

HUMBOLDT AREA SALTWATER ANGLERS

A VOICE FOR SALTWATER SPORTFISHERS

2013 FALL NEWSLETTER



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President's Message



The change of seasons is upon us here on the north coast, and it is time to start switching gears to crab and other off season activities. The most recent HASA activity has been related to the Pacific Halibut issue in which we sent our representative to a PFMC meeting to ensure our voice on the North Coast was heard. Your support for HASA enables us to embark on these costly trips, and the results speak for themselves. Thank you for your support. I am proud of being a part of an organization that makes a difference in my kids lives.

It is also time to start preparing for our annual fundraiser to be held in spring 2014. We are constantly looking for new volunteers to join the HASA team. If you or anyone you know is interested in helping out with the fundraiser or assisting the board in local fishing issues, please contact any board member or email us at HASA6191@gmail.com.

Lastly, take a kid crabbing. Our area is packed full of crabs that will light up any kids eyes. Here's a picture of my daughter Ella, tight lines!

Cliff Hart "Hart Attack"



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.



Marlene Allen once again demonstrated her angling skills on a guided kayak fishing trip out of Trinidad, courtesy of Greg Mouton and Pacific Outfitters. Marlene won the trip by catching the largest redbtail surfperch during the “Perchin’ on the Peninsula” tournament last spring. Fishing from kayaks was surprisingly comfortable. Marlene boated six black rockfish and one cabezon while releasing many small fish. Guide Mouton and I only managed two fish each. Other kayak fishers did well on blacks and lingcod, fishing around the kelp beds with swimbaits. Many people feel rockfishing should be opened year round for paddle craft like it is for shore fishers. The impact on the resource would not be significant and it would be a welcome boost for kayak fishing related businesses during the winter. ~ Casey

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GROUNDFISH FALL WRAP UP

Tom Marking,
GAP and CA Sports Representative



HALIBUT: For the North Coast and Southern Oregon, the halibut issue was the major topic this year. As most of you should be aware, the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) has put pressure on the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to reduce the harvest of halibut in our waters. We have been catching about 400% of our allocation (6,000 lbs +) for the last five years. This year will probably have the same result with our harvest well above 20,000 lbs. In order to reduce our harvest, an Ad-Hoc Committee was formed by the PFMC to study the issue and make management recommendations. Public meetings were held in July in California and Oregon with the final decision made in November. After considering numerous alternatives, the final decision was to shut down August (for halibut fishing) in our area and separate California and Oregon for better management. August was chosen because about 40% of the halibut harvested for the year is during this month alone. Their decision was consistent with the preferred closure option as put forth by HASA to the CDFW on July 18 at the public meeting in Eureka. The Rancheria in Trinidad is not on board with this recommendation due to the targeted financial impact this will have on them. This decision cuts out the heart of their halibut tourist opportunity. I offered a different suite of options at the public meetings and to the Council in November, in support of the businesses and Rancheria in Trinidad, but to no avail. I am concerned that this August closure places an unfair and too heavy a burden on Trinidad and Shelter Cove. Should we lose either of these launch sites due to a drop in tourism revenue, we may want to reflect on this summer block closure decision.

The loss of halibut in August for the 2014 season is the first step toward more closures for the 2015/16 seasons. The Council made it very clear at the November meeting in Costa Mesa that this is only the initial effort and more reductions are to be made in the future. In part, the Council is waiting for the results of the halibut site survey done this summer in Northern California. When the results are known in December of this year, the Council will have better data for their decision process to be made next fall on the subsequent seasons. How the survey data will be allocated will be a controversial topic for discussion next year. Since these fish are migratory, any increase in biomass will likely be made part of the 2A total allocation of which we only receive 1% on the non-tribal allocation (approximately 6,000 lbs). Whether this percentage will change is unknown at this time.

ROCKFISH: At the November meeting of the PFMC the annual catch limits (ACL), over fishing limits (OFL), and stock complexes were all discussed for the 2015/16 seasons. A range of alternatives were presented that are out for public comment and final action will take place at the March 2014 meeting. At the March meeting, the Council decisions will be drafted into a Draft Environmental



Impact Statement to be published in the Federal Register. There were many species that were assessed in 2013 for the first time. Sanddabs (flatfish), Aurora, China and Brown Rockfish were found to have healthy populations and other overfish species are on target for the rebuilding process. Interestingly, the Cowcod Rockfish down south has shown a rapid increase in rebuilding time due to much higher productivity than previously thought. And of course, the Yelloweye and Canary Rockfish continue to be constraining species for our region. We do hope to get an extension for the Ft. Bragg to Shelter Cove area for additional time on the water next fall, and more time to both ends of the season for the 2015/16 seasons. This additional time on the water is due to the low incidental take of Yelloweye in the northern regions. We will start the effort toward more time in the Mendocino Zone in March of next year. In-shore species such as Lingcod, Greenling and Cabezon are healthy and should provide good angling opportunities over the next several years.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) is up for renewal this year and considerable time has been spent in discussions on what modifications and changes need to be made. Many of the changes are based on which particular sector of the fishery one represents. In spite of a polarized Congress, there is hope that some progress will be made this fall toward improving the MSA. I was given the opportunity to participate in the development of a White Paper for the Secretary of Commerce on this topic. All Recreational Regions in the USA were represented as well as the Western Pacific areas of Hawaii and all the territorial islands of the Marianas, Guam, American Samoa, etc. It was very interesting to speak with all these folks from all over the globe on regional and national issues. The MSA affects all regions and while there are similarities with some concerns, the regional differences on what constitutes charter, commercial and recreational fisheries is quite varied. Clearly, a one size fits all does not apply to recreational fishery management across all the Regions.

