

# HUMBOLDT AREA SALTWATER ANGLERS

A VOICE FOR SALTWATER SPORTFISHERS

2014 FALL NEWSLETTER



Thank You Jimmy Smith

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# President's Message

Hello HASA members. This will be my last President's Message as the reigns are being handed over to Scott McBain, but I will still be active with HASA. I believe in our cause and mission statement. If it wasn't for our founding fathers starting HASA and organizing local sportfishers, I believe we would have greater fishing restrictions and less access, and our sportfishing issues would be a much larger uphill battle than they already are. Thank you for all your support.

We will be holding our general membership meeting in January 2015 (date to be determined soon), and will have the 2015 board member elections. Each board position is voluntary and is a perfect way to give back to the cause and continue building upon the efforts started by our predecessors. My experience with HASA has been extremely rewarding and I have learned a lot about board processes, teamwork, commitment, and have specifically enjoyed learning the challenges at the state, federal, and international levels of sportfishing regulation. If any of you are interested in becoming a board member, please contact any board member or email us ([hasa6191@gmail.com](mailto:hasa6191@gmail.com)).

HASA initially was founded to respond to the MLPA process in 2008, and we now provide significant input into salmon and groundfish regulations, and have been working on special projects such as the artificial reef and other studies partnered with Humboldt State University (HSU). We have developed strong relationships with regulatory entities, and these relationships are how you get positive work done. It doesn't typically happen fast, but slowly, progress is being made, and hopefully we'll continue seeing improvements in the coming years as a result of our collective efforts.

The most recent example has been the impact that HASA has had within the Pacific halibut regulatory process, and we have been interacting within the process for the past three years. The HASA Board of Directors embarked on a large expense earlier this year and hired a consultant to perform a socioeconomic survey. We also partnered with HSU and SeaGrant to perform the business side of the socioeconomic study. We now have information from recreational anglers, charter boat operators, and local businesses, and this information is currently being analyzed and presented to regulatory entities so they understand the economic importance of recreational Pacific halibut fishing to our area.

This newsletter has grown into a great resource of information for sportfishers, and I appreciate the work and time commitment that Casey Allen has put into it.

Remember to take a kid fishing and give them a memory of a lifetime. See you all on the water.

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Cliff Hart".

Cliff Hart "Hart Attack"

The mission of Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers is to represent North Coast fishermen's historic and ongoing right to sport 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.



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# **RESOLUTION NAMING THE FIELDS LANDING BOAT LAUNCHING FACILITY IN HONOR OF JIMMY SMITH**

**WHEREAS**, the Fields Landing Boat Launching Facility serves as the primary boating access to the southern portion of Humboldt Bay and benefits a variety of users including sport fishermen, clambers, crabbers, waterfowl hunters, canoeists, kayakers, and birdwatchers; and

**WHEREAS**, the Fields Landing Boat Launching Facility has not previously been issued an official name by the Board; and

**WHEREAS**, after working as a commercial fisherman and wildlife biologist, Jimmy Smith served as commissioner with the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District from December 1995 to December 2000 and served as supervisor with the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors from January 2001 to August 2012; and

**WHEREAS**, Jimmy Smith was instrumental in building partnerships and securing funds for improvement projects at the Fields Landing Boat Launching Facility over the last 20 years; and

**WHEREAS**, one of Jimmy Smith's major accomplishments during his career was anchoring the diverse County, State, and Federal team that achieved the clean-up, public acquisition, re-opening, enhanced protection, and ongoing effective management of the land located directly across the bay from Fields Landing, now known as the Mike Thompson Wildlife Area, South Spit Humboldt Bay; and

**WHEREAS**, Jimmy Smith was dedicated during his career to the conservation of natural resources and the public's use and enjoyment of these resources, and Jimmy Smith championed many large projects and initiatives for the benefit of natural areas, working landscapes, and fish and wildlife, with considerable work on Humboldt Bay, Salt River, Eel River, Trinity River, and Klamath River, and marine fisheries; and

**WHEREAS**, Jimmy Smith was a primary visionary and co-founder of the seven-county North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (now the North Coast Resource Partnership) and the Five-Counties Salmonid Conservation Program; and

**WHEREAS**, Jimmy Smith had a unique ability to bring people together to build trust and goodwill, bridge differences, and solve problems; and

**WHEREAS**, Jimmy set the gold standard for inclusiveness, careful listening, building partnerships, and formulating effective solutions; and

**WHEREAS**, Jimmy Smith's leadership and diplomacy resonated throughout northern California; and

**WHEREAS**, Jimmy Smith is a man of kindness, caring, grace, dignity, humility, and perseverance; and

**WHEREAS**, Jimmy Smith had a distinguished career in public service and his accomplishments made a major and lasting significance for Humboldt County.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

Recognizes the substantial magnitude of Jimmy Smith's career and his significant contributions to local history, consistent with the criteria listed in Resolution 95-92 for the naming of County bridges, roads, parks, and geographic features; and

Establishes the name of the recreational facility located in Fields Landing along Humboldt Bay as the **Jimmy Smith Fields Landing Boat Launching Facility**.





# Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers Inc.

