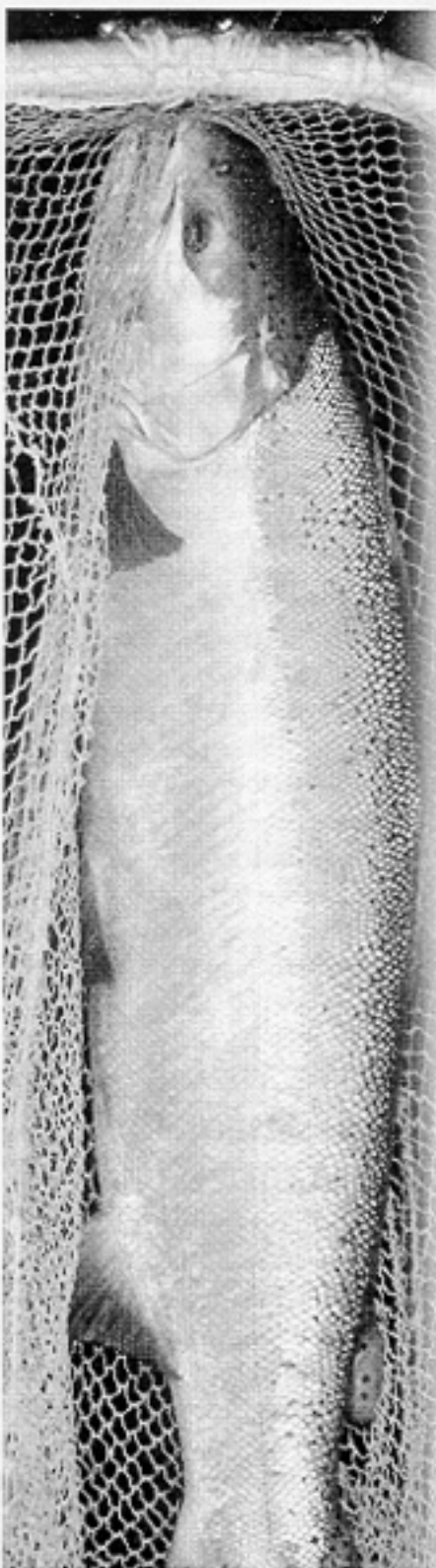


Environmental Protection



Approximately one half of the District's budget is dedicated to: meet federal and state regulations for the protection of threatened species such as the Carmel River steelhead and California red-legged frog; to protect Carmel River banks against erosion; and to monitor ground and surface water levels throughout the District.

Protection of the Carmel River Steelhead

The Carmel River steelhead population has increased over the past 10 years. In spite of progress made on the Carmel River, steelhead are listed as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act in many areas of California, including the Carmel River. District fishery programs focus on maintaining a healthy environment for steelhead spawning and rearing. District staff coordinate with Cal-Am and the California

Department of Fish and Game to control the amount of water released from reservoirs and pumped from wells so that adequate river flow is maintained for fish throughout most of the year.

Steelhead Rescue Operations Continue

District staff conducted 23 rescue operations, capturing a total of 12,169 steelhead from drying reaches of the lower Carmel River.

Staff transported the rescued fish to the Sleepy Hollow Steelhead Rearing Facility, 69 were released into the Carmel River Lagoon, and 57 fish died during transport.

The District applied for a federal permit to continue steelhead rescue operations.

Steelhead Count Lower than in 1998

The District's automatic fish counter, at San Clemente Dam, recorded 405 fish between December 1998 and May 1999. This is the fourth highest count since 1987; however, it is 47 percent lower than the 1998 adult steelhead count. The decline could be attributed to warm ocean waters caused by El Niño, and the March 1995 Carmel River floods that destroyed steelhead nests thereby reducing the survival rate of young fish.

Steelhead fish counts have been rising over the last decade