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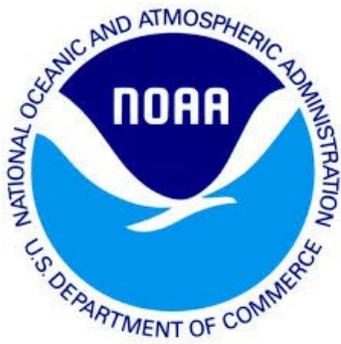
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Surf Forecast: Information for the Nearshore

One area that we at the National Weather Service in Eureka have long desired to provide quality information for has been the surf zone. A surf zone is defined as the area between deep water and the beach, usually identified by breaking waves over nearshore shoals. This is an active zone with a variety of users from surf fishermen to surfers to clam diggers to crabbers. Thanks to some advancements in the way we produce forecasts here at the NWS office, we are now able to offer daily surf forecasts to the Del Norte and Humboldt coasts, as well as the Mendocino coast.

The surf forecast is full featured and easy to use. Easy as 1, 2, 3 (see image below).

1: From our homepage at www.weather.gov/eureka, navigate to the blue column on the left and click on the "Marine Weather" link. This will take you to our dedicated marine weather page.

2: Click the "Surf Forecast" tab located at the top of the marine weather page. This will change the embedded forecast to the surf zone specific forecast.

3: Interpret the surf forecast. This forecast is designed for wide variety of users, so you will find:

- a) Expected weather conditions at the beach and over the surf zone.
- b) Expected breaking wave surf heights at west and south facing beaches.
- c) Forecast of open water wave conditions.
- d) Tidal information for Crescent City, North Spit, and Point Arena.

Bonus: Be sure to check out our Hanson Plots which provide a wind and wave forecast trend for the week ahead.

Provide Feedback: Once you have used our surf forecast a few times be sure to let us know what you think and how you are using it. There is a link to do so above the forecast and to the right.

Detailed wave information provided in the surf forecast will highlight low amplitude long period waves as well as the steep short period waves. These low amplitude long period waves are responsible for set behavior of breaking waves over nearshore shoals. Set behavior is the infrequent breaking of waves over shoals. Lulls between sets can last up to 30 minutes. While the coastal waters marine forecast may not pick up on a 2 foot at 20 second wave threat, the surf forecast will. It is designed to give all individual nearshore wave systems that make up the nearshore sea state. This can be useful information for mariners who may want to take a shortcut across shoals to shorten travel time or for crabbers who venture into the surf zone to lay pots.

Check out the surf forecast and discover the ways it can help you and your family remain safe near and on the water. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at the National Weather Service.

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Mixing salmon and rice

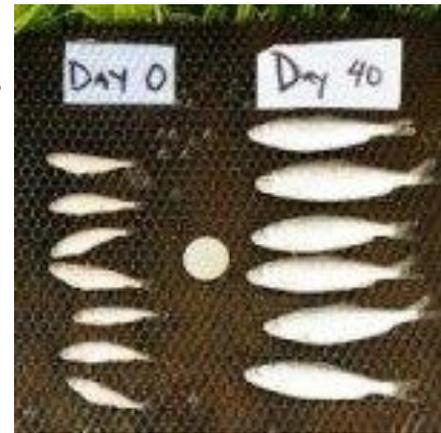
By Larry De Ridder



For the last two years CalTrout and UC Davis have collaborated on an experiment to see if different management techniques could benefit salmon smolts in the Central Valley. Large portions of the Central Valley flood each spring, providing habitat for out-migrants. However, extensive agricultural and flood protection barriers now restrict where the water flows. Now, much of the area is diked and divided, which restricts young fish to the main river. The experiment is taking place at the Knaggs Ranch near the northern end of the Yolo Bypass. The Yolo Bypass consists of 60,000 acres of low land a few miles north of Sacramento.

Most years it floods as waters are diverted to reduce the potential for flood damage to Sacramento. Much of the land is used for agriculture, particularly as rice fields. A select few fields were kept flooded for a longer period than normal, and salmon fry were introduced, to see if rice fields could provide the same benefits the former natural wetlands once provided.

So, how do you raise salmon in a rice field? The experimenters discovered that it was pretty much a case of "just add water". There are many microscopic aquatic organisms which can survive extended periods on dry land. Just as some desert plants produce seeds which lie dormant till it rains enough to initiate growth, some of these organisms have a life stage that can survive in a dry and dormant mode. Within two weeks of adding water, the fields were so filled with millimeter-sized invertebrates, that the water appeared "soupy". For young fish, it was like living in a buffet. The attached photo shows the difference 40 days in the rice fields made in the size of the young fish. During this experiment the fish grew an average of 0.93 mm/day and as much as 1.5 mm per day. That's about 1.2 to 1.7 inches per month. This is the highest growth rate for juvenile salmon ever noted in California's Central Valley. An interesting discovery was that it didn't matter a great deal whether the flooded field contained rice stubble, had been plowed under, or simply left fallow, though the fish did show a preference for fields with some current.



The downside of the experiment was the survival rate. In the shallow rice fields, predatory birds quickly discovered the fish. The survival rate of free-swimming smolt ranged from zero to 29%, while those in enclosures designed to exclude birds had survival rates of 35% to 98%. The next phases will experiment with different water depths to see if deeper flooding of the fields will increase the survival rate when the birds arrive for dinner, and experimenting with the timing of when to put fish onto the fields and when to put them back into the river.

