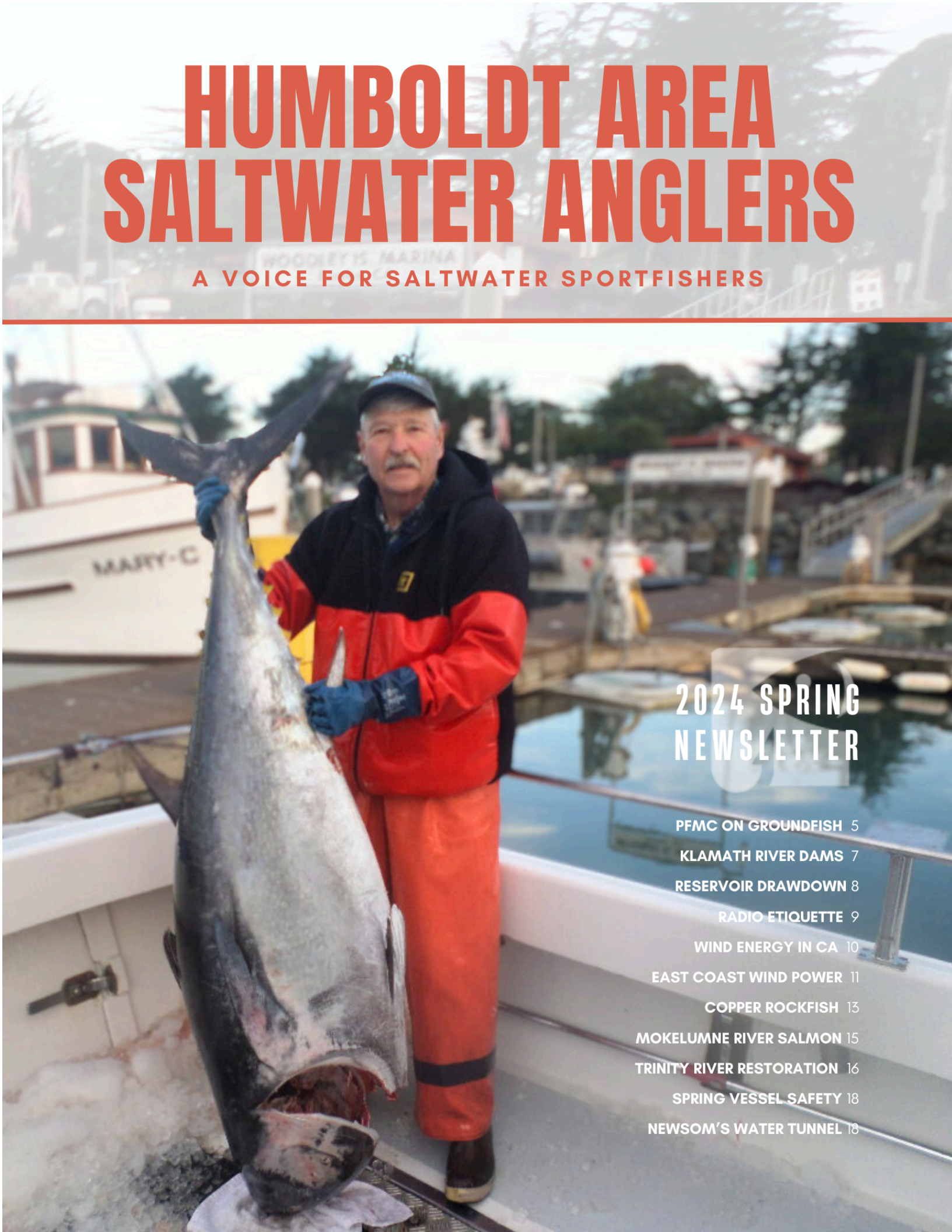
HUMBOLDT AREA SALTWATER ANGLERS

A VOICE FOR SALTWATER SPORTFISHERS



2024 SPRING NEWSLETTER

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.

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HASA Newsletter

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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 #: *54* | Editor: *Rachel D'Ambra*

President's Message

The biggest winter news affecting future salmon fishing on the North Coast is the recent breaching of four dams on the Klamath River. Page 7 provides a summary plus before-and-after photos documenting the removal of the Copco 2 dam late last year. In January, dewatering was initiated at Copco 1, Iron Gate and JC Boyle dams. There are Youtube videos showing the new riverbed emerging as the water levels drop. Depending on February rainfall and snow melt, these three reservoirs may be empty by the time this issue goes to press. The Trinity River is also on the receiving end of restoration efforts. See page 16 regarding efforts by the Yurok Tribe to undo damage caused by past mining activity below Lewiston Lake. Historically, the Klamath-Trinity system is the second largest salmon producer in the state, behind only the Sacramento.

Of course, any improvement to the state's salmon populations as a result of improvements within the Klamath-Trinity system, could be countered by the eventual construction of a massive tunnel planned by the State to move more NorCal water southward. Page 18 reports on the latest from Sacramento concerning Governor Newsom's tunnel project.