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

FEIN #61-1575751

October 19, 2014

Pacific Fishery Management Council  
Dorothy Lowman, Chair  
7700NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

RE: Pacific Halibut Alternatives for 2015

Dear Chair Lowman and Council Members:

The Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, Inc. (HASA) previously submitted public comment on August 11, 2014 and September 3, 2014 on the 2015 Pacific halibut allocation alternatives (Alternatives). We have reviewed the updated Alternatives, and based on our prior comments and subsequent input from HASA membership, HASA provides the following supplemental comments pertinent to the 2015 Alternatives:

1. Consistent with our mission statement, HASA supports a reasonable balance between fishing opportunities and regulations to provide a long-term sustainable Pacific halibut fishery for our membership. Historic allocations to California have been unreasonably low, emphasized by the 2013 IPHC Research Survey and other recent information. Regulatory management has made some progress lowering harvest towards PFMC allocations; however, albeit only one year of data, the 2013 IPHC Survey shows higher California production, and we anticipate similar results from the 2014 IPHC Survey. Therefore, there still remains substantial distance from a fair and equitable Pacific halibut allocation to California. Many of the revised Alternatives developed for consideration at the November 2014 PFMC meeting make good progress towards a more fair and equitable harvest for California as required by the Magnuson Stevens Act.
2. HASA supports continued refinement of a) Pacific halibut allocation to California, and b) regulation to meet that allocation, provided that the allocation is fair and equitable. As future IPHC Research Surveys and other scientific data better informs Pacific halibut productivity in California, we expect the allocation to continue evolving towards a more fair and equitable distribution of harvest.
3. While we would obviously prefer Alternative 5 for the 2015 allocation, we are willing to support the Alternative 4 allocation combined with more appropriate harvest management to meet the Alternative 4 allocation, provided future allocations continue to be refined in the coming years. As we mentioned in our September 2014 comments, the 2014 closure through the entirety of August has caused substantial socio-economic impacts to our recreational sport fishing community and the businesses they support. Implementing harvest management to meet the Alternative 4 allocation, based on the 2008-2014 average harvest rate, would slightly reduce the duration of a 2015 closure, and accordingly reduce the socio-economic impacts on our recreational sportfishers and local businesses.

In summary, HASA appreciates the more equitable Alternatives being considered by the PFMC in November. While we would prefer Alternative 5, we would be willing to support the Alternative 4 allocation with commensurate harvest management to meet that allocation as part of an evolution towards a more fair and equitable distribution of Pacific Halibut harvest. HASA would also like to continue working with CDFW and PFMC in 2014/2015 as more equitable, longer-term, science-based solutions are developed for Pacific halibut allocation and harvest management.

We appreciate the opportunity for providing public input on this very important matter, and do not hesitate to contact me at (707) 845-4106 if you would like any additional information.

Sincerely,

Cliff Hart, President  
Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, Inc.

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# Groundfish Update

Tom Marking GAP Sport Representative



We are a victim of our own success! 2014 has been an eventful year for many reasons, but there are definitely winners and losers on the horizon. In a nutshell, halibut is a win/lose scenario, depending upon your interpretation, and the rockfish harvest was so successful we have put ourselves in jeopardy. Let me explain.

## PACIFIC HALIBUT

As you are well aware, we have been exceeding our allocation of 6,000 lbs for the last 7 years. That came to the attention of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) and a subcommittee was appointed to study the problem for past two years and make recommendations. The culmination of the study, including our first population survey off-shore, resulted in action at the November PFMC meeting. There were two issues of concern. The first is, California believed we were not getting a fair amount of allocation. Second, the Oregon, Washington, IPHC, NMFS, PFMC regulators felt we were fishing unregulated and uncontrolled. As usual, there is some truth, and some misconception to all of this. Over the past two years of working in the Groundfish Advisory Subcommittee (GAP) I have empathized, cajoled, argued, pleaded and negotiated with the industry folks and regulators to inform themselves of the facts and the myths and work cooperatively to resolve both these concerns. As you know by now, the GAP took the lead in the resolution process and proposed that California receive 4% of the non-tribal allocation of Pacific halibut for 2015, with the understanding that we would stay within that allocation and take in-season action to shut the season down once the harvest goal (HG) is attained. To their credit, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), after avoiding this issue for a number of years, proposed an in-season method that satisfied all the critics and is based upon the CFRS (dock samplers) data. This is a one year agreement for 2015. For example, if the IPHC allocation is 960,000 lbs to the 2A zone in 2015, California will receive 24,960 lbs of Pacific halibut. To keep within this allocation, we will have a season structure of probably two-three months, depending upon what months we choose. Once the IPHC provides us with the 2A allocation in January of 2015, CDFW will schedule a meeting to ask for our opinion on what months we prefer. (*HASA will be asking members for input*)

Here is the current projection on monthly harvest success projected for 2015 by CDFW: May 3,700 lbs, June 8,600, July and August 16,000 each, September 6,500 and October 1250 lbs. So, pick any combination of months to not exceed 24,960 lbs and there you have it. We will have to wait for the IPHC to act in January before we will know the allocation. This is a really brief summary of the outcome, but considering the impacts in all of 2A, this is the best we could negotiate for this year. This took four years of really tough negotiations, dozens of meetings and hundreds of hours of staff and advisory body hours to arrive at this. It is what it is. The challenge is for us to prove that we can stay within the allocation in order to try to improve our position with higher allocations in the future. This will be a challenge, but we had better be up to the task. This year's off-shore survey should help bolster our request for an increased allocation.

