



Sonoma County  
California  
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## Johnson's Beach - Russian River 16,000 cfs, 22 feet (A. Cason photo 1/19/2016)

Since June 1977  
Visit our website at  
[www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)

### Headwaters...

**NOTE:** There will be NO RRFF General Meeting on Wednesday, February 10th! INSTEAD, PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE **RRFF CIOPPINO DINNER ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27<sup>th</sup>.**

Here, in the first week of February, our drought concerns are awash with recent rains as Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino both exceed 90% capacity, thanks largely to the new water release practices of the Army Corps of Engineers and an atmospheric river that has brought us some significant rainfall. The Russian River is running high, more like the average that we were once used to, and our coastal rivers have resumed the brunt of our local fly fishing attention. In the Sierra, the snowpack has hit a 5-year record (I believe exceeding 130% of normal for this time of year), although the last four years have been extremely dry

by any previous comparison. It is difficult to compare to, or establish, what constitutes a normal year anymore as weather patterns seem to be changing everywhere. At what point do we establish a new normal?

The **RRFF Cioppino Dinner** and **fund-raising raffle** is quickly approaching. Please help us make our only fund-raising event of the year a success! Your contributions of raffle items are necessary and greatly appreciated, and your support and attendance at the dinner are anticipated. You will be treated to an evening of camaraderie, great food and fun. Bring your families and friends. We can seat 135 for dinner **and the crab has been ordered**...so please send me your reservations and payment, or reserve your spot online at [www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)!

May the rains and snow continue. Our fish need a break.

~ Steve Tubbs

## RRFF Cioppino Dinner Donations

Donations are needed for the upcoming RRFF Cioppino Dinner Raffle on Saturday, February 27, 2016. Contact one of the following Board members to have your donation picked up. **Please get your donations to us one week prior to the dinner.**

Include donor's name and description of the item donated. This will be a "can raffle" with participants putting tickets towards only those items they want to win.

**Ken Magoon**, 527-8376 or [magoon5294@aol.com](mailto:magoon5294@aol.com)  
(Santa Rosa)

**Gregg Wrisley**, 823-5572 or [ggwris@gmail.com](mailto:ggwris@gmail.com)  
(Sebastopol)

**Paul Matzen**, 795-8885 or 480-1057  
(Petaluma)

**Greg Jacobs**, 823-7341 or [gjacobs48@gmail.com](mailto:gjacobs48@gmail.com)  
(Sebastopol)

*All of the following contributions are desirable:*

- Fly fishing rods, reels, lines, nets, vests, flies and all types of fishing accessories and clothing. (Other types of fishing gear also welcomed.)
- Fly tying vises, tools and materials.
- Prams, pontoons, float tubes and fins. ( Preferably in very good and safe condition.)
- All types of camping, outdoor and recreational equipment.
- Fishing, conservation, and nature related art work and books.
- Guided fishing trips or one day access to private fishing water.
- Weekend stays on a lake or river location.
- Products and services from your or a friend's business.
- Spa sessions or cosmetology services.
- Food items or wine.
- Tickets to sporting events.
- Dinners or stays at B & B's.
- Any one day family or group outing in a fun and unique location.

Thanks for your contributions,

~ Ken Magoon

## Tuolumne Surprise!

Besides fishing, surprise for some is the spice of life. I enjoy both.

A few days ago, I passed on a kind invitation to join Don Shaw at the International Sportsmen's Expo in favor of getting some early morning chores completed while I had a short break between the needed rains. I am lucky to live in an area close to three major rivers, the Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus which flow into the San Joaquin River and which still sport small runs of Salmon and populations of resident rainbows, although being greatly diminished in recent years. After checking the river flows, I decided to spend the afternoon teasing some of the rainbows on the Tuolumne.

This is the time of year to swing various streamers or to go deep with nymphs. I usually use my 5 weight, but thankfully at the last minute switched to my 6 weight which is more suited for the heavier sink line I decided to use.



