

# HUMBOLDT AREA SALTWATER ANGLERS

A VOICE FOR SALTWATER SPORTFISHERS

## 2025 SPRING NEWSLETTER

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# ***Represent. Advocate. Educate. Promote.***

The mission of Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers is to *represent* North Coast fishermen's historic and ongoing right to sports fish along the Northern California coast; *advocate* reasonable and rational sport fishing seasons and regulations; *educate* our members and the general public about the economic and cultural contributions of sport fishing to our local economies; and *promote* sustainable stewardship of the resource.



PO Box 6191  
Eureka, CA 95502



[hasa6191@gmail.com](mailto:hasa6191@gmail.com)



[humboldtasa.com](http://humboldtasa.com)



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## **HASA Newsletter**

### **Thank You**

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### **Want to Contribute?**

Send your article ideas, photos, and any comments to [clderidder@hotmail.com](mailto:clderidder@hotmail.com).

### **Past Newsletters**

See past newsletter at [humboldtasa.com](http://humboldtasa.com).

### **This Issue**

Issue #: 58. Editor: Larry De Ridder. Producer: Rachel D'Ambra. Cover photo: Kathleen Hensel from Crescent City with a California halibut caught in Humboldt Bay this summer.

# President's Message

Let's get started without any hang-ups! Good luck HASA members, I hope all of your days on the water bring easy limits and memories to carry for years to come! As we head into the 2025 fishing season we are tasked with plenty to remember! I have compiled a detailed list to help jog your memory before you hit the water:

## Beginning of the Season Checklist for both Shore-Based and Boat-Based Anglers:

1. Shop Early: Avoid last-minute rushes and ensure you have everything you need.
2. Terminal Tackle: Check and stock up on hooks, swivels, sinkers, and leaders.
3. Fishing Line: Inspect and replace old or frayed lines.
4. Tackle Boxes: Organize your gear and consider getting new tackle boxes if needed.
5. Reels and Rods: Clean and lubricate reels; inspect rods for any damage.
6. Lures and Baits:
  - Scents and Artificial Lures: Ensure you have a variety.
  - Live Bait: Plan ahead for fresh bait.
7. Nets, Harpoons, and Gaffs: Ensure you have all necessary gear.

## Boat-Based Anglers:

1. Electronic Devices:
  - Test fish finders, radar, GPS Chartplotters, VHF radios, and temperature gauges.
  - Test your EPIRB if required and ensure it is registered and up to date.
2. Safety Equipment:
  - Life rings and PFDs (Personal Flotation Devices)
  - Boots, slickers, and gloves
  - Batteries for handheld devices
  - First aid kits and fire extinguishers
  - Noise-making devices (e.g., whistles, air horns)
  - Flare gun with up-to-date flares



- Small binder for all paperwork (boat registration, fishing license)
  - Flotation ditch box for handheld GPS, VHF radio
  - Throwable flotation devices (e.g., throw cushions)
  - Navigation charts and compass
  - Manual bilge pump
  - Anchor and line
  - Tool kit for minor repairs
  - Spare parts (e.g., fuses, spark plugs)
  - Portable battery jump starter
  - Extra fuel
  - Weather radio
  - Dry bag for important items
  - Flashlights and extra batteries
  - Signal mirror
  - Life raft for offshore trips
  - Emergency food and water supplies
  - Sun protection (sunscreen, hats, long-sleeve shirts)
  - Sunglasses (polarized to reduce glare)
3. Boat Maintenance:
    - Test your boat before heading out of the bay.
    - Check and replace impellers and spark plugs if Needed.
    - Inspect fuses and have extras on board.
    - Include dockside inspections and test navigation Lights.

*(President's Message continued on page 19)*

# A Third Straight Year with No California Salmon Fishing?

ABBREVIATED FROM CALMATTERS BY ALASTAIR BLAND, OCT 2024

Fishery managers are currently projecting salmon numbers based on 2024 returns, and what they are seeing could be a bad omen for 2025. The low count of returning adult salmon, made at the federally operated Coleman National Fish Hatchery, was still preliminary in October, with several weeks left in the natural spawning period for the Sacramento Valley's fall-run Chinook.

There is some possible good news -- a large percentage of "jacks". Jack numbers can be a predictive indicator of ocean abundance for the coming season. It could be a sign there are more fish in the ocean than many expected, though officials said it was too early to tell. Overall, however, the numbers were much like those in 2023.

So, whether fishers will have a salmon season in 2025 still looks like a toss-up. USFS's Brett Galyean, project leader at the Coleman hatchery, described "really low" numbers of 3- and 4-year-old adult Chinook. As of Oct. 29, his staff had collected 4 million eggs -- less than one-third the hatchery's target of 14 to 15 million, with new arrivals at the hatchery slowing down.

At several other Central Valley hatcheries operated by CDFW, facility managers had only just started counting salmon in October, so overall numbers were still unknown.

The low returns to Coleman, the state's largest fish hatchery, reflect a long-term decline in Chinook salmon numbers region-wide. As many as 2 million adult Chinook historically spawned in Central Valley rivers. In 2022 officials counted just

69,000 adult fall-run Chinook in the entire Sacramento Valley, with a moderate improvement in 2023. In the mainstem of the Sacramento River alone, a key spawning destination, annual returns have dropped below 4,000 adults — down from an average of almost 60,000 each year from 1990 to 2009.

What ails California's salmon is endlessly debated. Water users lean on explanations such as invasive species, reduced floodplain habitat, and climate change. Fishery advocates tend to stress the importance of water, especially its timing, quantity and temperature. Fishermen generally take the position that the Central Valley needs more aggressive floodplain restoration to provide feeding and refuge habitat for small fish, but that sufficient water is ultimately the key.

