



# FISH • TALES

NEWSLETTER OF THE GGSA • APRIL 2018

## CAPTAIN ROGER THOMAS



*Captain Roger Thomas presenting an award to US Senator Maria Cantwell in 2017*

**C**aptain Roger Thomas, co-founder and chairman of GGSA, passed away in late December. For over 40 years Roger made a major difference in maintaining California's salmon stocks. Roger was a familiar face in Sacramento and the US Congress where he represented the interests of the charter boat fleet from Fort Bragg to Monterey for decades.

From his fishing expertise to his constant grace under pressure in adverse conditions while fighting for salmon, Roger was always a true gentleman.

He served on many boards and commissions related to marine and fishing interests and forged solid bonds with others across the country.

His boat, Salty Lady, will continue fishing and running nature trips out the gate under Captain Jared Davis. Roger won't soon be forgotten and is already sorely missed as we head into an uncertain 2018 salmon season. ■

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## RANDY REPASS, WEST MARINE FOUNDER, TAKES HELM OF GGSA

**R**andy Repass, founder of the West Marine retail chain, has taken over the role of GGSA chairman following the passing of Captain Roger Thomas. Repass has been on the GGSA board of directors since its founding. He brings a wealth of experience ranging from electrical engineering (his career before



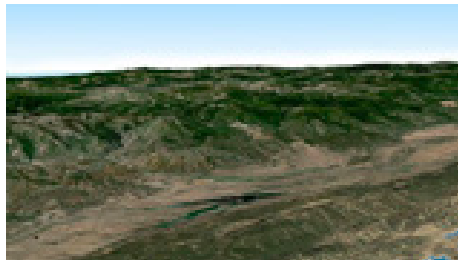
*Randy Repass, West Marine founder, GGSA Chairman*

founding West Marine) to building the biggest marine retail chain in the US with 250 stores and strong ecommerce presence, to being a trans-ocean mariner with multiple crossings of every ocean and sea on earth. He's also a founding member of Ocean Champions, a political advocacy group that works to protect ocean resources. GGSA is lucky to have him assume the chairmanship at a time when salmon freshwater resources are under continuous strain. ■

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## GGSA ECHOES STATE FISH EXPERTS' WARNING ON PROPOSED SAC VALLEY RESERVOIR



*The proposed Sites Reservoir Project in the Sacramento Valley would take water from the Sacramento River.*

**I**n comments filed with the California Water Commission, GGSA is echoing warnings from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife that far more water is needed in the Sacramento than levels the backers of the proposed Sites Reservoir are planning to divert at. The reservoir, proposed for the western Sacramento Valley, plans to divert river water even at low flows when it's needed by salmon.

That doesn't square with river levels needed to keep salmon healthy according to state fish and wildlife officials.

Backers of the new giant reservoir say it will help heal the environment. The southern California Metropolitan Water District say their investment in the reservoir would only make sense if the Delta tunnels project to move it around the Delta is built, which many now consider doubtful. ■

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## PROPOSAL TO JACK DELTA WATER DIVERSIONS MEETS STIFF OPPOSITION

**G**GSA and allied groups have asked the State Water Resources Control Board to step in and stop the planned killing of salmon by the federal Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau, operator of Shasta and Folsom dams, in February proposed a 2018 water release and diversion schedule that appears likely to kill off from 23 to 45 percent of the struggling winter run salmon. March rain and snow will hopefully prompt the Bureau to update their plan in a way that's safe for salmon. ■

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## GGSA WINS STATE WATER AGENCY BACKING OF SALMON REARING/FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT

**G**GSA worked with state legislators and others to get the state Dept. of Water Resources to drop its opposition to restoration of a prime salmon rearing ground downstream of Oroville Dam. DWR opposed the restoration, fearing it could complicate efforts to get the license to operate Oroville Dam renewed. A major nudge initiated by GGSA resulted in DWR dropping its opposition. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which has ultimate authority over actions within the dam's project boundary, has signaled it too will support the work. Other allied salmon groups have worked for years to get this project up and running. ■

## AFTER GGSA ACTION, STATE WATER AGENCY FINALLY AGREES TO PAY FOR TAGGING HATCHERY FISH



Inside mobile trailer used to tag and clip hatchery fish

After hard advocacy by GGSA and others, the California Dept of Water Resources (DWR) agreed to pay to mark and tag Feather River Hatchery fall run baby salmon. These fish have been adipose fin-clipped and tagged for over 15 years, providing an unbroken series of data on survival and straying. Until now, DWR has never paid for this even though they are obligated to as part of required mitigation for operation of the Oroville dam. The cost had been borne by the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, recently using emergency drought funds, which are now dried up. CDFW was unable to resolve the dispute with DWR until GGSA got involved and successfully made the case with higher ups in state and federal government that paying for tagging and clipping is part of DWR's mitigation responsibility. ■

## 2017 SALMON RETURNS, MIXED BAG. SPRINGERS AND WINTER RUN HAMMERED, MOKELUMNE RIVER SETS RECORD.



King salmon fillets at Ft. Bragg July 4 Salmon BBQ

The forecast of adult Sacramento River salmon in the ocean, at about 230,000, is very close to what was predicted last year at this time. The Pacific Fisheries Management Council is proposing three restricted fishing season alternatives with all options from Pigeon Pt north starting later than normal except for sport fishing in the far north state which may start May 1. The proposals are restricted due to the relatively low number of Sacramento fall run, protected winter run, and southern Oregon/NorCal coho forecast to be in the ocean now. Klamath River salmon will be less of a concern in 2018 as their numbers are forecast to be considerably higher than last year.

