



# Rx Fly Fishing!

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March 2013

Jerry Neuburger, Editor

Stockton, California

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## Calendar

- March 2, 2013 NCCFFF Board Meeting, TBA** [www.nccfff.org](http://www.nccfff.org)
- March 9, 2013 American River (Steelhead)**
- March 13, 2013 General Membership Meeting**
- March 13-16 Salmonoid Restoration Conference, Fortuna** [www.calsalmon.org](http://www.calsalmon.org)
- March 20, 2013 San Joaquin State of Our Rivers Symposium**
- March 20, 2013 DFF Board Meeting**
- March 23-24, 2013 Lower Sac at Redding (caddis hatch)**
- March 27, 2013 Fly of the Month Session, Balsa Popper Class Session I: Instructor Leo Gutterres**

## President's Message by Marty Kjelson

Hello Delta Fly Fishers,

Spring is almost here with the warming of waters, insect hatches and hopefully enjoyable times on the water with good friends. February gave us two outings, though the fish weren't too cooperative. Lake Amador and the Yuba saw a few hardy club souls chasing the rainbows and enjoying each other's company.

Joe Balderston and Mark DeLaBarre floated the Yuba River along with a fair number of guides that may have put the fish down. Jerry Neuburger provided some great information on our website for those two locations that will be of use to all of us in the future. Bruce and Sallye Rollans had a great day on the Yuba earlier in the month and shared their experience in a nice article on our web page.

We have an outing on the American on March 9<sup>th</sup> and Al Smatsky says there should be a few good steelhead representing the end of the run. Grady Lee, our expert on Amador, believes March and April should see good action there. So give it and other foothill reservoirs a try.

When you venture afield, take a camera and document your adventure using the good photo tips Doug Ridgeway gave us last month at our meeting. Our webmaster will put your photos on the web for all of us to enjoy. Add a few words telling a tale to go with your photos and see it in print! Don't worry if you don't see yourself as an author, we'll help you do it!

Regarding our outings, we are in great need of an outing chairperson to simply oversee those important club events. We have an abundance of outings planned already for 2013 but to make them successful we also need fishmeisters to be a point of contact for each outing with the help of the outing chair. A few of our outings, i.e., New Years Day, and Bridgeport in the fall, are well planned and fairly involved with food, camp sites, travel issues, etc. Most

of our other outings need not be complex or involve a lot of work by the fishmeister.

What I'm trying to say is that their main responsibility is for the outing to be announced, some information provided to our webmaster and Steve VonBerg, publicity chair, as to where we will meet and when, the approach and fly patterns needed for success, any safety issues and if any food is involved. The latter is not necessary! And fully up to the fishmeister.

I think food preparation, etc. tends to scare a lot of people off in volunteering to be a fishmeister and that need not be the case. We all like to eat and share the fellowship generated but not at the expense of canceling a nice club sponsored outing because we don't have a fishmeister. Please give this some thought and volunteer to help make our outings successful. Thanks.

Some of our members went to the Pleasanton Fly fishing show to enjoy the multitude of talks, fly tying demos, explore new places to fish, and to see old friends. We also had a good fly tying session led by Joe Balderston on the caddis pupa pattern that has passed the test of time. Give it a try! Our new mentor chair, Gil Parker, is working with Bob Fujimura, our membership chair, to find some new ways to educate our new members and strengthen our mentorship program. I'm sure that will be a help to our new members.

In that regard, invite a new member or an old one that doesn't seem to have a regular fishing partner for a day on the water. You'll be glad you did! Bob's recent listing of all member's phone numbers makes it easy to contact them.

Ron Forbes, our conservation chair, continues to keep us up to date on the many



(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

## President's Message

environmental issues that challenge our valuable fishery resources. Give him a call if you have questions on a specific project, water body, resource, law, or idea you have to help the critters. While specific environmental organizations have their focus purely on conservation matters, it is of value to our club and its members to be informed and to help where we feel we can help as members and as a club. Give Ron a thanks for his many efforts and commitment to that important topic.

I look forward to hearing from Ken Han-

ley on fishing the Pacific coast at our member meeting this month. I know surf perch can be great fun on a fly rod, though Ken will cover many other species and tell us how to be successful in that special environment. He is a great spokesman and has extensive experience. Come on out and bring a friend.

Finally, ones "first fish on a fly" by Joe Balderston. It seems over 30 years ago that Joe tied one of his first flies, a callibaetis dry fly and took it up to Manzanita Lake in Lassen park. He was wading along the shore of the lake when he spotted a beautiful 20 inch brown trout in the shallows of this crystal clear lake. He made the 80' cast using a 4 wt. rod, fast

action to settle the # 16 callibaetis gently to the side of the brown. The fish immediately turned to glide up to the imitation what seemed like slow motion, and sucked it in. The rest is history, release and photo and yelling. Joe was forever hooked! Later that evening the fly was "stolen" from his hat band to be seen later when a friend gave it back along with the fish's photo in a shadow box to celebrate the experience. That's what friends do. Joe was blessed and we are too by hearing the story.

See you on the water,

Thanks,

Marty

## Lower Yuba River Outing Report

By Bob Fujimura

February 17, 2013 Yuba Gold Fields — Seven DFF members attended Saturday's outing to the Lower Yuba River. Charlie Reames, Joe Balderston, Mark DeLaBarre, Mike Okazaki, Steve Specht, Bob and Jean Fujimura took the opportunity to fish this local river.

After communicating with each other the evening before, they used the boat launch at the Sycamore Ranch as the rallying location. Steve and Mark floated the section between the Hwy 20 bridge and take-out at Sycamore Ranch. Mike, Bob, and Jean fished the sections immediately next to the Sycamore Ranch and Hammond Park reaches. Charlie and Steve spent most of the morning and early afternoon walking and wading the sections upstream and downstream of the public access points.