Sometimes the outflow from Lake Shasta into the Sacramento River during the spawning season is too warm — conditions that can kill eggs. Hot weather has played a role, though environmentalists say negligent management of the reservoir — especially failure to keep its water sufficiently deep into the late summer — is just as problematic.

As the young salmon migrate downstream, they face such perils as low flows, high temperatures, water pumps, predators, and now thiamine deficiency, a relatively new ecological problem.

Barry Nelson, policy representative for the Golden State Salmon Association, believes the main reason for the Sacramento's salmon collapse has been inadequate river conditions downstream of Shasta, and subsequent low smolt survival. "We sterilized the Sacramento River," he said. "We killed almost all the fish, and rule number one in fisheries management is, if you kill all the baby salmon, three years later you don't have adult salmon."

## Let the Water Wars Resume!

The government recently adopted new rules for operating California's Central Valley water delivery systems. Both Federal and State agencies endorsed a plan backed by the Biden and Newsom administrations that claims to strike a balance between ensuring protections for fish and providing a reliable water supply for farms and cities. Those water systems deliver water to Central Valley farms plus about 30 million urban Californians.

However, water diversions by the pumps that feed those systems have contributed to the ecological degradation of the Delta and San Francisco Bay, home to threatened and endangered species including steelhead, Chinook salmon, longfin and Delta smelt, and green sturgeon.

Officials said the new operating rules for the Water Projects, which were developed over the last three years, would bring greater stability to the state's supplies during droughts. Under the new plan deliveries are scheduled to increase for major urban water suppliers and many agricultural districts, while being slightly cut for others, such as Westlands.

The staffs of several federal and state agencies jointly developed the plan after California and environmental groups successfully challenged rules adopted during the first Trump administration. Court-ordered interim plans were used these last three years, which are now in turn replaced by this new agreement, signed in the waning days of the Biden administration.

But decades-long disputes over California water management are far from settled. Environmental groups said the rules produced by the Biden and

Newsom administrations were even worse than the Trump policy was at protecting the region's fish. A federal environmental review agreed, concluding that some depleted salmon runs would be harmed by the new operating plan. The study predicted numbers of young salmon will drop further under the new operating rules.

Environmental and fishing groups said the new rules fail to provide adequate protections for threatened and endangered fish species in the Delta. They blame water managers for decisions that they argue deprive rivers of the cold flows salmon need to survive. Federal officials countered, and said the new rules include provisions aimed at managing cold-water reservoir releases from Shasta Dam to help endangered winter-run Chinook salmon survive. They also stressed the newest "adaptive management" approach will allow managers to more easily incorporate future scientific findings.

Agricultural water districts such as Westlands raised different criticisms, as they want more water. There are signs posted along Highway 5 in some farming regions that claim all fresh water running free to the ocean is "wasted". Rhetoric coming from Washington DC early in the second Trump administration sometimes echoes those sentiments.

So, the legal challenges continue. Last fall, a group of agricultural water districts sued the State agencies. They challenged the rule which requires a permit for the "incidental take" of threatened species caused by the pumping facilities. That case was still pending, even as the political landscape flipped again. The recent SoCal wildfires added even more fuel to the state's water wars, as the Feds used the fires as an excuse to bypass their State partners as they released additional water in early 2025 from Lakes Kaweah and Success.

# Hydroelectric Dams on Oregon's Willamette

ABBREVIATED FROM AN ARTICLE BY  
TONY SCHICK, OREGON PUBLIC  
BROADCASTING FOR PROPUBLICA

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said it could make hydroelectric dams on Oregon's Willamette River safe for endangered salmon by building gigantic mechanical traps and hauling baby fish downstream in tanker trucks. The Corps started pressing forward despite objections from fish advocates and power users who said the plan was costly and untested.

That was until a few months ago, when (then) President Joe Biden signed legislation ordering the Corps to put its plans on hold and consider a simpler solution: stop using the dams for electricity.

The new law, finalized on January 4, follows reporting that underscored risks and costs associated with the Corps' plan. The agency is projected to lose \$700 million over 30 years generating hydropower, and a scientific review found that the type of fixes the Corps proposed would not stop the extinction of threatened salmon.

The mandate says the Corps needs to shelve designs for its fish collectors until it finishes studying what the river system would look like without hydropower. The Corps must then include that scenario in its long-term designs for the river.

The new direction from Congress has the potential to transform the river that sustains Oregon's Willamette Valley. It's a step toward draining the reservoirs behind the dams and

bringing water levels closer to those of an undammed river.

Asked about how the Corps planned to respond to Congress, spokesperson Kerry Solan said in a statement that the agency was still reviewing the bill's language.

The 13 dams on the Willamette and its tributaries were built for the main purpose of holding back floodwaters in Oregon's most heavily populated valley, which includes the city of Portland. With high concrete walls, they have no dedicated pathways for migrating salmon.

Emptying the reservoirs to the river channel would let salmon pass much as they did before the dams were built. It would leave less water for recreational boating and irrigation during periods of normal rain and snow, but it would open up more capacity to hold back water when a large flood threatened. And the power industry says that running hydropower turbines on the Willamette dams, unlike the moneymaking hydroelectric dams on the larger Columbia and Snake rivers in the Northwest, doesn't make financial sense.

The dams generate less than 1% of the Northwest's power, only enough for about 100,000 homes. Furthermore, electricity from Willamette dams costs about five times as much as that generated by dams on the Northwest's larger rivers.

