

HUMBOLDT AREA SALTWATER ANGLERS

A VOICE FOR SALTWATER SPORTFISHERS

2023 WINTER
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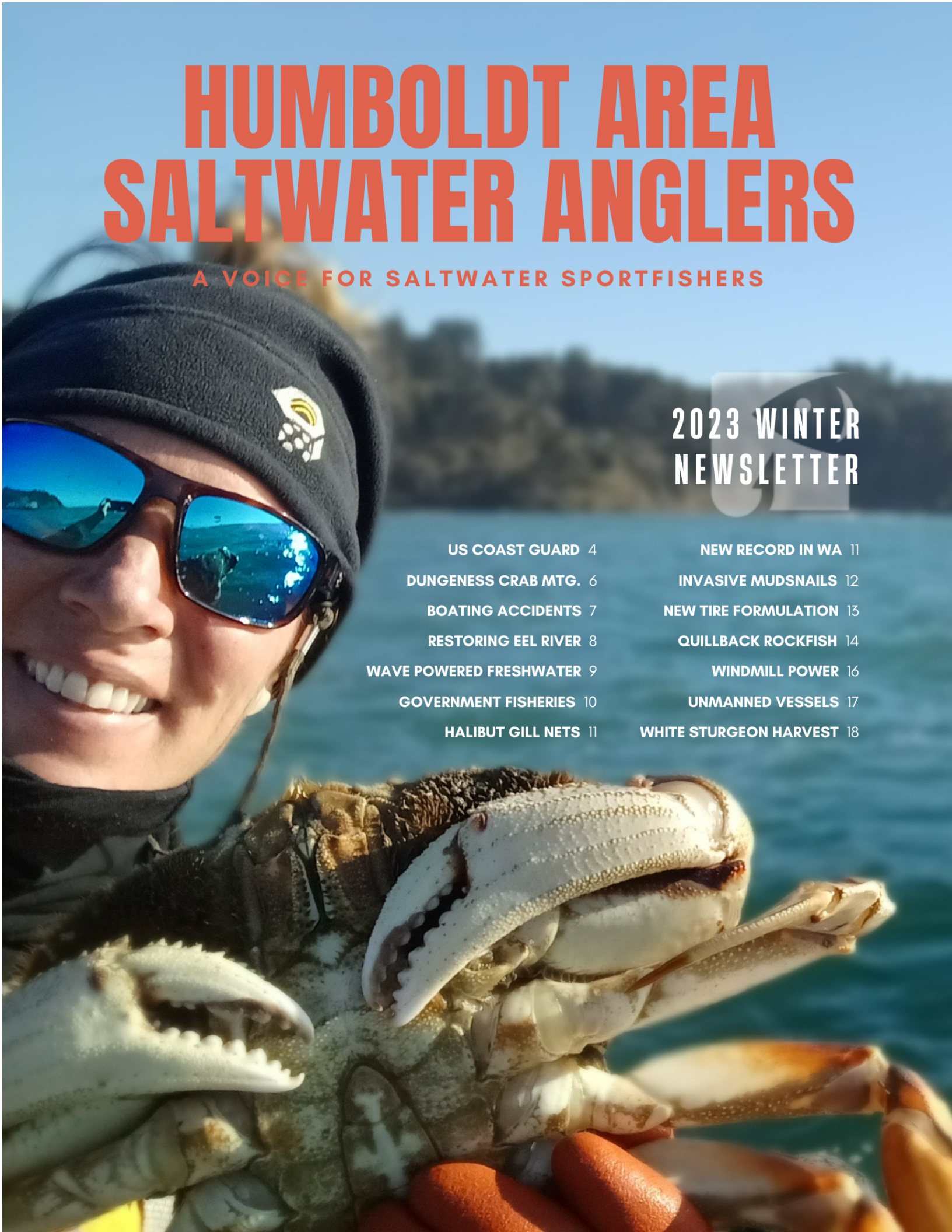
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Represent. Advocate. Educate. Promote.

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

Keep in Touch

Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers
P.O. Box 6191
Eureka, CA 95502

 hasa191@gmail.com

 humboldtasa.com



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HASA Newsletter

Thank You

All photos and articles in this issue are donated by HASA members and interested parties. HASA would like to expressly thank our friends for their time and contributions to our newsletter.

Please let our advertisers know that you are a HASA member and their support is very much appreciated.

Want to Contribute?

Send your article ideas and photos from your fishing adventures to rrracheldambra@gmail.com or clderidder@hotmail.com. Comments are always welcome too!

Past Newsletters

All past HASA newsletters can be viewed at humboldtasa.com.

This Issue

Issue #: 53 | Editor: *Rachel D'Ambra*

President's Message

Thus far it's been an active and interesting start to our "slow season". Several skippers have weighed in on the frustrations and joys of fishing for late-season bluefin tuna from Humboldt and Del Norte ports. This is a new game locally, but perhaps by next year more of us will learn from their experience and join the hunt in 2024.