Fishing was uniformly poor that day; little or no strikes were common along the attendees. Joe and Mark had the best experience with a few strikes and one good trout hooked by Joe but lost. Our



Mark DeLaBarre tying on a new fly during a float down the Yuba. Photo by Joe Balderston

group saw only one location on river where trout were consistently rising. Despite the high numbers of anglers and float boats on the river, no one saw fish being caught.

After fishing the lower section, Charlie, Steve, Jean, and Bob went up to the Hwy 20 bridge section. Charlie spent the remainder of the afternoon fishing this section. Steve, Jean, and Bob took the Fujimura's new SUV on some 4x4 roads on

the south side of the river. Later they fished some gravel ponds among the gold mine tailings. After that evening, most of the group met again at the Sycamore Ranch launch and shared stories and beers. Despite the poor fishing, everyone agreed that they were glad to be out and greatly enjoyed the company.

**Now you can access the club's website and the club's Facebook page right from the newsletter!**

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Steve Specht works a long line on a dredger pond in the Yuba gold fields. Photo by Bob Fujimura

## March 13th Program features Ken Hanley, Fishing the Surf Zone!



You couldn't ask for a more dynamic environment. It's likely to be one of your greatest challenges in fly fishing. The Pacific surf zone is one heck-of-a place to bring your flyrod. Don't let that scare you – bring it on!

Ken's presentation will cover tackle, field tactics, and target species.

### Ken Hanley... Short Bio

2005 Hall of Fame Inductee, Federation of Fly Fishers (N. California Chapter)

Over 15,000 students have taken advantage of Ken's varied programs both in the field and on the water. He's been in the adventure angling industry since 1970.

He's the author of seven fly fishing books. He also writes and photographs for both national and regional publications in the outdoor industry. Ken has three video/DVD's celebrating saltwater & freshwater adventures.

Ken's extensive field experience spans the globe; from the highest peaks in Tibet and the Himalaya, to the remote wilderness regions of Asia, New Zealand, Mex-

ico, Europe, and North America. From panfish to roosterfish, he's caught over ninety different species of fresh and salt-water gamefish.

He's on Pro Staff with the following sponsors; SAGE Instructor, SIMMS, RIO Products Intl, Daiichi, Renzetti, Umpqua, and Patagonia.

The presentation will be made Wednesday at 7:00pm March 13, at the [John R. Williams School](#), 2450 Meadow Avenue, Stockton.

## Stockton USD Students participate in Salmon in the Classroom



*A Hazelton 6th grade student works on a Salmonid Life Cycle sheet*

February 4, 2013—*DFE club member Joe Balderston's students have been participating in the Salmon in the Classroom program for a number of years. The students learn about the life cycle of the salmon and stream ecology. They wrote the club some letters telling of what they're learning:*

Dear Delta Fly Fishers,

Here at the Hazelton ACT Team, we have salmon eggs in the classroom. Our teacher, Mr. Balderston, got salmon eggs from a hatchery. Now we have to take care of them. We check the temperature of the water. Then we figure out how many thermal units the salmon get each day in the fish tank. We think the eggs will hatch in March. We hope we are

right. Then our teacher Mr. Balderston invites us to go let the salmon go at the hatchery. Then we can find bugs and when we come back we get points for finding different bugs in the river at the hatchery. Then some one gives you a tour inside the hatchery of what they do with the salmon eggs then we come back home. The end.

Daniel, 6th grade

Dear Delta Fly Fishers,

Mr Balderston, our science teacher, brought in some salmon eggs to the classroom so we could see them when they hatch, and learn about them. He gave us an orange bead of our own to see if we could take care of it. I lost my first bead named Bobby Jr. at my house. A couple weeks later, I asked Mr. Balderston if I could adopt another one to see if I could take better care of it. My table group named it Sammy the Salmon, Sam for short. It is really fun getting to learn about salmon and getting to take care of a fake one.

Sincerely,  
Maria, 6th grad

Dear Delta Fly Fishers,

We each have a fake salmon egg. My group has five salmon eggs. We all take them home and take care of them. We change the water to clean water. We have five salmon eggs in a small bowl with water, rocks, and shells. When we get home, we have to treat it like it is a real salmon egg. We take good care of it. We change the water and clean the rocks and

shells. The group records the date and what time we change the dirty water to clean water. We each take it home for three days and bring it back for the other person to take it home.

Sincerely,  
Jimena, 6th grade



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# March 9th Outing: Drifting the American

February 12, 2013 -- The American River, from its confluence with the Sacramento River at Discovery Park to Folsom Dam, is one of California's unique waterways. It is edged with 32 miles of parkway, the lower section managed by the County of Sacramento and the upper section by the State of California. Both agencies operate numerous access points along the river on both the north and south sides and a walking/cycling path runs from Old Sacramento all the way to Folsom Lake.

The river offers numerous recreational activities including bird and wildlife watching, cycling, roller blading, walking, jogging, picnicking, swimming, rafting and best of all for us, fishing. Three major fish species migrate up the river to spawn, chinook salmon, steelhead trout and American Shad. While the American Shad population is on its own to maintain its numbers, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife operates a chinook/steelhead hatchery at the base of Nimbus Dam. With the current emphasis on restoring our salmonid stocks, the populations of both species has drastically improved in the last three years.

Fishing pressure can be heavy on the river, especially in the late winter after January 1st when winter steelhead sometimes approaching 15 pounds are present, all the way to the end of April when smaller 2-6 pound football sized steelhead are in the system. Most of the fishing pressure occurs within a mile of Nimbus dam since the fish have a tendency to stack up below that obstacle but fish can be found all the way down river to Paradise Beach, below Sacramento State College. The river has a 5 mile per hour speed limit in the upper sections so guides use drift boats to give their customers access to some

of the more remote sections, where they can fish without the competition of bait and gear anglers.

