

For Immediate Release

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THREE-MILLIONTH WHITE SEABASS RELEASED FROM HUBBS-SEAWORLD RESEARCH INSTITUTE HATCHERY

**The Coastal Conservation Association of California
given the honors of releasing the milestone fish.**

Early in April of this year, the Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (HSWRI) reached a major milestone by releasing the three-millionth hatchery-reared white seabass into the wild at Agua Hedionda Lagoon in Carlsbad, California. Given the honors of releasing this fish was Tonie Bangos, regional director for the Coastal Conservation Association of California (CCA CAL). On hand to help release the milestone juvenile white seabass was Bill Shedd, chairman of AFTCO and CCA CAL, joined by CCA CAL Executive Director Chris Arechaederra and Regional Director Erik Landesfeind.

CCA CAL was honored to be chosen by HSWRI for this milestone release, as it recognizes the important work of the non-profit organization and its volunteer members, who have provided more than a decade of unwavering support of the HSWRI hatchery program.

CCA CAL partners with HSWRI by providing insurance for the grow-out pens for the white seabass hatchery program and the pens are operated by CCA CAL members and volunteers. Today there are 13 grow-out pens along the Southern California coast, from Santa Barbara to San Diego, including two facilities on Santa Catalina Island. These facilities are designed, constructed, and operated by volunteers associated with angler groups and non-profit organizations, including CCA CAL. Hatchery fish are transferred to these pens at around the age of 3 to 4 months of age, and will usually remain there until they grow to about 9 inches in length or larger, depending on conditions. And they cannot be released until they are cleared by the CDFW fish pathologist for release.

In addition, CCA CAL is working with the Dick Laub Fisheries Replenishment Program, HSWRI, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as well as the marine science community and recreational anglers on getting the next species authorized for release, and is conducting a survey of coastal recreational anglers on what species are important to them. CCA Cal also helps with citizen research, collecting DNA samples from locally landed white seabass populations.

The first experimental release of more than 2,000 juvenile white seabass took place in October of 1986 in Mission Bay. Since then, the program has released over three million juvenile white seabass into bays and near-shore coastal waters in Southern California. In October of 1995, the Leon Raymond Hubbard, Jr. Marine Fish Hatchery in Carlsbad became operational with the hatchery capable of producing more than 350,000 juvenile white seabass annually.

Each fish is tagged internally in the cheek with a small, stainless steel coded wire tag. The purpose of this tag is to identify hatchery-reared fish from wild individuals and is not visible externally on the fish and can only be located by a specialized detection device. Some of the information obtained from tagged individuals includes their movement, age, diet, growth, and most importantly, survival rate from that particular spawning stock. Today, this information is being supplemented by advanced genetic studies and isotope research using the otoliths from landed fish.