

Northern elephant seal population: facts and figures

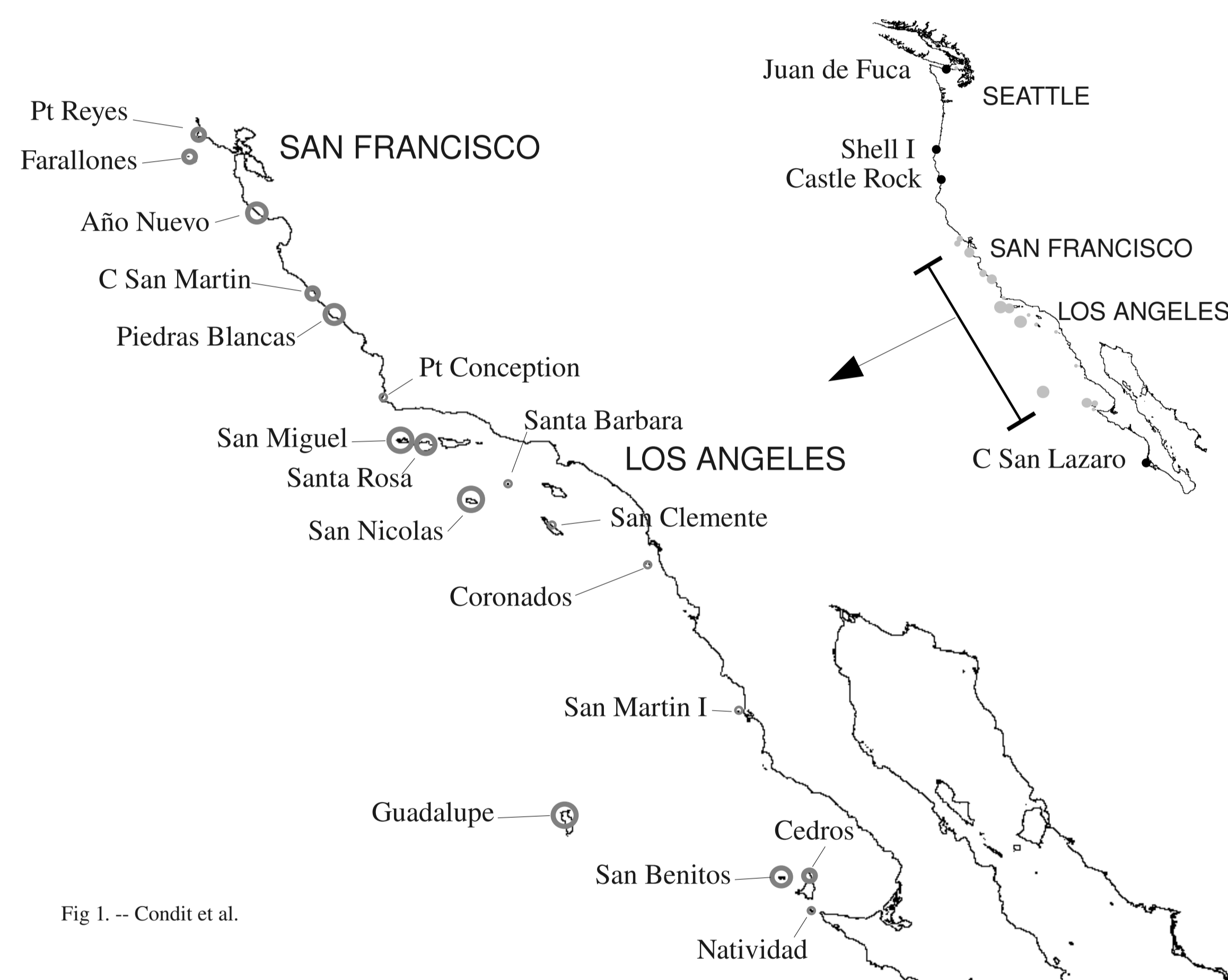
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documents: <http://ctfs.arnarb.harvard.edu/Public/Presentations/seals>

Northern elephant seals breeding colonies...

