

# HUMBOLDT AREA SALTWATER ANGLERS

A VOICE FOR SALTWATER SPORTFISHERS



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

The mission of Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers is to *represent* North Coast fishermen's historic and ongoing right to sportsfish 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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## **HASA Newsletter**

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### **Past Newsletters**

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### **This Issue**

Issue: #62

Editor: Larry De Ridder

Producer: Rachel D'Ambra

# President's Message

BY MATT DALLAM, PRESIDENT, HASA

As we approach the 2026 season, I am thrilled to announce the return of our biggest tradition: the *Annual Dinner*. After a hiatus following the pandemic, we are finally bringing back what was once the "event of the year" for us here on the North Coast.

This year's gathering will be held at the *Sequoia Conference Center in Eureka*. We expect tickets to be available soon at Englund Marine, RMI, Pacific Outfitters, and Murphy's Market on Glendale Ave. You can also contact me directly at 707-616-5803 for more information.

## Salmon Season Outlook

Regarding the upcoming salmon season, it looks like we will see an opener this year! While the exact dates are still being finalized, I have submitted a formal public comment to the PFMC advocating for a *July opening*.

A July start helps us avoid the June Coho migration and minimizes our impact on the Klamath and Trinity River fish, which are still seeing lower numbers and typically populate our area in the later months. If and when we get the green light, please take a moment to refresh your memory on the differences between *Coho (Silver)* and *Chinook (King)* salmon.

- *The Key Difference:* Kings have a black mouth/gum line; Silvers have a white mouth/gum line.
- Please review all distinguishing characteristics to avoid citations and keep incidental mortality to a minimum.

## Halibut and Rockfish Updates

Our seasonal opener is *April 1st*, and there is big news for 2026: *Halibut will open on the 1st, and we have no depth*



*restrictions on Rockfish*. This is a game-changer because you no longer have to worry about the logistics of targeting one species over the other. If you hook a Lingcod or Rockfish while Halibut fishing, you can legally keep it! As always, ensure you are up to date on size limits and "no take" species.

*Important Reminder:* If we get a salmon season, remember that if you have salmon on board before fishing for other species, you *MUST* use barbless hooks.

## Safety First

I'll leave you with one final piece of advice: Inspect your vessel and safety gear thoroughly before your first launch. "It worked last year" is not a valid safety plan. Lube your fittings, test your batteries, check your fuses, and ensure your flares are up to date.

Let's look out for one another out there. Wishing you all a successful and, above all, safe 2026 season!



*Matt Dallam*

HASA President

# 2026 Salmon Season Update

by Jim Yarnall

I write this immediately following the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s annual Salmon Information Meeting on February 25, 2026. At this meeting the department reported on the fall returns on both the Klamath and Central Valley rivers. They also provided the 2026 Ocean Abundance estimates which allows managers to craft the 2026 marine salmon seasons.

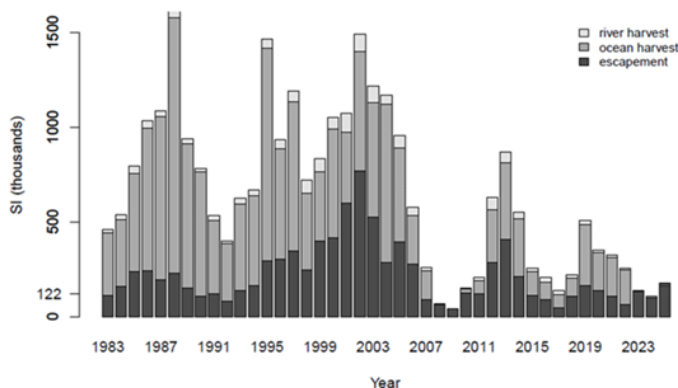
In summary it was a mixed bag of data, with signs of improvement but also areas of concern which will limit the 2026 options. The fall Chinook returns on both the Klamath and the Sacramento Rivers showed significant improvement from 2024 but there is still a long way to go before we can return to the meaningful ocean salmon seasons we remember and desire. On both river systems the jack returns were significantly higher than in 2024, implying a higher ocean abundance for both stocks.

On the Sacramento the 2026 ocean abundance forecast is 392,349 fish. The minimum spawning escapement is between 122,000 and 180,000. On the Klamath the 2026 ocean abundance forecast is about 176,000, with a minimum spawning escapement of 40,700 fish. The fish available for harvest are shared by all users, recreational ocean and river, commercial and in-river tribal.

There are many factors which limit the crafting of ocean salmon seasons fishing on a pool of mixed stocks in the marine environment. It is usually about trying to craft a season which avoids the constraining stock(s) while targeting the more abundant stocks. This year at first glance it appears that the fall run Klamath Chinook will likely constrain California marine fisheries. This especially hits hard in northern California as we encounter a higher percentage of Klamath fish when compared to areas south of the North Coast. Additionally there are several other unknowns which could impact the season structure this year. Some of them include guidance from National Marine Fisheries, as they have not finalized their guidance for this season. California will manage the recreational fishery with a season quota, though how that is implemented, whether statewide or by zone, is unknown. The situation for the Southern Oregon Northern California Coastal Coho (SONCC) is also unknown.