The most popular drift at this time of the year is from Sailor Bar to Rossmoor Bar, a drift of 5 miles. (See map below) The water along this section is basically flat with the exception of San Juan Rapids. The rapids are negotiated thousands of times each year by drift boats, rafters and tubers with the instructions, "Stay left, and ride through the standing waves".

Although this outing has no fishmeister, the general plan is for club members to drift the river from Sailor Bar to Rossmoor Bar. To do so, members will have to team up and leave vehicles at Rossmoor Bar, on the south side, down river and then continue on upstream to meet at Sailor Bar, upstream on the Fair Oaks side of the river. Since steelhead are notorious early feeders, those looking for success should plan arriving at Sailor Bar about 6:45, a few minutes before sunrise, assemble their pontoon boats or pontubes and once set up, drift down the river to various gravel bars where they can either indicator fish or swing flies to eager fish. An alternative to dropping a vehicle at Rossmoor Bar is to call a cab once at the take out and a number of members pile in for the ride back to Sailor Bar with one member left to guard the gear.

If members would rather wade than drift, a free handout showing access points is available from American Fly Fishing, Fair Oaks and Watt Avenue. The shop opens at 7:30 on Saturdays. The shop can also recommend specific patterns for both swinging and indicator fishing. [American Fly Fishing Co.](#) 3523 Fair Oaks Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95864, 916-483-1222 and 800-410-1222.

## Just the facts:

Date and time: March 9, 6:45am

Location: American River at Sailor Bar

Fishmeister: None

Fish species: Spring steelhead

Equipment:

5-7 weight rods

Lines: Floating or type II - III lines for swinging

2x, 3x tippet

Large indicators

shot or other type lead

Flies: egg patterns, San Juan worms, prinz

nymphs, brassies, copper

johns, caddis larva,

pheasant tail, rubber legs,

egg sucking leaches,

woollybuggers.

Sun block

Eye protection/polarized

sun glasses

Hat

Waders

Boots

If drifting the river:

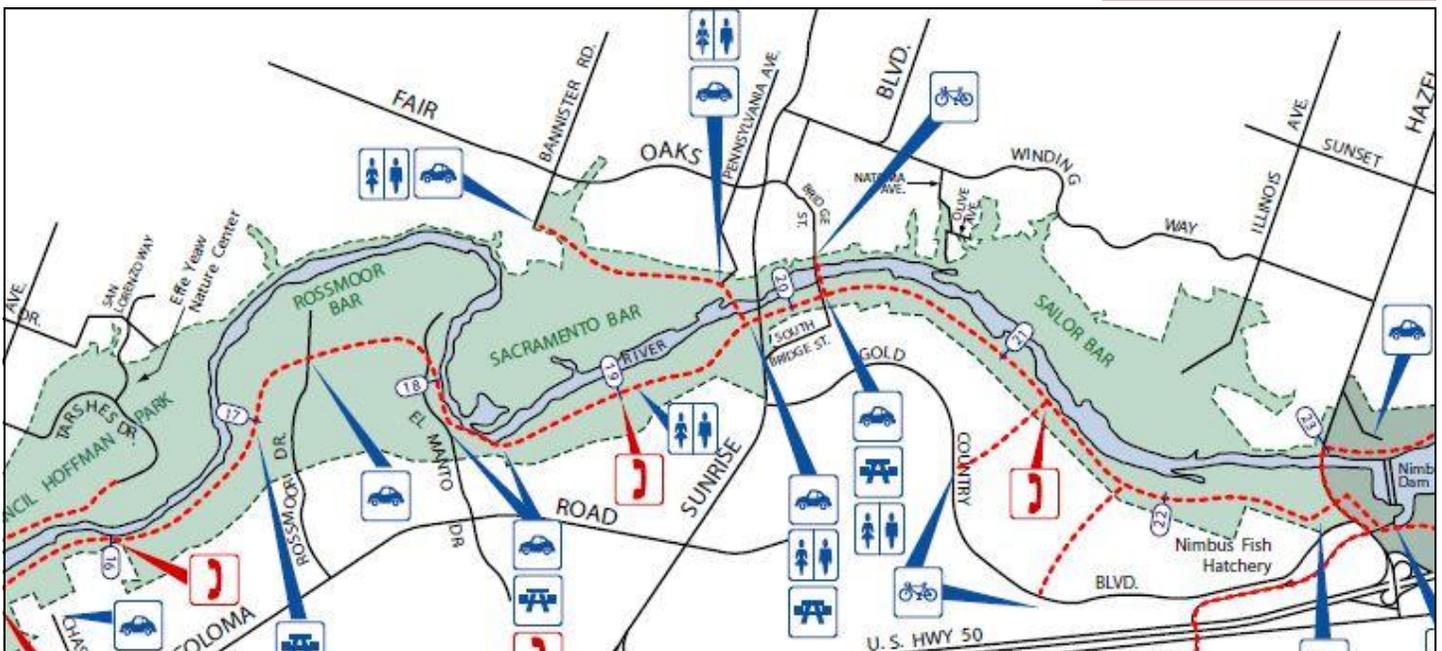
Drift boat, canoe, kayak,

pontoon boat, pontube,

paddles or oars, life jackets,

river anchor.

Do not wear fins, you will be wading the gravel bars.



## Doug Ridgway exposes camera techniques to produce better photos

February 13, 2013 Stockton CA -- Seven year member Doug Ridgway spoke to our club on tips to think about when taking photographs with digital cameras from the point-and-shoot camera all the way up to DSLR's pushing the envelope in price. Things to keep in mind while taking your picture - no matter what camera you have - is background, don't get too much background in the way of your main reason for the photo. Get up closer or change the angle of the photo while framing your shot. The less the background distractions the better the focus on the main subject. Use a low ISO setting for sharper photos in bright sunlight. Keep in mind low light can cause blurriness at low ISO settings when the camera automatically sets the shutter speed slower for its best exposure. The higher ISO setting is for lower light situations like near sunset or late evening photos. An ISO over 800 will show a lot of

"noise" or graininess.

