

HUMBOLDT AREA SALTWATER ANGLERS

A VOICE FOR SALTWATER SPORTFISHERS



2015 WINTER NEWSLETTER

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President's Message

By Scott McBain



As the incoming president to HASA, I appreciate the opportunity to serve our north coast fishing community for the next two years. At our general membership meeting on February 5, 2014, we voted on our 2015 Board of Directors. We are seeking future board members for 2016, so if you have an interest, contact me or one of our board members.

HASA was very active in 2014 representing our fishing interests, and 2015 looks to be similar. Our anticipated priorities for 2015 include:

- Annual fundraiser on April 25, 2015
- Continued coordination with agencies, regulators, membership, anglers, charters, HSU, ports, and businesses to improve and maintain fishing access for salmon, rockfish and Pacific halibut
- Increasing California allocation of Pacific halibut for 2016 to reduce season restrictions
- Continued planning and permitting on the artificial reef project
- Assisting UC Davis and agencies in removing derelict fishing gear
- Continue working with HSU, CDFW, NOAA, Sea Grant and others on fisheries studies that will improve scientific understanding to better manage our sustainable fisheries and enable future access
- Expand HASA membership and continue to foster collaborative input and problem solving to our fisheries challenges

A reminder that a majority of our annual budget to conduct these activities comes from our annual fundraiser. Our annual fundraiser will be on April 25, 2015 at Redwood Acres in Eureka. So mark your calendars! You can help HASA with the fundraiser by attending, supporting the silent and live auctions, soliciting donations for the silent and live auction, and/or assisting with planning and logistics for the fundraiser. Please also support the businesses that contribute to the HASA fundraiser. Cliff Hart, with assistance from long-time organizer Gene Morris, is coordinating this year's fundraiser. If you have time to help, give Cliff a call at 845-4106. Please bring the family out to have a good time and show your support for HASA and your fishery. All of the proceeds go towards HASA business that fits within our mission statement:

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.

I look forward to seeing you all at the fundraiser and working with you throughout the year!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott McBain'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



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Who Are Those Fish Counters, Anyway?

By Ed Roberts



If you're an avid Humboldt county angler you've probably run into the "fish counters" waiting for you back at the boat ramp, maybe more than once. They've asked you questions about your catch, how often you fish, measured and weighed the fish you retained, and possibly taken the heads from the hatchery salmon you've landed. Maybe you've wondered who they are, what they're doing, and why.

The "fish counters", more properly called scientific aids or samplers, are employees of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and they're collecting data for the CDFW's California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) for use in managing the state's marine sport fisheries. These are paid positions, they are not volunteers. Some of them are current students, working on degrees in natural resources. Most of them have already completed their undergraduate degrees and are working this entry level position in their chosen career field. Some of them have earned or are in the process of earning graduate degrees. For the most part, they've been hired because they are

upbeat, friendly people who can interact with the angling public in a positive way. In addition, their education has given them a good understanding of scientific principles, they have the ability to follow instruction yet use their own knowledge and judgment to make decisions in the field, and most of all, they have a passion for the sustainable use and conservation of our state's marine resources. They'll spend upwards of 100 hours in training, learning sampling protocol and survey design, receive hands-on fish identification training in the laboratory and in the field, and work with veteran samplers and their lead staff before they're sent out to work independently in remote locations. These CRFS samplers are dedicated, trained professionals.

Now you know a little bit about who they are; but what is it, exactly, that they're doing? Samplers work wherever people fish in the ocean – at public launch ramps, on beaches, at piers, and on jetties. They also meet charter boats at the dock or sample aboard the boat during fishing trips. The data they're collecting by examining your catch and asking you questions is used by CRFS in conjunction with other data sources to produce estimates of saltwater sport fishing catch and effort. These estimates are then used by state and federal fishery management agencies to manage California's fishery resources for sustainability, while providing for more sport fishing opportunities when and where possible.

Last but not least, why are they measuring, weighing, and counting your catch? The data that CRFS samplers collect is a critically important tool used to construct management measures. The collection of heads from adipose fin-clipped salmon allows managers to determine the important contributions of hatcheries to our ocean salmon fisheries, and to determine the impacts of those fisheries on depressed stocks. Hatchery managers also use the data to evaluate and improve hatchery rearing and release strategies based on the success of tagged release groups. Fishery managers use the information to assess the relative contribution of hatchery and natural production of salmon to the adult population, estimate stray rates of salmon, and measure the effect and success of both recreational and commercial fisheries. Coded-wire tag recovery data are also used to forecast future abundance of salmon. In turn, fishery managers use this information to improve and maximize salmon fishing opportunities, both in the ocean and in the rivers.

In addition, many species of rockfish are managed through annual catch limits. CRFS data is used to track in-season progress towards those limits. Not monitoring annual catch limits of over-fished species jeopardizes the success of rebuilding plans, whose goals are to increase populations to allow for future fishing opportunities. CRFS data has occasionally been used to constrain fisheries (the last in-season bottom-fishing closure on the North Coast was in 2008) but in the long term these fishery management actions are intended to promote sustainability. Take a look at CRFS' Mission Statement: "The mission of the CRFS is to collect fishery-dependent data on California's marine recreational fisheries, and to accurately estimate catch and effort in a time frame and on a scale that meets management needs." More times than not, CRFS data has been used to provide more fishing opportunities rather than less. Here are just a few examples of regulation changes that have given more opportunities to North Coast anglers, based in large part on CRFS data:



- Divers (spearfishermen) and shore-based anglers are able to fish for rockfish, cabezon, greenling and lingcod year-round
- The minimum size limit for lingcod dropped from 24 inches total length to 22 inches total length
- The daily bag and possession limit for cabezon was increased from 2 fish to 3 fish
- Gear restrictions on sanddabs were eliminated
- The daily bag and possession limit for greenlings was increased from 2 fish to 10 fish
- The daily bag and possession limit for lingcod will likely increase this year from 2 fish to 3 fish, and we'll probably have a longer bottomfishing season for the Mendocino Management Area (note: these regulations have not gone into effect yet – refer to the sport fishing regulations supplement, due out in May, or the CDFW web site)

CRFS relies on the help of anglers to be successful in our mission. Some anglers decline to participate, believing that information from their fishing trips will only be used against them in the form of increased restrictions. Without your cooperation, the quality of our data suffers, which can result in lowered confidence in CRFS estimates from fishery managers, and may lead to more restrictive sport fishing regulations, as fishery managers need to be more conservative when forced to rely on less precise data. By cooperating with the survey, you're doing your part to ensure that fishery managers are using the best available data on which to base their decisions.

On behalf of everyone associated with CRFS, I want to express my appreciation for your time, your friendliness and your cooperation when you are approached and asked to participate in our survey.

