



Salmon spawning. Photo by Kathy Kayner

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Volunteers are Cleaning Up Area Creeks and Rivers

Thousands of pounds of trash and debris are being removed from and around creeks and rivers in the Sacramento area by a new group of volunteers.

The River City Waterway Alliance was launched last January by four local residents who had seen a huge increase in the amount of trash and debris in and near our waterways in recent years.

"We now have about 50 volunteers and we're doing three cleanups a week," said Mark Baker, one of the founders who was interviewed in late March. "As the weather improves, we'll be expanding the number of weekly cleanups."

The crews work on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and each cleanup lasts for about three hours. They pick up an average of about 1,600 pounds per hour, Baker said. Many hypodermic needles have been recovered. At one abandoned camp site, more than 500 needles were found. The volunteers are given training to handle the needles safely.

At most cleanup sites, the county Regional Parks Department sends trucks to haul away the trash.

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California's Dwindling Salmon Runs have Forced a Shutdown of the Fishing Season

BY STEPHEN GREEN

The Pacific Fisheries Management Council adopted proposals on March 10 to shut down California's salmon fishing season in all marine and inland waters during 2023.

The action was taken in response to projections by the National Marine Fisheries Service that the fall run for Chinook Salmon in the Sacramento River will number about 169,767 adults — one of the lowest forecasts since 2008 when the current assessments began. For the Klamath River, the Fisheries Service fall run Chinook forecast is 103,793 adults — the second lowest forecast since the current assessments began in 1997.

But those projections are probably overestimated, according to scientists and

anglers who have been monitoring the yearly runs. In 2022, the projection for the fall run Chinook population in the Sacramento River Basin was 198,694. But only 61,850 adult hatchery and natural area adult spawners, and 6,995 jacks returned to the basin, according to state officials.

Spokesmen for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife contend the recent drought has been a major factor in the salmon decline.

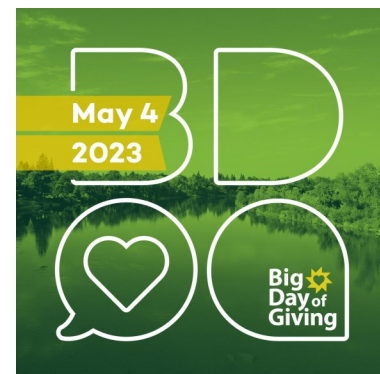
But other scientists and anglers blame fish and water management by the state and federal governments for the devastation of the fishery.

"The federal Bureau of Reclamation and the state Dept. of Water Resources have

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Big Day of Giving is May 4

Big Day of Giving is an opportunity for our region to come together and support the organizations that make our community strong by donating to local nonprofits. You can support SARA's work on behalf of the American River and Parkway by giving online beginning at midnight on May 4, or by scheduling a gift in advance starting April 20. Visit bigdayofgiving.org/save-the-american-river to make a donation. Every gift counts!



Salmon

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failed to operate their reservoirs and dams in the Central Valley of California in a manner that keep Chinook salmon and steelhead trout that utilize the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, their tributaries and Delta ecosystems 'in good condition' so as to benefit all the people and future generations," said retired fish and wildlife biologist Felix Smith.

Smith had a storied career on the West Coast exposing environmental problems and working to protect fish and wildlife while employed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He currently serves on the board of Save the American River Association.

"The bottom line," Smith said, "is the people's Chinook Salmon and their habitat are being sacrificed for mostly private uses of water by the state and federal water contractors. I have witnessed it first-hand. The big water districts play their political friends like a fine violin, not with science but with political pressure and donations (money talks — it shouts)."

Smith noted that a limited number of Chinook Salmon make it to inland rivers and are able to spawn. But the eggs deposited in the gravels require water quality that supports the development of viable embryos, swim up fry to smolts who need safe passage down river, through the Delta to San Francisco Bay and the ocean. During many years, the water quality and stream flows have been inadequate in flow, timing and duration. The water released has been too warm for the eggs and young Salmon to survive in many years, Smith said.

In the San Joaquin River watershed, the larger dams, with the exception of Friant Dam, were constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers. There were no hatcheries built below those dams. Water releases from the dams have not been adequate to protect the Salmon and Steelhead on the Stanislaus, Tuolumne and Merced Rivers.

