

FREMONT BULLETIN

Steelhead in Alameda Creek get helping hand

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Fremont Bulletin Staff

Two adult steelhead trout migrating up Alameda Creek were rescued below a migration barrier Saturday and moved upstream into Niles Canyon.

This is the ninth consecutive winter the Alameda Creek Alliance has documented ocean-run steelhead trout in the creek.

One large steelhead, 31 inches long and weighing 11 pounds, was the largest steelhead documented in the creek since the early 1960s.

The steelhead rescued were initially observed in the lower Alameda Creek flood control channel Thursday and Friday, attempting to migrate upstream to spawn.

Migratory fish are blocked below the Bay Area Rapid Transit weir, a barrier to fish migration in the Alameda Creek flood control channel in Fremont. Alameda Creek Alliance volunteers and an East Bay Regional Park District fisheries biologist captured the steelhead and moved them upstream to suitable habitat, operating under state and federal permits.

Photos and video of the fish and the rescue are available at www.alamedacreek.org.

Steelhead trout were listed as a federally threatened species in 1997 and the Alameda Creek Alliance has been advocating since then for dam removals and construction of fish ladders to allow migratory fish to reach spawning habitat farther upstream.

There are now 12 local, state and federal agencies cooperating on fish passage projects in Alameda Creek, including dam removals and construction of fish ladders and fish screens.

The projects will allow adult steelhead, currently blocked by barriers in the lower creek, to access up to 15 miles of spawning and rearing habitat in and above Sunol Regional Wilderness.

Until fish passage projects are completed, fisheries biologists and volunteers have been given annual permits by the California Department of Fish and Game and the federal agency National Marine Fisheries Service to move

blocked or stranded fish from the Alameda Creek flood control channel to suitable habitat upstream.

Alameda County Water District and Alameda County Flood Control District are pursuing funding for fish passage projects in the lower creek.

In May 2005, the Alameda County Water District received a \$1-million grant to fund two projects that will help improve passage for steelhead trout in the flood control channel.

This summer and fall, the water district will remove an inflatable rubber dam and install a fish screen at a water diversion in the lower creek.

This year, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission plans to remove two abandoned dams from Niles Canyon.