

THE FISHERIES OF THE MATTOLE RIVER

Compiled by Susie Van Kirk April, 1998

Newspaper References

Blue Lake Advocate (1888-1969), Blue Lake, CA. Ferndale Enterprise (1878-present), Ferndale, CA. Humboldt Standard (1876-1967), Eureka, CA. Humboldt Times (1854-present, now Times-Standard, Eureka, CA.

1858 1880-1889 1890-1899

1900-1909 1910-1919 1920-1921 1930-1939
1940-1949 1950-1956

HT (16 Oct. 1858) Letter from Mattole Valley, Sept. 25, 1858--...I saw an interesting article in your paper of the 11th inst., on Salmon fisheries. If some energetic men who understand the business would take a look at our Valley and River, I think it would pay them to examine the facilities for fishing purposes of the Mattole River.

1880-1889

FE (15 Dec. 1883) The Mattole River fishery of Stewart & King have been doing a rushing business this fall. They have had more salmon than they could handle. Several heavy loads have passed through Ferndale on the way to Hookton and much more is to come...

HT (23 June 1887) Camping Out--...camped seven days on the South Fork of the Mattole...A little trout fishing excursion... strolling along the Mattole, pulling out the speckled beauties for their breakfast...

FE (18 Nov. 1887) ...The Mattole is opened and a good run of salmon is reported in that stream. Swett & Fulmore [commercial fishermen from Eel river] will fish there this season.

FE (16 Nov. 1888) We are informed that an opening was made through the beach at the mouth of the Mattole by a crew of men Wednesday as a sort of a starter for the current to cut clear a channel to the ocean that the salmon may make their way up that stream. The people of that section have a jolly time spearing and catching these fish as they come in.

It is fine sport and about as exciting as one can imagine.

1890-1899 FE (25 March 1892) The upper Mattole river abounds with silver salmon.

FE (14 Oct. 1892) The Mattole river broke open Saturday night and as a result salmon came into the stream in large numbers.

FE (9 Nov. 1894) Quite a number of salmon are being taken in the Mattole river.

FE (3 Nov. 1899) Jack Smiley, the obliging proprietor of the Petrolia hostelry, while fishing in the Mattole, landed a 39 1/2 pound salmon with a light trout line and pole.

FE (7 Nov. 1899) The run of salmon in the rivers of southern Humboldt is said to be rather light thus far this season.

Word reaches us that the run in the Mattole river this year falls far short of the average.

As a rule, as soon as the mouth of this stream is opened, salmon make their appearance in large numbers, but this fall their absence is a most noticeable fact.

1900-1909

FE (5 Oct. 1900) The week's rain raised Mattole and Bear rivers several feet, making these streams so muddy that trout fishing could not be indulged in. The mouths of these streams are open and salmon are entering.

HT (2 July 1901) Budget of News from Thorn--The young people of this neighborhood greatly enjoy the sport of trout fishing in the tributaries of the Mattole river this year.

FE (22 Oct. 1901) Indians opened the mouth of the Mattole river last week and it is said that salmon are very numerous in that stream now.

A great deal of fun is being had spearing them.

FE (15 Dec. 1903) Steelheads are running up the Mattole river in large numbers.

FE (12 Jan. 1904) Thousands of salmon are now lying dead along the headwaters of the Mattole river, whither they had gone to spawn, and now await a freshet to carry them into a driftpile or out to sea.

It seems the great majority of the salmon, ere they are done spawning, are so bruised up by hammering on the rocks and by fighting and through the action of the fresh water, that they die.

There are few sights that so "get to a person's taste for salmon as these old soretails," as they are called in the vernacular, dying and dead along the upper courses of our streams at the spawning grounds.

FE (26 Feb. 1904) Salmon are said to be plentiful in the Mattole and North Fork.

FE (16 Sept. 1904) Fine fishing is reported in the Mattole river at present.

The fish are making their way down the stream and are being taken in goodly numbers by the local anglers.

FE (6 Nov. 1906) Salmon have been quite plentiful at the mouth of the Mattole river of late, furnishing not a little sport to the people of that section.

FE (8 March 1907) It is understood that the State Commission is investigating a proposition to place men along the Mattole river for the purpose of taking steelhead eggs from the fish which annually congregate there for the purpose of spawning.

It is the opinion of the members of the Fish Commission that Eel river does not afford a good chance for the taking of steelheads during the spawn season, but that with proper precaution the shoal waters of the Mattole and its tributaries may be utilized to advantage.

Afterwards the eggs are to be shipped to the hatchery at Weymouth's.

FE (7 June 1907) Petrolia News--Fishing is excellent in the Mattole streams at present, especially in the North Fork, where the fish are large and firm and bite as if none of their finny tribe had never been caught.

FE (25 Oct. 1907) Petrolia--Many of Mattole's sports spent several hours of the past few days opening the lagoon at the Mattole river's mouth that the salmon may have a chance to run in.

FE (5 Nov. 1907) Upper Mattole--The rain of last Tuesday was decidedly welcome...The Mattole raised about a foot as a result of the rain and became quite muddy.

The boys of the neighborhood have been watching the sky...The possible suffering and loss among the stock did not appeal to them so much as the hope that the salmon would run.

And after all they didn't, for the rise in the river was not sufficient to let them up. Quite a number of our young men have been trying their luck at the mouth of the river. A party consisting of Lewis Roscoe, Fred Roscoe, Levi Thrapp and Frank Hough started out armed with spears yesterday afternoon.

At this writing they have not returned...Frank Hough, who has been engaged in teaming at Needle Rock, arrived at his home and brought...a number of barrels in which the Stewarts expect to salt salmon near the mouth of the river this winter...

FE (22 Nov. 1907) Petrolia--Trolling on the lagoon at the mouth of the Mattole has furnished excellent sport of late.

Several good catches were made last week.

FE (3 Dec. 1907) Upper Mattole--...A few salmon have been running in the river since the late little rains.

There has not been a good run of salmon, however, since there has not been any considerable rise, the river being only a few inches above the summer stage.

FE (10 Dec. 1907) Upper Mattole--...There has been a rise of a foot or so in the river which is very muddy, and the salmon are running quite briskly.

FE (17 Dec. 1907) Upper Mattole--Just at present there is a lull in the storm that has been raging for several days with only an occasional break.

The first high water of the winter was Saturday when the river was several feet too high for fording.

On the following day it had dropped until it could be forded at the very shallow riffle near Saunders.

The fish were running briskly, and the sporting element turned out in hopes of getting some.

The water was too deep for good sport, however, and not more than about a dozen fish were taken, Lewis Roscoe and Frank Hadley, securing more than half of those.

Upper Mattole has fared badly so far as salmon fishing is concerned this winter.

Earlier there was not enough water for the fish to run and when it came there was too much to catch them.

Forest and Elmer Gardner are the only successful fishermen.

They went to the Cottonwood ford a week ago and met the run of fish before the water rose too much.

As a result they have a smoke house filled with fine fish...

FE (23 Oct. 1908) Petrolia--We had a fine rain last Wednesday and Wednesday night and the grass has already begun to start.

The rain opened the mouth of the river and the salmon have begun to run...

FE (3 Nov. 1908) Upper Mattole--...up to the present time, about two and a half inches of rain have fallen...It is probable that local sportsmen will have a chance to do some fishing, as there were many salmon at the mouth of the river.

Only a few got up so far as Upper Mattole after the last rise.

FE (13 April 1909) Upper Mattole--The Mattole and its tributaries furnish excellent sport at present as there are many steelheads in all the streams.

FE (14 Sept. 1909) Upper Mattole--Fishing is said to be excellent sport lately and many of the fish are quite large.

Frank Hadley landed a whopper the other day, it is said, and today at the Miner place the boys took a gun to shoot one that they couldn't get out.