Closer to home there has been movement on the proposed offshore wind power project and associated onshore support facilities. The project is proceeding, with a current cost estimate of $853 billion in 2023 dollars. The Harbor District site, humboldtbay.org, provides on-line access to a tremendous amount of documentation. Go to their site and type in "offshore wind" to catch up on everything from environmental permitting, to community involvement. This will be interesting to monitor, as recent economic factors have adversely affected various east coast projects that were further along in development than the local effort. East Coast news isn't necessarily predictive of local results, but is certainly indicative of what could happen. Board members are continuing to meet with project biologists.

When the new offshore season opens it will be important for all of us to recognize Coppers and Quillbacks in our catch, and for everyone to use proper descenders to return them to the bottom unharmed. Failure to do so

could result in another abruptly shortened offshore season. In this issue we highlight Coppers, just as our winter issue did for Quillbacks.

On February 15, we held our annual members' meeting. For the coming year, continuing Board members will be: Bill Gillespie, Dirk Pedersen, Kent Hulbert, Lonnie Dollarhide, Ross Taylor, and Cliff Hart. They will be joined by returning Board member Tom Marking and new Board members Dan Moore and Matt Dallam. As you see them, thank them for their work.

As we go to press, Tim Klassen and Steve Huber are headed off to government meetings to provide North Coast input on the offshore fishing situation. We'll know more about the results of those meetings in the next couple of months.

And finally, mark your calendar for March 30. Englund Marine in Eureka is hosting a seminar featuring Del Stephens, Tim Klassen and Travis Chambers. We'll be talking tuna, albacore, halibut and boat maintenance, as well as supporting HASA. I'll see you there!

Larry De Ridder
Outgoing HASA President

HASA Pictures!

Understanding the Pacific Fishery Management Council - Groundfish

This is merely a summary from their website. To learn more about the PFMC and their management practices, go to pcouncil.org/fact-sheet-groundfish/. If you have specific questions, email HASA's local expert, Tom Marking at tmmarking@sbcglobal.net.

The Council's Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) includes over 100 different species that tend to live on or near the bottom of the ocean. The FMP covers the following species:

1. **Rockfish** - All West Coast rockfish are included.
2. **Flatfish** - The plan covers 12 species of sole, flounder, and sanddab.
3. **Roundfish** - The plan includes lingcod, cabezon, kelp greenling, Pacific cod, Pacific whiting, and sablefish.
4. **Sharks and skates** - big skate, longnose skate, leopard shark, and spiny dogfish.
5. **Ecosystem component species** - spotted ratfish, finescale codling, and all endemic grenadier species.

Many different types of gear are used to target the wide variety of groundfish. The dominant gears are trawl, longline, hook and line, and pots. There are five separate sectors:

1. **Limited entry trawl**. This sector is composed of fishermen with limited entry permits endorsed for trawl gear, including bottom and pelagic trawls. The program limits the number of vessels allowed to participate in this fishery.
2. **Limited entry fixed gear.** This sector includes harvesters with limited entry permits endorsed for line or pot/trap gears. This sector mainly targets sablefish, but may also target other groundfish species such as rockfish.
3. **Open access.** This sector of the groundfish fishery includes fishermen targeting groundfish without limited entry permits, and those who incidentally catch groundfish.
4. **Recreational.** This sector includes anglers targeting groundfish species and others who target non-groundfish species but who incidentally take groundfish.
5. **Tribal.** This sector is made up of tribal commercial fishers who have a federally recognized treaty right to fish for federally managed groundfish in their "usual and accustomed" fishing areas. These tribes are all located in Washington state.

Groundfish are managed by setting harvest guidelines, quotas, trip and landing limits, area restrictions, seasonal closures, and gear restrictions. All sectors of the fishery are currently constrained by the need to rebuild groundfish species that are overfished and managed under rebuilding plans. Rebuilding plans specify the harvest control rules and target recovery years for these species. As of 2021, the only remaining species to rebuild was yelloweye rockfish.

The Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan contains the rules for managing the groundfish fishery. It outlines the areas, species, regulations, and methods that the Council and the Federal government must follow to make changes to the fishery.

The process for controversial or complex issues takes at least three Council meetings. Proposals may come from the public, participating management agencies, advisory groups, or Council members. If the Council wants to pursue these proposals, it asks

for alternate solutions to the problem being addressed and then directs the Groundfish Management Team (GMT), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and/or Council staff to prepare an analysis. At the next meeting when such a proposal is on the agenda, the Council reviews it and chooses a range of alternatives and possibly a preliminary preferred alternative. The analysis is then made available for public review, and the Council makes a final decision at the next meeting the item is scheduled.