## ROCKFISH

Rockfish this year was a smashing success! I don't know how else to put it. We harvested record amounts of Black Rockfish (BR) to everyone's astonishment, in particular CDFW. And, ling cod were thick as flies this year with people complaining they couldn't keep them off their lines to catch rockfish! When is the last time you heard that complaint? And it is going to get better, for ling cod that is...not so much for rockfish. Here's the rub. We caught too many BR this year and exceeded the HG for California. We share the Annual Catch Limit with our sister states, so we each have a HG to apportion up the total amount. We blew through our HG this year in a huge way, the HG was 230.8 metric tons (mt) and

we hauled in 416.9 mt projected. In the North, May through September, we doubled our harvest from a few years ago. To get us back to the 230 mt, we would have only had a two fish sub-bag limit for 2015. So, CDFW shifted 75 mt from the Commercial Sector (who are way under their HG) over to recreation that allows for a 305 mt HG. That will allow a sub-bag limit of five BR. We owe the Commercials big time for this one.

Here is the dilemma I see for next year. One, we will be tossing back scads of BR in an attempt to get the third ling cod they are allowing, and to try to catch something other than a BR. And what would that be? Greenling, cabezon, minor near shore species (MNS), vermillion, and whatever else is swimming around down there. A looming problem is the minor near shore complex has been reduced by 25% from 2014 due to the china rockfish problem up north (down to 40 10' line). The MNS complex has china, yellow and black, gopher, olive, treefish, quillback, grass, calico, copper and blue. For instance, we have caught 7.5 mt of China rockfish this year and the Over Fishing Limit (OFL) for 2015 is 7.2 mt.

Next year, we will be trying to fill our bag limit to ten fish, only five of which can be blacks. And, we have to try to avoid all the MNS species so as not to exceed that reduced allocation. I think you see the problem here. We have been squeezed into a narrow shelf of fishing area, and we are now beginning to deplete the local areas due to increased pressure. We can't go deeper because of the concern of yelloweye and canary rockfish, both overfished with very low by-catch amounts. And, you had better bone up on telling the difference between a blue and black rockfish. Hint, blues have small mouths and blacks have big mouths, kind of like small and large mouth bass. But blues are a problem north of us, so that will be the next fish to slap us upside the head. Fishing is getting complicated these days.

### BAROTRAUMA

I strongly advise every angler to take this very seriously in 2015. It is incumbent upon us to have an effective release device that is functional and we must use it. If CDFW sees a bunch of black rockfish floating around our boats, and our release mortality rockets upwards, they may be compelled to shut us down. That is a very real concern for next year. They will be tracking near shore and black rockfish harvest closely and will be watching for catch and wastage more critically than in the past. Get ready and be responsible.

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# Wild versus Hatchery Fish (Part 3 in a series)

By Larry De Ridder



In our last issue we looked at how there could be differences in genetic expression between naturally spawned and hatchery fish, even if they have identical parentage. The next question might very well be, “Does it really matter?” Let’s continue.

If you search for “wild vs. hatchery salmon” information online you will encounter articles alleging one way or another that “hatchery salmon can harm wild salmon through competition”. If you read these articles you will find the primary issue for many people boils down to a complaint that some hatchery salmon might out-compete some wild salmon for food and habitat, or at least limit what is available to wild salmon by their mere existence. That’s no doubt true – but is it significant? Most of these articles are clearly biased in favor of wild fish and the authors certainly consider this “competition” issue as inherently bad. However, they generally neglect to point out that wild salmon have always competed with...wait and think about it a moment...other wild salmon. In the open ocean Sacramento River fish mingle and compete with Klamath basin fish and Eel River fish and Columbia River fish, and so on. They compete with fish of other species. They compete with their own siblings. Further, the “hatchery fish can harm wild salmon through competition” argument seems a bit contradictory, since another of the allegations of many in the anti-hatchery camp is that hatchery fish are somehow deficient, as if they are missing some essential instincts that should develop during a young life in a hostile river. Now that’s also likely true – young fish straight out of the hatchery probably are particularly naïve. But if that’s the primary truth then wild fish should regularly out-compete the hatchery crowd. The truth is likely somewhere between those two extremes. Ultimately the strongest, healthiest and luckiest individuals of both groups will survive and return to spawn. As a practical matter I’ve never been able to tell in the ocean whether I’d caught a naturally spawned fish or a hatchery product without looking for fin clips; nor can I demonstrate a difference once the fish is on the barbeque Saturday evening. If there is some discernable difference in behavior I suspect CDFW would exploit that fact in our fishing regulations. As a silly example, what if someone discovered hatchery fish were most vulnerable to red flashers but wild fish preferred green? I can well imagine CDFW trying to ban green flashers as an effort to improve the survival of certain endangered wild stocks. If any of our readers can demonstrate a practical difference between the two groups while they are in the ocean or during the upriver spawning run, please submit a newsletter article on the subject.

