

THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE PARTYBOAT AND LIVE BAIT INDUSTRIES

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I am not a trained scientist; however, I hope that I qualify as a "practical scientist". I have lived in southern California for 44 years, have been fishing since four days before I was born, according to my mother, and I have been in the sportfishing business for 20 years professionally.

I hope I bring a laugh to you when I say "There is no sport in sportfishing and there never has been." I consider myself a recreational killer hired by sub-killers to take them out to do recreational killing.

We heard from Mr. Cary just before lunch (see Cary this symposium). When you get down to the field of predators, I am glad I don't live in the same jungle with this man because I'd have lasted until about the first morning. He would have had me for breakfast. This sort of crafty, bright businessman is one of the reasons I am trying to fulfill some sort of limited function by discussing problems which the scientific community must come to grips with in the battle for the minds of the great population which raises a hue and cry when you threaten to reduce anchovies or do any other dastardly deed like that.

The very fact that the scientific community allies itself with a commercial fishing industry, where there is a profit motive, already makes you suspect no matter how blessed be your findings or your research. If what I say bites you the wrong way just reject it and think nothing more of these remarks. They are just the opinion of one man who has been on the waterfront for a long, long time.

The best example that I can bring to the minds of those of you who were interested in or had any close relationship with the Great Experiment,¹ as I like to call the effort by the California Department of Fish and Game to create a 200,000 ton anchovy fishery in southern California, I can best talk about because I was one of the leaders of the opposition. I can tell you what we did and how we did it in trying to discredit a really fine scientific mind in the person of Phil Roedel. The undercurrent of fear that prevailed among the professionals in the recreational fishery was founded on the past performances of the commercial industry. The local industry simply does not understand the word conservation, and they never have. I don't know anything about Mr. Cary's elaborate world-wide functions, but the local fishermen in the San Pedro, California area will poach and destroy and catch every last scale if he can get away with it. He doesn't

care about tomorrow and he never has. Unless I can make these things clear to you I am afraid I won't do anywhere near the job I want to here today.

We have grown up with this fear so it is not surprising that when the 200,000 ton anchovy fishery experiment was proposed we began to hear rumors that the big fishing companies had plans on the drawing board for one-million ton reduction plants and the fishing nets were on the way. Rumor? Yes, but nevertheless it threw fear of a repeat of the sardine and Pacific mackerel debacle into us. So we waged a major emotionally charged, factless campaign against a dedicated guy whose presentation² before the California Fish and Game Commission, the day the Commission authorized the present reduction fishery, was truly enthralling. If I had been on the Commission, I would have bought it lock, stock and barrel in spite of the fact that I was there as part of the loyal opposition. It was thorough investigative procedure, the best the scientific community could produce. Yet, unfortunately, because you neglected one little facet, an iron clad lock that the fisheries should progress slowly, we had to battle you down to the wire. We had to prepare elaborate Letter to the Governor and Letter to the Commissioners campaigns. I had to hire a public relations firm to get our name, Associated Sport Fishermen of California, in every paper in California; and we saw to it that the local metropolitan newspapers in Los Angeles carried editorials supporting our position. Actually, it was a shame because the 200,000 ton request was just a dent in what I know to be the anchovy population. Knowledge not based on egg and larval surveys but my day to day running of the sportfishing boat between the local channel islands. There are lots of anchovies.

Another source of conflict is the \$1 per ton tax on pelagic fishes that helps support the scientific community. I want you to reject what I am about to say if it doesn't apply, but if it does then damn it act accordingly. The fact is that accepting that \$1 per ton, for study on the pelagic fishes, has to jade your opinions when you approach a borderline decision as to whether we should, or should not, go ahead with a fishery. If I was an underpaid biologist, a scientist dedicated to a facet of a fishery study that would be enhanced greatly by just a couple of hundred thousand dollars, 200,000 tons would suddenly look like nothing. I don't know whether anything like this can be altered, or even needs to be. I just hope it would

¹ Requirements for understanding the impact of a new fishery in the California Current System. Ahlstrom, E. H., J. L. Baxter, J. D. Isaacs, and P. M. Roedel. 1967. Report of the CalCOFI Committee. *Calif. Mar. Res. Comm., Calif. Coop. Oceanic Fish. Invest., Rept.*, 11:5-9.

² Report on the anchovy fishery. Roedel, P. M. 1967. *Calif. Dept. Fish and Game, MRO Ref.* (67-21):1-27, 17 Figs.

never affect your thinking if the situation should occur.

Another facet that is most important is that every time conditions arise which call for a regulated fishery, recreational or commercial, be aware of your responsibilities and know that your findings mean enforcement. Enforcement of laws that come about by the findings of your scientific endeavor. Often enforcement leaves much to be desired. At present the citizen recreational angler, fishing in an ocean that only borders our State and is not necessarily a possession of same, is often subject to arrest and humiliation for violation of laws that have absolutely nothing to do with conservation and pertain to a resource which frequently is not even an exclusive "property" of the State of California.

