



PISCES

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Cal-Neva Chapter Wins AFS Chapter of the Year Award!

On Wednesday, August 13, 2003, the Cal-Neva Chapter was honored by the parent AFS at its 133rd Annual Meeting in Quebec City, Quebec. The Chapter of the Year Award was awarded to both the Cal-Neva and Minnesota chapters for their outstanding contributions to fisheries resource conservation and the fisheries profession over the past year. Chuck Knutson, President of the Cal-Neva Chapter, was present at the Business Meeting to receive the Award. The AFS Chapter of the Year Award was initiated in 1992, and this year was the first time Cal-Neva has won the Award.

(*Award* continued on page 6)

Incoming President's Message

Jim Steele, President

Please join me in congratulating Chuck Knutson on finishing a great year as president of the Cal-Neva Chapter. Due to Chuck's leadership, and the contributions of the Executive Committee and Chapter members we have co-received the Chapter of the Year award from the parent organization. Chuck has set the bar high for us. With Chuck's help as Past President, we are planning to repeat that performance.

Our plans for the upcoming year include increasing membership by reaching out to university students through their clubs and organizations and extolling the advantages of belonging to a professional organization such as AFS. Our incoming membership chair, Mr. Bob Fujimura has taken this task on and hopes you will join him in seeking new members.

We will continue to watch over fisheries issues and develop position papers underscoring the need to use science in policy making and restoration, as well as promoting the conservation and recovery of fish resources world wide. In addition we will look for those new ideas that allow people to coexist with fish habitat and will support research that achieves that goal. I hope every member will take an active part in developing

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***Pisces* has gone electronic!**

If you would like to receive a hard copy in the mail, contact the Editor, Chris Wilkinson, at (916) 227-4504 or cdw@water.ca.gov.

strong and sound positions on important fisheries issues.

We will seek to engage all members of the chapter in the conduct of their organization and will encourage every member to consider being a member of the Executive Committee. Only by having the greatest membership involvement in the decision process can we continually receive the advantage of new and competitive ideas. Please contact Tom Lambert, your nominations chair and become more involved with your organization.

I look forward to a challenging year as your Chapter president and look forward to our annual meeting being held this year in Redding, CA. We have an exciting program planned and hope everyone can attend. If you wish to become involved in the planning and execution or just want information please contact our planning chair Ms. Tricia Parker. If you have questions about how to become involved in any Chapter activities, don't hesitate to contact me. We are all available through the Chapter web site at www.afs-calneva.org (or see the back page of this newsletter).

Outgoing President's Message

Chuck Knutson, Past President

I want all Chapter members to know how proud I was (and still am!) to accept the Chapter of the Year Award on behalf of the Cal-Neva Chapter at the AFS meeting in Quebec City on Wednesday, August 13, 2003. Although we tied the Minnesota Chapter for the Award, I feel that this takes nothing away from our accomplishments. We deserved it, and it's a great honor! The Chapter of the Year Award was initiated by AFS in 1992, and this year is the first time ever that the Cal-Neva Chapter has won the Award. I want to congratulate all of you for a job well done this past year. Keep it up!

Also at the Quebec Meeting, I gave a powerpoint presentation at the AFS Time and Place Committee Meeting, using information developed by Dave Manning, describing our Chapter's bid for the 2007 AFS Annual Meeting to be held in San Francisco. Guess what! The AFS Governing Board approved our bid! We're ahead of the game already, as Dave Manning has stepped forward to be General Chair of this meeting and Larry Brown will be the Program Chair. I know the rest of the Chapter membership will rise to the challenge as they did at Monterey in 1997! We have four years to plan!

I am glad to see that planning is on schedule for the 2004 Chapter Annual Meeting to be held in Redding on April 23-24, 2004. We especially need to make sure that we get good attendance from the Humboldt Chapter at this meeting. In these days of tight budgets, it is imperative that we figure out ways to make it easier for Chapter members to attend our annual meetings.

The American River Salmon Festival is coming up on October 11-12, 2003 at Nimbus Salmon and Steelhead Hatchery. Sharon Shiba will have our Chapter booth at the festival and is looking for volunteers; contact her at 916-358-2870. In addition to merchandise sales at these festivals, I would like to see the Chapter get the word out on AFS positions on various fisheries issues. We need to get our message to the public!

Although I am disappointed that we still have northern pike in Lake Davis, I think some progress has been made in getting community support for another chemical treatment. It is important that our Chapter continue to be involved in the updated Lake Davis Pike Plan and our positions continue to be in the forefront.

Lastly, I am looking forward to serving on the EXCOMM as Past President for the upcoming year to provide continuity and answer any questions people may have regarding Chapter functions. I also intend to assist in the development of a Mexican AFS Chapter and participate in outreach activities which will make the public aware of our activities and concerns. This type of activity is becoming a higher priority for AFS in general, as indicated in Quebec by Past AFS President Fred Harris.

Your Chapter Needs You!

Tom Lambert, Bylaws and Nominations Committee Chairperson

The Cal-Neva Chapter is seeking candidates to run for President-elect and Secretary for the April 2004 election. This is a great opportunity to develop your planning and leadership skills, and provide a valuable service to your Chapter and AFS. Previous EXCOMM experience is not necessary. The President-elect's primary responsibility will be to organize the program for the Chapter's annual meeting in April 2005. Following the annual meeting, the President-elect will then serve one year as President, presiding at Chapter meetings and representing the Chapter at the Western Division and Parent Society levels. Following completion of the Presidential term, the outgoing President would provide advice and guidance by continuing to serve on the EXCOMM for one year as Past-President.

The Secretary keeps the Chapter records and provides notes from the EXCOMM meetings. The Secretary serves as an officer of the Chapter for two years. Members interested in running for either office should contact Tom Lambert at (707) 829-7882 or by e-mail at lambert5@pacbell.net.

Chapter Seeks Awards Nominees

Pat Coulston, Awards Committee Chairperson

One of the highlights of the Chapter's Annual Meeting is the presentation of awards to deserving individuals for their professional excellence and fisheries conservation efforts. Your Chapter Awards Committee is currently seeking nominees for awards to be presented at the 2004 Annual Meeting to be held in Redding in April 2004. Five categories of awards are presented by the Chapter. They are:

- 1) **Distinguished Professional Achievement** – recognizing chapter members for professional excellence in research, management, education, publication, or outstanding contributions to the profession or fisheries conservation.
- 2) **Special Contribution** – recognizing members and others for outstanding service to the Chapter.
- 3) **Conservation Achievement** – recognizing non-member individuals or groups for outstanding contributions or service to fisheries conservation.
- 4) **Award of Excellence** – recognizing a Chapter and Parent Society member for exemplary depth and breadth of professional achievement, combined with significant publication and/or conservation activities, and participation in Chapter activities. Nominees for this award should have achieved statewide recognition as a major authority or guiding force in California and/or Nevada fisheries management and science.
- 5) **Award for Scientific Journalism** – recognizing journalists whose work is particularly accurate and effective in conveying information to the public regarding fisheries science or conservation.

The Awards Committee is requesting the help of Chapter members in the task of identifying award nominees. Suggestions for award nominees should be conveyed to the Awards Committee Chairperson, Pat Coulston, by January 31, 2004. Pat can be reached by phone at (209) 942-6100, or by Email at pcoulsto@delta.dfg.ca.gov. Please take this opportunity to recognize an accomplished colleague, citizen, or journalist who is active and effective in fisheries conservation or science.

