

Stranded fish rescued in Truckee River

By Associated Press

RENO – Volunteers joined Nevada wildlife officials this week in a rescue mission to save thousands of stranded trout and other fish from irrigation ditches that have been cut off from Truckee River water supplies due to drought in the Reno area.

Two dozen wader-clad rescuers splashed through the knee-deep ditches that soon will be going dry, netting an estimated 6,000 fish over two days.

Most were returned Wednesday to the Truckee River near Verdi, just west of Reno, where a rare stretch of wet August weather helped boost flows the past few days with more than an inch of precipitation.

Wildlife officials say the moisture helped, but it doesn't put much of a dent in the lingering drought, now in its third year.

"We're trying to make sure the fish in there get a second chance," Nevada Department of Wildlife spokesman Chris Healy said.

"Nobody likes to see a natural resource go to waste. We would have seen a lot of fish go to waste," he told the *Reno Gazette-Journal*.

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority shut off flows last week to the ditches that deliver river water to power generation and hydroelectric plants the authority operates.

"With the drought conditions, the water is going to disappear from these canals," said Kim Toulouse, volunteer program manager for the state wildlife agency. "All the fish that are

in the canals are basically stranded.”

The fish salvage was just one action state officials have been forced to pursue due to the unusually dry conditions. NDOW began plating trout raised in its Mason Valley hatchery into the river and the area’s urban ponds in February, the earliest time in 20 years.