

# HUMBOLDT AREA SALTWATER ANGLERS

A VOICE FOR SALTWATER SPORTFISHERS

## 2023 SUMMER NEWSLETTER



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**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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Submission of article topics and photos should be sent to [jcphasa@gmail.com](mailto:jcphasa@gmail.com).

Comments are always welcome and should be sent to [jcphasa@gmail.com](mailto: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))

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This is issue #52.



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## President's Message



A major sea change is well underway with HASA. The Board has completed most of the legal steps required to become a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. It's been a complicated process, and one the board could not have completed without the support of our members at last winter's annual meeting and the assistance of attorneys Jeff Slack and Tim Needham. HASA was originally created as a 501(c)(4), which gave us more leeway in the kinds of activities in which we could participate. However, being a 501(c)(4) disqualified HASA from many grants available to support local sport fishing related projects. It has become apparent that the benefits of becoming a 501(c)(3) would make the change worthwhile. This change is likely to be timely in light of the pending wind power project.

Speaking of the wind power project, this will drive major changes to the harbor's make-up and commercial activity level. As we learned years ago, when dealing with the MPA issue, we can either fight a losing battle to prevent the inevitable or climb aboard and work within the process to minimize adverse effects to the sport fishing community. Barring something unforeseen which makes the project unnecessary or infeasible, all signs are that the government in conjunction with large commercial interests will build a vast array of offshore windmill electrical generators and install many of them offshore of Humboldt County. This won't happen overnight -- the most optimistic estimate is it will be at least 2030 before anything is actually placed offshore. HASA will work to minimize adverse effects stemming from the project, as will the commercial fishing industry. The commercial sector has also created its own non-profit organization, California Fishermen's Resiliency Association, and is looking for a HASA member to attend their meetings. If you have the time and inclination to represent HASA at their meetings, and keep our membership up-to-date on developments, please contact a board member.

As of August 21, the nearshore rockfish season closed locally for the remainder of the year. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) subsequently announced that as of September 1, the 50-fathom restrictions would extend to the Mendocino Groundfish Management Area (GMA), San Francisco GMA and Central GMA. See page 7 for more information on the groundfish closure and links to CDFW web pages to assist in identifying shelf species which must be released unharmed (are you carrying an effective descender?) and various slope species which may be retained.

As a final announcement, Joe Polos plans to retire as editor-in-chief of our quarterly newsletter. As did his predecessor Casey Allen, Joe has produced a quality newsletter that keeps us all both informed and in touch with one another. The Board is looking into options as past queries among our members indicate that both the paper and on-line versions are important to the HASA "brand" and as a resource to our members. Please continue to send your fishing and boating photos, plus proposed articles, to HASA at [hasa6191@gmail.com](mailto:hasa6191@gmail.com).

Till next time, Fair Winds and Following Seas.

Larry De Ridder

## Recreational Pacific Halibut Fishery Closed

The recreational Pacific halibut fishery closed statewide on Friday, August 4 at 11:59 p.m. Based on the catch projections, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) estimated that the 2023 California recreational quota of 39,520 pounds had been caught. As of press time, CDFW has not released final numbers.

CDFW tracks the progress of the fishery each year to achieve but not exceed the California quota. CDFW field staff monitor at public launch ramps and charter boats the landings of Pacific halibut catch throughout the season, along with other marine sportfish species. The quota is determined annually by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC).

CDFW conferred with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the IPHC and the Pacific Fishery Management Council to review projected catch amounts and determine the closure date. Formal authority to close the fishery resides with NMFS, which took action to close the fishery following consultation with CDFW. CDFW implements changes to the season pursuant to authority found in sections 1.95 and 28.20, Title 14, California Code of Regulations.

For current information about the Pacific halibut fishery, science, or management, please check the following resources:

NMFS Hotline: (800) 662-9825

CDFW Recreational Pacific Halibut Regulations Hotline: (831) 649-2801

CDFW website: [wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Pacific-Halibut](http://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Pacific-Halibut)

IPHC website: [iphc.int](http://iphc.int)



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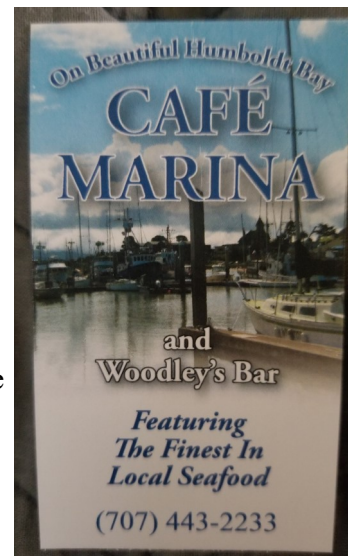
## Offshore Wind Power Project