Given the eat-or-be-eaten world the young fish are headed for in the ocean, larger and stronger juveniles should survive better. Depending on how longer term studies go, it may become routine to detour young salmon into selected rice fields for a number of weeks before sending them on to the river for their migration to salt water.

To read the full report, go to:

https://watershed.ucdavis.edu/files/biblio/Knaggs%202013%20final%20BOR%20report_0.pdf



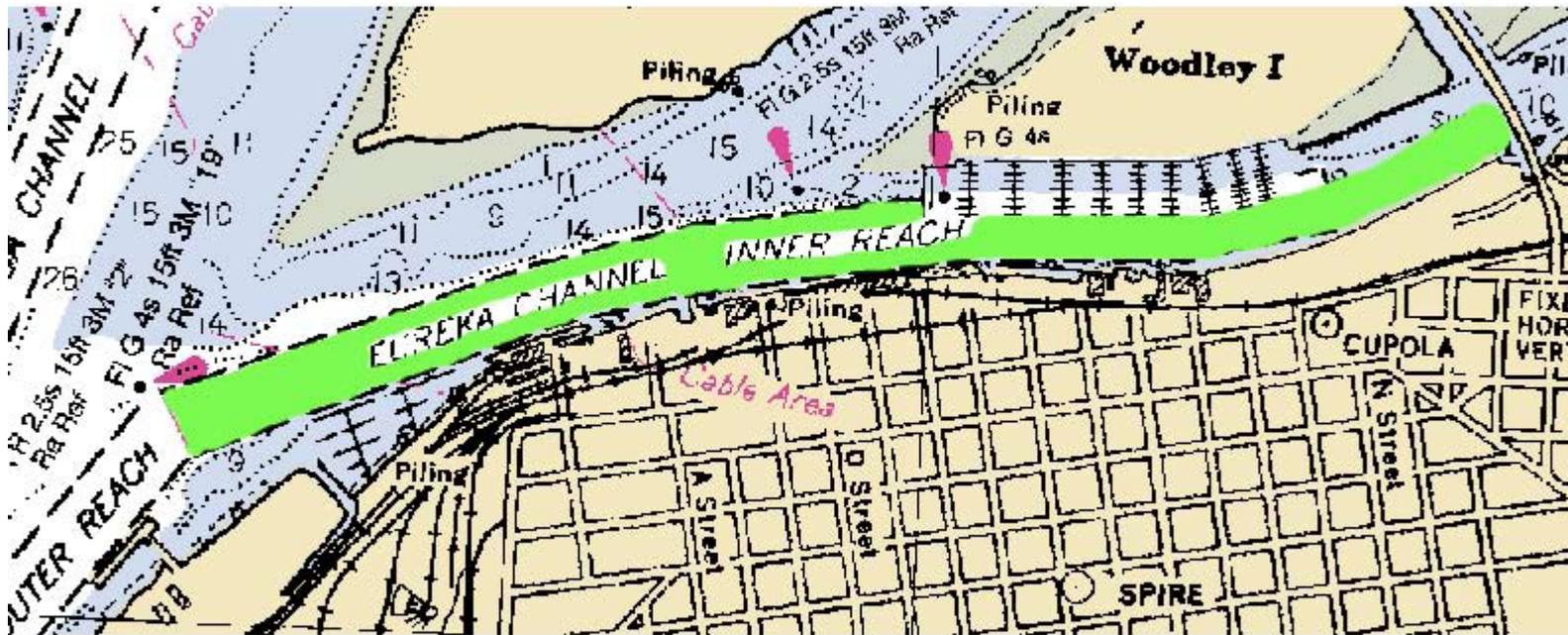
The Humboldt Harbor Safety Committee would like to remind all boaters to recognize the no wake zone illustrated below. All mariners are responsible for their wake and are liable for damages caused by their wake. Although the no wake zone does not extend to the northwest of the Eureka Channel along Indian Island at this time, courtesy should be shown as the area is frequented by paddle boats, kayaks, and rowing sculls. Moored vessels at Woodley Island Marina, the Eureka Public Marina, and Englund Marine's fueling dock are especially subject to damage. Even small wakes can cause vessels large and small to strain their mooring ropes, cleats, and docks. Recreational boaters in Humboldt Bay have a reputation for courtesy and cooperation on the water and at launch facilities. Minding our boat wakes is just one example of that standing.

NO WAKE AREA (shown in green)

From Samoa Bridge to West Side of Eureka Public Marina

Also use extreme caution around the two fueling terminals in Humboldt Bay

Englund Marine and the Chevron Marine Terminal



The City of Eureka Municipality Code Section 100.14

(B) It shall be unlawful for any person to operate a vessel at a speed that generates a noticeable wake within the Eureka Inner Reach Channel, defined as that waterway along the Eureka mainland between the southern section of the Samoa Bridge and the westernmost extension of Eureka's Small Boat Basin.