If you're trying to shoot an action shot or fast-moving kids, hold the shutter button down half way so the camera can do its "thing" like exposure, etc, then keep pointing the camera at your "action" shot



*Doug covering some of the finer techniques. Photo by Herman Spalinger*

and when you see what you want press the shutter button the rest of

the way. Doing this gives you a faster shutter response so you don't lose the shot while the camera does its adjusting prior to releasing the shutter.

Basically there were good points we all can use that Doug mentioned despite whatever digital camera you are holding. Most members present came away with some things to think about while using your camera, but one of the most important is *read your camera's manual* so you know how your camera responds to different situations.

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## March 23-24, a two day outing on California's premium rainbow trout fishery, the Lower Sac at Redding, the timing should be perfect!

February 25, 2013 — What has to be California's premier rainbow trout factory, the Lower Sacramento River at Redding is on the club's schedule for a two day outing on March 23-24. This nationally famous river is often overlooked by locals in favor of less productive streams and rivers thousands of miles away.

If you've never fished this waterway before, you're in for a mega shock in how good fishing can be in an urban setting, even with lots of fishing pressure.

The reason the river is referred to as the "Lower Sac" is because of Shasta Dam. The river above the dam is called the Upper Sac and the water below, the Lower Sac. That dam is also the reason why this tailwater has developed into the great fish

factory that it has become. The dam provides a year round supply of cold, clear water, perfect for trout and salmon. The recent efforts to restore salmon stocks have further enhanced the river, with a cold water curtain part of the release scheme for the dam.

The fall, winter and spring runs of salmon spawns are a reliable food source for its football sized rainbow trout in the winter months and the river's healthy insect population a boon for fish in the spring and summer months.

One of the thickest and prolific hatches is the spring caddis hatch. It starts at the end of February and builds through March, falling off in April when river flows are increased for agricultural uses. These bugs are sometimes so thick that a face

covering is necessary to keep them from flying in your mouth and up your nose. Of course, the trout gorge themselves on larva, pupa and adults during this time, eating continuously from sunrise to past dusk.

The river has access for both the wader and boat angler, and is flat enough that pontoon boats, canoes and other small craft can drift the most popular runs. A number of guides work the river as well, some using drift boats, and some jet boats though there is a 5mph speed limit.

Although this outing currently has no fishmeister providing coordination for those that want to attend, the following information is offered as a planning guide.

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

**March 23-24, a two day outing on California's premium rainbow trout fishery, the Lower Sac at Redding, the timing should be perfect!**

Dates: March 23-24

Location: Lower Sacramento River at Redding

Fishmeister: None

Species: Native wild rainbow trout

Equipment:

5-7 weight rods

Lines: Floating or type II - III lines for swinging

2x, 3x tippet

Large indicators

shot or other type lead

Flies: caddis larva, caddis pupa, caddis dries, pheasant tails, rubber legs, woolly buggers.

Sun block

Eye protection/polarized sun glasses

Hat

Waders

Boots

If drifting the river:

Drift boat, canoe, kayak, pontoon boat, pontube, paddles or oars, life jackets, Float tubes NOT RECOMMENDED!

River anchor. (12 pound mushroom or 12 -16 lb. lead anchor)

Do not wear fins, you will be wading the gravel bars.

**Flies, fishing supplies available at:**

[The Fly Shop](#), 4140 Churn Creek Road Redding, CA 96002 (530) 222-3555.

Hours:

Monday - Friday

7:30 am to 6:00 pm

Saturday - Sunday  
7:30 am to 6:00 pm

Access maps for wading and launching available at [The Fly Shop](#).

Popular drifts: **NOTE: While most of the river is flat and easy to navigate, the Lower Sac through Redding has a number of standing waves and class one rapids. Drifting the river should be taken with care and with proper gear including life-jackets.**

Posse grounds to Bonneyview launch ramp—5 miles.

Bonnyview launch ramp to [Sacramento RV Park](#)—5 miles.

Vehicle Shuttle fee—\$25-40 depending on the drift, should be arraigned in advance at [The Fly Shop](#)

Guided club rate for two people full day through [The Fly Shop](#), \$360—regularly \$400. Call and let them know you're with

the DFF and will be attending the March 23-24th outing. The weekend of the outing is an extremely popular time, reservations should be made well in advance.

[General information on the Lower Sac including flies, presentations, guide rates, lodging, INCLUDES LEADER SETUP FOR RIVER etc.](#)

[Current stream report for the Lower Sac and other area waters.](#)

**Camping:**

[Sacramento RV Park](#)—located along the beautiful Sacramento River just 4 miles south of Redding, CA at exit 673 on I-5.

Rates:

Daily Rate -\$32.00 + Tax

Cable TV & Internet included

Discounts: Good Sam, AAA, CAA, AARP

Daily Tent Rate—\$17 + tax.

See [the website](#) for a full list of amenities.



*Guide Todd Cancilla holds up a big fat rainbow, one of over sixty that Bruce and Sallye Rollans landed on the lower Sac in two days of fishing during October 2012. Photo by Sallye Rollans.*



**Only 30 days left** to get your reservations in for the [June 2nd and 8th Orland Outfitter shad trips](#) on the Sacramento. Reservations **MUST** be made by March 31st with payment of the full amount, \$140 to either Jason Stapleton or Jerry Neuburger. This is a non-refundable event. You may sell your spot if you can't attend but the club cannot offer a refund regardless of circumstances unless the event is cancelled.