We are a 501(c)(3)! After a lot of work we are officially a 501(c)(3) corporation. We owe a boatload of thanks to attorneys Jeff Slack and Tim Needham for doing the hard work on this change. The Board is looking forward to expanded possibilities in our future.

October 30 I joined Jeff Slack for a 6 mile drift on the Trinity River near Willow Creek. We observed active salmon redds anywhere the substrate and water flow were suitable. If that pattern extends all the way to Lewiston, we have hope for an excellent 2023 spawn, boding well for future years. On the Klamath, Copco 2 has been breached and the river flows freely at that location. The remaining three targeted dams on the Klamath are expected to be breached in 2024. As discussed in prior newsletters, the Klamath may run extra muddy for a year or two following those events, before settling into its new normal. Prior to construction of the dams, the Klamath supported about a million spring and fall Chinook salmon as well strong populations of steelhead, sturgeon and Pacific lamprey. All those species are struggling these days. Hopefully the dam removals will be a major step toward restoring these runs.

Following the abrupt cancellation of most bottom fishing based on quillback assessments, HASA was invited to partner with Coastside and Golden Gate Fishermen's Association to make a professional presentation to the SSC regarding our concerns, in an attempt to prevent some kind of regulatory over-reaction. In Del Norte County they've noted the economic damage caused by the abrupt fishing closure. Locals there, led by Andrea Spahn, have enlisted local government officials to get involved. They are also working with the UC Extension program to see what options are available.



The folks at RWE and Vineyard Offshore made a community presentation October 10, on their Joint Fisheries Communications Plan. The 38 page draft plan (posted on HTC and other sites) was available for review and comments through November 10.

I'd like to give a special welcome to new contributing author, Lt. Blake Thompson of the US Coast Guard. His first HASA article is on page 4. As you see the men and women in uniform around town or on the water, be sure to thank them for their service—they're here for our protection.

And finally, this is our first issue produced by our new newsletter editor and publisher, Rachel. Joe Polos has retired (again) and we'll miss him. As you have photos and/or articles for future issues, please send them to rrracheldambra@gmail.com or clderidder@hotmail.com.

Till next time, Fair Winds and Following Seas!



Larry De Ridder

HASA President

U.S. Coast Guard Sector Humboldt Bay Guardians of the Lost Coast

LIEUTENANT BLAKE THOMPSON

Who Are We?

I am Lieutenant Blake Thompson and I am an MH-65E helicopter pilot stationed here at Air Station Humboldt Bay at the Arcata Airport in McKinleyville, California. I graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 2015 and have been stationed on the 210-foot Coast Guard Cutter DECISIVE, Naval Flight School, Air Station Borinquen, Puerto Rico, and now here at Sector Humboldt Bay.

The United States Coast Guard is a military service that works under the Department of Homeland Security. We have a wide range of assets based all around the world from multiple different small boats, cutters ranging from 87 feet to 418 feet, a couple of large polar ice breakers, as well as two types of helicopters and four types of fixed wing aircraft. Sector Humboldt Bay's area of responsibility covers northern California from the coast east to the Nevada border and from Clear Lake north to the Oregon border. Sector Humboldt Bay operates two small boat stations, one in Samoa and one in Fort Bragg, each equipped with 47-foot motor lifeboats capable of high surf rescues, an Aids to Navigation unit in Humboldt Bay, an 87-foot cutter capable of longer endurance offshore patrols, and three MH-65E helicopters. We are also supported by C-27J Spartan fixed wing aircraft based out of Air Station Sacramento.

Sector Humboldt Bay maintains 24-hour duty crews ready to respond by air or sea to maritime distress as well as supporting our partner agencies for cases inland. In addition, Sector Humboldt

Bay partners with local, state, and federal agencies to conduct regular living marine resource patrols and compliance checks. You have likely seen our helicopters conducting hoist training events with Station Humboldt Bay or Station Noyo River small boats as well as conducting high surf training and vertical surface hoisting to the cliffs at Trinidad Head and Wedding Rock at Sue-Meg Park. Perhaps you have seen pictures or witnessed our brave crews crash through the surf aboard the 47-foot Motor Lifeboats. We have a 24/7 Command Center monitoring maritime very high frequency (VHF) communications, emergency position indicating radio beacons (EPIRB), and other calls of distress.

