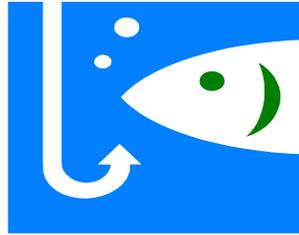


HUMBOLDT AREA SALTWATER ANGLERS

A VOICE FOR SALTWATER SPORTSMEN



FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER

President's Message

Well, our first year is almost complete. HASA is active in many programs directed at enhancing our fishing opportunities. Our brief salmon season wasn't as productive as I would have hoped. However, it did put the North Coast on the

map as a fishing destination. The local economy benefited from the out of town guests that were drawn to the area because of the salmon season. Many of the visiting fishermen that I spoke to were very impressed by our congeniality and the great opportunities for rock fish, halibut and albacore. The very fact that we did have a salmon season shows that the efforts of Ben Doane, 'Sumoco,' Tim Machado, 'CollyM,' and Jim Yarnell, 'JimmyY' were very effective. The salmon meetings will soon begin again and our representatives need support

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from all our members and the members of the KMZ coalition.

The MLPA process is well underway. The public meetings need to be well attended by HASA and friends interested in a fair outcome. The Humboldt Tuna Club web site will have a special forum for MLPA blogs, please utilize the site to stay informed and voice your concerns and recommendations.

HASA is nearing the completion of its first year necessitating the need for nominations and elections of officers and board members. Four board members will be completing their terms and need to be replaced or re-elected to a two year term. The process for nomination and election will be announced prior to the New Year. The general election and results will be at our next general meeting in January. It has been an honor to serve as your president and I appreciate the help that I received throughout the year. Tim Klassen, 'Reel Steel,' will need help from everyone as your new president. He is very involved in the MLPA and rockfish process which require considerable amounts of his time.

Gene Morris
President
HASA

The 10 Day 2009 Salmon Season

By Ben Doane

The short ten day salmon California season for 2009 has come and gone. While the catch was not great, about 670 Chinook for 9000+ angler trips, it was the first and only opportunity to fish for ocean salmon in the state since 2007. Initially the weather was not the best with wind and large swells, but it improved as the season progressed. Undaunted the ever optimistic fishermen and women ventured out on the ocean to chase the elusive Chinook.

By the fourth day of the season the more persistent anglers discovered that the few fish in the area were hanging out in deep water at the 1000 foot

depth line and beyond. They were able to scratch up some fish by slow trolling at 250 to 350 feet down on the wire or by mooching at those depths. The season ended with the few anglers that endured the weather and small numbers of fish, being rewarded with fish up to more than 30 pounds.



Opening morning of salmon season at Woodley Island was busy with optimistic anglers

The bright spot in the salmon season was the way the local community stepped up to make the anglers' opportunity the best and safest possible. Before the season began the City of Eureka Department of Public Works, with the assistance of Jim Yarnall of the Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers (HASA), washed down the boat ramps near the Samoa Bridge and at the Boat Basin. They did that twice prior to the opener. The City also arranged for additional port-a-potties and boat trailer parking to service the anglers. The County of Humboldt set up additional boat trailer parking at the Fields Landing boat ramp. The City of Eureka's Small Boat Basin and the Humboldt Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District's Woodley Island

Marina worked with local, out of area and charter vessel owners to accommodate as many boats for the salmon season as possible.

The National Weather Service developed and published a special section on their weather website. On a single page of the website an angler could view all of the weather related issues relevant to their safety and fishing enjoyment. As usual, Mother Nature did her best to confound the situation by moderating some of the winds and swells forecast, but it is better to be safe than sorry.

The business community did it's best to make the local anglers and those from out of the area welcome. The Times Standard published a special section on August 28th which provided maps, tides and information about local anglers' resources. Englund Marine Supply Company in conjunction with Sudden Link Communications sponsored a no cost salmon contest. Each salmon registered earned the angler a special hat and resulted in a one dollar donation to HASA. While there may not have been that many salmon entered in the contest, Sudden Link donated \$250 to HASA to help the organization continue to work for the ocean sport fishermen and women on the North Coast.

The net results of the salmon season were many. There were many visitors from out of the area who spent dollars stimulating the local economy. The visitors' rewards may not have been a great number of salmon, but many will now return to the area to fish for rockfish, halibut and albacore. Those fisheries were not as widely known outside the area as they are now. This season demonstrated the ability of the governmental entities and the business community to rise to a cause and support the ocean sports anglers.