Section 100.99 PENALTY. Whoever violates any provision of this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be subject to a fine not exceeding \$1,000. Each day any person is in violation shall constitute a separate offense punishable as provided herein. ('83 Code, § 11-1.801) (Ord. 338-C.S., passed 3-18-81)

2014 Ocean Sport Salmon Season Development

By Ben Doane



The process for creating the 2014 salmon season began at the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) meeting in November at Costa Mesa. The first item was a review of the methodology for projecting the Sacramento River Fall Chinook returns. Secondly, the schedule for developing the 2014 ocean salmon season management measures was reviewed and approved. Lastly, the location for the California preseason public hearing on 2014 ocean salmon seasons meeting was reviewed. Sacramento River Fall Chinook (SRFC) has been the backbone of the northern California and southern Oregon ocean salmon stocks for decades. The majority of salmon caught north of Point Arena are SRFC. In 2008 the formula for determining the projected returns for SRFC changed from a formula that was based upon total returns of age two year (jack) stocks from the entire Sacramento and San Joa-

quin drainage to the Sacramento Index (SI). The SI relies solely upon the Sacramento River Fall Chinook returning jack stock as a predictor of the following year's age three year (adult) SRFC returns. This prediction is subjected to a series of mathematical formulas and the end result is the determination of the number of SRFC available in a given year for the ocean and freshwater salmon seasons. The SI in use through the 2013 season development was based solely on the previous year's jack count. The flaw of the pre-2013 SI was that it consistently over-estimated the next year's age three adult returns. Beginning in 2013 for the development of the 2014 salmon season the SI will be based upon the previous one year's jack count PLUS a number of ocean and freshwater environmental considerations such as ocean upwelling, rainfall and river conditions. The 33 page document that supports the SI change for the 2014 salmon season development considered 13 possible formulas for the SI, including the SI formula used in 2013. The new SI formula, number 8 of the 13, is predicted to provide a more accurate number of the age three adult SRFC returns.



This explanation may seem complicated, but for those that want more detail, here is a link to the supporting document entitled: "Expected future performance of abundance forecast 2 models with application to Sacramento River fall 3 Chinook salmon": http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/C2a_ATT5_SI_FORECAST_sep_17_13_NOV2013BB.pdf

The schedule for the 2014 ocean salmon season began on November 2, 2013 at the PFMC meeting in Costa Mesa. There will be a series of meetings including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) 2013 salmon return review and PFMC staff, Council and public alternative hearings. Those will be followed by the National Marine Fisheries Service implementing the federal ocean salmon fishing regulations and the California Fish and Wildlife Commission establishing the various state regulations on or about May 1, 2014.

The complete schedule may be viewed at:

http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/C3a_ATT1_SalSched_NOV2013BB.pdf

From 2008 until 2013, the PFMC California preseason public hearing meeting has been held in Eureka. It is at this hearing that both commercial and sport fishing men and women may comment on the three 2014 ocean salmon season alternatives that will be developed at the March 2014 PFMC meeting in Sacramento. Those comments are then considered during the final ocean salmon season adoption at the PFMC April 2014 meeting in Vancouver, Washington. The 2014 California ocean salmon season alternatives public hearing will be held in Santa Rosa (instead of Eureka) on March 25, 2014 at a site yet to be determined. http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/C3b_SUP_SAS_NOV2013BB.pdf

Because the public hearing is scheduled so late in March, written comments on the alternatives will need to be submitted prior to the hearing, probably by March 20, 2014, to be included in the Council's briefing book for the April PFMC meeting in Vancouver. Comments submitted later than that will be given to the Council members at the meeting. Late submissions do not always get the attention they need to impact Council's decisions. Written comments may be e-mailed to: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Klamath and Sacramento River Chinook Returns, To Date, 2013

The Klamath River Fall Chinook (KRFC) returns to the Klamath River and its tributaries are under way. Due to a number of factors, the 2013 KRFC returns are significantly fewer than those in 2011 and 2012. The lack of rain and the resulting low water flows are certainly factors. Additionally the mouth of the Klamath River was sanded closed in early September until the

series of storms a bit later in September opened the river's mouth and allowed salmon river access. The Klamath River Project video counts on Shasta and Scott rivers have already peaked and are greater than the 2007 to 2010 counts, but far less than the 2012 count. At Bogus Creek, near the CDFW Iron Gate Fish Hatchery, returns are still coming through the video counter, but the daily counts are far less than the same dates in 2012. The Klamath River Project does not provide the jack versus adult ratio, so it will not be known until late February 2014 what portion of the returns are jacks.

At this time there is no official information available on the Sacramento River Fall Chinook returns. There is anecdotal information from the Coleman Federal Fish Hatchery, near Red Bluff, that there are fewer jacks among the returning SRFC than in the past two years, 2011 and 2012.



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Notes on the Twin Tunnels Project

By Larry De Ridder

In our last issue we briefly discussed a few of the issues surrounding the governor's plan to construct two 40-foot diameter, 35-mile long tunnels 150 feet below the Sacramento River. The purpose would be to transport Northern California water past the Delta and send it on to Southern California users. Because the health of the Delta very directly affects the survival rate of the salmon passing through it, this issue should be important to fishermen all up and down the West Coast. Additional research has turned up new facts and facets of the proposed project.

The tunnel proposal is part of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, one of Governor Brown's pet projects. On the face of it the Plan claims it will create about 145,000 acres of wetlands and "other habitat", and restore 57 wildlife species. However, there will be "side effects" to a project of such scale. The first obvious side effect would be the construction of three water intakes covering 2,700 acres of waterfront. That would be followed by a 925-acre fore bay, requiring the removal of 6 million cubic yards of earth. Next would follow the actual tunnels, which would start out 60 feet in diameter, and result in 22 million cubic yards of "tunnel muck". "Tunnel muck" is described as soil from below the river mixed with "conditioning agents" such as bentonite (a clay often based on volcanic ash) and various polymers. As such, it can't just be reused or returned to the environment somewhere as fill – it will need to be stored, dried and cleaned. During the drying and cleaning process it will be stored in mounds along the river on parcels ranging in size from 100 to 570 acres. The total land area to be devoted to "tunnel muck" storage is 1,595 acres. At the south end, where water emerges from the tunnels, there will be another fore bay comprising 840 acres, and requiring the removal of another 14 million cubic yards of landfill..