The local mariners in the Humboldt area are some of the most prepared I have seen in my Coast Guard career. One of the most important pieces of safety gear you can have aside from the obvious personal flotation device (PFD), aka life jacket, and cold-water gear is an EPIRB. This device transmits on 406mhz and 121.5mhz which are both distress frequencies. We have an instrument in our aircraft that will pick up these frequencies and point an arrow in our cockpit right to the source of the distress frequency. We can use this to locate and track you with a high degree of accuracy. Some modern EPIRBs will even transmit your exact GPS position directly to the aircraft. EPIRBs range in price as well as capability. Ensure you understand what your device is capable of and most importantly register it with your name, so we have your emergency contact information. Additionally, a waterproof emergency light is one of the simplest yet most effective pieces of gear for all mariners. Having personally searched for plenty of people at night I can tell you finding a human floating in the water in the dark of night is nearly impossible. We fly with night vision goggles every time we're out at night and just a simple light can be seen for many



Photo By: LT Mitch Dow

miles. Even better is a high-intensity strobe light attached to your PFD, but something as simple as a lighter striking can give off a lot of light and distinguish you from the surrounding ocean.

Recently, aircrews from Sector Humboldt Bay have conducted several exciting rescues from the high seas to the remote inland forest. As the primary air asset in the region, Sector Humboldt's MH-65E helicopter and trained aircrews have rescued injured hikers on the Lost Coast Trail, firefighters from active fires, loggers stranded by intense winter

storms, a climber stranded on a 200-foot vertical cliff at night, the master of a damaged sailboat in 20-foot seas over 80 nautical miles off-shore, and an injured crew member off of a government ice breaking vessel transiting the coast in thick fog. We have incredibly skilled crews ready and capable of responding in the extremely challenging environments NorCal provides. We readily stand the watch as Guardians of the Lost Coast. If any of this excites and interest you and you want to learn more about the Coast Guard and opportunities to serve, I encourage you to take a look at gocoastguard.com.

2023 Dungeness Crab Task Force Meeting Summary

BY ROSS TAYLOR

I attended the annual Dungeness Crab Task Force (DCTF) meeting in Santa Rosa on November 2nd and 3rd, the first in-person meeting since Covid-19. Overall, the DCTF meeting was focused on commercial crabbing issues, including an updated compliance guide for the electronic monitoring program, revised pre-season quality testing protocols, fishing of alternative gear in the fall when pots are prohibited due to presence of whales, Tri-State gear-marking program requirements, update of the Risk Assessment Mitigation Program (RAMP), and the current status of whale entanglements (both for 2022-2023 commercial season and for calendar year 2023). In addition, two topics were discussed that affect the recreational fishery – sea otter reintroduction and the abandoned/derelict gear retrieval program.

Sea Otter Reintroduction by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was discussed and the DCTF voted 100% strongly against supporting the reintroduction of up to 3,000 sea otters along the northern California and southern Oregon coast. Several research papers were discussed that were cited in the USFWS feasibility assessment report. Orca Inlet, Alaska saw their crab fishery pretty much disappear 14 years after sea otters migrated into that area. A UC Santa Cruz study estimated that in the area of proposed reintroduction of sea otters, approximately 22% of the area where otters were expected to forage would overlap the areas fished by the commercial fishery (inside of 30 fathoms), meaning that inside of 30 fathoms the Dungeness crab stocks may likely be impacted by sea otters. As a recreational crabbing

representative on the DCTF, I voiced concern that inside of 30 fathoms is where the bulk of the recreational crabbing occurs. I will keep tabs on the USFWS process and at some point, the HASA board of directors and sport-crabbers may want to consider writing letters of concern about potential impacts to the recreational crab fishery. Another feasibility assessment discussed by the DCTF estimated that if 3,000 sea otters were reintroduced to the northern California and southern Oregon coast, they could consume upwards of 14.3 million pounds of Dungeness crab annually, and that of course, includes consumption of sub-legal crabs and female crabs. More information about the USFWS reintroduction feasibility assessment is available at [Exploring Potential Sea Otter Reintroduction | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service \(fws.gov\)](#).

Gear Retrieval Program – is a subject that's been discussed at every DCTF meeting I've attended. The gear retrieval program run by CDFW was discussed, mainly the program's cumbersome reporting requirements. Before the topic was discussed with the full task force, I had several good side conversations with the Nature Conservancy rep, two reps of the Eureka fleet, and the Trinidad fleet rep about ways that our ocean sportfishing fleet can assist with the retrieval of abandoned commercial crab gear. I will continue to work with these folks, and I feel confident that HASA can provide our local sport fleet with a smart-phone app by the 2024 ocean season that would allow a boater to pull up next to an abandoned trap/buoy, click a tab, and send the trap/buoy's latitude and longitude coordinates to a database that provides guys who are retrieving abandoned gear out of Eureka and Trinidad with a list of gear to retrieve. The database would also be updated as gear is removed.

Top 10 Reasons for Boating Accidents in 2022

The Coast Guard recently published the top ten reasons for boating accidents in 2022. The US has over 11 million registered recreational boats. In 2022 the USCG counted 4,040 accidents involving 636 deaths, 2,222 injuries and about \$63 million in damage.