Now, there’s no doubt that we have substantially more hatchery salmon today than forty years ago. In Northern Pacific waters Japan, Russia, the US (primarily in Alaska) and Canada have many more hatcheries now than two generations ago. The numbers are still growing. California, for example, is currently building a new hatchery along the San Joaquin River as CDFW works to resurrect the river and its salmon population below Friant Dam. As the human population of the world has continued to grow, demand for fish protein has grown with it. This has prompted hatcheries dedicated to providing market fish, even in areas that don’t need mitigation efforts. In the last two decades much of this growth has been related to an increase in “fish ranching” and “fish farming”, both of which incorporate hatchery operations. Fish ranching refers to the practice of intentionally releasing so many smolts into a river system than the river could never sup-



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port the returning adults, with the intent of harvesting (netting) the majority of the returning fish once they arrive off the mouth of the natal river. It's an open-ocean equivalent of the Old West cattle ranching business model in which the stock ran wild most of the time. In Alaska alone approximately 1.4 billion young fish are released annually in fish ranching operations. Even if the survival rate is only 1%, that results in 14 million returning "ranch" adults per year. In 2012 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game reported that ocean ranched salmon represented over 34% of the commercial catch. I've seen this in practice in British Columbia and at "round-up time" a commercial ranching operation also supports a robust sport fishery for the returning adults. In Oregon next year they plan to release 100,000 spring-run chinook smolts into Yaquina Bay as a "ranching" operation specifically to boost the 2017 and 2018 sport fishing in the bay.

Salmon farming (a.k.a. marine aquaculture, or mariculture) refers to keeping hatchery-bred fish confined to open-water pens till they are ready to harvest. Pen-raised salmon farming operations have some additional advantages over ranching. For example, the operator doesn't spend money raising hordes of young hatchery-spawned fish to release in the hopes that enough survive a few years in the wild to provide a satisfactory return. There's no need to expend a great deal of time and fuel trying to catch fish in the open ocean, nor wait till the adults return to the "home ranch". There is no risk "your fish" will be netted by foreign fleets in international waters. There is very little risk of losing human lives or creating fuel spills from damaged or sinking fishing boats. There is no by-catch and no risk of killing members of endangered runs by harvesting from mixed-run schools. You raise what you need and keep them close to home. Fish can be harvested year-round, rather than have the annual harvest take place in just a couple of weeks. There are advantages for many buyers, too. Imagine a restaurant with a recipe that starts "take one fresh salmon..." The chef doesn't know if the next wild salmon to arrive off the docks will weigh five or twenty-five pounds, or even if there will be fish available. Dealing with a pen operation permits all the fish to be ordered in advance and in a consistent size. A recent pass through a local grocery store showed that farmed Atlantic salmon sold for about \$5 per pound less than commercially caught Chinook, while the cost of sockeye (perhaps from a "ranching" operation) fell between the other two prices. Clearly, the cost savings of a pen operation were passed along to the consumer and those who can't afford Chinook may still be able to enjoy a fish dinner. Unlike fish ranching operations, fish farming does not provide public sport fishing opportunities as a side benefit (unless you were on the boat which collided at night with a Mexican tuna pen a few years ago, and came to a stop inside the pen).

Economically, salmon aquaculture is worth more than \$10 billion annually. Norway, other European countries and Chile generate about 83% of this economic activity, mostly producing about 230,000 tons/year of farmed Atlantic salmon. About \$2 billion in economic activity takes place in northern Pacific waters. In the northern Pacific, Coho salmon are the most common product, followed by Steelhead, Chinook, and Atlantic salmon. However, nearest to us are the Washington and BC pen projects, which mostly raise Atlantic salmon.

Critics of salmon farming often point to a reduction in wild populations corresponding with the increase in domestic salmon farming. However, there is no demonstrable cause-and-effect. That is, there is no clearly proven reason why, for example, raising a pen full of Atlantic salmon in a British Columbia sound would adversely affect a wild population of Coho or Chinook perhaps hundreds of miles away. Further, during the same period these studies showed wild Chinook and Coho population declines in Alaska and BC near the pens, these same species also declined in Oregon and California, neither of which hosts salt-water salmon farming operations. The prevailing consensus appears to be that

the rise in salmon aquaculture and the decline in wild populations about 20 years ago may be related but at this time there is no proven connection.

However, there are serious issues with keeping large numbers of fish in close quarters. Anyone with a tank of guppies can tell you the first concern -- the potential for a rapid spread of diseases. There are several serious pathogens which target salmon. The transfer of sea lice from farmed Atlantic salmon to nearby wild Pink salmon has been well documented. Adults usually survive sea lice, but infected juveniles often die. Some diseases are so easily transmitted in close quarters that the detection of a single sick fish requires the destruction of the entire cohort in an infected hatchery run. Locally, we witnessed how rapidly the 2002 Klamath River fish kill progressed through an adult population. To prevent disease in rearing pens, young fish must be inoculated, and sick fish must be treated or removed. Infectious disease organisms which survive the medication process can reproduce future generations of pathogens which are genetically more resistant to treatment. Wild fish passing near the pens may become infected by, and spread, this medication-resistant strain of infectious agent. Just as human medications accumulate in wastewater treatment plant discharges, salmon excrete their unused medications and affect the water around them. This does cause down current effects on the environment as drugs are encountered by both the salmon they are intended to treat and other organisms that the medications aren't intended to treat. Similar side effects happen with food put into the pens. Uneaten food pellets and resultant fish feces will drift down current and settle onto the bottom. This affects the local environment. Employees at salmon pen facilities are required to monitor the ocean bottom below their pens for possible adverse effects and alter their operations if a problem is detected.

