

New Zealand Mud Snail Alert

The highly invasive New Zealand mud snail, which has spread explosively throughout the Pacific Northwest, has been found in Alameda Creek. The non-native mud snails were found in the flood control channel and in upper Niles Canyon in November. Their presence could have impacts on resident rainbow trout and efforts to restore steelhead to the creek.

New Zealand mud snails are invasive exotics that can occur in immense numbers, typically tens to hundreds of thousands per square meter. They have spread widely throughout the western U.S. since first detection in Idaho during the 1980s. They occur in a variety of freshwater and estuarine habitats. They are known to occur at several localities in California and within the nine Bay Area counties, they have been found in the lower Napa River in 2004, in Solano County in 2006, and in Contra Costa County (West Antioch Creek) and the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz this year. The Alameda Creek specimens represent their first known occurrence in the southern Bay Area.

These tiny snails can live on sand, rocks, and mud and survive in fresh and brackish water at many temperatures and in damp conditions out of water for weeks. They destroy habitat, sometimes entirely coating surfaces with hundreds of thousands of snails per square yard. They have the potential to alter stream insect populations and impact the food web for native fish. The snails can pass through fish alive, and a study found that trout fed New Zealand mud snails lost weight. See the Department of Fish and Game's [web site on the New Zealand mud snail](#).

No effective method of eradication has been found – our best hope is to prevent or slow the spread.

Fishermen and biologists are suspected agents for dispersal as the snails can hitchhike on wading gear, sampling nets, etc. Transportation by birds is also probable. If you fish, hike, work in, or otherwise have contact with local creeks, please get to know this pest and follow procedures for decontaminating your equipment. You can download a [flyer](#) on how to decontaminate your equipment (be patient - big PDF file).

The Alameda Creek fish rescues will be following strict protocols to prevent the spread of mud snails - be prepared to follow these protocols if you volunteer for fish rescue or participate in any activities in the creek.

If you suspect you have found New Zealand mud snails locally, please contact Arleen Feng of the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program, (510) 670-5575, watersheds@acpwa.org.

Alameda Creek in the News

Pleasanton Weekly - November 5

[Hosterman gives Mayor's Award to Friends of Kottinger Creek](#)

East Bay Express - November 7 (mentions Tuolumne River issues with SFPUC water supply projects, but not potential Alameda Creek water grab)

[Tuolumne Water Grab](#)

Membership Drive

Thank you everyone who renewed your Alameda Creek Alliance membership or just joined. We now have over 1,500 members!

If you did not get a recent membership request mailing from us, you are not on our mailing list. Please send me your address or click [here](#) to download a membership form. Your membership will allow us to remain an effective voice for creek restoration and protection of native species and their habitats in the Alameda Creek watershed.

Fish Season

If we ever get any significant rain, it's the time of year when chinook salmon and/or steelhead trout could try to make their way up lower Alameda Creek. If you live near the creek, watch for fish in the flood control channel after big storms. Rain is predicted for this coming Sunday night and Monday. Salmonids have been spotted in past years below the BART weir and below the lower rubber dam. See our web page on what to do [if you spot fish in the creek](#).

Alameda Creek Native Rainbow Trout

The SFPUC's Alameda Creek [Aquatic Resource Monitoring Report for 2005](#) is posted on the ACA web site. Since 1998 the SFPUC has been monitoring native fish populations in Alameda Creek below Calaveras Dam, in the reach of Calaveras Creek below the dam and from the confluence of Calaveras Creek with Alameda Creek down to the Sunol Valley Water Treatment Plant.

This report, which has fish survey data from 2005, confirms that native rainbow trout are nearly gone from below Little Yosemite. 55 trout were observed during visual, snorkel and electro-fishing surveys of the reach in 1998, a wet water year. Since then, the annual trout observations from similar surveys in this reach have been 5, 5, 3, 1, 2, 0, and now 2 trout in 2005. The SFPUC began sampling Little Yosemite in 2002, and found about 20 rainbow trout in Little Yosemite each year from 2002-2004; 6 trout were found in Little Yosemite in 2005. Surveys show there are much healthier rainbow trout populations further upstream in the vicinity of the Alameda Diversion Dam and at Camp Ohlone.

The surveys show the need for immediate cold water summer releases from Calaveras Reservoir to revive the remnant native trout population in the reach below the dam.

SF Bay Oil Spill Resources

Check out the SF Gate [website](#) for an entire list of all their media coverage, as well as maps, photos and volunteer resources. Go to the [Save The Bay](#) page for important information and links about the oil spill.