Lamprey Committee Update

*Shawn Chase, WDAFS and Cal-Neva Chapter
Lamprey Review Committees Chairperson*



Gravid female Pacific lamprey
(Photo by Rene Reyes, US Bureau of Reclamation)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was petitioned under the federal Endangered Species Act to list four species of lamprey as threatened or endangered. In light of the proposed listing, the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society (WDAFS) formed the Lamprey Review Committee (LRC). The primary objectives of the LRC are to review the petition for completeness and scientific accuracy, make a recommendation to the WDAFS Executive Committee whether WDAFS should support the petition, and to make recommendations for any further action that WDAFS should conduct regarding the petition.

The LRC found the petition to list Pacific, river, western brook, and Kern brook lamprey under the ESA to be well written, however, some of the data and conclusions presented did not stand up to scientific scrutiny. The majority of the weaknesses found in the petition are the result of the paucity of information on lampreys. The depth of the information available on the four lampreys varies by species. The case to list Pacific lamprey was fairly well developed for the Columbia River and Umpqua river basins, but was much weaker for most other river systems and for California in general.

The most compelling data supporting the listing of Pacific lamprey comes from counts at dams on the Columbia, Umpqua, and Snake rivers. For example, counts at the Ice Harbor and Winchester dams were measured in the 10's of thousands during the early 1960's, but declined to the low 100's or less by 2001. Although the counts of lamprey at the Columbia River Dams were considered unreliable by Moser and Close (2003), the sheer magnitude of the decline speaks to the seriousness of plight of Pacific lamprey. Moser and Close (2003) did note that the counts were conducted in a uniform manner, and they provide the only historical measure of relative abundance for Pacific lamprey.

The case to list the three remaining species (river, western brook, and Kern brook lampreys) was not as strong. There are few accounts of these species in the literature cited, and no trend data for the three remaining species were presented. However, based on the limited data that are available, as well as the professional opinion of biologist familiar with these species, the LRC believes that these species are likely at historically low levels.

The first step for the USFWS is to decide if it should accept the petition for review. The Lamprey Review Committee concluded that sufficient information exists that strongly suggests that the populations of the four species of lamprey are in decline, and that a review of the status of these species is warranted. Therefore, the LRC has recommended that the Executive Committees for the Western Division and the North Pacific International (Washington and British Columbia), Idaho, Oregon, and California-Nevada chapters write letters urging the USFWS to conduct its own population status review of Pacific, river, western brook, and Kern brook lampreys.

Along those lines, the Cal-Neva lamprey committee (yes, such a thing actually exist) is looking for information on all species of lamprey found in California. See the "Got Lamprey" article in the last issue of *Pisces* for details (available at www.afs-calneva.org/Pisces/Summer%202003.pdf).

Current Status of Northern Pike Issues, Lake Davis, California

Ivan Paulsen, Senior Fisheries Biologist, California Department of Fish and Game

In 2003, the California Department of Fish and Game's Portola Field Office completed a Three Year Report outlining results of the "northern pike control and contain" program being implemented at Lake Davis, Plumas County, California. The report

contains an evaluation of the field work completed during calendar years 2000, 2001, and 2002. The measurements of success were based on four criteria:

1) Changes in pike density in Lake Davis; 2) Impact to the trout fishery; 3) Changes in the risk of pike escaping; and 4) Changes in the risk of human movement of pike.

Summary of the findings

1) The pike population grew during the first three years (2000-2002) of plan implementation. We have noted that growth may have slowed in 2004.

2) Angler survey and monitoring data indicated that trout densities in Lake Davis have decreased. This may have been partly due to pike predation but was also likely a reflection of a decrease in annual stocking numbers beginning in 2000 after an unusually large stocking program in 1998 and 1999. Catch rate data suggests the density of larger pike capable of eating catchable-size trout may have remained about the same or increased more slowly than the pike population as a whole.

3) Increased pike abundance during the course of the plan implementation increased the risk of pike escaping the reservoir.

4) Although both education and enforcement activities may have reduced the risk of human movement of pike, increases in pike density (and the potential to catch and move pike) may have cancelled out these effects.

Based on this information, the Lake Davis Steering Committee recognizes that there is a definite need for the Department to move forward to investigate alternative methods to deal with the northern pike in Lake Davis. The Portola Field Office has prepared a list of alternatives which need to be investigated along with a list of issues which need to be addressed for each of these alternatives. The alternatives include, but may not be limited to: 1) Leave Lake Davis as a pike lake and do no more to control the pike population; 2) Continue the current control and containment program; or 3) Eradicate the pike by the following methods; a) drain the lake dry, b) drain the lake to dead pool (approximately 90 acre feet) and then either chemically retreat, use electrofishing boats, nets, detonation cord, or alter water quality (i.e. lower pH, introduce CO₂, etc.) or, 3) lower lake to approximately ¼ capacity and then either chemically retreat, use electrofishing boats, nets, detonation cord, or alter water quality (i.e. lower pH, introduce CO₂, etc.).

The Steering Committee held a Coalition meeting for the general public on Monday, September 8, 2003. There were approximately 60 individuals present for this meeting. The Three Year Report and Alternatives to be investigated were presented. No one at the meeting objected to the proposed investigation into various alternatives. Several individuals spoke in favor of the Department moving forward with dealing with the pike issue. Their concern was based on their perception of how trout fishing success has steadily diminished over the past three years (as has been substantiated by the Department's creel census surveys). The general consensus of the audience was for the Department to move forward in investigating how best to deal with the northern pike. No mention was made by the public for retreating of the lake.

Several local members of the Steering Committee are concerned about economic impacts to the community and would like the State to address this issue. Also, an area of concern is whether or not there was any contamination of the ground water from the 1997 treatment. The Plumas County Health Department has just completed its fifth year of sampling approximately 80 wells below Lake Davis. This is a ten year program to determine if there was any contamination. Results to date have shown no evidence of any of the chemicals found in the Nusyn-Noxfish or rotenone to be present. Also, water samples were taken from several wells in the Lake Davis area for analysis by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, under the GAMA program, to test for volatile organic compounds in trace amounts (parts per trillion) and



Northern pike collected from Lake Davis
(Photo courtesy of CDFG)

isotope aging of the water and lake water to see if there might be a direct connection. To date, results from these tests have not been received.

There seems to be an increase in the numbers of local people who support the Department eradicating the northern pike, even if it means re-treating the lake. It is anticipated that other individuals will most likely sue the Department if a new treatment program is proposed. Basically, not everyone will be happy with the outcome of dealing with the pike, whatever the final decision will be.