Oregon Rep. Val Hoyle, whose district includes much of the Willamette River Valley, said in an emailed statement it was "unacceptable" for the Corps to move ahead without first producing the thorough look at ending hydropower that lawmakers asked for.

The bill also requires the Corps to study how it can lessen problems that draining reservoirs might cause downstream. Because of a 2021 court order to protect endangered salmon, the Corps has tried making the river more free-flowing by draining reservoirs behind two dams each fall. The first time the reservoirs dropped, in 2023, they unleashed masses of mud that had been trapped behind the dams. Rivers turned brown and cities' drinking water plants worked around the clock to purify the supply.

Congress wants the Corps to study how to avoid causing those problems again. That could include engineering new drinking water systems for cities below the dams.

The Corps has the authority to engineer infrastructure for local communities and cover 75% of the cost for such improvements, but it has never used this provision in Oregon.

A week before Biden signed the new bill, biologists with NOAA published their own 673-page report saying the Corps' preferred solution for the Willamette — the one involving fish traps — would jeopardize threatened salmon and steelhead.

NOAA proposed more than two dozen changes for the Corps, ranging from better monitoring of the species to altering the river flow to better accommodate migrating salmon. The Corps is reportedly still reviewing NOAA's opinion and deciding what action to take.

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## CDFW Salmon Update

BY TOM MARKING

CDFW held on-line meetings February 26 and 27 to discuss the Salmon escapement numbers on the Sacramento River system and the Klamath River. For the Sacramento only about 99,000 of a projected 213,000 fish returned in 2024. That was far below the 122,000 fish needed for minimal escapement. The 2-year-old jacks counted would normally predict about 300,000 fish will return this year. But because the returns for the past several years have been far below expectation, that number was reduced to 165,00 projected returns in a process called autocorrelation. So that leaves only 47,000 fish for harvest consideration, to be split between the river and the ocean sectors, and the ocean sector to be further split between Oregon and California, and more splits between the Commercial and Recreational fleets. It will be very difficult to construct a fishery without exceeding the harvest allowance, with so few Sac fish.

The Klamath River also had a very poor return

and remains in an overfished status, since only 25,000 natural spawners returned. That is far below the 40,700 needed for minimum escapement. That would probably only allow for a de-minimus fishery in 2025, which would result in a very small number of fish for California and Oregon. The expectations for returns this year are more positive with 81,000 three- and four-year-olds projected to return. At least 67,400 fish would need to return to get us out of an overfished condition, so there is some hope on that situation. However, as only 56% of the expected returns came back in 2024, this year's projections are very speculative.

At the PFMC meeting on March 4th the Council and Advisory bodies, with public input, will form three alternatives for this year's proposed season and allocations. At the April PFMC meeting the Council will vote on one of those three alternatives, after public comment. Right now it appears rather bleak for any chance of a salmon fishery for the north coast.



## Washington Fish Ladder Hit by Copper Thieves

ABBREVIATED FROM AN ARTICLE BY FOX 13 SEATTLE

The Granite Falls Fish Ladder (Washington state) is out of service following three copper wire thefts in October 2024. The facility, which enables Chinook salmon and steelhead to access 57 miles of critical spawning habitat in the Upper South Fork Stillaguamish River, has been inoperable since the incidents, threatening both the ecosystem and the economy.

The ladder, completed in 1956, consists of 51 vertical slots guiding fish through a 300-foot tunnel and around an impassable waterfall. It underwent a significant upgrade in 2000 with the installation of an automated gate to manage sediment buildup, and another in 2020 following a 2017 failure. The gate has since been instrumental in keeping sediment out, ensuring uninterrupted operation—until the thefts occurred.

On October 7, 2024, thieves broke in and stole

several hundred feet of thick-gauge copper wire and damaged critical components. The thieves returned two more times in the next week, causing further damage. Repair costs are estimated at over \$250,000.

The fish ladder is essential for the Chinook salmon and steelhead, species that are pivotal to the region's ecological balance and economic health. The inoperability of the ladder jeopardizes efforts to sustain these fish runs, which support commercial and recreational fisheries. The Stillaguamish River fish runs were just starting to recover before this setback.

To mitigate further damage, crews are manually operating the tunnel, but the process is labor-intensive, impacting the entire WDFW department. Officials are also monitoring weather conditions to prevent sediment buildup, which could exacerbate the situation.

Adding to the challenge is the state's budget crisis, leaving the future of the fish ladder's restoration uncertain.

# Update on Eel River Dam Removal

ABBREVIATED FROM THE UKIAH DAILY JOURNAL AND TIMES-STANDARD

In late January PG&E presented an update on plans to remove the dams created for the Potter Valley Project and build a new water diversion facility. The Final Draft Surrender Application and Decommissioning Plan for the Potter Valley Project was released, and along with subsequent comments will be filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on July 29. After formal submission to FERC the plans will be reviewed and critiqued by numerous other federal and state regulatory bodies.

According to Tony Gigliotti, the Senior Licensing Project Manager for PG&E, There is one application with two separate processes. Process 1 -- Removal of Scott Dam (Lake Pillsbury) was described as a “three-year process, with the first year involving lowering the reservoir, then installing a large hole, then plugging the hole, then when the reservoir comes back (during a high-flow year) we remove the plug, possibly with explosives, allowing the sediment to be flushed down.” However, given that a “high-flow year” may not immediately follow the first year of the project, the first two “years” of the project may not be consecutive years.

In Process 2 -- It was proposed that a consortium called the Eel-Russian Project Authority (ERPA) will take control of some of PG&E’s existing infrastructure plus build some new water diversion infrastructure. Construction on the Eel River side of the project will include a new pump station, and a conduit between the pump station and the existing inlet to the tunnel at Van Arsdale Reservoir, and supporting infrastructure.