Ed Roberts is an Environmental Scientist with CDFW and has served as the Lead Person for CRFS in Del Norte, Humboldt and Mendocino counties for the last nine seasons. Feel free to contact Ed with any questions, comments or concerns related to CRFS at Ed.Roberts@wildlife.ca.gov or (707) 441-5757. You can find out more about CRFS by visiting: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/crfs.asp>

HSU Fisheries Graduate Student Asking for Pacific Halibut Carcass Donations for Thesis Project

By: Miki Takada



Research in Northern California during 2013 by fellow HSU Fisheries graduate student Liz Perkins and the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) found that Pacific halibut are more abundant than previously assumed, and that their size-at-age is greater than those caught in more northern waters, suggesting that the Pacific halibut off Northern California may be in better shape than those further north. We need more data to help us understand the situation better, but unfortunately the IPHC survey will not extend into our region this year. However, this summer I am planning to continue and expand upon Liz Perkins' dockside survey of recreationally caught Pacific halibut in two key ways:

1. In addition to Northern California, I will survey Coos Bay to gain information about Pacific halibut size at age Southern Oregon;
2. I will characterize female gonad maturity (a key demographic parameter) in Northern California and Southern Oregon more rigorously using methods recently developed by Kirsten MacTavish of the IPHC.

To do this, I need your help.

With the assistance of HASA and other Northern California anglers, Liz was able to sample 270 Pacific halibut, which she used to characterize age, growth, and maturation of Pacific halibut landed here. I will be taking the same measurements: length (and weight for fish that haven't yet been filleted), examining otoliths to determine age/growth, and female gonads to determine their stage of sexual maturity.

If you, or anybody you know, in either Coos Bay, Oregon, or in Northern California, catch a Pacific halibut during the 2015 season, please consider donating your carcass(es) to me, or better yet, calling me so that I can meet you at the dock and collect data from your fish before you fillet it. I will be putting up posters and flyers in the coming months with more specific details.

If you have any questions please call me at: 858-472-4938.

Thank you for your cooperation, and I hope to see you out on the docks once the season starts!



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2015 Groundfish Preview

Tom Marking GAP Sport Representative



While the rivers are swollen with much needed rain, reservoirs are filling, steelhead and salmon are running upstream to spawn our thoughts project forward to May, a few short months away. The 2015 season is going to have substantial changes for marine anglers. Today (Feb 10th) was the Fish and Game Commission meeting where halibut was briefly discussed, salmon concerns for future years discussed, and current groundfish regulations were adopted. A summary of each follows:

PACIFIC HALIBUT

The California allocation is 25,220 lbs this year. While that is a major step up from the 6,000 lbs we previously had, it is still less than what has been harvested in recent years. The IPHC has determined that California has about 100,000 lbs of exploitable halibut, so our harvest over the allocation has not been a conservation issue. As a compromise position, we will receive 4% of the non-tribal allocation, up from the previous 1%. However, for this additional 3%, we have to agree to stay within the 25,220 pound allocation for the 2015 year. To that end, the CDFW has been working with HASA and all interested persons to fashion a season structure that will reduce the harvest amount from previous years, but fairly distributes these fish with the five ports and the charter sector north of Point Arena.

CDFW produced six season options for consideration, while HASA had developed nine and distilled these down to four. Attendees at the two meetings, CDFW on February 4th and HASA Feb 5th, voted on their preference. The structure that had the most support was intermittent periods of opening and closing (one or two weeks) throughout the season. CDFW is reviewing these options, along with the public comment, but did not have any preferred options as of today at the Commission Meeting. Regardless of what option is chosen, the fishing opportunity for halibut will be severely curtailed this year. The Commission seemed to be empathetic to the ports and voiced support for whichever option gave the most economic relief during the summer tourist season. So for now, we wait...again.

ROCKFISH

Here is the short version: we get three ling cod plus ten in the bag limit of ten other rockfish, only five of which can be black rockfish. Greenling and cabezon are considered part of the ten. The reduction to five black rockfish is because we overharvested last year, for the northern half of California. We exceeded the harvest goal of 230.8 metric tons (mt) by landing 416.9 mt. Thus, the reduction to five black rockfish in the bag limit. This will be a concern for all the charter and private boaters, as black rockfish have been the predominant species caught. As we fish



deeper for copper, brown, and vermillion rockfish, we also run the risk of catching yelloweye and canary (protected species). This could become a problem.

To compound the problem, the minor near shore complex (MNS) 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 rockfish. For instance, we have caught 7.5 mt of China rockfish last 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 while avoiding all the MNS species so as not to exceed that reduced allocation. 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. Be sure to brush up on telling the difference between a blue and black rockfish. Hint, blues have small mouths and blacks have big mouths with spots at the base of the dorsal fin.

BAROTRAUMA

Wastage will become a much more serious concern from here on out. It is incumbent upon us to have an effective release device that is functional and we must be prepared to use it. This will be a different year for us, and north of Cape Mendocino, we will have pressures not seen in the rest of the state, so be prepared.

Editors note: The HASA board approved buying and distributing deep water release devices for free while they last. We should have them before the fundraiser dinner April 25th.

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Another kind of boat safety.... Lock it up!

by Pamlyn Millsap

We all know that thefts in Humboldt County have increased. There are those of us who would swear, on our neighbor's life, that our crab pots have been raided or flat out stolen. It isn't just crab pots either. People have also complained that "someone was on my boat" while it was moored at a slip at the Eureka Marina or Woodley Island Marina. Woodley Island is open to the public, and while there is a security guard, they can't be everywhere at once (Woodley Island Marina has since installed video surveillance). The new Eureka Marina is accessible by either a short swim off the boat launch ramp or by simply hopping a fence. Daytime thefts can also happen when the gates are left open.

There are some homeless transients who love hanging out by the City of Eureka maintained restrooms. They also live down along the bay in tents. I took this photo recently, and wondered if these were your fishing poles?

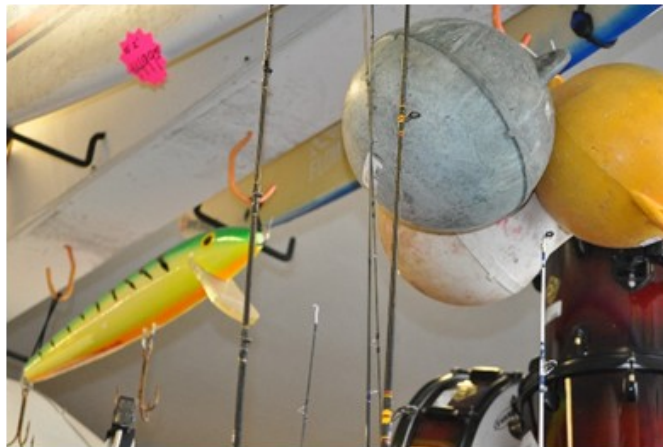


Maybe these were your kayaks...

