Redwood Creek, Humboldt County
(Field Note)

Tributary to: Pacific Ocean

Date of Survey: July 25, 1997

Purpose of Survey: Determine presence of fishes

Location: Mouth located T11N, R1E, Sec. 32. This survey extended from Prairie Creek to downstream of Highway 101, a distance of approximately 1.7 miles.

Method of Survey: Snorkeling

Equipment Used: Mask and snorkel

Surveyors: D. McLeod

Observations: Humboldt County is mandated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to maintain the channel of lower Redwood Creek between the levees as a flood control facility. This entails removal of riparian vegetation in-channel and on the levees, and removal of excessive sediment deposits. The Department has requested that some vegetation be allowed to remain, especially alder and willow growth along the channel thalweg. Maintaining lowflow channel integrity is important for salmonids, as opposed to shallow sheeting flow.

This survey was done to identify fishes inhabiting the lowflow channel, especially salmonids. The area surveyed was from the mouth of Prairie Creek downstream to an overhead power line, approximately 1.7 miles. The area was surveyed from 1300 to 1500 hours. All runs and pools were inspected in the most likely looking salmonid habitats. An aerial photo is attached.

At the mouth of Prairie Creek there were numerous age 1+ steelhead and several adult suckers. Cooler water from Prairie Creek was the attractant. The water warmed beyond this point.

A few yards below Prairie Creek the water temperature was 69°F and at Highway 101, 71°F. Only a few threespine stickleback were observed to this point with the exception of immediately below Prairie Creek.

About half way between Highway 101 and the power line at survey's end, one age 1+ steelhead was observed along the vegetated levee toe. Water temperature here was 73°F. More threespine stickleback were seen to the end of the survey.

Recommendations: The section of Redwood Creek maintained by the county does not provide good rearing habitat for over-summering salmonids, primarily because of high water temperatures. However, lowflow channel integrity should be maintained by retaining vegetation along the thalweg. This will provide protection for both upstream and downstream migrating salmonids. Adults moving upstream are subject to animal predation, including human predation. Juveniles moving downstream must escape predatory birds and other animals. Channel depth and vegetative overhang help provide protective cover.

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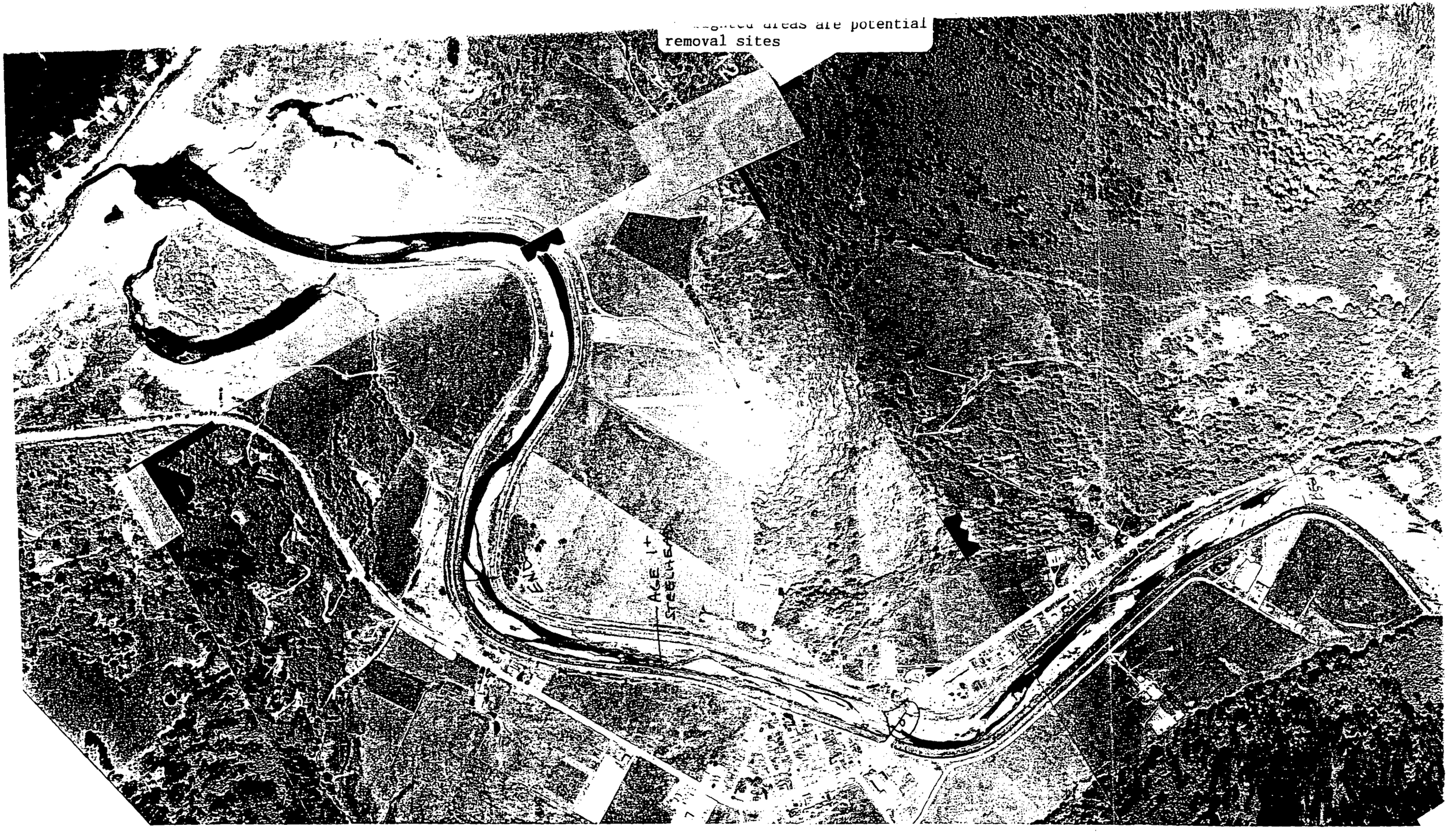
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removal sites
AGE 1+
STEELHEAD