



October 2008 Newsletter

2009 Salmon Season Outlook

Most of the fall run salmon have now returned from the ocean to the Sacramento River and its tributaries. The news is mixed but is mainly bad for a 2009 fishing season. At the end of September, 2,700 fall run salmon had passed through the weir counter at the entrance to Battle Creek in the upper Sacramento River. Last year at the same date 6,500 had passed and as recently as 2003, 25,000 had passed. Hopefully, the run is just late but the figures are disturbing particularly since there was no fishing season this year. Jack counts are also low. As of October 6th, Coleman hatchery had 3,000 fish in its holding pond. They will immediately start spawning these fish. Coleman needs approximately 10,000 fish to make its egg quota. More data on the final run size will be available by the end of October..

Cal Trout and Water4Fish Cooperate

In a move to strengthen the impact of both organizations, Cal Trout and Water4Fish have entered a cooperative promotional program. Cal Trout is asking its members to log onto Water4Fish and send political letters. Water4Fish will highlight several of the key Cal Trout objectives including their comprehensive statewide salmon, trout and steelhead report coming out in November. Log on and join Cal Trout at www.caltrout.org. The truth is, if we are going to turn the fisheries around, we need to support every active fishery group in the state.

Please Help, We Are Gaining but Need More Angler Support

Thank you for your Water4Fish support. 62,000 supporters have already gone on line at Water4Fish and asked for water policy changes but we need thousands more before we can move the political needle firmly in our direction. Unfortunately, fish in California continue to get the short end of the stick in water policy decisions. The drought and the emergency water declarations by the Governor are taking a huge toll on the runs of salmon, steelhead and striped bass. In the past year, almost nothing positive has taken place that will help these species recover other than court actions. We are being ignored by the Governor, the Legislature and the Bush Administration. Water4Fish is the only place where all fishermen and supporters can unite to demand change. Please ask your friends and associates to go online to Water4Fish.org and send letters to the politicians and give us their proxy as a constituent. Forward this email to others or send an email to action@water4fish.org and ask us to send you one of our email flyers you can then forward to others.

Lucky Strike Charters to Run Water4Fish Fundraiser

The week of November 15th - 22nd, Captain Kevin Yost of Lucky Strike Charters will run a Water4Fish fundraiser. Water4Fish will receive a donation for every sturgeon landed that week. He will run two trips per day. To book a trip and help, call (707) 301-8050

Salmon Fishery Groups Meet with the National Marine Fishery Service

In September, recreational and commercial fishery groups met with leaders of the National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) in Sacramento to discuss the California salmon crisis and actions the agency is taking to restore the salmon and steelhead runs. The stakeholder group included commercial and recreational fishermen, fishery conservation groups and fishing businesses. They represented over 250,000 fishermen and supporters and over 1,000 businesses with a California economic contribution of over \$1 billion.

NMFS has the federal authority and responsibility to protect and recover all marine species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act. It is the agency that has the most authority to protect endangered salmon and steelhead. It has failed to do this in the last several years and the federal court has rejected their biological opinions on delta pumping as inadequate to protect salmon. Pumping has been reduced and NMFS has been ordered to produce new biological opinions. In addition, the agency has the responsibility to produce a salmon recovery plan. These opinions and plans were the subject of the meeting.

Following the NMFS presentations, a number of the fishery participants expressed serious concerns that the agency's actions would be too little and too late to restore the salmon runs. The stakeholders requested several actions by the agency.

1. Adopt the salmon doubling goals required by state and federal law and lay plans to achieve them. In salmon production terms, doubling means laying plans that will allow 15 to 20 million pounds of commercial catch along with a parallel recreational catch.
2. Change their current salmon recovery project list to a full plan with priorities and steps along with a financing proposal that the stakeholders can support.
3. Focus more on the real causes of the decline. Set plans that will reduce the amount of water taken out of the delta and reduce its pollution.
4. Improve enforcement of illegal water movements and diversions.
5. Stop focusing on compromises and bring the agency's full focus on the needs of fish. Use the unique position of the agency and its bully pulpit ability to get positive results for fish.

Mr. Rod McInnis, the Regional Director for NMFS responded to each of these requests and indicated the agency will try to be responsive within the limits of its authority. A follow up meeting will be held in December.

Thanks for your continuing support
Dick Pool - Editor

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