

Shasta-Trinity National Forest
Big Bar Ranger District
Canyon Creek

August 28-30, 1995

Surveyors: Gabrielle Baldwin, Janet Capes, Buddy Carpenter, Eric Johnston,
Lindy McCaslin, Ron Smith, Dan Westington

REF 90446

Adult Summer Steelhead and Spring Chinook Salmon Survey

Canyon Creek is a tributary of the upper Trinity River and runs in a southerly direction through steep mountainous terrain. Three crews (two swimmers each) surveyed approximately 13.5 miles of Canyon Creek by direct observation snorkeling in August of 1995. These included personnel from the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and Hayfork Watershed Center. Two crews snorkeled two days while the third spent three days on the project including transporting the other teams and hiking into the wilderness. The downstream teams could average four to five stream miles per day while the upstream teams averaged closer to two to three miles per day.

The survey for adult summer-run steelhead (Oncorhynchus mykiss) and spring-run chinook salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha) began in the Sinks, located below Lower Canyon Creek Falls, and proceeded in a downstream fashion to the confluence with the mainstem Trinity River. Locations of fish observations are recorded on the accompanying topographic map. The reach labels were designated in 1990 and may not correspond to 1995 daily swimming reaches.

Observations

Reach A

142
Reach A begins at the Sinks and extends 2.5 miles downstream almost to Ripstein Campground. The stream channel is characterized by large, round boulders. The Sinks had good flow during the 1995 survey unlike previous drought years. Two adult steelhead and one half pounder were observed in this section, all in step pools. Juvenile rainbow/steelhead trout were commonly observed, although few of these were 0+. No salmon were seen. A four inch Klamath small scale sucker (Catostomus rimiculus) was observed about one quarter mile below the trailhead (just downstream of first east bank tributary below trailhead).

Reach B

143
Reach B begins just above Ripstein Campground and extends two miles downstream to the bridge near Grasshopper Flat. Three adult and one half pounder steelhead trout were observed in this section. Two jack chinook salmon were also seen. This channel reach is characterized by boulders although smaller than those in Reach A. Much of the holding water is formed by bedrock which becomes more common downstream.

Reach C

Reach C begins at the bridge at Grasshopper Flat and extends 1.5 miles downstream to the old chestnut grove. Six adult steelhead trout, two adult chinook and four salmon jacks were observed. Most of the holding habitat in this reach is associated with bedrock (lateral scour or main channel pools).

Reach D

Reach D begins at the old chestnut grove and extends 2.5 miles downstream to the Silver Tip mine. Three adult steelhead trout were observed while five adult chinook salmon and ten jack were seen in this section.

Reach E

430
Reach E begins at the Silver Tip mine and extends .75 miles downstream to the Cantrell (new Blue Bird) mine. Two adult steelhead were observed as well as four half pounders. Thirteen adult chinook salmon and six jack were also observed.

Reach F

Reach F begins at the Cantrell mine and covers the remainder of the creek to its confluence with the mainstem Trinity River, a total of 4.25 miles. One adult steelhead trout, fifteen adult chinook salmon and seven salmon jack were observed. All adults were observed in main channel or bedrock formed lateral scour pools.

Summary

A total of 17 adult steelhead, six half pounders, thirty-five adult chinook salmon and twenty-nine jacks were observed in Canyon Creek during the 1995 survey. All fish were observed below the Trailhead and above Clear Gulch except for one jack seen 50 yards below this tributary. Juvenile rainbow/steelhead trout were commonly observed. The water temperatures ranged from 50.9°F (53.9°F, air) on August 28 to 65.8°F (89.5°F, air) on August 31.

It is questionable whether future Canyon Creek surveys will occur due to such low populations. It would be interesting to document the larger fall and winter runs. If the summer snorkel survey is continued, it should take place in late July during low flow years or late August during high flow years. It would be advantageous for the upstream (wilderness) crew to start early with their own vehicle since they have to hike in. This would save hiking back in a second time.