

2019 SEASON UPDATE



This is a good season to buy salmon, including directly off the boat, with plenty of salmon available at good prices

Those who monitor the ocean salmon fishery say we may be on track to surpass the great fishing we experienced in 2013. Then, as now, big salmon numbers followed by two years wet winters and springs with lots of rain and snow runoff. The commercial fleet reportedly landed 500,000 pounds of salmon in the Morro Bay/Avila Beach area during the month of May. Monterey Bay has kept producing salmon at least into July and the Eureka area has had sport limit days of good size fish too. The SF Bay Area sport and commercial fishing has been very good as well. In addition to catching full size adult salmon, anglers have caught plenty of small fish too, suggesting we should be ok next year even though the parent year of next year's fish, adults that returned in 2017, were relatively few in number because of the last drought. The advances made in hatchery releases the last few

years appears to helping to get through years with fewer naturally spawned fish. For now, in the 2019 season, some of the best salmon fishing, both sport and commercial could be yet to come. ■

Increased Ft. Baker releases considered, challenged by anti-hatchery types

GGSA is working to increase releases of hatchery fish at Sausalito's Ft. Baker since they survive at 300 to 400 percent higher levels than those released at the traditional Bay release site in Vallejo. Their survival is even higher when compared to those released at Central Valley hatcheries. So why not move the remaining millions of fish being released at Vallejo to Ft. Baker? That's what GGSA

is exploring. The California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife is aware of the benefit such a move would provide but they're also dealing with some nervous Nellie types worried about too many hatchery fish doing well. We're continuing to work on the issue.... Stay tuned.

Releasing hatchery salmon on a two day on, five day off release schedule, and then trying to time releases to evening/dusk hours on an outgoing tide, requires quite the logistical dance. When the stars align, you better have enough tanker trucks to deliver a whole lot of fish fast. GGSA's success two years ago in securing additional funding in the state budget, and then pushing to get those funds spent to acquire two additional tankers, is paying off. We can't do it without your support. ■

Update on Yolo Bypass, Fremont Weir notching

GGSA president John McManus and policy consultant Barry Nelson recently met with the key leaders from CDFW and the federal Bureau of Reclamation who are working to notch the Fremont Weir which controls flooding of the Yolo Bypass. When flooded, the bypass provides high quality food and predator refuge for baby salmon. Baby salmon exiting the bypass also wash into the Delta in an area safely away from the huge diversion pumps.

In the wet winter and spring of 2017 and again in 2019, the bypass was flooded for weeks on end and likely full of thriving

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Update on Yolo Bypass, Fremont Weir notching



View of the Fremont Weir Adult Fish Passage structure at the north end of the Yolo Bypass. This is one of two notches planned for the weir.

baby salmon. The agency staff working to finalize and implement the notching plans have settled on a final design and approach. Once the notch is cut, assuming it works as intended, the bypass will be flooded more than currently. Although landowners in the bypass have existing agreements with the state that allow their land to flood, if the frequency of flooding increases, some of them may not be happy without additional compensation of some sort. Agency

staffers are trying to work out deals with the various landowners to compensate them for any added flooding. We wish the staffers well in this task since it's very important to aiding salmon. Landowners will hopefully realize that in addition to being made whole, which is widely supported, there's also a public benefit in increasing the salmon population for all Californians to enjoy. ■



It takes a certain kind of nerd to appreciate this kind of diamond in the rough, a marsh separated from the Delta by a soon-to-be breached levee.

GGSA visits Lookout Slough Delta restoration project

GGSA president John McManus and board member Vance Staplin recently

toured a habitat restoration site adjacent to the southwest corner of the Yolo Bypass. The project, being put together by a private group of investors called Ecosystem Investment Partners, will restore 3400 acres of tidal freshwater marsh once it's completed. The investor group bought the land and is working with the state to restore it.



McManus and Staplin of GGSA touring Lookout Slough tidal marsh restoration project

The state believes that once the surrounding levees are notched or removed and the area is once again inundated by delta tidal waters it will produce the type of microscopic food needed for delta smelt. GGSA believes the restoration will likely also produce food for juvenile salmon as well as additional rearing areas.



