

Local Steelhead Fishing

Friday, January 04, 2008

I know that with the predicted storms over the next few days many of you living on the Central California coast are thinking about steelhead fishing the nearby streams. The following information may be of help. I'm sending this out to all of you because most of the citations issued over the past two years were to fly fishers! We practice zero tolerance on violations. We're lucky to be able to fish these streams at all so please help police our ranks and protect the fish.

You will need to have a 2008 fishing license and Steelhead Report Card in possession if you are 16 years of age or older. I no longer sell licenses but you can get them at Longs Drugs, Big 5, Outdoor World and the Department of Fish & Game (your best bet). If you have a 2007 Steelhead Report Card, you must now mail it to the Department of Fish & Game (the address is on the back of the card). The report card is important to the management of our steelhead fisheries. Also, record only those rainbow trout caught that are greater than 16 inches in length.

Coastal streams from San Francisco County south are open to fishing from December 1st through March 7th but only on weekends, Wednesdays, legal holidays and the opening and closing days of the season. In addition, the Carmel River and streams south of the Carmel River are subject to low flow closures. The Carmel River and creeks south to and including Soberanes Creek shall be closed to all fishing when the CDFG determines that the flow on the Carmel River is less than 80 cfs. The Big Sur River, Limekiln Creek and those streams from Granite Creek south to and including Salmon Creek shall be closed to all fishing if the CDFG determines the flow on the Big Sur River is less than 40 cfs. If the CDFG determines the flows on other streams to be so low so as to impede fish passage, those streams shall then be closed to all fishing. The CDFG will check the flows every Tuesday and Friday. Call 831-649-2886 BEFORE YOU GO FISHING to see if the stream you're planning to fish is open.

Most streams are open to fishing from any Highway 1 bridge downstream to the mouth. The Carmel River is open from Rosie's Bridge downstream to the mouth. The Arroyo Seco River is open from below the waterfall located near Horse Bridge down to the confluence with the Salinas River. The San Lorenzo River is open to fishing from the Lomond Street Bridge, in Boulder Creek, downstream to the mouth. Consult the regulations for other specific streams.

Zero limit...it's all catch and release.

As far as gear is concerned, only barbless hooks may be used and on the Carmel River only barbless and artificial lures may be used (no, you can't use scents). There are other restrictions so do read the regulations but this is the major one.

Techniques...any method used to catch steelhead anywhere else will work on our local streams but dry flies won't produce much, if anything. I'm seeing more floating lines with bead head nymphs/egg patterns/streamers and it works. The most important thing you can do to catch a local steelhead is to spend as much time on the water as you can. The better you know a section of water, the more likely you'll encounter fish.

Please contact me via email (or 831-626-6586) or the Department of Fish & Game at 831-648-2870 if you have any questions.

Sincerest regards,

Geoff Malloway

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