The next steps in the season setting process are the PFMC meeting in Sacramento scheduled for March 3rd-9th. During this meeting three season alternatives will be created for public comment, about the time this newsletter goes to press. This will be followed by a public hearing in Santa Rosa March 23rd, for public comment. The final crafting and adoption of the seasons will be at the PFMC meeting in Portland, OR on April 6th-12th.

## 2025 Sacramento Index (SI) = 176,417



**There is a lot of great additional information available on the PFMC website under the “Salmon” heading.**

# Salmon News from around the State

## Lower Klamath River Tributaries Chinook and Coho

Chinook Salmon (counted through Nov 24)	Coho Salmon
Shasta River: 5,859	Shasta River: 5
Scott River: 2,878	Scott River: 42
Bogus Creek: 316	Bogus Creek: 3
Jenny Creek: 208	Jenny Creek: 0
Shovel Creek: 263	Shovel Creek: 1

As pointed out by the Siskiyou News, the 2025 count raised a significant question: Where are the fish? The monitoring stations on Shasta River, Scott River, Bogus Creek, Jenny Creek, and Shovel Creek are all tributaries of the lower Klamath River, historically with counts in the tens of thousands.

What the data suggests: The relatively low tributary counts compared to historical basin-wide estimates suggest significant numbers of salmon may be:

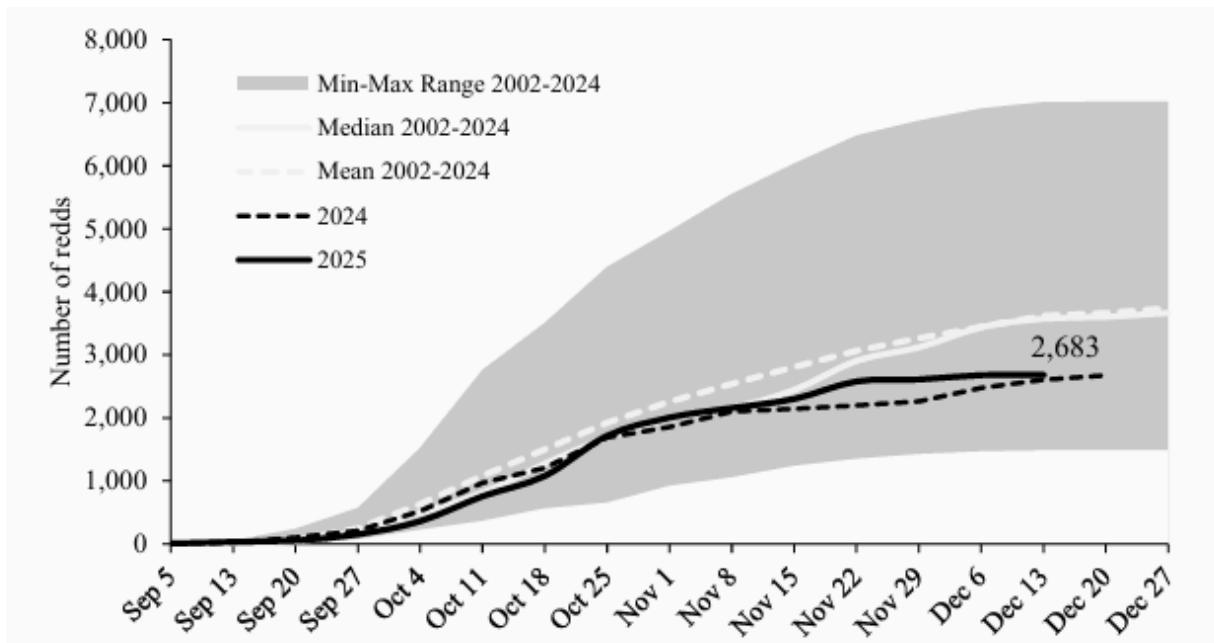
*spawning in the mainstem Klamath River; or utilizing the newly accessible upper basin reaches; or spawning in uncounted areas downstream of weir locations.*

The absence of comprehensive mainstem and upper basin monitoring means the full 2025 Klamath return remains unknown.

Note: These counts represent net upstream passage at monitoring stations only. Significant spawning occurs downstream of counting facilities, particularly in Scott River and Bogus Creek. No monitoring data is available for mainstem Klamath River or upper basin spawning areas. Sonar data from Scott River and final escapement estimates will be produced later.

### 2025 Trinity River Carcass Count

The Arcata USFWS along with CDFW, Yurok and Hoopa Tribal fishery programs annually survey the mainstem Trinity River to recover salmonid carcasses and count and map Chinook Salmon redds. The river is divided into 14 reaches, from Lewiston downstream to the Klamath. Spawning surveys are attempted weekly between Lewiston Dam and the North Fork Trinity River and every other week on



Cumulative redd counts in Reaches 1–10 of the mainstem Trinity River in 2025 compared to the range of counts from 2002 to 2024.

the survey reaches downstream of the North Fork Trinity River.

The graph (*page 5*) compares preliminary 2025 cumulative redd counts in Reaches 1 - 10 with the previous 23 years (2002–2024). Redds constructed by Chinook and Coho salmon are not differentiated until the end of the season when they are apportioned by species and origin (hatchery or natural) using carcass data. Data through December 19, 2025 indicates this was a below-average year, and very similar to 2024.

Despite below-average counts on the Trinity, there is good news from other watersheds. Over the last few months there have been multiple reports of a salmon resurgence elsewhere, often following stream rehabilitation projects. We've summarized several interesting reports.