At the extreme end of the anti-mariculture community are individuals that object based on the amount of fish food that must be fed to the subjects prior to harvest. Clearly there can't be a 100% conversion of fish food to salmon flesh. Basically this extremist group would rather see the fish food fed to people directly, rather than fed to the fish and then the fish eaten by people. In theory you could feed more people with their method, and at a cheaper cost. Would any of our readers care to skip a trophic level or two and enjoy a meal of reconstituted krill and anchovy pellets? On a more serious note, excessive marine harvesting to feed farmed salmon could adversely impact free-swimming fish in the region where the krill or baitfish were netted.

A different issue often raised is the potential for pen escapees to "contaminate" the local population by participating in the local spawning run, or establish a separate non-native run in the local river system. In the case of Atlantic salmon, they are actually more closely related to rainbow trout than they are to Pacific basin salmon, and thus aren't capable of breeding with the locals. Over the years there have been several hundred Atlantic salmon escapees detected in BC watersheds, but there has never been evidence of successful natural spawning. In fact, about a century ago there were large-scale efforts to establish a self-sustaining population of Atlantic salmon in British Columbia. Those efforts failed. At this time biologists don't know why Atlantic salmon don't successfully spawn on the West Coast, but the fact is there appears to be no danger of developing a west coast Atlantic salmon run to compete with the native species. Obviously pen-raised Coho, Chinook or steelhead escapees can breed with the locals, but the stream they would most likely enter would be the local stream nearest the pen, which is likely where the fish originated. Overall we're left with theoretical adverse outcomes from escapees, but little documented evidence of harm done.

We'll continue the discussion in our next issue.

# Humboldt Bay Bar History

By Larry De Ridder

The following was taken from Night Crossings, a book detailing the fate of five boats which encountered sleeper waves and sank while crossing the Humboldt Bay bar at night. As an exercise, some items are left blank. Fill in the blanks and then check the answers later to see how your local knowledge compared to the author, Jon Humboldt Gates. Answers are on page 15.

The north and south Humboldt Bay jetties are over a mile long from their seaward most point to where they meet the inner harbor sea walls. They were originally built by the Army Corps of Engineers from quarried rock, in the late \_\_\_\_\_ century. Whole sections of the original jetties were destroyed by waves within \_\_\_\_\_ years, and the westernmost parts were buried in sand. Army engineers rebuilt the jetties, and installed a \_\_\_\_\_-ton monolith of steel-reinforced concrete at the end of each structure. Boulders weighing as much as \_\_\_\_\_ tons were placed around these monoliths for armor protection. This rebuild was completed in 1925, but within \_\_\_\_\_ years major repairs were required. In 1932 concrete blocks weighing over \_\_\_\_\_ pounds each were placed along the breakwaters for added protection. The ocean washed most of them away the following winter. For the next 30 years Army engineers continued efforts to reinforce the ends of the jetties. More 200,000-pound blocks were installed. In the 1940s scores of \_\_\_\_\_-pound 3-legged tetrahedron-shaped structures were placed, as engineers experimented with new concepts to prevent erosion. By 1969 most of the 200,000-pound blocks had disappeared again. In \_\_\_\_\_ (year) Army Corps engineers introduced "dolos", invented in \_\_\_\_\_ (country) by the Port of East London's harbor engineer. In its native Afrikaans language, *dolos* means the ankle bone of a small goat. The original design was smaller than what was installed in Humboldt County. The units built and installed locally weigh \_\_\_\_\_ tons each. They work on the principal of deflecting waves and dissipating the energy into many small waves rather than trying to defy the ocean's energy by sheer mass. \_\_\_\_\_ (number) dolos were placed around the ends of the two jetties in 1970. In 1985 Army engineers returned to the jetties to conduct further repairs, but the jetties were largely intact and repair work required was minimal. After 15 years only four of the original units had broken. Nevertheless several thousand tons of quarried rock was deposited into the eroded areas and another 1,000 dolos were placed. In recognition of the Army Corps of Engineers century-long battle with the ocean, the Humboldt Bay jetty system was designated a National Historic Engineering Landmark.



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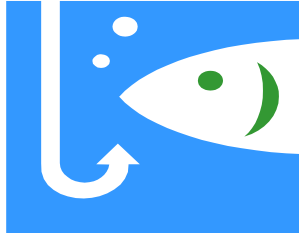


## Answers to Humboldt Bay Bar History

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Please list your interests, talents, and affiliations for participating in committee functions

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All HASA members will receive timely updates on all club and committee functions including a quarterly e-newsletter. Premium members without e-mail will be sent a hard copy of the newsletter.

All HASA members will be invited to the Humboldt Tuna Club potlucks. More information is available at [humboldttuna.com](http://humboldttuna.com)

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# Humboldt Currents

By Casey Allen



Many thanks to everyone who participated in the Pacific halibut economic study, especially those who provided leadership like HASA's **Scott McBain** and **Cliff Hart**; **Deb Wilson-Vandenberg**, CDFW; **Joe Tyburczy**, Sea Grant; **Miki Takada** and **Dr. Tim Mulligan**, HSU; **Kristen Sheeran**, **Taylor Hesselgrave** and the folks at Ecotrust.

The Pacific halibut economic study is an important piece of our quest to secure a reasonable catch share for Northern California. The study combined with recent survey data are the nuts and bolts of our request. Our Pacific halibut fishery is relatively new and will continue to grow economically as traveling anglers learn they can catch quality halibut without an expensive trip to Alaska. Human population in our region has not changed much in the last 50 years though we have lost a lot of job opportunities with the decline of timber and commercial fishing industries. As our economy becomes more and more dependent on recreation and tourism, the value of Pacific halibut is growing.

