



July 2022

# FISH TALES

Newsletter of the Golden State Salmon Association

## Taking Kids Fishing, Roger Thomas' Spirit Lives On

The late Roger Thomas, former owner/operator of the charter boat Salty Lady, left GSSA an endowment to be used to get kids out fishing. After the last slow years caused by covid, the program is back up and running strong. GSSA has already arranged to get four charters of kids out fishing this season. GSSA is working with the San Mateo Police Activities League, the Richmond Police Activities League and the SF Salesian Boys and Girls club to organize groups of kids, transportation, equipment,



*These kids from the Salesian Boys and Girls Club loved the water*

and chaperones. If you know of other groups of kids who might like to go salmon fishing, contact us.

The kids get a handout with helpful tips on how to handle their catch and a few words about who Roger Thomas was and his importance

to our salmon fishery. Some of the trips have stayed in the Bay and focused on other species. All of the trips have led to happy kids who are proud to bring home fresh fish they caught. A common question we get is "when can we go again." Roger's spirit lives on. ■

## Season Update

It's summer and it's time to fish salmon. Some are calling this year's ocean salmon fishing the best since 1988 (which was a very good year). Commercial boats have seen better than 100 fish days (there are reliable reports of a few 200 fish days) and sport and charter boats that have been in the right place at the right time have seen easy, early limits of quality fish through early July.

Last spring state and federal fishery

managers calculated that there were about 396,458 fall run salmon originated from Sacramento Basin rivers and hatcheries in the ocean. The catch so far this season, both commercial and sport, suggest that number might be low. But maybe not as that number doesn't include fish from the Mokelumne Hatchery or the San Joaquin Basin. We won't know the real number until early in 2023, when fishery managers add up the fish caught in all the fisheries and those estimated to have returned to the rivers to spawn.



*Ice for shipment to market*

*Continued on page 2*



*The Hog Heaven has put in some real good limits this season*

*Continued from page 1*

In river fishing starts July 16 and maybe we'll learn more about this year's salmon run then. This year's returning adult salmon are likely to encounter very warm river temperatures and will likely modify their behavior as a result. This might mean they'll rush to get into whatever cool water they can find. ■

## Mokelumne Fish Comprise 43 Percent of Early Tag Recoveries

Very early analysis of coded wire tags taken in the ocean fishery through the end of the commercial opener below Pigeon Pt, which closed June 12, suggest that about 43 percent of the fish originated at the Mokelumne Hatchery. The Mokelumne hatchery produces about 20 percent of the Central Valley hatchery fall run salmon. The fact that it appears to be contributing a higher percentage of fish to the ocean fishery could be because about half of the Mokelumne's annual 6 million fish are trucked to high survival release sites near the ocean, including Sausalito, Half Moon Bay, Santa Cruz, and Monterey. It's presumed that the majority of coded wire tags recovered so far have come from the commercial fishery, which saw some good fishing below Pigeon Pt up until the June 12 closure.

In the 2021 fishing season, fish from the Mokelumne hatchery made up 42 percent of what was caught by sport fishermen in the ocean fishery but only 19 percent of what was caught in the commercial fishery.

If Mokelumne fish contributed 19 percent to the commercial fishery



*State workers checking fish at the dock*

in 2021 and so far have contributed 43 percent of all heads taken, with a presumed majority being from the commercial fleet, it appears they're likely making up a bigger part of this year's take.

Mokelumne fish aren't likely to help the inland fishery much with the exception of some that may stray up to the American River or be caught in the lower Mokelumne River or nearby Delta waters.