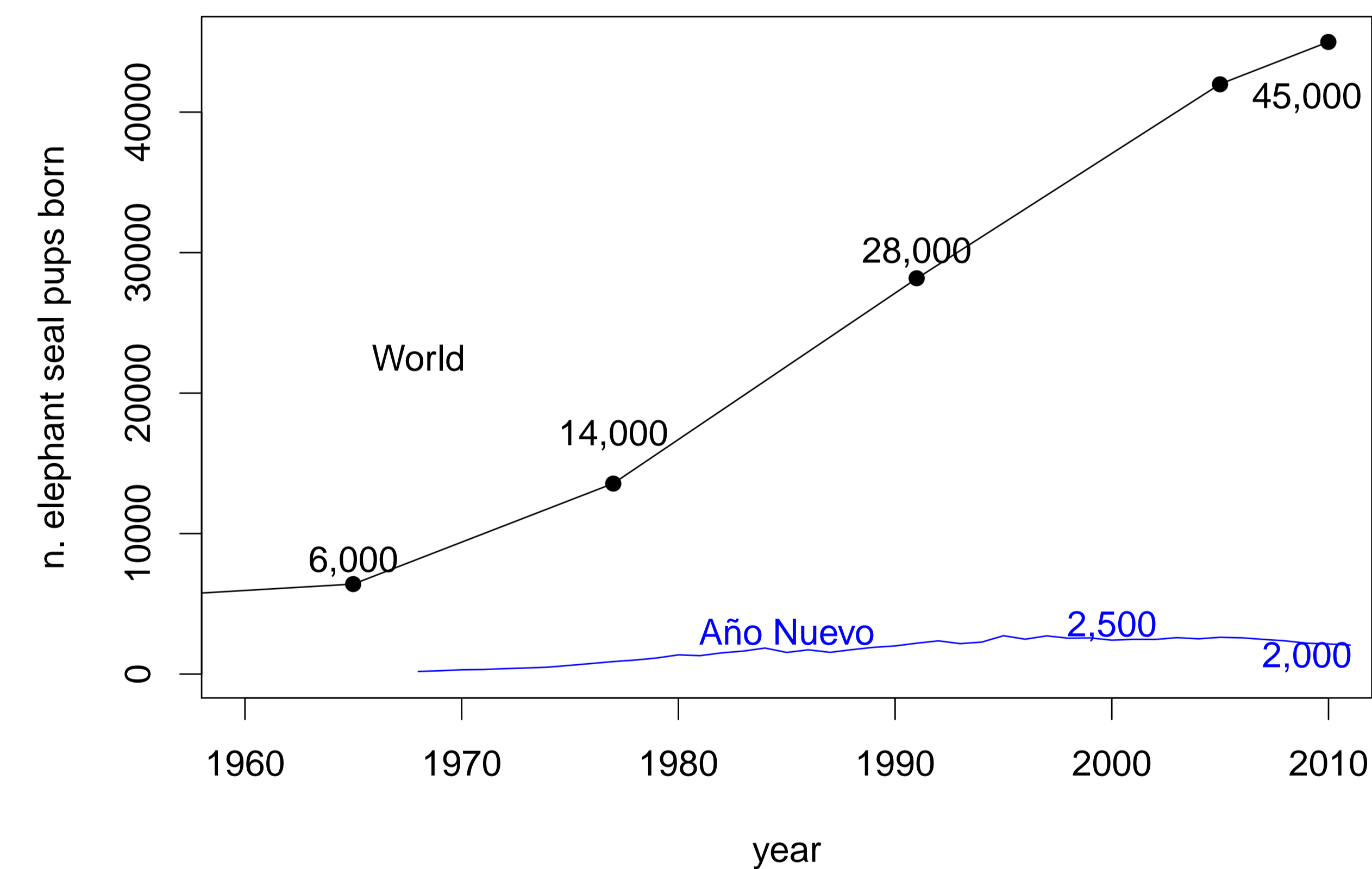
- 20 colonies known, from s. Baja to Vancouver I.
- 7 largest have more than 2,000 pups born per year
- the largest: 16,000 pups per year at San Miguel Island



The world's population of northern elephant seals...

