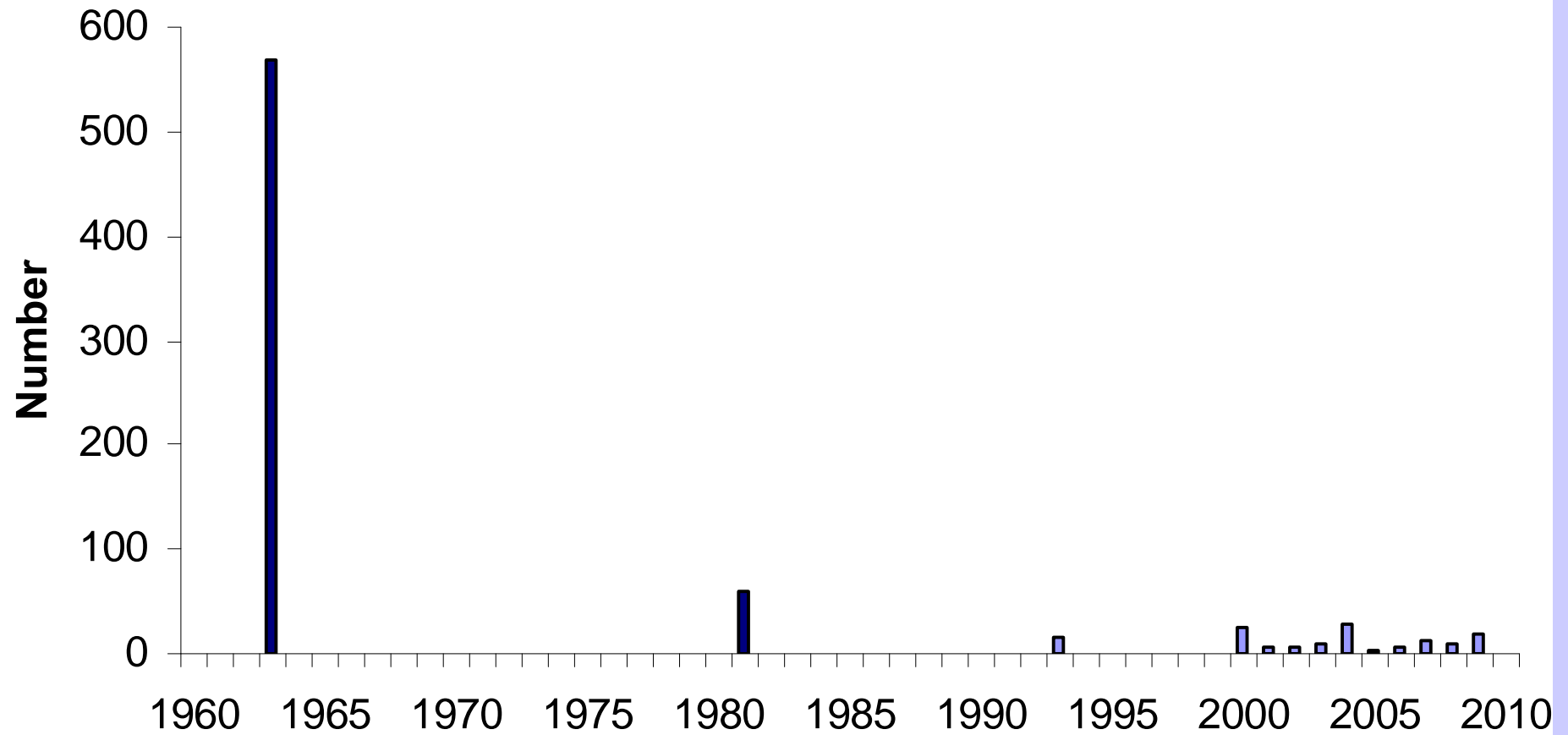
Spur-winged Plover



Spur-winged Plover



Black-backed Gull



Population Trends

	In last 50 yrs	In last 10 yrs
Wrybill	No change	No change
Black-fronted Tern	No change	No change
Black-billed Gull	Declined	No change
Banded Dotterel	No change	No change
SIPO Oystercatcher	Declined?	No change
Pied Stilt	Increased?	No change?
Spur-winged Plover	Increased	No change?
Black-backed Gull	Declined	No change

What Have We Achieved

É Our surveys show no change in population levels of the threatened species in the last 10 years

É Does this mean our predator trapping, weed clearing, and public awareness activities have been in vain?

Where to From Here

- É Repeat 1963 and 1980/81 surveys from Gorge to SH1 in November this year
- É Count ducks, geese, and herons (they were counted in 1963 and 1980/81)?
- É Continue doing surveys every year?
- É Stop attempting to do October surveys?

Acknowledgements

É Many volunteers from the Ashley/Rakahuri Rivercare Group, OSNZ, Forest & Bird, Environment Canterbury, DOC, and the general public ó thank you

É S. Moore, C. O'Donnell, F. Overmars, M. Kwant, N. Head for unpublished data

É This talk dedicated to the late Barbara Spurr