In the Sacramento River watershed, the federal Shasta and Folsom Dams and the state's Oroville Dam were constructed

with hatcheries to mitigate for the lost habitat. Flows released to mitigate damages to fisheries have been abysmal. The Yuba River lost its spring run Chinook after the New Bullards Bar Dam was constructed. Flow releases were not adequate to sustain that Chinook run.

The California Public Trust Doctrine provides that certain resources belonging to the people are to be administered by the state for the benefit of the people. The Public Trust Doctrine is a background principle of property law. The core principle of the Public Trust Doctrine is that every sovereign government has a property interest in its water, fish and wildlife, held as a trust for the benefit of today's generations and generations yet born. The Public Trust Doctrine predates today's environmental laws and applies to every water right that impacts trust resources and may, in fact, define or limit the very nature of the right to put water to beneficial use.

California Fish & Game Code Section 5937 reads, in part: "The owner of any dam shall allow sufficient water at all times to pass through the fishway, or in the absence of a fishway, allow sufficient water to pass over, around or through the dam, to keep in good condition any

"The bottom line is the people's Chinook Salmon and their habitat are being sacrificed for mostly private uses of water by the state and federal water contractors."

FELIX SMITH

Retired fish and wildlife biologist

fish that may be planted or exist below the dams.

"The failure to follow the Public Trust Doctrine, California Fish & Game Code Section 5937 and other laws and court ruling has caused irreparable harm to fish and fish habitat," Smith concluded.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council is refining its salmon season shutdown proposals and will release them this spring.

California's salmon fishing industry is valued at \$1.4 billion in economic activity and 23,000 jobs annually in a normal season. Yet sport and commercial fishing groups had been leading the charge to

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Chinook salmon spawning on the American River. Photo by Kathy Kayner

Salmon

Continued from Page 2

shut down the ocean and inland salmon fishing seasons.

James Stone, executive director of the Northern California Guides and Sportsmen's Association, said "We have seen historic low runs in the Sacramento Valley since 2015...Current salmon management policy and poor water management, without proper hatchery mitigation, has got us to this point of full collapse.

"We need a complete overhaul of our salmon management models and policies that have led to this scenario," Stone concluded.

John McManus, president of the Golden State Salmon Association, said his organization "is working to address the chronic lack of water dam operators provide to salmon. The Golden State Salmon Association is in court trying to get enforcement of existing laws to provide adequate water for salmon because water for salmon is water for people, the people throughout the state who make a living tied to salmon or who supply food for the family's dinner table.

"We need to take action to get our natural salmon back now and to support this iconic species and make a decent living like we used to," McManus said. ■



RCWA founder, Mark Baker, and several volunteers at a recent clean-up

Volunteers

Continued from Page 1

"We have a very good relationship with Regional Parks," Baker said. "At some of the bigger cleanups, they've sent us a Bobcat to help with the work."

During the winter floods, many homeless campsites were abandoned along river and streams, and huge amounts of trash were left behind.

Dr. Roland Brady, a former professor who taught engineering geology and habitat restoration at Fresno State University, has done studies in the area on how trash harms the river and creek beds, and the aquatic life they sustain.

"What the physical trash does is armor the bed making an impermeable layer at the bottom of the channel," Brady said. "At some stage in their lifespan, most aquatic organisms spent time in the substrate, the bottom."

He noted that at abandoned campsites, they are finding insecticide cans used by campers to ward off fleas. The deteriorating cans leach poisons into the waterways. Abandoned generators also leach oil and gasoline into the environment.

Several years ago, Brady and Crystal Tobias started a cleanup effort on Steelhead Creek that is still underway.



Needles and batteries recovered from a camp

And they also are now volunteers with the River City Waterway Alliance.

When the crews work in areas where there are still active encampments, the volunteers are respectful of the people living there, said David Ingram, another co-founder of the Alliance.

"We're one of the few organizations that will actually go in and work with live camps and the campers there," Ingram said. "We build relationships and trust because a lot of the people that live there, they don't have a lot of trust with other people."

Anyone who would like to donate money to support the Alliance's work can do so through the Sacramento Area Creeks Council: <http://saccreeks.org>. The council is a 501c3, so the donations are tax deductible.

Members of the Alliance also are seeking more volunteers so that cleanup efforts can be expanded. They also hope to recruit more retired people who are available to work on week days. More information on the Alliance and their work can be viewed on Facebook, Instagram and Youtube.