With the 2009 season behind us, HASA is now preparing to negotiate a hopefully more satisfying salmon season for 2010. The preliminary salmon returns to the Klamath systems are just beginning to be available. The adult salmon returns initially support the projections made in the spring of 2009 and the jack counts are still too small at this time to quantify. There are not yet any significant return numbers available for the Sacramento

system, which is the primary driver of our ability to determine the 2010 season. As information becomes available it will be posted on the website: humboldtuna.com in the salmon thread.



By mid week, local charter captains found the salmon far offshore and very deep.

Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

By Tim Klassen – Vice President HASA

By now most of you have heard of the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative (MLPAI). It is a 1999 law that requires California to establish a network of Marine Reserves along its coastline. These reserves are to be placed according to the “best readily available science”. For the first few years the initiative languished due to a lack of state funds. But along came a group of pro-reserve environmental organizations to join with the state to fund the process. The State and the Resource Legacy Foundation Fund (RLFF) formed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to outline how the law would be instituted. Coastside

Fishing Club filed a lawsuit challenging the use of private money and lost. This is also about when the Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) was born. The BRTF was not part of the original legislation but was included in the MOU. It gets more confusing (with more acronyms). The law requires public participation so a Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) was formed in each area. To ensure that the “best readily available science” is used, a Science Advisory Team (SAT) was also formed. So, with the help of the SAT the RSG makes proposals to the BRTF who review and sometimes manipulate the proposals before sending a recommendation to the California Fish and Game Commission. The Fish and Game Commission is the final word and they vote on the proposals and adopt the winner. There has been a lot of questionable politics after the proposals leave the RSG. The BRTF is made up of appointees by the governor. They include a marina developer and an oil lobbyist.

So what is next for us? The MLPA has completed the south central and north central coast and is nearing completion of the south coast. The MLPA has had a couple of informational meetings here on the North Coast already. The next meetings are currently scheduled for October 28th and November 17th. Those dates may change. The MLPAl staff should request stakeholder nominations in late October with the deadline for nominations in late November. They are requesting that groups submitting external proposals declare their intent by early November and to submit external MPA arrays by mid December. These timelines may change, however.

So what are we doing about it here? HASA directors recently voted to join the California Fisheries Coalition. The coalition will include local and national recreational fishing organizations, commercial fishing organizations, aquaculture, charter boat organizations, and conservation groups. Go to their website at www.cafisheriescoalition.org to learn more. It is in our best interest to work with other organizations and other communities to maximize our voice and minimize loss of access to our ocean resources. The CFC will begin working on an external proposal very soon.

Here’s what **YOU** can do. Tell your friends and neighbors that California Coastal fisheries on the North Coast are some of the LEAST exploited fisheries in the world. That the current fishing regulations are working. That the north coast

cannot afford to lose fishing jobs and that fishing is a large part of the North Coast heritage. Your heritage. Tell your state representatives that fishing is important to you and your family. Tell them that you fish, you vote and you have a long memory.

Quote of note:

Heard at least 20 times on VHF channel 68,

“At least we’re fishing”

An answer to the Marine Life Protection Act worth writing about

This editorial by Casey Allen was originally published in the Outdoor Writers of California October Newsletter

One of the hottest outdoor stories in California this year is the Marine Life Protection Act. Anyone following the action will see well financed, big box environmental groups taking on poor, politically inexperienced fishermen to create Marine Protected Areas with the blessing of the State. The story is full of drama, conflict, manipulation, ambition, and greed. There are plots and sub-plots, good guys and bad. Many fishermen are wondering how private organizations can conduct State business that adversely affects its citizens. The concept of establishing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) was fine and many fishermen supported it. A network of MPAs along the California coast were

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designed to close fishing and other activities so species can prosper and generate a higher population that will theoretically spill over into areas that are still open to fishing. The process of creating these underwater parks was supposed to be open and transparent and include all user groups. The size and locations were to be based on the best science available and takes into consideration socioeconomic impacts.

In reality, fishermen are finding the MLPA process is robbing them of more coastline than they realized. The process is based on a scientific concept and not actual scientific data. The work stakeholder groups invested in alternative plans was ignored. The results will not only negatively impact fishermen but the businesses that support them and the port cities they launch from.

Fishermen are fighting a Governor who wants an environmental legacy he cannot afford while at the same time is closing State Parks for budget reasons. Fishermen are faced with a decision making “Blue Ribbon Task Force” whose chairperson is a lobbyist for big oil companies (big oil?), and the Fish and Game Commission who have one member with an obvious conflict of interest by working for the environmental group funding the MPLA implementation.