RWE Offshore Wind Holdings and CIP/Vineyard Offshore recently won the rights to two local offshore lease areas. They intend to build massive wind-power generators locally and anchor them about 20 miles offshore. On June 12 HASA participated in a Zoom meeting with representatives of these companies. On July 26, the meeting resumed, this time in person at Woodley Island. The visiting company representatives were fisheries and marine affairs managers, plus a local government stakeholder representative. These initial meetings were basically an introduction all around and a chance for HASA to provide them with some baseline information concerning the local sport fishing scene and our target marine species. They are separately meeting with the commercial fishers and other stake holder groups which will be affected if the project proceeds as envisioned. Separately, HASA has already had one meeting with the Harbor District concerning this project. Currently one of the issues under discussion is how to create effective two-way communication channels between the local sport fishing community and the biologists working for these companies.

Information obtained at a separate government agency meeting attended by HASA last winter showed that there are a tremendous number of local issues to be addressed beyond the obvious impacts to fishing and bay channel congestion. Those issues include everything from beefing up the local power grid in preparation for the proposed electrical input, to providing additional housing for incoming workers, to new facilities at CR to train workers for the project. In the meantime RWE and CIP will be going through scientific studies and permitting hoops. For example, next summer they hope to run an unmanned submersible vehicle between the near-shore waters and the lease areas, to gain a better understanding of the nature and stability of our underwater landscape.

Humboldt Bay is the preferred location for such a project because of two key features. First, the most reliable wind on the West Coast for power generation is off Humboldt. Second, we have a deep water channel without an overhead bridge. These proposed towers are so tall that there is no way to build one in a harbor and then tow it offshore if there is any kind of overhead obstruction, and there is really no way to build one offshore. The turbine blades are so long they can't be transported by land. So the blades can be built here, or at an alternative waterfront location so they can be loaded directly onto a specialized cargo ship for transport here for final assembly. Due to the harbor's features and location, Eureka is visualized as a construction hub for not only the locally installed windmills, but also for those destined for transport to other west coast proposed locations. To see a presentation by the Harbor Commission, go to <https://www.youtube.com/@humboldtbayharbordistrict>.

This project will take a long time to develop, and it will be important for HASA to remain actively involved so that adverse impacts to fish and fishing are minimized. And who knows -- when all is said and done we may ultimately have some offshore fishing structure for those years when the warm water swings close to shore.



# Offshore Wind – Fisheries Communications Plans and Fisheries Working Group

By Kim Gordon, Principal, Resource Logic

In June 2023, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) executed offshore wind development leases for the two Wind Energy Areas off the Humboldt Coast. These leases are awarded to RWE Offshore Wind Holdings, LLC (RWE) and Vineyard Offshore.

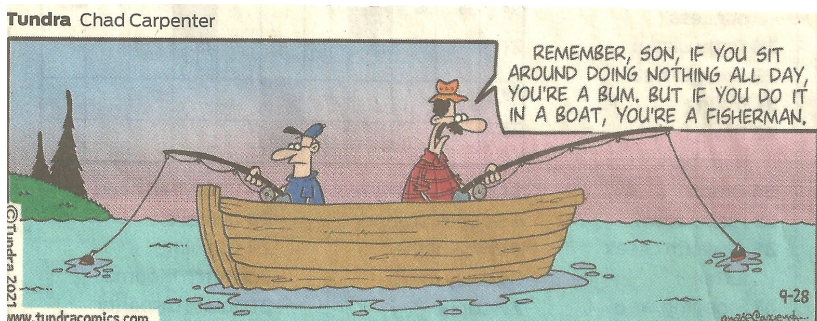
This summer RWE and Vineyard Offshore met with HASA President Larry De Ridder and members of the HASA board to provide introductions and begin a dialogue with the association. The two developers are currently drafting Fisheries Communications Plans, which will provide a framework for long-term communication and engagement with the recreational fishing community. These plans will be available this fall for review and feedback, and the developers will be hosting a meeting to solicit input from local fishermen. Please feel free to reach out to Rick Robins, RWE’s Marine Affairs Manager (Rick.Robins@rwe.com, 757-876-3778, americas.rwe.com) or Erik Peckar, Vineyard Offshore’s West Coast Director of External Affairs (epeckar@vineyardoffshore.com, 703-244-9585, vineyardoffshore.com) with any questions.