Not too long ago, someone tried to steal my kicker motor off my boat while it was parked in front of my house. I had a lock on it, and it was bolted to my boat, but someone had taken off one of the bolts and was working on the removing the other one when something or someone interrupted them. The motor was barely hanging when I discovered it. I bought a better lock so it would be harder to remove or cut off.

A friend of mine had his boat parked in his front yard about 10 feet from a window and his front door. He limited out on a Saturday fishing trip and on Sunday when he went outside to get the boat ready, (much to his wife's dismay) his electric Cannon downrigger was gone. Someone had unbolted it without making a sound.

These are just a couple stories, and I am willing to bet you have heard of a theft or been victim to a couple of your own. I spoke with the folks from the pawn shops, and they get fishing equipment all the time from people who probably don't fish and probably don't own it. On big ticket items the pawn shops contact Eureka Police Department if they suspect it has been stolen. Any reported stolen item goes on a list and the shops are aware to contact law enforcement. So if you do have equipment stolen, the pawn shops and Craig's List are a good place to go look. They are very cooperative with returning items to the rightful owner if proof of ownership can be established.




Some things you can do to prevent theft or to assist law enforcement with returning your items to you if they do find them are:

Clearly mark (etch, engrave) your belongings with your name. If you later sell the item to someone else, provide them with a bill of sale. The new owner should clearly mark the item with new contact or owner information. Keep a list of the serial numbers for your electronics, motors, or any other items that could be stolen from your boat. If it has value to you, it has value to others. Take a photo and keep it with your serial numbers and purchase information to provide to law enforcement should something be stolen from your boat.

Make it as hard as possible for thieves to access your belongings. I once had gas stolen from my boat. I now have hog wire that I put over the small motor and tie to the boat that also covers my non-locking gas tank. It is just another step a thief has to work through to get at my gas tank or motor. It would be best if I could remove the motor and lock it up every time I am done with my boat, but that isn't practical for me. So I do what I can to make my belongings less appealing to thieves. They are usually a lazy bunch after all. The harder a thief has to work, the less likely they are going to mess with your stuff.

If you moor your boats at one of the slips in Humboldt Bay, remember that there have been many thefts of gear left on the boat. Take anything removable or easy to carry. Never leave extra keys in your boat. A boat with available keys was taken for a spin not too long ago. If you find some of your stuff for sale online, contact the police and set up a buy with the seller. Confirm and take law enforcement with you. They love doing things like that.

Stay safe on land or sea and have fun!



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Wild versus Hatchery Fish (part 4 in a series)

By Larry De Ridder

We closed our last issue discussing the consequences of hatchery pen-raised fish escaping captivity and breeding with local wild fish. Escapees which successfully breed could spread traits which are genetically distinct to the hatchery/pen fish population, and dilute the genetic distinctiveness of the local natives, if the hatchery stock originated from a separate river system, or if the hatchery fish were the result of many generations of selective breeding. Let's continue.



In recent years it has become clear there really can be measurable genetic differences between same-species fish from different watersheds, sometimes even those in close proximity. On the flip side, there is a limited amount of natural genetic exchange as a very few adult anadromous fish stray into the wrong river system to spawn. As a result these differences are generally very minor if the watersheds are in close proximity, and somewhat more apparent as distance increases. In any case, anyone who has spent much time chasing rainbow trout knows that Eagle Lake rainbows are different from those found in Rocky Mountain streams, and those differ from coastal river rainbows, and so on. They're still the same species, and will inter-breed if placed together, but there may be definite appearance, growth rate and habit differences. In the same way, Kenai River salmon are famous primarily because they grow larger than other Chinook stocks – though again they're all the same species. In response to this recognition of regional differences, CDFW no longer permits fertile hatchery fish to be planted in any body of water which has a distinct genetic profile for same-species fish and where adding fish from another watershed could result in long-term population genetic shifts. They've become especially firm on this policy for trout or salmon placed into any body of water which flows directly to the Pacific Ocean. However, CDFW is also expected to ensure fishermen have fish to catch, often in waters that can't sustain heavy fishing pressure on the natives, or where water projects have adversely impacted the native population.

In many places CDFW has satisfied those competing demands with hatchery-produced triploid fishes. Perhaps that's a term you're only vaguely familiar with? Organisms which reproduce sexually generally have paired chromosomes. For example, humans have 23 pairs, domestic cats 38, and guppies have 46 pairs. There are a few natural oddball organisms out there, including a few fish species with triploid all-female populations, but generally speaking an organism, whether it's a person, a cat or a fish, receives one set of chromosomes from each parent. Thus the norm is two sets which pair up – a *diploid* organism. An artificially induced *triploid* organism is one which received a carefully controlled chemical, temperature or pressure treatment at a specific very early stage in the egg development which messed up the normal growth process and resulted in an extra batch of chromosomes for each cell. Two sets of chromosomes = diploid; three sets of chromosomes = triploid. It sounds a bit Frankenstein-ish, but we're all familiar with another induced triploid life form. Have you ever enjoyed a seedless watermelon? The vine grows like other watermelon plants, the fruit looks normal except for the absence of mature seeds, it tastes like other watermelons -- and it's sterile. There is no "seedless watermelon strain"; it's an induced triploid condition. Similarly, there are no triploid trout or salmon strains. Treated young salmon and trout are culled and generally only the sterile females retained. Early in life triploid female fish grow at about the same rate as normal diploid fish, though some stocks show a lower survival rate, and some individuals develop minor body abnormalities, such as a hooked jaw. When a triploid organism, whether a melon or a fish, becomes mature enough to fully develop reproductive cells the extra set of chromosomes mucks up the process at the cellular level. The result – at a size and age when normal diploid female fish start expending energy becoming sexually mature, induced triploids just keep growing larger.

When I was a kid the typical planted fish I'd encounter was the infamous half-pound hatchery trout that tasted faintly like the liver meal pellets it grew up eating. If I was lucky I'd catch a hold-over from a prior plant which was a couple of inches and a few ounces larger. In recent years private hatcheries and CDFW are much more likely to regularly release really large trout into fresh waters as trophy angling targets, along with the standard smaller fish from CDFW hatcheries. A few are aged former brood stock, but most are sterile triploids, such as those produced by Mount Lassen Trout Farms. Some of these trout weigh more than ten pounds, including the current California record sport-caught rainbow trout which weighed 27 pounds. There's no problem eating such a modified organism – just like with the watermelon, once in your stomach it's all good food.

In recent years young triploid salmon have been more frequently released into freshwater lakes, such as Shasta, Folsom and Berryessa to provide an alternate sport fishery. Hmmm, I wonder if they could do that with steelhead at Mad River Hatchery...Is there anyone out there who would like to catch 40 pound triploid steelhead in our local rivers? Experiments are ongoing to make the survival and growth rates of farmed triploid salmon more economically competitive with raising normal diploid fish. Thus far I've been unable to determine whether any of the Washington, Alaska and BC saltwater mariculture pens produce triploid salmon.

