

S - Upper Truckee R.
El Dorado Co.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
INTRAOFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

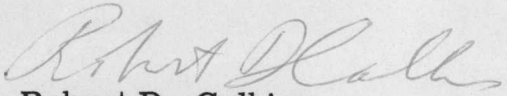
DATE: February 8, 1961

TO: Robert D. Montgomery, Manager, Region 2

FROM: R. D. Calkins, CPO

SUBJECT: Rainbow trout die-off in upper Truckee River

Attached is a copy of a letter from Freeman T. Ormes which I discussed with you on the telephone yesterday. I understand you will have our local warden discuss the problem with Mr. Ormes and follow up with a letter from your office.


Robert D. Calkins

RDC:jm

Attachment

cc: Mr. Shannon with original
letter of 2/5/61 from Mr. Ormes

FREEMAN T. ORMES
GENERAL CONTRACTOR
P. O. BOX 654
TAHOE VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

February 5, 1961

State Of California
Department of Fish and Game

Gentlemen;

The past few days I have observed dead and dying tens of thousands of rainbow trout in the upper stretches of the Truckee river. These fish are of all sizes from fingerlings to eighteen inches in length.

At the rate they are going I dare say in a few more days there will not be a live fish left in the stream.

There has been no turbulence of the water such as sometimes happens on the tributary streams of the Sacramento.

There is a white foam like substance on the surface but this is not caused by water action.

I have only observed up to the Tahoe Valley Airport.

These are not Kokanee Salmon that recently spawned in other streams.

I can not believe this to be winter kill as before stated these fish are dying NOW.

My interest is that I am a devout fisherman and also this is one of my very favorite fishing streams in this area. Farther. In just a short time the Cutthroats will be in this stream. If this condition is pollution or disease I am sure the Department is well aware of the seriousness of it. These dead fish are being washed right into Lake Tahoe. Any farther information I may be able to furnish I will be happy to be of service.

Respectfull

Freeman T. Ormes

RF. El Dorado. Upper Truckee River. Fish Kill. - 1/10/61
997

Region II
1001 Jedsmitz Drive
Sacramento 19, California
February 9, 1961

Mr. Freeman T. Ormes
General Contractor
P. O. Box 654
Tahoe Valley, California

Dear Mr. Ormes:

Thank you for your prompt and accurate report of the dying fish in the Upper Truckee River. The incident was reported to us by phone Saturday evening, and Sunday morning we found that the kill was the result of toxic water coming from Echo Lake. Echo Lake was chemically treated last October to remove the large rough fish population, and the chemical has not yet decomposed. The unusually warm weather combined with rainfall on the Echo Lake drainage caused the lake to raise several inches. The water was prevented from spilling by dam boards at the PG&E dam at the east end of the lake. Some time Friday, an unauthorized person removed two dam boards from this dam and about ten c.f.s. of the Echo Lake water ran down the channel of Echo Lake into the Upper Truckee River. The flow in the Upper Truckee River was very low because of the unusually dry winter, and the Echo Lake water was not diluted enough to prevent a fish kill.

We shut the Echo Lake flow off as soon as we found that this was the trouble, but, unfortunately, almost all of the trout in the Upper Truckee River from Echo Lake down to Lake Tahoe were killed. The water in Echo Lake should be completely free of toxic chemical by the time spring thaws require it to be released. To make certain of this we have started a program of continuous chemical and biological tests on the lake.

We are now in the process of planning a re-stocking program for the Upper Truckee River.

Thank you very much for your report. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to write us.

Sincerely yours,

Robert D. Montgomery
Regional Manager

DWK/lk

Warner