

## **New fishing closures for Alameda Creek**

By Eric Louie  
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The new year will bring year-round fishing closures on most of Alameda Creek, a move that supporters say will help protect steelhead and rainbow trout.

The California Fish and Game Commission approved the closures earlier this month along with a package of sport-fishing regulations from 2010 to 2012. The regulations go into effect March 1; county Superior Courts will set the punishments for those who violate the new rules, the commission said.

The closures will ban fishing in Alameda Creek and its tributaries downstream of the San Antonio Reservoir in Sunol, Calaveras Reservoir in Milpitas, and Del Valle Reservoir in Livermore, said Jeff Miller, director of the Alameda Creek Alliance, which was among the groups supporting the change.

With the new regulations, fishing will be allowed only above Del Valle from April to November. The upstream areas also will be under the same catch-and-release, artificial-lure and barbless-hook conditions now allowed during the season.

Miller said efforts have been under way for more than a decade to bring steelhead back. He said the new closure is not a major step, but it adds to other efforts such as increasing water flow. Not many trout are in the Alameda Creek area already, he said, and even catch-and-release fishing can decrease the fish population due to the stress from being caught.

"A couple people fishing could really put a dent in the population," he said.

Steelhead and rainbow trout are the same species, although steelhead spend time in the ocean like salmon, and they look similar to rainbow trout when they are small, Miller said. Steelhead typically grow larger than rainbow trout, which live all their life in fresh water.

Before the 1950s, steelhead were plentiful in the area, but water diversions for development and flood control have reduced their numbers.

Those returning to spawn also face dams and other man-made barriers.

They are considered threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.