



January 2023

FISH TALES

Newsletter of the Golden State Salmon Association

Colman Hatchery Releases First of 1.5 Million Fry Directly to Sacramento River



Here's what the fry looked like immediately prior to release to the river

In the second year of a three-year experiment started after GSSA proposed it to the US Fish and

Wildlife Service, the Coleman hatchery released the first group of this year's 1.5 million fry on

January 3. Over 600,000 fry were released into the Sacramento River. The release was timed to take advantage of high-water conditions to boost their survival.

After observing the fry release last year, the CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) decided to copy it this year with a fry release from the Nimbus hatchery on the American River. Like Coleman, the Nimbus fish will be tracked using DNA taken from their parents, which is also a first for salmon in a state-run hatchery. Fry can be released earlier than other hatchery salmon which allows them to take advantage of high flows in the rivers. ■

Year End Donations Very Appreciated

We are always seeking support from you, our members, to keep doing the work we do. At the end of 2022 many of you responded to our appeal, and we thank you. A few of you went way above and beyond and we'd like to thank you with special acknowledgement.

Pam and Mark Smithers from St. Helena donated 100 shares of stock worth more than \$10,000. We're very grateful for this donation and

just a reminder to everyone that GSSA is set up to receive any stock donations.

We'd also like to give a special shout out to the Northern CA Kayak Anglers Club which donated \$6500 to the Roger Thomas Fund. This fund is exclusively used to get kids out fishing. The club made the donation in honor of late club member Joel Herranz Lotilla. Club members Allen Bushnell, Allen Sansano, Howard Joe and renowned fishing reel rebuilder Alan Tani all helped make sure the



GSSA got five boat loads of kids out fishing in 2022 thanks to the Roger Thomas Fund

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funds found their way to the Roger Thomas Fund. An anonymous donor matched with another \$6500 donation, again to get the kids out fishing. We're very grateful to all and looking forward to getting the kids out fishing. ■

Crab Fundraiser February 11, 2023

GSSA invites everyone to an afternoon and early evening crab feast on February 11, the Saturday before Valentine's Day. There will be two seatings, one at 11:30am and the next at 430pm. Unlike many crab feeds, GSSA does not, and will not, use previously cooked (and often frozen) crab. We go the extra mile to cook it, so you know you're getting the real thing. Consider buying your partner a rose and getting a couple of tickets for a head start on Valentine's Day. Or bring the whole family or team. Who doesn't like fresh crab? And you know the proceeds are going to a good cause that will benefit you and your neighbors in the long run. Get tickets at goldenstatesalmon.org. ■



Fresh crab coming, served with a smile!

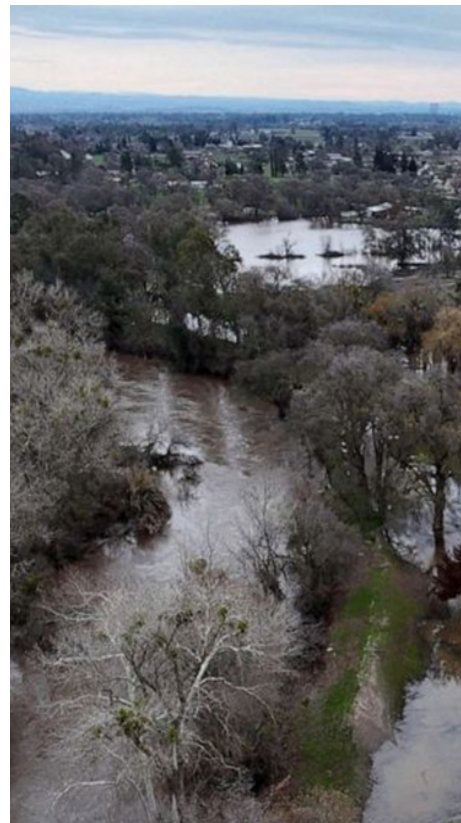
2022 Returns, Not Good, 2023 Season Outlook Clouded

As earlier reported, we won't know until mid-February or early March what the total 2022 return was, nor the number of two-year-olds which is used to calculate the expected number of adults in the ocean in 2023. Some state fish experts are suggesting they haven't seen such grim returns since 2007, the year before the fishery closure. We fully expect the state's big water users to point to the commercial take of salmon in 2022 and the thiamine deficiency problem as the reasons for poor salmon numbers, and both factors are real. But the ongoing low production of salmon in the Central Valley over the last two decades is primarily caused by over-diversion of the river water needed by the salmon to survive. In addition, chronic overheating of salmon spawning beds and dewatering of fertilized salmon eggs caused by upstream dam operations have also been major factors in why we are struggling to rebuild consistent, robust, salmon runs. ■

It's Raining and You Know That Can't Be Bad (For Salmon)

Widespread rain over California is giving some hope that the worst effects of drought might be avoided in 2023. In the past, good rains in the winter and spring generally meant you could count on good salmon returns two years later. Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be the case now since the number of adult spawning salmon is so low. At this point we don't know if the

rain and snow will mean anything come spring when juvenile salmon start migrating to the Delta, Bay, and ocean. The low reservoirs behind the major dams can absorb an awful lot of water before they



have to consider releasing any for flood control. If it stops raining in the early winter, like it did last year, come springtime, there may be little benefit for juvenile salmon. This year's juvenile salmon are expected to be mostly hatchery fish that are likely to be trucked. One big exception is the fish produced at Coleman hatchery which generally are not trucked. We're hoping these fish will be met with the wet type of conditions we enjoyed in late December and early January. ■