# Crowds down a little at Bob McMillan Trout Bout but DFF club members come through to get the work done

By Herman Spalinger

Feb 3, 2013 - Oak Grove Park — We should all appreciate the following club members for their volunteer work at the latest trout bout. They are: Bill Laughlin, Rick Greene, Grady Lee, Jason Stapleton, John Highsmith, Charlie Reames, Steve Cooper, Joe Balderston, Jim Rich, Harvey Hamlow, Earl Summers, Jerry Neuburger, Mark Delabarre and Herman Spalinger.

Unfortunately the turnout by the fishermen/



Mark DeLaBarre working registration

fish was three pounds seven ounces caught by a 12 year old who was carrying his fish all around the deck waiting for the weigh-in. There was only one more fish weighed in at just over three pounds. Rumor has it DF&W planted some lunkers up to eight pounds that are still swimming around in the pond. A few fishers caught their limit and folks were saying lots of trout were caught.

A [photo album](#) of some of the day's activities are on the club's website.



Harv Hamlin in charge of the hot dogs.

those "customers" who came through the door was not as great as expected and as a result we had some food left over. Despite the low turnout a good time was had by all and we will be ready for the June Catfish Derby held the first weekend of the month.

Joe was always a hit with those who came in for food showing off his flies he was tying, and Harvey did an excellent job of cooking the hotdogs. Charlie, Steve, Earl and John and Jason all pitched in at 6:00 a.m. to set up the tables for serving our food to go.

women/kids was the lowest I'd seen in all my years of attending since 2000. It wasn't the weather as the fog lifted around 10:00 o'clock but the sun didn't come out entirely as it was high overcast clouds. Perhaps the fact that the event fell on Superbowl weekend was a conflict for some, especially since a bay area team was playing. As usual our club was a hit with the contestants as Bill and John drove around in a cart to sell our food and drinks to those hungry souls.

Because of the low turnout,

We are looking forward to the upcoming Catfish Derby in June and would like to see different volunteers show up to help out as this group seems to be the same ones every fish derby. It is enjoyable talking to the folks and it gives you a good feeling when we are complimented by them when we sell them the food.

Also I should mention Mark and Joe did a great job at weigh-in at 12:30. The biggest



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## From CalTrout: The Fight For The McCloud River

The McCloud might be California's most-loved (and most-beautiful) river, yet despite its protected status, it faces multiple threats -- including the raising of Shasta Dam and a FERC dam relicensing.

Here's what we're doing to protect the McCloud:

Raising Shasta Dam: [We're opposed to the raising of Shasta Dam](#), which would flood 1-2 miles of the Upper Sacramento and McCloud Rivers. (To read CalTrout's [position on dam raising](#), [click here](#). To read our detailed comments on the BOR's draft feasibility report on raising Shasta Dam, [click here](#).)

McCloud River Dam Relicensing: We're protecting flow regimes on the lower McCloud during the FERC relicensing of the McCloud Dam. ([click to learn more in our screencast](#).)

McCloud Documentary: CalTrout's short documentary Enough is Enough combines stunning photography with information about the threats to the McCloud (film accepted into the The Wild & Scenic Film Festival and the Fly Fishing Film Tour). You can view the trailer and read an [interview with the filmmaker here](#).

The McCloud River is an icon -- a Blue Ribbon trout stream that enjoys special legal protection, yet faces threats anyway.

We're committed to keeping it that way.

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209-327-5993 1/14

# From CDFW: Help Save Endangered Species at Tax Time!

California's wild animals and plants need your help, and there's an easy way to do it! Just make a voluntary contribution on line 403 and/or line 410 of your state income tax return (Form 540). By contrib-



*California Condor in flight over the Big Sur Coast. Carrie Battistone/DFG photo*

uting any amount over one dollar you can support the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Rare and Endangered Species Preservation Fund and/or the California Sea Otter Fund. What you donate this year is tax deductible on next year's return. Californians can receive state income tax credit from the Franchise Tax Board for helping wildlife.

"The voluntary contributions Californians make at tax time are incredibly helpful in our efforts to save threatened and endan-



*A great gray owl in Sierra National Forest near Oakhurst. Chris Stermer/CDFW photo*

gered species," said CDFW Director Charlton H. Bonham. "These funds have provided critical support for many state-listed species, including the Tiburon

mariposa lily, Owens pupfish, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, mountain yellow-legged frog, great gray owl, Sierra Nevada red fox and many more. These donations help protect California's exceptional biodiversity."

There are 387 listed plant and animal species in the state, from little "bugs" that most of us have never heard of, to the iconic California sea otter. Money raised through the tax check-off program helps pay for essential CDFW research and recovery efforts, and critical updates on the status of state-listed species to help assure their conservation.

California is one of 41 states that allows taxpayers to make voluntary, tax-deductible contributions to worthwhile causes on their state returns. Since 1983, the tax check-off fund for Rare and Endangered Species has raised more than \$18 million and supported numerous projects, including surveys for the endangered Sierra Nevada red fox. Support from California taxpayers has enabled wildlife biologists to achieve important recovery milestones to conserve vulnerable species.

More information on the Rare and Endangered Species Preservation tax check-off program is available at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/taxcheck>.

A second tax check-off fund was created in 2006 specifically to facilitate recovery of the California sea otter, which is listed as a Fully Protected Species under the state law and threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. According to the most recently completed survey, there are fewer than 3,000 sea otters in California waters. This small population is vulnerable to oil spills, environmental pollution, predation by white sharks and other threats. Many sea otter deaths have been linked to pollution flowing from land to the sea, including fecal parasites, bacterial toxins, road and agricultural run-off, and chemicals linked to coastal land use.