Contact can be made through the Alliance's website: rivercitywaterwayalliance.com ■

BOOK REVIEW

THE OUTDOOR WORLD OF THE SACRAMENTO REGION

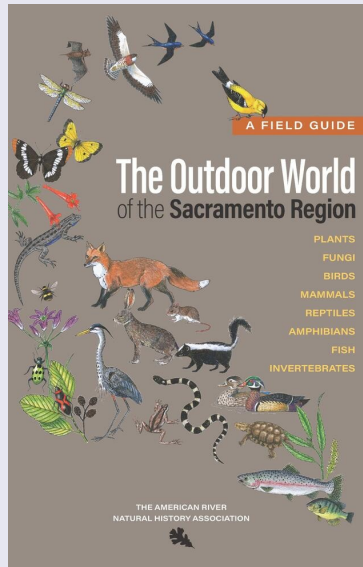
Co-edited by Molly Keller and Peggy Kraus Kennedy
American River Natural History Association, Paperback, 256 pages, \$22.50.

The 14th edition of this field guide was recently published by the American River Natural History Association (ARNHA). The first edition was published in 1975 and each new edition has been expanded and improved.

The latest edition has descriptions and full-color drawings of more than 575 local plants, birds, mammals, insects, fish, reptiles and amphibians. It also portrays regional landforms, geology, climate and weather, environments and the first native peoples, the Valley Maidu (Nisenan).

Nature lovers have treasured this book since it was first published and have used each new edition for their explorations of the Sacramento Region.

Sales of the book directly support educational programs at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael which is operated by ARNHA. It can be purchased at the Nature Center or through the Nature Center's website: www.sacnaturecenter.net. The book also is on sale at Soil Born Farms, Botanica Apothecary, Beers Books and Wild Birds Unlimited in Loehmann's Plaza. ■



Nature lovers have treasured this book since it was first published and have used each new edition for their explorations of the Sacramento Region.

Parkway Advocate Eugene Gualco Has Passed Away

Eugene T. Gualco, one of the strongest early supporters of the American River Parkway, died last December at his home in Sacramento at age 93.

“As a county supervisor and state legislator, Gene was Save the American River Association’s ‘go-to-guy,’” said former SARA President Clyde Macdonald. “We could always count on him.”

Gualco was elected to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors in 1964 where he spent a decade working to acquire more land for the Parkway and other parks in the county.

He was instrumental in getting the 1972 County Park Bond on the ballot and approved by county voters. It provided funding for acquisition and development of the Parkway.

Two years later, he convinced his board members to create the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District which closed sewage treatment plants that discharged to the American River and replaced them with a regional plant south of Sacramento near Freeport.

In 1974, Gualco was elected to the state Assembly where he worked to win passage of environmental legislation and environmental protections for the Lake Tahoe Basin.



Eugene T. Gualco

He secured state funding to expand the American River Bike Trail from Nimbus Dam to Beals Point on Folsom Lake. And he carried the bill requiring the state Parks & Recreation Department to preserve the Bushy Lake area on the Parkway. There had been plans to create a golf course on the land and a parking lot for CalExpo.

In 1979, Gov. Jerry Brown appointed Gualco to the Sacramento County Superior Court where he served with distinction until his retirement in 1994.

Gualco was a Sacramento native who attended law schools at McGeorge and UC Berkeley. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Dorothy, daughter Gina and son Larry. ■

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In Memoriam

Save the American River Association has received donations honoring the memory of the following friends:

Don Bryan

Teresa G. Diaz

Judge Eugene Gualco

Donald A. Kenmonth

Barry Swerdloff

Save the American River Association frequently receives donations in memory of lost loved ones, many of whom were users and supporters of the American River Parkway. Some donors give names. Others prefer to remain anonymous. SARA notifies family members when donations are made. The money is used to further SARA's advocacy work on behalf of the Parkway.

Contributions may be made by check or online via SARA's website.

SARA also has a Legacy program. For information on the program, please contact the SARA office. ■

SARA appreciates the support of our generous members. Without your support, SARA would not be able to continue our role as *Guardians of the American River and Parkway since 1961*. New and renewing members are listed in *RiverWatch* according to their preference (indicated on the SARA membership/renewal form).

