

HUMBOLDT AREA SALTWATER ANGLERS

A VOICE FOR SALTWATER SPORTFISHERS

2023 SPRING NEWSLETTER

President's Message	3
HASA Fund Raiser Donors and Sponsors	4
HASA Fundraiser—May 2023	5
Important Change Pending for HASA	6
Trust Your Technology, Until Common Sense Says Otherwise	7
Offshore Season Opens with Pacific Halibut	9
Bottomfish Season and Bag Limits	9
CDFW Announces Inland Salmon Season Closures	10
Change to California Halibut Daily Bag Limit Takes Effect June 1	10
Klamath River Dam Removal Update	11
CDFW Announces Crabbing Restrictions	12
News Release From Nordic Aquafarms - May 5, 2023	13
Winter Storms to Help Increase Survival of Chinook Salmon	14
Humboldt Bay Offshore Wind—Informational Video	15
El Niño Is Back	15

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

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

Submission of article topics and photos should be sent to jcphasa@gmail.com.

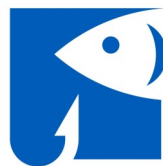
Comments are always welcome and should be sent to jcphasa@gmail.com.

HASA would like to expressly thank our friends for their time and contributions to our newsletter .

All past HASA newsletters can be viewed at [Newsletters \(humboldtasa.com\)](http://Newsletters(humboldtasa.com))

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

This is issue #51.



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President's Message



First off, I'd like to thank everyone who worked to make our May 13 Albacore Fishing Seminar and fund raiser a success. Regardless of how long you've been chasing albacore, I'm sure our speaker Del Stephens taught you some new techniques. Weather models currently predict we will be in an El Nino event by mid-summer. While not a guarantee of good weather, El Nino conditions often line up with good albacore fishing here and I hope to apply what I learned at the seminar. Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officer Adam Shilts and CDFW Officer John Fraley both joined us to answer questions from attendees. For a list of donors and sponsors, please see page 4. Photos from the event can be found on page 5.

The second item I would like to draw to your attention relates to HASA's future. Please see page 6 for details.

Given that we won't have a local salmon season, it seems likely that there will be extra pressure on both the halibut and rockfish fisheries. While it may not be the case at all our local ports, both these fisheries require running farther out of Eureka than is normally the case when we're salmon trolling. It will be particularly important that we ensure our boats are properly maintained, fueled, carry appropriate safety gear and skippers remain alert for weather changes. In addition to the daily safety issues if you, as the skipper, are 50 years or younger you must have taken and passed the California Boater Exam. The cost is \$34.95 and the requirement can be met online by going to boaterexam.com.

On the local waterfront scene, there has been a surprise announcement from Nordic Aquafarms. See page 13.

While it will be years before the pending offshore wind energy project actually has windmills in the water, the commercial fishers are of course concerned about future impacts to fishing. They have formed a group called California Fishermen's Resiliency Association. The first paragraph of their letter to HASA reads, "The California Fishermen's Resiliency Association (CFRA) is pleased to request the Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers' participation as a Consulting Member in the CFRA's efforts to minimize and mitigate the negative impacts of non-fishing offshore developments and to promote long term resiliency in commercial fishing communities." If you are interested in representing HASA at CFRA meetings please contact a Board member to let us know.

And finally, Joe Polos will be stepping down from his newsletter manager. If you are interested in becoming the newsletter manager or helping produce the newsletter please contact me or Joe (jcphasa@gmail.com) and we can fill you in on the details.

Till next time, we'll be looking for you offshore.

HASA Fund Raiser Donors and Sponsors

Del Stephens' sponsors (Garmin, Daiwa, Lamiglas, IBraid, Rapala, Sirius XM Marine, Schooner Creek Boat Works, Costa Sunglasses, Mercury marine, Gamakatsu, Serger) -- many of the lures, Garmin fishfinder, rods and reels and a host of other items

Englund Marine -- Ice chest and event ticket sales

Coast Central Credit Union -- financial support

B2 Squid -- raffle basket

Redwood Marine, Inc -- rod and reel combo

Doc Honey -- lead cannon weight and jig molds

Ben and Sue Doane -- emergency beacon

707 Sportfishing -- halibut trip for 2

Redwood Curtain Brewing -- beer for the event, tee shirt

Mr. Fish -- tee shirts

Rod & Jamie Boone -- two Nomad Madmacs 200 trolling plugs

Majestic Encounters -- photo on canvas

Sue Doane -- fish themed tea serving set and hand-made child blanket

Redwood Coast -- Spreader Bars

Mark Celsi, HASA, Englund Marine, and Humboldt Pawn -- Kids raffle items

Anglin Second Hand -- loan of the clothing rack to display HASA shirts

AND ESPECIALLY **DEL STEPHENS** FOR SHARING HIS TIME AND PASSION WITH US.