A biennial management process was implemented in 2003. Under the biennial cycle, eligible management measures are implemented for a two-year period and adjusted through routine in-season actions. Separate harvest specifications (overfishing limits (OFLs), acceptable biological catches (ABCs), and annual catch limits (ACLs) are identified for actively managed stocks and stock complexes each year in the two-year period. A multi-meeting process is used to decide biennial harvest specifications and management measures:

1. **September (in odd years):** the Council adopts final OFLs , final ABCs, and a range of ACLs for stocks where a change in the harvest control rules is contemplated.
2. **November (in odd years):** the Council chooses (for public review) preliminary preferred ACLs for stocks where a change in the harvest control rules is contemplated, and adopts a range of management measures for more detailed analysis.
3. **April (in even years):** the Council decides on final harvest levels, and chooses preliminary preferred management measures for public review.
4. **June (in even years):** the Council decides on final management measures.

The Council reviews management performance and socioeconomic impacts relative to management objectives (e.g., rebuilding plans) during the two-year management period in order to consider modifying harvest specifications and management measures in the next biennial management period. New assessment results are also considered.

After considering Council recommendations and public comments, NMFS publishes the adopted regulations. For non-routine and annual management decisions, NMFS publishes a Federal Register notice and provides a public comment period before finalizing the recommendations. The GMT is involved throughout the decision-making process. The GMT includes staff from Washington, Oregon, California, NMFS, and a representative for the tribes with a recognized treaty right to take federally-managed groundfish. GMT members perform an analysis, make recommendations on proposed management measures, and present information to the Council, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP), and other Council advisory bodies.

The GAP advises the Council on policies and management decisions that affect the groundfish fishery and the public. The panel includes industry representatives of commercial and recreational groundfish sectors, a tribal representative, charter boat owners and operators, fishing organization representatives, processors, an environmental organization representative, and a public at-large representative. Each major commercial and recreational gear group is represented.

GMT and GAP meetings are open to the public, and public comment is generally accepted during the meetings.

Update on the Klamath River Dam Removal Project

ABBREVIATION OF PRESS RELEASE BY THE KLAMATH RIVER RENEWAL CORPORATION

Dam removal begins.

Removal of the Copco 2 dam structure was completed last September. Subsequent river bed work prepared the river canyon for consistent river flows, which the canyon hasn't seen in 98 years.

Copco 2 was located immediately below Copco 1 in a steep river canyon, commonly known as Ward's Canyon. Completed in 1925, Copco 2 was a diversion dam that funneled the river's flows out of the canyon and into a tunnel system that sent the water to the Copco 2 powerhouse located downstream, essentially dewatering the 1.7-mile-long canyon. Without the river's presence in the canyon, trees grew in the riverbed which, when exposed to consistent river flows, would have died off and created a hazard for future recreational users. These trees were removed in September in collaboration with area tribes.

The remaining three dams, Copco 1, Iron Gate, and JC Boyle are slated for removal in 2024. In January, the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC), initiated the drawdown process. Those three dams are expected to be completely removed by November 2024, though restoration activities will continue for several more years.

The Klamath River flows freely through Ward Canyon in Siskiyou County for the first time in 98 years. Photos by Shane Anderson of Swiftwater Films.

Reservoir Drawdown Initiated at Iron Gate Dam

EXCERPTS FROM A NEWS RELEASE BY THE KLAMATH RIVER RENEWAL PROJECT

On January 11, the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) initiated the drawdown process by opening the low-level outlet tunnel in the Iron Gate Dam. Drawdown of the JC Boyle and Copco 1 Reservoirs will begin later in January, and all reservoirs are expected to be drained by the end of February. Drawdown refers to the slow draining of the water in the reservoirs, which will be lowered in a controlled manner through tunnels located at the base of the dams.

Communities downstream of the dams will start to see changes in the river in the coming days, as sediment that has accumulated behind the dams is evacuated downstream. There is an estimated 17-20 million cubic yards of sediment behind Iron Gate, JC Boyle, and Copco 1. During the drawdown process 5-7 million cubic yards is expected to go downstream during the initial phase of drawdown in January and February. Extensive testing done by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and KRRC consultants have determined the sediment to be non-toxic, mostly consisting of dead algae, gravels, and fine clay particulates.

The bypass tunnel at the bottom of Iron Gate Dam in Northern California has been carefully reinforced so it can handle the load of water and sediment pouring through it. | Juliet Grable for NPR

VHF Marine Radio Etiquette

First, the short version of this article: (1) Be kind and respectful of all. (2) Use the main local channel for short interactions, but move to another channel for extended conversations.

And second, the long version. We all like to check in with our friends when we're offshore, but then some days -- frustration. Someone is hogging the VHF band with an endless broadcast, playing their favorite music into an open VHF mic, or venting expletives that no one else wants to hear. I've heard of a few unfortunate incidents from other boaters recently and went looking for some reminders as we ease our way toward the 2024 opener. So, let's get into it! Here are some tips from the Coast Guard and Sailing Savvy.