**Gravid female northern pike from Lake Davis
(Photo courtesy of CDFG)**

Award (continued from page 1)

Congratulations to all! Some of the notable achievements during the past year include:

- hosting a highly successful 2003 Western Division AFS Annual Meeting in San Diego and 2002 Chapter Annual Meeting in Lake Tahoe;
- assisting in the arrangements for the first annual California Estuarine Research Society Meeting in San Diego in 2003;
- encouraging student participation through awards, membership discounts, job fairs, volunteerism, free lodging at meetings, and grants to students and subunits;
- completing and printing 5,000 Chapter membership color brochures;
- participating in and donating \$1,000 to the American River Salmon Festival;
- purchasing and selling 300 copies of Dr. Peter Moyle's book, *Inland Fishes of California, 2nd edition*, at a 50% discount to AFS members;
- raising the level of concern over the boating industry's attempt to gain a larger share of Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration funds;
- reviewing and providing recommendations to NOAA–Fisheries regarding candidates for the Central Valley Salmon Recovery Team;
- initiating a strategic planning effort for the Chapter;
- reviewing and commenting on a WDAFS letter to the Departments of Commerce and Interior on the 2002 Klamath River Fish Kill;
- producing a high quality newsletter (Pisces) several times a year, maintaining a Chapter website, and using a member listserve to keep Chapter members informed;
- sponsoring six symposia at the last two annual meetings;
- recognizing professional achievement through awards (Excellence, Distinguished Professional Achievement, Conservation Achievement, and Special Contribution)
- presenting a Chapter position statement recommending eradication of northern pike from Lake Davis, using chemical treatment if necessary, at a Lake Davis Coalition Meeting;
- sending a comment letter to the USBOR regarding our concerns over a proposed reduction of CVPIA b(2) water for fish protection;
- sending letters of support to the USFS, Lahontan WQCB, and CDFG, for the Silver King Creek Paiute Cutthroat Trout Restoration Project;
- continuing to be party in a lawsuit to designate critical habitat for the Santa Ana sucker, a Federally-listed species.

Regarding the WDAFS Chapter of the Year Award, the Cal-Neva Chapter has won this award in 1986, 1990, and 2003. All Chapter members should be extremely proud of our accomplishments during all of those years!

Notes from the Field

We want to hear from you! Please send your stories, photos, essays, and opinions.

Guidelines: Contributions for “Notes from the Field” should be submitted to Chris Wilkinson, *Pisces* Editor (cdw@water.ca.gov), in the body of an email or as an attachment in MS Word, Word Perfect, or Portable Document Format (PDF). There is no length limit to contributions, but files should be 6MB or smaller.

Submissions for the next issue of *Pisces* are due by November 15, 2003.

Survival at the Edge: Plight of the San Mateo Creek Steelhead

*Tim E. Hovey, Associate Fisheries Biologist, and Jenny O'Brien, Scientific Aide,
California Department of Fish and Game*

For the past four years, the California Department of Fish and Game (Department) has been continually monitoring the small population of Southern Steelhead Trout in the San Mateo Creek drainage in northern San Diego County. Discovered in 1999, this population represents the first confirmed presence of southern steelhead trout on the drainage in over fifty years. Immediately following the discovery, the Department initiated a program to monitor the status of this newly discovered population. This program is dedicated to collecting information on trout abundance, age at growth, genetics, temperature data, spawning behavior and overall health of the population.



**Southern steelhead habitat in Devil Canyon
(Photo courtesy of CDFG)**

San Mateo Creek stretches approximately 21 miles from its headwaters in Southern Riverside County within the Cleveland National Forest to Northern San Diego County on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. The creek is separated for most of the year, and sometimes the entire year, from the Pacific Ocean by about 100 meters of sand. While steelhead trout were abundant on the drainage in the 1930's and 40's, consistent steelhead presence has not been observed in San Mateo Creek for over fifty years. The newly discovered San Mateo Creek population of steelhead currently represents the southern-most population of southern steelhead trout in California.

Strontium/calcium otolith analysis conducted on specimens collected in 1999, indicated that the newly discovered trout were the offspring of anadromous females that entered the drainage in 1997-98 to spawn. The analysis established that the age of the trout was approximately 2 - 2 ½ years at the time of discovery. Several of the trout, which ranged in size from 150- 220 mm T.L., were also observed in the smoltification stage, indicating they were likely emigrating out of San Mateo Creek when they were discovered.

As monitoring continued through 1999, we knew that only a handful of resident trout still remained in the upper portion of San Mateo Creek. Due to inconsistent water levels, these individuals were unable to complete their emigration out of the drainage and became stranded in small ephemeral pools over a short portion of the creek. An additional threat to trout survival, the pools were also occupied by largemouth bass, green sunfish, bluegill and black bullhead, exotic fishes that are known predators and likely competitors of salmonids.

While the future looked bleak for the San Mateo trout at the close of the 1999 monitoring season, not all the news was bad. Surveys further up Devil Canyon Creek, a tributary to San Mateo Creek, revealed several trout of the same size-class. This provided an uninterrupted link of resident trout presence between the two drainages. While San Mateo Creek is heavily loaded with exotic fish species, a substantial barrier at the confluence precludes exotic migration into Devil Canyon.

With the similar size class observations and the documented locations of trout on the drainage, we concluded that the original emigrating group began their journey from deep within the confines of Devil Canyon Creek in 1999, progressed down to San Mateo Creek during a high water period and continued on towards the Pacific Ocean, water permitting. The first fish was actually discovered a short ½ mile from the ocean and the size-class linked it to the individuals in the upper drainage. While individuals were observed near the lagoon mouth, there is no way of knowing if any trout actually succeeded in making it to the ocean.



Southern steelhead from the San Mateo Creek Drainage
(Photo courtesy of CDFG)

In the spring and summer of 2000, we began to document the disappearance of the San Mateo trout. No appreciable rainfall had been recorded in the 12-months prior and the once over-flowing pools had now been reduced to overheated sumps, where the exotic fish species thrived and the trout did not. Repeated snorkel surveys began to reveal extremely emaciated and unhealthy trout, schooling with large groups of black bullhead. It was clear that those trout that had not been consumed were now being out-competed by the immense number of nonnatives. Documented temperatures of up to 30 degrees Celsius within the pools sealed the fate of the San Mateo Creek trout and the last recorded observation was made in August of 2000.

The Devil Canyon trout fared far better during this time. Temperature probes deployed in both drainages during the summer of 2000 recorded more suitable

and stable temperatures for salmonids in trout-occupied pools within Devil Canyon Creek. Additionally, the lack of competitive and predatory exotic fish pressures allowed trout to prosper. Conditions were so favorable in the drainage that two separate groups of juvenile trout were observed on Devil Canyon during the 2000 monitoring season. This discovery indicated that the presence of southern steelhead trout on the drainage was not just a one-time event, and that successful reproduction was occurring within Devil Canyon. The juvenile observations documented by the Department on Devil Canyon became instrumental in providing the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) with enough critical information to designate the southern steelhead ESU as endangered.

As the 2000 monitoring season came to a close, the drought conditions became severe. While the lower portion of Devil Canyon ran dry, its interior pools maintained levels adequate for trout survival. The narrower creek walls and extensive overgrowth protected the pools from direct sun light for most of the day, easing evaporation. The temperature probes also indicated that the larger pools were still being fed by subterranean flow, maintaining a thermocline for trout survival.

Through 2001 and into the spring of 2002, we monitored the few fish on Devil Canyon Creek. The pools were separated now and it became easy to identify specific individuals. As we monitored the size class of these individuals, we were convinced that these were the survivors of the juvenile batch we had encountered in 2000. They appeared healthy in their ever-shrinking pools, content to stay close to the bottom, where the cooler, groundwater fed the pools. Despite the poor conditions, we continued to search for juvenile trout on the drainage. Extensive snorkel surveys and passive shore observations revealed no new recruits for 2001.

While it appeared that the severe conditions on the creek had contributed to the lack of reproductive success for 2001, we did observe behavior that would suggest the contrary. On two occasions in the summer of 2001, we observed spawning behavior in a pool that was occupied by the highest number of trout on Devil Canyon Creek. Individuals were observed staging around a central boulder and conducting reproductive posturing over a sandy area located in the center of the pool. This type of reproductive behavior had not been previously observed. Despite these encouraging observations, no actual spawning was ever documented and no juvenile trout were detected for 2001 and into the spring of 2002.