An even more bizarre attempt to prevent pen escapees from spawning with local wild runs combines cross-breeding with a triploid treatment. The crossbreed most people are familiar with is the mule (horse & donkey parents). Most crossbreeds, like the mule, are naturally sterile. Some crossbreeds show what biologists refer to as "heterosis" or "hybrid vigor" as they display some of the best traits of each parent species, and that was part of the expectation for this experiment. In this case Alaskan biologists fertilized Chum salmon eggs with sperm from Chinook males, and then performed a triploid inducing treatment on the fertilized eggs to doubly ensure all the descendants were sterile. Clearly nothing resulting from this process could spawn with natives in the local river! Whether this will become a common strategy remains to be seen. Generally each step of complexity adds to the cost of the final product, and the goal for such experiments is to produce an economically profitable food source while protecting wild populations.

What some commercial salmon producers would really prefer is a single treatment which, like the result of many years of selective breeding, would continue from generation to generation. Nearly two decades ago the Canadian firm Aqua Bounty Farms hit upon one solution, but the backlash from various parties has thus far prevented it from becoming routine. In our next issue we'll discuss their solution to the issue and wrap up our discussion of "Wild vs. Hatchery Fish."

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All photos and articles in this issue are donated by HASA members and interested parties.

Submission ideas and photos should be sent to longfish@humboldt1.com. Comments are always welcome. Send to hasa6191@gmail.com

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This is issue #24



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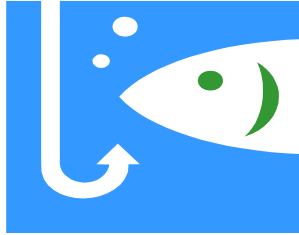


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All HASA members will be invited to the Humboldt Tuna Club potlucks. More information is available at humboldttuna.com

HASA PO BOX 6191 Eureka, Ca. 95502

Humboldt Currents

By Casey Allen



I would like to thank HASA member **Rick Urban**, “the fishing mortician,” for providing the great photo on this issue’s cover. You can see more of Rick’s photography work on his Facebook page, Majestic Encounter Photos. We hope to see more of Rick’s work in future editions.

Although it seems we are getting unnecessary cuts to the Pacific halibut season, consider what is happening in Washington. According to an article in the Seattle Times, anglers out of Westport can fish Pacific halibut starting May 3rd on Sundays and Tuesdays only. The season is expected to last 5 or 6 fishing days until the quota of 42,739 pounds are caught. Fishing off Neah Bay will be open May 14, 16, 21, and 23 or until the quota of 108,030 pounds is reached. Ilwaco will open May 1st with fishing open Thursday through Sunday until the quota is reached. Though not finalized the quota is expected to be 11,895 pounds. It also said the average size fish out of Westport was improved to 19-20 pounds and fish further north averaged under 15 pounds. The article made all this sound like good news, that the seasons were status quo. They did not suffer further cuts because of their dedication to stay within the quotas, their work to reduce bycatch, and their ability to show the socioeconomic importance of recreational Pacific halibut fishing to local communities.

Many kudos to new HASA president **Scott McBain**, who thought we were working with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to develop season options for Pacific halibut. After much work gathering input from local anglers, charter captains, and affected businesses (see letter page 22) it appeared to be considered as one public comment from one of the many stakeholders. Scott traveled all the way to Sacramento to present our recommendations to the CDFW Commissioners and only got three minutes to speak. Then it was learned, there was not enough time allocated for the Commissioners to weigh in on the season options as they needed to be provided to NOAA for approval in the coming weeks. Woops. Hopefully we can learn from our experience this year and have a better collaborative process with CDFW in the coming years. I can remember when all we had to do was get the boat and tackle ready, find some bait, mow the lawn, and go fishing.

HASA would like to ask all Pacific halibut anglers to support this year’s catch survey by HSU student **Miki Takada** (see page 8). The previous survey by **Liz Perkins** was a huge success largely because of the participation by local anglers. Of course, that survey sparked many more questions and with your help Miki will be able to provide some more answers. It is most important for us to learn as much as we can about Pacific halibut to be able to sustain a quality fishery.

Charlie Holthaus announced that the Samoa Fire Department will host the perch fishing tournament again this year. They used the solunar tables to pick Saturday April 18th. It will be a new moon with high tide at 12:30 pm. It should be good fishing if the wind does not blow. Charlie said the rules will be the same as past years with an earlier check-in deadline. Look for more information soon on how to support Samoa Fire during this fun fishing event. My wife, Marlene, will be out of town, so we will all have a better chance to win.



HASA and Coast Central Credit Union jointly contributed \$500 to the Moonstone Beach clean up of the huge pile of fishing nets and gear thought to have drifted from the tsunami in Japan. **Aaron Ostrom** of Pacific Outfitters is managing the clean up effort and this donation will help pay for the containers needed to haul the stuff off.

The Humboldt Fisherman’s Marketing Association is sponsoring a NOAA Marine weather class that will take place on March 21, 2015 from 9AM to 3PM at the Harbor District conference room on Woodley Island, Eureka. NOAA will discuss important weather items with many useful safety tips. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP at 707-443-6484 x2, or for more information, please call Bob at (707) 845-8288 or email at rhbfishhd@aol.com.

The MPA Collaboration is an interested group of government agencies and NGOs that are working together to educate the public on Marine Protected Areas. Since many of the MPAs are inaccessible the Collaboration is working toward bringing the network of MPAs to the public. This will be done through signage, brochures, and videos. The sign below is a draft created by the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation and will be placed near the Eureka Waterfront Trail. It is agreed that success for MPAs will depend on a wide understanding of how the network of protected areas work and support for the monitoring projects. HASA is a member of the North Coast MPA Collaboration and we will keep you informed on developments and results of MPA monitoring.

Conserving California's Coastal Treasures

Marine Protected Areas Safeguard Our Ocean's Bounty

A statewide network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) safeguards California's rich coastal resources. Humboldt Bay serves as a rest stop and nesting grounds for many species of resident and migratory birds. Harbor seals, sea lions, and river otters surface and watch curiously. Over 90 species of fishes inhabit the depths. The intertidal flats of South Bay support approximately 2,000 acres of eelgrass, critically important to the bay ecosystem. Plankton and algae anchor food webs of invertebrates, mollusks, crustaceans, fish, birds, and mammals, including humans.

California leads the nation and the world with its network of MPAs.