The number one reason by a large margin was operator inattention. That would involve the operator doing just about anything else while driving the boat, and becoming distracted. The 602 accidents due to operator inattention last year led to 45 deaths and 308 injuries. The second most common issue was operator inexperience, with 464 accidents causing 69 deaths and 249 injuries.



Based on your experience, try to rank reasons three through ten from the list below:

(answers on page 19)

- Improper lookout
- Machinery failure
- Force of wake/wave
- Navigation rules violations
- Alcohol
- Excessive speed
- Weather
- Hazardous waters



Water Users Support Restoring Eel River to Free-Flowing State

ABBREVIATED FROM THE ORIGINAL CALTROUT ARTICLE

Dam removal on the Eel River is closer than ever after county water agencies and a tribal government announced a last-minute conceptual plan for how a trans-basin water diversion from the Eel River to the Russian River watershed might be continued after PG&E removes two century-old dams on the upper Eel River.

The proposal was submitted to PG&E last week by the Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission, the Round Valley Indian Tribes, and the Sonoma County Water Agency, in response to the company's announcement earlier this year that it intends to remove Scott and Cape Horn dams as part of its draft plan for decommissioning the Potter Valley Project, which stopped producing electricity in 2021. The dams block native salmon and steelhead from reaching prime habitat in the headwaters of the Eel, and restoring upstream and downstream fish passage past the dam sites is a high priority for federal and state fisheries agencies as well as conservationists.

PG&E has said they will submit a draft decommissioning plan to federal regulators by November of this year. A final license surrender and decommissioning plan is due in early 2025.

California Trout and Trout Unlimited reacted to the announcement with cautious optimism. Many important details remain unclear in the proposal, including a final design for the diversion structure, timing and rate of diversions, how diversions might impact the Eel River, and who would be responsible for the substantial cost of constructing, operating and maintaining the new diversion facilities.

Located on the Eel River 20 miles northeast of Ukiah, Scott and Cape Horn Dams are more than 100 years old. Equipment failures in 2021 caused project owner PG&E to permanently suspend hydropower operations. The dams are seismically unsound and completely block fish passage to high quality cold-water habitat in the Eel River headwaters.

Removing the Potter Valley Project's dams would make the Eel River California's longest free flowing river and would reconnect salmon and steelhead with almost 300 miles of habitat in the upper mainstem Eel River. Scientists recognize the Eel River as having the potential to support the rebound of these fisheries throughout the North Coast region.

Conservation and commercial fishing groups have long advocated for a free-flowing Eel River. In 2023, American Rivers named the Eel one of America's Most Endangered Rivers, citing the Potter Valley Project dams as major factors driving Chinook salmon, steelhead, and Pacific lamprey toward extinction.

Wave Powered Fresh Water Coming to Fort Bragg?

In a novel proposed use of wave energy, Fort Bragg is hoping to use the power of waves to convert ocean water to freshwater, and pump it ashore for community use. The Department of Water Resources has approved a nearly \$1.5 million grant for the pilot project. Fort Bragg was approved for the project because it relies on surface water, and during the multi-year drought water became scarce. Once installed and operational, the project is expected to produce as much as 13,000 gallons of fresh water per day.

Unlike traditional desalination plants which boil salty water and convert the steam back to fresh

water, these units depend on reverse osmosis. Reverse osmosis uses a membrane that water molecules can pass through, but which salt molecules cannot. The fresh water thus isolated is then piped ashore using wave energy, while the salty residue is pumped back into the ocean to dissipate.

This won't be the first of its kind, but it will be the first commercial unit in California. The Canadian company behind the endeavor, Oneka Technologies, has similar projects installed in Chile, Florida and a few other locations. Various federal and state agencies must still issue permits before construction begins. If all goes as planned, construction will take place in 2024. Once built, boaters will have to be cautious when in the vicinity of the buoys, made of recycled plastic bottles, and located half a mile to a mile offshore of Fort Bragg.



Government Fisheries Management Practices in the Crosshairs

In 1976, Congress passed the Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, to provide for the management of United States marine fisheries. Among the provisions of the act is permission for National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to require that fishing vessels “carry” federal observers on board. Over time, as monitoring costs increased, it became impossible for NMFS to gather enough information to properly oversee all fisheries. About 2013 the government administratively decided to address this by charging the commercial boats being monitored for the cost of the on-board observer. Part of the rationale was that these private companies are making a profit from a public resource (the fish), so they should pay for the observers. That decision didn’t set well with the owners of the boats carrying the observers, many of which were family-owned single-vessel businesses. After all, paying the salary of a non-productive person aboard the boat cuts directly into profit. They would rather the agency (e.g. taxpayers) pay for the observers.