What is appropriate marine VHF etiquette? You must (1) use the proper channel for the situation, (2) follow standard protocol, and (3) use appropriate language and terminology. A VHF marine radio is a means of communication for many situations, but especially emergencies. And in urgent situations, the last thing you want is for your calls to be blocked because someone else won't stop broadcasting. There are alternatives for long calls. Although few of us use them to their full potential, more and more of us have VHF radios which incorporate DSC technology. When properly using the selective calling feature, only your target boat(s) will be able to hear you. You and your buddy boats will need to first register for MMSI numbers. Then program them into your radios -- and voila! Instant privacy on the VHF, and the band is still available for others. If you wish to have an extended offshore conversation consider (1) using a DSC enabled radio, or (2) if within range of a tower use your cell phone, or (3) move the discussion to a secondary channel.

A proper VHF call includes: (1) self-identification, (2) identifying your target vessel, (3) briefly stating your needs or questions, (4) waiting for a reply, and (5) clearly indicating when the conversation is completed. And of course, don't step on someone else's call.

It's important that the rules of maritime communication are respected and adhered to. Communicating via marine VHF radio is no exception. The items listed below are considered bad etiquette and can lead to the perpetrator being fined.

1. Swearing. Keep in mind open channels can be heard by everyone.
2. Not releasing the push-to-talk button.
3. Using casual language or language that does not follow marine protocol.
4. Not monitoring emergency channels and other important ones for the area.
5. Having a casual conversation on an emergency or working channel.
6. Making a fake distress call.

The USCG addresses marine communications at navcen.uscg.gov/radio-information-for-boaters.

Offshore Wind Energy Is Coming to California's North Coast!

CONTRIBUTED BY VINEYARD OFFSHORE

Vineyard Offshore is one of two companies – the other is RWE – that hold lease areas off the coast of Humboldt Bay for development of offshore wind projects. Because of the water depths, these projects, like those slated for lease areas off Morro Bay on the Central Coast, will need to employ floating wind turbine technology – the first in the United States. These projects, and their developers, will one day be sharing the waters of the Pacific with current users. We know that our project cannot be a success unless we are good neighbors, onshore and offshore.

Vineyard Offshore is developer of the first commercial-scale offshore wind project in the U.S. Now under construction off the coast of Massachusetts, Vineyard Wind has more than 40 monopile foundations installed and its first finished turbines are already generating electricity. When completed later this year, Vineyard Wind's 62 turbines will send 800 megawatts of clean power to the New England power grid, enough to power 400,000 homes.

For over a decade, Vineyard Offshore has engaged with commercial and recreational fishermen, vessel owners, fishing advocacy organizations, and fisheries research organizations, all in the interest of building relationships of trust and collaboration. We have relied on a network of Fisheries Representatives to maintain two-way communication during project development and construction. We have hired fishing vessels and charter boats to conduct fisheries surveys and support site assessment efforts, data gathering, and other activities on the water. And when issues arise, we work collaboratively with all involved to find appropriate and practicable solutions.

Here on the West Coast, we are committed to developing similar relationships, so that offshore wind and fishing can thrive together. Though still new to California, we already have in place a full-time Fisheries Liaison, Lucia Ordoñez-Gauger, who is eager to hear from you. You can reach her at lordonez@VineyardOffshore.com.

East Coast Offshore Wind Power Projects Canceled

Offshore wind is expected to play a major role in Sacramento politicians' plans to reduce California's carbon emissions. It's also a part of President Biden's plan to combat climate change. Proponents tout major wind projects as ways to generate well-paying jobs. But, as noted in our last issue, these projects are currently facing difficulties unrelated to the actual science and engineering challenges. Recent news reports documented three examples from outside our area, but which could be predictive of what might happen in California.

In the first case, European-based BP and Equinor "paused" their joint Empire Wind 2 project covering over 80,000 acres offshore of New York. The agreement, signed only two years ago, obligated the companies to sell a megawatt-hour for $107.50. Recently, due to "unforeseeable economic forces", BP and Equinor requested permission to charge $177.84/MWh when the project goes on-line. The "unforeseeable economic forces" referenced unusually high inflation and interest rate hikes which developed after the contracts were signed. The requested price increase was denied by the government, leading to the firms' "pausing" the projects.

In the second case, Orsted, which has wind powered projects in Europe and Taiwan, planned to develop two projects, named Ocean Wind 1 and Ocean Wind 2 for New Jersey. These sites were 15 miles off the coast, and expected to go on-line in 2025. Instead, last fall Orsted announced cancellations for both projects. Executives cited "macroeconomic factors, including high inflation, rising interest rates and supply chain constraints" that led to the decision.

In late January Orsted announced another "pause", this time to their Skipjack Wind 1 and Skipjack Wind 2 projects, 20 miles off Maryland. Orsted executives repeated the same mantra of "market conditions, including inflation, high interest rates and supply chain constraints".