So, just where does the State acquire all this land? A quick glance at the numbers above suggests over 6,000 acres will be needed. One possibility is the frequent use of "Eminent Domain". This came to mind when I encountered a story about a bird sanctuary that was informed their site will be transformed into a "temporary" construction site as part of the project. The sanctuary owner apparently wasn't especially keen on the notion. Eminent Domain basically amounts to the government forcing current owners to sell or surrender control of their property "for the public interests", but often at a price set by the government. In some instances this makes sense. Imagine a major freeway which can't be completed because one person refuses to give up a home where the center lane will run! On the other hand, there have been some serious abuses of the process in recent years. Some government entities have stretched the concept of "public interests" to include tax revenue. Thus, a person with a desirable residential property who wishes to remain in the family home, might be forced to sell it to the government so the government can turn around and sell it to a contractor who will build a mall or other private enterprise project. In such a case the perceived "public interest" is nothing more than the fact the new use of the property will generate more tax revenue for the local government than the residence currently on the spot. It will be interesting to see how the State intends to obtain title to all the proposed properties.

Some of the anti-tunnel advocates claim the completed tunnels will essentially suck the aquatic life out of the Central Valley and ship it south. That's probably an unfair representation of the facts. Estimates are that the tunnels' water transport capacity would be 4.8 to 5.6 million acre-feet of water each year, which is very close to the amount currently sent south. As long as we aren't using both the tunnels and existing pumps, it isn't as if the water flow south will double. The State is still bound by the Endangered Species Act, flow regulations established by California's State Water Resources Control Board and numerous court rulings. Further, the tunnel project does nothing on its own to increase the carrying capacity of the canal transport system running south from the Delta. However,

it might have side effects on water rights, since it would shift the point at which the water leaves its normal channel. From a fisherman's perspective, it would probably be unfortunate if Westlands Water District somehow obtained seniority in the water rights pecking order because they paid for the tunnels. I haven't seen anything to indicate how this aspect might be interpreted by the courts.

A question I was unable to address in our last issue was how the government could proceed with a project of this scale without a popular vote. Current estimates are in the neighborhood of \$24 billion to build and operate the tunnels – \$17B to build them and \$7B to operate them for 50 years. That assumes accurate up-front estimates and no cost overruns. The lack of a requirement for a popular vote appears to stem from Governor Brown's decision to avoid spending General Obligation bonds to finance the project. GO bonds must appear on our ballot for everyone to approve or reject. In 1982 his Peripheral Canal project was defeated in a popular vote by about a two-to-one margin. Some political observers consider it to have been his biggest political defeat during his prior term as governor. This time the plan is to pay for his project with Revenue Bonds, which can be issued by any state agency and are paid for through user fees assessed against those who will benefit from the project. In this case that ultimately means the taxes would not be paid directly to the State. Instead, they would be paid by increased water rates to those who get the water, and the water agencies would then forward money to the State. Technically the State is paid by the water districts, which then increase water rates on users. Ultimately the same people pay, but through a different route. Since such bonds are not backed by the taxing power of the State of California, they represent a higher risk to investors. From what I've read, a year of negotiations between the State and the water agencies tasked with paying for the project has failed to produce an agreement.

The recent federal government shutdown has been blamed for a delay in releasing the Public Draft Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) till December 13. The public review period will run from its release till April 14, 2014. During that time we will be able to access copies online or in print, and determine additional details. The official government line is that "no decision has been made". Strangely, that hasn't stopped the government from hiring advertising agencies to start hyping the proposal to the general public.

Given the importance of the Sacramento River salmon population to our sport, I believe we need to educate ourselves so that we can make informed decisions. As it stands now, the water is already leaving the Delta and heading south. That's going to continue with or without the tunnels. Will the tunnels help restore the salmon or contribute to habitat destruction? It would be a great idea if we all read the upcoming EIR/EIS and provided input to the government.



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Eel River Recovery Project Conducts Successful 2013 Fall Chinook Dive Survey

By Patrick Higgins

The Eel River Recovery Project (ERRP) gained steam in 2013 on its lower Eel River Early-Run Fall Chinook surveys and a whopping 5954 adult and jack Chinook salmon were counted by the November 9 dive team. In 2012 the peak count came slightly earlier, when 5046 Chinook were counted on October 27, but that was after many thousands of fish had already migrated upstream. The data suggest that there is another robust early run of Chinook in the Eel River, but as this is written, they are stuck in the lower river and the size of the wave of fish that follows with the rain is unknown.

Although the California Department of Fish and Wildlife conducts redd and carcass counts in about a dozen tributaries of the Eel River, flow fluctuation often confound surveys leaving data gaps. Community members expressed a desire for more information on Chinook salmon trends, so ERRP began collecting baseline data in 2012 using standard direct observation dive techniques. Although counts may not be precise because of challenging conditions in the lower Eel River, they do provide an index of abundance. This helps the community make sure fall Chinook salmon are not declining and trend data may be helpful in understanding success of basin-wide restoration efforts.



November 9 dive team at River Lodge in Fortuna before surveying into the 12th Street Pool with nearly 3000 Chinook salmon.