According to CDFW Wildlife Veterinarian and lead sea otter pathologist Melissa Miller, the California Sea Otter Fund provides essential funding to help state scientists better understand and trace the causes of sea otter mortality, identify factors limiting population growth and collaborate with other organizations to pre-

vent the pollution of California's near-shore marine ecosystem. This fund consists entirely of voluntary contributions from taxpayers of the state of California.



*Rare Paiute cutthroat trout in a remote Alpine County stream. CDFW photo.*

The California Sea Otter Fund has become especially vital during the current economic downturn, because other sources of support for sea otter conservation and research have decreased or disappeared entirely. There are no other dedicated state funding sources available to continue this important work.

You can support this research by making a contribution on line 410 of your state tax form 540, the California Sea Otter Fund. CDFW works with the California Coastal Conservancy, Friends of the Sea



*Mountain Yellow-legged frogs (Rana sierrae) in the eastern Sierra Nevada. CDFW photo*

Otter, Defenders of Wildlife and others to promote the Sea Otter Fund. Visit the website at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/taxcheck> and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SeaOtterFundCDFW>.

Media Contacts:

Esther Burkett, CDFW Wildlife Branch, (916) 445-3764

Melissa Miller, Marine Wildlife Veterinary Care and Research Center, (831) 469-1746

Dana Michaels, CDFW Communications, (916) 322-2420

# The Fisheries Crash in the Delta, how bad is it?

By Jerry Neuburger

February 4, 2012 -- In December of 2012 the California Department of Fish and Wildlife completed their annual Fall Mid-water Trawl Survey. (FMWT) The survey is used to index the fall abundance of pelagic fishes and to compare those indices across time. When taken species by species:

**Striped Bass** -- The 2012 age-0 striped bass index is 125 and one of the lowest indices in FMWT history. Age-0 striped bass abundance was highest at the survey's inception in 1967.

**Delta Smelt** -- The 2012 delta smelt index is 42, making it one of the lowest indices in FMWT history. Delta smelt abundance was highest in 1970 and has been consistently low since 2003, except in 2011.

**Longfin Smelt** -- The 2012 longfin smelt index is 61, which is the second lowest index in FMWT history. Longfin smelt abundance was highest in 1967.

**Threadfin Shad** -- The 2012 threadfin shad index is 41, making it the lowest in FMWT history and the fifth in a series of



*Will fish like this soon become delta ghosts? Photo by Jerry Neuburger*

very low abundance indices. Threadfin shad abundance was highest in 1997.

**American Shad** -- The 2012 American shad index is 415 and the fourth lowest in FMWT history. American shad abun-

dance was highest in 2003.

When examined, most of the indices show a rapid decline from the pivotal year of 1987 and all of them show a catastrophic decline since 2000. While other influences such as dry or wet years do show spikes and dips on the surveys, the basic observation, that all species started a rapid decline with the operation of the Federal Central Valley Project and the State Water Project. The exporting began in the 70's and has increased on an almost annual basis to as much as 29% of total delta flow. (in excess of six million acre feet in 2012) Of the water exported, the greatest percentage (80-85%) used by agriculture with a great part of it, irrigating the desert portion of the west San Joaquin Valley.

And while the health of the delta fisheries is important to so many people, including sportsman and numerous economic inter-

*(Continued on page 11)*

## NCCFFF, now that we're rejoining, what do they do?

**Editor's Note: DFF Conservation Chair, Ron Forbes, attends the quarterly NCCFFF meetings as a representative for our club and has been doing so, even while the club was not a member of the Council. Ron also attends numerous conservation meetings, representing our club, including meetings held by Restore the Delta, the Foothill Conservancy and various organizations dedicated to the restoration of valley stream and rivers and their fisheries. Ron's efforts deserve our applause and appreciation. Keep at it Ron, the club and the fish appreciate your efforts.**

By Dave Ford, NCCFFF Outreach Committee (*reprinted from the NCCFFF website*)

Most fly fishers know about NCCFFF events like the Hall of Fame dinner and Fly Fishing Festival. Fewer know about Council activity that provides conservation news to club conservation people via the NCC's conservation list serve and \$ grants to clubs for conservation projects. But there are other activities that few know about—one is the NCC's education activity.

Trout in the Classroom is one part of edu-

cation outreach. The NCC's efforts here include providing grants to fund equipment purchases, and programs to help teachers in classroom instruction. Tens of thousands of dollars in NCC club grants by have been provided in support of this program.

Another education outreach effort is the Learning Centers, which the NCC provides during events like the ISE San Mateo, the Pleasanton Fly Fishing Shows, the Bass Pro Shops Spring Festivals, and the annual Salmonid Festival, Salmon Restoration Conferences. Literally thousands of current fly fishers have been introduced to fly fishing at these events.

A relatively new major NCC and fly clubs outreach program teaches fly fishing to disabled veterans, using fly fishing in their rehabilitation. It is called Project Healing Waters/Fly Fishermen for Veterans, and Veterans First Fly Fishing (VFFF). They are holding the 1st annual benefit dinner on December 8th at the Fremont Elks Lodge, 38991 Farwell Dr. Fremont, CA 94536. The funds from the dinner and raffle will be applied to:

--Purchasing materials and equipment to support the workshops for the veterans

--Developing, building and providing fly fishing and tying devices/equipment for disabled veterans.

Outings & trips (mostly within California). Funds go to paying the veteran's portion only, (volunteers pay their own way)

VFFF Recent developments include adding a workshop through Art Livingston & the Granite Bay Fly Casters (GBFC) that serves the Community Based Warrior Transition Unit (CBWTU). CBWTU's are comprised of combat wounded Army soldiers who are in their own homes recovering, and/or convalescing while they and the services are evaluating their future status. Some may return to active duty and some may be retiring with disabilities. This is a new avenue for us and we are thankful for Art & the Granite Bay club stepping up and hosting these soldiers at their meetings and events.