HASA has been invited to attend the International Pacific Halibut Commission's annual meeting January 26-30, 2015 in Vancouver, British Columbia. We have enlisted **Captain Tim Klassen** to attend as he is most equipped to speak as a recreational angler and a businessman. "This year's meeting is scheduled to open on Monday with presentations on the fishery, the 2014 stock assessment, and the harvest decision table, and conclude on Friday with Commission approval of catch limits and regulations. All public sessions and administrative sessions will be open to the public. These open sessions will also be webcast." For more information visit the IPHC website: <http://www.iphc.int/meetings-and-events/annual-meeting.html>.

Work to prepare the environmental documents for the State Lands lease application for the Humboldt Offshore Reef Project is continuing. **Adam Wagschal** at H. T. Harvey & Associates believes the application will be submitted to the State Lands Commission in December. After a review, we will learn what steps we need to take to obtain permits and begin construction. It is a long process.

The Humboldt MPA Collaborative met for the third time led by **Calla Allison**, Director of the MPA Collaborative Implementation Project. Most of the discussion was around providing public education through signage, information panels and kiosks. Most of our Marine Protected Areas are hard to access so the signs would be placed at marinas, launch facilities, and visitor centers. The need for boundary markers for the Samoa and South Bay MPAs were discussed. We were reminded that boundary information for all MPAs will be widely available on electronic devices that support GPS. We still felt a physical marker in the bay and on the beach was desirable. The most popular potential project was the production of an MPA video. Everyone agreed this was a great public outreach tool and there were many ideas about content and theme. The big question was whether the short film could be produced within the provided \$10,000 budget. **Jenifer Savage** (Northcoast Environmental Center), **Beth Chaton** (Humboldt County Office of Education), and **Joe Tyburczy** (CA Sea Grant) volunteered to co-chair a sub-committee to explore the possibilities.

Many kudos go to **Bert Colbert** on Banker's Hours, with buddies **Josh Mitchell** and **Jeffrey Switzer**. They arrived at the False Cape for some rockfishing just in time to see two guys in

another boat frantically waving their arms. At first Bert thought they were warning him of submerged rocks, but then they both jumped overboard as their open aluminum boat capsized. It only took a few minutes for Bert to motor Banker's Hours to the stricken anglers and with the help of another boat they pulled the guys out of the cold water. One guy was wearing a life vest and the other was clinging to a throw cushion. Both were so cold after just a few minutes in the water that they could not help their rescuers pull themselves into the boats. Bert volunteered to transport both soggy anglers back to port and ended up transferring them to the USCG off Table Bluff. It is not known what caused the boat to capsize.

My favorite fish story of the season came from **Rick Alexander** who hooked the biggest halibut of his life. He fought the brute for over 30 minutes in 300 feet of water. The fish shook its massive head and took short powerful runs typical for very large halibut. As Rick's muscles were running out of gas and with everyone looking over the side for color, ready with the gaff, it turned out to be a half a truck tire. Unfortunately, it came off before they could get it in the boat.

With this the season of giving thanks, I would be remiss not to note that **Hank Seeman**, Deputy Director of Environmental Services and County Supervisor, **Rex Bohn**, spearheaded the movement to name the Fields Landing Boat Launch Facility after retired County Supervisor, **Jimmy Smith**. Hank and Rex engineered a surprise dedication at the facility where approximately 200 people attended, including Congressman Mike Thompson. Jimmy was genuinely surprised and was heard to say, "what the hell is going on here?" See page 4.

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# DRAFT Economic Study of impacts from August 2014 Pacific halibut block closure to North Coast sportfishers and businesses

By Scott McBain

As most of you may know, HASA has been actively engaged for many years in supporting continued fishing opportunities for Pacific halibut off of our north coast. As part of our continuing activities to support this critically important fishery, HASA is focusing efforts on the following three areas: Science, Policy, and Economics. A critical requirement of the Magnuson Stevens Act states *“Conservation and management measures shall not discriminate between residents of different States. If it becomes necessary to allocate or assign fishing privileges among various United States fishermen, such allocation shall be (A) fair and equitable to all such fishermen; (B) reasonably calculated to promote conservation; and (C) carried out in such manner that no particular individual, corporation, or other entity acquires an excessive share of such privileges.”* To help support our arguments for a “fair and equitable” Pacific halibut management policy for Northern California, an assessment of the economics of our Pacific halibut fishery was needed.



Therefore, HASA provided funding to Ecotrust (Portland, OR) to conduct an economic study of the August 2014 Pacific halibut block closure on our recreational sportfishers (the “Recreational Survey”), including charter boats (the “Charter Boat Survey”). In parallel, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) funded Humboldt State University (HSU) in collaboration with California Sea Grant to conduct a similar economic study on the effects of the August 2014 block closure on local businesses (the “Business Survey”). These studies focused on the ports of Shelter Cove, Humboldt Bay, Trinidad, and Crescent City, and are now in various stages of completion. You likely received one of these surveys from us, and preliminary results of those surveys are summarized below.