These MPAs—

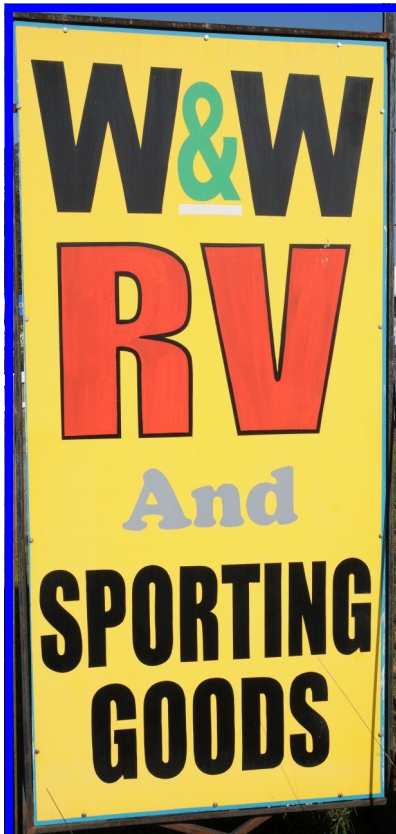
- Have varying levels of protection
- Conserve marine habitats and diversity
- Allow marine life to thrive
- Make great places for education, research and fun

For MPA boundaries, maps, coordinates, and allowed uses, go to: www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/MPA
Report violations: (888) 334-CaTIP, (888) 334-2258

MPAs—Good for the Ocean; Good for You!

What? Dude! You can now view this newsletter on your phone. My son, **Sean Allen**, has developed an app where you can view all our newsletters on your Iphone, Ipad, or any PC. Here is the link, <http://hasa.enyalios-enterprises.com> . Check it out and send your comments to me at longfish@humboldt1.com. Of course you can always see them on your PC on the Humboldt Tuna Club discussion board, <http://humboldtuna.com/smf/index.php>.

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New Restoration Planned for Old Salmonid Habitat in Siskiyou County

By Bob Smith (AKA RBob)
Photos by Chris Adams

A stream that hasn't run continuously for nearly 150 years is now free flowing. Little Springs Creek only flows a tiny 1.3 miles but it could provide critical cold water habitat for juvenile chinook, coho and steelhead once it's restored. Located within the Shasta Valley, the stream is within the Shasta River Watershed on The Nature Conservancy's Shasta Big Springs Ranch.

The Shasta River has experienced tremendous wild chinook runs off and on over the past 50 years and has averaged nearly 17,000 returning adults since 2011. Like many watersheds in arid areas, there's fierce competition over limited water resources. Many millions of dollars have been spent to improve the river's aquatic habitat and most ranchers in the area have been involved in some sort of habitat improvement project. The one resource that's most valued and rare is cold water.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) purchased the Nelson Ranch in 2005 and the Busk Ranch in 2009 totaling 5,840 acres. The ranches are adjacent to each other and include important salmonid habitat in the Shasta River and Big Springs Creek (tributary to the Shasta). The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) purchased a conservation easement for \$10.5 million dollars and is a partner with TNC in the two properties which are now combined and known as Shasta Big Springs Ranch. The ranch features excellent water rights to cold water springs – critical for salmon and steelhead.

While TNC purchased the properties to help recover salmonid fish populations, they also wanted to operate a working cattle ranch to showcase fish friendly ranching. Little Springs Creek was initially determined through TNC's baseline surveys to have an impassible fish barrier along with being too warm during certain periods of the summer for salmonids. TNC made the decision that Little Springs water should be used to irrigate nearly 400 acres of pasture on the TNC property.

Little Springs Creek is a spring fed tributary to Big Springs Creek. The



Little Springs Creek doesn't look like a salmon and steelhead rearing stream

creek flows out of a base of an old lava flow at a constant 7 to 8 cubic feet per second with the water temperature at the spring source at a constant 55 degrees – perfect for salmonids. Ranching has occurred on the area for nearly 150 years so the stream itself is set up for irrigation, not growing fish. TNC fenced off the riparian area of Little Springs prior to grazing livestock which has helped the streamside vegetation to recover. There are three diversion dams and four culverts which trap and warm the water, as well as provide additional barriers to fish. Little Springs Creek really didn't (and still doesn't) look like rearing habitat for salmon and steelhead.

In the winter of 2013, CDFW fisheries biologists conducted snorkel surveys in Little Springs Creek, where biologists jump into the creek wearing their dry suits with mask and snorkel and observe fish. What they discovered were juvenile chinook and steelhead in the portion of the creek above the fish barrier. It turns out the fish figured out a way to get around it! The results of these surveys prompted conversations between CDFW and TNC which ultimately led to an agreement that water would no longer be diverted from Little Springs Creek for irrigation purposes. Ultimately, juvenile coho salmon were also documented in Little Springs Creek.

Not only were juvenile salmonids present in Little Springs Creek, they appear to be thriving. While the creek infrastructure contains dams and culverts that caused daytime warming on hot summer days, some of the young fish stayed in Little Springs throughout the first summer the stream was free flowing. Surveys continued and it was found that the creek contains a rich smorgasbord of delicious invertebrates to provide forage.

As CDFW continued to monitor Little Springs Creek, more exciting information came to light. Juvenile chinook moved into the stream after emerging from their redds and stayed a few months to forage prior to their out-



Fyke net used for fish trapping in Little Springs Creek

migration to the ocean. Juvenile coho salmon marked in other portions of the watershed moved into Little Springs Creek during both late spring and fall as part of a redistribution event that occurs as fish seek cooler temperatures or winter habitat. Steelhead of all ages were found throughout the small creek. All fish species appeared to be thriving and in better condition than those found in other portions of the watershed. The bottom line was that Little Springs was showing tremendous potential to help restore Klamath River salmonid populations.

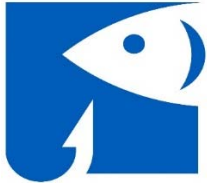


A chunky Little Springs chinook

What’s next for Little Springs Creek? It’s time to make plans to restore the creek so an already good creek can become outstanding! What a tremendous and rare opportunity to restore an entire watershed in conservation ownership! CDFW has proposed removing two culverts which are fish barriers. They hope to have this completed sometime in 2015. That will be the beginning of what is hoped will be an exciting restoration project. Both TNC and CDFW will collaborate to convene a technical team which will gather a group of experts in spring creek habitats and restoration to develop a restoration plan. The ultimate goal is to fully restore Little Springs Creek so that it’s fertile waters flow cool and unimpeded, providing a tremendous nursery to Klamath River salmon and steelhead.



Juvenile coho salmon and steelhead in Little Springs Creek



Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers Inc.