Fishermen feel they are being steamrolled, that too many areas are being closed needlessly, and that California’s constitutional right to fish is threatened. Fishermen believe, especially in the North, that the MLPA is like raising taxes during a budget surplus. The answer to this lopsided battle may be the creation of artificial reefs. It is a scientifically proven fact that

artificial reefs attract and hold large numbers of fish species. The creation of a reef on an otherwise barren ocean bottom could easily offset the lost fishing opportunities from MPAs. Environmentalists agree that artificial reefs are beneficial in providing more fish habitat while lessening fishing pressure on natural habitats. Examples of success are the hundreds of artificial reefs scattered all along the US East Coast and Gulf Coast.

Artificial reefs are also good for the environment because they utilize materials that are hazardous to dispose of. The mothball fleet in Suisun Bay has approximately 70 Navy vessels that are slowly rotting away and threatening the bay with pollution. A Rand Corporation report showed reefing as one of the most economical and environmentally friendly methods of disposing of old ships. Opponents might say they don't want 'trash' dumped in the ocean, but we call them building blocks. Ships must be cleaned of all toxins and contaminants to EPA standards before they are sunk and that is where most of the cost of reefing is. Then they are towed to the sink site, flooded and sunk. A ship provides more space for plankton sized critters and plants to attach than a natural reef. Soon small fish appear followed closely by larger fish. In less than a year an entire ecosystem is operating.

The California Ships to Reefs organization

(<http://www.californiashipstoreefs.org/>) is a non-profit group of divers working toward a statewide reefing program. Although their interest is new dive locations, they realize their chance of success is much better when partnered with fishing organizations. Most of the East Coast artificial reef success was due to fishermen. In San Diego, the vessel Yukon was sunk 10 years ago at a cost of 1.5 million dollars. The reef is now estimated to add 4.5 million dollars to the local economy each year.

California Ships to Reefs and partner Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers (humboldtuna.com) are hoping our elected officials will see the win-win opportunity and use stimulus money to create a reefing program which will provide jobs cleaning ships and recycling materials, help sport fishing and dive related business, and above all – keep sport fishermen fishing.

California Ships to Reefs resurrected the WWII saying “loose lips sink ships” so please, take this opportunity to spread the word and get people talking.

Wave Energy Conversion update

By Larry De Ridder

PG&E's WaveConnect project planning continues, with meetings held approximately monthly. The most significant development since our last newsletter is PG&E's concession to the fishing community to submit the proposed pilot project location as far north of the bar as possible and still keep it within their study area. The site will be approximately two miles long and half a mile wide, with the outside edge running along the three-mile line. That puts the project in water approximately 25 fathoms deep, basically offshore of the Arcata bottoms. From the sport fishing community's perspective, this puts it inshore of most halibut drifting areas, north of most Humboldt Bay based salmon trolling effort, south of most Trinidad based salmon trolling effort, and minimizes impacts on winter crabbing. At the request of the commercial fishermen the projected 12 -24 devices will be in a single line running parallel to shore, rather than in a 3x4 or 4x6 grid. The commercial crabbers felt this design would minimize entanglement with winter commercial crab trap layouts.

Equally important from our perspective, is that thus far neither PG&E nor any of the government agency representatives I've spoken with have expressed any intention to block sport fishing access to the test site, with one exception. During construction and while the electrical transmission lines are being laid, the Coast Guard will almost certainly close the vicinity. If I understood the USCG representatives correctly, if they can accurately mark the exact locations of the devices and anchoring systems, they may well be OK with boating and fishing access in the area. That final decision hasn't been made yet. Given that this will be the first serious offshore pilot project in the nation, we have the opportunity to prove that we can share the ocean with

utility companies as successfully as Southern states' fishermen share the Gulf with oil companies. If we develop conflicts here, it's possible that banning sport boats and fishing from the vicinity of these devices could become the norm. On the other hand, if we can co-exist successfully, then access is likely to become the norm. Given the fish-attracting potential of these devices, I'm looking forward to the day when I can mark my favorite WEC on my GPS.

Winter meetings will focus on the specific types of devices to be tested locally, anchoring/mooring systems to be employed, and how management will respond to unexpected issues and events.

If you have some particular concern or input you would like considered at the Working Group meetings, please leave a PM for Larry De Ridder on the HTC website. Presently, working group meetings are expected to be held approximately monthly through March 2010, then only as needed once the proposal is submitted to the government. Informational updates will be posted in upcoming newsletters and/or the website.