In 2020 Loper Bright Enterprises, a New England based herring harvester filed suit, claiming that NMFS went beyond what Congress authorized thru Magnuson-Stevens by forcing commercial boats to pay for government observers. That may be true, but at the District Court level, the case was decided in favor of the government, as similar claims are nearly always decided. For years there has been an expectation, known as the Chevron Deference, that courts must favor the authority of an administrative agency's interpretation of a statute whenever (1) the intent of Congress was ambiguous and (2) the agency's interpretation was reasonable or permissible. However, on appeal this assumption

that the government regulatory agency is assumed to be acting within its authority, may be in jeopardy.

The Supreme Court has recently been more conservative in its verdicts, and the plaintiffs are counting on that fact. November 10, 2022, Loper Bright petitioned the Supreme Court to hear its case. Bear in mind the Supreme Court won’t rehash the facts of the case. It will look at the underlying law. In its petition, Loper Bright presented two questions to the Court. First, it asked the Court to rule on whether granting NMFS the power to require domestic vessels to pay the salaries of government observers it carries was properly decided. Second, it asked the Court to rule on whether the policy of courts almost automatically favoring a government agency should be overruled outright, or at least limited in its scope. This past May, the Court granted the petition to hear this case, but limited the appeal to only the second question.

This case is important as it touches nearly every aspect of fisheries management, and more broadly to how the federal government makes enforcement rules on all sorts of matters. Typically, Congress passes a law dealing with its “broad brush” intent. Once signed, the law is passed on to a federal department like the Department of Commerce, and from there to an agency such as NMFS. The agency then decides what it thinks Congress wanted, and creates the nuts-and-bolts rules on how to implement the law. If the government prevails in Loper Bright, then life will continue as it is now. If the plaintiffs prevail, then Congress will likely have to become far more specific when it passes laws, because agencies will be limited to only those powers that congress specifically authorized. Government departments and agencies across the board would have far less leeway to create rules and regulations for the rest of us, which could limit the agency’s ability to quickly adapt to changing circumstances.

Commercial California Halibut Gill Nets Still Going Strong

Set gill nets were banned in Northern California in 1915, and in SoCal in 1990. However, these bans only affect waters within three nautical miles of the mainland. They are still legal for license holders using them in federal waters, at offshore banks, and in some areas around the Channel Islands.

California halibut are a prime target. Recall that this year CDFW abruptly reduced the California Halibut daily sport fishing bag limit from three fish to two.

It's been six years since CDFW last collected bycatch and mortality data associated with dozens of set gill net licensees in Southern California. CDFW's Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is required to prepare solid recommendations by November 25, 2023 on how to improve data collection and minimize bycatch. Two reports presented to MRC

July 20 showed vastly different conclusions, though based mostly on the same data. Oceana and the Turtle Island Restoration Network reported a 64% discard rate and a 54% mortality rate. CDFW reported bycatch rates ranging from 1% to 6% for marine mammals (mortality rate 100%), to a bycatch rate of 87% for invertebrates (mortality rate 47%). The reports highlight the variety of species killed in the nets include great white sharks and giant sea bass, both of which are protected. Though they came to different conclusions, both reports recommended making the existing 90 commercial set gill net fishery licenses non-transferable. The latest data released indicates that 35 of the licenses are currently active.

Currently recommended options include (1) resuming a requirement for onboard observers, (2) shortened soak times, (3) reduced net heights above the ocean floor, or (4) a complete phase-out of the fishery.

New Washington State Dorado Record

A normal albacore season off Washington will see about a dozen dorado caught, mostly 6 - 12 pounds. This past August 25, charter skipper Keith Johnson put client Wade La Fontaine onto a 21-pound 48-inch dorado using a spreader bar. The previous state record was 16.27 pounds.



CDFW News Release: Invasive Mudsnaails Detected at Lake Sonoma Fish Hatchery

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and partners have confirmed the presence of New Zealand mudsnails (NZMS) at Warm Springs Fish Hatchery near Lake Sonoma. While NZMS have been detected in other portions of the watershed, this is the first confirmed detection at Warm Springs Hatchery.

NZMS were detected in an intake pipeline and an aeration pond during a regularly scheduled quarterly hatchery survey this summer. Since the detection, scientists have conducted surveys in about 75 percent of Coho-bearing streams in the watershed and have not observed NZMS presence beyond previously known locations. Warm Springs Hatchery operates production and release programs for Coho salmon and steelhead. The NZMS surveys have focused on stocking locations for these fish species, which are conducted mostly in Russian River tributaries in the lower basin.

Dense populations of NZMS can displace and out-compete native species. They may consume up to half of the food resources in a stream and have been linked to reduced populations of aquatic

insects, including mayflies, caddisflies, chironomids and other insects important to trout and salmon.