#### **Sonoma County Coho**

Coho salmon have returned to the Jenner Headlands Preserve on the Sonoma Coast. The discovery celebrates the first confirmed coho sighting in the area in roughly 60 years.

The fish were found by accident in the East Branch of the Russian River. A snorkel survey confirmed for state biologists the presence of about 240 juvenile coho. The East Branch, where this happened, previously had no confirmed Coho sightings since 1965.

The return follows a major habitat restoration project that was completed in 2019 on the East Branch, which restored 3.5 miles of stream habitat.

#### **Alameda County Chinook**

Alameda Creek is the largest local tributary to San Francisco Bay. It flows from Packard Ridge in the Diablo Range east of San Jose, for more than 40 miles until it reaches the city of Fremont. Over the past century, the watershed experienced intense

urbanization including the construction of three major dams and reservoirs. Until recently, the entire watershed was inaccessible to anadromous fish other than lamprey.

There have been multiple fish passage projects built in the last four years. First, new fish ladders enabled salmon and steelhead to migrate through the lower creek into Niles Canyon and access some of the upper Alameda Creek watershed for the first time in over fifty years.

Then in late 2025, CalTrout and PG&E removed the last man-made barrier to fish passage on mainstem Alameda Creek. Shortly thereafter, Chinook salmon were observed migrating above the former barrier accessing habitat that has been largely unavailable for over 70 years. The project connected more than 20 miles of quality upstream spawning habitat. Based on available records, this is the first time salmon have volitionally accessed this part of the watershed since the 1950s.

The Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup, formed in 1999, brought together various government agencies and non-profits. Together, the group has worked to remediate 17 former fish passage barriers throughout the watershed.

#### **Santa Clara County Chinook**

A story of recovery played out in the South SF Bay last fall as large salmon were making their way through Los Gatos Creek to spawn. The sight of salmon in the creek drew crowds of spectators. The successful spawn was the result of the fall rains but also a long running effort to clean up local creeks.

“It’s pretty significant because this is the furthest point south on the North American continent where you have a viable run of king salmon coming in to a major city. So we’re very excited about that and we want to see the numbers increase,” said Steve

Holmes, Founder of South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition. The South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition has done 470 creek cleanups in the past 11 years and they've removed 1.5 million pounds of trash.

Steve Holmes said "When we first started, we'd see a couple dozen fish and that was it. As we've been working to clean the waterway, we've seen incrementally the numbers increasing. Two years ago, it was about 500 fish. Last year it was 600."

### **Mendocino County Coho**

The CDFW announced that juvenile Coho salmon were spotted in Ackerman Creek, a tributary of the Russian River in Mendocino County, by a Pinoleville Pomo Nation water specialist. This was the first observation confirming natural reproduction of Coho in the River's upper basin since 1991. The juvenile fish were in a pool isolated from the main stream. Teams used nets to rescue two Coho, three Chinook, 146 steelhead and hundreds of other native and introduced fish species.

### **South Central Valley Chinook**

The San Joaquin River Restoration Program set a new record for returning adult spring-run Chinook salmon with 448 fish, the highest number recorded since reintroduction began in 2014. These salmon disappeared from the river decades ago after dam construction dried portions of the waterway.

Biologists have been capturing returning fish in large mesh traps and trucking them roughly 120 miles upstream to cooler habitat near Friant Dam. The high return numbers demonstrate successful juvenile outmigration.

### **San Joaquin County Chinook**

Over 10,500 Chinook salmon reached spawning grounds in the Mokelumne River last fall. The

salmon's return helped the East Bay Municipal Utility District's fish hatchery in the Sierra Nevada foothills reach its yearly goal of collecting and fertilizing 7.5 million salmon eggs.

The Mokelumne River's salmon population can make up about half of California's commercial coastal catch. Its flows start in the Sierra Nevada and make their way west through Calaveras, San Joaquin and Contra Costa counties before reaching the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and eventually the Pacific Ocean.

According to EBMUD, this year's count is on par with the river's annual average of 11,100 salmon - though it is significantly lower than 2024's record-setting count of over 35,450. The count in 2023 held the previous record at 28,698.

### **Sonoma County Chinook**

The preliminary Chinook count for 2025 on the Russian River reached 4,175 fish, the fifth highest count in the 23-year data set. This significantly exceeded the long-term average of 2,633 adult Chinook salmon.