Greg Miller of Ukiah did not catch a legal salmon while fishing out of Eureka. But he did catch his first Pacific Halibut, a 45 pounder. Later he said, "I'm sitting by the pool drinking a beer and I'm in a glow about that fish."

A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD



Ever wonder if the Coast Guard gets annoyed with rescuing stranded fishermen? The smiles on these guy's faces as they prepare to tow a disabled boat tells the story.

The US Coast Guard was out in force during the 10 day 2009 salmon season. Although the predicted crowds did not materialize as feared, the Coast Guard was very busy. Each day there seemed to be



someone broken down on the water and one day there were 3 or 4 at the same time. They cheerfully did their jobs with a high degree of professionalism. Even their safety checks were courteous and very few citations were issued. All fishermen are thankful and proud of our Coast Guard.

Membership news

HASA's first year has been a great success in terms of membership with close to

300 members. In November HASA will be sending out membership renewal notices. Please consider renewing your individual/family membership for \$20. If you are an associate member consider becoming an individual/family member. Our best membership recruiters are fellow members. Ask your family and friends, especially those you give fish, to become members. Membership applications can be found at the Humboldt Tuna web site at <http://humbolddtuna.com/smf/index.php>. Just click on the big yellow pencil at the top of the index page.

HASA communicates with its members through the Tuna club web site and by email. If you are a member and not receiving the newsletter or meeting notices by email please email us at HASA6191@gmail.com. We are still working out a few of the bugs in setting up our email system. Your help and patience is greatly appreciated.

Mary Marking
Membership Chair



Long Range Fishing

By Dick Woolsey

It was fall of 2005 and from the banks off southern Baja came reports like these. "Capt. Brian Kiyohara brought back the fishing vessel American Angler this early morning with an amazing catch of 63 fish over 100lbs and 20 of those were over 200lbs. 17 out of the 22 passengers on board had personal bests to be proud of and ranged from 144 to 297 pounds. Congratulations to all and to your teamwork while catching these fish." And from the Excel this report: "After a long couple of days traveling we arrived at the yellowfin grounds and slid right into a stop for 18 fish. All of the fish were 185 to 265 pounds and we had 11 over 200 pounds out of that stop. We also released 5 yellowfin, two of which looked to be a little over the 200 pound mark. After that spot of fish left us, we looked around and found another eager school of big one's. These were from 190 to 285 pounds and we tagged 11 more over 200 pounds and released three fish from 180 to 220. For the day we had caught 22 fish over 200 pounds with 5 over 194 and released 8 fish from 185 to 220. So far we have successfully released 48 yellowfin from 100 to 220 pounds and it is very nice to see everybody's enthusiasm and support on catch and release on this trip." Although not every fall is the same, it was an epic year of "cow fishing" on the long range boats out of San Diego. HASA has several members that have "cows" to their credit from that year.

While we all dream of catching big fish and having the opportunity to catch and keep or catch and release one of those once-in-a-lifetime fish, there is more to long-ranging than those epic 10 to 17 day fall or winter trips. The areas fished depend on the length of the trip and the time of year that you choose. Most of the true long-range trips can fulfill that dream in one form or another.

Spring Trips

A newcomer to long- ranging may find a six to eight day trip to be an ideal introduction to what long range fishing is all about. Given a good catch, these trips can yield plenty of hot action for Yellowtail weighing more than 50 pounds. During the spring season, late April, May, and into early June, most of the long-range fleet runs these six to eight day trips. The primary target on these trips is Yellowtail. If the Albacore show up early they are usually a target in the offshore grounds while en route to places like San Martin, San Benitos, Cedros and Guadalupe Islands. On the 8 day trips, boats may fish as far down as Magdalena Bay and as far out as Alijos Rocks. Other species that may be taken on these trips include Bluefin, Yellowfin (mostly 12 to 100 pounders), Calico bass, Grouper, Black Seabass (usually released), Dorado and possibly a chance at Wahoo during warm-water cycles.