Consulting fisheries biologists and those that work for Tribes and agencies participate in the dives and mentor inexperienced volunteers. Many ERRP volunteer divers with experience from several dives are also becoming quite proficient at estimating large groups of fish. Humboldt State University scientific dive students often participate who have already conducted marine fish surveys in Mendocino before joining lower Eel River dives. Other folks who like cold water sports, such as abalone and scuba divers as well as surfers, join in the fun and many are able to pick up the knack of counting fish rapidly.

Divers form a line and do the equivalent of a synchronized swim the length of pools, with experienced and inexperienced divers interspersed. A preceding September 20 physical habitat survey helped map pools so teams could anticipate where they were likely to see fish and experienced divers could occupy lanes where large packs were likely to hold or pass.



ERRP Chinook survey divers spanning the 12th Street Pool on the lower Eel River on November 9

Divers call out scores to a bank-side score keeper and confer amongst themselves during the survey to make sure less experienced divers are getting fish identification and counts correct. Fish that circle in front of divers are not to be counted, only those that swim past them. If fish circle back under divers, they let the scorekeeper know by calling out the number of fish that milled past them and specify they were moving downstream.

Chinook often sense the on-coming divers and stir up algae and sediment to obscure vision, similar to what they would do if pursued by otters. Consequently, divers can tell they are about to get into the thick of things when the water gets cloudy. There was a special treat for many divers on October 26 as an adult green sturgeon swam slowly forward under the team for five minutes (see video at www.eelriverrecovery.org). Likely the same sturgeon also was observed on November 9. Groups of sturgeon had been seen previously in the estuary and lower river after the September 30-October 1 storm, including an eight footer that was likely a white sturgeon.



Fall Chinook holding at the 12th Street Pool riffle crest flex their tails to kick up algae as they retreat.

The core dive area in previous years has been from the 12th Street Pool downstream to the Creamery Pool below Fernbridge; however, in 2013 the pools and runs downstream of the Drake Pool filled in and were not holding fish. Therefore, later dives did not cover the reach furthest downstream and the pool at the mouth of the Van Duzen River was added. The Weymouth Bluff Pool upstream of the Van Duzen River likely held a very large number of fish, but there were never a sufficient number of divers or time to cover it this year. The peak count in 2012 was 1274 Chinook salmon; consequently, 2013 totals would likely have increased substantially had ERRP been

able to conduct a survey there. In 2014, Friday dives will cover the Weymouth and Van Duzen Pool and Saturday dives will go cover the standard index reach below River Lodge.



Flows in the lower mainstem Eel River dropped as low as 50 cubic feet per second in mid-September and signs of stagnation like thick algae mats and foam were showing. Not only were lower river pools filled in, but riffles were shallow and braided and threatened to block Chinook passage. Humboldt Redwood Company observations indicated that mid-September migrations of half pounders into the Scotia to Dyerville reach were not occurring. September 20 and September 30-October 1 rains allowed Chinook salmon

Four foot long green sturgeon in the 12th Street Pool on October 26.

and steelhead to move into lower river pools and further upstream.



ERRP's October 5 dive was postponed for a week because the Van Duzen River opened with the early rain and compromised water clarity. Afterward flows were ideal for dives as the river dropped below 200 cfs and maintained clarity. A limited number of early-run Chinook got up the Van Duzen as far as Swimmers Delight, Yager Creek above Highway 36, the South Fork to Redway, and the main Eel as far as Eel Rock. As of November 15, no fish have reached the Van Arsdale Fish Station and spawning was beginning for early fish that had been able to access upstream areas.

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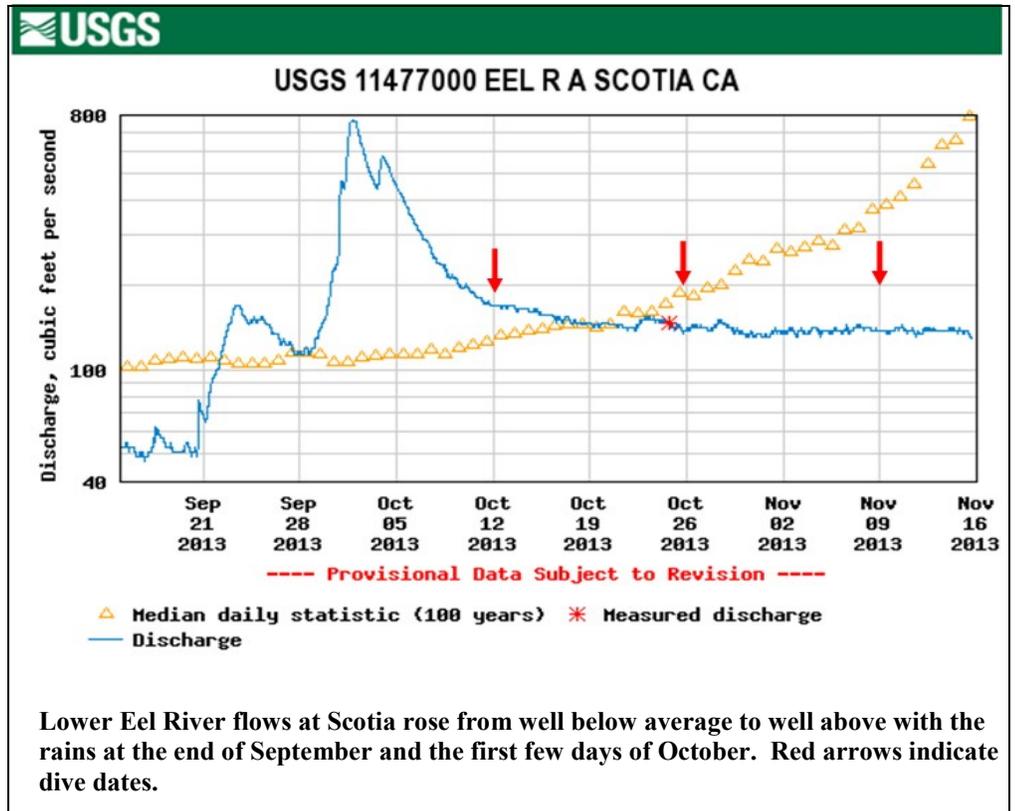
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It appears that many early run Chinook will likely be spawning in lower river reaches that are more vulnerable to scour during subsequent high flows in 2013. ERRP will be photo and video documenting migrations and spawning concentrations through the rest of November and December. If you see fish, call Volunteer Coordinator Pat Higgins at (707) 223-7200. You can help make this activity an annual community event by contributing to the ERRP "Penny for a Salmon" project at