As for the design of the new diversion facility, David Manning from the Sonoma County Water Agency showed renderings of both the current Cape Horn Dam, and how the facility could be transformed. The facility’s design phase was described as “60-percent complete” and the intent of the planning is to ensure that neither recreation nor fish passage will be impeded.

As for Cape Horn Dam (Van Arsdale Reservoir), that dam is anticipated to be removed at the same time as Scott Dam. Construction of the new diversion facility is planned for the same time as Cape Horn Dam’s removal in order to minimize disruption and intrusion.

Humboldt County is not actually a party to ERPA, but is instead a regional partner. Nevertheless, in mid-February, Humboldt County’s board of supervisors (some with a bit of hesitation) signed on to the plan, stating that this appeared to be the best path forward toward dam removal. Other entities supporting the agreement included Trout Unlimited, Friends of the Eel River, and the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations.

The agreement transfers the water rights of PG&E to the Round Valley Indian Tribes. Importantly for the Eel, the agreement states the agency intends to only pull from the river during high water seasons, modeled around the life cycles of fish.

In late February everything was once again thrown into turmoil. Lake County (where Lake Pillsbury is physically located) threatened to appeal directly to President Trump, Governor Newsom, and their respective advisors, asking them to put a halt to any dam removal efforts. As of press time it isn’t clear if those letters have in fact been mailed.

# What's up for Halibut in 2025

BY TOM MARKING

The annual IPHC (International Pacific Halibut Commission) meeting was held in Vancouver, BC on January 27-31. There were fewer attendees this year; about 120 that I counted, and the fishery organizations represented dropped about a third or more. Perhaps it is the cost to attend, the low state of the fishery and just plain weariness by fishery folks. Meetings can wear people out, particularly when their expectations are not met.

The 2A area (the three pacific states) had one State Rep each from WA and OR, two rec fisherman from WA and the wife and I for California, and a small number of folks listened in electronically. The Tribes in WA had a large contingent of probably 20+ folks, but they keep to themselves these days, as they are now on a Government-to-Government Consultation Status and don't mingle with us lesser beings.

I won't overwhelm you with a lot of data, but there is certainly lots of data for those technical types that want to see it. In a nutshell, the biomass of the population is still dropping slightly, the summer surveys are dropping slightly overall, and the size and weight of the fish are dropping, particularly in the northern areas. Paradoxically, the Stock Biomass is holding steady and even slightly increasing, now at 39%, while the Spawning Biomass is dropping slightly, now at 149 M pounds. How is that possible you say? And, in most areas the commercial catch is down and the fisherman are getting somewhat depressed with the low state of the fishery.

And here is the story: basically two things have happened that have substantial impact on the fishery.

1) The sizes of the fish at maturity are considerably smaller than they were from the '70s through the '90s (e.g. age 19 down from 100 lbs to 31 lbs) and,

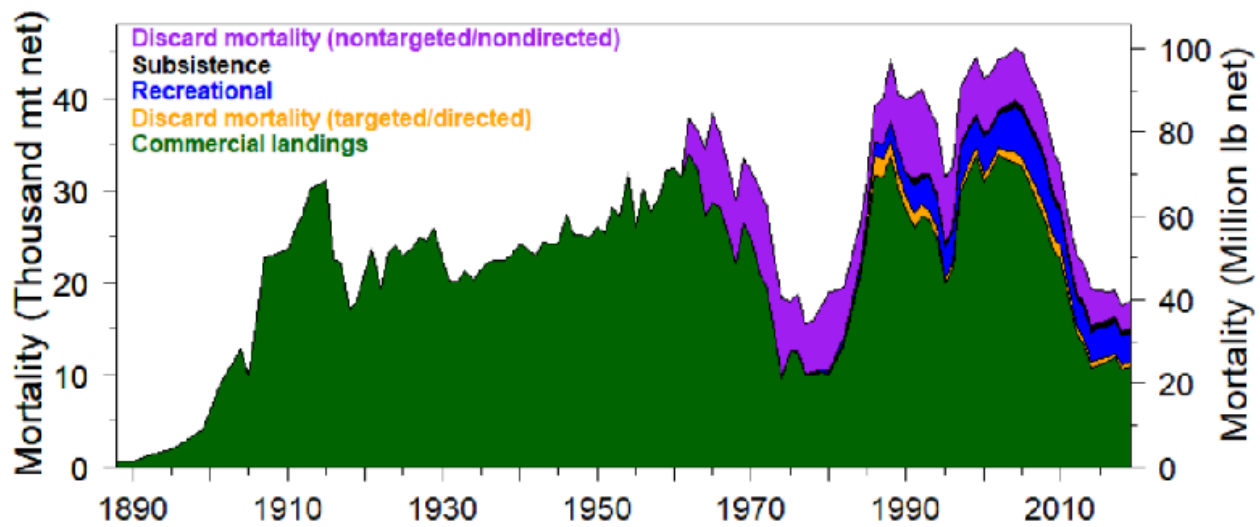
2) Recruitment is more sporadic and smaller than seen in past decades. In the '80s some of the largest recruitment events in history were recorded. Now we are back to what was recorded from about 1900 to 1970.

These are the two principal factors at play, and they have a substantial impact on the biomass and size of the fish. And because of those impacts, the industry, and the Commissioners have decided to substantially cut the harvest rate, in hopes this will result in an increase of biomass in the future. Here is what happened toward this end.