The recreational angler is subject to a ream of sportfishing regulations. Partly because of his own insecurity which causes him to obtain legislation that will insure him a successful day's killing, and partly because of the scientific community which felt a need for conservation laws. Regulations have almost reached the point where the angler should fish with a code book in one hand and his rod and reel in the other. It is so difficult to remember the 30 odd species of fish that sometimes have more than one size limit, and have individual or collective numbers limits that only the rare person knows any of the laws. This is the case and will continue to be the case as long as men try to legislate conservation. So, when you are in a position where your scientific endeavors lead to laws or changes in the code, please give some thought to the fact that along with laws come enforcement and that often the result is confusion.

I would like to dwell on the fact that it is extremely important that communication continue at this or a more appropriate level. It is important that you people get out in the community that you live in and work in, and unwind and unmuddle some of the conservationists groups that you must sooner or later impress with your findings. It is too easy for special interest groups to mount a successful emotionally charged campaign, such as we did to knock the props out from under the anchovy experiment. This tactic goes on in all levels of political activity, it can be accomplished by almost any group of aroused citizens, and it is a shame. So along with all your other work, you have to get to people like me and you've got to say, "Look, Russ, this is the way the facts point. Please, with your practical experience, does it apply? Can it work? Will you help us?" Then perhaps we can evolve a pelagic fish study that will give us an anchovy fishery of some meaningful content.

I think facts that Mr. Talbot [see paper this symposium] gave you regarding the number of people who went recreational fishing in 1965 was based on a thin study. I think there were more people. Tackle sales continue to go up, up, up, so either the same people are buying more tackle all the time, or even greater numbers of people are trying to utilize the same fisheries that the commercial fishermen are using.

One of the tragedies of our communication and our public relations work is that we have never been able to sell recreational fishing. We have been compelled to sell this blood lust, this killing and our business is a failure because of it. We have never been able to talk to the angler of the beauty of nature and the beauty of the sea and the wind and the good equipment and the effort we make on their behalf. There is a certain instinctive behavior about being a predator and bringing home as a great white hunter, a mastodon draped across your back. I think my business is a failure because of our inability to communicate, but I don't think there is anything we can do about instinctive things. Man just has this blood lust. I took a 4½ day trip with a friend of mine from San Diego down to San Pablo Bay, Baja California, Mexico. The weather was beautiful, the fishing was excellent, but we 18 anglers only caught 45 yellowtail. Everywhere we stopped there was unlimited whitefish, sand bass, and rockfish; fish of this sort. A line couldn't get into the water without pulling one out but on the way home there was grumbling among the 18 "sportfishermen" because the ice hold was not full of yellowtail. When we got back to San Diego and the ice hold was unloaded of its 45 yellowtail and filets of rockfish and whitefish, and what have you, about 30 of the 45 yellowtail were left lying on the dock. I don't know whether that came through to you or not but what they wanted was a 400-500 fish count so that they could have left 420 or 30 or 40 still lying on the dock rather than to have left 30. So, somewhere, we are failing to provide the right public relations in that respect.

One last word. One of my pet projects, and a fight that I just lost in a battle with the Department of Fish and Game, was to utilize the sportfish catch. I know that over half the barracuda that are caught today are caught by sport fishermen and that over half of their catch goes into garbage cans or is thrown out of cars to the side of the road. This is "criminal", doubly so in a world that is hungry. I would say that maybe 30-40 percent of the sport caught rockbass, probably the most desirable fish there is, is wasted. Somehow there has to be a different approach to fish and game laws than the present one that creates a condition where a fishery of this sort is turned to waste.

I know this is an indictment on my industry, but it is not that we are not aware of it. We are hamstrung by a lot of archaic ideas in the Department which sort of indicate to me that the Department itself feels a bastion of defense against the hook and line fishermen and that the hook and line fishermen could conceivably destroy a fishery if he were not so drastically curtailed with rules and regulations concerning, for instance, his ability to prepare fish for the pan while on a sportfishing boat.

As you may or may not know, the code requires all fish leaving a sportfishing boat to be in an identifiable condition. I recently tried to get the California Fish and Game Commission and the California Department of Fish and Game to authorize a filleting proposal. A perfectly reasonable approach to this

problem, but because it entailed a change in enforcement procedures the enforcement section shot it down. It was a bitter disappointment to me and my industry. I don't like being party to a system that knowingly contributes to a waste of our limited resources, yet I am stuck with it until such time as I can get a chance to be heard by councils that will do something about it.

DISCUSSION

KLEIN: Didn't we hear just this morning that nothing is wasted?