www.eelriverrecovery.org.



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

Submission ideas and photos should be sent to longfish@humboldt1.com. Comments are always welcome. Send to hasa6191@gmail.com

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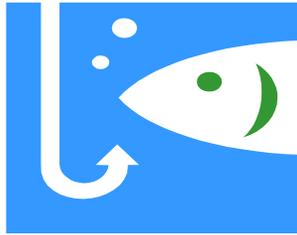
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All HASA members will be invited to the Humboldt Tuna Club potlucks. More information is available at humboldtuna.com

HASA PO BOX 6191 Eureka, Ca. 95502

Time For a Move?

By: Matt Goldsworthy

We have all been there. Your lines are out. Hopes are high... but nothing is happening. Should you try a different color squid? A little shallower? Deeper? Further north? Further south? Fresher bait? Stay on this drift for another hour? Make a move? Call Tim and ask for help? Go drop in next to Gary? Wait for the next tidal cycle? Maybe a different color? Welcome to fishing for Pacific halibut! If you aren't a patient person, this has got to be the toughest sport there is! The bad news is... nobody has the answer. Even if your friend calls you into their "hot bite"... chances are you will arrive to discover more boredom... and more head scratching about how to make something happen. There are a few things you can do to help your odds... but patience is always required.

Surprisingly, there has been quite a bit of relevant research on Pacific halibut.

When compared to other fisheries, actually a lot has been discovered over the years

and anglers would be remiss in not taking advantage of those lessons that others have already learned for us. Starting in the late 1970's, scientists from NOAA have been watching halibut from submersibles. Their first lesson was interesting: Pacific halibut started schooling up and following the submersible around! These observations continue today and a lot has been learned. Now it is time to apply all of the knowledge that is out there.

I have talked with a lot of people about Pacific halibut locally. They really believe that if they put in their time... eventually they will drift over a halibut and it will bite. Most do not think halibut are picky. I strongly disagree- but there is no way to prove any of this. However, based on decades of underwater observations (and even more recent GoPro footage) it is clear that Pacific halibut are picky and actually will not bite at just any offering they stumble across. In fact, the data is pretty clear now that halibut use their senses to track down food. One study found that almost every single halibut caught on commercial longlines approached the bait from down current. The take home message is this: halibut are attracted from long distances by scent, sound, and sight. Observations from these various studies have found that halibut will avoid some baits and take more interest in other baits (herring was found to be significantly more successful than octopus).

Want to catch more halibut? Attract more halibut to your offerings. How do you attract more fish? Play to their senses. The first obvious tactic is to lay down a good scent trail and the best way to accomplish that is to disperse scent from above the bottom... so it doesn't just settle out on the bottom. The other technique, which could also be said to be "scientifically proven", is to use sound. Underwater observations of long-line gear are very clear. Once one fish is hooked to the line and thrashing around on the bottom- other halibut are attracted and come in to inves-



tigate. Recall the schools of halibut following the scientists in their submersible? Yes, halibut are attracted to anything and everything that they can sense. It's a dark and lonely desert they live in. Any commotion they sense probably results in dinner-time. Local anecdotes also confirm this: anglers with enough stamina to bounce jigs on the bottom help attract fish by using the sounds of the weight "thumping".

Sight is the final sense

the smart angler can use to their advantage. A lesson can be learned from the East Coast here... where anglers "deep drop" into very deep water targeting tilefish and other bottom dwelling species. The phrase you hear from deep-droppers on the East Coast is this: *"if you don't have a light, you won't get a bite"*. Adding a flashing strobe light helps catch the eye of halibut, especially if the light is deployed 5-6 feet off the bottom. Obviously, we aren't fishing in very deep water here (200-400 is most common), but light levels are still pretty low and the strobe lights appear to be very effective.

Redwood Coast Spreader Bars has combined all of these factors in one lure: the "Yard Sale" rig. The Yard Sale rig features a flashing strobe light, an offshore rattle, and 3-hooks arranged vertically. The "Yard Sale" rigs position the strobe light and rattle about 5-6 feet off the bottom for best visibility. The 3 hooks allow anglers to use three times the amount of bait, effectively tripling the strength of the scent trail. The rattle produces a lot of sound, as does the weight as it 'thumps' the bottom.

Simple geometry will tell you how much farther a fish can see something 6-feet off the bottom, as compared to something lying in the mud. Yard Sale rigs get your offerings up and off the bottom (where fish will see them)... your hooks have a light flashing on the offering from above... all the while the rattle plays the sweet sounds of a feeding frenzy. Draw more fish in. Catch more fish. Stop relying on pure luck and waiting to stumble into a fish... offer a Yard Sale and start bringing in more customers!