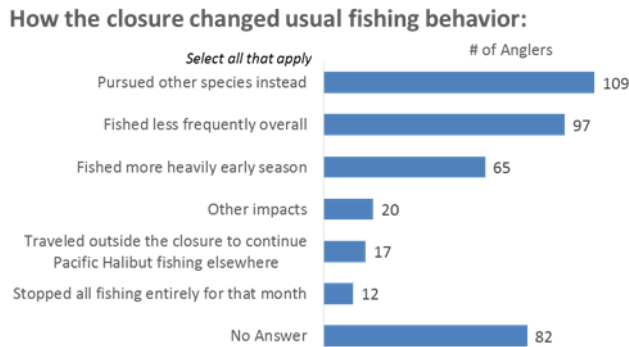
**Business Survey:** 338 north coast businesses were identified as potentially having an impact from the August 2014 block closure, and of these, 144 were prioritized based on anticipated sensitivity to impacts from changes in sportfishing regulations. These included tackle shops, gas stations, and motels near the primary ports. To date, 23 of these businesses have responded (14.6%), and HSU student Miki Takada continues to encourage additional responses from local businesses. Preliminary results suggest that impacts of the August 2014 block closure to local businesses (excluding charter boats) was approximately \$300,000.

**Charter Boat Survey:** Surveys were distributed to all of the 21 known charter boat operators between Shelter Cove and Crescent City, and approximately ½ responded to the survey. 70% of those respondents reported a reduction of revenue in August 2014 compared to the

Number of identified operating charter businesses in the north coast of California:	21
% of our respondents who reported lower August 2014 gross revenue compared with August 2013:	70% ✘
Average estimated revenue loss per charter business due to August Pacific Halibut closures:	\$20,052 ✘
<b>Total estimated loss of revenue across north coast charter businesses due to August Pacific Halibut closures:</b>	<b>\$294,766</b> ≡

previous year specifically due to the block closure. When expanded to the entire charter boat fleet, the August 2014 block closure impacts were approximately \$295,000.

**Recreational Survey:** The Recreational Survey was sent to the entire Humboldt Tuna Club membership (many hundreds of recipients), and CDFW dock survey staff handed out survey cards to sportfishers at boat ramps and docks between Shelter Cove and Crescent City. We received 252 responses, of which 89% (224 anglers) indicated that Pacific halibut was a primary or secondary targeted species. A majority were from Humboldt Bay (65%), with Trinidad (18%), Crescent City (7%), and Shelter Cove (5%) representing the remainder of the primary ports on the north coast. Foregone purchases ranged from fuel to food to lodging to gambling at local casinos; the total average expenditure per angler per trip was estimated at approximately \$254. The total number of estimated trips foregone by the August 2014 block closure was 4.3 trips/angler, and when expanded to the total number of anglers responding, represented an economic impact of approximately \$245,000. This economic impact could be considered a minimum value because the survey did not sample all of the potential halibut anglers that would have fished. For example, if our survey only captured 50% of the potential halibut anglers, then the true economic impact would be double that of survey respondents (\$538,000). Because we do not know what percentage of potential halibut anglers were included in our survey, combined with the likely effect of effort shift to other species and other months, we feel that the estimated economic impact of \$245,000 is a reasonable number. Because the recreational survey also included estimated expenses on charter boats, the results of the Recreational Survey should not be added to the Charter Boat Survey. [We think it is safe to say that the likely overall economic impact of the August 2014 Pacific halibut block closure was between \\$250,000 and \\$500,000.](#)

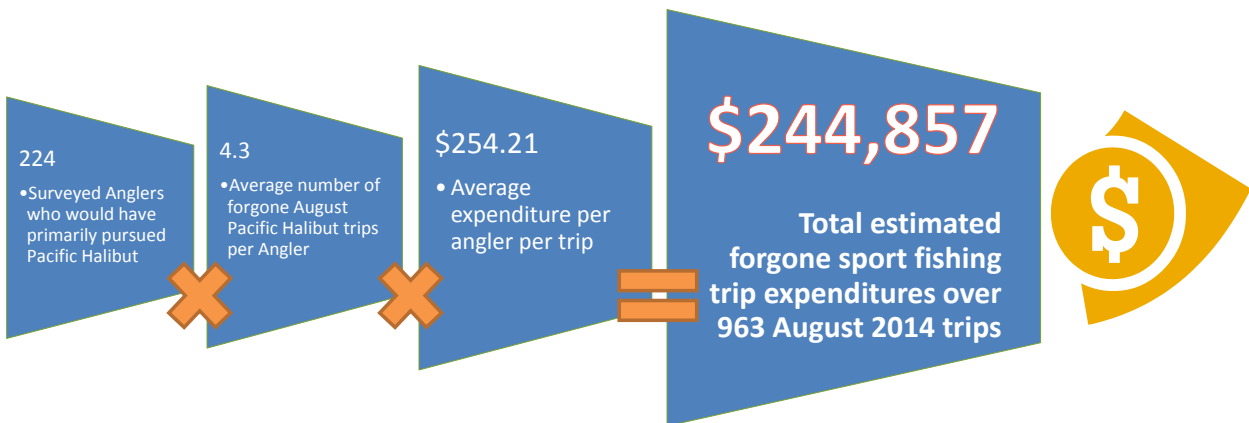


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Once these studies are finalized in December, we anticipate submitting results to the IPHC as part of our comments on the 2015 Total Allowable Catch allocation. These results will also be considered as part of HASA's input to CDFW on the 2015 Pacific Halibut season structure.