In the summer of 2002, we began to document the decline of trout on Devil Canyon Creek. Holdover pools that would routinely survive the summer began to disappear as a result of the two-year drought. By August of 2002, we could confirm the presence of only two adults along the survey area. A month prior,



Electrofishing for southern steelhead in Devil Canyon
(Photo courtesy of CDFG)

we had collected a single dead, adult female trout that had succumbed in an overheated pool, further illustrating the harsh conditions within the drainage. The fish was found to contain partially hydrated eggs that made up over ten percent of her body weight, a condition that would have certainly enabled her to spawn in life if given the opportunity. The age of the fish was found to be 2-plus years, confirming that she was indeed a cohort of the juveniles discovered in 2000. The last trout was observed on Devil Canyon Creek at the end of August 2002.

At the end of 2002, we had concluded that the severe drought conditions had strongly contributed to the decline and the eventual extirpation of resident trout on San Mateo and Devil Canyon creeks. The end of the 2002 monitoring season also marked the end of trout presence on the drainage.



**Southern steelhead in San Mateo Creek
(Photo courtesy of CDFG)**

At the beginning of 2003, the Department began to scale back the amount of survey time allotted for San Mateo and Devil Canyon creeks. With the poor conditions and the documented decline of resident trout, the possibilities for new discoveries were low. The lagoon had remained closed during the entire four-year monitoring period and while several slight rain storms had occurred, the available water was nowhere close to what was needed to breach the sand berm. The trout had managed to survive in the drainage under the worst conditions imaginable for the last four years.

In order for trout to again become established on San Mateo Creek, many circumstances must become favorable at the same time. Probably the most important element, of course, is water availability. Not just water within the creek, but enough water available to blow out the sand guard and allow creek access to new anadromous spawners. The second most important condition for steelhead success is trout presence. It's not much of a

party if nobody shows up. Mature, adult steelhead need to be in the right place when the creek allows access. And in southern California, this is the smallest of available windows. Access, at times can be measured in days and if adult steelhead are not present for their upstream migration during these periods, their chances are lost. Lastly, steelhead trout not only need to be in the right place, but need to be there at the right time. Southern steelhead trout should began staging at or near their home streams from about late December to March, when seasonal rains typically open the creeks for access. These conditions are further stretched by the constant pressure applied to ground water sources to supply an ever-growing community.

Despite the over whelming odds, there is promise. On the last day of December 2002 an angler caught and released a 20-inch female steelhead trout in Dana Point Harbor only a few miles north of San Mateo Creek. This meant that the fish were in the area and at the right time of year. The size of the captured fish was also of interest. Twenty inches is well within the growth rate of a 3-year old, sea run steelhead trout; a trout that may have entered the system in 1999. This strongly suggests that, during the discovery of southern steelhead trout in San Mateo Creek in 1999, some of the fish may have actually made it to the ocean and were now returning to the creek to spawn.

While an intriguing discovery, the presence of steelhead off the coast had no impact on the stream, if they could not access it. For the past three years, the 100 meters of sand had stood as a sentinel to the ocean, precluding both entrance and exit. And even though a few rainstorms in January of 2003 had drenched the area, it provided nowhere near the amount of water capable of blowing out the sand berm. Three weeks later, that would change.

By February and heading into March a succession of large storms hit southern California. Record amounts of rainfall were reported in the short 4-week period and on February 25, 2003 the swollen creek pushed through the sand block and provided access to and from the ocean for the first time in over three years. While migration access was only available for three days, two follow-up storms continued to fill the aquifer and provided access to the creek for an additional 30 days during the prime spawning period for southern steelhead trout.

As of this writing, both San Mateo Creek and Devil Canyon Creek continue to run. While ocean access has been blocked for months, the extended migration window that was present in March gives hope that adult steelhead may have entered the drainage during that time to spawn. This suggests that juveniles will be visible within the drainage sometime in late summer 2003. The Department is again coordinating surveys with Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton biologists and volunteers from interest groups to search the drainage for trout. Snorkel surveys on both drainages are slated to occur in the late summer and early fall of 2003 and all involved are hopeful. Only time will tell if conditions were favorable enough during the spring for southern steelhead to return to San Mateo Creek and once again complete their life cycle. Only time will tell if they will be able to survive at the edge.

News Releases and Announcements

***** Mark Your Calendar / Save The Date *****

2004 AFS meeting of Cal-Neva and Humboldt Chapters

April 21-24, 2004 in Redding

**Theme: Understanding, Protecting, and Enjoying California's Fishes -
From the Sierra to the Sea**

Greetings all,

The date and location of our upcoming Cal-Neva AFS annual meeting, held jointly with the Humboldt AFS Chapter this year, has been confirmed. We will meet at the Red Lion Inn in Redding on April 21-24, 2004.

April 21, Weds: Continuing Education

April 22, Thurs: Symposia (daytime) and Welcoming Social (evening)

April 23, Fri: AFS meeting begins (Plenary session: morning and concurrent sessions (afternoon)). Friday night is the AFS banquet!

April 24, Sat: Concurrent sessions (morning).

Multiple recreational activities are available in the local area for before and after the conference.

Please contact Program Chair/President-elect Tina Swanson, if you are interested in being part of the program. Please contact Tricia Parker if you have any questions, or wish to help, with the Local Arrangements.

See you in Redding in April!

Contact Information:

Tina Swanson, 2004 Program Chair, Cal-Neva AFS

(530) 756-9021 or swanson@bay.org

Tricia Parker, 2004 Local Arrangements Chair, Cal-Neva AFS

(530) 527-3043 x254 or Tricia_Parker@fws.gov

**Accidental and Purposeful Introductions of Animals:
Investigating Species Interactions at Different Trophic Levels**

**Sponsored by the Western Section of The Wildlife Society
October 14-16, 2003 Radisson Hotel Sacramento, California**

This symposium will examine both intended (purposeful) and unintended (accidental) animal invasions in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Introduced vertebrate species and their interactions with native animal and plant species will be the central theme of the symposium. Animal invaders can have roles as competitors, predators, herbivores, and granivores. In turn, the distribution, abundance, and population dynamics of the invader can be affected by these same relationships, as well as by changes in habitat structure from invasive plants. Outcomes of these interactions are often considered harmful; others are considered acceptable or, in some cases, even beneficial.

Not only do introductions have ecological implications, they are further complicated by sociological, political, economic, and cultural influences. Although many animal introductions are accidental, some introductions are deliberate. Purposeful introductions that are done as part of commonly accepted land- and resource-management programs are ongoing in most parts of the world. This symposium will examine both types of introductions from ecological, conservation, and policy perspectives, with views encouraged from areas throughout the world.

Presentations will address invasive-species characteristics, invaded communities, invader impacts, and positive and negative outcomes of control programs in sequential, rather than breakout, sessions. Because of the nature of the sequential sessions, only a limited number of oral presentations will be accommodated.

Contributed posters will be an essential part of the program. A special evening poster session and reception with authors present will allow plenty of extended discussion among conference participants. Symposium proceedings will be published and distributed to all registrants.

More information, including an online registration form, is on the Meetings/Workshops page of the web site for the Western Section of The Wildlife Society at www.tws-west.org.