It was a beautiful afternoon with no jacket needed and my dog, Sallie, and I went for a long walk upstream, around a difficult knoll, and then slid down a steep hillside of slippery clay and jagged lichen, and moss covered schist and tombstone shale, to our final destination. It was a perfect way to spend the afternoon accompanied by red tailed hawks and turkey vultures soaring overhead, juncos and white crowned sparrows hopping on the ground, and acorn woodpeckers, flickers, and phainopeplas keeping us company in the oaks.

On the way I caught one nice little rainbow which was promptly released. Then as I covered the head

of a large pool fed by the main current which was pretty strong due to the narrowed section it plummeted through, my retrieve got heavy as if I was stripping through debris, but upon strip striking, the line throbbed and I knew it was a fish. This was a heavy fish with very hard and deep head shakes that started easily running downstream and then began putting on the juice. My smooth drag started screaming beautifully as his initial three runs took me about ½ way into my backing (farther than I have ever been before) and I was beginning to wonder if I was going to lose my entire line and backing. My initial thoughts on this particular fish was how this really epitomized a fight or battle. As he ran I tried to confuse and tire the fish by making sure I was leveraging from either side and not straight on and after a standstill for a bit I finally started gaining line and very slowly started to put line back onto my reel. I really had to stay diligent as he and I were battling in a large fast moving eddy, bordered by fast current on one side which I didn't want him in and a root/limb strewn bank on the other which I also didn't want him in. He had different views but I continued my leverage techniques to confuse and tire him and very slowly got him back to hand. The water had only about a foot visibility and I never did see the fish as it stayed deep even when my leader was at the tip of the rod. Finally I slowly saw this huge mouth and head emerge and realized it was a spent striper which I grabbed by the lower jaw and lifted out of the cold water. The battle was done. The striper was 29 inches long, a good test for my 6 weight and small streamer suited for trout.



Stripers were introduced in 1879 from New Jersey and spend a majority of their time in the ocean, San Francisco Bay and the delta estuary. It is common knowledge that they come up the rivers and I have seen them caught before but it is not something you expect, especially when you're targeting trout with smaller streamers. This particular adversary was released to live another day.

~ Walt Kruse

## Conservation Corner 5: The 4 “H’s” of Fisheries Conservation continued - Hatcheries

Large fish hatchery programs didn't exist in our local watersheds until 1983, far after stocks of anadromous fish plummeted. But we are just now beginning to understand how, when managed traditionally, they might be preventing wild stocks from rebounding and why that matters. Our addiction to hatcheries in the West started back in



1870's. Spencer Baird, the U.S Commissioner for Fish and Fisheries, realized that habitat destruction, over-harvesting and dams would destroy Pacific salmon runs and proposed that building hatcheries would be easier than protecting habitat and regulating harvests. Hatcheries have been with us ever since. We've always been suckers for a “have your cake and eat it too” solution.

Anders Halverson describes in *An Entirely Synthetic Fish* how Livingston Stone, a fish culturist, was sent by Baird to open the first hatchery in the West on the Upper McCloud River in 1872. Unfortunately, Stone fundamentally misunderstood what he was observing and assumed anadromous fish ascended rivers to spawn according to the fitness of the water and habitat, rather than homing in on their birth waters. As Jeff Crane explained in *Finding the River* this rationalized Stone's approach of using a single source of eggs to propagate far-flung waters and led to a far greater reliance on hatcheries rather than saving habitats or enforcing regulations. British Columbia's fisheries managers came to a contrary conclusion to Stone's and began closing their hatchery programs in the 1920's.

Starting in the 30's, hatchery use was greatly accelerated by the grand bargain that was made in permitting many of the dams in the West. Policy

makers and water managers were not unaware that large dams would have a negative effect on wild fish and so mollified sport and commercial fishers with a massive program of hatchery building. While this covered up short term losses, scientific studies are just now showing how this has impacted the viability of wild fish populations through the reduction of genetic diversity and fitness. Rob Masonis, Trout Unlimited's (TU) Director of Western Conservation Programs and one of the founders of the Wild Steelhead Initiative, cited research showing that hatchery/wild cross offspring had a 50% lower survivability than wild stocks. TU's John McMillan cites research from Washington's Olympic Peninsula that hatchery fish reduce wild trout growth by 35%. This damage also reaches into our mountains where competition from hatchery stocking of non-native trout has severely impacted the viability of our state trout, the California Golden trout, the rare Paiute Cutthroat and the largest trout, the Lahontan Cutthroat, among others.