FE (26 Oct. 1909) Upper Mattole--There are many fine salmon in the river, although not many have got so far as Upper Mattole.

FE (9 Nov. 1909) The Mattole River Valley [article from San Francisco Commercial News]--...The river itself is noted for its fine fishing, and Governor Gillett frequently goes there to enjoy himself, catching the wary salmon trout, as well as other varieties...

1910-1919 FE (15 Nov. 1910) Happenings of Upper Mattole--The men and boys of the Mattole valley are having great sport the past day or two.

The mouth of the river opened Tuesday evening and the fish have been running at a great rate since.

The fish are very fine ones, also great fat juicy fellows, and everyone has fish.

If for any reason any family is unable to catch some, those which are over supplied are willing to divide.

There is, perhaps, no event that is looked forward to with keener interest by those of sporting propensities than the first rise in the river, and the first run of fish.

FE (9 Dec. 1910) Wildcats and Salmon Plentiful--The run of salmon in the Mattole this year was something immense.

At Ettersburg there were about a thousand of the big fellows spawning on one riffle about 100 yards long.

The water was literally alive with fish thrashing about, splashing and fighting among the water...

FE (21 July 1911) Fishing in the Mattole river is reported to be excellent at present.

BLA (23 Dec. 1911) With two and a half tons of salmon taken from the Mattole river near Petrolia, John Titus assisted by David Ball and Albert Thompson arrived in Ferndale Tuesday, the fish being taken to Weeott for disposal to a salmon buyer...

FE (12 July 1912) Trout fishing in the Mattole river has been reported good of late.

Word reaches the Enterprise that Charles Gilbert recently landed a trout weighing close to two pounds in the river near the Shelbourne home, which is an unusually large specimen for this time of the year.

FE (6 Aug. 1912) Dr. F.L. Dungan and H.N. Briggs of Ferndale spent Saturday afternoon and Sunday at Petrolia and Union Mattole, making the trip in Dr. Dungan's automobile.

Some fine fishing was engaged in the Mattole river, the trout being of good size and rising to the fly readily.

FE (1 Oct. 1912) George Spalding, wife, and brother, Joe, who have spent the past several months at Requa, returned to this county last week.

Mr. Spalding and his brother engaged in fishing during the season just closed on the Klamath river and will in the near future depart for the Mattole river where they will fish for salmon during the coming season on that stream.

In late years, there has been a big run of salmon on that stream, but little fishing has been done because of the difficulty of getting the fresh fish out to a market. This year the salmon will be "mild cured" and freighted out when the roads are passable.--Fortuna Advance.

FE (7 Jan. 1913) Advocates Bounty on Fish Ducks--Humboldt county's reputation for being a sportsmen's paradise and her industry of commercial fishing is seriously endangered by the sawbill or fish duck, is the belief of Albert Etter, the plant wizard and naturalist of Ettersburg, who spent the early part of the week in Eureka and who said that the ducks of that variety on the Mattole river alone exterminate more than a million young salmon and steelhead annually, besides destroying great quantities of spawn there...

FE (19 Jan. 1915) Mattole's Budget of News Notes--The creeks are full of steelheads at present.

FE (12 Nov. 1915) Mattole's Budget of News Notes--...Quite a copious rain has fallen...The river raised probably two feet, and the salmon are running in at the mouth of the river, where many enthusiastic sportsmen are enjoying themselves, no doubt, notwithstanding an occasional heavy shower.

A four horse team with several men, intent on sport, went to the landing from Upper Mattole last evening.

FE (19 Nov. 1915) The fish and game wardens have announced that with the exception of Eel river and a portion of Mad river, all streams in this county are closed to net fishing.

This means that it is unlawful to use nets either in the Mattole or Bear river.

FE (11 Aug. 1916) Trout and Steelhead for the Mattole--Last Wednesday evening Messrs. Joseph Bagley and Ellis Hunter took down to the Mattole valley a shipment of about 35,000 young steelhead and rainbow trout to be turned loose in the streams of that section.

There were seven cans, Messrs. Hunter and Bagley carrying them down in their autos.

The fish were secured from the Fort Seward hatchery through the efforts of Mr. Bagley, who spent considerable time and was at some expense getting the allotment. They were released in the waters of the main Mattole river, the North Fork and Squaw Creek. It is claimed that the fish grow from four to six inches a year, so in a couple of years some very fine fishing may be expected in the Mattole section, which is already noted for the fine sport furnished by its streams...

FE (10 Nov. 1916) The annual run of salmon has appeared in the Mattole river and the sport of salmon spearing has commenced.

FE (12 Dec. 1916) Upper Mattole--There was a fine run of salmon in the Mattole river last week.

FE (27 Nov. 1917) Truck Load of Salmon Seized--About twelve hundred pounds of salmon alleged to have been taken illegally with a net from the Mattole river were seized in Ferndale last Sunday afternoon by Game Warden Benson, while they were on a truck bound for Eureka.

It is alleged that the fish were shipped by M.F. Gardner of Upper Mattole, who states that they were not to be sold but were for his own use.

The fish were yesterday turned over to the county hospital.

FE (4 Dec. 1917) Upper Mattole--November this year has been an unusually fine month, there being plenty of rain to bring along the young feed much more rapidly than usual at this time...Also there was plenty of water in the river to bring up a fine run of King salmon...

FE (6 Dec. 1918) Brevities from Upper Mattole--Some of the young men have enjoyed good sport trolling for salmon since the last rise in the river and some good catches have been made, and some smoke houses are busy.

FE (14 Nov. 1919) Upper Mattole--Our local sportsmen are getting decidedly impatient because the rains are so light that they cause little raise in the river, so no salmon get in.

Lewis Roscoe, Wesley Fiffy and George Lindley went to the mouth of the river the last of the week, hoping for some action, but were disappointed.

The people in that section have opened the mouth, but it has not brought any fish in.

1920-1929

FE (2 July 1920) Will Make Effort to Get Streams Stocked--An effort is to be made to get from the State Fish and Game Commission a large number of young rainbow trout to be placed in the waters of the Mattole river, Bear river and Davis creek. At the Chamber of Commerce luncheon in Ferndale Tuesday this matter was brought up by Dr. A.M. Dinsmore and met with the hearty approval of those present. It has been the policy of the Fish and Game Commission to furnish trout whenever possible for stocking streams, local people attending to the work of planting the fry in the streams. If the Commission is able to furnish the trout, the services of volunteers will be asked to attend to placing them... Anglers of southern Humboldt will anxiously await a reply from the Commission, as the planting of the rainbow in these streams would assure fine sport in a few years.

FE (22 Oct. 1920) Upper Mattole--Very few salmon have entered the Mattole so far.

FE (19 Aug. 1921) Rainbow Trout Planted Tuesday--Last Tuesday evening a shipment of 20,000 rainbow trout was received from the hatchery at Steelhead in compliance with a request filed some months ago by the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce. The little fellows were taken in charge by R.M. Poole, C.R. Thompson and W.A. Bartlett and the same evening were planted in Bear river, Davis Creek and the Mattole river. This should do much toward stocking these streams with the gamy rainbow, and if a few thousand were planted each year it would tend to keep up the supply which is threatened by reason of the great number taken out.

FE (2 Sept. 1921) 75,000 Trout Put in Mattole River--Last Monday evening Arthur Way of Eureka went down to Petrolia with 75,000 steelhead and rainbow trout, which were planted in the Mattole river.

The trout were secured from the State Fish and Game Commission through the efforts of Eureka people. With the young fish which were recently put in that stream by R.M. Poole, Chas. Thompson and W.A. Bartlett of Ferndale, this shipment should go far toward re-stocking the Mattole, which has been heavily fished the past few years.

FE (25 Nov. 1921) Upper Mattole--It is hoped that some salmon will now be able to get up the river.