Relatedly, the California Coastal Commission is solidifying membership for the California Offshore Wind and Fisheries Working Group, also known as the Condition 7c Working Group. The purpose of the working group is to develop a statewide strategy for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of impacts to fishing and fisheries related to the offshore wind development leases recently issued by BOEM. The working group will include representatives from the central and north coasts, and from commercial and recreational sectors. Both RWE and Vineyard Offshore look forward to participating in this working group to build productive and respectful partnerships with the fishing community and develop strategies for successful and sustained shared use between offshore wind and fisheries. More information on the working group can be found on the Commission’s website ([Upcoming Projects \(ca.gov\)](https://www.ccc.ca.gov/Upcoming-Projects))

## Sportfishing’s Economic Impact

The American Sportfishing Association in partnership with Southwick Associates has released updated figures regarding the economic impact of anglers, nationwide. Their figures indicate that there are 13,800,000 saltwater and 40,900,000 freshwater anglers in the country. Sport fishers’ combined economic impact to the economy is \$148 billion, and they support 945,000 jobs. These anglers also contribute \$1.8 billion toward conservation efforts. To review the report by state or district, visit [asafishing.org/economic-impacts-of-recreational-fishing](https://asafishing.org/economic-impacts-of-recreational-fishing).

Locally (Second District of California) the report documents 41,500 anglers, \$65.2 million spent in California for fishing-related purchases, \$119,500,000 in economic output, and 830 jobs supported.



## CDFW Closes Nearshore Groundfish Fisheries

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) announced that as of August 21, the 50 fathom Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) boundary line for the Northern Groundfish Management Area (GMA), from the California/Oregon state line to Cape Mendocino, is in effect.

CDFW subsequently announced similar restrictions effective September 1 for the Mendocino GMA (Cape Mendocino to Point Arena), San Francisco GMA (Point Arena to Pigeon Point) and Central GMA (Pigeon Point to Point Conception).

The 50-fathom RCA boundary line is defined by straight lines connecting a set of waypoints as adopted in federal regulations (50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G). It shall be unlawful to take or possess nearshore species (shallow and deeper nearshore rockfish, cabezon and greenlings) in these areas after their respective closure dates.

Fishing for and retention of sablefish and flatfish are not affected by this action and may be targeted, taken, and possessed year-round in all depths. **However, no gear may be deployed shoreward of the 50-fathom RCA boundary line when shelf rockfish, slope rockfish or lingcod are possessed onboard the vessel.** Vessels may transit shoreward of the 50-fathom RCA boundary line with shelf rockfish, slope rockfish or lingcod in possession if no gear is deployed. Changes in retention allowances described here for boat-based modes do not apply to shore-based anglers or divers.

CDFW took this in-season action to prohibit retention of quillback rockfish, in what is likely to be a series of steps to reduce the total impacts to quillback rockfish. CDFW anticipates that additional action(s) may be needed for this and other GMAs in the remainder of 2023 and in 2024, in response to the most recent quillback rockfish stock assessment indicating the population is in severe decline.

CDFW urges anglers to use best fishing practices to reduce impacts to quillback rockfish and other prohibited groundfish species. These include reducing mortality when releasing fish by utilizing a descending device and relocating to different fishing grounds or switching targets if quillback rockfish or other prohibited species are encountered.

CDFW recommends reviewing the Summary of Recreational Groundfish Fishing Regulations page before each trip to ensure anglers are up to date on the most recent groundfish regulations.

For information on groundfish visit CDFW's Marine Region Groundfish page ([Groundfish \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdffishandwildlife.ca.gov/Species/groundfish)). See [Nearshore rockfish ID flyer \(ca.gov\)](#), [Shelf Rockfish Found off the California Coast](#) and [Slope Rockfish Found off the California Coast](#) for assistance in identifying these species assemblages. If necessary, print those three pages and take them with you when bottom fishing.

## Letter from BoatUS to All Boaters

Governor Newsom's proposed 2023-2024 budget calls for a 300% increase in boat registration fees. Although California boat registration fees have not increased in several years, BoatUS and our state partner, the Recreational Boaters of California (RBOC), do not believe such a significant increase has been justified by the administration. Please contact your state legislators to request they reject this proposal and engage with boating stakeholders to develop realistic fees that are dedicated to boating programs.