**Call for Papers and Posters
Wild Trout VIII Symposium
September 20-22, 2004
Yellowstone National Park, Old Faithful Inn**

Symposium Theme: “Working Together to Ensure the Future of Wild Trout:”

The first International Wild Trout Symposium was held in 1974 and symposia are now being held at 4-year intervals. The objectives of these symposia have focused on the conservation and restoration of wild trout resources. These symposia have sought to attract fishery professionals, natural resource conservationists, non-governmental conservation groups, and other individuals interested in wild trout.

The goals of the Wild Trout VIII Symposium are to bring together a broad and diverse audience representing governmental entities, non-governmental conservation organizations, media representatives, educators, anglers, guides, and business interests associated with trout fisheries to share their viewpoints on wild trout management and related public policy, to exchange technical information, and to seek ways of cooperatively advancing the conservation of wild trout resources. To this end, the Program Committee is soliciting abstracts for presentations and posters.

The Program Committee is particularly interested in abstracts related to the following topics:

- *Balancing Management of Native, Introduced, and Invasive Species. How can we accommodate conflicting philosophies of managing for native species? What are the trade-offs between managing for native species and managing for introduced species with potentially more recreational value?*
- *Watershed-scale Approaches to Enhancing Trout Habitat and Reducing Non-point Source Pollution. What is the role of watershed associations and how are they funded? How might government help but not control? Where are the good case histories?*
- *Communicating Fishery Science to the Public. How well are agencies communicating and how might they do better? How effective is the media and what might government learn from them?*
- *Regulations: Reality vs. Expectations. How effective are regulations in protecting wild trout? How do we balance harvest with catch-and-release interests? How do anglers and guides influence regulation strategies?*

Abstracts related to other topics are welcome. Additional session topics may be added and at least one session will consist of contributed papers.

Authors are encouraged to consult the Wild Trout VIII web page (WWW.WILDTROUT8.COM) for guidelines for abstract, poster, and manuscript preparation.

Abstracts must be submitted by February 1, 2004.

If possible, abstracts should be submitted electronically to Robert Carline; Word Perfect or MS Word files are acceptable.

Authors of presentations chosen for inclusion in the symposium are expected to submit a complete manuscript of their paper by August 1, 2004. All papers will be published in a symposium proceeding. Abstracts for posters will be included in the symposium proceeding.

For additional information and inquiries, contact the Program Committee Co-chairs.

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Nation's Federal Marine Fisheries Managers to Host Fisheries Conference November 13-15

Registration Now Online; Organizers Accepting Abstracts for Poster Sessions

It's time to register for the first-ever fisheries management conference, cosponsored by the eight Regional Fishery Management Councils and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries). The conference is open to the public and will be held in Washington, D.C., Nov. 13-15, 2003. The conference Web site and registration are now online at: www.managingfisheries.org.

This conference, *Managing Our Nation's Marine Fisheries - Past, Present, and Future*, aims to educate the public, policy makers and media on the fishery management process; highlight successful management by region and current management and research initiatives; help bridge the gap between perception and reality regarding fisheries management; and provide a forum for information exchange and solicit a wide range of perspectives on future management and marine research directions.

Whether you are a fisherman, an environmental advocate, a policymaker or a reporter who covers the fisheries beat, you will find the conference sessions to be pertinent and informative as Congress considers re-authorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which governs management decisions for our nation's marine fisheries. The conference will provide a nice backdrop for topics covered by the Pew Commission and U.S. Ocean Commission reports.

Visit the conference Web site at www.managingfisheries.org to preview the agenda and a list of invited panelists and speakers, and to register to attend.

Conference Logistics

When: November 13-15, 2003

Where: Omni-Shoreham Hotel and Conference Center, 2500 Calvert Street, Washington D.C.

Registration: Advanced registration requested. Attendance is free of charge.

To register, go to: www.managingfisheries.org.

Poster sessions and panel discussions will run concurrently with other activities. The deadline for submission of poster abstracts is September 15. Abstracts are limited to 500 words. Please submit abstract in accordance with guidelines posted at www.managingfisheries.org, to: David.Witherell@noaa.gov.

Knocking Down Barriers and Building New Partnerships: A Popular Program Frees

Miles of Waterways for Fish

June 18, 2003

Contact: Amy J. Gaskill, (503) 231-6874

Douglas DeHart, (503) 872-2763

Forging dozens of new partnerships with myriad public and private organizations at every level, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will spend \$2.3 million this year to help reopen 837 miles of fish habitat and spawning grounds in 29 states. Nearly \$400,000 will go to projects that will open more than 20 miles of fish habitat and passage for migrating fish in Oregon, Washington, California and Nevada. The popular Fish Passage Program, which engages willing partners to remove obsolete dams and other obstructions, construct fishways, and improve or replace culverts under roads or railroad tracks, approved 62 projects this year alone – twice as many projects as in previous years, thanks to Congress appropriating additional funds.

“This is a program with home runs all around,” said Steve Williams, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. “Because our partners all contribute to the cost of individual projects, our budget goes a long, long way. We have other Federal agencies, State agencies and dozens of private conservation and civic organizations who are on board in this effort. We welcome and value all of them.”

Williams pointed to the Manistee River culvert replacement project in Michigan and the Good Hope dam removal in Pennsylvania, each of which had a total of 13 private and public supporting partners, as examples of the kind of wide acceptance that the Fish Passage Program has throughout the country. Many of the small dams set for removal date as far back as the American and the Industrial Revolutions. Most were built either to accommodate early barge traffic or to provide power or irrigation for a fledgling economy, in a time when ecological or wildlife concerns were non-existent. Over time, however, it became apparent that obstructions in hundreds of waterways were cutting fish off from their spawning or rearing grounds, contributing to a long, slow decline in many species' populations.

Since 1999, when the fish passage program began, the program has supported 105 projects throughout the United States, restoring fish access to more than 3,750 miles of river habitat and 69,191 acres of wetlands. The program, which operates on a 50-percent match, has been able to add \$6.2 million in partner contributions since its inception.

“This program operates with a minimum of fanfare, and a lot of efficiency,” said Mamie Parker, Assistant Director of Fisheries and Habitat Conservation. “Partners seek us out. They match our money with their money. It’s such an exciting thing to watch. It’s the simplest of concepts, and it’s so effective. It really works.”

Six projects in the Pacific Region will receive funding this year. They include:

Oregon — Fort Creek (diversion fish screen)(\$20,000) – This project will install a screen at an irrigation diversion, opening five miles of in-stream habitat — including spawning habitat 300 feet upstream of the diversion — for native redband trout.

Washington — Lantz Creek (culvert replacement) (\$80,100) – This project on a tributary of the Wishkah River will replace two perched and undersize culverts with appropriately sized culverts, opening up 2.25 miles of habitat to coho salmon and cutthroat and steelhead trout.

Washington — Hulten Creek (culvert replacement) (\$100,000) – Seven species of salmonids, including bulltrout, coho and sockeye, will benefit from this project in the Quinault River basin. The existing culvert will be replaced with a bottomless arch, opening up 1 mile of stream and wetland habitat.

Washington — Culvert assessment on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands in Western Washington (\$70,000) – Stream crossings within the Nisqually, Dungeness and Outer Coast national wildlife refuges and Quilcene, Quinault and Makah national fish hatcheries will be assessed to identify fish barriers. Those identified will be prioritized for removal.