Bottom line: these early data appear to further confirm that releasing fish closer to the ocean pays off big with much higher survival. ■

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**For more info, go to:  
[goldenstatesalmon.org](https://goldenstatesalmon.org)**



## Buying Salmon Direct from the Source

Just a reminder that if you can't get your own fish but want to eat some of the best salmon anywhere on the planet, GSSA has published a page on our website listing retailers, farmers' markets, boats, harbors, and the like, where real wild caught CA king salmon can be bought. A new addition this year is the San Francisco Community Fishing Association on Pier 45 at SF's Fishermen's Wharf where retail fish will be sold for the first time. This is a good year to get some fresh salmon. ■



*There's nothing fresher or higher quality than buying from the boat*

## Major Habitat Restoration Projects Break Ground

Two big salmon habitat restoration projects broke ground in the last few weeks. Both have been supported by GSSA advocacy. One is the 3400 acre tidal marsh known as Lookout Slough, the other is the "Big Notch" in the Fremont Weir which controls Sacramento River flows into the Yolo Bypass.

Lookout Slough is in the southwest corner of the Yolo Bypass, adjacent to the rich waters of Cache Slough and the Delta. It's home to any Delta smelt that may still exist in the wild and seasonally, to baby salmon coming down the Sacramento and eventually headed for the ocean. Lookout Slough was disconnected from tide waters many decades ago by duck hunters who built levees to create pond conditions. The current project will breach these levees and restore tidal influence. The project is being implemented by a private group of investors who

have bet their money that they can do the restoration faster and cheaper than the state. The state agreed to pay for the work if the work is completed below a set cost in a certain amount of time. So far, it looks like the private group will easily meet the conditions. Construction is expected to be completed in 2024. About 20 miles of restored open tidal channels will be created. GSSA supported the project at several key moments during the permitting process to make the case for the biological benefit to salmon this restoration would bring.

The Big Notch will remove a section of a concrete "dam", the Fremont Weir, and excavate a channel between the adjacent Sacramento River and low-lying areas of the Yolo Bypass, just west of the City of Sacramento. A gate will be installed in the channel that can be lowered or raised to control the volume of water allowed into the Yolo Bypass.

In years of heavy rains, the Fremont Weir is designed to allow Sacramento River water to overtop it and flow down into the

bypass rather than flood the City of Sacramento. When the bypass currently floods, commonly, baby salmon will be washed down into it, usually to their benefit. In the bypass they find good food to rear on and usually exit as floodwaters recede to the Delta at the south of the bypass. The Big Notch will allow this flow through the bypass to occur more often. GSSA has long advocated for this project with state agencies and others. ■



*Levees surrounding 3400 acres bordering Lookout Slough will be breached to reconnect it to the Delta and restore good fish habitat*

## July 23 Salmon BBQ, Tamales!

GSSA is hosting on a salmon BBQ fundraiser at the William Tell House in Tamales on July 23. This afternoon outdoor event will have two seatings, one at noon, the second at 4pm, at this historic venue in the small west Marin town. The main dish will be the best wild caught CA king salmon that planet earth has to offer, along with other tasty treats, including

a very special halibut ceviche. So if you like to eat salmon, and you want to support GSSA's work, get a ticket, or a bunch, and bring the gang for an eating treat. It could be foggy but could be hot, so make sure you've got a hat and some sunscreen. **Get Tickets Here:** [www.goldenstatesalmon.org](http://www.goldenstatesalmon.org)



EST. 1877  
**WILLIAM TELL**  
HOUSE  
**NORTH COAST**  
BREWING CO.  
INDEPENDENT SINCE 1988

## Feds and Tribe Work to Bring Fish Back to the McCloud River

On Monday July 12 fertilized winter run salmon eggs were returned to the McCloud River for the first time since the construction of Shasta Dam in the 1940's. The action was taken by the Winnemem Wintu tribe along with the National Marine Fisheries Service and CDFW. The eggs were moved because the cold water needed to

successfully incubate and hatch winter run down stream of Shasta Dam is in short supply this year. Fishery managers have warned for months that winter run left to spawn in the Sacramento River downstream of the dam are likely to produce eggs that will be lost because much of the water coming out of the dam will be too hot for

the eggs to survive in.

Since the McCloud River now flows into Lake Shasta, where the winter run fry would be trapped, the plan is to trap them in the lower section of the McCloud before they hit the lake. Then they'll be moved downstream of the dam and released into the Sacramento River. ■

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