In a recent [article in Comstock](#), Peter Moyle, a UC Davis fisheries biologist, says the Central Valley's



Chinook salmon are becoming more poorly suited for survival with each generation. *“Most hatchery-born juveniles die shortly after they are released into the wild, a result of generations of artificial selection in captivity. [This is] because of the way they are reared, in uniform cement troughs, feeding on pelleted food. The crux of the problem is that, over generations, hatchery salmon become very well adapted to survival in a man-made environment free of predators and very poorly adapted to living in the wild — hallmarks of a domesticated animal”*. Moyle goes on to say that *“[hatcheries] have inadvertently selected for more docile fish. They're easier to handle in the processing rooms but would not have been favored by natural selection in an environment*

*of rapids, competing male spawners and predators on the river bank”*. Unfortunately, the evidence shows that genetic problems from traditional hatchery breeding practices can continue for 40 years or more (G.E. Whelan, American Fisheries Society Symposium 44 [2004]).

So with all of this evidence of their harm, why have so few hatchery operations reformed or shut down? If you believe in Steven Levitt's economic incentivism, the hatchery program brings hundreds of millions of dollars from tourists and the federal government into communities and supports thousands of jobs. Another strong constituency that is keeping hatcheries under traditional augmentation management is fishermen themselves. It seems intuitive that if you put a bunch of fish into the water there will be more fish to catch. Fifty million trout alone were stocked in [California in 2006](#). Fisheries biologist Jim Lichatowich has dubbed this “the Hatchery Myth”. It appeals to the traditional combination of empiricism and common sense that fired the Market Revolution in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and led to the explosion in hatchery propagation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The very funding of hatcheries is based on selling licenses to people who want to catch more fish. It has also been argued that waterways have been so degraded, and will continue to be, that wild fish won't come back. Or that without hatcheries, tribal and commercial fishermen will catch the last few fish and leave none for recreational fishers. Or that hatchery fish keep the sea lions and squawfish fed so they don't eat all the wild ones.

But the evidence doesn't support any of these arguments. In one example close to home, CDF&W stopped stocking hatchery fish on [Putah Creek](#) in 2008. The fishery repopulated with wild fish and by 2010 the fishing was better than it had been during the hatchery years. Giving in to the seeming uselessness of trying to restore wild fish to previously degraded habitats also doesn't hold up. As Rene Henery, TU Science Director, eloquently summed up his organization's focus on restoring natural physical and biotic processes in a recent steelhead science symposium: “if you build it they might come, but if you don't, they won't”. The economic benefit argument also doesn't hold water. In a [2011 paper](#), Hans Radtke analyzed the economic benefits of the Sandy River Hatchery in Oregon. He found that across 5 different hatchery runs of

Steelhead, Coho and Chinook salmon, the net benefit-to-cost ratio averaged 0.5. That means that for every taxpayer dollar spent to propagate anadromous fish, only 50 cents swam back up the river. Not a great ROI. Alaskan fisheries management has demonstrated that with no hatcheries, strict regulations, and an intact environment, there are enough wild fish for a robust commercial, recreational, and tribal fishery with even a few left over for the sea lions.

So is there a place for any hatcheries at all? One idea being proposed by the TU's Wild Steelhead Initiative and Wild Steelheaders United is the wise use of hatcheries based on a watershed-by-watershed approach. Wild steelhead still abundant in a river with good habitat? Remove the hatchery fish. Tiny populations remaining of a valuable genetic strain in a watershed that could be rehabilitated? Conservation hatcheries could preserve the unique genetics until conditions improve. Confused genetics with few wild fish in a system with extreme habitat damage and little chance of repair? Leave the augmentation hatcheries and put-and-take regulations in place. And their polling of fishermen, fly and otherwise, suggests most understand and support a more nuanced approach such as this.