There had not previously been sufficient water.

FE (25 Aug. 1922) Thirty cans of rainbow trout were planted in Bear and Mattole rivers last Saturday by Fred Rushmore, Chas. Thompson and R.M. Poole of Ferndale.

FE (12 Jan. 1923) Etter Writes of Salmon Scarcity--"Editor Enterprise:

With the discussions, relating to the scarcity of salmon in our streams and a feeling that net fishermen violating the law are responsible for it, I opine there may be another cause than net fishermen responsible for the reduced numbers of fish ascending our streams to spawn. I have been on the Mattole river now for 29 years, and there are not as many people in Mattole now as there were 29 years ago.

As far as I know, salmon have never been taken for commercial purposes in the Mattole river, and I doubt if more are taken by ranchers now than formerly, yet there are not nearly so many salmon here now as there were ten or fifteen years ago. Sometimes we cannot tell how many fish actually do run, as they pass in a raise in the river, spawning further up the river.

But it is my impression that the last three years have been lean years, progressively so.

This season there were scarcely any fish here to spawn even on the favorite riffles. For 26 years previously, these riffles were full of spawning salmon--dozens of them regardless of the raise in the river favoring them going further up stream. While it does seem to me there have been no really normal runs in the last six or seven years, it is more noticeable the last three years.

In this period, sea fishing for salmon has been developed rapidly, and notably so in the last three years.

If my observation stands as correct, I think we can blame the scarcity of salmon spawning in our rivers to the fact that they have nearly all been taken at sea. Whether this is good business or not is another question to discuss...If the salmon keep up their progressive reducing in numbers for a few years more, the question as to where they shall be caught, or how they shall be taken, will be of comparatively little importance, as there will be no salmon left to argue about.

I am very sincerely, Albert F. Etter."

FE (8 June 1923) A large number of steelhead were planted in Eel river this week from the Steelhead hatchery.

It had been planned to put thirty cans of these fish in Bear river and the Mattole, but at the meeting of the Humboldt Fish and Game Association in Eureka last Tuesday night, it was the general opinion that it would be more advisable to plant rainbow trout in these streams and accordingly a supply of rainbow will be secured at a later date, probably in August.

FE (12 Oct. 1923) News of the Week at Upper Mattole--The local sportsmen are expecting a run of salmon almost any time now, and are predicting that another shower will bring them up the river.

It has been reported that a few have been caught at the mouth of the river, but so far none have been seen in the upper valley.

FE (23 Nov. 1923) News of the Week at Upper Mattole--There has been a good run of salmon at the mouth of the river since the rain and a number of upper valley fishermen have brought home good catches...

FE (2 May 1924) Fishing Season Opened Yesterday--The fishing season opened yesterday, May 1st, and the many trout streams in the county were lined with anglers. The day was observed as a holiday in Ferndale, the stores and business houses being closed and dozens of our people went fishing. Bear river and the Mattole attracted the greatest number of anglers, there being many from Eureka, Fortuna, and other parts of the county as well as from Ferndale.

Many steelhead were reported in these streams and it is safe to say that some good catches were made, though the anglers had not returned at the time the Enterprise was put on the press yesterday. There will be some great stories the next few days regarding the big ones which were caught and the still bigger ones that got away.

FE (1 May 1925) Trout Season Opens Today--Today, May 1st, is the big day to which the disciples of Izaak Walton look forward to during the long winter months, for today is the opening of the trout season. While most of the larger streams are too high and roily for good trout fishing, many of the smaller creeks will be in good condition and should furnish plenty of sport. Many local anglers will be found along the nearby creeks, while there will be some who will go to Bear river and the Mattole river.

While the latter streams are believed to be too high for good fishing, it is possible that some fair catches will be made there...

FE (7 May 1926) Many Fish Taken on Opening Day of Trout Season--Last Saturday, May 1st, was the opening day of the trout season and several hundred fishermen lined the banks of the different streams in Humboldt county. Many limit catches of trout were taken but the fish as a rule were small, though a few good catches of good-sized trout are reported. The Mattole and Bear rivers attracted anglers from all over the county and nearly everybody got the limit of small trout.

A few steelheads were hooked in these streams.

The small fish are unusually plentiful in both rivers and this gives promise of some fine fishing later in the season.

FE (15 Oct. 1926) Week's News of Upper Mattole--...Trout fishing seems as good as ever in spite of the thousands that campers have caught this open season.

Probably the placing of many young fish in the river by the fish and game commission is responsible for there being such excellent fishing now.

FE (10 Dec. 1926) Otters Menace to Fish Propagation in Mattole River--The following letter received by the editor of the Enterprise from Albert F. Etter of Ettersburg will be of interest to every angler in Humboldt county...Mr. Etter writes as follows:

"Knowing your continued and keen interest in fish propagation in Humboldt county, I am going to put before you a matter that sooner or later must be dealt with here on the Mattole river if trout are ever to propagate themselves naturally. Last summer fish were quite numerous in the deep holes that would weigh from two to three pounds and were said to be rainbow trout that had been planted in the Mattole.

A menace to all fish life in this river during the dry season are the numerous otters that live and breed on the stream.

On several occasions since I have been here otters to the number of twenty or thirty in a hole have been seen fishing.

It is remarkable that any fish are left after a band of otters fish the stream.

The fish are certainly cute in getting away from the otters, yet they destroy so many fish there is no question but that some steps should be taken to exterminate the otters if fish are wanted.

We can't have both fish and otters...

FE (6 May 1927) Anglers Had Poor Luck on Opening Day--Last Sunday, May 1st, was the opening day of the trout season and hundreds of Humboldters tried their luck on the various streams and lagoons.

Most of them returned home in the evening with empty creels or with a very few fish, mostly small... Bear river and the Mattole were visited by several Ferndale anglers but were found too high for fishing.

Even the North Fork of the Mattole, which usually furnishes good sport at this time of the year, was not in condition for fishing and but few trout were taken there...

FE (3 June 1927) Anglers who visited the Mattole river over the weekend reported that the stream is still too high for good fishing.

The trout season is unusually late this year.

FE (14 Oct. 1927) Opened Mouth of Mattole--A number of Petrolia people went to the mouth of the Mattole river last Saturday afternoon and opened a channel from the lagoon to allow the salmon and steelhead to come into the stream.

It was not expected that the mouth would remain open for more than a few days but it was hoped a good run of large fish would come in shortly.

FE (16 Dec. 1927) To Plant Large Number of Fish--At a meeting of the Humboldt Fish and Game Association held in Eureka...it was decided to ask the State Fish and Game Association to furnish fish to this county as follows:

Steelhead, 1,280,000; rainbow trout, 750,000; black spotted trout, 150,000; cutthroat trout, 150,000. Providing the above allotment is granted, the fish will be distributed as follows:...

Steelhead...Mattole river, 100,000... FE (6 July 1928) Steelhead Placed in Two Streams--A planting of 25,000 steelhead was made in the Mattole river last evening under the direction of Game Warden Kaliher.

Later on other plantings will be made there and it is expected about 75,000 young fish in all will be placed in the Mattole this season. Twenty-five thousand steelhead will be placed in Bear river tonight and another lot of 25,000 will be planted in the same stream tomorrow night.

The fish came from the hatchery at Steelhead, near Fort Seward.

FE (13 July 1928)--...The planting of steelhead in the Mattole river, scheduled for several days ago, was delayed on account of the truck breaking down near Bull creek while they were being taken across from South Fork, it being found necessary to release the young fish into Bull creek to save them from dying in the cans.

The planting in the Mattole will be made later.