California — Calaveras River (Bellota weir) (\$35,273) – Located in California’s Central Valley, this weir blocks virtually all upstream migration of migrating adult salmon and steelhead from fall through spring. This project will provide up-stream and downstream passage at the 20-foot-high water diversion weir.

Nevada — Truckee River (diversion restoration) (\$85,100) – This project will re-establish fish passage at a private irrigation structure and restore access to 10 miles of river habitat for Lahontan cutthroat trout.

*For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, visit our home page at www.fws.gov
For more information about the Fish Passage Program across the United States,
visit: fisheries.fws.gov/FWSMA/fishpassage*

Fish and Game Commission Seeks Comments on Plan for Market Squid Fishery

July 17, 2003

**Contact: Chamois Andersen, Information Officer, (916) 657-4132, CAndersen@dfg.ca.gov;
Dale Sweetnam, Marine Region, (858) 546-7170, DSweetnam@dfg.ca.gov**

California's market squid, which has been the state's most valuable fishery resource for the last four years, is about to receive a management boost.

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has forwarded the state's draft Market Squid Fishery Management Plan (MSFMP) to the Fish and Game Commission for its adoption process. DFG is encouraging the public to review the current draft and provide comments directly to the Commission.

"California's squid resource is not only valued for its national and international sales, it is also used as bait for sport fishing, and provides essential forage for seabirds, marine mammals and a wide variety of commercial and sport fishes," said Dale Sweetnam, a DFG senior marine biologist. "This management plan will guide us in maintaining this fishery at a sustainable level," said Sweetnam, who is coordinating development of the plan.

The current draft plan will be available after July 25 for public review on DFG's Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/marketsquid/index.html. Copies may also be reviewed at DFG's regional offices, harbors and marinas, and at county libraries along the coast. Written comments on the MSFMP may be mailed to the California Fish and Game Commission, Market Squid Fishery Management Plan, 1416 Ninth St., Room 1320, Sacramento, CA 95814.

DFG's Marine Region staff will present the draft plan to the Commission at its Aug. 1-2 meeting in Long Beach. The Commission will also hear public testimony on the MSFMP and its suite of management options at that meeting as well as at a special hearing in Monterey in September (date to be announced). The plan will also receive public comments at the Commission's scheduled adoption hearing during its Nov. 6-7 meeting in San Diego.

The current version is the result of revisions to the preliminary draft MSFMP, which was released for public review in May 2002. The plan was redrafted to address public input as well as comments received from a scientific review panel.

The market squid fishery is often listed as California's largest fishery both in terms of volume and monetary value. In 2002, the fleet consisted of 184 vessels, which landed more than 160 million pounds of squid. This amounted to a fishery worth more than \$18 million. The squid resource is also an important source of bait for the state's recreational fisheries and is a valuable forage item for marine fish, birds and marine mammals.

The MSFMP will establish a management program for California's market squid resource with goals that are aimed at ensuring sustainability of the resource and reducing the potential for overfishing.

The proposed tools to accomplish these goals include:

- Establishing fishery harvest control rules, including a seasonal catch limitation to prevent the fishery from over-expanding; continuing weekend closures, which provide for periods of uninterrupted spawning; and maintaining monitoring programs designed to evaluate the impact of the fishery on the resource.
- Instituting a restricted access program, including provisions for initial entry into the fleet, types of permits, permit fees, and permit transferability.
- Continuing gear regulations regarding light shields and wattage used to attract squid to reduce the potential negative impacts to seabirds and coastal communities; and adding limitations on using lights to attract squid around several of the Channel Islands, an effort intended to protect nesting seabirds.

The new plan also includes procedures for the Commission and DFG to follow to address potential market and environmental impacts to the resource. The market squid fishery is often subject to extreme fluctuations in stocks due to El Nino events or other environmental conditions, which can have an effect on landings and market activities. International demand for California's squid can also dramatically affect how much squid is landed.

The MSFMP has been developed under the provisions set forth by California's Marine Life Management Act (MLMA), which became law in 1999. The MLMA created state policies, goals, and objectives to govern the conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of California's living marine resources such as the squid resource.

Court Upholds Commercial Gill Net Prohibition to Protect Marine Life

July 22, 2003

Contacts: Chamois Andersen, Public Information Officer, (916) 657 4132; David Bunn, Legislative Affairs, (916) 651 6719

SACRAMENTO - In a recent court ruling, Judge Martin J. Tangemen of the San Luis Obispo County Superior Court held that the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) had not acted illegally or improperly in adopting a regulation prohibiting the use of set gill nets to a depth of 60 fathoms (360 feet) in ocean waters. The prohibition extends from Point Reyes in Marin County south to Point Arguello in northern Santa Barbara County.

The regulation prevents the drowning of threatened southern sea otters, common murre (a diving seabird), and other marine life due to entanglement in gill and trammel nets used by commercial fishermen. In 1990, a statutory closure enacted by the state Legislature prohibited fishermen from using gill nets in depths less than 30 fathoms (180 feet) for most of the Central Coast. The prohibition was increased to 60 fathoms and made permanent in 2002.

In the July 11 ruling, the court agreed with DFG that the use of the nets was directly impairing the recovery of the threatened southern sea otter, which is a state protected species and also listed as threatened on the federal Endangered Species List.

The court upheld the regulation based solely on the evidence presented by DFG that showed the use of set gill nets posed a serious threat to the recovery of the southern sea otter. The court, however, did not find that the use of these nets resulted in a level of mortality that actually threatened the "viability" of the overall common murre population, which was a required standard.

The permanent gill net prohibition and regulation took effect in September 2002. The Fish and Game Code provision authorizes DFG to impose such closures if the use of such fishing gear is adversely impacting marine life, as was concluded.

In December 2002, a group of affected fishermen from the Morro Bay area sued DFG, claiming that the closure was arbitrary and capricious and not supported by substantial evidence in the record.

In addition to protecting sea otters and common murre, the gill net closure benefits other marine life such as harbor porpoises, sea lions, elephant seals, and cormorants that inhabit California's nearshore ocean environment, and are also subject to entanglement by the nets.

Set gill nets (both gill and trammel nets) are used to fish for halibut, white seabass, white croaker, and rockfish. A gill net is a single curtain like net made of nylon that is suspended in the water without slack. It has mesh openings large enough to permit only the head of the fish to pass through, ensnaring them around the gills when they attempt to escape. A trammel net is a single panel net that is suspended in the water with slack, or is constructed with more than one wall of webbing. This type of net is used to entangle species. Fish are rolled up in the net rather than ensnaring them by the gills.

For additional information on the gill net fishery closure or to obtain a copy of the regulation and related materials, logon to DFG's Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/gillnet/permanent.html.

Service to Conduct Review of Threatened Delta Smelt

August 1, 2003

Contact for news media:

Jim Nickles, (916) 414-6572, (916)799-5581 (cell)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today it will conduct a five-year review of the delta smelt, a native fish of California's Bay-Delta Estuary that has been listed as threatened since 1993. The Service agreed to the review in connection with the settlement of lawsuits filed by the California Farm Bureau Federation and the San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority.

The lawsuits seek the five-year review and challenge some of the Service's recovery criteria for the species. The Service has agreed to complete the review by March 1, 2004.

The Endangered Species Act requires the Service to review the status of listed species at least once every five years. While the Service has continued to use the best available information under its ESA responsibilities for the delta smelt, the information has not been fully evaluated under the ESA's five-year review requirement.

