

STEELHEAD

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Alliance, Turtle Island Restoration Network, South Yuba River Citizen's League and Coastside Habitat Coalition.

"We know from our experience in California with winter-run Chinook salmon that the Endangered Species Act can work to protect and recover fish. But it works only if it is enforced, and that's why we need enforcement now to begin the recovery of steelhead," said Zeke Grader of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations.

According to the coalition, steelhead probably numbering in the millions once migrated up California streams each year during spawning season. Dams, water diversions, flood control projects, logging, grazing and gravel mining have radically reduced the migrating populations. Today an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 steelhead return to central and south-central coast streams. The runs on many streams have gone extinct.

A similar coalition of environmental and fishermen organizations plans to sue NMFS this week over threatened steelhead in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

6/23/99

Lawsuit Filed To Protect Steelhead

A coalition of eight steelhead trout advocacy groups yesterday filed a lawsuit to protect threatened populations of the fish.

The coalition includes the Alameda Creek Alliance, which has been working to restore steelhead to Alameda Creek. The creek runs to San Francisco Bay through Sunol and Niles Canyon.

The suit charges that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has failed to issue protective regulations for California's threatened steelhead populations, as required by the Endangered Species Act. The suit was filed in federal court in San Francisco.

Jeff Miller of the Alameda Creek Alliance said, "NMFS has placed restrictions on fishermen, but the real problems for steelhead are dams, water diversions and habitat destruction. Without protective regulations that address these issues, many of these runs will soon become endangered or go extinct altogether. Some of these streams already have so few steelhead left that we've considered naming the fish rather than counting them."

Others in the coalition are the Center for Biological Diversity, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, Northern California Council of the Federation of Flyfishers, California Sportfishing Protection

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Independent 6/23/99