HASA Board, fisheries meetings representatives and event planners/volunteers

Lonnie Dollarhide

Tim Needham

Bill Gillespie

Tom and Mary Marking

Gene Morris

Ross Taylor

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Larry and Carol De Ridder

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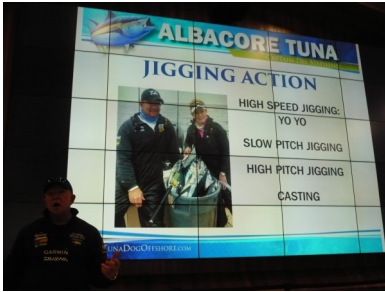
Del and Weddy Stephens

Tim and Sherri Klassen

Kent Hulbert

Cliff Hart

HASA Fundraiser—May 2023



Important Change Pending for HASA

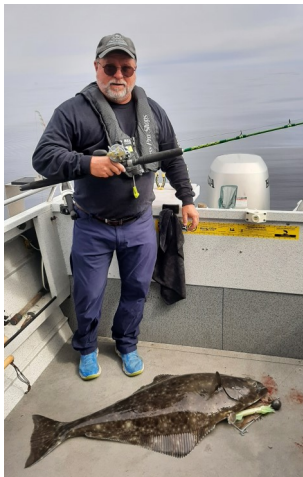
by Tim Needham and Larry De Ridder

HASA is presently a 501(c)(4) corporation. For non-profit purposes, organizations fall into two broad categories, 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(3). Donations to a 501(c)(4) are not tax deductible but it can follow a broader agenda, including participation in political campaigns. Donations to a 501(c)(3) are tax deductible, but it is strictly prevented from political campaigning for a specific candidate. As a result, government entities and other organizations are much more likely to make grants to 501(c)(3) organizations than a 501(c)(4). Sometimes the HASA Board has become aware of grant opportunities that could have been helpful to our mission, but as a 501(c)(4) we were ineligible to apply for funds.



None of HASA's past, present, or anticipated future activities would violate the political restrictions of 501(c)(3). Thus, for Fiscal Year 2022/23 the Board budgeted funds to explore a change. At last winter's annual members' meeting, the Board received positive feedback and encouragement from the members present regarding a change. Based on what we've learned thus far in the process the Board feels it is in our best interests to change HASA to a 501(c)(3) organization. We need professional help with the process, but the expenses are not burdensome, and we definitely anticipate future benefits.

Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any easy way to convert from a 501(c)(4) to a 501(c)(3). Therefore, the more straightforward route is to form a new organization. Because we are well known as Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, we've been trying to retain the name. However, the government doesn't want two organizations with the same or extremely similar names, even though we're the same folks. So, we're having a bit of trouble coming up with a name that both preserves our current "branding" and can obtain federal approval. We're currently working on that issue. Once we get a name approved and the Board goes through some legal processes, there will briefly be two organizations. We will then close out the 501(c)(4) and move all the assets to the new organization. Our assets consist of items related to our annual fund raiser, our shirt and hat inventory, a stockpile of fishing gear slated for youth events, and of course our deposits at Coast Central Credit Union. HASA has retained an attorney to help us understand and implement this plan.



As a practical matter we do not anticipate any significant changes to our mission, policies or practices once the transfer is complete. The Board will continue to keep our members advised as this action progresses. Once the new organization is in place the Board will meet to start the new corporation and dissolve the old. (Sorry directors and officers but you will still be on the hook.)



Trust Your Technology, Until Common Sense Says Otherwise

By Kit Mann

“Trust in Allah but tether your camel”. - Islamic saying.

Trust your tech, until common sense says otherwise. – Experience saying.

Story I.

