

FISHES OF MOORE CREEK
LAS POSADAS AREA

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by

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Rainbow and Steelhead Trout (*Salmo gairdneri*)

Those rainbow trout living in a river system open to the ocean usually migrate downstream when two years old and enter the ocean for a feeding and growing period of two years, after which time they will make a return migration up coastal streams for spawning purposes. Rainbow trout which perform this migration to and from the ocean are called "steelhead" or "steelhead trout." In other words, a steelhead trout is merely a rainbow trout that has lived in the ocean and returned to spawn in fresh water. The fish which remain in fresh water are smaller in size and not so "steel-like" or silvery in appearance.

Their native range is from southern California into Alaska. This is the trout that is propagated so extensively in state fish hatcheries. Its fame as a game fish has spread far beyond its native range. About 3 million pounds of steelhead are caught commercially every year on the Pacific Coast.

Rainbows and steelhead trout have mouths white inside; salmon have quite black mouths.

Sacramento Sucker (*Catostomus occidentalis*)

This fish has a ventral mouth with thick lips covered with small, fleshy feelers.

Its distribution is widely spread throughout the streams and lakes of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Basin, in the Russian River Basin, and in streams entering San Francisco Bay; a native fish of California. It is of very slight commercial value being sold largely by the Chinese. The flesh is too bony for most Americans.

Sacramento Squawfish or Sacramento Pike (*Ptychocheilus grandis*)

This fish has a large, pike-like mouth with teeth set far apart. The young have a spot at base of caudal fin.

It is a native of California only; it is found in the Sacramento-San Joaquin drainage, the Russian River and the Pajaro River systems. Its habitat is typically that of a slow, warm lowland or foothill stream having frequent pools. It is one of our large western minnows. When these fish are overly abundant they present serious competition with more desirable species of fish. They compete with trout for "living space" and food.

Hardhead (*Mylopharodon conocephalus*)

This fish has a large mouth with thick lips, a depressed head and small eye.

It is native of California only, being found in the Sacramento-San Joaquin river systems. It attains a large size for a minnow, up to 2-3 feet in length, and next to a species of *Ptychocheilus* found in the Colorado River, is the largest of the native American cyprinidae.

Prickly Sculpin (*Cottus asper*)

The color of this fish is grayish olive mottled with black; the skin is rough to the touch; and its size is about 5 inches.

It is found in coastal streams from Alaska to Ventura County; found in fresh and brackish waters. These are eaten to some extent by large trout in the coastal streams and are used as bait by anglers fishing for steel-head. They are frequently found in enormous numbers.

Slim Sculpin (*Cottus aleuticus*)

Description similar to the preceding. Skin is smooth but may be prickly beneath. The head and body are mottled or spotted above, uniformly light brown ground color; the dark markings are often arranged in six cross bars.

These fish are found from Unalaska to Monterey, California and are common to coastal streams and occasionally in brackish waters. Very little is known about the habits of these fish. They are used as bait to some extent.

Three-spined Stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*)

The color of these fish is variable depending on their particular habitat, being silvery green to bluish black in marine specimens and mottled brown in fresh water specimens. Their length is rarely more than three inches. The first dorsal fin has 2 or 3 serrated spines which can be locked in a position vertical to the body.

These fish are found from southern California to northwest Alaska in marine, brackish and fresh waters. They feed on small crustacea and water insects. They are found in almost any place a fish can live from fresh water to a depth of 90 ft. in the ocean.