The review will ensure that the listing of smelt as threatened under the Endangered Species Act is still accurate. The Service will consider the delta smelt's population status and threats based on any new information since the original listing. If new information determines that the present classification of the species is inaccurate, the Service may propose to change the species' listing status.

The Service is soliciting information from all sources. Comments must be received by September 30, 2003.

"The purpose of the review is to ensure that delta smelt have the appropriate level of protection under the Endangered Species Act," said Wayne White, supervisor of the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office. "Reviewing the latest information will also lead to better management and improved conservation of the species."

The delta smelt was listed as a threatened species under the ESA on March 5, 1993. The Service designated critical habitat for the species on December 19, 1994. This species was also included in the 1996 Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Native Fishes Recovery Plan.

This fish is considered an environmentally sensitive species because it lives only one year, has a limited diet, and lives primarily in the transition zone from freshwater to saltwater. The abundance and distribution of the delta smelt fluctuates widely from year to year depending on water flows in the Bay-Delta.

The Service is seeking any new scientific or commercial information concerning the status of the delta smelt. Material should be submitted to the Field Office Supervisor, Attention: delta smelt five-year review, Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605, Sacramento, California. Information on the delta smelt may be sent electronically to Lawrence_Host@fws.gov. More information about today's announcement, including the Federal Register notice, is available at sacramento.fws.gov.

Northern Pike Pose Threat to Comins Lake

August 12, 2003

Northern pike, a voracious predatory fish that was illegally introduced into Comins Lake near Ely, is now threatening the lake's rainbow trout fishery, according to the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW).

Chris Crookshanks, NDOW biologist, said more than 100 pike have been caught at the White Pine County lake this year, up from the seven confirmed catches in 2002 and three in 2001.

"This is our worst nightmare," said Crookshanks. "It has become a really big problem, really fast. It's a shame because it is going to ruin one of our state's premier trout fisheries just as it had gotten started."

Most of the pike that have been caught this year range in size from 18 to 20 inches, which are fish that were spawned in the lake two to three years ago. Anglers have also caught some pike that measure 12 to 14 inches and were produced one to two years ago. There have also been a few fish caught that range from 22 to 24 inches.

Crookshanks said the pike are certainly capable of consuming planter rainbow trout and juvenile largemouth bass. He believes that over the past two years the pike have decimated the largemouth bass spawn.

"In a reservoir setting such as Comins, it (pike) just doesn't work because there's no forage base. They need a self-sustaining forage," said Crookshanks.

He believes the future for the trout fishery is not too rosy because the pike will eventually eat all of the trout and bass. When those fish are gone, the pike will then turn cannibalistic.

Crookshanks theorizes that someone put pike into the lake with the intent of developing a pike fishery. The fish were likely removed from Bassett Lake northeast of Ely and planted into Comins.

"This was a selfish and irresponsible act that threatens an outstanding rainbow trout fishery. It could also have some economic consequences for Ely because the lake has been attracting a large number of anglers who are traveling to the lake because of its reputation for producing nice catches of large rainbow trout," said Crookshanks.

Comins is located approximately seven miles south of Ely adjacent to U.S. 93.

Fish and Game Commission Gives San Francisco Bay Herring Fishermen a Reduced Quota and Shorter Season for 2003-2004

September 8, 2003

Contacts: Eric Larson, Bays and Estuaries Ecosystem Coordinator, (650) 631-6788; elarson@dfg.ca.gov; Mary Patyten, Research Writer, (831) 649-2804; mpatyten@dfg.ca.gov

The California Fish and Game Commission has voted to provide a herring fishery for San Francisco Bay with a shortened season and a reduced quota for 2003-04.

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) had provided two options for the Commission to consider. The DFG's preferred option would have closed all herring fisheries in San Francisco Bay for the 2003-04 season. The option the Commission adopted will provide an overall quota of 2,200 tons for these fisheries. In addition, the season for the roe herring (gill net) fishery has been shortened by approximately one month.

More than 90 percent of the state's herring resource spawns in San Francisco Bay. Concern for the depressed status of this stock led the DFG to recommend closing the commercial herring fishery as a protective measure for the 2003-04 season.

The Department's management strategy for this fishery has been to harvest age 4 and older herring, and to avoid the harvest of age 2 and 3 herring, most of which are first-time spawners. DFG data, which has been collected annually for

the last 30 years, indicated there has been a decline in the number of age 4 and older herring that are needed to support the fishery since the El Niño event of 1997-1998. This decline in older herring has been accompanied by an increased catch of younger herring (age 2 and 3). Overall, the population has been weak since the 1997-1998 El Niño event, remaining well below average for the last six seasons.

In addition to Department data, an independent, scientific review of the status of the herring stock was conducted through California Sea Grant. The scientists who participated in the review included three experts in the field of fish population dynamics, including a Canadian herring expert with 25 years experience. The key finding of this review is that the San Francisco Bay herring population has been reduced to a level of roughly 20 percent of its unfished level and is presently at or near the lowest abundance observed since the early 1970s. The review also recommended that a rebuilding policy should be implemented.

Although the adopted 2,200 ton quota for the fishery for 2003-04 is not likely to help rebuild the herring stock, it is believed that it should not cause a further decline in the population.

The proposed herring fishery regulations for the 2003-2004 herring season, and other information about the herring fishery, is available on the Department Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/herring/index.html Also, visit the Commission's Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/fg_comm/

Fish and Game Commission Grants December Extension for Coho Salmon Recovery Strategy September 19, 2003

Contacts: Dirk Brazil, Chief Deputy Director (916) 653-7667; Stephanie Coupe, Staff Counsel (916) 654-3830

SACRAMENTO - The California Fish and Game Commission has granted an extension to the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) for the completion of the Coho Salmon Recovery Strategy. The extension, made at a special meeting held Thursday, instructs DFG to make improvements and complete the document by the end of the year.

The Coho Salmon Recovery Strategy will provide a blueprint for the recovery of coho salmon in California, helping to revive struggling coho populations and restore their depleted habitat. Goals of the recovery strategy are the removal of coho salmon from the California Endangered Species List as well as the restoration of tribal, commercial, and recreational coho salmon fisheries.

“The more I read the plan, the more impressed I am with it,” said Sam Schuchat, Fish and Game Commissioner.

The Recovery Strategy is complex and lengthy, containing 11 chapters in 350 pages of text encompassing more than 500 recommendations, and it clearly reflects how complex and lengthy the development process is.

The statewide recovery team, comprised of key stakeholders appointed by the DFG Director, began meeting in December 2002. A second recovery team, also appointed by the Director, and more narrowly focused on the Scott and Shasta Valleys of Siskiyou County, began to meet in January of 2003. The teams met monthly, typically devoting two days to discussion and debate, often listening to technical presentations made by subject area experts. This formal process, facilitated by a professional mediator, led to the development of the recommendations embodied in the recovery strategy.

The Coho Salmon Recovery Strategy represents an unprecedented effort by DFG and the myriad of stakeholders involved. The work embodied in this report represents huge strides toward the recovery of coho.

“Those involved have dedicated a tremendous amount of effort, showing equal parts of passion and perseverance,” said Robert C. Hight, DFG Director. “And along the way, we have been developing respectful partnerships that will bring this process to a successful completion.”