1930-1939 FE (21 March 1930) Move Under Way for Fish Hatchery on Mattole River--Ex-Mayor A.W. Way of Eureka is actively behind a movement to have a fish hatchery established on the Mattole river by the California Fish and Game Commission. The need for a hatchery has long been realized by the disciples of Izaak Walton in this county who have seen the supply of trout being steadily diminished by reason of the heavy fishing in the Mattole the past few years. It is stated by authorities who have investigated the situation that the Mattole is an ideal location for a hatchery and it would be possible not only to maintain the supply of trout in that stream but to furnish large numbers to other streams of the county as well. The Mattole is one of the few streams in the state in which large numbers of trout have been found the last few years without stocking.

A few fish have been liberated in the river in past years but not enough to have been of any material benefit.

It is noticeable from year to year, however, that the supply is rapidly diminishing, and action must be taken for stocking it if it is to be a paradise for anglers as in the past. It is said by those familiar with conditions that there are but few good locations for hatcheries in the state, and that the Mattole presents the best possibilities of any.

It is hoped that the effort to have a hatchery established on the stream may be successful.

FE (12 June 1931) Ferndale Fish and Game Association Met Tuesday Eve--...Tom Petersen of Fortuna, captain of volunteer wardens of the county, gave a report on trout planting activities.

He stated that 30,000 steelhead would be planted in the Mattole river within a few days, also a like number in Bear river.

These plantings will be followed by more later. Capt. Petersen stated that word had been received from Supt. Lewis of the hatchery at Steelhead to the effect that the water is getting low at the hatchery and that it will be necessary to get the trout out as soon as possible... There was a discussion of the destruction of young trout by the merganser or fish duck, and efforts will be made to obtain permits for shooting these pests, which are protected by federal law.

The federal bureau in control of migratory birds, however, has made a ruling allowing the California Fish and Game Commission to issue permits for killing them in this state...

FE (17 July 1931) Fish Ducks Take Tribute of Trout in Mattole River; Albert Etter Reports of Observations on the Stream; River Depleted of Trout by Mergansers and Otter--...In a letter to the editor of the Enterprise [Albert Etter] writes in part:

"At various times in the past 25 years I have called attention to the menace of the Merganser, or fish duck, and the otter here on the Mattole river.

Again I will relate what I found in a mile hike up the Mattole river canyon above Ettersburg schoolhouse. "This mile of canyon should be good fishing; nobody has fished it this season, yet all the fish I was able to see in the crystal water was one little fellow two and one-half inches long, who immediately proceeded to hide under a rock when he saw me. "There are no water dogs, small water snakes or helgramites.

Why this dearth of life?

Too many ducks and otter.

I ran into a flock of fish ducks.

These ducks are unable to fly yet but are over half-grown.

They dive and come ashore, hiding in the brush, grass and rock crevices.
Hard to get without a good dog or two.
In the water they are just like a fish, only that once in awhile they poke their heads out to get a breath.
Just as soon as they are older and able to fly they will go down the river to new feeding grounds.
Same to the otter.
Needless to say after relating the foregoing, fishing here at Ettersburg is not good.

"Here we have about twenty miles of one of the best fishing streams turned over to otter and fish ducks, protected by law at the only season they can be gotten at, and we are trying to propagate fish.

One might as well try to raise chickens and skunks in the same yard.

What do you think?

Sincerely, Albert Etter." The anglers of this part of the county fully realize the truth of Mr. Etter's contention that fish ducks are exterminating the trout in the Mattole and other rivers of the county.

While the fish ducks are under the federal migratory bird law, the fact that they are detrimental to fish life in California streams is recognized by the federal government, which has granted the California Fish and Game Commission authority to issue permits for the shooting of the ducks during the closed season. Requests made by local anglers for the necessary permit have not been granted, however.

Efforts [are] under way to bring before the Fish and Game Commission the necessity of thinning out the ranks of the fish ducks if the trout are to be saved, and it is hoped that the Commission will shortly begin the issuance of permits to responsible parties.

By practically all who are familiar with conditions in the Mattole river it is claimed that the fish ducks take each year many times as many trout as are landed by anglers.

FE (14 Aug. 1931) View with Disfavor the Shooting of Mergansers--[Letter to Albert Etter from U.S. Game Protector in Berkeley] "Mergansers are protected by both State and Federal laws and both a State and Federal permit would be necessary before you could legally kill the merganser out of season... "I cannot give you much encouragement in seeking such permits.

A few years ago, late in July, some stomachs of the American merganser, taken on Smith River, Del Norte County, Cal., were sent to the Bureau at Washington for examination. No traces of trout were found in any of the stomachs.

The contents were mainly bullheads.

The most prominent fish culturists of California claim that the bullhead is one of the trout's worst enemies as it eats so much trout spawn.

Apparently you need something to keep down the bullhead. "If you wish to aid the Bureau and State in making a further study of this subject, I know the Bureau would like to examine a few stomachs of the merganser each month of the year..."

FE (14 Aug. 1931) Fish and Game Assn. Meeting Tuesday Night--...Tom Petersen of Fortuna, Captain of the volunteer wardens of the county, gave a report of rainbow trout plantings for the local association which he had supervised.

He showed that 225,000 trout had been planted under the auspices of the Ferndale club as follows: ...Mattole in Honeydew creek 25,000...Mattole river 25,000.

Other plants in the Mattole river have been made by the wardens...

FE (17 June 1932) Fish Ducks Take Limit of Trout in Mattole River--Fishing in the Mattole river is unusually good this season--for the mergansers or fish ducks.

The ducks are unusually plentiful and are taking out the tiny trout by the thousands.

A recent visit to a section of the Mattole known as Goose Bend disclosed three bands of the ducks numbering around forty, working in a stretch of the river about a mile long.

It is given as a conservative estimate by men who have studied the habits of the merganser that each duck will take at least twenty small trout a day for food.

A little figuring shows that these forty ducks will take 800 trout a day or 24,000 in thirty days. With hundreds of the ducks steadily working on the river from its source to its mouth it is readily understood why the Mattole is showing a marked decline in the number of fish from year to year.

Anglers report less fish showing up in that river this year than ever before and the decline for a number of years past has been noticeable...

FE (15 July 1932) Shipment of Trout Arrives--Jos. J. Bognuda, secretary of the Ferndale Fish and Game Club, received a notice stating that 75,000 fingerling trout would arrive the latter part of this week.

The first shipment arrived Thursday, July 14, consisting of 25,000 trout.

This shipment will be planted in Bear river... Next week 150,000 will arrive here to be planted in streams in southern Humboldt.

These will be planted in Mattole river under the direction of the game wardens and Arthur Way of that section...

FE (5 Aug. 1932) Joe Bognuda reports that 60,000 steelhead and brook trout have been planted in the main river at upper Mattole by the Ferndale Fish and Game Association.

A.W. Way of Union Mattole supervised the planting of the fish in the main river and some adjoining streams.

FE (7 Oct. 1932) Permits Issued to Kill Fish Ducks--Federal and State permits have been issued to Albert Etter, Ben Sutherland, Henry Hindley, Geo. Crippen and Dave Cronin for the shooting of merganser fish ducks, as it is claimed that this duck is devouring thousands of small fish in the Mattole and other rivers.

A few of these birds will be killed each month, and from Mattole they will be sent to Ferndale where they will be prepared for shipment.

The stomachs of the ducks will be removed and sent to the U.S. Biological Survey at Washington, D.C. for inspection. In order to halt the protection of these ducks, it is first necessary to prove to the government that they are a real menace to the fish.

The work of preparing the birds for shipment to Washington will be carried on by Dr. Hanna and Joe Bognuda.

This experiment will be carried on well into the year of 1933.

FE (9 Feb. 1934)...The run of steelhead that is expected in the Mattole has not arrived yet but should come in anytime from now on.

If the continued low water prevails, both the Mattole and the lower part of Eel river will be exceptionally good for the balance of February...

FE (15 June 1934) Sports Notes--An unusual amount of small trout can be caught almost any place on the Mattole.