**Join or Renew your
GSSA Membership**

**For more info, go to:
goldenstatesalmon.org**

GSSA Only Fishing Group Asked to Help Review Federally Funded Restoration Proposals



Some side channels offer better habitat than others

GSSA was invited by the US Bureau of Reclamation to help review salmon restoration project proposals to improve or restore salmon habitat in the Central Valley. GSSA's input was sought because of our acknowledged expertise in salmon habitat needs and because of relationships built over the years with agency staff. GSSA also participated for years in helping stand up the federal government's Science Integration Team model which measures the ecological value of various salmon habitat features. ■

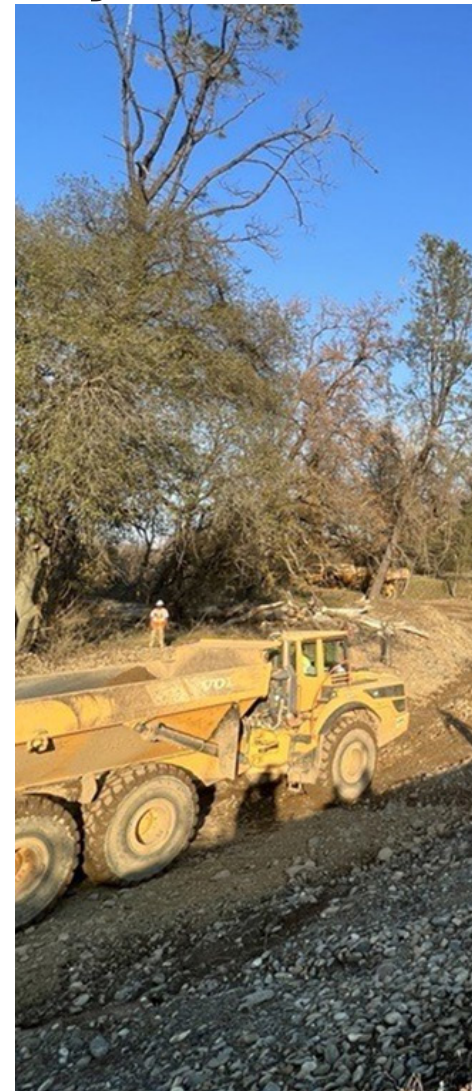
Dispute Over 2023 Interim Water Operation Rules Before Federal Judge

GSSA and allies are awaiting a ruling from a federal court on our challenge to the proposed short-term rules to operate the Central Valley project in 2023 as a long-term plan is being developed. Federal and state agencies have proposed a repeat of last year's rules which proved nowhere near protective enough to safeguard salmon. We've pointed out the shortcomings of their plan, including the fact they promised to maximize winter run habitat in the upper Sacramento River but then didn't. Instead, they diverted more water than first proposed, something the court appears to be interested in delving into. ■



Operation of Shasta Dam is one issue of contention

Major Rearing Habitat Restoration Project Done



Restoring the river's natural side channels provides rearing habitat for baby salmon

While GSSA focuses on recovering the river flows needed by salmon in the Central Valley, we also keep our eye on other habitat needs, including that of more rearing habitat. Historically, side channels, where the river might split as it flows around islands, provided this. Baby salmon, two to four inches long will take up residence in these lower velocity side channels, sometimes for months. Here they can often find good food sources

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and places to hide from predators. Development of the Central Valley destroyed many side channels but today we recognize the need to restore side channels. A recent example is the Kapusta side channel which is almost a half mile long. After promising to fund this project a few years ago, the Bureau of Reclamation changed its mind when politically powerful local

entities tried to redirect the funding to their pet projects. GSSA quietly intervened behind the scenes and convinced the Bureau to restore the funding for Kapusta and several other important side channel restoration projects. Our established relationships and trust carried the day, and the funding was restored, for which we're grateful. ■

Volunteers Needed

GSSA is putting out a call for help from volunteers. We're looking for some extra hands to help at the February 11 crab fundraiser in San Rafael and in June at the Santa Rosa dinner.

Let us know if you can help by emailing info@goldenstatesalmon.org or call 855-251-4472.

Thanks. ■

Looking Over the Horizon

GSSA will be in the trenches in the coming year and years beyond, but we need support to keep going. If you didn't get our yearend letter, check it out at goldenstatesalmon.org to see how GSSA made a difference in 2022.

If you haven't done so already, please consider renewing your

membership starting at \$35 or making a donation for the coming year. You can renew at goldenstatesalmon.org or mail a check in to: PO Box 320096, San Francisco, CA, 94132

GSSA is also set up to take donations of any stocks you might want to part with and we're always

grateful for donations above the membership fee.

We are very grateful for the support we got from many this past year. There's a lot of unfinished work ahead. We're on it thanks to you. ■

GSSA Founding Members

Chris Arcoleo, John Atkinson, Raymond Bonneau, Dennis Burkell, Hugh Chatham, Coastside Fishing Club, Joesph 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. Gaebe, Vic Giacalone, Victor Gonella, Zeke Grader, Ren Harris, Eric Holthouse, 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

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