The bottom line is that the lead contractors have realized that with the current macroeconomic situation they cannot build as previously envisioned, charge for electricity at the previously negotiated rate, and earn a profit. While the government is in discussions (and in some cases threatening lawsuits) with the lead contractors, many locals, activists and others are pleased. They believe the companies' use of powerful SONAR to scan the seafloor is behind dozens of beached whales and dolphins the last two years. Data from the NOAA shows 20 humpback whales were found dead along the New York and New Jersey shoreline in 2023, which is about four times the previous ten-year average. Interestingly, this level of whale deaths is far higher than what has resulted in recurring commercial crab season hold-ups in California.

At present the government is pouring money into the project. Recently, the harbor district received a grant from the feds for nearly $427 million. That money is earmarked for developing the terminal required to build the turbines. It will be interesting to see if the same economic forces which caused the East Coast projects to stall will begin to affect the local project, or if Sacramento and Washington D.C. will inject enough cash into the process to keep it rolling in spite of any updated financial projections.

Intro to Copper Rockfish

FROM WIKIPEDIA

The copper rockfish (Sebastes caurinus), also known as the copper seaperch, is a species of marine ray-finned fish belonging to the subfamily Sebastinae, the rockfishes, part of the family Scorpaenidae. It is found in the eastern Pacific. The specific name caurinus means “northwestern”, an allusion to Alaska.

Copper rockfish are known to be highly variable in coloration, ranging from a dark reddish brown, with pale copper blotching along the sides, to a lighter pinkish brown with a yellowish white mottling on the flanks. At one time it was thought that these variations were two different fish due to the different coloration patterns between northern and southern populations. Copper rockfish are known to create and communicate with sound produced using the swimbladder and associated muscles. These sounds are used for agonistic behaviors, including territory defense.

The copper rockfish is a relatively common rockfish of the Pacific coast. It is very widespread in its distribution, known from the very northern reaches of the Gulf of Alaska, to the Pacific side of the Baja California peninsula, north of Guerrero Negro. The copper rockfish is also very widely distributed in depth, from about 30 to 600 ft. It is a demersal fish which occurs in rocky areas with high relief.

Copper rockfish males are known to mature between three and seven years, while females mature between four and eight years. Generally the larger a female is, the more young she will bear. Copper Rockfish are a viviparous fish giving birth to live young after a gestation period of around 10 months. They are a long-lived fish, with the oldest known individual being 55 years old. Copper Rockfish are a modest fish reaching a maximum size of 23 inches and a weight of 6 pounds.

Juveniles are almost exclusively found in kelp beds and shallow rocky areas. They begin life feeding primarily on planktonic crustaceans. As they grow they continue to feed on increasingly larger crustaceans such as shrimp and crabs, as well as squid, octopus and smaller fish. In turn, copper rockfish are preyed on by lingcod, cabezone and even salmon. Seabirds and sea mammals also take their toll, and of course fishermen. Copper Rockfish are known for the table quality of their flesh and their willingness as a sportfish. The adult copper rockfish is found very close to the bottom. They are almost always associated with and around rocks, and almost never over sand. This rockfish is known to be very faithful to its chosen home and numerous tagging studies have shown that these rockfish travel no more than a mile from their chosen location. In combination with habitat patchiness and limited larva dispersal distance, this behavior means separated populations differ significantly from each other genetically.

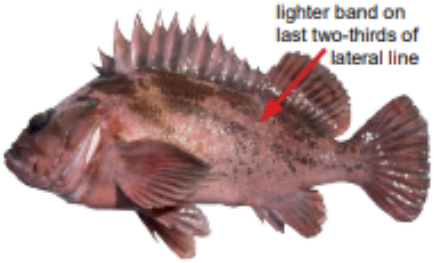
The copper rockfish is an important component in commercial fisheries in western Mexico, caught using hook and line. It is fished for by recreational anglers in California but in Washington the copper rockfish has been classified as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) under that State's Wildlife Action Plan and as a "Priority Species" under Department of Fish and Wildlife's "Priority Habitat and Species Program" and the recreational fishery in Puget Sound.

Given the current fisheries situation it’s important that we learn to distinguish Coppers from similarly appearing species, and release them unharmed using a well-designed descending device.

Rockfish coloration may vary, but some characteristics stay the same in each species.

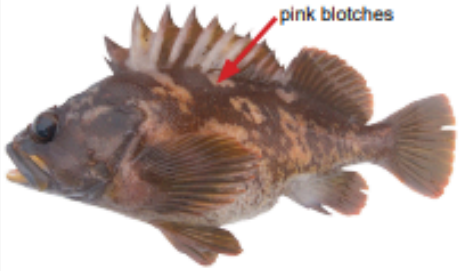
COPPER ROCKFISH

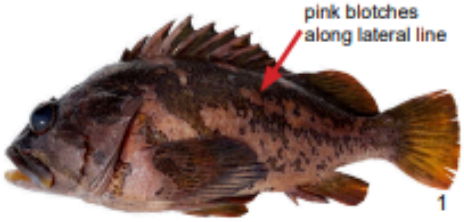
LOOK FOR: Lighter colored band on last two-thirds of lateral line, white belly

