

Community Comment 6/24/2013

By Jon Sapper

Fish On!

This is Jon Sapper for Community Comment.

If any of you have friends or relatives visiting our area or if you are listening on the radio and just passing through and like to fish, stop here and go salmon fishing in the ocean. To say it has been incredible is an understatement. Many boats go out in the morning and in just a matter of a few hours, are back on shore with beautiful fresh Chinook salmon. You are allowed to catch two per day and limits have been the norm. There was a prediction that over 300,000 4-yr old fish would be off our coast this summer.....Translation.....Big fish and lots of them. And they are out there right now.

This is a welcome change from several years ago when Chinook salmon were tough to find. But the combination of great ocean conditions, Spring rains, a healthy survival rate among young fry returning to the ocean from our rivers, and the recovery of our watersheds and spawning beds have all contributed to the unbelievable bounty that we have been enjoying the last couple of years.

If you're not a salmon fan, but like halibut, you can try your hand at catching that delicacy of the sea. Local charter boat operators can take you to the halibut grounds with a good chance of catching one of those bottom dwellers. Freshly caught halibut is great table faire.

An added experience this year is the large number of gray whales showing up near shore. I was out the other day and saw over 30 of these magnificent creatures. They were feeding within a few hundred yards of shore and putting on a spectacular show laying on the surface, breaching and giving you a bird's eye view of the largest mammals on earth.

We truly live in a beautiful place and these resources are here for us to enjoy. In this year of bounty, please remember a couple of things:

- Let's not take more than we need. It would be easy to do that with as many fish as there are to catch.

- Let's continue working together to improve our watersheds and return more water to our rivers. A brilliant scientist concluded that there is a direct relationship between fish and water.
- Let's welcome our out-of-town visitors who want a fishing experience of a lifetime, and
- Let's support our local charter boat operators and sporting good stores that rely on fishing and outdoor recreation. Google Humboldt County Fishing to find a list of who they are.

I have fished for over 50 years on the North Coast for salmon and I can honestly say, it hasn't been any better. As soon as I catch my 50 lb. salmon this summer, I will be back on the radio to tell you about it. Because as you know, fishermen never lie.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.