

# RCAC CONFERENCE REPORT

Paul McCollum, Board Member

## **Conference**

### **INVASIVE-SPECIES SYMPOSIUM**

#### **Accidental and Purposeful Introductions of Animals: Investigating Species Interactions at Different Trophic Levels**

**Sponsored by the Western Section of The Wildlife Society  
October 14-16, 2003, Radisson Hotel, Sacramento, California**

This was a good conference though it was more heavily oriented towards invasive terrestrial mammals than marine invertebrates. There were several good presentations and contacts which I will summarize below.

## **Presentations**

The History of Introductions by Kim Todd

Kim Todd who wrote the book "Tinkering with Eden" did a great historical perspectives presentation which gave an overview all exotic species introductions into the U.S.. She showed how often and more socially expectable exotic species introductions occurred, not that far back in time when it was often not only socially acceptable but highly praised, often by sport hunting or fishing groups. She also offered some great advise about the need to be much more proactive and intelligent when dealing with invasive species introductions. She discussed the importance of looking at the Negative Keystone Species degradation potential of certain invasives that can pose very high levels of impacts.

Exotic Fishes in California: Characteristics of Success and Failure by Michael Marchetti

This was a good presentation reviewing exotic introductions that were both done purposefully and accidentally. It offered a broad scale view of a state wide analysis of impacts and priority concerns. He reviewed a systematic process of looking at the 1) Transport, 2) Release, 3) Establishment, 4) Spread and 5) Integration of invasive species. He mentioned the importance of using ranking models and that a full model worked best to look and the most important factors which their study showed to be Ability to Spread, Physiological Tolerance and Propagule Pressure.

Community Level Considerations by Bruce Coblenz

This was a good presentation by a long time invasive species advocate. Bruce pointed out that dealing with NIS problems requires a mulitpronged approach in which biologist and resource managers need to be much more aggressive with both eradication programs when addressing already established invasions and in the regulatory and legal arenas in order to prevent invasions from establishing and spreading in the first place.

A History of Species Introductions in Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands) and Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, British Columbia, Canada: Implications for Management by Todd Golumbia.

This was a good overview of introductions in the Queen Charlotte Islands and the comparison of impacts and eradications on Park Reserve lands versus non Park lands.

Ecosystem-Level Considerations by Erika Zavaleta

This was one of the better presentations. Erika provided a more holistic view of invasive eradication programs, explaining that they often cause more problems than they solve if not very carefully done with ecosystem wide scientifically based studies prior to conducting an eradication program. While this approach was mostly focused on vertebrate introductions and associated removal efforts, it was a very inspiring presentation on the need to look at entire ecosystem scales and functions when addressing invasive species issues and potential impacts.

Dining Out in San Francisco Bay: How Does a New Clam on the Menu Influence Wintering Diving Ducks? by Susan Wainwright-De La Cruz

Good paper on how an introduced clam caused chain reaction events leading to impacts to feeding diving ducks. This is clearly a major issue in which our marine invertebrate invasions in Alaska will likely lead to cascading large scale problems in the future.

Impacts of the Chinese Mitten Crab on the Benthic Community of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta by Cindy Messer

This was a good presentation on the impacts of the Chinese Mitten Crab, a major problem now in the Sacramento and central California coastal area.

## **Summary**

This was a good conference overall. Even with too much focus on terrestrial vertebrate species there were many important view points and studies that held a high degree of significance for our battles with invasive marine invertebrate threats. If and when we move forward with our NIS efforts, how we proceed should be largely influenced by the knowledge and expertise of the much more experienced NIS programs and scientists from other areas already very seriously impacted by invasive species.

This conference itself was really nice in that it purposely did not have concurrent sessions. It provided plenty of time for presenters and usually there was adequate time for questions and discussion. They also spent a lot of effort prior to the symposium in surveying the priorities from potential presenters and attendees. All in all it was a good conference.