

From: [REDACTED]
To: [FGC](#)
Cc: [Lehr, Stafford@Wildlife](mailto:Lehr.Stafford@Wildlife); [Thomas, Kevin@Wildlife](mailto:Thomas.Kevin@Wildlife); [Ewing, Ben@Wildlife](mailto:Ewing.Ben@Wildlife)
Subject: Re: Status Review, Clear Lake Hitch
Date: Tuesday, July 22, 2014 7:33:51 AM

To the Fish and Game Commission,

Please list Clear Lake hitch not as threatened but as endangered. Without help, I believe that this subspecies will disappear in the near future.

This year and last when monitoring chosen sites in the northshore, I have observed primarily Sacramento suckers that generally have appeared to have begun migration about a month ahead of Clear Lake hitch (ref.

<http://www.rootlets.com/environment/hitch.html>, links to 2013 and 2014 observations and small study, 2012). Unfortunately I've observed no hitch in northshore areas for several years.

Regarding management recommendations and recovery measures that will hopefully help Clear Lake hitch populations improve, I would like to add a thought. Please add steps that might support sufficient aquifer levels and groundwater recharge for areas of the Clear Lake basin, such as a study that will help to better understand timing of groundwater recharge. From April on, when fish passage is blocked by existing barriers and more appear when water is released and streams subside, Clear Lake hitch and probably other migratory species might be unable to complete their life cycles. The northshore area comprises much of the watershed for Clear Lake.

Plainly there are many influences and ramifications with respect to this, some that we don't know, but I have noticed that in the northshore, marshy areas and streams with which I've been familiar began decreasing and disappearing from the 1980's on, in areas where they previously existed even during and shortly after the drought in the late 1970's and where I have seen hitch migrate and spawn.

It's my opinion that Clear Lake hitch are an indicator species and that what will help their recovery will help entire ecosystems supporting wildlife that the Department defends. For a few examples, in Rodman Slough, Western and Clark's grebe nurseries observed 14 or so years ago included several hundred juveniles but when observed 3 and 4 years ago, had only a dozen or fewer individuals. Their nests that reportedly had been numerous in that area were few and far between. Large flocks of American white pelicans and dabbling, diving, and perching ducks migrated through that area, and sizable flocks of pie-billed grebes were there as well. Some of these are resident year round, and more or fewer are there in any given year, but in recent years I've observed far fewer individuals overall. Complex ecosystems, microecosystems, and food webs including apex predators exist or have existed there. We can learn and protect as we learn.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Sunny Franson

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