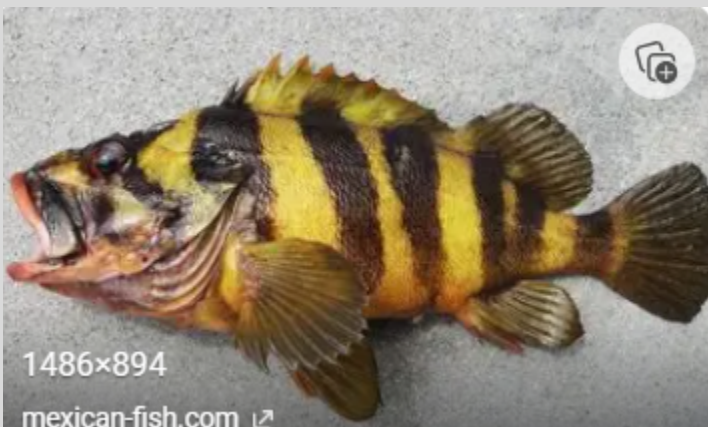
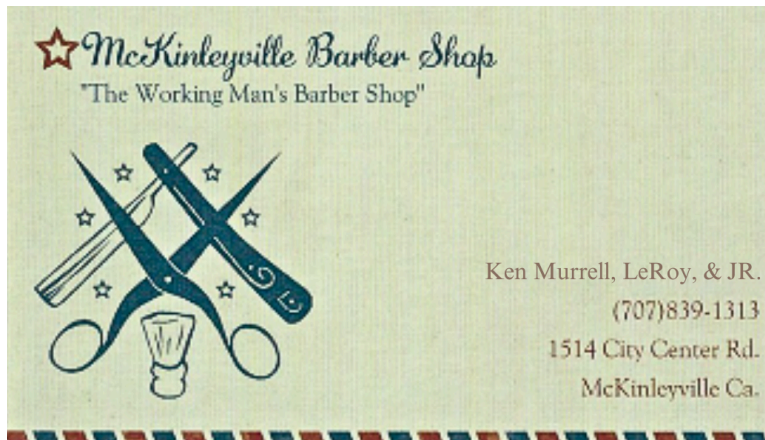
The high number observed over a shorter than normal monitoring season suggests the Chinook return in 2025 was very strong. These salmon are offspring of wild parents that naturally spawned in the upper river sections or in Dry Creek.

### **Upper Klamath River (Oregon)**

In late September, Chinook salmon were seen on video ascending a fish ladder at Keno Dam, one of the Klamath's two remaining dams in the upper basin. Since then, cameras and radio tags have confirmed the presence of salmon at various locations further upstream. This marks the salmon's first return to the Upper Klamath Basin since the dams were built in the early 20th century.

At least 200 salmon are believed to have made it to the Upper Klamath Basin, as well as tributaries like the Sprague and Williamson rivers. Past Keno, the fish had to swim through algae blooms and agricultural runoff, then past the Link River Dam at

the southern edge of Upper Klamath Lake. The salmon likely then found pockets of aquifer-fed freshwater within the highly polluted Upper Klamath Lake and eventually continued upstream to places like the Sprague, Williamson and Wood rivers.



**Which one am I?...**

- Copper Rockfish
- Treefish
- Grass Rockfish
- Black and Yellow Rockfish

# Sacramento River Salmon Redds Dewatered Again

Abbreviated From an Article by Tom Cannon

Full article with graphs at

<https://calsport.org/fisheriesblog/?p=4886>

I have previously reported on the dewatering of fall-run salmon redds in the upper Sacramento River near Redding during the early fall spawning season. Redd dewatering has a significant negative effect on salmon egg and fry production that translates to lower annual escapement and significantly contributes to the multi-decade decline in the population.

October is the peak of the fall-run Chinook salmon spawning season. During early November 2024, the

Bureau of Reclamation reduced Keswick Dam releases from the October average of 7000 cfs to 4000 cfs. The flow reduction reduced water levels in the upper river spawning grounds below Keswick Dam from approximately the 11-ft water surface elevation (stage) to about the 8.5 ft level, a drop of about 2.5 feet. In 2025, nearly identical flow management led to the same redd dewatering conditions. With most of salmon redds constructed in the 1-to-3 ft depth range, most were dewatered or only slightly watered and thus susceptible to high-egg-mortality conditions (low flow, warm water, low oxygen, and sedimentation).

The flow management strategy was also employed in recent wet years 2017 and 2019, although a more benign strategy was employed in historical wet year 2011. The issue has attracted inter-agency study and mention, but actions necessary to reduce the problem have been limited.

## New World and State Record

Mendocino County fisherman Brendan Walsh, 26, said he caught a 10.25-pound Canary Rockfish off the coast of Albion.

Canary rockfish can grow up to 2 1/2 feet in length and weigh 10 pounds, but are normally much smaller. Walsh said this fish was 2 1/4 feet long. He submitted the catch to the CDFW, which tracks in-state records. The current state record-holding fish weighed 9 lbs. and was also caught offshore of Mendocino County. He also submitted his catch to the IGFA in Florida, where records show the world record is a 10-pound canary rockfish caught in 1986.



After ensuring they had taken the right measurements to document the catch, Walsh's mother, Deirdre Lamb, fried the rockfish with garlic and butter. The rockfish was reportedly delicious.

# 2026 Salmonid Habitat Restoration Projects

In 2025 CDFW received 53 proposals requesting more than \$49 million in funding. Following a technical review by CDFW and NOAA, 16 projects were selected to receive funding for the restoration, enhancement and protection of salmon and steelhead. The total funding for these projects amounts to more than \$10 million in grant awards from CDFW's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program.

The awarded projects advance the objectives of state and federal fisheries recovery plans that focus on removing barriers to fish migration, restoring riparian habitat, recovering wildfire impacts detrimental to rivers and creating a more resilient water resources system (e.g., water supply, water quality and habitat) that can better withstand drought conditions.

Below are some of the selected projects:

**South Yuba River (Nevada County).** The project will restore eight acres on the Yuba River to improve juvenile rearing habitat, and promote increased growth and survival of spring- and fall-run Chinook salmon and California Central Valley steelhead.

**Chamberlain Creek (Mendocino County).** An instream project will increase stream complexity and pool frequency and depth to improve rearing habitat along 2.5 miles of stream for Coho salmon and steelhead trout.