The Fishing Organizations for Alaska have been working for months with a proposal to cut the allocation to all areas by up to 20% for 2025. The Canadians more or less agreed to this concept, but ONLY if every area took the same level of cut. And here's the rub! The Alaskans are peeved because we in 2A get more than our calculated share by having the 1.65 M lbs and the Canadians (2B) have an interim agreement of getting a blended allocation that is higher than their calculated share, with Alaska giving up poundage to both 2A and 2B. And that aggravating issue has been longstanding.

And to add to the misery, the finances are in trouble with the Executive Director trying to make the summer surveys revenue neutral (the surveys must pay for themselves), and that is a trying task, especially when the sales of the fish are dropping slightly while expenses increase due to inflation.

So, after several days of haggling and arguing, the Commission developed an Agreement between the two countries of a 15.6% cut in allocation



Summary of estimated historical mortality by source (colors), 1888-2019.

overall, with 2A staying at 1.65 M lbs. The Alaskans are not pleased since they have to take more cuts. Of interest is that our 2A area is the only area showing an increase in survey data, but that may be because the current situation plays to our circumstance, where we are a grow-out area for juveniles with the larger, older adults moving north. With younger fish from the recruitment events of 2012 and again in 2016, we have more smaller fish, thus our surveys are improving while the larger fish up north are dying out or have been harvested. Their lifespan is about 40 years, so the large cohorts from the 1980's are disappearing rapidly.

Surveys: To save money, the Commission has put in place a new block survey scenario where they monitor the core areas every 2-3 years, with the non-core areas about every 5 years. We will see a

survey in 2027, but only down to the 41 latitude line (the same initial survey area as 2012 and 2013). It will be interesting to observe what changes have occurred since the last survey in 2017.

In summary, we will continue to receive our 1.65 M lbs in 2025. The Commission directed the Secretariat to investigate hard numbers on what would constitute overfishing, a conservation concern status, and the minimum numbers of females needed for spawning biomass in the various regions for further consideration at the 2026 Annual Meeting. That will fall under the MSE (Management Strategy Evaluation) process that I have been involved with since 2012. The data may not be available to fully answer these requests, but the state of the fishery is causing great concern overall. That we continue to receive our 1.65 M lbs will be a topic of conversation in the future.

## ***Your ad could be here!***

**If you would like to increase the visibility of your business to the sport fishing community, please contact Larry De Ridder at [clderidder@hotmail.com](mailto:clderidder@hotmail.com).**

**Prices range from \$250 for a full page to \$40 for a business-card sized ad.**

# Dumb Fishing Stunts

BY TIM NEEDHAM

I have a logbook on my boat in which I write down the idiot things I've done (e.g. "don't launch the boat until you've taken off the straps in back", "don't go over the bar if they are surfing in the entrance", "don't tighten down your drag so much that a halibut pulls the rod overboard", etc. etc.) Not to say I won't do them again but at least I have a written record in the hopes I won't repeat it more than once or twice. So, to the logbook I need to add the following:

In late 2022 when they closed the inshore fishing my neighbor and I decided to run out past 300 feet and jig for some lingcod. It was a beautiful day with about a four-foot sea. In my neighbor's defense, he has only recently started fishing and catches the occasional ocean perch. We were fishing with the large hex jigs on my halibut poles and had managed to at least get a couple of grabs.

I had reeled in and was messing with my jig when he shouted "Look at all the dolphins." I looked up and, sure as heck, there was a large group of small dolphins headed directly for us. He asked what he should do and I told him to reel in quick because

we didn't want to accidentally catch a dolphin. As he is reeling in suddenly it's "fish on" and the line starts tearing out.

He asked what he should do and I told him that he needed to cut it off before he got spooled because we certainly didn't want to catch a dolphin. There was a knife lying next to him and he immediately cut the line. The whole thing from the hook-up to cutting off was probably under 15 seconds.

It's then I started thinking, "Those weren't dolphins." I'd just managed to have him cut off a bluefin tuna. By then they were long gone. I later looked it up online in the hope that I had been mistaken and it was actually a dolphin we had released and not a tuna. Nope. The only consolation is we probably couldn't have landed it anyway. (That is the best "sour grapes" I can come up with.)

I did call my younger brother who used to run a charter out of San Diego. He was very sympathetic with my mistake. (Actually, he said something to the effect of "you @\$% idiot", but I like to think of it as sympathy.)

So, next time I hook a bluefin I hope to have the good sense not to cut it off.



**George Petersen**  
**Insurance Agency**

Talk to Gavin or Mindy, 442-2971

# Educational Opportunity

BY TOM MARKING

NOAA has hired a consultant, GMRI, to conduct a five-day course on the Council Fishery Management Process. Attendees will learn how a member of the public can become better informed and participate in the fishery management process. The purpose is to explain the Council process from a high level on how data is obtained, processed by the fishery scientists, moves through the advisory bodies, and is finally evaluated by the Council and promulgated into regulation. This year's course is in La Jolla,

California and is an "all expenses paid" five-day course. It is a combination of classroom and field trip education. About 30 folks are selected from among the applicants to represent all sectors of the marine fishery.

It is very informative and gives a balanced view on how you as a member of the public can participate and be more effective in the process of fishery management.

If interested, contact Lauren O'Brien at GMRI (Gulf of Maine Research Institute) for an application. [lobrien@gmri.org](mailto:lobrien@gmri.org)

## ***To Our Readers...***

If you agree that it's important for representatives of the Northern California fishing community to attend the various out-of-area halibut, salmon, bottomfish, and crab meetings, please go to our website at [humboldtasa.com](http://humboldtasa.com) and become a member, or renew your membership. As you've noticed, our primary focus isn't on how to catch more fish. We have a lot of local knowledge and talent, but there are plenty of others out there providing how-to tips. Review our mission statement on page 2. We're primarily interested in ensuring that we have the opportunity to practice our sport. We've helped to fund local fisheries research, underwritten fishing events for kids, and other activities. Membership isn't expensive, at \$25 per year, and it is important for our representatives at government agency meetings to be able to state that we have the backing of the local fishing community.