The writer caught the limit in a short time, using a grey hackle with a silver body and both copper and brass spinners, all working about the same.

No fish were caught in the lagoon early Sunday morning but plenty up stream in the riffles.

HT (27 June 1935) Garberville, June 26--260,000 Fish to be Planted--Beginning today 260,000 salmon and steelhead fry will be planted in southern Humboldt streams under the supervision of the county game wardens aided by members of the Garberville Fish and Game club.

The planting will occur as follows:...Mattole river at Thorn, 30,000 and Bear creek near Sutherlands, 25,000... Mattole at Ettersburg, 60,000... The fish will be secured from the state hatchery on the headwaters of the main Eel river, and transported in cans each holding 2,000 fry.

FE (23 Aug. 1935) Hook And Line--...Another good catch of trout was made at Mattole, the fishermen bringing in 14 in less than an hour with the largest measuring 16 inches...

FE (8 Nov. 1935) Hook And Line--...The Mattole furnished plenty of excitement on Thursday and Friday of last week and Monday of this week but fishing will be almost at a standstill there until after the next rains when the winter steelhead will probably enter the river...

FE (20 Dec. 1935) ...The Mattole has been excellent for several days and a few steelhead have been taken in Bear River.

FE (4 Dec. 1936) The mouth of the Mattole river recently opened by the manual labor of the residents of that section is again reported to be closed. Insufficient flow of water in the river is the cause of the closing. Many fish are lying outside the mouth of the river and will be unable to reach their spawning grounds unless there is a heavy rain soon.

FE (14 May 1937) Hook And Line--A run of steelhead surprised many fishermen at the Mattole River last week end. A number of fine steelhead were taken there and it was the opinion of many that the late run was actually a delayed run of the regular February run which came into the river to spawn and remain for about ten days. All of the fish caught had the appearance of fish from the sea and were of excellent flavor when cooked... Probably the first local fishermen to discover the steelhead run in the Mattole were Tic Robarts and Geo. Becker. They tried it one day last week and between them brought home six steelhead and two rainbow trout. Two of the steelhead weighed in at six pounds... Ock and Jude Fowler, those fishing twins, knocked 'em over at Mattole last week end. Ock caught four steelhead, the largest weighing 10 pounds and Jude brought in three...

HS (25 April 1938) Trout Fishing Season Will Open Here May 1--...The Mattole is...reported in good shape and a number of steelhead have been seen in Bear river.

HS (3 Sept. 1938) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Redwood creek mouth is closed, as is also the Mattole, according to recent reports. Frank Pidgeon reports excellent small trout fishing in the upper Mattole...

HS (10 Sept. 1938) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Frank Pidgeon reports that the mouth of the [Mattole] river is still closed and probably will remain so until the first real rains, but that some nice catches of trout, up to ten inches in length, are being made around Petrolia and in the lagoon. Gray hackles with yellow body flies are doing the work, as well as single eggs upon a small hook.

HS (4 Oct. 1938) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Frank Pidgeon reported the Mattole river open at the mouth and quite a run of chubs in. The stream is rising and deer hunters in the upper Mattole watershed told of heavy, steady rains, which should mean plenty of water and fish there...

HS (22 Nov. 1938) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Frank Pidgeon reported the Mattole clear, low and open at the mouth Sunday, but few fish, and added that Jorgensen of Petrolia said the stream has been quiet for several days.

HS (29 Nov. 1938) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Exciting news comes from the Mattole, via Frank Pidgeon, who says that the first big winter run has hit into that stream and that the water is fairly swarming with fish for the first two miles. "I never saw so many before," was the comment of that always authentic observer. "Everyone had fish, and some of the steelhead ran upwards of 10 and 12 pounds. The run began in the middle of the week." Spinners and bait were taking them, according to Pidgeon, who states that the Mattole steelhead, like his brother of the Mad river, will not take flies, although the water was in good condition. Half pounders and chubs were plentiful and almost every cast, weather into pool or riffle, brought a raise. Needless to say, Frank landed his limit, but returned minus a set or two of tackle, left with big ones that wouldn't be brought to time...

HS (20 Dec. 1938) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Mattole river enjoyed a fairly brisk week end, according to Frank Pidgeon, who reported the stream below Petrolia active in spots, but generally quiet upstream. A number of nice catches were made Sunday, while earlier in the week, Mrs. Verne Johnson and Mrs. Carl Wallace brought in limits of good sized steelhead which set Mattole-minded fishermen to planning.

For that stream is tops when it gets going, and many a Eureka will turn down chances nearby to take the trip, enjoy the peace and scenery of a beautiful valley, and get hold of fighting fish.

Among those who brought in catches from the Mattole over the past week end were Blaine Boice, Ellery Peterson, Chet Connick, Buff Redmond, Dr. H.H. Stuart, "Sody" Johnson and Frank Pidgeon.

HS (27 Dec. 1938) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Another winter giant was taken from the Mattole by Stanley Roscoe, who reported to Sam Wells that he hung onto a 17-pound 14-ounce steelhead Monday below Petrolia using a No. 1 hammered bronze spinner...Mattole river seems to be in high gear, according to all reports.

Not only did Stanley Roscoe land his winter run giant, but Jack Harris and Stanley, Jr. and Charles Roscoe tied into limits of steelhead and unusually large half pounders-- these last running up to 3 pounds.

Many big fish are in the river, according to Roscoe, and runs are milling in and out of the stream's mouth.

If the present rains are not excessive, there should be fine going along most of the stream. Buff Redmond and Blaine Boice fished Mattole river Monday below Petrolia and reported a big day, everyone taking fish.

HS (30 Dec. 1938) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Last minute data on the Mattole is lacking but with the experience of Sam Wells and Don Bunce Tuesday still fresh in mind, it is a sure bet.

In three hours' fishing, Wells had hold of fish almost continually, battled with eight and landed a limit, one of which made 17 pounds and took out 160 yards of line.

No. 1 spinners turned the deal, while Bunce, using a fly, also accounted for a limit. Everyone returning from the Mattole early in the week reported the river swarming with fish and fresh runs milling in and out of its tidewater lagoon.

HS (6 Jan. 1939) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--Our fishing is done and streams were rising this week, heavy seas are pounding the Humboldt coast and winter is here. So this is the last you will see of "Fisherman's Luck" for a while... Mattole river continued active right to the last, when rising water started them on their way upstream Monday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Mel Parks, Dr. and Mrs. H.H. Stuart, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Hensel, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Pidgeon and Albert Pidgeon were among those who brought back limits of steelhead and reported wonderful sport.

Most of the fish were taken Sunday and ranked upwards of 14 pounds at tops.

With rising water Monday, the steelhead turned their thoughts from biting to getting underway, thus ending one of the greatest seasons the Mattole has known in years...

HT (15 Jan. 1939) Steelhead Caught at Mad, Eel and Mattole Streams--Fine catches of winter steelhead yesterday at Mattole, Mad river and South Fork of Eel river were reported last night. Sam Wells and Don Bunce, Eureka sportsmen, returned early last evening from Mattole with three beautiful steelies, weighing 14 1/2, 14 and 8 pounds. The biggest one measured 35 inches and had a girth of 18 inches. The fish were taken while casting a spinner from a fly rod, one and a half miles above the mouth of the river. Wells also reported that Angler Langley and Mrs. Langley, local fishermen, tied into seven steelies yesterday and landed five at Mattole.

J. Lake of Ferndale was another successful fisherman. According to Wells the stream is in wonderful condition and the roads in that area are in fine shape.

"Good fishing should be enjoyed in Mattole as far up as Honeydew," he said. Honeydew is 12 miles upstream...