In the late 80’s, we mostly fished out of Donald’s boat – a 16’ Gregor Baja with a pair of 15hp motors on back. I won’t say “twin” motors since one was a key start Johnson and the other a pull cord Evinrude. It had a single person center console with a plexi windscreen, mounted compass, CB radio, and a Raytheon combo paper/flasher sonar that was as big as a breadbox and must have weighed ten pounds. This was a couple of years before Magellan came out with the handheld NAV1000 GPS. His whole setup was several levels better than what I had been doing – renting those waterlogged wooden skiffs from Bob’s Boat Basin in Trinidad and putting my dad’s old duck boat 6hp on the back. That little motor could barely push those thousand pound monsters up a swell, but it could maintain a decent trolling speed on a flat day.

One day we were trolling in Don’s boat south of the Jaws. The fishing was slow and while there wasn’t much wind or chop, there was a quite respectable long period swell. In the early afternoon, the fog came down and visibility dropped to about 100 feet, so we decided to call it quits and head for home. At that point, we were still a mile or so south, but we weren’t certain of our exact westerly location. We knew there was a good rule to find the end of the south jetty based on water depth, so we called out on the radio and asked. The answer came back clear: go to 60 feet, then head due north.

By tradition, we never just pick up and run if we still needed fish. So we kept the lines in the water and kept trolling on the “long tack home”. We began trolling east, keeping an eye on the flasher depth finder. As we approached the 60-foot depth, I heard a noise behind us and turned to see that thing that none of us ever wants to see - whitewater at the top of a swell that was higher than the boat. I yelled and as we were still in the trough Don whipped the boat around and gunned it up over the just cresting wave. We kept running west for quite a ways while we caught our breath. Luckily nothing had fouled the prop.

We figured we must have heard the instructions wrong, maybe it was 90 feet, so called again on the radio and got the same answer, a bit more emphatically this time. A fish or two shy of limits and still not wanting to pass up fishing time, we reset the lines and dropped the downriggers to about 35 feet. As we began to feel our way east again, we kept one eye on the flasher and another off the stern. Then I noticed something odd - the flasher was telling us we were in 65 feet of water, but the downrigger weights were bouncing on the bottom. And sure enough, looking to the stern, a big swell was just getting ready to break. A second time we evaded disaster by a quick turn and scurrying west. Sitting once again in safer water, we dropped the downriggers to bottom contact and confirmed what they had already told us, the flasher sonar was



For a Good Bite!

Jeffery Holland DDS

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completely inaccurate. In our attempts to get to 60 feet deep, we had been driving right into the surf line along the south spit.

We began thinking about how to use the downriggers to feel our way back when another boat emerged out of the fog. They were running so it was pretty clear they knew where they were and where they were going. We pulled in behind and followed them all the way back to the ramp.

Story II

Fast forward a few decades, and I've just installed a Furuno wireless radar on my Grady White Seafarer. The trick with this radar is that you don't need a hard-wired display module; it sends the display to an iPhone or iPad via Bluetooth. My brother-in-law had given me an older iPad when he upgraded, so I was using that. I needed a protective case for it, but because it was going to live in the cockpit, it didn't really need to be waterproof, just a bit of cushioning in case it fell. I bought an inexpensive folding case for it at Staples.

One morning with patchy fog, Don and I headed north out of the Jaws. He took the helm while I busied myself head down tying rigs. We'd been running for a bit when I noticed that when the sun broke through for a moment, it was no longer over my right shoulder but was now over my left – in other words, we were going south. I asked Don why we were going back, and he assured me we were still going north by the compass (I think even he will admit that having grown up with boats about seven decades ago, it's childhood habit that he'll pay attention to a compass before a GPS). I came up and took a look and sure enough, the compass pointed due north. But we could glimpse the sun and shore on our left, so of course that wasn't true. In the fog, as can happen if you're not paying close attention, we had made a wide imperceptible turn till we were headed in the opposite direction.