Your HASA Board

# Deep Ocean Mining Moves Forward in Japan

In the deep waters around Minami-Tori-shima island, Japanese researchers have discovered a huge trove of elements critically necessary for our 21st-century technology. Initial reports indicate the presence of 230 million tons of rare elements during a survey of over 100 sites on the seabed. Some sites are more than three miles deep. These deposits include manganese, cobalt, and nickel, crucial for the production of lithium-ion batteries and other high-tech applications. The survey area is about 4,000 square miles of "easily minable" manganese nodules, making extraction feasible and efficient. Deep Ocean mining is typically done with an aquatic suction line reaching from a ship to the ocean floor. Valuable items are sorted out and loaded onto a ship, while the dirty water and mud are pumped back overboard.

Materials like cobalt and nickel are indispensable for manufacturing lithium-ion batteries, which power everything from smartphones to electric vehicles. With global demand for battery-powered technologies expected to rise by 400–600% in the coming decades, Japan's newfound reserves could provide a sustainable supply for industries reliant on these materials. Currently, about 95% of the world's rare-earth elements come from China.

The Japanese site is estimated to hold 610,000 tons of cobalt and 740,000 tons of nickel. This quantity will supply Japan's domestic demand for cobalt for 75 years and nickel for 11 years.

Mining at such depths poses ecological challenges, as past deep-sea mining has spread destruction well beyond the borders of the mined regions. To minimize the environmental impact, Japan claims it will extract only three million tons of material annually.

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## Will the US Soon Follow?

ABBREVIATED FROM AN ARTICLE BY ALHAM SHABAHAT

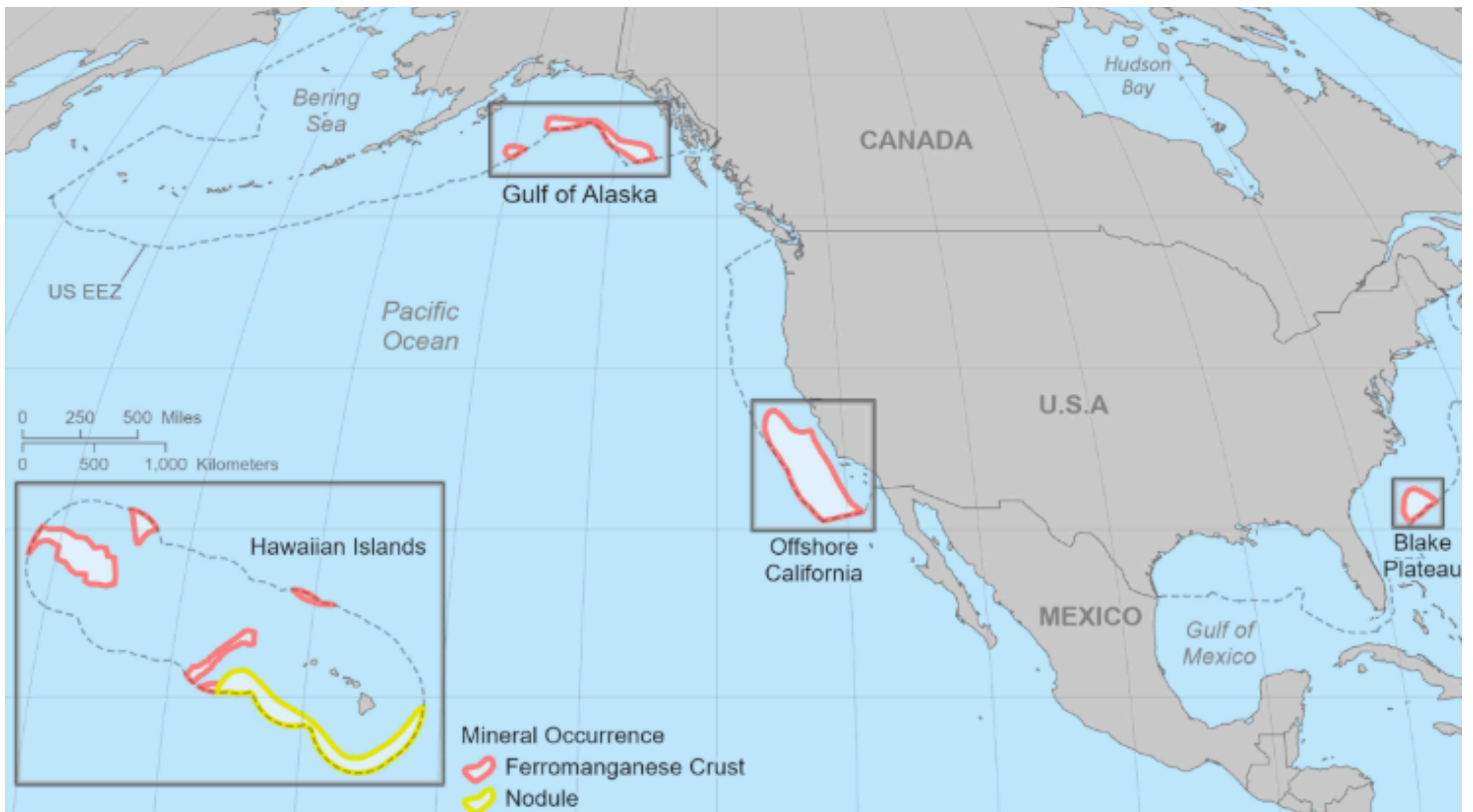
The deep-sea mining industry is speeding up efforts to mine precious minerals in international waters. Norway, however, became the first country to allow mining exploration in its own territorial waters, and the United States may not be far behind.