HT (17 Jan. 1939) Here...There...Everywhere by Gordon Hadley--Anglers who invaded Mattole and Mad rivers had fair luck over the weekend... Among the anglers who fished Mattole were Buff Redmond, Blaine Boice, Larry Gafney, Dr. H.H. Stuart, Sady Johnson, Fred Johnson, W.L. Baldry, Harry Dinsmore, Dr. Frank Smith, Bill Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bull, Mr. and Mrs. Parks, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Pidgeon, Mrs. Nell Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Thompson, Henry Hunt, Louis Raice and George Jorgensen.

Jorgensen caught some beautiful steelhead, one of them weighing 11 pounds.

G.W. Adamson landed a 13 1/2 pounder near the Honeydew bridge. We used a number 2 spinner. It was estimated that more than 100 anglers fished at the Mattole Sunday. It was pointed out that the stream is being fished harder than the Eel and that a fish planting project should be carried on there. According to Sam Wells, the river has not been stocked in several years and because conditions are so ideal on the river fish should be planted.

HS (20 Jan. 1939) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--Three steelhead trout whose total weight ran 47 pounds!

That, brethern, is something.

Sam Wells caught 'em on the Mattole recently, using a fly rod and Nos. 1 and 2 spinners.

Two of them weighed in excess of 14 pounds and one big rainbow walloper topped 16, and was as beautiful a trout as ever brought to town. These three giants were the high marks of two trips to the Mattole and upon both occasions, Wells landed his limit. The biggest fellow ran out with 160 yards of line at one time during the battle and the others took out a good 120 yards, according to Sam.

HT (24 Jan. 1939) Here...There...Everywhere by Gordon Hadley--...Mr. and Mrs. Mel Parks were the only anglers reported to have had fair luck at Mattole although there were probably others. Mrs. Parks caught the prize fish of the day when she landed a beautiful 14-pounder...

HT (26 Feb. 1939) Here...There...Everywhere by Gordon Hadley--...Chet Schwarzkopf landed an eight-pound steelie on an airplane spinner at Elk River.

HT (22 April 1939) Local Sportsmen Complete 268 Mile Tour of Streams--...Other southern Humboldt streams which were not included in the trip but are expected to yield good catches early in the season are the Mattole river above Petrolia, the Bear river above Capetown, and Bull Creek which runs into Eel river above Dyerville.

HS (29 April 1939) Fisherman's Club by Chet Schwarzkopf--"Where are you going May 1st?"...Last reports on the Mattole stated that the stream had a good run of spring steelhead in, and that almost anywhere offered possibilities.

HS (6 Dec. 1939) Biggest Salmon Run of Year Reported in Eel River--...Reports from Mattole today were that salmon were running in the Mattole river and many catches were being made...

1940-1949 HS (22 Jan. 1940) Steelhead Run in Eel River--...Reports from the Mattole were that a number of steelhead had been caught in that river over the past week end.

HS (8 Nov. 1940) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Frank Pidgeon reminds us that the Mattole should be in shape for Sunday.

He is right, for that stream clear quickly.

HS (12 Nov. 1940) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Bud Turner of Scotia treked over the hills and tangled with the Mattole.

Bud reported that the Mattole was muddy below Squaw creek, and high everywhere.

Best fishing was around Honeydew, with indications that the stream would be in good shape all the way down.

Despite high water, Turner landed two salmon of 30 and 15 pounds heft, but stated that few people were fishing, and that one had to work to get results.

If there is no more rain for a few days, the Mattole will be prime.

HT (13 Nov. 1940) County Streams Clearing; Good Fishing Reported- Humboldt sportsmen are returning to Eel River, Bear River and Mattole River following the recent storm which muddied the streams. According to reports from the Mattole and Bear river areas, both streams were reported rapidly clearing.

The Mattole river mouth is now open and salmon are heading upstream.

Number two and three spinner in the Bear Valley style as well as fly and bait are being used in the Mattole...

HS (15 Nov. 1940) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...The Mattole is clear now, and fish are being taken all along the stream.

A report came in that one party took three salmon and a large steelhead on spinner below the swinging bridge near Petrolia...

HS (19 Nov. 1940) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...The Mattole is going good. Sid Bunce returned from there Sunday with three steelhead and two salmon, taken with a spinner in the lower stream.

One steelhead weighed 16 pounds, the largest taken this season, so far as is known. This report came from Lon McNew and Saturday Stan Roscoe took five steelhead on the Mattole on No. 2 brass spinner, near Petrolia.

HS (23 Nov. 1940) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Last Tuesday, Sam Wells prospected the Mattole river from the swinging bridge near Petrolia upstream to the vicinity of Honeydew.

Sam found the stream very clear, not too high, and with relatively few fish in evidence.

Apparently the Mattole, like Mad river just now, is undergoing a period of quiet.

HS (6 Dec. 1940) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Sam Wells reported that Sid Bunce brought in five hefty steelhead, taken on the Mattole river casting spinner Wednesday early.

Fish are said to be abundant in the lower stream from Petrolia down.

Frank Pidgeon stated that the winter-runs are coming in rapidly and that they will take bait as well as artificial lures.

HS (11 Dec. 1940) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Mattole river is full of fish, low and clear.

No reports have come in about fly fishing, but J.H. Moore brought in five steelhead and one salmon Monday, taken on bait, and told Sam Wells that they would not hit spinners or fly.

HS (13 Dec. 1940) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Mattole river continues good below Petrolia, according to Sam Wells, who stated that an observer climbed a tree overlooking one pool and counted over two hundred big steelhead.

Think of that!

They are not trying to move upstream until the water raises.

HS (17 Dec. 1940) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...One of the greatest catches of steelhead trout in years was "harvested" on the Mattole Sunday.

According to Frank Pidgeon, to whom the reports were made, the lower stream pools were packed with the winter-run giants, and they were hungry as wolves.

Bait seemed to be what it took--and how they took it!

People leaving Eureka in mid-morning Sunday were back with limits by sundown.

HS (3 June 1941) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Frank Pidgeon brought in a limit from Mattole near Petrolia, but stated that the stream is high and still milky.

HS (10 June 1941) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...From Sam Wells comes word that the Mattole is good...

HS (17 June 1941) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Sam [Wells] stated that the Mattole has plenty of trout in it, but they are about like a catch a fellow brought in when he said: "I got one three-incher and the rest were little ones."

HS (8 Aug. 1941) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Sterling Peterson and Bluff Redmond brought in limits from the Mattole river below Petrolia.

They reported fair sized stream fish in evidence and biting good.

HS (11 Nov. 1941) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...From the Mattole comes news. Glenn Shively and Howard Cousins took their limits of steelhead from that stream last week end.

Guess the Mattole is starting for town.

HS (22 Nov. 1941) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Frank Pidgeon says the Mattole should be in high gear by now.

Frank went up there recently and took several medium sized steelhead before the last rains.

HS (25 Nov. 1941) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...From Sam Wells comes word that Ernie Scholl and C.N. Rowell brought in four fine salmon from the Mattole recently, the fish weighing 5, 10, 30, and 40 pounds, respectively.

No. 3 hammered brass spinner did the job.

Location, downstream near the mouth.

FE (5 Dec. 1941) Random Thoughts by Waldner--[Joseph S. Shaw caught a 30-pound salmon in Mattole River in "swimming hole above Camp Wilbricha."]

FE (6 Sept. 1946) Let's Go Fishing--...Jumping south to the Mattole, Jack Lund caught several limits of good trout in the lagoon at the mouth of the river before he came home from his vacation last week.

Herb and Bill Mikkelsen, with "Chief" Auchenberg, and Lorraine and Jackie Goff verified the good trout fishing there.

Herb and Bill fly fished (with the good old royal coachman) from a boat in the lagoon late Sunday and caught a nice mess in an hour.

Next morning with the others, they fished just below the Drewry pool to get another mess.

Prescott Branstetter, Mrs. Dulce Fowler and your editor fished on different days upstream from the steel bridge above Petrolia with only fair results.

