

THE POINT OF VIEW OF RECREATIONAL INTERESTS: THE ORGANIZED SPORTSMEN

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California has one of the longest coastlines of any state . . . 1,200 miles of coastal waters. Since World War II the number of citizens who find recreational pleasure fishing in our coastal waters has grown in direct proportion to the increasing population.

Now this type of recreation depends upon a resource that must reproduce. It is not a recreation that man creates for himself.

Abusing this resource destroys the recreation. In the last 20 years, sensitive, aware sportfishermen have come to understand this basic fact.

As the sportmen's interest and concern grew, it became clear that active steps had to be taken to keep this resource growing and healthy.

To safeguard the fisheries, programs in: research; resource management; education in responsible utilization on the part of those who fish for profit, or for recreation; law enforcement; and long-range ocean resource planning, and the means to fund them; must be undertaken without delay.

At this point let me thank you for the privilege of presenting the organized sportmen's views and interests.

I also like to think that I am presenting the thinking of the unattached sportmen who have not yet found their way into an organized club or one of the many conservation groups in this state.

The importance of the sport of fishing in our economy . . . and in our way of life . . . is a matter of record. National surveys prove that as do the annual reports of our own Department of Fish and Game.

Now, for the programs that we believe are needed to safeguard this important use of the fishing resources:

RESEARCH

The ocean angler is a strong supporter of research. He feels that without adequate research, it would be impossible to implement the wise use of the resources that make possible his recreation.

We are deeply indebted to those hard working, conscientious scientists who have made possible projects such as the Salton Sea . . . the restoration of the kelp and sand bass fisheries, the management programs that have been put into effect to date, and all the other fine projects that have contributed to our knowledge of ocean fisheries.

However . . .

Monies in the form of license fees are collected from the California recreational ocean angler to sup-

port our Department of Fish and Game. The figures on that portion of the license money spent on state marine research definitely show that the sportsman remains an orphan . . . little if any research is aimed at how to better sportfishing.

On the Federal level the sports fisherman has received token attention while most of the efforts have gone toward locating fish, improving harvesting methods, and developing ever more efficient gear and marketing methods for the commercial fishermen.

Oftentimes we hear the statement that research for commercial fishing is also of benefit to the sportsman. But is it? Can you tell me, for example, what benefit the sportsman has received from all the sardine and Pacific mackerel research?

When there has been research that could have benefited the sport, it has often been put on the shelf where it is collecting dust. Certainly such research should be reviewed and promising recommendations put into effect.

Knowledge of the relationship between the different species of fish is sadly lacking. For instance, the relationship between the forage species and those species that prey upon them, has not been clearly established.

Even data on the number of ocean sports fishermen is inadequate. Party boats, for example, are no longer the big haulers of passengers . . . yet these figures are still used by the Department of Fish and Game as the main index to count sportfishermen. They completely ignore the small-boat fishing armada.

Sportsmen are reluctant to provide additional funds for research unless there is some assurance that more attention will be given to their interests.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Management and research are a team that must work together to achieve the wise use of our resources. Unfortunately, we feel that California's system of management . . . with the legislature controlling the major amount of commercial activity and the Fish and Game Commission regulating the activities of the sportsmen . . . leaves a house divided. What is needed in California is complete control over the fisheries by the State Fish and Game Commission.

There seems to be a growing tendency in this state to create intermediate agencies and various advisory committees. These only add to the confusion in attempting to resolve California's ocean fisheries problems. After all, how many experts can you have advising you? Won't all these advisors have to turn to the researchers and the enforcers to find out what

the gut issue is, and what works and what doesn't when it comes to handling the issue?

There are many species of fish on which the regulatory powers still remain in the hands of the state legislature. We feel it would be in the best interests of the resource to transfer these powers to the Fish and Game Commission where a more flexible management program could be exercised.

EDUCATION IN RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESOURCE USERS

We must keep in mind that many of our California fisheries are now being harvested to their maximum capacity. Imports are necessary to meet the demands of the general public. For example . . . we have to depend on our northern neighbors . . . Oregon, Washington, and Alaska . . . for crab meat, salmon, and halibut. We bring in lobster, abalone, and shrimp. Other fish are brought in from such far away waters as Norway, Japan, and Southwest Africa.

And while we are on the subject of foreign imports, let it be noted that the complaint by the commercial fishing interests against "foreign competition" is a hollow one. Some of them create "foreign competition". Many American commercial fishing interests have financial interests in these "foreign firms."

We feel there is unwarranted emphasis on the need for fishery products as a source of protein for the people of the under-developed nations. There is much substantiating research to show that proper protein can be provided quickly and cheaply in massive quantity by fast-growing land crops such as soybeans, chick peas, etc.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

We need research to provide information on how to manage properly. Then we need enforcement of the regulations that management deems necessary. Presently the personnel and equipment provided by the State are wholly inadequate to enforce the management regulations.

LONG RANGE OCEAN RESOURCE PLANNING AND FUNDING

Planning

The ever-expanding development of offshore oil will strongly affect inshore fishing along the coast. While

there is no effect from the actual removal of the oil from beneath the ocean floor, the processing which it must undergo definitely perils inshore fishing. The return of the concentrated brine along with heated and deoxygenized waters into the ocean, creates a completely different ocean climate and adds to the pollution hazard. This could destroy the habitat provided by the kelp beds and destroy the sand crabs, mussels, abalones and lobster which provide food for such species as perch, croaker, opaleye, sand and kelp bass.

Power-generating plants being built along the shoreline will bring thermal pollution when they dump heated water into the bays and estuaries. What will happen to the fishery resources is an unknown element which we feel must be studied . . . and soon!

Desalinization plants may raise temperature and salt concentrations beyond the point of tolerance of many fish.

Harbor developments and beach expansion with the necessary dredging will destroy habitat. Estuaries are being filled and/or dredged to make way for residential development thereby destroying fish nurseries and food supplies.

Another area which looms large on the horizon is our relationship with Mexico. Strong cooperation between our government and that of Mexico must be worked out, since so many of our sport fish migrate between California and Mexican waters. As both commercial and sport fishing expand in Mexico, this will become another steadily rising source of pressure on the *same* resource.

Funding

Present State law reserves all the monies paid for license fees and taxes by sportsmen and commercial fishing interests, for the operation of our Department of Fish and Game, which carries out the policies determined by our Fish and Game Commission. The structure of this law precludes supplements from the State's General Fund. We see nothing to be gained by altering this. But present funds are not now adequate.

The time has come when there are just too many problems dealing with recreational fishing. It is our belief that the only way these problems can receive immediate and adequate attention, is that some assistance be given our Department of Fish and Game by the Federal government through the U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.