



## Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission MINUTES June 16, 2020

*The Commission meets the THIRD Tuesday each month from 6:30pm through 8:30pm. Agenda items and supporting info should be mailed to HCF&GAC; PO Box 922; Ferndale, CA 95536; Phone 707.786.4902 or 707.407.5747 email: [nkaytis4@gmail.com](mailto:nkaytis4@gmail.com) up to two weeks following previous meeting. Online meeting via ZOOM.*

*Attendance:* James Clark, John Clark, (ab)Loren Furber, Phil Grunert, Hollie Hall, Yadao B. Inong, Rhiannon Lewis-Stephenson, Denver Nelson, (ab)Kenny Priest, Ted Romo, Brad Smith, Jeff Stackhouse, Harry Vaughn, Mike Zamboni, Nancy Kaytis-Slocum. (ab)=absent. Guests: Joan Romo.

Meeting called to order by Vice-Chairman Ted Romo (Chairman John Clark having difficulty with his internet connection) at 6:35 pm.

Commissioner Yadao Inong advised that lead free bullets would not be on this agenda.

The minutes from the May 19,2020 were not available.

Item 7q Fish Health was moved to the top of the agenda to accommodate Commissioner Yadao Inong's cellphone connection. He reported that the Hoopa tribe representatives had been out at the hatchery; none of the Trinity Chinook had been tagged. That presents interesting management issues, but there is nothing anyone can do about it. This is huge, since fishermen would not be able to tell if the fish caught was a hatchery fish or not. They are back at work now, but I'm not sure there is enough time to do the coated wire tags on the fall fish, which won't be released until August or later. With the Juvenile salmon on the Trinity, we've been seeing quite a lot of natural juveniles in our Willow Creek screw traps, pretty good numbers of natural fish before the hatchery fish are released. The Trinity is experiencing some high flows now; they are doing some releases, but will drop within the next few days. It will kind of give those fish a push out to trigger migration. Commissioner Mike Zamboni: fishing for salmon in the ocean – this year is worse than the last one. Unless a hatchery is started, ocean salmon fishing won't recover. Inong: The hatchery fish are meant to be caught and eaten, but at some point there will be more hatchery fish than natural ones. Commissioner Denver Nelson: Showed a graph of the returns at the Van Arsdale counting station from 1934 to 2020. In 2010 there was a spike, but it came back down again to almost nothing. Commissioner Jeff Stackhouse: In Oregon and Washington they have big "cages" in their bays to somehow supplement the fishing industry; would there be a place for that in Northern California? Inong: I can give you a partial answer on that, they did this in Norway in the Fjords where they have pens of hatchery fish, but because of the concentration they have in these pens, the parasites and the critters that like to live on fish, bloom because of such a concentration. Too many fish in such a concentrated area creates a problem. Zamboni: they are called floating net pens and they use them in Oregon and Washington and the Sacramento River area; they truck the fingerlings down from the hatcheries, dump them in this thing in the estuaries to acclimate to the river. It works well in Sacramento. Nelson: the environmental people don't like them because they are not genetically pure. Zamboni: in closing I really think it's up to you, Yadao, and the tribes to make this thing happen. Inong: I would encourage people to take a trip to the hatchery to see what goes on there, because the amount of fungus and stuff that those fish get is not positive. They get fin rot, and they are all kind of like fuzzy, covered with the stuff, still swimming around and spreading it.

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Area Rivers: Commissioner Denver Nelson: There are still plans afoot to remove Scott Dam as well as the Klamath Dams. I asked John Driscoll today, and he didn't have an answer – the Federal Gov. is spending so much money on the pandemic, that I don't think there will be very much left for these huge projects.

Salmon Habitat: Commissioner Phil Grunert: Are there any smolts in the South Fork?  
Commissioner Harry Vaughn: I haven't really been doing any downstream work, so I haven't been keeping an eye on them.

Wolves: Commissioner Mike Zamboni: Nothing new to report. Commissioner Jim Smith: I have a question. What is the dividing line between Eastern and Western California. Zamboni: Generally I5, I believe.