Map of the project near the southwest corner of the Yolo Bypass

We wish this project the greatest luck. There's widespread support for the project which has been required by the federal government since 2008 but languished for years until the private sector group stepped in. One exception to that support is some opposition from Solano County, concerned about possibly losing some of its tax base, and from a neighbor, possibly looking to get his levy rebuilt for free. ■

Shasta lawsuit filed, state enters fray



Efforts to raise Shasta would strangle the Sacramento River, cutting off flood control releases and damage salmon downstream

On May 13 GGSA and allies filed a lawsuit against the Westlands Water District to stop the raising of Shasta Dam. Having almost no water of their own, Westlands Water District, in the dry western San Joaquin Valley, relies on the water historically used by salmon 400 miles away to grow their almonds and pistachios. By raising the dam, they plan to capture more of the natural flow of the Sacramento River which would be damaging to all life downstream, including salmon. The US Fish and Wildlife Service warned of the damage raising the dam would do but so far the White House is ignoring the science that caused the warning. The law requires the federal Bureau of Reclamation to have a local "cost share partner" to pay for part of the project. But state law forbids any state agency, and Westlands is considered one, from participating in any project that would destroy any river protected under California's Wild and Scenic Rivers



AquaBounty's salmon (background) has been genetically modified to grow bigger and faster than a conventional Atlantic salmon of the same age (foreground). AquaBounty Technologies photo.

Genetically modified Frankenfish salmon could be coming to a restaurant near you soon

Genetically modified salmon, being grown in closed systems in Indiana, are being sold to diners in Canada and could start appearing, undetected, in restaurants in the states soon, according to published reports. The fish are being produced by a company called Aqua Bounty which got a permit from the federal Food and Drug administration to make them as an "experimental drug". Go figure. GGSA is in court with allied groups challenging the federal approval of these "frankenfish". It's clear they're intended as food, not drugs, and if they were ever to escape to the wild, no one knows how they might interbreed or otherwise affect natural spawning salmon.

Even if GGSA and allies eventually prevail in the court case the fish aren't likely to disappear. Instead Aqua Bounty will likely move production out of the US. The fish are retrofitted with the genes of an unrelated fish species that cause it to grow much faster than real fish, similar to how cancer cells grow rapidly. ■

Act. The McCloud River, which flows into Lake Shasta, is one such protected river and would lose at least a mile at its bottom end if the dam is raised and lake levels rise. The State of California has filed a look alike suit against Westlands for the same reasons. The good news is Westlands does not appear to be holding good legal cards... ■

Congressional meetings with Representatives Huffman and Pelosi

GGSA members recently met with top US Congressional leaders to discuss



Congressman Jared Huffman, far right, joined GGSA president John McManus, board member Mike Aughney (far left) and others on the Reel Magic out of Bodega Bay

salmon and water issues. In the case of one member of Congress, Rep. Jared Huffman, they discussed issues while

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Chris Arcoletto, 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 Elie, Yancy Forest-Knowles, Douglas R. Gaebel, Vic Giacalone, Victor Gonella, Zeke Grader, Ken Harris, Humbolt Fisherman's Marketing Association, Paul Johnson, Perry Kerson, Jonah Li, Todd Magalline, John McManus, Joseph Meiswink, Mark Milcoch, 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 Weinzing, Jay Yokomizo, David Zeff, Thomas Zizzo

GGSA Founding Members:

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Congressional meetings with Representatives Huffman and Pelosi



Captain Merlin Kolb of Reel Magic high fives Rep. Huffman after landing fish

salmon fishing out of Bodega Bay. Huffman has a long record of being friendly to salmon issues and salmon communities. He represents the California coastline from the Golden Gate Bridge up to the Oregon border and is well known and appreciated by sport and commercial

fishermen from Sausalito to Bodega Bay to Ft. Bragg to Eureka and Crescent City. GGSA vice chairman Mike Aughney hosted Rep. Huffman on his six pak boat Reel Magic to reacquaint the congressman with this part of his district, as seen from the water. The trip included discussion of how best to address opposition to the Ft. Baker hatchery fish releases and a briefing for the congressman on the tremendous strides being made to improve hatchery salmon survival by moving the release points west for trucked fish and what this means to the salmon industry.

A few days earlier, GGSA president John McManus, board member Noah Oppenheim, and policy consultant Barry Nelson all had an opportunity to share views with House speaker Nancy Pelosi. The discussion quickly turned to wa-



GGSA's McManus and Oppenheim in conversation with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Next up- get her out on a salmon boat!

ter issues in the Central Valley and the speaker made clear she understands the damage to the salmon fishery caused by excessive diversions of freshwater from the Delta.■