Another pathway being taken is the application of new technologies to reform our hatchery system. Scientists such as [John Carlos Garza](#) are working to identify specific genetics of returning salmon and breed in diversity to strengthen the health of hatchery stocks.

Whether another technological fix (like the original hatcheries were supposed to be), removing every hatchery from every watershed, or some pragmatic mix of the two is the solution to a return to the abundance of the past remains to be seen. The hope lies in the desire for finding a better way that is evident in the continuing research, discussion, and launching of new ideas.

How to get involved –

1. Support initiatives like Trout Unlimited's [Wild Steelheaders United](#) that is sponsoring scientific research for more strategic hatchery operations. WSU is unusual in that they are taking a pragmatic, population-by-population approach to hatchery management.

2. Support the [Russian River Wild Steelhead Society](#). This organization is working to both enhance habitat for wild steelhead and educate our youth on why wild steelhead and a healthy watershed are so critical to our local culture.

3. If you are more of the "remove-'em-all" bent, you'll be more interested in supporting organizations like the [Pacific Rivers Council](#), the [Center for Biological Diversity](#) and the [Native Fish Society](#). These organizations certainly support a science-based approach but apply more stringent standards for what would be an acceptable hatchery program.

~ Derek Campbell  
*Conservation Chairman*

## ***Welcome New RRF Members***

The Russian River Fly Fishers would like to welcome new members Scott Bonin, Robert "Jeff" Cratty, Jake McKee, Bob Pawlan, Robert Piziali and the Mike Strunk Family. We would also like to welcome back returning member Neil Silverman.

You should receive your new member information within the next few weeks and our RRF newsletter, *The CAST*, will be available online or by email. If you have any questions about our club, please contact one of our RRF board members. All contact information is listed in the newsletter, as well as information regarding upcoming events, outings and meetings.

Please consider joining us for our next club meeting, the **RRF Cioppino Dinner** on Saturday, February 27<sup>th</sup> at the Veteran's Memorial Building in Santa Rosa. Make your reservations now before we run out of space!

To receive the most benefit from your RRF membership, we encourage you to join us at the RRF Casting Pond (for our weekly practice and instruction) and on our monthly fishing outings. Your participation in the activities that we offer will determine the quality of your experience with the RRF.

Welcome Aboard,

Steve Tubbs  
RRF President

## *Calendar of Events*

**Winter Fly Casting Clinics** – From 12:00 noon until 2:30 pm (weather permitting). RRFF Fly Casting Clinics are held the first and third Saturday of each month.

### **February**

- 4 - 7 **Baum Lake** (B Laurie)
- 10 No General Meeting – Attend the Cioppino Dinner!
- 17 Board of Directors Meeting 7:00 PM
- 26 – 28 Pleasanton Flyfishing Show
- 27 **RRFF Cioppino Dinner**

### **March**

- 9 General Meeting – Vets Building 6:30 PM
- 9 **Eagle Canyon Trophy Trout Lakes** (J. Vallerga)
- 11 – 12 **Red's Fishing Tackle, Duck Decoy and Sporting Collectibles Show** – Vets Building
- 12 **Lance Gray Lower Sacramento River Tour** (E. Barich)
- 13 Daylight Savings Time Begins.
- 16 Board of Directors Meeting 7:00 PM
- 17 – 20 **Pyramid Lake** (K. Magoon)
- 19 Summer Fly Casting Clinics every Thursday 4:30 – 7:00 PM

### **August**

21 – Sep 3

**Idaho, Montana Camping, Fishing, Float Trip.**  
Maximum 12 RRFF members. Sign up now. This will be a two week trip through the great rivers, streams and lakes of Idaho and Montana. It will include an optional one to three day fishing float trip. Details to follow (B. Laurie)