P.O. Box 6191, Eureka, CA 95502

Email: hasa6191@gmail.com

FEIN #61-1575751

February 12, 2015

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Caroline McKnight, Environmental Scientist
20 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Suite 100
Monterey, CA 93940

RE: Pacific Halibut Season Structure Recommendation for 2015

Dear Ms. McKnight:

The Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, Inc. (HASA) is a northern California sportfishing organization with over 200 members representing saltwater anglers since 2008. We have been actively engaged in saltwater sportfish management over the years, with the goal of providing a long-term sustainable Pacific halibut fishery for our membership. Since the salmon closure of 2008, Pacific halibut has been an increasingly important sportfish for our members; however, recent management requirements, beginning with the August block closure in 2014, have reduced sportfishing opportunities for our members, and will again reduce Pacific halibut fishing opportunities in 2015.

As you know, despite the increased PFMC Catch Share Plan allocation to California in 2015, we will be required to limit harvest to avoid exceeding this allocation, which will require further reductions in our 2015 Pacific halibut season. Based on our experience with the 2014 season structure (August block closure) and information gained from economic studies funded by HASA and CDFW, we have conducted a survey to better understand saltwater anglers' preferences for a 2015 season structure. The survey results and subsequent discussions highlighted the following preferences:

- Having fishing opportunities throughout the season, particularly early and late in the season when salmon fishing opportunities may be limited;
- Having fishing opportunities during the primary tourist season (June, July and August) to economically benefit local ports, local and traveling recreational anglers, and charter boats;
- Having at least two of the three major holidays open to support greater sportfishing opportunity and the economic benefits to the region;
- Having a fair distribution of opportunity to catch Pacific halibut (no favoritism to any group).
- Ensure that the 2015 season structure and season management fully utilizes the 2015 allocation of 25,220 lbs (reduce risk of "leaving fish on the table").

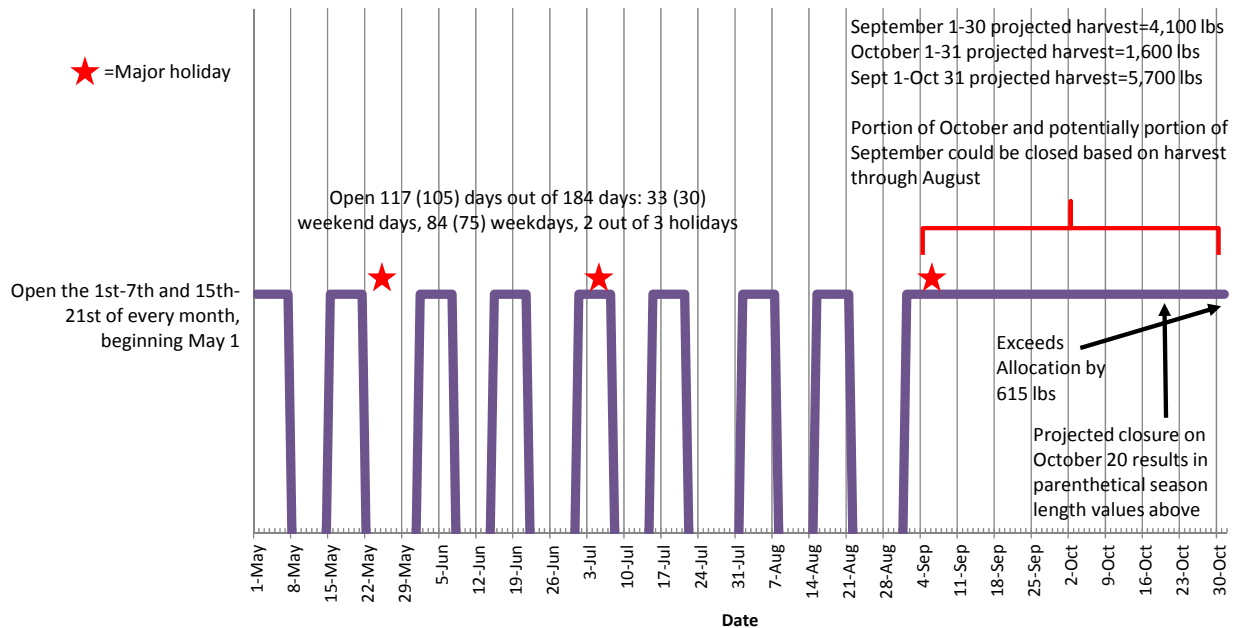
In addition to the above sportfishing criteria, we also considered CDFW needs and requirements for 2015 season structure (which could be more flexible in future years):

- Cannot exceed 25,220 lb allocation, and once the season is closed, it does not reopen;
- Must be simple for public understanding and CDFW enforcement;
- Preferred to be compatible with existing CRFS sampling to get most accurate weekly and monthly harvest rate estimates.

Based on the survey results, close coordination with CDFW harvest management and California Recreational Sport Fishing (CRSF) sampling staff, discussion during the February 4th CDFW public meeting in Eureka, and discussion during our February 5th HASA General Membership meeting, HASA provides the following recommendations for 2015 season structure. Each option uses the same “conservatively high” monthly harvest estimates used by CDFW, and each option slightly exceeds the 25,220 lb allocation to 1) reduce risk of leaving fish on the table if actual 2015 harvest rates are lower than the monthly harvest rates assumed by CDFW, and 2) enable the season to be closed early in October (and September if needed) if actual 2015 harvest rates are equal to or higher than the monthly harvest rates assumed by CDFW.