About a year ago, the Department of Defense delivered a report on the emerging deep-sea mining industry and its potential for the United States. A new study highlights four regions in federal waters where deep-sea mining would be

possible: the Blake Plateau off the southeastern United States, the Hawaiian Islands, the offshore region of California, and the Gulf of Alaska.

Formed over millennia and resting in the seabed, the target nodules are tennis-ball-sized rocks containing copper, manganese, cobalt, and other minerals. Ferromanganese crusts that contain cobalt are mineral deposits found in underwater mountains that are remnants of long-extinct volcanoes. Researchers say it's likely that nodules exist around the Hawaiian Islands and that all four areas of interest have ferromanganese crusts.

But these prospective regions are also locations with substantial biodiversity and human activity. In the Gulf of Alaska, for example, mining the

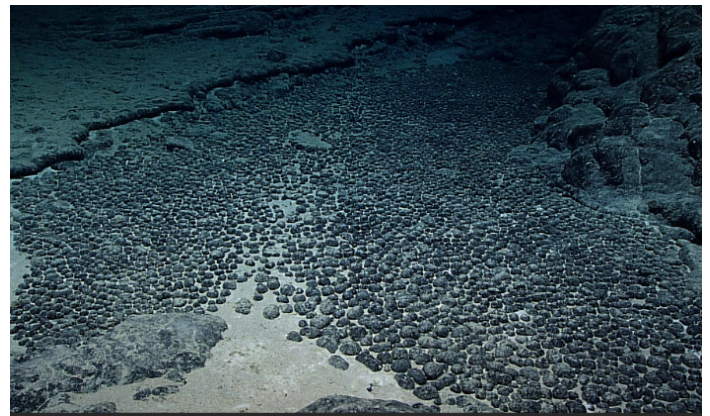


The Blake Plateau, offshore California, Hawaiian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska potential mining areas, map by Gonzalez Ortiz et. Al. with data from USGS.

seamounts could endanger populations of groundfish, corals, and sponges.

Researchers expect deep-sea mining around Hawaii to generate sediment plumes, which can travel hundreds or even thousands of miles. Mining operations could threaten the bigeye tuna fishery and affect ray-finned fishes, sharks, sea turtles, and other endangered species.

Despite the federal government's interest, California and Oregon have already introduced legislation to ban deep-sea mining, citing the high risk to biodiversity, fisheries, and the rights of Indigenous peoples. The States argue more data about the interactions between marine habitats



Deep-Sea nodules containing industrially important elements

and mining is needed for stakeholders to better evaluate the risks of deep-sea mining. However, it's unclear just how much clout the states will be able to exert on activities taking place more than three miles offshore in federally controlled waters.



## Cal Poly Humboldt News Release (ABBREVIATED)

Cal Poly Humboldt is looking toward the future with a new oceanographic research vessel.

The 78-foot-by-28-foot custom-built aluminum catamaran powered by twin 1100 horsepower Tier 4 engines will travel at speeds up to 24 knots. The vessel — expected to be operational in early 2025 — will carry up to 40 students, faculty, and crew on day trips and accommodate up to 14 people on multi-day research voyages. The vessel will have a variety of hydraulic deck machinery for handling up to 5,000 lbs of oceanographic equipment and instrumentation.

The deck will also accommodate divers entering the water from two dive platforms off the stern. The vessel's laboratory and pilot house will carry a diverse array of state-of-the-art navigation and oceanographic electronics to measure physical and biological features of the ocean bottom and

water column.

The new vessel will replace R.V. Coral Sea, which was purchased by the University in 1998. The Coral Sea is due for retirement, says Eric Riggs, dean of Cal Poly Humboldt's College of Natural Resources & Sciences. Though well-maintained, the Coral Sea turns 50 this year, far exceeding the average 30-year lifespan of a research vessel. In addition, the state passed new emission standards effective in 2026 for vessels in the Coral Sea's class, and replacing the ship's five diesel engines to meet the new standards would cost up to \$2 million.

Acquiring another second-hand vessel would present its own challenges, requiring substantial retrofitting of the vessel selected. Given these factors and the anticipated growth in enrollment in the University's marine science programs, it made more sense to invest in a vessel built specifically for Humboldt, according to Riggs. The \$7.9 million new research vessel is made possible by the state's investment in Humboldt's expansion as a polytechnic university.

# Japanese Sardines Cross the Pacific

ABBREVIATED FROM NOAA FISHERIES  
ARTICLE, OCT 23, 2024

full article at:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/surprise-japanese-sardines-astonish-scientists-crossing-pacific-west-coast>

Recent fish surveys along North America's west coast show that we may have acquired a new baitfish species.

Of the 345 sardine samples collected during NOAA Fisheries' 2021 and 2022 Coastal Pelagic Species Surveys, all of the fish in 2021 were Pacific sardines, but those collected in 2022 were a mix of Pacific and Japanese sardines. When research scientist Gary Longo first saw the results of his genomic analysis of sardines, he thought he had mixed up his samples.

Examination of another 825 sardines collected in 2023 found the same result: many were Japanese sardines. Previously known only from the western North Pacific near Asia, the Japanese species had never before been documented in the eastern North Pacific.

