

Fun with Fish Interpretive Cheat Sheet

Objective:

To learn about the species of fish in the American River forks, past and present, native and non-native.

Materials in box:

From CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife, Richard Munoz, Interpretive Services, 916-358-1644. He has more materials if needed. There is a smaller Fish box containing extra copies of most items in this box.

Posters: Life Stages of the Rainbow Trout
2018-2019 California Freshwater Sport Fishing Regulations
Salmonid Savers workbooks
F.I.S.H. Fishing is Simple Handbooks in English and Spanish
Sacramento Region Watchable Wildlife brochures
Tips for Watching Wildlife brochures
CalTip stickers
Which of these will harm your local creek? Brochures
Marine Protected Areas brochures
Gone Fishin in the City brochures

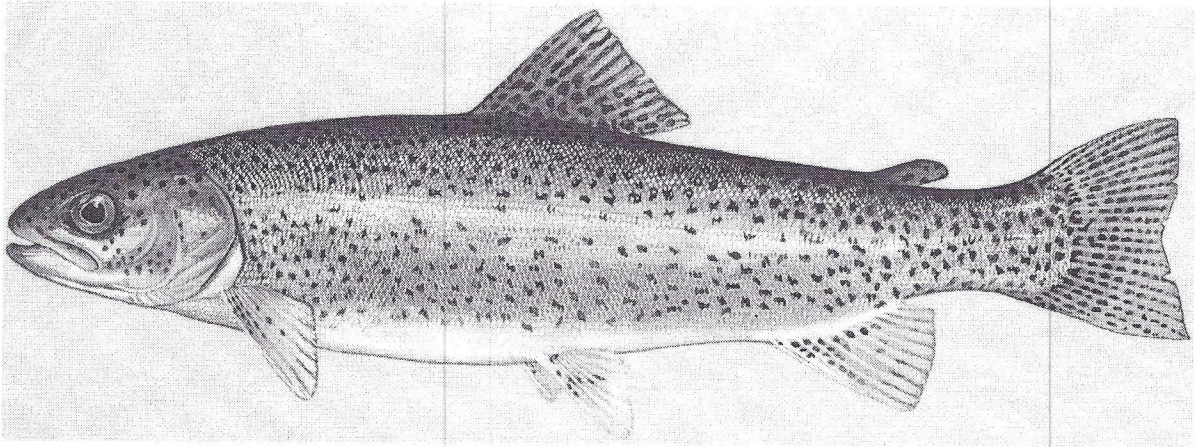
Interpretation

- Fish living around the North and Middle American River forks before arrival of Europeans:

Rainbow trout, steelhead (rainbow trout that migrate to and from the ocean), Chinook salmon, Sacramento squawfish, western sucker, riffle sculpin, speckled dace, hardhead.

The native Nisenan population gaffed and smoked Chinook salmon during the Fall upstream run at Murderers' Bar Falls.

Chinook salmon was an important fishery until the early 1950's, with fall and spring runs. Now there is only a fall run below the Nimbus Dam. This run is threatened by water diversions and releases for competing uses.



Rainbow trout

- Introduced fish found around the forks:

Smallmouth bass, brown trout

Some species of fish are only found in the lower American River below Folsom Lake and are not discussed here.

- Fishing access:

There is no road access to the North Fork upstream from Colfax-Iowa Hill bridge, though there are several trails that provide access.

Fishing for trout upstream from Humbug Bar is better than in the lower reaches where the water temperature is higher and non-game fish predominate.

Good trout fishing is found on the Middle Fork between Oxbow Powerhouse and Folsom Lake. Raft traffic and corresponding water flow management on this fork can make fishing difficult during the season.

Lake Clementine is a narrow, 5 miles long reservoir on the North Fork. Warm water species such as smallmouth bass, bluegill and bullheads are found. The lake is best accessed by boat due to weed beds and steep hillsides.

Fishing regulations: seasons, limits and equipment rules vary. Check the current Fish and Wildlife regulations for the area you plan to fish.

California Fish and Wildlife designated the North Fork as a Wild Trout Stream in 1982, which means it is managed for wild rather than hatchery trout. The North Fork American River is also a Federally listed Wild and Scenic River.

- Historic and current impacts on the river:

Gold mining: mercury from hydraulic mining and silt covering spawning beds severely impacted the ability of fish to reproduce.

Dams constructed after hydraulic mining was banned did not have effective fish ladders. By the mid 1950's the spring run salmon had been decimated.

Water diversion for irrigation, agriculture, mining and other uses reduces the water available for fish and can make the temperature of the remaining water too high for successful reproduction.

Seasonal fluctuations and low rainfall years make life tough for our fishy friends.

