



January 2025

Member Newsletter of the Golden State Salmon Association

[goldenstatesalmon.org](http://goldenstatesalmon.org)

## Joint State and Federal Water Grab - It's Time to End This BS!

Last year was an incredibly busy and challenging year. Friends and family continue to feel the impact of a second salmon season closure while the fishery faced a joint state and federal water grab. We fought a litany of destructive salmon and water policies, challenged infrastructure projects that will harm the fishing industry and critical salmon rivers through hearings and litigation, and with your help, successfully secured \$25 million in hatchery funding in Proposition 4, and made great strides within our coalitions to strengthen our efforts.

In 2025, our efforts will be needed now more than ever as we expect another very challenging year. It will be tough but we are inspired by our members and partners for their continued support and dedication. Governor Newsom's water policies are killing California's salmon runs. Salmon fishermen and women have been out of work for two years. Enough is enough, let's get back to fishing. This year we are focusing on our critical work to 1) restore and prevent further degradation of the cold water flows salmon need to survive and thrive, and 2) improve hatchery



production by working with fishing partners to lay the groundwork for a new Sacramento River mainstem hatchery and implement a community salmon net pen project, as an example.

To tackle this work, we have invested in additional staff – added a policy and advocacy manager, increased our marketing staff member to full-time, and continued engagement with our Sacramento lobbyist and fisheries agency consultant. Additionally, we are calling on all of you to

take part in our newly launched 'End This BS!' campaign. It's time the Governor saves salmon, fishing jobs, the Bay-Delta Watershed, communities and families. Learn more at [www.endthisbs.com](http://www.endthisbs.com).



# WE'RE FIGHTING



## Mokelumne Hatchery Hits Record Returns

The 2024 salmon spawning season delivered mixed results: while California state hatcheries exceeded their egg collection goals, Coleman National Fish Hatchery fell significantly short. With only 1,100 females returning, Coleman managed to gather just 5.5 million eggs—far below their 12-million juvenile salmon target. To make up the gap, Mokelumne, Feather, and Nimbus Hatcheries stepped in, transferring over 8.5 million eggs. This shortfall underscores the devastating impact of poor water management practices under the Newsom administration, which continues to choke California's salmon population.

Despite these challenges, the Mokelumne Hatchery achieved a record-breaking year with nearly 35,000 salmon returns—the highest in history. The Mokelumne River is showing promising signs of natural spawning success, aided by effective smolt-release strategies like trucking young salmon directly to the Bay. This method, including releases at Ft. Baker (a prime site identified by GSSA), will remain a critical component of their program.



On the Feather River, 40,205 fall-run Chinook passed upstream near the Thermalito Afterbay, enabling the Feather River Hatchery to meet its target of 6 million smolts, with an additional 6 million set for increased production. As in previous years, some of these fish will be released as fry—around two million based on last year's figures. Most of the smolts will hitch a truck ride to the Bay, though river releases will depend on water conditions.



Nimbus Fish Hatchery also met its production goals while contributing eggs to support Coleman's efforts. The final numbers for fall-run Chinook returns to California's Central Valley will be released in February, with results shared at the CDFW Public Meeting on California Salmon in March.

## Disaster Relief Funds Finally Within Reach for Impacted Industry

On December 20, The FISHERIES Act, spearheaded by Congressman Byron Donalds, passed the U.S. Senate and came a few weeks after the critical bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives with a unanimous bipartisan voice vote - the bill was signed by the President during the first weekend of January.

In an effort to prevent future delays in much-needed disaster relief getting into the hands of fishing families as quickly as possible, GSSA signed on and mobilized support for the legislation over the last 5 months. Currently, California's salmon fishing community continues to wait for disaster relief funds to be distributed for the 2023 closure – nearly 2 years after the disaster was declared. GSSA had been in contact with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as it sought to expedite one of the final hurdles and cut through the red tape of the disaster relief process. In January GSSA was informed that funds were

# FOR SALMO



## Disaster Relief Funds Finally Within Reach for Impacted Industry

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finally sent to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, which will, hopefully, make it to struggling fishing families in a couple months.