**Your newsletter is now totally integrated with the World Wide Web. You'll find many clickable links throughout the newsletter to the club's website, the club's [Facebook page](#) and other external links.**



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Any correspondence regarding this publication should be directed to: The Delta Fly Fishers Inc. PO Box 77862 Stockton, CA 95207-7862

# Sallye Rules on the American

By Bruce Rollans  
January 29, 2013  
Sacramento — We put the drift boat in the river at 5:30 a.m. There was a full moon behind cloud cover and my finger tips were already hurting from the 35 degree temperature.

As usual, Sallye insisted on sitting in the back seat. She must know something I have not yet figured out. Keith Kaneko, our guide for the day, rowed us up river to just below the Hazel Avenue Bridge and across from the hatchery on the American River. This had been a hot spot for the past few days. However, try as we might, the location just didn't pan out for us. I immediately had a grab, let it run and quickly lost it. Best guess is it took the bottom flies, a #16 Alvin pattern, but the middle fly, an Alaska rigged egg, rolled over the steelhead's back, snagged the fish and caused a loss of tension on the Alvin resulting in a lost fish. The only evidence of having hooked it was a scale on the egg hook. Moments later Sallye had the same experience; however, Keith thought her fish was much larger as the scale on her egg hook was twice the size of what I had. Go



*Keith Kaneko holds up Sallye's six pound steelhead. A good day on the American River. Photo by Bruce Rollans*

figure. We subsequently landed several half pounders and a couple of "springers." Then Sallye had what she claimed was a bottom snag, but the rod started to vibrate and the line moved downstream. She played the fish correctly and soon landed a hen of about six pounds; a fish that had weighted maybe 8 pounds before releasing her eggs. Well, I tried, but there must be something about back seat drivers. *Editor's comment: Even having earned the Incomplet Angler's Award for being hooked (several times) by Bruce, she still trusts him enough to sit to his rear. Is it love or...*

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ests, plans go on to export even more water from the delta, including the governor's massive twin pipe diversion, a smaller one pipe diversion and a third plan to move the export point from Clifton Court Forebay to a point more western in the delta.

In order to address the decline, the Delta Stewardship Council and Department of Water Resources convened a group of scientists to provide direction. The group under the title of The Delta Science Program has studied the problem for several years with the FMWT survey a valuable part of their information.

Lauren Hastings, Deputy Director of the plan states, "The introduction of the science plan will spell out what the problem is, why a Delta Science Plan is

needed, what will it do and how it is

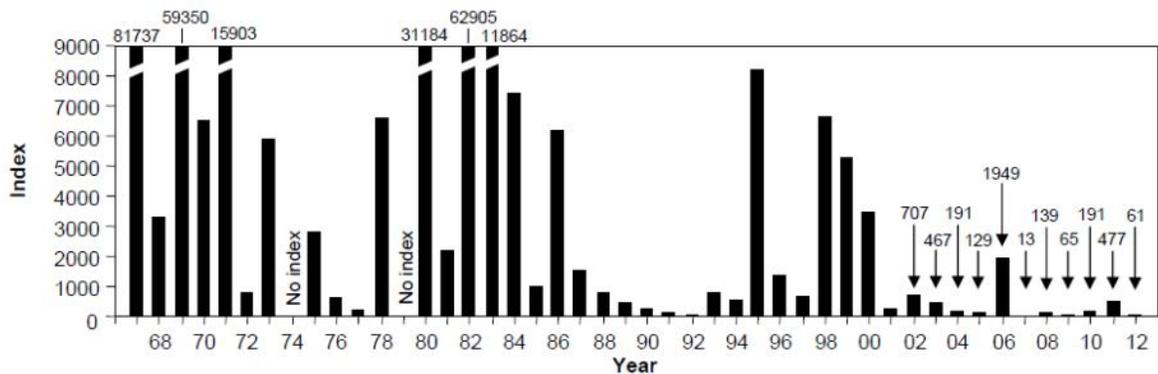
the solution: "We've realized we need is a framework to organize and integrate Delta science activities, to provide best available science, and to focus on priority management issues," Ms. Hasting said. The Plan will also provides approaches for communicating science to support adaptive management decision making, and provide tools for the science community to provide that best available science and to provide it in such a way as to support adaptive management."

(the above an excerpt from Maven's Minutes: [Delta Stewardship Council science update: Delta smelt index dropping, Delta Science Plan starts to take shape and more](#))

While the plan has lofty goals, the actual decisions regarding the delta will be made by politicians and therein lies the rub. Will regional self interests and greed dictate the future of the delta or will science and sustainability of our state's natural resources prevail.

History says, "Follow the money..."

Figure 3. Age-0 striped bass FMWT annual abundance indices, 1967-2012.



One of the five graphs provided as part of the Fall MidWater Trawl Survey report. The full set of graphs can be found at [http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/Item\\_8\\_Attach\\_1\\_7.pdf](http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/Item_8_Attach_1_7.pdf)

## "Brazilian Waterweed, the plant that ate the Delta" and other NIS

*"The solution of any problem -- work, love, money, whatever-- is to go fishing, and the worse the problem is, the longer the trip should be."*

John Gierach

Every month there is a problem in deciding about what issue in conservation is most pressing and one that will be interesting and affects our clubs fishing experience. This month it was easy. The third week in February, I was watching a local newscast and saw a story about biology research students from the University of Nevada (UN) working with our Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) collecting non-native invasive species (NIS) at Lake Tahoe. They had located a group of 15 goldfish in a shallow area near shore. The fish were probably getting ready to spawn.

The surprising thing about the fish was that they a not the normal size goldfish that we think about but much larger fish. The largest specimens were 18" in length and weighted over 4 pounds. DFW and UN have been

bass, brown bullfish, bluegill, and crappie. These warn water fish are also non-natives that are having a negative effect on Tahoe's ecosystem. The researchers are also concerned about the goldfish's effect on



A four pound Lake Tahoe goldfish. Photo courtesy U.N.R.