Wet Weather has Spawned A Surge in the Tick Population

The wet weather that has saturated California this year has generated many studies of the impacts. But there's one impact that has been given little attention – an explosion of the Western Black-legged Tick population.

Western Black-legged Ticks (*Ixodes pacificus*) transmit Lyme disease – one of the fastest growing infectious diseases in the county. Depending upon which source you consult, there are anywhere from 400,000 to several million Lyme infections yearly in America. And Northern California is one of the hot spots.

The ticks are tiny, the size of a poppy seed. The male is brownish-black in color with eight legs. The females are a little larger with a brown-black plate on its back and an orange abdomen. Unlike the males, they are voracious eaters. Once they start sucking blood from a host, they can triple in size.

The tick's life has four stages: egg, larve, nymph and adult. It takes about three years to complete the life cycle. Nymphal ticks primarily feed on small animals and humans during the spring and early summer. Adults are most active during the winter and seek hosts from late fall to spring.

Ticks are usually found in grasslands, woodland grass or brushy areas. They hop onto animals and humans who come in contact with logs, branches and shed leaves.

Because of their small size, the host



Western Black-legged Tick

Depending upon which source you consult, there are anywhere from 400,000 to several million Lyme infections yearly in America. And Northern California is one of the hot spots.

often doesn't immediately notice that the tick is there. The tick punctures the skin of the host and inserts a feeding tube that secretes a cement like substance and has barbs to help the tick to stay attached to the host. Once attached, the tick will feed on the host's blood for several days. And it will secrete saliva that can transmit the Lyme pathogen to the host's blood stream.

Once detected, Lyme disease can be treated with antibiotics. But rashes,

fever, fatigue and other symptoms can last for weeks.

Doctors recommend wearing long pants and insect repellents when browsing in areas where ticks may occur.

To remove a tick:

1. Use clean, fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. If the tick's mouth parts break off and remain in the skin, remove them with tweezers.
3. Thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.
4. Never crush a tick with fingers. Dispose of a live tick in alcohol, in a sealed bag, or by flushing it down a toilet. ■

California's Pot Black Market is Thriving

In 2016, California voters approved Prop. 64 which legalized the sale of marijuana for recreational use.

One of the top arguments presented by pro-Prop. 64 advocates was that legalizing pot would put illegal growers out of business and end the criminal activity associated with it.

But more than six years later, the pot black market is thriving and legal growers and sellers are struggling to stay afloat. It's been estimated that more than 80 percent of the weed produced in California comes from illegal farms. And in major production areas like the Emerald Triangle on California's north coast, unlicensed farms outnumber legal operations by as much as 10-to-1.

Crime associated with illegal growing and sales of weed continues to increase. It's been documented that cartels from as far away as China and Bulgaria are

competing with the Mexican cartels that used to be the dominant foreign force in California's black market.

California, like other states that have legalized pot, has imposed fees, taxes and bureaucratic hoops for people operating legal farms, distributorships and retail shops. High taxation and regulatory demands have caused legal businesses to stagnate and illegal operators to flourish.

At the same time, California has made only a minimal commitment to policing illegal growers, distributors and retailers. And illegal farmers continue to steal California water and runoff from their grows pollutes streams and rivers with pesticides and rodenticides.

The illegal operators have become entrenched. And that appears to be the status quo for some time to come. ■

Support County Parks — Buy An Annual Pass

For as little as \$60 per year, you can have unlimited access and parking in the parks. All funds go directly towards maintaining and operating the 15,000-acre system.

Pass holders receive free daily entry into Regional Parks and annual passes are valid for one year from date of purchase.

Pass Fees Are Based On Use:

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Vehicle + Trailer/Boat/RV:	\$120
Senior Citizen Vehicle*:	\$30
Senior Citizen Vehicle + Trailer/Boat/RV*:	\$60

** Senior discount applies to ages 65 or older and must have proof of age at time of purchase.*

Where to Purchase Your Parks Pass

- Online through the American River Parkway Foundation Web site arpf.org/visit
- At REI stores in Sacramento, Roseville and Folsom
- Patriot Cycles in Fair Oaks
- Effie Yeaw Nature Center at Ancil Hoffman Park
- Regional Park offices and park kiosks
- American River Parkway Foundation office at the William B. Pond Recreation Area ■





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