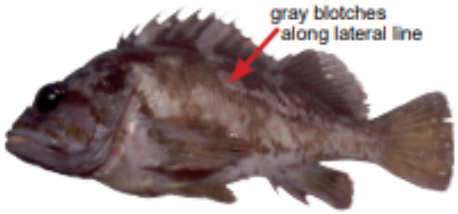


GOPHER ROCKFISH

LOOK FOR: Pink-to-gray blotches, irregular color on lateral line

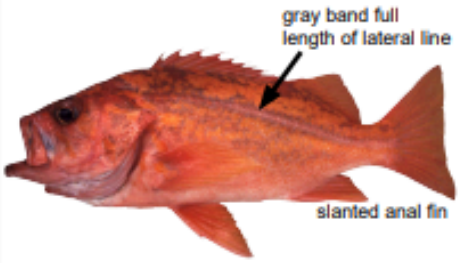


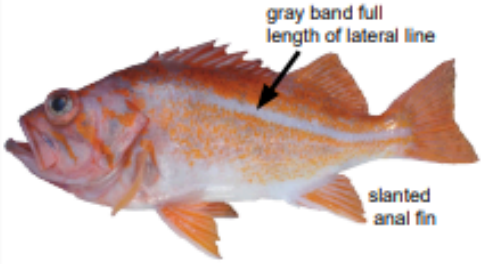


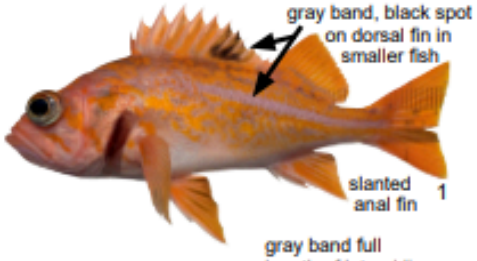


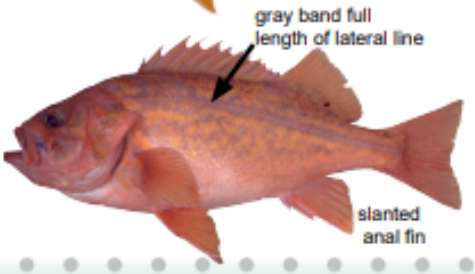
CANARY ROCKFISH

LOOK FOR: Gray band along full length of lateral line, slanted anal fin









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Angler Best Practices

Know your fish and educate others. Familiarize yourself with the rockfishes in your area through resources such as fish identification books and guides, informational flyers, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) website (wildlife.ca.gov/Fishing/Ocean/Fish-ID), game wardens, and port samplers.

Minimize the fish's injuries. When rockfishes are brought up from depth, decreasing pressure may injure them. These injuries may cause the fish to float helplessly at the surface. Many anglers use a **descending device** to help a released fish regain depth. Visit wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Groundfish/Barotrauma for more information.

Handle fish as gently as possible. Use wet hands if possible (or wet towels, though they may remove protective slime) and do not touch the eyes. Get the fish back in the water quickly. Consider using barbless hooks, and avoid using treble hooks. Visit http://bit.ly/1e9EP4G for more information.

Check before you go fishing! For up-to-date information on rockfish regulations that pertain to your area, call the Recreational Groundfish Fishing Regulations Hotline at (831) 649-2801 or visit wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Groundfish.

Photo credits: **1**- *CDFW photo by E. Roberts III. All other photos courtesy of the CDFW California Recreational Fisheries Survey*

Alternate communication format available upon request. If reasonable accommodation is needed call (916) 322-8911 or the California Relay (Telephone) Service for the deaf or hearing impaired from TDD phones at 1 (800) 735-2929 or 711.
Version 1 - January 2022