My iPad was on the dash next to the compass, and I moved it to take a closer look at what I assumed was a compass that had somehow suddenly become faulty. The compass immediately swung around to the correct south heading. Puzzled, I put the iPad back where it had been and the compass swung around to the north again, although now I understood that it wasn't really pointing "north" – it was pointing at the iPad. I didn't think there could be a magnet in an iPad strong enough to affect the compass, but what else could it be? I took the iPad out of the case and moved it all around the compass, but now the compass remained steady and on a correct heading. After playing with this for a few minutes, I was truly puzzled but since the compass seemed to be ok now and wanting to get to the fishing, I put the iPad back in its case and put it back where it had been. The compass flew back to point at the iPad. Aha! Evidently the case had something to do with it. Taking a closer look at the case I realized that the clasp on it was a strong magnet hidden inside the webbing tab. I got my knife and cut the webbing clasp off and waving it nearby I could get the compass to follow it around like a puppy. Thinking about where I could put the magnet to be sure it wasn't interfering with the compass or any other device on board, I decided that the safest place was as far as I could throw it off the stern.



Offshore Season Opens with Pacific Halibut

As we all know, CDFW opened the 2023 recreational Pacific halibut fishery Monday, May 1. The season will remain open seven days per week until Nov. 15 or until the quota is reached, whichever is earlier. The 2023 Pacific halibut quota for the California subarea is 39,540 pounds – approximately the same as the 2022 quota. Numerous HASA members participated in CDFW’s angler survey which resulted in this year’s season dates.

Season dates, bag/possession limits and gear restrictions can be found on CDFW’s Pacific halibut web page ([Pacific Halibut \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdfw.ca.gov)). Public notification of any in-season change to regulations is made through the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific halibut hotline at (800) 662-9825 or CDFW’s Pacific halibut Regulations Hotline at (831) 649-2801.

As in previous years, CDFW will intermittently publish estimated catch totals and when the estimated harvest is projected to exceed 39,540 pounds, the season will be closed on short notice. Given that we have no salmon season this year halibut fishing can be expected to be intense and may result in an early season closure.

Bottomfish Season and Bag Limits

Given that most HASA members live and fish near the dividing line between two management zones, it will be important for all of us to be aware of which side of the line we are fishing. Given that Coppers and Quillbacks are of special concern, please correctly ID and carefully release these species alive whenever possible.

If you are not very good at identifying which rockfish species you have boated, it might be well to stock your boat with a high-quality photographic aid such as those produced by Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Mac’s Field Guide or CDFW & Sport Fish Restoration

Additionally, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife have developed a West Coast Fish Identification mobile app for Android ([West Coast Fish ID - Apps on Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.wdfr.westcoastfishid)) and Apple ([West Coast Fish ID on the App Store \(apple.com\)](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/west-coast-fish-id/id1488888888)) devices.

Northern Management Area between the California/Oregon state line and 40°10' N. latitude (near Cape Mendocino): For rockfish, cabezon, greenlings and lingcod: closed Jan. 1 through May 14, open at all depths May 15 through Oct. 15, closed Oct. 16 through Dec. 31.

Anglers will need to identify rockfish species they catch, and beginning in 2023, be able to determine if the fish is categorized as a nearshore, shelf or slope rockfish species, as different seasons and depths apply to each category depending on the Groundfish Management Area and month. The RCG bag limit will remain at 10 fish in combination of rockfish, cabezon and greenlings, with sub-bag limits of not more than four vermilion rockfish, one copper rockfish and one quillback rockfish. Take and possession of cowcod, yelloweye and bronzedspotted rockfish will remain prohibited.

Mendocino Management Area between 40°10' N. latitude (near Cape Mendocino) and 38° 57.5' N. latitude (Point Arena): For nearshore rockfish, cabezon and greenlings: closed Jan. 1 through July 15, open at all depths July 16 through Dec. 31.

For all other rockfish (shelf and slope species) and lingcod: closed Jan. 1 through May 14. From May 15 through July 15, take of shelf and slope rockfish and lingcod is open seaward of the 50 fathom RCA line. Take is prohibited shoreward of the 50 fathom RCA line. From July 16 through Dec. 31, open at all depths.

The new groundfish regulations are a significant departure from the fishing seasons and depth limits that anglers are accustomed to and are necessary due to survey data suggesting that copper rockfish and quillback rockfish populations are in severe decline. The season structures for each management area were developed in consultation with fishing industry representatives, non-governmental organizations and state, federal and tribal governments, and were designed to provide the greatest amount of groundfish fishing time and opportunity to anglers throughout the year.

CDFW Announces Inland Salmon Season Closures

The California Fish and Game Commission acted unanimously to enact a full closure of California's recreational salmon fishing season in the Klamath River Basin and Central Valley rivers through its annual process for adjusting seasons and bag limits.

