

Catch and Release: Threatened Steelhead Rescued from Alameda Creek

The winter rain was great for native fish, but they still need help to spawn

By [Raquel Maria Dillon](#)

With the wet winter, steelhead trout are running again in Alameda Creek, swimming upstream to spawn.

But the rare fish need a lot of help. That's where the Alameda Creek Alliance, with about a dozen volunteers, and several public agencies come in to play.

Volunteers caught rare steelhead trout in Alameda Creek to help the threatened fish get past a concrete barrier underneath the BART tracks, and continue their swim upstream to their spawning grounds in Niles Canyon.

Last week and on Wednesday, volunteers caught rare steelhead trout in Alameda Creek to help the threatened fish get past a concrete barrier underneath the BART tracks and continue their journey to their spawning grounds in Niles Canyon.

"Yeah, we've kind of got a limo and dating service going for these fish here, until the fish ladders get in," said Jeff Miller, executive director of Alameda Creek Alliance.

Underneath the BART trestle over a flood control channel in Fremont, a sloped expanse of concrete impedes the steelhead's spring migration to the shady streams of Niles Canyon.

Alameda Creek's tributaries are good habitat for steelhead to mate and lay eggs, Miller said. The challenge for the federally threatened species is getting there.

The East Bay Regional Parks District and the Alameda Creek Flood Control District are working to keep the creek's steelhead population viable while fish-lovers eagerly await the construction of a state-of-the-art fish ladder that will allow the steelhead to navigate the blockage on their own.

In the meantime, the migratory fish are stuck, unable to reproduce without human intervention.

With water flows high this season, fish biologists and volunteers are rescuing the steelhead that have returned to Alameda Creek, weighing and measuring them, tagging the large ones with radio transmitters, and releasing them upstream to continue their journey.