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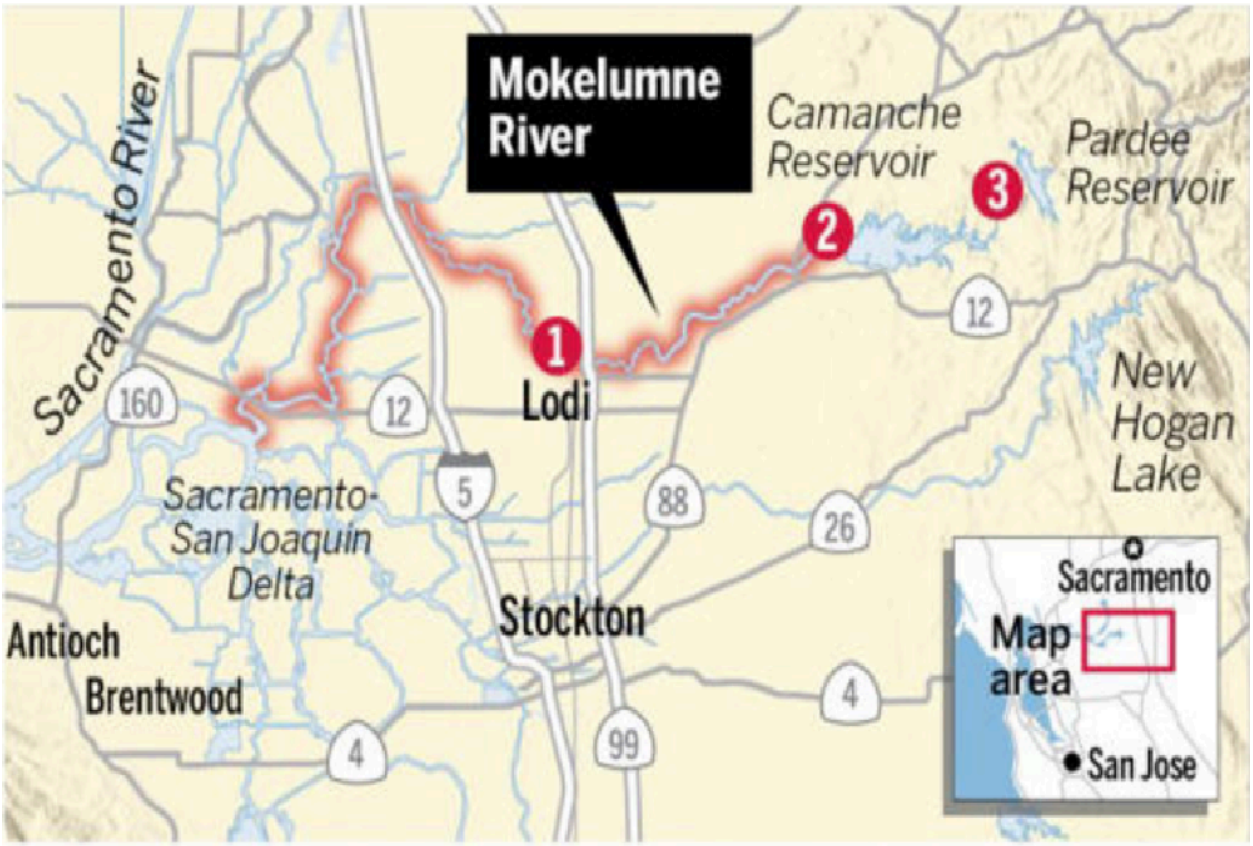
Record Breaking Salmon Spawn in the Mokelumne River

ABBREVIATED FROM MERCURY NEWS ARTICLE BY WILL McCARTHY

The Mokelumne River is a 95-mile waterway that supplies a majority of drinking water to the East Bay. Local legend has it that many years ago, the river was so packed with salmon you could walk from shore to shore along their backs. Salmon now exist there primarily because of hatcheries.

To draw salmon upstream, water must be released from dams periodically to mimic natural weather patterns. Sometimes young hatchery fish must be trucked to San Francisco Bay. Recently the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) announced a record-breaking fall salmon run in the Mokelumne. According to EBMUD, over 20,000 salmon returned to spawn in the river in 2023, the most in 80 years of record-keeping.

The utility district said the record-breaking salmon run was due to restoration projects and other measures to try to boost the salmon population. Although the Mokelumne River contributes only about 3% of the freshwater flow into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, its salmon population makes up as much as 50% of the commercial catch off the coast of California.



Restoration Progress on the Trinity River

ABBREVIATED FROM AN ARTICLE BY JULIET GRABLE

The Trinity River flows 165 miles before joining the Klamath River at Weitchpec. For thousands of years Indigenous peoples fished the river. Gold seekers first arrived in 1848. They set up mining operations on every bar of the river, using water wheels, diversion dams, water cannons and large dredges to extract every ounce. Their operation literally turned the river upside down.

In 1955 Congress concluded that excess water in the Trinity River that was "wasting to the Pacific Ocean" could be diverted to the Central Valley "without detrimental effect to the fishery resources." By 1963 two dams had been built and the Trinity River Diversion began transferring water to the Sacramento River watershed.

The dams blocked over 100 miles of habitat for salmon and steelhead, and in the early years, as much as 90% of the water impounded by the dams was diverted to the Central Valley Project. What little water was sent downstream was artificially managed. Flows flat-lined, and salmon and steelhead populations plummeted. As the cumulative consequences of the mining, nearby logging and water diversions became clear, the Department of Interior amended its management strategy. In 2000, the agency called for the restoration of Trinity River anadromous fish populations. The Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) was set up to carry out the directive by actively restoring the 40 miles below Lewiston dam and managing the timing and volume of water released from upstream. The

Large wood is placed at a rehabilitation site to create an engineered log jam. Photo by Kenneth DeCamp.

TRRP is a long-term collaborative effort involving the Yurok Tribe, Hoopa Valley Tribe, and state and federal agencies.

In 2020, the Yurok Tribe Construction Company (YTCC) officially formed as a separate entity. The company occupies a specialized niche, with operators who have years of experience operating heavy equipment specifically for restoration work. Currently the company is working on an ambitious restoration project called Oregon Gulch, just east of Junction City. Oregon Gulch is the partners' 40th project, and thus far it's largest. Here, crews from the YTCC are rerouting a straightened stretch of the Trinity River into a newly sculpted meander to help restore the river's form and function.