Humboldt Currents

By Casey Allen

The Humboldt Bay Artificial Reef Project suffered yet another setback with the resignation of our environmental consultant, citing his busy schedule. The HASA reef committee hopes to have a replacement very soon. The good news is the project is moving through phases with students at HSU. At least one student who used the reef project in the Environmental Impact Assessment class is moving on to grant writing. The project is popular among HSU students because it allows them to work on a real life project and not something hypothetical.

The halibut study conducted by HSU student Liz Perkins and sponsored by HASA, Sea-Grant, and the Harbor District came to a close with Liz sampling 270 halibut. That number exceeded expectations and was achieved by the cooperation of sport fishers and charter captains – not to mention all the hard work by Liz. She is now aging the otoliths which will be verified before the data is analyzed. The results should be available sometime in December and a full report will be in the 2014 Winter newsletter. We all expect to discuss the next phase of the study based on this year's results. We would like to express our thanks to all who contributed to this study. It is another example of a community that knows how to work together to find the answers that will protect the resource for the benefit of all.

From the North Coast MPA Monitoring Enterprise team:

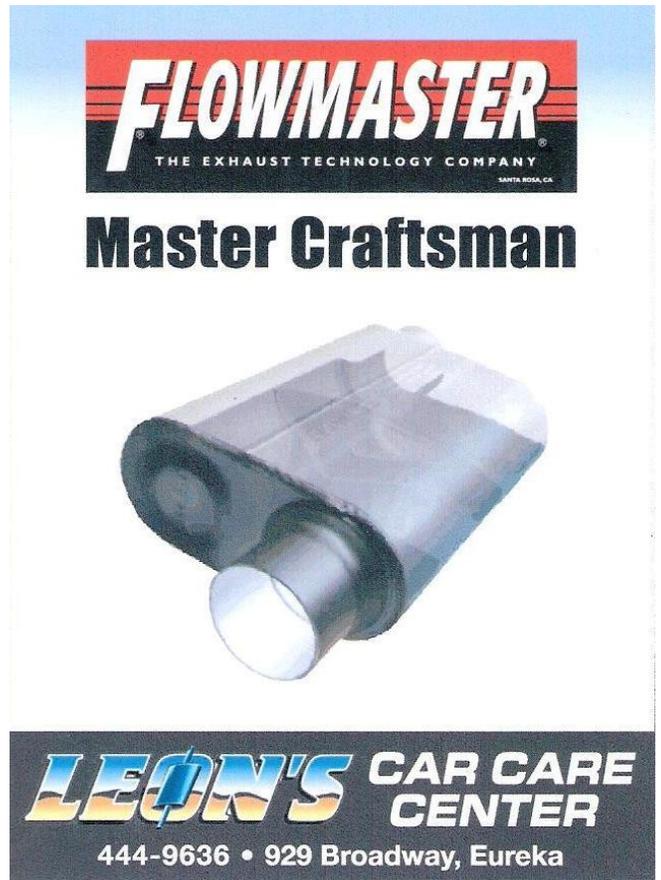
“In early August, we received MPA monitoring proposals covering a broad range of topics across the whole North Coast region, for a total request of over \$11 million. Over the past two months, the Baseline Program partners have been coordinating and managing the peer review of these proposals. All proposals were first reviewed by independent, external, subject-matter experts who assessed each proposal against the evaluation criteria listed in the RFP, including scientific and technical merit of individual proposals, partnerships and local expertise, and alignment with the Baseline Program purposes. We then convened a review panel, consisting of additional scientific, technical and local experts to review all proposals, consider the input received from the peer reviews, and recommend projects for funding.

Over the coming weeks, the management team will work with project leads on selected proposals to modify objectives, work plans, and budgets in response to the results of the review process. We anticipate announcing the final set of projects selected for funding after Thanksgiving.”

If approved at least three of the proposals will enlist the participation of HASA members.

From Jimmy Smith and Hank Seemann:

“Humboldt County (working with GHD, Inc.) is approximately 2/3 through the design and permit process for the proposed boat ramp replacement at Fields Landing. The target is to be awarded construction funding from Department of Boating and Waterways



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in 2014, and to construct in spring of 2015. The goal would be to start in April and reach completion by the end of June to avoid most of the major salmon season. Permitting hurdles or lack of funding could delay the time-frame target.

The current design expands the usable width of the ramp from 32-33 feet to 36 feet (two 18-foot lanes). The slope would steepen from 9% to 15%. The bottom of the ramp will be higher (to reduce debris accumulation) and extend out further toward the channel. Floats will go from 6 feet to 8 feet wide. Guide piles (three on each side) will be replaced. The ramp will be constructed in two parts. Dozers will advance a "push slab" for the lower part, and the upper part will be cast in place concrete. Work will include new retaining walls and RSP. Estimated cost is \$1.8 million.

The County submitted a 65% design package to the Department of Boating and Waterways in June for review. We received DBW comments in October concurring with the proposed design. Based on that approval, draft permit applications were submitted to NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, Coastal Commission, and State Department of Fish and Wildlife in early November, to verify the County's approach dealing with avoiding, minimizing, and mitigation impacts to sensitive species and habitats, in particular eel grass. Feedback from the resource agencies is expected by the second week of December so that we can incorporate or revise the plans and environmental documents as necessary to address their comments and submit the final permit applications and finalize the design. We expect to request funding from the Department of Boating and Waterways in spring of 2014 and have all the environmental permits by the summer of 2014. Mitigation and monitoring requirements from the agencies will be extensive.”



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