

FIELD NOTE  
Nicasio Creek  
Marin County

May 19, 1965

The stream was checked in the vicinity of the recent pollution fish kill for a presence of fish. In two hundred yards of stream, 12 fish about 2 inches long were observed. They appeared to be silver salmon. No larger fish were seen. The fish were quite scarce. Estimated flow 3/4-1 cfs. Immediately below here, at the junction of the tributary from the Howard Ranch, young salmonids were abundant. Twenty to twenty-five were counted in one twenty-foot-long pool. Water is clear in the Howard Ranch tributary, flowing 1/4 cfs. Water is turbid and brownish in the main stream. Cause unknown.

In the Howard Ranch tributary, fish were fairly abundant. Approximately 10 per pool. A small log jam exists 50 yards above the mouth. It is not serious, however. There is a good gravel bottom, although the stream appears only moderately productive. A few sticklebacks seen. No yearling fish were seen. Good shelter, pool-riffle combination.

An interesting bedrock dike outcropping exists on the north side of the stream about 1/4 mile upstream. This is a beautiful little stream running through a redwood forest, largely unspoiled by man over the past 40 to 50 years. It was logged in the early days, but the second growth are now trees 1 to 2 feet in diameter. The stream is meandering with good shelter in undercut banks. Gravels are good, but with a fair amount of sand intermixed. One half mile upstream is a remnant of an old rock masonry dam now at streambed grade. A large pool is below. Two trout 8 and 10 inches long were seen. The stream makes a distinctive oxbow at this point. Above the oxbow, young one-inch long salmonids were noted from a late hatch. They were probably steelhead. The habitat still looks good but fish are less abundant in this upper section.

Three quarters of a mile upstream, the stream forks. The north or east branch is more open while the south or west branch is still in dense shade. In the area just below the junction, fish were scarce. North or east branch--estimated flow 1/4 cfs. A jeep road comes in from the north to this junction. It has a willow lined bank, the bottom is algae covered. It looks good but no fish seen. Went up 1/4 mile, stream open, oak grass hillsides on north. Probably goes dry in summer or at most a few standing pools. No sign of habitation.

The south or west branch--estimated flow 1/4 cfs. Small, narrow, about 4 feet average width--average depth 4-5 inches. Well shaded, good gravel bottom. A few salmonids seen, but scarce. Perhaps 1 per 100 feet. Nice redwood forest. Old road parallels the stream but is washed out at crossings. One small log jam 1/4 mile above the confluence of the two forks. It is not impassible, however, and only 3-4 feet high.

*WAE*

Willis A. Evans  
Fisheries Management Supervisor  
Region 3

WAE:bg