**Bouverie Dam Removal (Sonoma County).** Bouverie Dam is the final man-made barrier to unimpeded fish passage on Stuart Creek, a major tributary to Sonoma Creek. The dam removal restores access to pristine high quality rearing habitat and cool climate refugia for juvenile salmonids.

**Buckeye Creek (Sonoma County).** This project

restores salmonid habitat by placing 55 pieces of large wood at 21 structure sites to increase stream complexity, high flow refugia, pool frequency, and rearing habitat for salmonids.

**Beaver Creek (Siskiyou County).** This project will develop a restoration design on 7 miles of Beaver Creek, a Klamath River tributary near Yreka. The project area has approximately 50 acres of low-lying floodplain that is disconnected due to channel constraint. The design would improve conditions for spawning and rearing fish by connecting floodplains and improving habitat structures.

**Cottaneva Creek (Mendocino County).** Goals of this project are to improve habitat complexity with the construction of 38 large wood structures along 1.2 miles of South Fork Cottaneva Creek, Rockport Creek, and an unnamed tributary to Rockport Creek.

**Cachagua Creek (Monterey County).** This project will provide a design plan to remediate an existing migration barrier in this important tributary to the Carmel River. The current ford is a partial migration barrier for all life stages of steelhead. The removal and replacement with a free span bridge will improve migration conditions in this reach of Cachagua Creek.

**Bridge Creek (Humboldt County).** The project will improve salmonid habitat in Bridge Creek through the introduction of large wood features.

**Upper South Fork Eel River (Humboldt & Mendocino Counties).** This habitat improvement project will improve ecological complexity along 3.5 miles of the South Fork Eel River by installing 41 large wood structures composed of 166 logs and 202 boulders, which will help create a natural habitat setting.

**Arroyo Seco River (Monterey County).** The project will remove an existing concrete vehicle ford which

spans the Arroyo Seco River.

Green Valley Creek (Sonoma County). The project will connect an existing floodplain pond to Green Valley Creek via an excavated connector channel to allow free access to off-channel winter habitat for juvenile salmonids. The off-channel pond will provide high-quality wetland habitat throughout the majority of winter and spring that will be used by out-migrating salmon to forage and rear. The project

will also see habitat improvements as a result of the installation of engineered log jams to drive pool development and provide woody cover.

Elk Creek (Glenn County). The project will restore fish passage and migration access to spawning and rearing Coho salmon by replacing an existing undersized culvert with an 8-foot-diameter culvert with a natural channel bottom. The culvert upgrade is one part of a larger project that will restore fish passage at six barriers in the headwaters of Elk Creek.

## Welcome to Our Newest Board Members

### Template

At our annual Member's Meeting in January, two of our long-serving Board members stepped down. As you see them in town or offshore, please make it a point to thank Dirk Pedersen and Bill Gillespie for their long-term leadership on the Board. Elected to three-year terms to replace them are Gabe Acosta and

Darrin Ruhe. We caught up with Darrin and he gave us a quick bio: "Hello. This is Darrin Ruhe. I have fished my whole life. I enjoy the outdoors and am very passionate about fishing and supporting our fishing resources and fishing communities to help keep our way of life to continue for future generations. I love the idea of getting more kids fishing and learning about fishing. I'm looking forward to helping and supporting our cause."

With Dirk's "retirement", Lloyd Petrunaro has assumed the position of Treasurer.

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# Fishwrap News

by Tom Marking

**HALIBUT:** The IPHC proceedings in Seattle this year between the Canadians and the Americans was in full competition mode again, with each side presenting long-standing complaints, some real, some exaggerated. The Alaskans have suffered substantial cuts to allocation over the past years, the Canadians less so. The Canadians came in with the same tired excuses of why they deserved way more than their allocation, and had successfully parleyed that position for a number of years (in no small measure since they have half the votes), to the frustration of the Alaskans. And we in 2A, on the southern fringe of the halibut distribution, stood in quiet observance and were sheltered from the process, thanks to the Washington Treaty Tribes and the treaty obligation of 1.65 M lbs of allocation.

But, and this is a game changer, the USA brought in a Champion in the form of a professional negotiator from the current administration that had done his homework and was well prepared. He calmly asked the Alaskan fisherman how many millions of pounds they were selling to Canadian buyers, who then processed those fish and then sold them back to the USA? Since the Canadians were importing 5.47 M lbs of processed halibut, and only had about 4 M lbs of Commercial allocation, how were they getting all those fish? That quieted the room when those Alaskans were asked why they were not selling their fish to American fish processors? Also, a distant shadow of import taxes loomed overhead...and suddenly there developed a new spirit of cooperation from the Canadians, who then agreed to take a 7.2% cut to their allocation. The USA allocation remained status quo.

