

Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

Dry fly indicator fishing has become a lost art with the constant increase of watercraft in the Eastern Sierra. Preferred method is a two-nymph rig under a piece of yarn or some odd contraption. I've never liked using indicators, there must be something wrong with my wiring as I prefer a dry-dropper with some of the larger parachute dry flies. These large flies are easy to see and float really well after several treatments of frog's fanny or your favorite "dry-fly goop". I feel the advantages of fishing a dry fly as an indicator are numerous; the nymphs can be dead drifted while the indicator gives you one more opportunity to take the occasional fish on the surface; the parachute indicator wing rides above the surface of the water making it much easier to see, and occasionally you can take trout on both the dry and the nymph at the same time. First thread the dry fly on the tippet section and slide it up out of the way. Let the dry fly slide freely above a surgeon's knot. It's also important to use flies with "down eyes" so the fly rides properly. Now tie a surgeon's knot below the dry fly with 4 feet of 4X or 5X material. This will make your leader anywhere between 11 to 13 feet long. Now tie on your nymph.

Casting with a longer leader and 2 flies 5 feet apart can have its problems, and you will have to learn how to slow down and concentrate on stopping your back-cast before starting your forward cast. This will take some practice so be patient and the rewards will be many.

Weather Conditions

Eastern Sierra high-pressure system moved out on the 3rd after a month of great weather with prior temperatures reaching the mid 80's. Early October produced about 10 inches of snow dropping the temps to a comfort level that trout enjoy. Some fish were eager to hit any offering made to them. Around the 23rd the weather drastically changed with a 36 hour barrage of rain filling all the streams and lakes and sending huge amounts of trout food into the equation making all planned tactics out to lunch.

Early forecasts predicted a warm October until around the 15th to the 17th, but that changed. CalTrans predictions for this winter are for a very cold and heavy snowfall, but they could be buffering their budgets for their predictions.

Lawsuit – Fish and Game Commission issued its 12-page STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR REGULATORY ACTION and the adoption hearing was on 9.16.10 regarding the EIR/EIS required for all waters, and DFG still stands on the ground that this has been done. I have a copy but I'm not a scientist and that leaves a huge gap for determinations and conclusions. As this unfolds I will report any news or changes.

The invasive New Zealand Mud Snail remains a problem and it is imperative that fishers-of-the-fly help thwart the spread by NOT WADING.

UPPER OWENS flow is at 86cfs above Hot Creek confluence so fish deep. Some reports of spawning browns, but nothing concrete. Also try some large black wooly buggers. Now that the cooler nights are here, the BWO's will show up. Try parachute Adams, and #16-20 Elk hair caddis. Nymphs doing well have been grey or olive WD40's, Prince nymphs, Hare's Ears, and Zebra midges. Don't forget those large black wooly buggers. No crowds so watch for the first signs of browns.

ROCK CREEK LAKE slowed somewhat but then picked up just prior to the storm, and fish are still taking black or olive Matukas, and Hornberg's. In the slower water try flying ants and elk hair caddis and work Mack Lake for "the" brown.

CROWLEY LAKE is fishable everywhere. DWP is holding at the current lake level until further notice. Conditions are excellent for stripping perch imitations with dry or intermediate lines. Midging in

12 feet of water has turned up some nice size fish. Larger fish are reported in the North End and measuring in the pounds. Check with local fly shops for patterns of the day if you plan a trip. Daphnia is hanging on for dear life so look for open channels and look for spots as fish are all near the bottom, but as Kent says, use the 5 minutes rule. Things change.

MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN still reports fish feeding aggressively as the days shorten, but be prepared as the rain has made a change in all that was working up to the 24th. Try some Parachute Adams #16, Flying Ants, and #16 BWO during warmest time around mid-day. **HOT CREEK** water conditions were good just prior to the rain last weekend and the flow is up, so continue to look for areas between the moss and your favorite spots might surprise you with a belly flash of reddish brown as he takes your fly. Try some pheasant tails #16, black or grey or olive hare's ears, black zebras and #20 prince behind another nymph.

SAN JOAQUIN water level is low with hatches down, and trout are still rising to a few dries when the air temp is suitable on parachute Adams, Humpy's, and stimulators. Try Copper Johns, BH pheasant tails, and hares ear flashback. Doc's Special in rust and olive are the hot colors around mid-day. Shuttle is done for the season so smile, you can drive down yourself. Look for the best water around Rainbow Falls.

JUNE LOOP had been doing fairly well on a variety of flies like Zonkers, and streamers with a dropper, small midges, and prince nymphs. Also try Doc's special in rust or olive. June and Gull both did well using the same methods. The temperature dropped drastically hitting the high 20's in some areas, so bring your best attitude and tactics and you just might be the lucky one to pull up a hawk.

LUNDY LAKE did fairly well most of the month at the inlet using streamers in brown/grizzly # 10 or 12, and also the gray/grizzly did well. Most afternoons settled down with the occasional breeze, but the inlet still held the number one spot for the best action.

VIRGINIA LAKES did great as tubers using flashy dime-store type olive wooly buggers from Target or K-Mart had high numbers. Consistent patterns were Rust or olive Twin Lakes Special, black gnats, Griffith Gnats, and Rickard's AP emerger, and the naked caddis during the afternoon window. I've been using dries and emergers just under the surface, and still popping about 8 or 9 fish in around 35 to 40 minutes just before the bats hit the water for the first 10 days of the month. Spider trails were constant from the 10th until the 20th making soft hackles the hot fly for warm afternoons.

GREEN CREEK) has not been stocked this summer due to the logistics and just received news that it will be stocked in 2011.

BRIDGEPORT REZ has had its moments so try streamers with a dropper near the weeds and also near the dam. Catching has been inconsistent so if you haven't changed up at least 6 times in the first 45 minutes it would not be normal under the current conditions. Pheasant tails under an indicator have taken fish, and black and gray zebra midges. Also try a BH micro-mayfly.

EAST WALKER – Flow currently is at 90cfs (cubic foot per second) and the temperature has dropped. Dry dropper (get it to the bottom), San Juan worms under a Stimulator, little yellow sallies, and anything else you might try will probably get a few tugs until you change up again. Nothing has been consistent. Nymphs working are Buckskin Caddis, PT size 20, and hare's ears. Streamers working are leech patterns, punk perch and Zonkers.

WEST WALKER – Water was at 94cfs on the 24th at 1:00 am, and at 1440cfs at 11:30 pm and currently at 192cfs. So look for another location to toss your flies, unless you got had a brain-storm of some miracle trout food after a mega buffet washed all the fish and food down river.

SADDLEBAG LAKE saw good action most of the month around the north inlet and especially the dam area using streamers with a lot of flash.

See you on the water! CJ (10.10)