Lake Tahoe's excellent water clarity. The goldfish's excrement is rich in nutriments that cause algae blooms and will make the lake far less clear.

In June of 2011, three days of shocking yielded hundreds of bass, bluegill and crappie with the average bass weight from 11/2 to 3 pounds, some going to 6 pounds. Bass were found in Lake Tahoe in the 1960's and now they are well established.

They live in the keys and in weed and marshy area close to working on non-native fish in Lake Tahoe for several years and have collected both large and smallmouth

in weed and marshy area close to

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shore. When these and other NIS have been collected, their stomach contents are sent to UN and examined to see how the fish are affecting the ecosystem. DFW feels the NIS cannot be eradicated from Tahoe but contained. It is felt that the source of the NIS warm water species in Tahoe is due to aquarium dumping.

After doing some research on the Tahoe fishery, I became interested in what is happening to the Delta and its NIS problems. Unfortunately, we have more than our share of problems to deal with. Along with loss of habitat, the NIS are leading causes of the loss of the Delta's biodiversity. The Delta has over 750 species of plants and animals. However, over 250 species of the flora and fauna are NIS. In

thumbnail. The population has grown to the point where 50,000 of them live in an area one meter square. After their introduction, they have changed San Francisco Bay and parts of the Delta from a pelagic (mid-water) to a benthic (bottom) environment. Since the clam filters water efficiently, high levels of selenium have been found in its tissue and have become a major problem in the ecosystems food chain. One of the major problems it causes is bio-fouling power plants and irrigation systems. The site where the Asian clams were first located has at least 23 other NIS that have been identified.



*Water hyacinth (Eichhornia crassipes) and other aquatic weeds have significant impact on wildlife, recreation, and water conveyance, especially in the Sacramento River Delta (Photo: Bob Case, [Sacramento River Watershed Program](#))*

cinth and the Brazilian Waterweed may be contained. Once these plants have become established, they have never been eradicated. They will always be part of the Delta.

The water Hyacinth came into California, probably as an ornamental plant, in the early 1900's. It has proven to be totally noxious. Many feel it is the most rapidly growing plant in the world. It does not reproduce like most plants but rather metastasizes. When conditions are right for the hyacinth, it can double its size in 10 days forming a mat from 4 to 6 feet deep. It is a major problem for Delta fishers in that it can rapidly deplete the oxygen available. In a recent TV news story, California is trying a new approach for



*The Asian or "overbite" clam, a Delta invasive species. Photo courtesy of U.C. Davis.*

some areas, the non-native species of both plants and animals is over 90% of the biomass.

The Delta today is not the Delta that existed when the only inhabitants of the state were Native Americans. The NIS were brought here both intentionally and unintentionally. Ships were probably one of the first sources of NIS. A good example of this is in Suisan Bay. In the mid 1980's college students collected three clams never before seen in either the San Francisco Bay or the Delta. Returning the next year, the clam (the Asian or "overbite" clam) was found to be the most common bottom dwelling species in the area. They are less than 50 mm in size; about the size of your

Another major NIS problem in the Delta has been the invasion of two plants we have to deal with. Both the Water Hyacinth and Brazilian Waterweed (Egeria Densa) are invasive weeds that choke the Delta. Anyone who has fished, swam, or boated in the Delta is well aware of the problems they cause. Those of us in Delta Fly Fishers, who were on the clubs first trip to Discovery Bay, last year, have had a personal experience with Brazilian Water-

weed. The waterweed has been in the Delta for about 40 years. It is an aquarium plant and was probably introduced by someone dumping his or her aquarium into the Delta. It has turned out to be a major problem especially in Discovery Bay. It can be treated with fluridone from April to October. It is safe for pets and other animals but fish in the treated area leave until the chemical dissipates, as those of us who fished that day now understand. Water Hyacinth can be treated with 2,4-D or glyphosate. With constant control measures, both the Hy-



*Egeria Densa in Old River. Originally from Brazil and sold as a decorative plant for aquariums. Someone emptied their aquarium into the delta and this is the result. Photo courtesy of Delta Fly Fishers.*

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control of the plant by releasing insects that eat hyacinth leaves in three areas of the Delta. Hopefully they are not introducing another NIS.

The intentional introduction of NIS into America has some disastrous effects. The kudzu plant was introduced to the United States in 1876 at the [Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia](#). The South suffered from serious erosion problems and much of the land was being lost to farming. The USDA subsidized farmers to plant the kudzu. The plant thrived in the warm, humid South and not only prevented erosion but has taken over. It

can grow over foot a night and is referred to as, "the plant that ate the South."

More recently, the Environmental Protection Agency is in the final stages of giving incentives to companies that want to import a plant called Arundo, a giant reed grass that can grow to 30 feet tall and grows in clumps. It is to be used for bio-fuel production. Arundo is on the World's



*Kudzu, the plant that ate the South. USDA Photo*

eral government's decision will be made soon.

The Delta and San Francisco Bay are not the ecosystems we knew 30 or 40 years ago. They will never return to the a native ecosystem. With the continued introduction of non-native species, both systems will remain in a constant state of flux. Last year, non-native invasive species cost the United States \$120 billion.

Ron Forbes  
Conservation Chair



*Arundo, a good source of bio-fuel or the next invasive catastrophe? USDA photo.*

100 Worst Invasive Species list. Those who want the plant call it the "finest bio-energy crop available". The National Wildlife Federation and representatives of local, state, and national groups including universities have urged several federal agencies "to avoid this potentially invasive feedstock". Arundo in Alabama is doing "irreparable damage to the states natural ecosystems". The fed-