# THE VAULT

By Matt Goldsworthy

I am sure we all know the old saying... the top 10% of the fishermen catch 90% of the fish. The folks that catch most of the fish usually do so right in front of an audience of others. There is a reason why Captain Gary Blasi on the SeaWeasel will catch a handful of fish right next to you before you even get a bite. Same bait... same lures... same spot... same direction... same depth... its the little details that make the difference. The things you may not notice at first glance, but upon further inspection into the tackle boxes of the most successful anglers... there is usually an "Aha!" moment. Leader lengths, colors, bait brines, knots... it can all make a big difference. The results-oriented folks who catch most of the fish pay close attention to the details they have learned to be important.

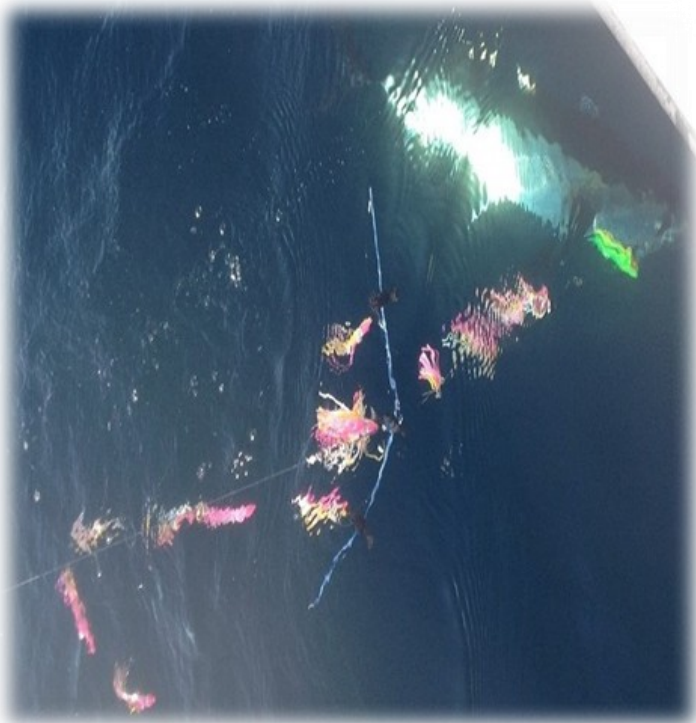


Those who end up focused on certain fisheries will master them. Pay attention to this group of people... their passion and experience enable them to refine the critical details of the fisheries they love. One of my friends (Randy) has been targeting bluefin tuna with great success over the past few years... and its pretty clear he is a master of those details that matter. Randy has been landing some big bluefin tuna... and it's his technique that seems to make the difference. Pay attention! The Vault of fishing details and secrets is now open for HASA members in this newsletter... intentionally timed with the arrival/migration of the bluefin tuna into our local waters. Commercial vessels landed some very large bluefin tuna off of Cape Mendocino in November of 2013 (last year).

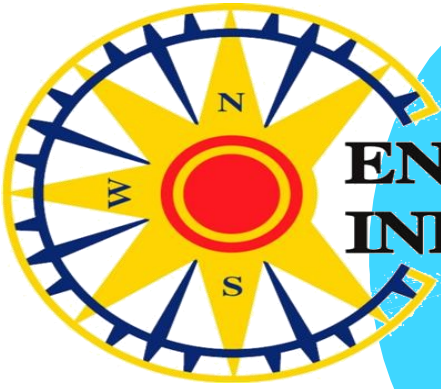
Here is a proven method to catch large bluefin tuna... the 'Down Line'. The local challenge for HASA members (other than fall weather) will be finding live bait acceptable to bluefin tuna. If a hearty bait can be found (not anchovy), the 'Down

Line' may be the best known technique for bluefin tuna on the US West Coast. This is a results-oriented technique... but you cannot catch fish where there are no fish. If you find yourself in the right neighborhood, on the right day... this will work. Now it is time for another reminder about the top 10%... and the critical details. If you choose to ignore some of the details... you are missing the entire point here. Enough said.

Bluefin can be pretty line shy and you will need to use fluorocarbon leaders. Secure your live bait to an appropriately sized circle hook (last warning about details here)... yes, it must be a circle hook on fluorocarbon line. Flyline your bait behind the boat as you drift until it is about 200-feet behind the boat. Then, attach your weight setup. The weight setup is simple. But guess what? The details matter. The weight should be torpedo shaped and weigh about 6-8 ounces. Using a split ring, attach a ball bearing swivel to one of the eyes of the torpedo weight. Next, attach a lightweight rubber band to the swivel/weight (bear claw the rubber band onto the swivel). Now, with your live bait 200-feet behind the boat... attach the weight setup to your line by bear clawing the rubber band around the line.



Its time to lower the 'Down Line' to the proper depth... which Randy has confirmed appears to be between 100-200 feet down (150-200 optimum). Set your deepest 'Down Line' first. Slowly lower the rig and count the pulls until it is 200-feet deep. Repeat the procedure and set another 'Down Line' to about 100 feet deep. Repeat the procedure a third time... but do not attach a weight setup... so your third line is flylined. Most of the bites will come on the Down Lines. The biggest fish usually come from the deepest Down Line. The name of the game is long soaks with chum... but that is another topic for another article. Spreader bars took over a dozen Bluefin in California this past summer as well (w/ cedar plug chasers).



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