Getting to a clean slate required moving mountains of cobbles and gravel - the legacy of dredge mining. In August 2022, trucks began transferring the tailings to a quarry half a mile down the road. In total, they have removed 580,000 cubic yards of material from the site.

The most engineered aspect of the project is a constructed landslide, called "the plug," designed to prevent the river from routing back into a straight

Channel rehabilitation work at the Bucktail site in 2016 reconnected the river with its floodplain.

Sawmill Side Channel rehabilitated in 2009, photographed in April, 2017.

channel. A newly created floodplain is designed to sit just above the river level. Eventually the river will find its own route, depositing trees, brush and rock along the way.

The partners have seen a four-fold increase in juvenile salmon on the 40-mile "restoration reach" since 2005, but this hasn't translated into an increase in adults returning to spawn just yet. Poor ocean conditions, prolonged drought and perennial water-quality issues on the Klamath River have taken a grim toll.

On October 15 when the dumping, spreading and scraping of material ceased, the crew began the work of seeding and planting the raw banks and floodplain. The Tribe has been vegetating the program's restoration projects since 2015. They are working with 45 native species, planting shrubs and trees and using seed mixes tailored for each location, as different plants do best at different elevations above the river. The vegetation will help support a variety of birds and wildlife while reducing erosion.

Today, water diversion has been reduced from 90% to about 50% of what the dams capture. New biological opinions for both the Central Valley Project and for the operation of the Trinity River dams are being developed, which could impact future timing and volume releases.

If you would like to learn more about the project, or about the Trinity River Restoration Project overall, go to https://www.trrp.net.

Spring Vessel Safety Checklist

The following is a short list of safety-related items to ensure you are prepared for the opener:

1. Inspect your life jackets' straps, buckles and floatation materials. It's also a good idea to have a whistle and light attached to each vest that can be accessed by the wearer.
2. Check the expiration date on your flares. Replace if needed.
3. Check your fire extinguisher's age, condition and charge. Again, replace if needed.
4. Test your bilge pump, including the float switch.
5. Test your boat's horn.
6. Check your boat's navigation lights.
7. Check the batteries in all emergency lights and handheld communication devices.
8. Renew the registration on your EPIRBs and and PLBs.
9. Check your ground tackle for knots, corrosion, and worn spots.
10. Check your boat trailer tires, wheel bearings, safety chains, tie-downs and lights.

Governor Newsom Advances Water Tunnel Despite Opposition

ABBREVIATED FROM AN ARTICLE BY ADAM BEAM, AP

A long-sought and disputed project in drought-prone California (aimed at capturing more water during heavy rainstorms) reached a key milestone December 8 when Governor Gavin Newsom's administration finished an environmental review for an underground tunnel. The project still must complete a federal environmental review and obtain various state and federal permits. That process is expected to last until 2026.

The tunnel would be about 45 miles long and 36 feet wide, or large enough to carry more than 161 million gallons of water per hour. The tunnel would be another way to transfer water from Northern to Southern California. State officials said had this tunnel existed last winter, the state could have captured and stored enough water for 2.3 million people to use for one year.

The Newsom administration says the tunnel is a necessary upgrade of the state's aging infrastructure because it will protect the water supply from earthquakes and capture more water from rain storms known as atmospheric rivers. State officials have not said how much it will cost to build. A previous estimate for a different version of the project (Twin Tunnels) was $16 billion. State officials will release a new cost estimate next year.

But environmental groups, tribes and other opponents say the project will take more water out of the river than is necessary and will harm endangered species of fish. They say the Newsom administration is ignoring their concerns. The Sierra Club said in a statement that the tunnel's construction and operation would "cause mass environmental destruction for Delta communities and ecosystems." Scott Artis, executive director of

the Golden State Salmon Association, called it "an extinction plan for salmon." Jon Rosenfield, science director for San Francisco Baykeeper, said California already diverts more than half of the water flowing through Central Valley rivers for farms and big cities, which threatens native species of fish.

The report is significant because it signals the Newsom administration's commitment to completing the project despite strong opposition from communities in the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Delta region.

Proposed responses to comments, as well as the Final EIR and accompanying informational resources, can be accessed at www.deltaconveyanceproject.com. This action is the last step DWR is required to take under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) prior to deciding whether to certify the EIR and approve the proposed project.

The Final EIR was prepared by DWR as the lead agency to comply with the requirements of CEQA. The Final EIR is presented in two volumes: 1) the contents of the entire Draft EIR, as revised, and 2) all comments received on the Draft EIR and responses to substantive comments.

EIR access here: https://www.deltaconveyanceproject.com/planning-processes/california-environmental-quality-act/final-eir

New Boat Dock

There is a new small-boat dock in Arcata. Just be certain you return well before low tide!

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Annual Engine Maintenance

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