You can easily contact your state representatives using our prefilled form ([Action Center \(votervoices.net\)](#)). Feel free to add your own views to this message. **Take Action.**

RBOC, BoatUS and other recreational boating stakeholders have been engaged in a two-year process to review the state's boating programs. While we anticipated there would be a modest increase, we expected the state to recognize the significant contribution boaters already make, such as \$107 million in annual motor fuel taxes. It is our expectation that the fees and taxes paid by boaters go to fund boating programs. Unfortunately, that is not the case with the current proposal.

You can read more about this issue at the RBOC website ([RBOC.org](#)).

Now is the time to speak up and request your state representatives stand firm in rejecting this massive registration fee increase. While boaters are willing to pay our fair share, this will be a barrier for many Californians to enjoy the state's waterways.

Please contact BoatUS Government Affairs [govtaffairs@boat.us](mailto:govtaffairs@boat.us) if you have additional questions.

## Maine Lobstermen Win in Court

Though it is premature to predict whether it will affect California's commercial crab fishery, in Maine, the lobstermen beat the government in court when it came to proposed new gear rules. The US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled that NMFS overstepped its authority by trying to force Maine lobstermen to reduce the number of trap lines in the water by 98 percent within ten years. The government claimed the proposed rules were to protect endangered North Atlantic right whales. The lobstermen countered that NMFS own data failed to show any whale deaths due to lobster trap entanglement. The lawsuit was filed two years ago and claimed the rules were set based on hypothetical "worst-case scenario" data and approved to force commercial lobstermen to convert to expensive ropeless gear.

Because in California there have been some documented whale deaths due to entanglement, and we're in a different court circuit, the ruling doesn't directly apply here. However, having a three-judge appellate court ruling state the government's "legal reasoning was not just wrong, it was egregiously wrong" may deter similar federal rule-making in other fisheries. Only time and possibly other lawsuits will tell if this is a one-off or the beginning of a sea-change in how fisheries rules are generated.

## CDFW Director Opens Razor Clam Fishery in Humboldt County

The Director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has re-opened the recreational razor clam fishery in Humboldt County following a recommendation from state health agencies that consumption of razor clams in the area no longer poses a significant threat for domoic acid exposure.

In April 2023, the razor clam fishery was closed in Humboldt County due to risk of domoic acid exposure. During the closure, state health agencies continued to assess domoic acid levels which consistently exceeded the federal action level for domoic acid of  $\geq 20$  parts per million (ppm). However, clams collected from Clam Beach, Humboldt County in July 2023 all had domoic acid concentrations lower than this action level.

Domoic acid is a naturally occurring toxin produced by certain types of plankton that can be harmful or even fatal to humans. Domoic acid poisoning in humans may occur within minutes to hours after consumption of affected seafood and can result in signs and symptoms ranging from vomiting and diarrhea to permanent loss of short-term memory (Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning), coma, or death. There is no way to prepare clams that will remove the toxin. Cooking and freezing have no effect.

CDFW reminds clammers that the daily bag limit for razor clams is 20 and the first 20 clams dug must be retained regardless of size or condition. Each person is required to keep a separate container and is not allowed to commingle their clams with another person's when digging and transporting clams to shore.

For more information, please refer to Section 29.20 Clams General and Section 29.45 for specific razor clam regulations.

For more information on any fishery closure information or health advisories, please visit CDFW's Ocean Health Advisories website.

To get the latest information on current fishing season closures related to domoic acid, call CDFW's Domoic Acid Fishery Closure Information Line at (831) 649-2883.

For the latest consumption warnings, call the California Department of Public Health's Biotxin information Line at (510) 412-4643 or toll-free at (800) 553-4133.



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## **CDFW Completes Release of 23 Million Fall-Run Chinook Salmon**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has completed the release of approximately 23 million fall-run Chinook salmon raised at its four Central Valley anadromous fish hatcheries, the Feather River Fish Hatchery, the Nimbus Fish Hatchery, the Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery, and the Merced River Hatchery.

The 23 million salmon raised and released by CDFW in 2023 represents a 15 percent increase over the roughly 20 million fall-run Chinook salmon raised and released in 2022. This year's production goals were increased as a coordinated effort among state and federal partnering agencies to help fall-run Chinook salmon overcome impacts from an extended drought that increased water temperatures and decreased water flow throughout the Central Valley during critical salmon spawning and rearing periods. Drought conditions coupled with Thiamine Deficiency Complex, a vitamin deficiency that impacts reproduction, have reduced in-river spawning success in the past several years.