The hatchery will continue to operate its Coho and steelhead programs. CDFW is working with USACE and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which permits the hatchery, to determine if any changes in Coho release protocols are needed given the detections.

Boaters, anglers and others who visit the Russian River watershed are asked to decontaminate equipment and follow the “clean, drain and dry” directive with all equipment used in the river. Remove any visible snails with a stiff brush and follow with rinsing. If possible, freeze or completely dry out any wet gear. Never transport live fish or other aquatic plants or animals from one waterbody to another.



New Automotive Tires Formulation Coming?

In our winter 2021 issue, we reported on why up to half of coho salmon and steelhead die within hours of entering an urban stream before they spawn. Scientists from Washington State and University of Washington, funded by NOAA Fisheries and USFWS, discovered that a chemical additive to automobile tires was the culprit. This chemical protects tires from degradation by ozone in the air. However, as tires wear, microscopic tire particles wear off and can wash into urban streams. In addition, some people simply dump their old tires into waterways. As it turns out, this chemical is lethal to many anadromous fish.

The Yurok Tribe, in conjunction with two Washington State Tribes, petitioned EPA to develop regulations that prohibit the use of 6PPD (a.k.a. N-(1,3- Dimethylbutyl) -N'-phenyl-p-phenylenediamine) in automotive tires due to its lethal effects on salmon and other wildlife. On November 2nd, the EPA responded that they would proceed with the Tribes' petition. EPA would not commit to a specific rulemaking time frame or outcome. However they do plan to finalize a new rule before 2025. Tire manufacturers will likely need to find a biologically safer alternative to 6PPD, or future automotive tires could have a much shorter lifespan. In return we may well get a resurgence in successful salmonid spawning in streams subject to urban runoff.

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Intro to Quillback Rockfish

FROM WIKIPEDIA

The quillback rockfish (*Sebastes maliger*) is a species of marine ray-finned fish belonging to the subfamily Sebastinae, the rockfishes, part of the family Scorpaenidae. This species primarily dwells in salt water reefs. The average adult weighs 2–7 pounds and may reach 2 feet in length. Quillback rockfish are named for the sharp, venomous quills or spines on the dorsal fin. Their mottled orange-brown coloring allows them to blend in with rocky bottom reefs. They are generally caught in cold water 20-30 fathoms deep, but sometimes much deeper.

The quillback rockfish is ovoviviparous, like other rock fishes. That means the eggs are internally fertilized and the mother provides nutrients to the developing embryos. They mate in December and the female can store sperm for weeks before it is used for fertilization. The larvae are born in April and May in British Columbia and from April to July off Northern and Central California. There is a pelagic larval phase of up to two months, before the larvae settle into a benthic habitat. The juveniles are typically found in shallower waters than the adults. This species has been known to live for as long as 95 years and half of the fish are sexually mature at 11 years old. The females in the population tend to be older and larger than the males.

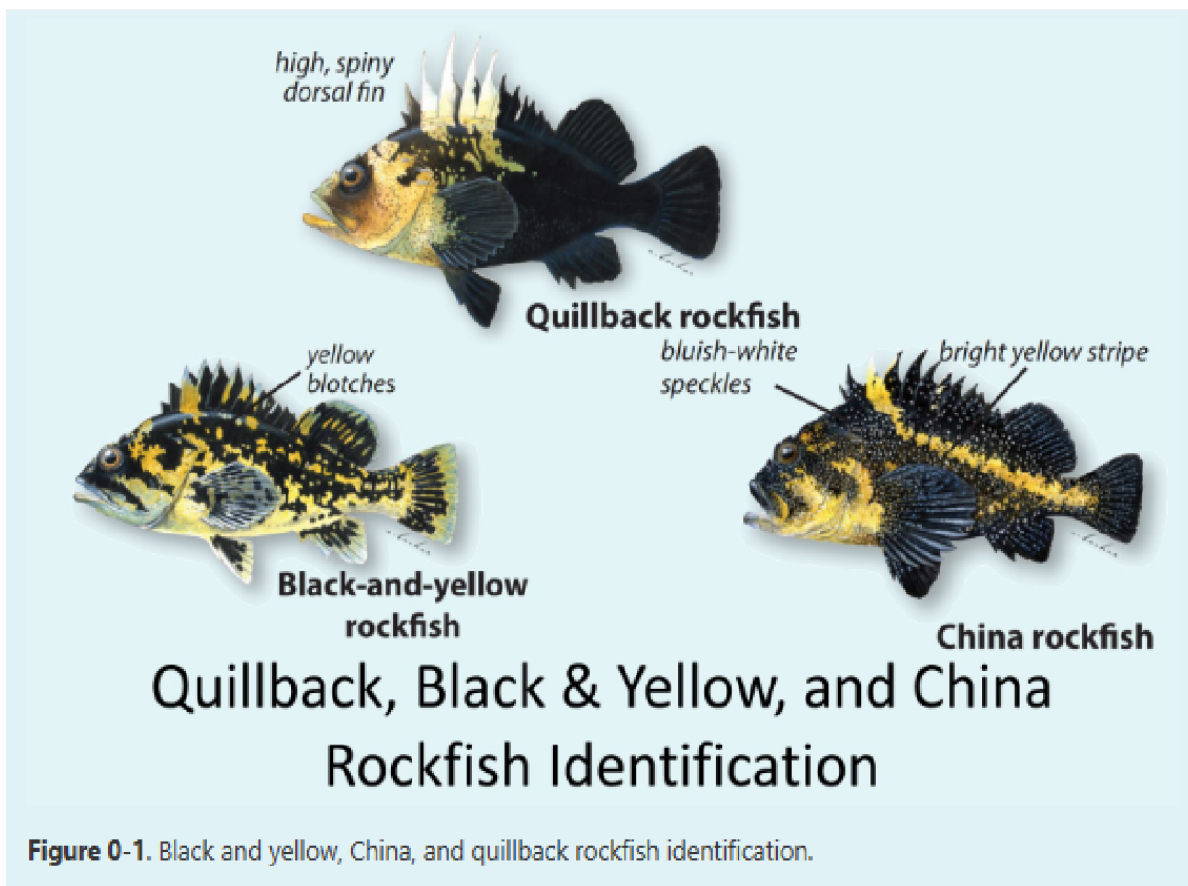
The quillback's range extends along the Pacific coast from the Gulf of Alaska to the northern Channel Islands of Southern California. The juveniles stay