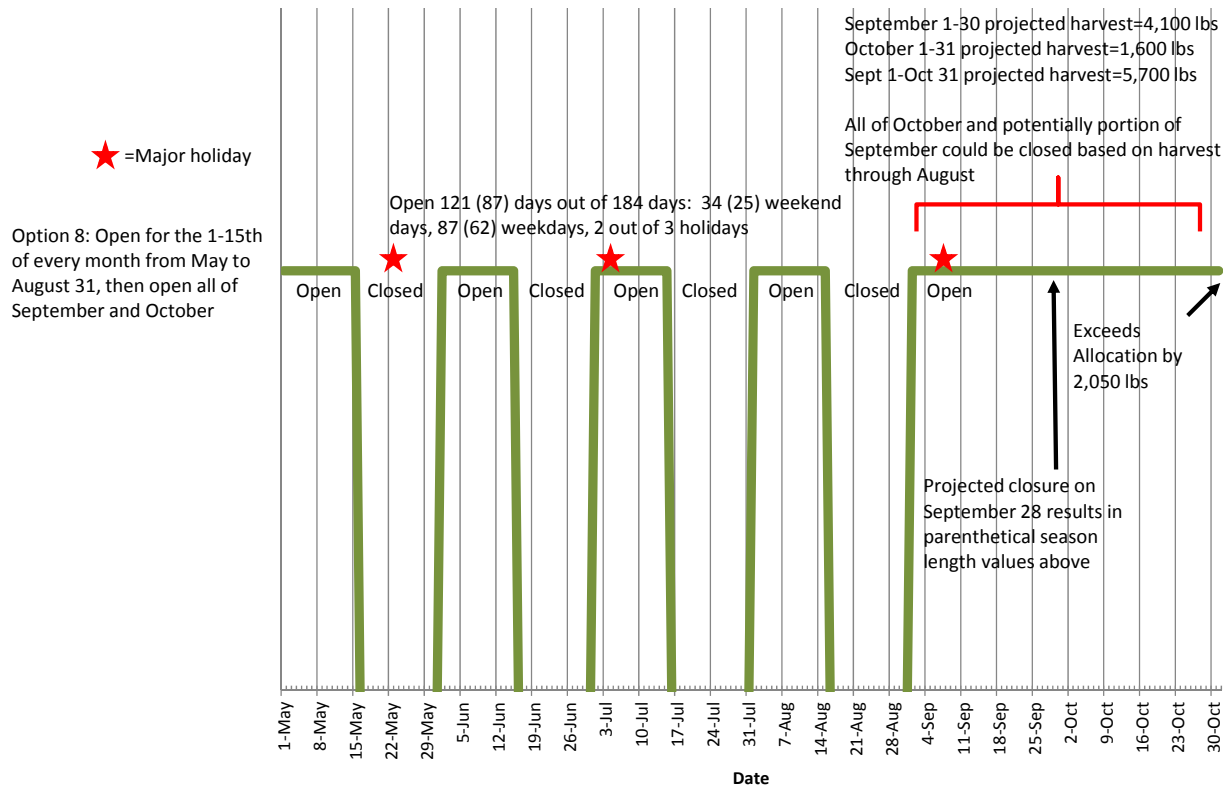
Preferred HASA Recommended option:

- From May 1-August 31, open the 1st through the 7th and 15th through the 21st of each month
- Open every day from September 1-October 31
- Closed once forecasted total harvest exceeds the 25,220 lb allocation in the Catch Share Plan



Secondary HASA Recommended option:

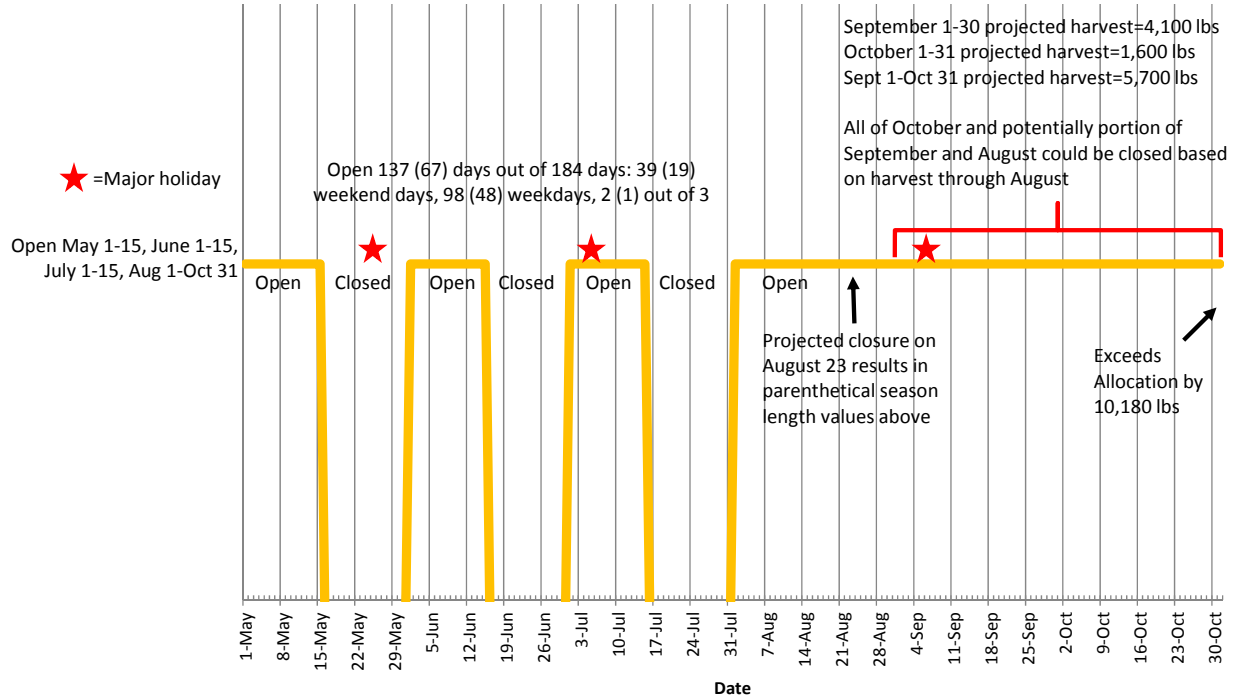
- From May 1-August 31, open the 1st through the 15th of each month
- Open every day from September 1-October 31
- Closed once forecasted total harvest exceeds the 25,220 lb allocation in the Catch Share Plan