In a separate emergency action, the Commission voted to close recreational salmon fisheries in the Smith River and Eel River, and the summer season in the Klamath and Trinity rivers. Additionally, in the same emergency action, the Commission voted to allow federally recognized tribes that currently or historically used the river segments affected by the recreational fishing closures, to continue fishing under existing inland sport fishing regulations. The regulations are expected to take effect no later than July 1, 2023, following approval by the Office of Administrative Law.

Change to California Halibut Daily Bag Limit Takes Effect June 1

In another emergency action, the Commission voted unanimously to reduce the daily bag and possession limit for California halibut from three fish to two fish in California waters north of Point Sur, Monterey County. The regulations are expected to take effect June 1, 2023. The reduced California halibut limit is designed to protect the resource amid increased recreational fishing pressure due to limited fishing opportunities and changes in other ocean fisheries, including salmon. The Pacific halibut fishery is unaffected by the Commission's action; the daily bag and possession limit for Pacific halibut remains one fish with no size limit.

Klamath River Dam Removal Update

The following information is summarized from information provided by the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC). Dam removal activities will begin in 2023 and should be completed in 2024, with the return of the river to a free-flowing condition. KRRC recently posted signage warning of public safety issues related to increased construction and maintenance traffic, especially along Copco Road.

Of the four dams, Copco No. 2 will be removed first (Fall 2023) due to its small size. Reservoir drawdown and the beginning of deconstruction of the remaining three dams is planned to occur essentially at the same time in early 2024. Iron Gate Dam will be the last one to be fully removed due to the size of the dam and amount of material that must be removed. Dam removal is planned to be completed by the end of 2024.

The specific reservoir drawdown schedule will be dependent on the snowpack and watershed hydrology. There will be two drawdown periods. The initial drawdown will occur from January to March of the drawdown year and then a second drawdown will occur following the spring thaw, which will partly or completely refill the reservoirs due to snow melt runoff. The reservoir drawdowns will be carefully controlled. Once the historic river channel is exposed, which is expected to happen between May and July of 2024, JC Boyle, Copco 1 and Iron Gate Dams will be removed.

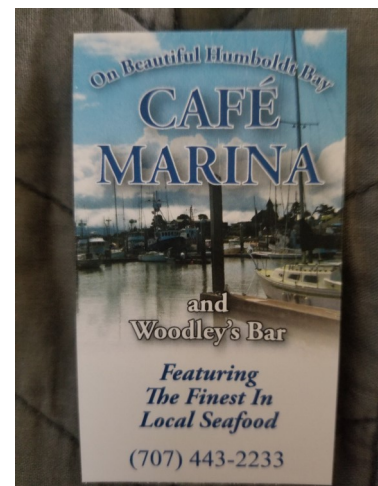
Deconstruction activities will begin with roads, bridges, and project dam features to prepare for the dam removal itself. These actions will impact existing day use and camping areas.

Assuming all goes as planned, when dam removal deconstruction commences, KRRC will close the reservoirs and reservoir recreation sites, and access will not be permitted. This will restrict whitewater boating, camping and day use within the affected areas and the river reaches between J.C. Boyle Powerhouse and approximately Iron Gate Dam at Lakeview Bridge. Once the drawdown begins whitewater boater access will not be allowed.

Following dam removal, outdoor recreation opportunities along the Klamath River will be substantially different, as the reservoirs will be replaced with a free-flowing river.

The vegetation restoration of the reservoir bottoms will begin as soon as drawdown is complete. KRRC's revegetation plan includes seeding reservoir footprints with native grass seed. Select areas will also be planted with trees and shrubs, with species tailored to the location within the reservoir and proximity to streams and expected wetlands. All sites will be monitored for several years to ensure revegetation success, oversee the control of invasive species, and take other necessary actions to restore the landscape.

The States of California and Oregon, in consultation with recreation stakeholders, Tribes, and local residents, are planning to improve or upgrade existing public access facilities and to construct new facilities to support the transformed recreation opportunities. HASA members, as downstream users, are looking forward to anticipated positive impacts on salmon populations within the Klamath watershed.