Elk Herd: Commissioner Zamboni: They are all over the place. Commissioner Hollie Hall: Mike, do you know if the Roosevelt Elk Herds and the Tule Elk Herds are both over populating grazing lands like they are in the Van Duzen? Private ranch land owners have said that elk are grazing on ranchland used for grazing livestock, breaking fences, trees, porches. Are both Roosevelt and Tule herds doing the same damage? Zamboni: What I know about it is the Roosevelt elk are by far the biggest problem. The Roosevelt are being pushed farther south where they may mate with Tule Elk – DFW are trying to avoid that. Inong: The boundary for those two herds is the Laytonville area. Stackhouse: An AU (Animal Unit) is 1000 lb animal. Tules are .6 while Roosevelt are .85 on average. You can't just count the number of elk, you have to consider that Roosevelt Elk are bigger and eat a lot more feed. Commissioner Brad Smith: We know there is a herd of Tule Elk in the Laytonville area. What about the Cache Creek Elk? Answers from several, yes these are Tules. Smith: There is quite a bit of distance between the two herds, is there really a problem with intermixing? Is the difference in the variety or in the species? Varieties can intermingle, but species cannot. Grunert: I don't believe it is a problem yet, but it is just a matter of time before the Roosevelts will move south, and they will then interbreed. Stackhouse: I agree with Phil that they will interbreed. There are Roosevelts as far south as the Island Mountain Ranch, and that ranch covers the convergence of Trinity, Mendocino and Humboldt Counties, so as the crow flies to get to Laytonville, the distance can't be more than 25 to 30 miles. Commissioner Rhiannon Lewis-Stephenson: What is the margin of concern relating to over population? The Elk used to be in the thousands, and now are in the hundreds. Zamboni: The reason we can say they are over populated is because of the population density in certain areas is higher than pretty much anywhere else, but the elk are not spreading out. If you look in California as a whole, they are not over populated. But if you look in Humboldt and Del Norte counties - As I said before they issue more tags in Coos County than they do in all of California. Commissioner Hall: Does anyone have an accurate count of the elk population? On the internet in 2017, there were just under 6000. Zamboni: I've talked to others that think the population is about 35,000, so it depends on who you talk to. The elk are super hard to count. Smith: There are 3 reasons elk move; food, sex, so during the estrus season and a bull pulls a few cows, they are liable to move great distances, and the third thing is just plain overcrowding. Roosevelt are a very aggressive species, so they will push out other deer species. No one has a good handle on the elk herd count. Not many predators. Commissioner Denver Nelson: Some of my rancher friends are going out of business

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because of elk overgrazing. In Yellowstone, wolves eat Elk. Maybe we need more wolves.

Zamboni: I still want to get back to what on earth happened to the bull tags? PLM tags are selling for a lot of money.

Hunting and Fishing Access: Commissioner Mike Zamboni: There are four boat ramps on Humboldt Bay, one at Fields Landing, two at Eureka, and one at Samoa. The internet says the one at Samoa is open, but one is not allowed to park there. Have all commissioners call their sponsoring supervisors and tell them that there is a problem that needs to be addressed at the Samoa Boat Ramp. The McKinleyville Service District is trying to buy up all that ranchland down by the Hammond Bridge, where I duck hunt.

Cannabis: Commissioner Jim Clark: Had a reason to look at the Fish & Wildlife webpage for an Audubon item and there is a problem with grow sites being basically put out of commission and then, they walk away. I looked to see what kind of enforcement was happening and you can't find out anything about what is being done at these sites. He drafted a letter saying we want to know what's going on with this, and the public should know what is happening, too. It's a real threat to wildlife and also accountability and transparency. Commissioner Hollie Hall said she couldn't find that information either. Also want to request an update for restoration on public lands. Jim Clark: Hollie and I will get a letter together to send around in time for an action item next month.

Elk Hoof Disease: Commissioner Rhiannon Lewis-Stephenson has written a letter on this item, and it will be an action item on our next agenda. Commissioner Hollie Hall will assist with this letter.

Next Agenda: Elk Hoof Disease.

Next meeting July 21, 2020.

The meeting was closed at 8:14pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Nancy Kaytis-Slocum, Secretary