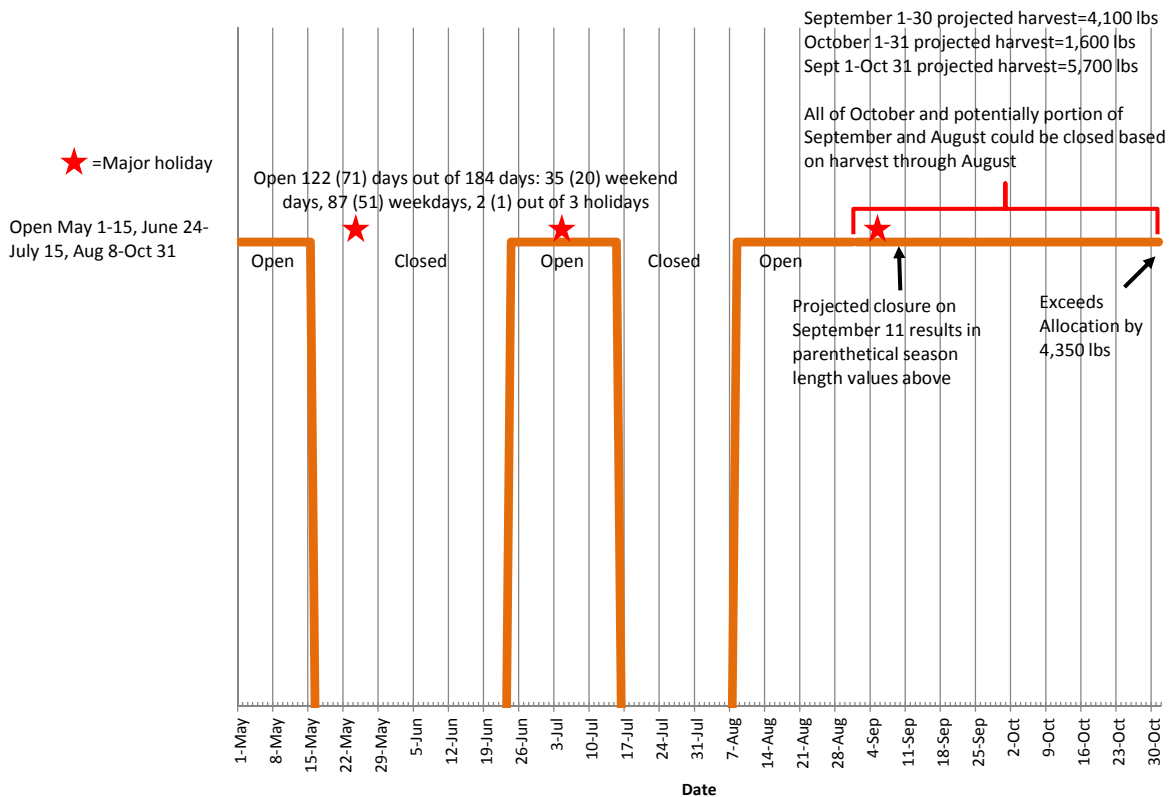
HASA also understands that our preferred option recommendations may cause some challenges to the CRSF sampling protocol, and may require some additional effort and/or resources to refine the sampling methodology to accurately estimate Pacific halibut catch in 2015. Given the importance of Pacific halibut sportfishing to our membership and the local economy, HASA requests that, if needed, additional resources be allocated to the CRFS program to: 1) refine the sampling strategy to specifically accommodate the recommended season structure, and 2) reduce the time needed to provide monthly catch estimates. Our current understanding is that there may be as much as a 4-6 week turnaround time to generate refined monthly harvest estimates. This overly long turnaround time will require CDFW to rely on less accurate harvest estimates at the latter half of the season, which will increase the risk of leaving fish on the table or exceeding our 25,220 lb allocation.

On February 7, you distributed two draft season structure options (labeled Compromise A and Compromise B, illustrated below) and requested additional input. We have analyzed these options in a consistent manner with our recommended options above, and compared to the prioritization criteria obtained from our extensive surveys of membership, local anglers, and local businesses.

CDFW Compromise A



CDFW Compromise B



Option	Over harvest*	Open days	Open weekdays	Open weekend days	Open holidays
HASA Preferred Option (Open 1 st -7 th and 15 th -21 st from May 1 through August 31, then open September 1 through October 31)	615 lbs	117 (105)	84 (75)	33 (30)	2 (7/4, 9/7)
HASA Secondary Option (Open 1 st -15 th from May 1 through August 31, then open September 1 through October 31)	2,050 lbs	121 (87)	87 (62)	34 (25)	2 (7/4, 9/7)
CDFW Compromise A (May 1-15, June 1-15, July 1-15, Aug 1-Oct 31)	10,180 lbs	137 (67)	98 (48)	39 (19)	2 (7/4, 9/7**)
CDFW Compromise B (May 1-15, June 24- July 15, Aug 8-Oct 31)	4,350 lbs	122 (71)	87 (51)	35 (20)	2 (7/4, 9/7)

() parenthetical values reflect truncated end of season where projected harvest=25,220 lbs allocation, used to compare apples to apples between Options

* Used to provide some buffer to reduce risk of leaving fish on the table

**Holiday likely eliminated if projected harvest=actual harvest in 2015

Our results show that both HASA options provide many more days on the water for our constituents while better adhering to the harvest constraints in the 2015 Catch Sharing Plan. For example, the HASA preferred option provides over 50% more days on the water when using the predicted end of season dates (parenthetical values in table below), while having a more reasonable “overharvest” amount that is closer to the desired management value of zero. In addition, it better achieves HASA objectives of providing fair access to the fishery through the entire season, minimizing the economic impact of block closures on local ports and businesses, provides simple season structure for angler interpretation and CDFW enforcement, will have a much greater likelihood of providing fishing opportunities in September and October due to having a smaller “overharvest” amount (less likely to result in early season closure). For example, using the CDFW monthly harvest rates, the HASA preferred option would close on October 20 (105 open days), while the CDFW Compromise A would close on August 23 (only 67 open fishing days). The CDFW compromises will likely create a derby fishery in August that will result in closing of the season in August or early September, which would be harmful to the local charter boats. Our findings above are also corroborated by the comments provided by the Trinidad Rancheria, which continue to support the HASA preferred option over the CDFW Compromises for many of the reasons summarized above (Leslie Sanders email to you on February 11, 2015).

In addition, HASA has spent a considerable amount of resources and effort to better understand the socio-economic ramifications of various season structures, and have conducted rigorous surveys and membership meetings to solicit input from northern California Pacific halibut anglers and businesses supported by Pacific halibut anglers. We believe that the results of these surveys and feedback from the Trinidad Rancheria, combined with the comparative analysis of the different season structures shown in the table above, continues to support the HASA options as better meeting overall recreational and economic objectives. Therefore, we request that CDFW adopt one of the HASA options for the 2015 season structure for submitting to NOAA for

consideration and adoption. If CDFW decides to adopt Compromise A, we request that it be modified to be similar to the HASA Secondary Option to have an additional 2-week closure in August in order to provide a higher likelihood of fishing opportunity in September or October. However, to reiterate, we continue to recommend the HASA Preferred Option be forwarded to NOAA for consideration and adoption.

Finally, HASA also supports the inclusion of harpoons as a legal method of landing Pacific halibut, as well as the regulation conformance with IPHC and federal regulations.

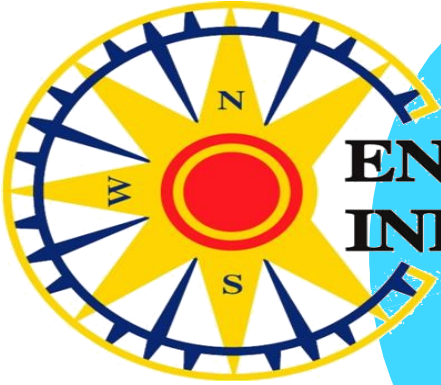
HASA appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the 2015 Pacific halibut season, and the efforts of CDFW in working with HASA to develop and refine our recommendation. We also look forward to future collaboration with CDFW to develop a longer-term solution to Pacific halibut allocation that will result in a fairer and more equitable allocation of this important resource to California anglers as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Achieving this long-term goal will require consistent, coordinated, and collaborative teamwork between CDFW, HASA, local charters, ports, and businesses. Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the 2015 Pacific halibut season structure, and do not hesitate to contact me at (707) 845-0101 if you would like any additional information or have any questions.

Sincerely,



Scott McBain, President
Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, Inc.

cc: Mr. Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director, California Fish and Game Commission
Mr. Charlton Bonham, Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife



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