## Is a Salmon Net Pen Coming to Richmond?

GSSA spearheads proposal to establish a salmon smolt net pen in the Richmond city marina to benefit both the local community and California's salmon populations. Building on over a decade of proven success with net pens, this initiative would acclimate juvenile hatchery fish in the marina for several weeks, prompting their return as adults to the same location.

The project aims to provide Richmond's under-served community with rare and enriching salmon fishing opportunities, hands-on environmental education, and community-centered events. Through direct engagement with salmon—both in their juvenile rearing stages and later as returning adults—residents will develop

stronger connections with nature, the San Francisco Bay, and California's vital salmon heritage.



Net pens have demonstrated significant benefits for salmon survival. In 2012, the Coastside Fishing Club conducted a pilot study acclimating 180,000 salmon smolts in Half Moon Bay, increasing survival rates three- to fourfold. Since then, over 6 million smolts have been successfully reared and released at Pillar Point Harbor, yielding substantial benefits to both commercial and recreational fishing.



GSSA's Cat Kaiser has been leading the effort, including garnering project support from East Bay Municipal Utility District, The City of Richmond, local community and youth groups, and community members. The proposal has been delivered to California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

## Frankenfish Farm Shuttters

In a major win for GSSA, wild salmon, fishermen, and the environment, AquaBounty Technologies, Inc. announced the closure of its Bay Fortune facility in December—its last remaining fish farm—marking a decisive moment in the decades-long fight against genetically engineered (GE) salmon. AquaBounty will cull all remaining fish and reduce personnel, signaling the end of its controversial operations.



The closure comes after years of organizing by a broad coalition of environmental groups, fishermen, Tribes, and consumers. GSSA and the coalition challenged the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's 2016 approval of GE salmon, which was developed by AquaBounty using DNA from three fish species: Atlantic salmon, Pacific king salmon, and Arctic eelpout. GSSA highlighted significant environmental and health risks, including the potential for GE salmon to escape, outcompete wild species, and disrupt ecosystems.

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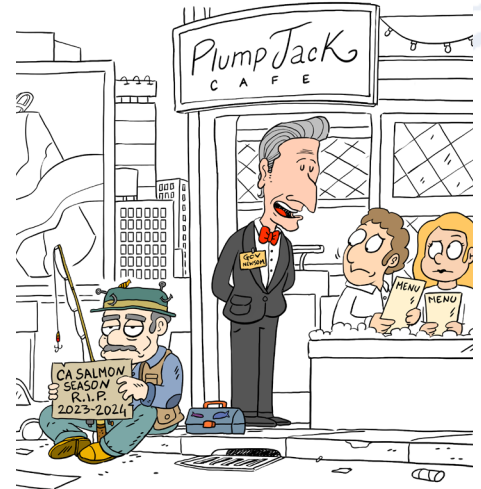
## GSSA Board Members Honored at International Sportsmen's Expo

What a great day for GSSA Board members Dick Pool and Mike Aughney as both were honored with awards on January 18 at the ISE Show in Sacramento.



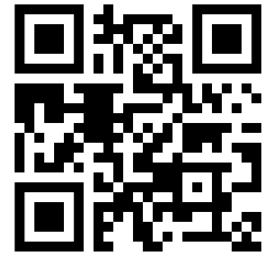
Dick received a Salmon Conservation Lifetime Achievement Award on behalf of GSSA as well as a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition. Dick was praised and thanked by top industry leaders and agencies, including a very special recognition from Congressman Jared Huffman, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the American Sportfishing Association.

Mike, GSSA Vice Chairman and salmon advocate, was inducted into the California Outdoors Hall of Fame for his decades of sportsmanship and as strong voice for salmon and the fishing industry. Mike has pursued salmon his entire life formerly working as a commercial fisherman and a deck hand on party boats around the Bay Area. He is singularly recognized as the originator of online fishing reports, beginning with the establishment of USA Fishing in 1994.



*"Don't mind him. Norwegian salmon served here."*

Check out GSSA's demand to Newsom to #ENDthisBS on our new campaign website by scanning the code below



## Golden State Salmon Association Founding Members

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