mainly along the shore, in reefs, sand and eelgrass, while the adult rockfish live in the deeper waters. They are for the most part solitary dwellers, rarely being found in groups. They prefer to stay close to kelp, rocks, coral, or lodged in crevices or holes. Despite this, they are not territorial. High densities tend to coincide with peak plant growth. Quillback rockfish prey on herring, crabs, amphipods, krill and copepods. They are diurnal feeders.

Depending on the location, the quillback rockfish are minimally to moderately migratory. On the high-relief rocky reefs of Puget Sound, they maintain small ranges of 30 square yards, while on low-relief reefs they may stay within a larger 400 – 1500 square yard area. They sometimes move seasonally to low-relief reefs when summer kelp is present.

From Oregon to southeast Alaska quillback rockfish are a regular part of the inshore sport and commercial fishery. Most rockfish are landed in deep water by anglers using bottom-fishing tactics or mid-water drifting. These fish are not known for great battles or for large size, although the larger specimens may provide good sport. According to the Oregon Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, the sport harvest of nearshore rockfish (such as quillback, copper and china rockfish) off the Oregon coast was 6-12 metric tons annually between 2004 and 2009.

There are several species that appear similar, so maintaining accurate photos on board your vessel will help prevent retention of overfished species. See the comparison photos on page 15.



Windmill Power Generation is Facing Headwinds

Wind power generation is reported to have increased 350 percent in California from 2001 to the present, and now accounts for about 7% of our electricity. While still growing, numerous factors are slowing the growth rate of wind power.

One growing area of criticism is that windmill farms are estimated to kill substantial numbers of birds and bats. Bird deaths originate from collisions with the blades and transmission lines, plus electrocution on the transmission lines. Estimates vary wildly with published numbers ranging as high as a million bird deaths per year, and much higher when blade collisions are combined with electrocutions. Bats are also estimated to experience a million deaths per year from windmills, from direct strikes and a form of barotrauma (abrupt air pressure changes as the blade passes).

A second area of criticism is based on inefficiency. A 2018 Harvard study indicated that land-based windmills' efficiency at power generation per acre was much lower than previously believed. Related to this issue was power level inconsistency. When wind speed is too low, power generation drops off. When wind speed is too high, operators must power down windmills to protect them from physical damage.

These and other issues related to land-based power generation are driving interest such as we're seeing locally -- to build offshore windmills. After all, it's known that offshore winds are more steady. Placing windmills offshore removes the threat to hawks, song birds and bats, but may replace it with threats to migratory shorebirds. There are also allegations that the underwater sounds related to windmills

may contribute to whale beaching incidents.

There have been some reports which allege windmill blades are failing earlier than projected. As windmills are built larger, the physical stresses on the blades increase. Larger blades could result in even shorter blade life expectancy. These blades are made from fiberglass composites which cannot be conveniently recycled, and thus failed blades tend to accumulate in landfills.

While it's becoming more common to see large windmills in the midst of a farm or ranch, there is likely no way to engage in commercial fishing in and around anchored windmills. Any offshore region dedicated to windmills is likely going to prevent nearby commercial net-based fishing, and could result in a complete ban on nearby fishing.