Accessing stored samples from prior surveys, they analyzed sardines collected from 2013 to 2021 but found no sign of Japanese sardines during those years, suggesting that their trans-Pacific trek is a very recent development.

Scientists from NOAA Fisheries and other institutions reported the surprise discovery in the journal *Molecular Ecology*. Both species look so

similar that only genetic examination can tell them apart. The scientists took advantage of recent advances in genomic sequencing to examine data from millions of genetic markers and constructed full mitochondrial genomes for sardine to verify the identification.

The Japanese sardines were found from Washington State to southern California and were sometimes schooling with Pacific sardines. The Japanese sardines were 1 to 3 years old, typical adult age classes for sardines. NOAA scientists are now examining about 700 new samples from the 2024 survey. They're trying to verify whether there is now a continuing presence of Japanese sardines in the California Current Ecosystem.

Though there have been many examples of western Pacific species arriving on our West Coast, these have mostly been associated with floating debris carried by the North Pacific Current. In this case, the authors suggest that marine heat waves warmed the North Pacific over the last decade and thus opened a corridor of favorable habitat. The Japanese sardines may have followed this hypothetical corridor across the ocean.

Many fish distributions change as ocean conditions change. Now the question is whether the presence of Japanese sardines is temporary, or if this new species will persist in the eastern Pacific.

Scientists also don't know if the two sardine species can interbreed. This is a key question that would help determine how these two sardine species may interact along the West Coast. That could then impact sardine management in the California Current ecosystem.

## Waterfront App

In December HASA met with RWE employees to preview recent updates to their Waterfront App. Development is led by Khalid Kamhawi, CEO of Ithaca Clean Energy. This program can be used either on a home computer or as a cell phone app while offshore, for multiple safety-related issues. First, you can document lost ghost-fishing crab

pots or other stationary navigational hazards. Second, it displays both your location on a nautical chart, plus the location of commercial vessels in your vicinity who are broadcasting AIS signals. If visibility is limited, it can be a little spooky to hear a large vessel in your neighborhood that you can't see. Try it and experiment a bit before the season begins.

## Pause on Offshore Wind Projects

In January, President Trump signed an executive order temporarily halting offshore wind lease sales in federal waters and pausing the issuance of approvals, permits, and loans for both onshore and offshore wind projects. The long-term impacts will likely become clearer later this year.

From Lucia Ordonez of Vineyard Offshore, "We've

been getting a lot of questions about Trump's Executive Order (EO) - the short and sweet is that for California Offshore Wind, we don't anticipate it having much direct effect since our timeline is still so early. There's a clear one-page explanation you can read at <https://www.northcoastoffshorewind.org/temporary-widthdrawal>. This website also has a really comprehensive FAQ section about Offshore Wind as it pertains to the North Coast."

## Wind Turbine's "Typhoon-Proof Blades" Break Off

ABBREVIATED FROM AN ARTICLE BY PRABHAT RANJAN MISHRA

The "world's largest single-capacity" wind turbine was installed in China in August 2024. It featured a modular, lightweight design with flexible power output up to 20MW and a wind rotor diameter of 850-958 feet. The offshore prototype survived typhoon Yagi, in September 2024, a storm which devastated a nearby wind farm in Hainan. But the blade later broke off in December.

Manufactured by Mingyang, the 20MW giant

offshore wind turbine was installed in China's coastal region of Hainan. The company advertised that the turbine was designed to thrive in medium-to-high wind speeds, and capable of withstanding typhoons and winds of 180 mph.

It's unclear what caused the blade breaks. The Chinese manufacturer, one of the world's leading turbine makers, did not immediately comment, reported Recharge News.

With an average wind speed of 19 mph, it is claimed that it can generate 80 million kWh annually, offsetting 66,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions —equivalent to the annual consumption of 96,000 residents. That is, of course, if it doesn't repeatedly self-destruct.

# California Boater Card Reminder

As of January 1, a California Boater card is required of all persons regardless of age, operating a boat in the state. Depending on which course you opt to take, costs range from free to \$44.95 at boat-ed.com. *Important side note! The classes apparently need to be recertified from time to time. Be sure you don't take a course with temporarily expired certification.* After passing the course, the lifetime card fee is \$10. The lost card replacement fee is \$5. An online course takes a few hours to complete, but doesn't have to be completed in one sitting.

The card is issued by the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW). Once DBW has received your application, proof of



education and payment, you will receive a 90-day temporary boater card by email. You should receive your official boater card by mail within 30 days from the time the application was approved.

If you haven't already done so, you can start your application at: <https://boatercard.parks.ca.gov/application>. The offshore fishing season will be here before you know it, and you'll need your ID card by then.

*(President's Message continued)*

As always, let's be helpful to one another. I've seen this deteriorate over the past several years and it is saddening if not madding! We should be courteous, professional, and light-hearted with a good sense of humor; without it, we have truly missed the point of

comradery and friendship! We are truly only in control of our own actions and reactions!



*Matt Dallam*  
HASA President



*For up-to-date Seminar  
information, scan this  
QR Code.*

**FREE!**

# **EUREKA SALT WATER SEMINAR**

**Saturday, March 29, 2025**

**at 590 W. Waterfront Drive**

**Join us for a day packed with expert insights, industry secrets, and all things saltwater fishing!**

**Englund Marine is thrilled to host this **FREE** event, featuring:**

- Guest Speakers sharing their top tips & tricks**
  - Industry Experts bringing the latest innovations**
  - Exclusive Giveaways & Special Offers**
- ... and so much more!**

**Whether you're a seasoned angler or just dipping your toes into saltwater fishing, this is a must-attend event!**

**Mark your calendars & spread the word!**