

Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

Fishing tip: I'm going to veer from my normal report to provide you with information on the regulation changes for Hot Creek, Upper Owens and the East Walker Rivers that the Fish and Game Commission will implement on November 1st. I have my own opinion but will only offer facts.

How the process works is that anyone can propose changes by putting it on the Agenda for consideration. The agenda is then published on the web site in the spring, then the public is welcome to come to any meetings around the state and make comments or write a letter with your commentary on any of the proposals, and then at the December meeting, the Commission votes and the proposals that pass are adopted into the regulations that come out in the spring.

Hot Creek got pounded near the Interpretive Site on March 1st while spawning occurred, which is a negative impact.

These flows are dependent on the winter storms and the amount of water that is taken for irrigation. East Walker should be open or closed all year based on water flow on a day-to-day basis. The fish are taking a beating when the water flow is low and temperatures are high. No information from any survey is available for winter yet. How do you implement a day-to-day rule change, who is going to put the signs up and down? How do you protect the fish in the summer to be safe?

It's pretty cool for the catch-and-release angler to get to fish in March and April and have his own early opener and not have to wait until May when the bait crowds arrive. Will the benefit outweigh the negative impact on the fishery?

The number of locals or people that will come up from So Cal and fish the winter months, in an average or high snowfall year will be dependent on the snowfall, so having it open or closed November through February is probably moot.

Any assumption from DFG biologists as to the true long term impact on the resource is no more than speculation.

The only way to know is to try it for a year then re-evaluate the results. The local guides would be the best survey you could possibly get, as they fish the waters more than the average fly angler. But do the guides want to increase their business or do they care about the resource. This is your judgment call.

If you agree or not, voice your opinion and contact the Commissioners, they need input to make a sound decision for the resource. Hopefully, they will make the right decision to maintain a valuable fishery.

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Weather: Unsettled would best describe the entire month with wind, rain, snow and cold temperatures. Water temp is dropping fast, but it has not hurt the fishing. Generally

speaking the fishing has been slow, with the exception of the first 10 days, it was excellent and then again on the 13th and 15th The wind has brought in a few snow flurries but we had a ten day period of pure heavenly weather. The fishing has picked up

ROCK CREEK AREA – No Report

UPPER OWENS – The section downstream from the Benton Bridge to the monument is now closed until the Saturday preceding Memorial Day of 2008. You may fish UPSTREAM from the bridge, which has special regulations and is currently open all year. You may also fish downstream from the monument to Crowley with special regulations until November 15th. All the open area are still doing well on streamers, so fish the deep water near cut banks and the flows are up a bit due to the recent storm activity that dropped a few inches of snow/rain.

HOT CREEK – The flow is low but some water from the recent storms has increased it slightly. Afternoons have been the best time to get some action using very, very small flies with a 7X, yes; I said a 7X, my favorite size. Some caddis and baetis mayflies are around so you better do a dry dropper in the pools and runs.

CROWLEY – The marina will be closed shortly and the season ends Nov. 15th but you can still wade, float or drift for the next 3 weeks. A Warming trend has been producing some nice 30 fish days. Low water has some hazards so you should check with the store for their locations. Some water markers are present but these may not be enough. The Vanderleeche with a black tiger midge or Gillie as the dropper has been the number one source of action. IAG put in over 2,000 pounds of half-pounders and the Still Water Classic also planted some small browns.

CONVICT has been doing well on the south shore near the trees on large olive bunny streamers, black and olive wooly buggers, and their "Marvel".

MAMMOTH BASIN – With the inconsistent temps and air pressure during this time of year, fish feed vigorously early and late and seek cover during mid-day. Choose your line carefully and your patterns by observing the bushes and nearby lake structures to see what the fish are taking. Streamers will probably be your best bet, but chose wisely.

SAN JOAQUIN continued to show action on medium sized dries (Stimulators, Humpies, Light Cahills and Parachute Adams #16-18) try small nymphs like Copper Johns, PT's, Zug Bugs as the under fly #18-20.

RUSH CREEK – No Report

JUNE LOOP hawks are interested in fattening up before the freeze so try some large Matuka in olive or brown, Flash-a-buggers in olive brown or purple, #10 Mohair leech in Maroon or Brown with a trailer of a red Copper John, #16-18 Tiger Midge and a #10 olive Mini Leech

VIRGINIA LAKES - Some nice Alpers were taken on Olive Matukas, and olive and black wooly buggers out in the center of Little Virginia mid month, but when the wind kicked in, it all died. Indian summer took over the last half of the month but no one was around to enjoy it. Spider columns are still coming off the pines so soft hackles will also do well.

EAST WALKER has been good even with the low flows. Try small midges, WD40's, zebra midges, blood midges and Copper John's. Streamers have all been doing well, either Zuddlers, Hornbergs and mini leech perch fry's.

BRIDGEPORT REZ – Looks like a mud hold, and temps are finally dropping. Tubing will be the only way you can get into some action with a 3-fly rig. Bring your finest and work them, from midges to larva patterns. Try large streamers on top and micros as the bottom with prince nymph, scuds, bird's nest and PT's in the middle. You'll have to work for them as the water is not being flushed, but some nice fish are coming out if you work it.

WEST WALKER – hard to find any good water unless you go way down the canyon where the other sources meet the main flow or "trickle". Terrestrials will probably get you into fish with soft hackles as a backup. See you next year on the water....cj