CDFW Announces Crabbing Restrictions

CDFW has assessed humpback whale entanglement risk under the Risk Assessment Mitigation Program and implemented a 30-fathom depth constraint for Fishing Zones 1 and 2 (Sonoma/Mendocino county line to the Oregon state line) effective May 15, 2023 at 12 p.m. (noon) for the commercial Dungeness crab fishery. Traps used in the commercial fishery will be prohibited in waters seaward of the 30-fathom contour as defined in Title 50 of the Federal Codes of Regulations, Part 660, Section 660.71.

Recreational crab traps will be prohibited in Fishing Zones 3-6 (all areas south of the Sonoma/Mendocino county line) effective at 12 p.m. (noon) on May 15, 2023. CDFW reminds recreational crabbers that take of Dungeness crab by other methods, including hoop nets and crab snares, is still allowed until the closure of the season on June 30, 2023.

Fishing Zones 1 through 6 also remain under a Fleet Advisory for both the commercial and recreational Dungeness crab fisheries until the season closes in each Fishing Zone. All anglers should be prepared to act quickly to remove fishing gear from remaining open areas should entanglement risk become elevated. For more information related to the risk assessment process, please visit CDFW's Whale Safe Fisheries page: [Whale Safe Fisheries \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdwr.gov/whale-safe-fisheries). For more information on the Dungeness crab fishery, please visit CDFW's Crab page, including FAQs ([Invertebrates of Interest: Crabs \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdwr.gov/invertebrates-of-interest-crabs)) for the 2022-23 commercial fishing season and a Compliance Guide for Electronic Monitoring ([RAMP Electronic Monitoring Compliance Guide \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdwr.gov/ramp-electronic-monitoring-compliance-guide)).



News Release From Nordic Aquafarms - May 5, 2023

It was with considerable surprise that we noted a May 5 announcement by Nordic Aquafarms. They announced their intent to raise Yellowtail Kingfish (*Seriola lalandi*) in their planned operations in Humboldt County. Previous discussions had stressed Atlantic Salmon. They have raised Kingfish since 2017 in Europe. There is at least one other kingfish operation in the US, a fairly new and small facility located in Maine.

Yellowtail Kingfish have long bodies, a slender head, and are a blue or blue-green on their back, white-silver below with a yellow caudal fin. The largest fish commonly caught are up to 39 inches long and weigh 22 to 33 pounds. However, a few individuals will measure over six feet long and weigh up to 150 pounds. Yellowtail Kingfish occur naturally in ocean waters from Queensland south to Western Australia and inhabit temperate waters worldwide. In those waters they are often found associated with floating objects in the ocean and pylons and jetties within bays. Juveniles commonly school up.

Brenda Chandler, Nordic's US CEO confirmed the benefits of the change with Nordic remaining a phased project but anticipates the proposed Humboldt County aquafarm will start smaller than what was projected for Atlantic Salmon. Growth over time will be carefully considered. Nordic's farm will still use seawater to raise its fish but use less freshwater and energy than previously forecast. With Yellowtail Kingfish, it is a fully closed life cycle, one that begins with in-house brood stock to produce fertilized eggs and grows fish to harvest weight.

Yellowtail Kingfish reportedly yields a firm-textured, light pink flesh with an excellent clean, slightly sweet flavor. It's a highly valued and popular fish, reportedly excellent grilled or baked, and well-suited for sashimi, crudo, and ceviche. Commercially, the market demand for yellowtail kingfish saw strong growth both in Europe and the US in 2022.



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Winter Storms to Help Increase Survival of Chinook Salmon

Summary of CDFW Release

Given the substantially above-average snowpack we have this year, CDFW plans to use the high stream flows to help the survival of hatchery-produced Chinook salmon throughout the Sacramento River system.

On February 23, with a series of late-winter storms building, CDFW staff released approximately 1.1 million fall-run Chinook salmon fry from Nimbus Fish Hatchery into the American River in Sacramento County. These Chinook salmon are

part of a pilot study testing new genetic based tagging techniques that, if successful, will allow more flexibility in fish release strategies to take advantage of natural high flow events in the future. This was the first release of fall-run Chinook into the American River in more than three years. Since the spring of 2020, drought conditions have forced CDFW to truck Nimbus Hatchery juvenile salmon downstream. This 1.1 million fry release was in addition to the normal 4 million smolts released annually from Nimbus Hatchery for mitigation and are also in addition to the 500,000 in increased production scheduled for 2023 to help offset losses to in-river production caused by drought.