Factually, the Pacific halibut population biomass is substantially lower than it was in the last few decades of the 20th century. Also, the recruitment is much

lower now than it was in the heyday of the fishery back in the 80's and 90's, when the fish were 100 lbs instead of the 32 lbs (at 19 years of age) that they are presently. This, by the way, is a reasonable explanation to the author, as to why the recruitment cycles are so much smaller now than when the females were 3X their current size. Big fish lay substantially more eggs than small fish...that would seem reasonable and obvious to many, but not to the statistical analysts, who are mystified as to why the cohorts are smaller now than in the past century. Perhaps, what we see now in the new normal? Current biomass is very similar to what the population was measured from 1900 to 1970, prior to the large increase in size. But, the good news is 2A maintained our allocation at 1.65 M lbs. Of note, both California and Oregon are struggling to catch our allocations, as both are leaving a sizeable percentage of fish on the table. Perhaps this is due to poor salmon and rockfish seasons and reduced effort, but we are not anywhere close to attaining our harvest goal. The Charter effort has been substantially reduced over the past few years due to no salmon fishing and the Quillback rockfish shutdown; and that has cut our angler effort by about 50%. That's about what we're leaving in unharvested allocation. Perhaps that's just a coincidence, but it seems reasonable that reduced effort across the recreational sector is part of the explanation.

**SAMPLING:** We will have our area sampled again in 2027; that was last performed in 2017. It will be interesting to see if our abundance is holding steady, or if there have been substantial changes over the past decade. The sampling will be from the 41 d line to the Oregon border.

**GROUND FISH:** We face some challenges with rockfish. The bag limit will remain at ten, but the sub-bag may change. Canary RF are again under the spotlight and may be a constraining species. Expect to have the Quillback and Yelloweye as non-retention species, but both are not in an

over-fished designation, and have healthy stock designations. Currently, there is ongoing discussion on depth and length of seasons. It seems we are now being encouraged to get further offshore to avoid Quillback, Copper and China Rockfish. Of course, deeper water means more Yelloweye contact...but they are steadily growing in numbers. It is also being debated on whether the bag limit could contain one of each of these species (Yelloweye and Quillback) as a sub-bag, but those decisions will be made in the April Meeting by the PFMC. Tim Klassen is our local rep on the GAP and very involved in those discussions. I now just monitor the proceeding and don't have a seat at the table, so I can be a bit less passionate about the issues. South of Cape Mendocino, the Vermillion/Sunset RF is a major concern and they are struggling with that issue with depth and length of season. The PFMC meetings in March and April will be focused on Salmon and finalizing the biennial specs on groundfish for the 2027/28 year cycle.

**MOTHERSHIP WHITING FLEET:** Who is this and why do they matter to us?

Well, those are the battleship sized off-shore processing ships that catch and process 50,000+ lbs of whiting (hake) daily. They are the lawnmowers of the ocean and process some 550,000 tons of whiting per year. To date, they are normally off Oregon and Washington. But since the whiting population has now shifted into California water, they want to follow the fish down off our northern coast and fish in our local waters. The last assessment determined that about 70% of the whiting was off the north coast, 10% in Washington and 20% in Oregon. One might think that maybe they have depleted the stock up north, but the MS sector is trying hard to convince us that, in

fact, the fish have drifted down to our waters that act as a sanctuary area for them. Currently, the MS sector is restricted to stay above the 42 line (Oregon Border). In response, they have fashioned an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application to NMFS, and are pressing this application forward at the Council level. CDFW and the California fishing fleet is resisting this effort on the basis of salmon by-catch (which actually is quite small). To this author, the more serious issue is the large amounts of by-catch allowed this sector for groundfish and flatfish "set-asides" and IFQ allowed to this fishery. We are talking about hundreds of metric tons of fish allowed as incidental catch in order to prosecute this hake fishery. To note: 20 MT of Canary and 100 M tons of flatfish (halibut by-catch amount?) are part of these set-asides. And, they routinely exceed their set-aside amounts, with little or no penalty. In essence, they are too big to fail! The trawl and sports sector fleet would be shut down and tied to the dock for similar behavior, but the Whiting Fleet seems to get their way at the Council level. My biggest concern is the Canary, Short Spined Thornyhead RF and Pacific halibut by-catch that directly affects our area. The final decision is up to NMFS, but this could have very serious impacts to our area. If interested, the GAP statement from November 2025 in the Council Briefing Book under the groundfish MS EFP proposal had a detailed discussion. That document details the amounts of set-aside bycatch and exceedances that are very eye-opening.

The Pacific Halibut season opener has been moved up to April 1 this year, so the fishing season is upon us. Depths and bag limits for RF will be discussed at the March and April PFMC meeting. And finally, salmon season proposals will be presented at the March meeting.

# Red Abalone Recreational Fishery Closure Extended

Abbreviated From a CDFW News  
Release

In a move to protect red abalone populations that have suffered drastic population decline, the California Fish and Game Commission at its Dec. 10-11 meeting extended the red abalone recreational fishery closure 10 years.

The Commission unanimously voted to adopt regulatory amendments to extend the red abalone recreational fishery closure in Northern California

until April 1, 2036. The Commission determined that continuing the closure is necessary to protect red abalone and help facilitate its restoration.

California's red abalone population suffered a drastic decline, approximately 85%, following the 2014 kelp forest collapse triggered by a marine heat wave. The loss of kelp greatly contributed to this decline and the increase in purple sea urchin densities has prevented kelp recovery. Kelp is the abalone's primary food source. CDFW will be supporting abalone restoration through the development of a statewide red abalone restoration plan that will include robust and adaptive strategies to support abalone populations.



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# Department of Agriculture Asks FERC to Halt Potter Valley Decommissioning Process

Abbreviated From Lost Coast Outpost  
Article by Hank SIMS

The two broken dams on the Upper Eel River found a powerful champion, after the United States Department of Agriculture filed a motion to intervene in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission proceedings that would see them removed.