FE (13 Sept. 1946) Let's Go Fishing--...Charlie Thompson broke the ice with a 16-pounder on Thursday of last week.

He fished near Eastlick.

Charlie wonders how any salmon get into Eel River as on the day he caught his first there were some 16 commercial fishing boats on the Eel River bar, within a half mile of shore.

According to men living at Camp Weott, this situation is not unusual as commercial boats are reported daily as fishing in the swells just outside the breaker line off the mouth of Eel River.

The same situation exists at the mouth of Bear River and the Mattole River.

FE (27 Sept. 1946) Let's Go Fishing--...The light rain of last week did not change fishing conditions in either the Eel or smaller streams although some larger trout were reported caught over the week end above the Mattole lagoon area.

FE (25 Oct. 1946) Let's Go Fishing--...It was reported Wednesday that the mouth of the Mattole river was opened Tuesday following the heavy rain of Monday.

Although there is not much water in the Mattole yet, it is expected that the mouth will remain open.

Some salmon came in as soon as the lagoon at the mouth was opened. FE (22 Nov. 1946) Storms Welcomed to End Drought--...The Mattole and Bear rivers each broke through their lagoons to the sea with many salmon reported entering the Mattole and none at Bear River.

FE (6 Dec. 1946) Steelhead Fishing Receives Setback by High Water--Local fishermen were disappointed this week by a surprise rise in local streams which again sets back the possibility of good fishing indefinitely.

Both the Mattole and Bear rivers were in perfect condition for steelhead fishing last week end and many fishermen tried each stream.

No one reported a catch, however.

FE (28 March 1947) Fish Depletion in Mattole Explained, By Albert F. Etter--..."To the Editor:

"Looking back over a half century of fish life here on the Mattole river, it goes without saying that fishing is not what it used to be in any sense of the word. In 1906 the big earthquake was a hard blow on the salmon and steelhead that spawned in the Mattole. The numerous slides everywhere along the river covered over boulders and crevices where the spawn and young hatching fish could hide or find security. As an instance: the big slide on Bear Creek so completely covered the rugged bottom of the creek that one could drive a horse and buggy up the creek with ease because all boulders were smoothed over with fine broken rock. The spawn was deeply covered over or left in the open, while the little fish drifted without favorable shelter and were devoured by their enemies. As the seasons passed this debris worked its way with the current down the river.

"Naturally the inability of the steelhead and salmon to generate the usual large families was equal to race suicide, wanted or not.

This feature in practice for the last 40 years has reduced the run to maybe not over 10 to 15% of what it was in the years just before and after the earthquake of 1906. In any life problem of numbers, the fewer the individuals the harder and more telling is the onslaught of their enemies.

"A Second Problem--Brown Trout. In 1894 the year I came out to this region, one could easily catch 100 fish in a few hours most anywhere on the river. In going over the catch one could now and then spot a little brown trout. From whence they came or when they arrived I presume nobody knows, but I feel they are here to stay. Good little fish in their way, and they understand the principles of existence too, by the way they are increasing and multiplying.

"I feel these brown trout intend to inherit the earth so far as the Mattole river is concerned. In the spring of the year they are mostly up in the small streams where feed is more plentiful and abundant shelter is all about. But when the spawning season is on they go around the spawning beds and gather up the salmon or steelhead eggs until they can scarcely close their mouth. Later on they eat the hatching little fish as they are nearly helpless while they carry their egg yolk before absorption.

"I quote an instance: a brown trout about 8 inches long was observed standing on his head just below a spawning salmon. Presently he swam into shallow water where he was quite contented for the time being as he was out of the current. He was readily picked up by hand and when held up by the tail 7 salmon eggs rolled out of his mouth. A little later a squeeze on his belly delivered 2 more eggs--9 in all.

"As years go on this much smaller species will probably exterminate the much larger salmon and steelhead species. The young salmon, I believe, soon after hatching, make their way down the river, while the young steelhead tarry until late in summer. The brown trout is better adapted to concealing himself than is the young steelhead. This exposes the young steelheads to being taken by merganser or fish-ducks, and the numerous little grey fishing snakes. These small snakes that when full grown are about 14 in. in length, numerous as they are, destroy a good percentage of the small fish in the Mattole River.

"A third species of fish here in the Mattole is the Rainbow trout. The one factor as I see it, that prevents them from becoming numerous is the otter. In the fall of the year when the water is low, the otters gang up in packs of half a dozen to 20 and make a drive as they proceed up or down the stream. Since these larger fish are the seedstock, when they are taken, they necessarily fail to propagate their species. The sensible thing to do is to destroy the otter as they are only an undesirable varmint anyhow."

HT (20 April 1947) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--[regarding opening day of trout season]...Prairie and Redwood creeks, Little river, Mad river and tributaries, the Humboldt Bay streams, the Eel, Van Duzen, Mattole and all their tributaries will open May 29.

This later opening date is planned to give young migrating steelhead trout a better chance to get away to sea and grow up to be real wallopers...

HT (24 Aug. 1947) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...The Mattole is a beautiful stream, and one which, by reason of its comparative isolation, is not fished so heavily as the rivers nearer home.

It has remained open all year, for the first time in many seasons, we're told. But it is a late stream and no sea-run fish have come in, apparently. But fishing there comes in early winter, when first rains have raised the water.

FE (29 Aug. 1947) Let's Go Fishing--...Jack Lund reports that Mrs. Lund's brother, Grover S. Peterson and his son, James of Piedmont, had excellent trout fishing in the Mattole while guests of the Lunds at their summer place last week. They fished in the lower part of the river.

Jack also reports that the Mattole is open to the ocean on high tides.

FE (5 Sept. 1947) Let's Go Fishing--...Dulce Fowler opines that the upper part of the Mattole will be specially good, the river never having closed since it was opened last November.

She landed a 14-inch trout near Goose Bend last week and a limit of fat, but smaller trout...

FE (10 Oct. 1947) Let's Go Fishing--Mattole River trout fishing was good during the week but heavy rains may muddy the stream for the weekend.

Mrs. Rae Wright and Mrs. Adrian Chapin of this section were two of the lucky fishermen this week, each catching limits of 8 to 10 inch trout near the mouth of Conklin Creek...

FE (23 Jan. 1948) News from the Mattole Valley--Mattole River was lined with fishermen over the weekend and many were having good luck.

FE (16 April 1948) Fish Conservation Subject of Meeting at Mattole April 22--An open meeting on fish conservation will be held next Thursday night at the Mattole Grange Hall and sponsored by the southern Humboldt Grange... Taking of salmon and steelhead for their spawn by sports fishermen and commercial fishing within the immediate area of the Mattole mouth are two major topics of discussion at the meeting. Both actions have caused an alarming decrease in the number of fish in the stream and residents of the district believe the practices, unless halted, will deplete the river of fish life entirely. One suggestion to be advanced is to establish a seasonal limit on salmon and steelhead such as used for deer.

Stocking of the Mattole, long neglected according to Mattole residents, will also be discussed.

Mattole leaders have stated that the arbitrary closing of certain portions of the river to fishing while leaving other important spawning areas open, is another contributing cause of fish depletion.

The same leaders have expressed opinions that closer supervision by game wardens or the appointment of special wardens would go far to eliminate flagrant violations occurring in the area...

FE (4 June 1948) Mattole Residents Make Recommendations in Resolution to Div. of Fish and Game--As a result of an open meeting sponsored by the Mattole Grange last month, a resolution was adopted by the Grange making certain recommendations on wildlife conservation in the Mattole District.

The resolution was sent to the Division of Fish and Game for its consideration and action.

In addition to the major resolution, represented below, a second resolution was included in which the Mattole residents urged a bounty placed on fish ducks.