A recently surfaced issue is the ramp up of cost estimates. The wind itself is free, but the cost of building, installing and maintaining the infrastructure is heavily front-end loaded. Thus, to be competitive with alternate power generation methods, financing is ideally arranged at a low interest rate. This allows costs to be affordable and spread out over years. With interest rates rising recently, projected financing costs have skyrocketed. Earlier this month there were reports from New Jersey of developers finding reasons to cancel contracts, rather than proceed in the current economic environment and incur years of very low profits or outright losses.

Another issue to be addressed is the cost of storing wind-generated electricity for times when demand exceeds production. Building massive battery storage facilities is very expensive, but the only alternative is to have a back-up non-wind power generation source

And finally, inflation has driven up labor costs, and there are lingering supply chain delays. All these costs can only be recouped by charging the electricity buyers higher rates, or through taxation of the general population. At present the

government is promoting the issue and granting cash subsidies and tax incentives to the power generation entities involved. Only time will tell whether this is money well spent.

Unmanned Offshore Vessels

Last year there was an unmanned drone vessel working offshore here. We're likely to see more unmanned vessels in the future. Given the cost of hiring full-time crews, programmable vessels are far more economical. They are often used to gather real-time oceanographic and weather data which is then relayed to a controller.



Unmanned vessels come in two general types -- subsurface and surface. According to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Autonomous Underwater Vessels (AUVs) are “programmable, robotic vehicles that, depending on their design, can drift, drive or

glide through the ocean without real-time control by human operators.” Communication with the control center can be through satellite link or underwater acoustic beacons to permit some level of control. We are likely to have an AUV operating off Humboldt Bay next summer, mapping bottom contours and shelf stability from near-shore to the proposed wind farm location.

Uncrewed Surface Vessels (USVs) remain on the surface collecting data on weather, fisheries and oceanographic data. USVs are typically equipped with AIS transponders, navigation lights, radar reflectors and cameras. Operation schedules are normally available on the Coast Guard's Local Notice to Mariners. Here are photos of two typical USV designs.



CDFW News Release: White Sturgeon Harvest Reduced for 2023-2024 Season

The California Fish and Game Commission enacted emergency regulations to reduce the harvest of white sturgeon in state waters. The new regulations will reduce the number of fish that can be kept to one per year, reduce the slot limit to 42-48 inches, cap the number of white sturgeon that can be possessed on a vessel at two per day and add seasonal closures to sturgeon fishing in key spawning areas. The new regulations are expected to go into effect by HASA's press time, following approval by the Office of Administrative Law.

The new regulations were enacted by the Commission following a joint recommendation by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and angling groups. The emergency action was taken in response to long-term declines in adult white sturgeon populations as well as impacts of a harmful algal bloom in the summer of 2022.

There are two sturgeon species in California: green sturgeon and white sturgeon. Green sturgeon are listed as a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act, and may not be retained. White sturgeon are listed in California as a Species of Special Concern.

Individual white sturgeon can live about 100 years and don't start spawning until approximately 14 to 19 years old. Scientists estimate that white sturgeon

in the Central Valley only spawn successfully every six to seven years. White sturgeon abundance has declined significantly from approximately 200,000 harvestable fish in 1997 to around 33,000 (recent five-year average). Sturgeon fisheries in California have closed multiple times in the past due to over-harvest.

Harvest will be reduced to one white sturgeon for 2023 and 2024. Catch and release fishing for white sturgeon will still be allowed with a valid sturgeon report card after one sturgeon is kept except for closures outlined in California Code of Regulations, title 14, sections 5.80 and 27.95. The slot limit was reduced to 42-48 inches, and a limit of two fish per vessel per day was added. Fishing for white sturgeon will also be closed seasonally upstream of the Highway 50 bridge on the Sacramento River and Interstate 5 bridge on the San Joaquin River from January 1 to May 31, 2024. This upstream area will re-open to catch and release fishing on June 1, 2024, once spawning season is over.



Answers to Boating Accident Reason Quiz:

- (1) Operator inattention (602 accidents)
- (2) Operator inexperience (464 accidents)
- (3) Improper lookout (387 accidents)
- (4) Excessive speed (320 accidents)
- (5) Machinery failure (289 accidents)
- (6) Weather (221 accidents)
- (7) Alcohol (215 accidents)
- (8) Navigation rules violations (205 accidents)
- (9) Hazardous waters (184 accidents)
- (10) Force of wake/wave (137 accidents)



Note From The Editor

This is my first time as the new editor of HASA's newsletter and it's been so much fun reading through the articles and getting to see all of your photos. I

hope my efforts help HASA members stay connected and inspired to go out and fish! Thank you for this opportunity.

Send your photos and article ideas my way for the next issue. Email me at rrracheldambra@gmail.com.

Happy Fishing! —Rachel



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