Feather River Hatchery is scheduled to release 3.1 million fish that were raised above the hatchery mitigation requirement. They will be taken to the Sutter Bypass for release where they can directly enter rearing habitat resulting from rainfall the region experienced in early March. In early April, 900,000 fish were scheduled to be released as pre-smolts into the Feather River. The 6 million mitigation fall-run Chinook and an additional 2.9 million fish will be trucked to San Pablo and San Francisco Bays as smolts for release.

Approximately 2 million spring-run Chinook salmon are scheduled for release at various locations along the Feather River. The favorable conditions in the Feather River and bypasses should provide good rearing habitat allowing these fish to grow and increase survival rates.

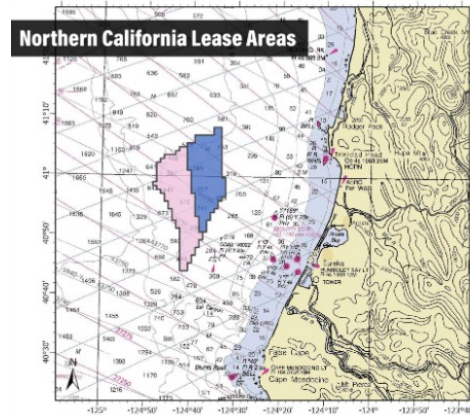
“By putting these fish out into the river now, they are going to experience the natural environment of our rivers as natural-origin fish would and will be able to take advantage of the high flows we’re getting with these storms,” said Jay Rowan, who oversees CDFW’s Fisheries Branch.

CDFW expects survival rates for these Chinook salmon to be very high given the increased flows and expects to see the benefits of these early releases three years from now when the adults return to complete their lifecycle.



Humboldt Bay Offshore Wind—Informational Video

In mid-May, the Humboldt Bay Harbor District released a YouTube video about offshore wind that may be of interest to you. In the near future, the District will be initiating a public engagement process. As a part of that process, videos will be periodically uploaded to this site: <https://www.youtube.com/@humboltdbayharbordistrict>.



El Niño Is Back

Following three years of La Niña, El Niño conditions have established themselves with higher than normal water temperatures in the eastern tropical Pacific. The National Weather Service forecasts an 84% chance for a moderate El Niño (≥ 1.0 C above average sea surface temperature) and an 56% chance for a strong El Niño (≥ 1.5 C above average sea surface temperature). El Niño conditions are determined to be present when the SST is 0.5 C above average. The current El Niño conditions are expected to strengthen and spread along the west coasts of Mexico and the United States into the winter of 2023-2024.

While El Niño can bring opportunities to catch more southerly distributed fish species (i.e.: dorado, marlin) along the Northern California coast as they follow the warm water north or albacore very close to the coast due to lack of upwelling, it can be devastating for our local fish fauna.

Upwelling that supports productive conditions, providing a buffet for juvenile salmon and rockfish, is severely reduced or stops. Fat-laden northern copepods that are typically associated with upwelling are replaced with southern copepods which are less nutritious and market squid that support a variety of fish species migrate farther north to follow colder water. For rockfish species, they may move to deeper, cooler waters or move north. Another detrimental effect of El Niño is deep-sea marine heatwaves (the blob) can become more intense and persist for longer periods of time, negatively impacting this ecosystem.

Updated detailed information from the National Weather Service can be found at their web site ([Climate Prediction Center: ENSO Diagnostic Discussion \(noaa.gov\)](https://www.noaa.gov/climate-prediction-center/ens0-diagnostic-discussion)) and CDFW has a webpage with information concerning El Niño ([El Niño Information \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdwr.ca.gov/El-Niño-Information)).

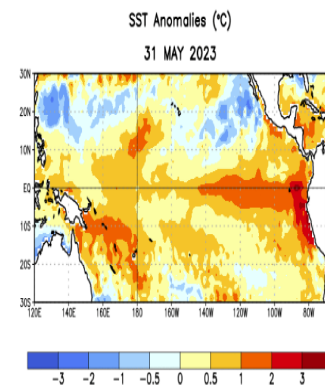


Figure 1. Average sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies ($^{\circ}$ C) for the week centered on 31 May 2023. Anomalies are computed with respect to the 1991-2020 base period weekly means.



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