The department's filings follow Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins' letter to the editor published in the Mendocino Voice, in which Rollins told Potter Valley farming interests that they were "not alone in this righteous fight, which strikes at the very heart of our freedoms."

The dams -- together known as the "Potter Valley Project," and owned by Pacific Gas and Electric -- have been unable to generate power for many years, which is the purpose they were built for a century ago.

In the last few years, Rep. Jared Huffman has led efforts to form a compromise "two-basin solution" that would allow for continued diversion of water from the Eel to the Russian River, supporting agriculture and communities in Mendocino and Sonoma counties.

When that was completed -- and after local tribes, environmental organizations, Humboldt County and the principal water agencies in both Mendocino and Sonoma all signed on -- PG&E officially filed a decommissioning plan with FERC in July 2025.

But chapters of the Farm Bureau in communities along the Russian River have stood in dissent, and have communicated their displeasure to the Trump Administration, as has the government of Lake County, which is home to Lake Pillsbury, the reservoir behind one of the dams.

Now, with the official intervention of the Department of Agriculture, it appears their pleas have been heard. Writing for the department, Tucker A. Stewart, senior advisor to Secretary Rollins, argues on a number of fronts that FERC should deny PG&E's application to remove the dams, at least in its current form.

The department's principal concern appears to be protecting farmers and ranchers, especially those in the Potter Valley region. But it also makes a number of arguments about the decommissioning plan's effects on firefighting, recreational opportunities and reforestation.

Scott Greacen, conservation director for Friends of the Eel, told the Outpost that the department's ask of FERC appears to be to force PG&E to continue to maintain the dams -- an option he argued was forbidden under federal law. "The Federal Power Act expressly forecloses that as an option," Greacen said.

# News Briefs

## Humboldt Tuna Club Website

If you haven't already noticed, the old HTC site is not functioning. Bob Taylor has put together a smaller alternate site. The new address is:

<https://www.humboldtclub.com/smf/index.php>.

First time visitors to the new site must re-register.

Further changes are anticipated.

## Is an El Niño Brewing?

A major shift may be brewing in the Pacific Ocean:

Forecasters say El Niño could develop later this year.

If it does, it could reshape weather patterns across the United States during the second half of 2026, as well as the Atlantic hurricane season. An El Niño often has interesting effects on our Northern California albacore season.

## On-Line Newsletter Sign-Up

If you would like to become a HASA supporter and have our quarterly newsletter emailed directly to you, please let us know by sending a note to [hasa6191@gmail.com](mailto:hasa6191@gmail.com), or dropping a note in the mail to us at HASA, PO Box 6191, Eureka, CA 95502. We don't share our email list with other organizations, nor do we send excessive amounts of email.

## For the Traveling Boater

Non-native species often wreak havoc on newly populated ecosystems. According to the US Fish and

Wildlife Service, an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) is a freshwater or marine organism that has spread or been introduced beyond its native range and is either causing harm or has the potential to cause harm. State and federal agencies have set guidelines and regulations for commercial and recreational boaters to help reduce the spread of AIS.

Wildlife Forever, in partnership with state and federal agencies, has developed a new interactive mapping tool called Expect to Inspect where you can find the latest information on state laws regarding AIS and locations for AIS decontamination stations.

If you visit [cleandraindry.org](http://cleandraindry.org) you can zoom in on Humboldt Bay, for example, and see where European Green Crabs have been detected. Elsewhere you can get the locations of inspection and cleaning stations, which could be helpful if you are taking your boat out of the area. Regulations are organized by state, and there are multiple products that can be purchased to assist with cleaning your boat.

## Nordic Aquafarms Update

Seven years after announcing plans for a massive land-based fish production facility on the Samoa Peninsula, Nordic Aquafarms has abandoned the project. Nordic CEO Charles Hostlund submitted paperwork in February to formally dissolve the California-based proposed project.



### ***Which one am I?...***

- Olive Rockfish
- Gopher Rockfish
- Blue Rockfish
- Kelp Rockfish

# Appeals Court Rules Against Delta Tunnel Financing Proposal

Summarized From Sacramento Bee

A California appellate court dealt a setback to the state's Delta tunnel project, ruling that the Department of Water Resources lacks the legal authority to issue billions of dollars in bonds to dig the controversial tunnel under the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

In its opinion, the state's 3rd District Court of Appeal said the bond plan, first approved by water managers in 2020, was too vague and would give the department "unfettered discretion" to decide what to build and how to pay for it. The court upheld a 2024 decision by a Sacramento judge, siding with project opponents.

The tunnel - officially called the Delta Conveyance Project - is a proposed massive 45-mile underground tunnel pushed by Gov. Newsom that would divert water from the Sacramento River before it flows through the Delta and ultimately sending the water to Southern California.

State water officials say the tunnel is needed to modernize aging infrastructure and make the water system more resilient to climate change. Critics argue it would harm local ecosystems, farmland and communities already burdened by state water policies.

The court's opinion puts DWR and Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration at a crossroads. After years of trying to push the tunnel forward without going through the Legislature, the state may now have to

either shrink the project or ask lawmakers and/or voters to approve bonds.

The court found that DWR's legal approach relied on a misapplication of a decades-old statute intended for minor modifications to existing infrastructure, rather than the creation of a new large-scale project. Specifically, the justices said, DWR had argued that the tunnel was a "further modification" of the Feather River Project under a provision tied to the original State Water Project from the 1960s. The court disagreed, ruling that DWR overstepped its authority.