- nearly exterminated by hunting (for oil) around 1900
 - approximately 100-500 survived
 - only at Guadalupe Island, Mexico
- expanded quickly after hunting stopped
 - 6,000 pups* born per year by 1965, mostly still in Mexico
 - by 1990, 28,000 pups and mostly in S. California
 - still growing through 2010, reaching 45,000 pups*

* total population = 4 x number born



Population growth at Año Nuevo

- Breeding first known on the island in 1961 (11 pups born)
- First pup born on the mainland 1975
- Colony grew until 1995, when 2500 pups were born
- No further growth through 2005
- A small reduction since 2005

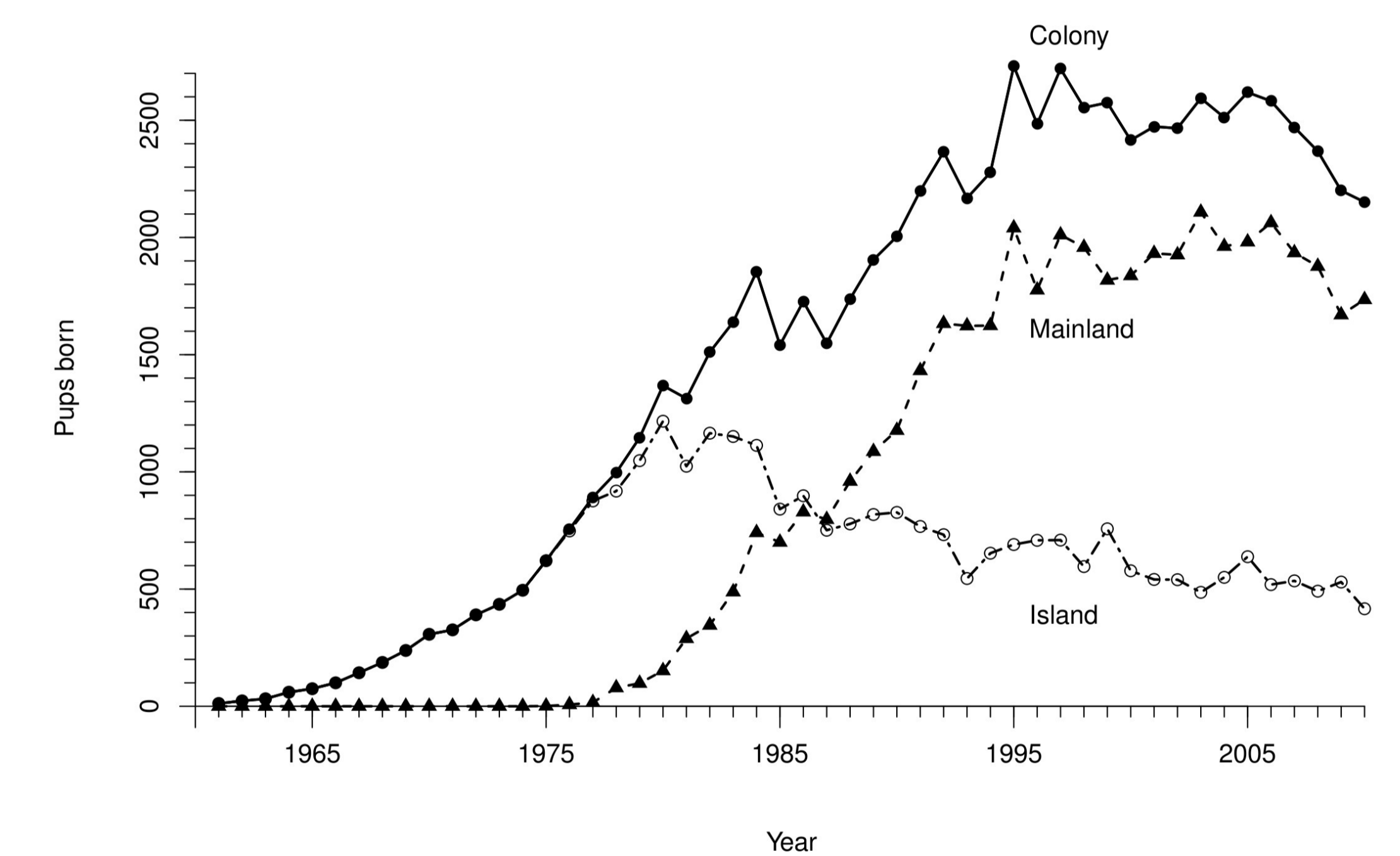


Figure 3. The number of northern elephant seal pups born at the Año Nuevo rookery since 1961 (filled circles and solid line). Also shown are pup births on the island (open circles and dotted line) and on the mainland (filled triangles and dashed line). Data from 1961-1967 are number of pups weaned (Orr & Poulter 1965); pups born was not available.