

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FISH AND GAME
FIELD CORRESPONDENCE

FROM: Ovid Holmes

PLACE Fort Bragg, Calif.

TO: A. C. Taft.

DATE Nov:8th:1937.

SUBJECT: Hump Back Salmon.

The Hump Backs were first noticed this year in the Ten Mile River and t
the Garcia River about October first. Relative to the Garcia River I
couldnt say as to just how far these fish migrated up the stream. However
in the Ten Mile river They were seen spawning about five miles up the
stream, from its mouth. I might also say there was quite a run of them,
rangeing in size from 5 to 6 pounds. Also many people were intrested to
know what kind of fish they were, and wether they all took my explanition
as to the species, I couldnt say. Though I havent heard of any one sending
one in for identification, though I asked several to do so. I might say
this also; Seven years ago,(1930), I caught a male of the same species in the
Ten Mile River, November 7th. and the following year on Februrary 6th; I have
not seen or heard of them since those two years in these streams along
the Mendocino Coast, until this fall. Also there seems to be a much larger
run of them this year, than in the previous years mentioned. Wether this
is true or not I couldnt say for sure as in the years previous the
water was riley as we had ,had several freshets and the fish could not
be seen. However this year the water was clear and many quite large
schools of them were seen causing quite a lot of talk around here.
There is no doubt the fish hit this section every so often and spawn
here. Further than that I cannot tell you any more about them.
Trusting the information herein is of value to you,

I remain very sincerely

Ovid Holmes

Nov 1937

Following the receipt of the foregoing fish some additional reports of humpback salmon were sent in by two other Wardens in the North coast area.

Warden Avid Holmes of Ft. Bragg reported as follows:

"The humpbacks were first noticed this <1937> year in the Ten Mile and the Garcia River about October 1. In the Ten Mile River they were seen spawning about five miles upstream from the mouth. I might say also that there was quite a run of them, ranging in size from 3 to 6 pounds. Many people were interested in knowing what kind of fish they were, and whether they all took my explanation as to the species. I couldn't say. I might also say that seven years ago I caught a male of the same species in the Ten Mile River on November 7 and the following year on February 6. I have not seen or heard of them since those two years in these streams along the Mendocino Coast, until this fall. Also there seems to be a much larger run of them this year than in the previous years mentioned. Whether this is true or not I couldn't say for sure as in the previous years the water was roily as we had had several freshets and the fish could not be seen. However, this year the water was clear and many quite large schools of them were seen causing quite a lot of talk around here. There is no doubt the fish hit this section every so often and spawn here. Further than that I cannot tell you any more about them.

Warden Leo Mitchell of Pt. Arena also sent in a report. He say, "On September 26 I was told of a large run of unknown fish in the Garcia River. I went to investigate on the 27 all over from the Red Bridge to the western boundary of the Indian Reservation, a distance of about two miles. The water was rather low and beds quite mossy. I found females without and males with a hump working hard on the beds. The run seemed large. I would say that on September 27 and October 1 and 2, when I was patrolling the river quite closely for trout fishermen, I saw several hundreds. Finally I found a dead male but it was too far gone to send in. It was 23 inches long, 8 inches wide at hump, gray in color and with teeth in upper and lower jaws. I could not count the scales, pyloric caeca or soft rays in the anal fin. A particular fact is that black spots covered all fins and the tail.

On the 3rd of October I tried to make a count of them but it was very difficult. During one hour near Windy Hollow Ford I counted 116. I become immensely interested and inquired about other coastal streams. Holmes told me of their presence in the Ten Mile River and Von Arx said they were in the Russian River. I saw them myself milling around on the riffle at Lone Tree west of Monte Rio on October 6 and then just under the bridge at Monte Rio on October 22. They had disappeared from the Garcia.