

What Do Steelhead Need?

1) Clean, Cold Water: Polluted water and high water temperatures threaten fingerlings as well as adults. Sediment reduces visibility (which the steelhead need), covers up gravel needed for spawning, and can smother steelhead eggs.

2) Continuous, Consistent Water Flows: Low flows caused by damming, or unusually high flows caused by flooding can prevent fish from migrating upstream, and can destroy essential habitat.

3) Tree Cover on Stream Banks: trees and streamside vegetation hold banks in place and provide shade that keeps the water cool.

4) Barrier-Free Migration Paths to Creek Headwaters: the upper reaches - or "headwaters" - of creeks provide the best spawning areas for steelhead. Obstacles to migration, such as dams and steep culverts, stop steelhead from reaching these areas.

How Can I Help Steelhead?

1) Don't Dump Pollutants! Motor oil, garbage, and pesticides find their way from streets and lawns into the creeks, where they degrade water quality for steelhead and kill the insects they eat.

2) Be Careful Where You Wash Your Car. Detergent and water on the street flow into the storm drains, which empty directly into creeks. Use a car wash (they filter their water), or use biodegradable soap and wash your car where the water will drain onto your lawn.

3) Protect Streamside Vegetation, including trees, shrubs, and ground cover. They prevent erosion and provide essential shade for steelhead spawning habitat.

4) Restore Creeks and Wetlands. Loss of habitat has put steelhead in danger. Restoring and "daylighting" creeks, and restoring wetlands, can increase steelhead populations dramatically.

5) Fight for Better Local, State, and Federal Laws that protect creeks and watersheds, and make your local governments and agencies enforce them. Cities sometimes feel political pressure to relax creek protections. Push back by speaking up!