

## ***SFEWS - stagnant for extinct wretched salmoniforms***

The San Francisco Estuary Watershed epitomizes variety. The land - from the craggy, alpine summits laden with snow and chiseled rock and sapphire ice, swooned in icicle clouds, viewed only by genuflecting, warped, dwarf junipers averting their gaze from the imperial, empyreal spires, to lush, verdant mixed-coniferous forests cradling endless botanical treasures, then down into rolling oak savannahs and rectangular farm fields and the impenetrable veil of tule marshes. The waterways - cobalt, crystalline little cirque lakes in the arctic austerity of the alpine world, to blue ribbons of rivers rolling to little hydropower reservoirs and giant water-supply reservoirs, then out to sea, rolling through muddy bays and muddy, meandering tidal sloughs. The fishes, of course, from the little leopard-spotted rainbows and chocolatey brookies that inhabit the high-elevation lakes, to the elegant pikeminnow and the gilded-emerald suckers that mesh with the cool-water rivers of the mid-elevations, all the way down to big, burly bat rays that fan the muds in the salt marshes of South Bay. And of course the people - brown dudes and chicks with roots winding back to *Alta California* and Mexico and other countries further south working their asses off in the farm fields under the unrelenting summertime sun, Asian cats fishing gracefully for roughfish, possible descendants of the Chinamen who built so much infrastructure in California, the *Ailanthus* marking their trails and travails, the bruthas next door to me who warmly offer their golden Hennessy and can gab and jab with the best of 'em, and white folks stemming from all tendrils of Eurasia, many red-necked Bubbas working hard alongside the hard-working Hispanics in the food fields. Such variety of life united by this watershed.

You'd think a journal entitled *San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science* would, likewise, feature articles spanning the wide array of life and land and water. Instead, were it called *Smelt and Domesticated Salmon of the Delta*, few of its articles would be inconsistent with such a title.

"*San Francisco Estuary and Watershed...*" - kind of misleading, really.

"Science" - *having knowledge, to know*. Time rolls on imperturbably, and the watershed also continues to evolve, with ever-greater numbers of plants, of people and other animals, in part because of continual species introductions. Yet so much "watershed science" is focused on one small area of the watershed (the Delta), on one species functionally extinct (delta smelt), and on one domesticated species (king salmon) - and increasingly domesticated - that reflects not Nature's forces of flow and season and growth and senescence but merely the maladroit hand of man. One's an anachronism, the other's of a self-delusional stagnation. I fear that the rate of the watershed's growth, its evolution, is not only faster than that of our knowledge, but our knowledge - at this point, it's redundant, irrelevant, a regression to a rigid little bubble of a time and place that no longer exists.

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