## *Join the RRFF on Facebook*

We currently have **675 members** on our RRFF Facebook page. You can keep up with the RRFF and our fly fishing and conservation community by joining us at:

<http://www.facebook.com/russianriverflyfishers>

## *RRFF Newsletter Submissions*

Newsletter materials are due the fourth Monday of each month. Please email submissions as an MSWord doc to our newsletter editor:

**Lorrin Ngum - lorrinn@aol.com**

**Check out the Russian River Fly  
Fishers  
on the Internet at**

**[www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)**

## RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Steve Tubbs**

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Vice President & Outings Co-Chairman: **Ken Magoon**

527-8376 [magoon5294@aol.com](mailto:magoon5294@aol.com)

Secretary: **Greg Jacobs**

823-7341 [gjacob48@gmail.com](mailto:gjacobs48@gmail.com)

Treasurer & Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**

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Casting Instruction Chairman: **Steve Tubbs**

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Program Chairman: **Joe Banovich**

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Outings Co-Chairman: **Bill Laurie**

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Library Master: **Don Shaw**

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Membership Dues Billing & Raffle Coordinator: **Ed Barich**

539-4608 [ebarich@sonic.net](mailto:ebarich@sonic.net)

Special Events & City Liaison: **Art Carney**

539-2545 [ccarney@sonic.net](mailto:ccarney@sonic.net)

Member at Large: **Mike Kast**

538-9762 [michaelrkast@gmail.com](mailto:michaelrkast@gmail.com)

Membership Chairman: **Doug Mackay**

575-5709 [demackay@sonic.net](mailto:demackay@sonic.net)

Member at Large: **Paul Matzen**

795-8885 [ggbridgeman@att.net](mailto:ggbridgeman@att.net)

Member at Large: **Ken Young**

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823-5572 [ggwris@gmail.com](mailto:ggwris@gmail.com)

### Coordinators

Day Fishers & Fly Tying: **Lee Soares**

974-2651 [frommewee@comcast.net](mailto:frommewee@comcast.net)

Women's Activities: **Susan Bostwick**

815-5926 [shbgold@gmail.com](mailto:shbgold@gmail.com)

Casting Pond Stewards: **Doug & Sage Mackay**

575-5709 [demackay@sonic.net](mailto:demackay@sonic.net)

Casting Pond Monitor: **Binky Castleberry**

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762-4652 [lorrinn@aol.com](mailto:lorrinn@aol.com)

**Russian River Fly Fishers**  
**P.O. Box 2673**  
**Santa Rosa, CA 95405**



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## Russian River Fly Fishers Membership Application

*I acknowledge in this agreement, and fully understand, that it is a release of liability. I further acknowledge that I am waiving any right that I may have to bring legal action or to assert a claim against Russian River Fly Fishers (RRFF) for its negligence. Any member who invites a non-member (including member's spouse and family) agrees that such guest is bound by the same conditions and agrees to so advise the guest. I have read this statement and agree to its terms as a condition of my membership in the Russian River Fly Fishers. This agreement is valid for all RRFF sanctioned events, (fishing outings, picnics, meetings).*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Referred by \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address\* \_\_\_\_\_

How Can You Help the RRFF? \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\* Required for e-mail newsletter

### Please mark one of the following categories:

**I apply as a new member:**  **Single membership** – \$50 annual dues  **Gold membership** - \$1,000.00 (one-time)

**Family membership** – \$55 annual dues [JOIN ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)

**Junior membership** – \$25 annual dues

**Existing membership renewal:**  **Single membership** – \$50 annual dues  **Gold membership** - \$1,000.00 (one-time)

**Family membership** – \$55 annual dues [RENEW ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)

**Junior membership** – \$25 annual dues

Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 30th of any year will cover the balance of that year and also the membership dues for the following fiscal year. The RRFF fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30<sup>th</sup>

Please mail this application and your check payable to: **Russian River Fly Fishers, P.O. Box 2673, Santa Rosa, CA 95405**