In practical terms, the decision disrupts DWR's ability to lock in financial commitments from water contractors and stalls the state's preferred path to funding the estimated \$20 billion tunnel.

The court also criticized DWR for bypassing a more appropriate statute that governs the creation of new State Water Project units but requires additional public and legislative oversight. According to the ruling, DWR appeared to avoid that statute deliberately, as it would have imposed higher barriers.

Tribal and environmental groups have raised concerns about the project's environmental implications that could reshape the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and affect regional water quality, farmland, fisheries and communities.

The ruling does not invalidate the Delta Conveyance Project itself nor halt construction. The opinion makes clear that the court did not assess the project's environmental merits or rule on compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. CEQA-related litigation is ongoing in separate cases.

# Future Oregon Fishing Ban?

In Oregon, they're at it again. Under the guise of addressing animal cruelty, a group is gathering signatures for a measure that could effectively ban fishing, hunting and animal husbandry for most of the state.

Initiative Petition 28 presents itself as removing many exemptions from current Oregon animal cruelty laws to protect more animals from abuse, neglect and killing. Exemptions would remain for self-defense and veterinary practices, but otherwise the measure would criminalize activity that injures or kills animals.

However, it is intentionally vague in some areas. The effect would be that most of the same protections that currently apply to the family dog or cat would extend to fish, wild game, domestic ranch stock, and lab animals. Called the PEACE Act (People for the Elimination of Animal Cruelty Exemptions) it would drastically affect Oregon businesses, from hunting and fishing to ranching and scientific research.

At last count they were about 90% of the way toward gathering the required 117,173 signatures to qualify for the November ballot. It's unclear how many of those who signed were aware of the side effects adoption of this as law would generate.

## Recognize California's Near-Shore Groundfish

Scattered throughout this issue, you will find photos of nearshore groundfish native to California with four common names shown. Can you match each photo to the correct common name?

**Page 8 answer:** *Treefish*

**Page 17 answer:** *Olive Rockfish*



**HASA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_


Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Boat Name/Offshore Handle: \_\_\_\_\_

Join online at [humboldtasa.com](http://humboldtasa.com) or use this form by mail. Please mail this application plus \$25.00 to:

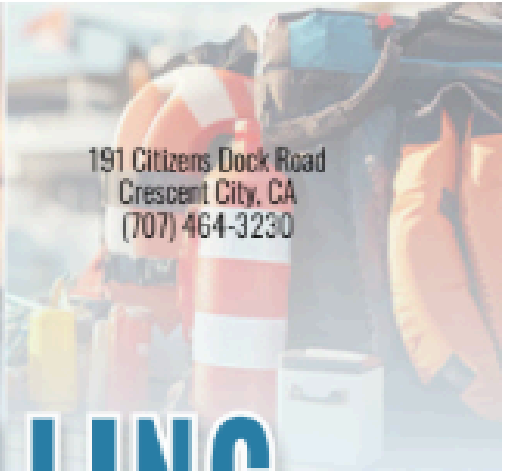
*Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers PO Box 6191 Eureka, CA 95502*



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# SPRING IS CALLING

## Is Your Boat Ready?

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**Bottomfish and Halibut open April 1st!**

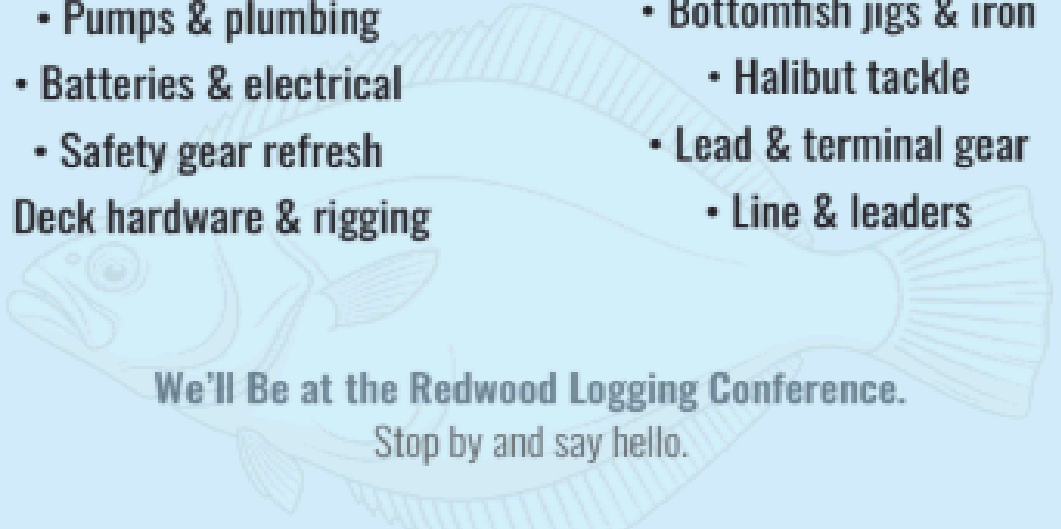
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### Spring Boat Checklist:

- Pumps & plumbing
- Batteries & electrical
- Safety gear refresh
- Deck hardware & rigging

### Gear Up For The Season

- Bottomfish jigs & iron
- Halibut tackle
- Lead & terminal gear
- Line & leaders



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