Service Removes Sacramento Splittail from List of Threatened Species

September 22, 2003

Contacts: Rick Morat, (916) 414-6571, or Miriam Morrill, (916) 414-6569

After five public-comment periods and an exhaustive scientific review, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today published a “notice of removal” determination to remove the splittail from the list of threatened and endangered species. The Service analyzed Sacramento splittail population information, as well as the threats to the species. It found that threats to the species are being addressed through habitat restoration actions such as the CALFED Bay-Delta Program and the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, and that as a result, the splittail is not likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.

”We applaud the continued effort of state and Federal agencies to improve conditions for all fish and wildlife in the Central Valley and Delta,” said Steve Thompson, manager of the Service’s California-Nevada Operations Office.

Thompson said the Service will continue to monitor the health of the Sacramento splittail.

This shows that CALFED is working, said Robert C. Hight, director of the California Department of Fish and Game. It also underscores continued commitment to work with all our public and private partners in the Central Valley and the Delta to improve conditions for wildlife.

The Sacramento splittail is a native fish of California’s Central Valley. The Service listed the Sacramento splittail as threatened in 1999, citing changes in water flows and water quality, drought, loss of habitat and the effects of agricultural and industrial pollutants. Under the Endangered Species Act, a species is threatened when it is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

The State Water Contractors, the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority and others challenged the listing, contending that it violated the Endangered Species Act and the Administrative Procedures Act. On June 23, 2000, the U.S. District Court in Fresno ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and found the listing unlawful. The Court sent the issue back to the Service for further consideration but kept the species’ protections in place during the review. Since January 2001, the Service has conducted five public-comment periods seeking information on the factors affecting the Sacramento splittail.

Sacramento splittail populations are affected by the loss of spawning and rearing habitat. However, it appears that the splittail is benefitting from habitat-restoration and water-management actions that are underway to benefit Central Valley fish, including several federally protected species. The principal spawning areas of splittail – the Yolo Bypass and the Cosumnes River – are largely protected and being further enhanced and restored.

See http://sacramento.fws.gov/ea/News_Releases/Sac_Splittail_Withdrawn.htm for more information.

“Collaborative Watershed Efforts for Salmonid Recovery”

**22nd Annual Salmonid Restoration Conference &
14th International Salmonid Habitat Enhancement Workshop**

-First Call for Session and Presenter Abstracts-

The 22nd Annual Salmonid Restoration Conference and 14th International Salmonid Habitat Enhancement Workshop will be held in Davis, California at the Veteran’s Memorial Center from Wednesday, March 17th through Saturday, March 20th, 2004. The Salmonid Restoration Federation will host this conference entitled “Collaborative Watershed Efforts for Salmonid Recovery” in collaboration with the American Fisheries Society-Fisheries Management Section and Trout Unlimited.

The first two days will be filled with full-day workshops and field tours. A half-day, theme related plenary session will be followed by 1½ days of technical and policy concurrent sessions. This conference focuses on a broad range of salmonid and watershed restoration topics of concern to restoration practitioners, agency scientists, and land planners and owners.

Proposals and abstracts for sessions, field tours, and workshops are encouraged and topics of interest include:

Workshops of interest:

- Fish-friendly agricultural practices
- Effectiveness and validation monitoring of restoration projects
- Urban creek restoration and water conservation efforts
- Advanced GIS analysis for watershed management
- Increasing Your Watershed and Fish Restoration Organization’s Capacity: Grant-writing, Technical Assistance, and Permitting.
- Instream Flow Requirements for Salmonids

Session of interest:

- Conservation hatchery practices and research
- Opportunities for restoration through the FERC relicensing process
- Nutrient Enhancement
- In-channel and off-channel salmonid habitat enhancement projects
- Case Studies in Collaborative Restoration Programs
- Global salmon restoration and conservation efforts
- Diversion and culvert replacements, fish bypass structures
- Non-native species: direct and indirect interactions with salmonids
- Development and implementation of standards-based salmonid education programs.

Field tours of interest:

- Putah Creek restoration efforts
- Cache Creek, Yolo bypass and Wetlands: Flood control and urban runoff with fish in mind
- Village Homes and Davis, CA: suburban watershed planning
- Consumnes and Mokelumne River restoration programs
- Sacramento urban streams and American River restoration efforts

Final deadline for session abstracts and a summary of recommended presenters is October 24, 2003. Successful session proposals include presentations that address salmonid restoration from a fishery resource, physical watershed processes, or broad policy perspective. Sessions should be developed with 5 to 7 speakers, with talks lasting 25 minutes with a 5-minute question period. Presentations on projects which are completed and have a monitoring and assessment component are encouraged. Panels can be incorporated into session design. The Agenda Coordinator will work with each Session Coordinator (SC) towards confirming presenters by November 15 and soliciting speaker abstracts. **SC's and speaker's conference fees are waived and they receive a commemorative conference t-shirt.**

Format for submitting Session and Presentation Abstracts or Posters

Session and presentation abstracts should be prepared as MS Word or WordPerfect files in 12 point, Times New Roman font, and left justified only.

Each abstract should include:

1. Title
2. A list of all the authors, their affiliation, and contact information. Presenters must be clearly identified
3. An abstract of 500 words or less. Extended abstracts and papers will also be accepted, for distribution via the web and/or CD.
4. An indication of what concurrent session you would like to contribute to or indicate "Poster." Include preference of presentation type- 2x2 slides or Powerpoint LCD projector
5. Indicate if the presenter is a student

All contributions, including Session and Presentation Abstracts, should be submitted electronically by email to jaisrael@ucdavis.edu and srf@northcoast.com with abstract attached as an MS Word or Wordperfect file. Receipt of your submission will be acknowledged by email and forwarded to the correct session chair. Please contact Josh Israel regarding workshops and field tours. For any additional information, please contact Josh Israel at (530) 848-9073 or jaisrael@ucdavis.edu.

Final deadline for presentation abstract submission will be December 4, 2003.

Information related to the 2004 conference can be found on the Salmonid Restoration Federation web site at www.calsalmon.org. This site will be updated regularly and will contain information on conference registration, accommodations and transportation, the banquet and cabaret, sponsorships, and FAQs.

San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science: An electronic forum on science and resource management of San Francisco Bay, the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, and the upstream watersheds

A new online journal has been developed – *San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science* – an electronic forum on science and resource management of San Francisco Bay, the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, and the upstream watersheds. The new journal is a collaborative project of the California Digital Library, the California Bay-Delta Authority Science Program, the University of California, Davis’ John Muir Institute for the Environment, and the San Francisco Bay-Delta Science Consortium. *San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science* is an eScholarship Repository journal. The Repository (<http://repositories.cdlib.org/escholarship/>) is hosted by the California Digital Library (www.cdlib.org/). An initiative of the University of California, the CDL partners with UC campuses to apply innovative technology to managing scholarly communication.

San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science will foster the communication of collaborative, peer-reviewed research by presenting original research findings, reviews, techniques, and comments to forward the current state of knowledge about the ecology of the San Francisco Bay-Delta region. The journal provides researchers who are concluding new information about the region with an outlet for sharing their work more readily with policymakers who are using their information for management applications. The journal’s flexible online medium and peer-reviewed format will accommodate a wide range of papers – from technical notes to monographs – which allows the communication of both tightly focused individual studies and longer papers presenting detailed reviews.

The first issue of *San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science* will be available online on October 3, 2003 (<http://repositories.cdlib.org/jmie/sfews>). Readers are encouraged to access this dynamic new forum for receiving relevant, high-quality science and regional researchers are encouraged to consider publishing in this new journal.

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