



Voices IDEAS & COMMENTARY

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SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS ♦ TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2005

LETTERS, E-MAIL & FAXES

Southern steelhead close to extinction

We were pleased to read the Sunday News-Press story about the recent discovery of another pair of federally endangered steelhead in lower Mission Creek. The story left out one important fact:

The Environmental Defense Center reminds people that local creeks are closed to fishing because southern steelhead are on the verge of extinction. Only about 1 percent of the population remains. Until we can recover the species and remove it from the Endangered Species List, the Department of Fish and Game and federal wildlife agencies have closed local creeks, and rivers below major dams, to fishing.

To bring this species back, it will be necessary to restore channelized and dammed creeks to allow the spawning fish to swim from the ocean to the cleaner and more perennially flowing headwaters. In fact, like the other steelhead found in recent years in lower Mission Creek, these fish were found just below a concrete channel that is known to significantly impede migration to the best spawning areas.

The article helped educate people about the plight of steelhead in local waters and throughout southern California. In addition, the News-Press should highlight the fact that local creeks are closed to fishing, so no unwitting anglers disturb the few remaining steelhead.

EDC is very encouraged to see steelhead making a comeback attempt in local creeks and greatly appreciates the community's commitment to cleaning up and restoring its creeks.

Brian Trautwein
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CHOICE WORDS

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