The fish duck population on the Mattole river has increased tremendously, according to experts in the area... "Whereas the amount of fish in the Mattole River and its

tributaries has decreased tremendously in the past years; and "Whereas the low water river conditions during certain years have not allowed salmon or steelhead to return to spawning grounds; and "Whereas flagrant violations of the steelhead

limit are a common practice by so-called sportsmen; and "Therefore, in the best interests of fish conservation, we as a group recommend the following to your board for consideration: "1. That a special warden be assigned the Mattole River during the steelhead season. "2. That the Fish and Game Commission restock the Mattole River

as soon as possible and to restock as often as necessary. "3. That the Fish and Game Patrol Captain of this district be allocated authority to close any stream during adverse weather conditions which has resulted in the slaughter of trout and steelhead.

"4. That the use of spawn be prohibited during the steelhead season."

FE (27 Aug. 1948) News from the Mattole Valley--Eddie Snyder, owner of the airport at Cottonwood, Arizona, flew up to do a bit of fishing on the Mattole last week...after

spending several hours at Werner's Mattole Lodge, he returned with passengers from here to Cottonwood, Arizona.

FE (8 Oct. 1948) Let's Go Fishing--...About five inches of rain fell in the Mattole last weekend and opened the lagoon at the mouth.

The river was muddy this week but should be clear by the weekend.

George Lindley said quite a few salmon entered the Mattole on the high water.

John Chambers limited the entering salmon to "a few."

HT (10 Oct. 1948) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Frank Pidgeon stated the mouth of the Mattole river is open and salmon are showing up in the stream.

Not much chance for steelhead in there yet, for the sea-run rainbow come late to that area...

FE (22 Oct. 1948) Let's Go Fishing--...Mattole trout fishing near the mouth has crowded the banks of the river with bait fishermen.

All had good luck, too.

Jack Lund, over the weekend, got a limit of trout on fly--two striking at once in several instances...

HT (24 Oct. 1948) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Saw George Hindley Thursday, just back from the Mattole, and he said that stream has the Eel river doldrums, too.

Thousands of young trout are leaving the stream for sea this time of the year, and George said plenty were moving downstream in the Mattole...

HT (2 Dec. 1948) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...On the Mattole river, Wes and Guy Christy took three steelhead on spinners Sunday, and reported good runs coming into that stream.

HT (26 Dec. 1948) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Frank Pidgeon, at Buhne's, reports the Mattole clear and plenty of big fish running.

The Mattole is a generation behind the streams nearer to Eureka, in point of fishing, due to its remoteness.

Runs still come into there as they did in the Eel and Mad 25 years ago.

But nowadays it is being heavily fished.

HT (30 Dec. 1948) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...The Mattole is going good, according to several reports.

This is winter-run time for that stream, and if you have fished it, you know the score. If you haven't, it's as good a bet as the Mad...Incidentally, Bear river below Capetown on the way to the Mattole has some good runs this time of year.

But remember--it is only open at tidewater, whereas the Mattole is open as far up as the Honeydew bridge.

HT (6 Jan. 1949) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Last minute dope from the Mattole says that stream also is nice and clear and business good...

HT (14 Jan. 1949) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Guy Worcester brought in three winter-run steelhead from the Mattole early in the week.

The fish were taken just upstream from the suspension bridge.

FE (21 Jan. 1949) News from the Mattole Valley--Earl Flynn and party of Modesto are spending a couple of weeks here enjoying fishing and report good luck on the Mattole.

Mr. Flynn has visited Honeydew frequently for several years.

HT (17 April 1949) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Recent trips to the upper waters of both Redwood creek and the Mattole river have resulted in seeing numbers of fresh-run steelhead cavorting in the riffles.

There seem to be a lot of them in the streams.

This, of course, is still their spawning season.

They looked so good it made our reel fingers itch.

HT (29 May 1949) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Spring run steelhead have worked their way far upstream into the headwaters of streams like the Mad and Van Duzen.

These are not spent fish.

They are, for the most part, fresh arrivals from the sea that will spawn in the late fall or early winter...

The pools in the upper Mattole river also have their quota of big trout in from the sea for the summer.

HT (5 June 1949) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...After opening day's rush, there wasn't so much fishing during the week.

No more big ones were reported, but everyone who has been out says the lower streams are swarming with small trout. This seems particularly true of the Mattole and Mad rivers, and no doubt holds good for the rest.

These fellows are on their way to sea, of course, and are easily caught.

Do please give 'em a break though--for they're the ones that will come back as tackle-busters in a couple of years...

HT (24 July 1949) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Bear creek in the upper Mattole by Ettersburg is reported unusually hot for speckled beauties this year and good sized ones.

HT (4 Aug. 1949) Fisherman's Luck by Chet Schwarzkopf--...Jerry, Evelyn and Les Barber reported the Mattole river producing nice pan-size trout on flies--which statement was verified by Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Lyman, who also had luck.

FE (9 Sept. 1949) Let's Go Fishing--...Trout fishing in the lagoon at the mouth of the Mattole River has been reported good with nothing to brag about from the upper portions of the river...

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HT (25 Jan. 1950) Mattole Area to Act on Fish Abuses, Petrolia--Destructive fishing practices by alleged sportsmen in this area, principally the Mattole river and its tributaries, has resulted in a heavy loss of fish and indignation of residents in this area. According to local residents, a group of sportsmen believed to be from the Napa area have for several years engaged in illegal fishing on the Mattole river, holding out for the better part of the winter season.

Fish have been caught in the past in large quantities, it was said, and believed possibly diverted to commercial channels. The most recent deprecation performed by the group, residents report, was the outright destruction of salmon heavy with spawn, entering spawning beds in the tributaries of the Mattole.

It was said that the illegal fishermen capture the salmon [and] rip it open to remove spawn.

The spawn, it was said, is then in turn sold commercially at fancy prices. The group ordinarily indulges in winter steelhead fishing on the Mattole river, but since high water has been in effect for several weeks, the fishing has come to a halt, but the spawning salmon have continued their run into the tributaries to lay their eggs. Complaints have been numerous from this southern Humboldt community each year of discourtesies practiced by this out of county group which invades the Mattole Valley each year...

FE (8 Sept. 1950) Let's Go Fishing--...N.J. Lund brought in two limits of nice trout to his summer camp at Mattole.

These were caught on fly at the Mattole lagoon...

FE (27 Oct. 1950) Let's Go Fishing--Conditions for fishing the lagoon of the Mattole River were at their best this week with a number of large salmon being taken and many in the lower river.

The progress of the salmon upstream reached as far as the Miner pool on the Mattole early this week with four salmon weighing from 20 to 25 pounds each being taken at the pool on Monday.

The mouth of the Mattole has been open since the heavy rainfall of several weeks ago.

FE (2 Nov. 1951) ...John Jackson of Petrolia reported the Mattole was open and that fish were coming in and going upstream in about two or three feet of water early this week.

He said no fish had been taken near the mouth of the river.

FE (7 Dec. 1951) News from the Mattole Valley--The rainfall for the Mattole region jumped from a 24-inch report last week to 43.8 at Honeydew on Monday with the rain still falling...The Mattole River is too high for fishing and there has been very few visitors from out of the Valley towns.

FE (16 July 1954) News from the Mattole Valley--George Black of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service arrived in Eureka recently to plan for the investigation of fishery resources for Humboldt, including the Mattole River.

Investigation will estimate number and species of fish, the flow needed to sustain or improve the fishery, a map of spawning beds and an estimate of the economic and recreational value of fish populations.

FE (4 Feb. 1955) News from the Mattole Valley--...Mrs. Holmes [of Ft. Bragg] caught a 16 pound steelhead near the Way's Mattole home on January 28.

FE (9 Nov. 1956) News from the Mattole Valley--Some salmon are going up the Mattole river and quite a number of Mattole residents are getting their gear ready for fishing.