Beyond the hatchery production increase, CDFW carried out several new, innovative, and experimental release strategies in 2023 to take advantage of some of the best in-river flows and water conditions in years and to increase overall survival. These included:

\*\* For the first time since 2020, CDFW conducted in-river salmon releases within the Feather River and the American River to take advantage of the increased water flows associated with winter storms and runoff that lingered into the spring. These flows increased available rearing habitat and provided for increased survival while migrating toward the ocean. Salmon smolts outfitted with acoustic tags were released with larger groups in their natal rivers to allow CDFW to monitor and track their downstream migration to the ocean. Preliminary results suggest high survival for groups of hatchery-raised fish released into the river systems in 2023. Watch the May 16, 2023, release of fall-run Chinook salmon smolts into the American River (Video).

\*\* The more than one million salmon fry released into the American River in February represented CDFW's initial effort with "Parentage Based Tagging" or PBT. These juvenile salmon don't carry physical markings or tags, but their genetic signatures have been recorded and stored for future analysis to evaluate the overall success of the fry release.

\*\* The Feather River Fish Hatchery released smaller juvenile fall-run Chinook salmon earlier in the spring than the typical smolt releases to diversify hatchery release strategies as well as the timing and size of hatchery-raised fish entering the bay and marine environments.

\*\* CDFW added to the release sites and strategies used within San Francisco and San Pablo bays. These included new release locations at: the Estuary and Ocean Science Center in partnership with San Francisco State University; Point San Quentin, in partnership with the Marin Rod and Gun Club; and Brickyard Cove in Richmond in partnership with the City of Richmond and the Golden Gate Salmon Association. At these locations, smolts were released at night on strong outgoing tides to reduce bird predation and encourage seaward migration.

\*\* Except for PBT release groups in the American River, 25 percent of all fall-run Chinook salmon raised and released by CDFW's Central Valley anadromous fish hatcheries carry coded-wire tags (CWT) with information on their origin and have a clipped adipose fin to indicate

their hatchery origin. Both CWT and PBT tagged fish will provide important scientific data that will inform future management decisions and hatchery operations.

Fall-run Chinook salmon support the bulk of California’s commercial and recreational salmon fishing seasons. Although ocean and in-river salmon fishing seasons have been closed for 2023, fishing seasons will be reevaluated in 2024.

## HASA Clothing Sale

Following our May albacore fishing seminar and fund raiser, our stock of clothing has been reduced. Since then we’ve further reduced prices. Once enough stock has been sold to alleviate storage issues, we’ll be stocking new designs. Please email us at [clderidder@hotmail.com](mailto:clderidder@hotmail.com) and we’ll help you update your HASA wardrobe.

### Men’s

XL	6 long-sleeved shirts
L	13 short-sleeved shirts and 5 long-sleeved shirts
M	16 short-sleeved shirts and 7 long-sleeved shirts
S	5 short-sleeved shirts and 2 long-sleeved shirts

### Women’s

2XL	1 short-sleeved shirt
XL	3 short-sleeved shirts
L	6 short-sleeved shirts
M	4 short-sleeved shirts
S	3 short-sleeved shirts

### Youth

XL	2 short-sleeved shirts
L	4 short-sleeved shirts
M	4 short-sleeved shirts
S	2 short-sleeved shirts

Hats	Adjustable size	2 red, 1 brown, 9 black
	Flex fit	1 blue (S/M), 1 brown (L/XL)

Newly Reduced Prices: long sleeved shirt \$14 each or 2 for \$25  
short sleeved shirt \$12 each or 2 for \$20  
hats \$9 each or 2 for \$15

### Note from the Newsletter Manager:

As this is my last HASA newsletter I want to thank everybody that provided articles, pictures, recipes, and fishing tips. It is all your contributions that have made the newsletter, I was really just assembling what you all provided. I especially want to thank Phil Glenn who I spent many enjoyable breakfasts with at Café Marina talking about fishing and just life in general.

If you know somebody interested in taking over producing the newsletter please contact Larry DeRidder at [clderidder@hotmail.com](mailto:clderidder@hotmail.com).

Wishing you all great fishing adventures.

Joe





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