Summer Trips

While some operators offer 1 ½ to 3 day trips during the Albacore season, these runs aren't considered by most anglers to be traditional long-range trips. These shorter trips focus almost exclusively on catching Albacore while the longer trips offer more fishing days and a variety of species. Most of the larger long-range boats offer 3 to 5 day trips during the summer "Albacore season" (July to September). Good to excellent tuna fishing will sometimes be within 30 to 40 miles offshore, or they might be 300 miles out. With no way to tell in advance, taking the longer trip makes more sense than going on a shorter trip. The additional days beyond the third allow these boats to expand their possibilities and target Bluefin and Yellowfin which usually arrive off the Southern California Coast within the second week of July. While traveling the crew are always looking for kelp or other floating debris which may be holding Yellowtail, Dorado, or tuna. On the 4 and 5 day trips, Guadalupe Island is a destination that gives the angler a real possibility for large Yellowtail and the chance at a Yellowfin in excess of 100 pounds. That is if the local population of Great White Shark, "the tax man", doesn't get it before you get it to gaff. This is true especially in the months of August and September.

Fall Trips

This brings us to September through November, when 8 to 12 day trips are scheduled. These fall trips offer the greatest variety of fish. Anglers have the opportunity to fish for Wahoo, Yellowfin Tuna, Yellowtail, Dorado, giant Grouper, Bass, Pargo, and Marlin.

The main destinations for these trips are Alijos Rocks, Magdalena Bay, 23 Fathom Bank, Uncle Sam Bank and down to the Jamie and Golden Gate Banks north of Cabo San Lucas. Fishing is usually, at some time during these trips, wide open for some of the above species. Dorado and Marlin can become a problem because they are so voracious that you sometimes can't get your bait through them to target the fish below. Given the fact that you are on the boat longer, the captain has time to find the fish and he usually does.

Winter Trips

With the onset of winter (December through April) the long-rangers increase their time on the water with most trips being 12 to 17 days. It is during this time of year that the waters off of the Baja are no longer the target destination but rather the areas south of Cabo and well offshore are. Before closures took place, about 10 years ago, places like Roca Partida, San Benedicto, Socorro and Clarion Islands were the destination for the fleet and the main target species were large Yellowfin tuna (100 to almost 400 pounds) and Wahoo. Since the closure the fleet seems to have cut their winter schedule back and now offer fewer trips to the buffer zone (outside 6 miles) around these islands. Hurricane Bank 600 miles from Cabo was and still is an option for these longer trips and great catches are common.

Now that we have looked at some of the options for the length and type of trips, let's look at a little bit of the history of long-range fishing and some of the history of the areas that one sees when venturing out on a trip out of San Diego.

History of the Long-Rangers

Beginning in the early 1950s, Southern California sport fishing innovators, such as Bill Poole, Otto Kiessig and Lee Palm, turned an eye southward from San Diego. They were intrigued by Mexico's fish rich waters. Off the Pacific coast of Baja, at places like Guadalupe, San Benitos and Cedros Islands, virtually untapped resources of Yellowtail, giant Black Seabass, White Seabass, Grouper, Bluefin and Yellowfin tuna and other small to medium-size game fish fished in abundance. These early explorers took their vessels to the then-outer limits of the emerging long-range grounds and discovered a new form of fishing.

Over the past six decades, multi-day or so-called long-range fishing trips have pushed farther and farther south along and off the Baja peninsula. Long-range trip schedules, which once included destinations some 300 miles distant, gradually extended to haunts close to 1,000 miles south and farther. In days past, a few 23 day expeditions ventured about 1,600 miles to the French-owned Clipperton Island. As the fleet pushed steadily southward, with larger, safer, more comfortable boats, fish holds went from storing their catch on ice to freezing the catch in a brine solution and now storing the fish in refrigerated sea water, which keeps the catch in a "just caught condition". The fledgling San Diego-based fleet of two or three, narrow-beamed boats in the 65-foot class has grown to a dozen deluxe vessels that range from 88 to 124 feet long and up to 32 feet wide and feature amenities like stateroom berthing, air conditioning, plasma-screen TVs, and gourmet meals.

Reports from the fall of 2005, like the two above, are not the norm. In that one epic fall and into the winter of 2006, reports like these came in day after day after day. 2005 was the “Year of the Cow”, the year that more personal bests were established than any other year in the history of long-ranging. Maybe we will never have a fall like that again. Maybe 2009 will be a repeat or just be a “normal fall” with only 140 pounders coming over the rail. One never knows. What we do know is that every day on the water is different as is each passing year and that if you sit on shore you will not catch that one-in-a-lifetime fish, be it a 40 pound Albacore in July, a 50 pound Yellowtail at Guadalupe Island in September,



HASA board member Dick Woolsey with a tuna caught near the Alijos Rocks, seen in the background

or that 200 pound Yellowfin during the next “Year of the Cow”.