IZOR: You just heard from me, a practical, experienced, 20-year veteran that one-half the sportfish catch is wasted. One of the reasons I talked about recreational killing (I am going to leave this sportfish thing out of it) is that all fish caught belong in a commercial market so that through the processes of distribution they can become a part of the fish market. The prohibition on selling sportfish is something that organized "sportsmen" brought about. Sportfish belong sold somewhere at dockside to a commercial market where they can be utilized. This is long range thinking because great obstacles are to be overcome. The minds of muddleheaded sportsmen get emotionally charged if there is any threat to an existing status quo.

ROEDEL: Are you saying that you would favor a common fishing license?

IZOR: I would like to see a common commercial fishing license for what is now a \$3 license and pump that money into the scientific community.

ROEDEL: Then everyone, sport and commercial alike, would have the same license, rules and regulations.

IZOR: For example, this is what happens now. Relying on landmarks and experience I can find a certain rock on the bottom, or I know where a stringer of kelp is, or an old wreck. A man with a 16-foot skiff buys a commercial license and follows me to the fishing grounds. He doesn't know where the rock or kelp or old wreck is, but he has the physical capacity and the mechanical technique to stand there and jig barracuda or bonito or some other fish. Passengers that pay me for my services are restricted to 10 fish, which is too many anyway, but they are limited to 10 fish. The fellow with the commercial license is no more a commercial fisherman than the passengers on my boat, yet he can sit there with his jig and "sink his boat with barracuda" and take them in and sell them. The man who pays \$20 for my services cannot sell his catch and at the end of the day he doesn't want the fish he has caught. So they go to waste, believe me. I have groups of doctors and professional people who have ridden my boat for 15 or 18 years and I have seen them leave 40 white seabass on my boat. It's against the law for me to sell them and I am in violation for having 40 white seabass on my boat if we only have two sportfishing licenses in my crew. So I am really stuck. The only "out" is to find some charitable organization that will take them.

It's a bad situation and I think it all stems from man's desire to legislate himself a guaranteed sack of fish every time he goes fishing. It can't be done. He would rather not improve his technique as a fisherman. He wants to create laws that will guarantee this "just putting it in the bath tub and yanking the fish out."

ISAACS: Let's return our thinking to the subject of the scientific data as related to an experimental anchovy fishery. I think the point you are making is that the main apprehension of the sportfisherman was not the scientific data by itself, but rather apprehension of the inability to the total legislative regulatory process to really act on the ultimate against the commercial. Is that the opinion?

IZOR: Yes, I felt that way about the anchovy fishery. A 200,000 ton catch is not going to affect the anchovy fishery locally, but it is 30 times what has been caught for bait during the last 15 years and to the layman it seems like a lot. We have a large industry which is dependent on a daily supply of live anchovies. We are afraid of any additional fishery that will exert heavy fishing pressure without guarantees that any increase in landings would be gradual, say 25,000 to 50,000 tons per year or something like that. It seemed reasonable, to me, that this was a logical approach because if the anchovy fishery is there now, conceivably it will be there 20 years from now, so when we do need additional fish meal, or to take advantage of some new process that maybe hasn't been devised, or is lying in one of your minds right now, the resource will be there and we will know how much fishing pressure it can stand from actual practice rather than larval counts.

ISAACS: Scientific evidence that you get from some catch. Director Shannon said we had not sold the scientific data to the public. Another aspect that entered very strongly is that the public did not feel that the total legislative and regulatory process was able to, at the moment, in its present organization, withstand the eventual political pressures and thus end in over exploitation. I think this is a very important point and that we should understand there is some unanimity of opinion along this line of thinking.

GILLENWATERS: It is very important because this confrontation will never be resolved, it has to be modified. For the first time, as you know, we have some representation of your sportfishery currently on the Governor's Advisory Commission on Ocean Resources. You talk about improving communication. How can you improve it? What are your suggestions? We've got a Commission meeting coming up and the administration is dedicated to trying to modify this confrontation, not for the political benefit I assure you, for the benefit of the resources. How can we approach this communication?

IZOR: Well, idealistically, with elaborate public information programs, however, I can't help but say that people to people communication is the very best. If any of you could serve as guest speakers for 15-20 minutes it would be extremely worth while.

SCHMITT: You speak of fishermen not being conservation conscious. Do you mean just the commercial or sport?

IZOR: I think it applies to everyone, but unfortunately, the recreational angler fishes with a small hook on monofilament line and the net fishermen fishes with a "mile-long" purse seine. The chances for great profit, for instance around my favorite island, is always there and no matter how hard the Department

patrols—it can only patrol so much. Funds are limited and habit patterns develop. So when you know there is only one patrol boat on maybe a 100 mile stretch of coast, and that it is at anchor and the crew is ashore, the poacher only has to go a mile or two to a bonanza that can be quickly caught, quickly racked up, and quickly moved into a safe area. That is the only definite aim in singling out the commercial fisherman. He's no worse than anyone else.