Because fishery managers over predicted last year's fall run returns, they have purposely "under predicted" this year's. Based on 24,400 two year "jacks" returning to spawn in 2017, about 230,000 adult three year old salmon are predicted to be in the ocean now. If last year's predictions had been right, this

year's prediction would likely be closer to 400,000 adult salmon in the ocean now. Federal fishery managers are saying they want to see more than the minimum target of 122,000 adult salmon return to spawn in 2018. They are shooting for over 150,000 to make it back and spawn.

In past years where two year old returns numbered around 24,000, much higher forecasts of three year old adult salmon in the ocean the following spring were made and generally decent fishing seasons were the rule. For instance, 20,000 two year old spawners in 2013 converted into a forecast of just under 635,000 adult salmon in the ocean in the spring of 2014. Some fishermen are questioning why last year's two year olds aren't leading to a similar robust forecast for the 2018 fishing season. ■

### FOUNDING MEMBERS

Chris Arcoleo • John Atkinson, Raymond Bonneau • Dennis Burkell Hugh Chatham • Coastside Fishing Club • Joseph Conte • Crab Boat Owners Association • Tom Creedon Ron Davis • Jim DeMartini • Joe Donatini • Jacky Douglas • Chris Duba • Kerry Egan • Ken Elie • Patrick Elie • Tim Eli • Yancy Forest-Knowles • Douglas R. Gaebe Vic Giacalone • Victor Gonella • Zeke Grader • Ren Harris • Humbolt Fisherman's Marketing Association Paul Johnson • Perry Kerson • Jonah Li, Todd Magaline • John McManus Joseph Meiswinkel • Mark Mlcoch Galen Onizuka • Rick Powers • Bob Praszker • Queen of Hearts Sportfishing • Randy Repass • Frank Rescino • Jeff Robles • Patty Schifferle • Frank Seghesio • Richard Shears • Ken Stagnaro • Roger Thomas • Edwin A. Tognetti • Aaron Weinzinger • Jay Yokomizo  
David Zeff • Thomas Zizzo

## Santa Rosa Dinner April 6

Join us at the April 6 fundraising dinner in Santa Rosa to support salmon restoration while having a good time. Great raffle and auction prizes.

Visit [goldengatesalmon.com](http://goldengatesalmon.com) to purchase tickets.

### FEDERAL FISH AGENCY CALLS FOR MUCH NEEDED SPRING PULSE FLOWS FALLING ON DEAF EARS

Spring run salmon in the Central Valley, protected as a threatened species, seem to be dying in droves after they leave their birth creeks and hit the mainstem Sacramento River according to recent studies. In response, the National Marine Fisheries Service has put together a proposal to test if releasing a burst of upstream Sacramento River water to hasten their trip downstream might markedly improve their survival. Salmon in the Columbia River basin of Oregon, Washington and Idaho enjoy extra springtime water released through spillways (instead of through the turbines) in the dams, thanks to a 2005 court order. Since 2005 salmon runs there have seen a significant rebound. California salmon need extra spring water to get a similar benefit. ■

### FULL MERCED HATCHERY PRODUCTION TO BE SAVED AFTER GGSA ACTION

GGSA recently voiced opposition to plans to release Merced hatchery

baby salmon at the hatchery instead of trucking them this year.

Releasing them at the hatchery means they'd have to survive passing the deadly Delta pumps to get to the ocean which usually results in losses ranging from 92 to 95 percent of the fish.

After GGSA raised the issue with CDFW officials and asked that the fish instead be trucked, CDFW reversed the release decision and announced they'd truck the fish after all, saving an estimated million baby salmon from certain death at the pumps. ■

### AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION OFFICIALS VISIT CALIFORNIA, DEEPENING ALLIANCE WITH CA SALMON

The new president of the Washington DC based American Sportfishing Association (ASA) Glen Hughes, along with Government Affairs Vice President Scott Gudes and Conservation Director Mike Leonard recently spent three days in California to learn about issues confronting the salmon fishery. The trip was sparked in recognition that California salmon anglers are an important economic block for the tackle and other represented by the ASA. The group met with commercial and sport salmon fishing representatives, guides, charter boat captains and others to better understand the current threats to California's salmon fishery.

The DC ASA team also met with top officials from the National Marine Fisheries Service, California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and US Fish and Wildlife Service to talk salmon issues. They also toured key features in the Delta including the Delta Cross Channel and the federal pumping facility near Tracy. ASA recently represented California salmon interests when Congressmen hostile to salmon held a hearing in DC to plot weakening salmon protections. ■



ASA political director Mike Leonard (right) joins GGSA board members Randy Repass and Dick Pool and Delta pumps officials

### STATE BLOCKS MULTIPLE FEDERAL ATTEMPTS TO SEIZE EXTRA WATER FROM DELTA

Multiple times, starting in December, federal water managers tried to exceed Delta pumping limits, put in place to protect salmon, in order to hand more water to western San Joaquin Valley growers. In all instances, they needed the cooperation of state agencies to take and move the water. GGSA made its opposition clear to state officials and asked them to uphold current salmon protections. So far, the state has heard those pleas and refused to allow the extra water diversions. ■