

Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

Fishing conditions:

"We could all learn something from Mother Nature, she doesn't care about criticism no matter how much she gets." Gratitude is something I've acquired for the magnitude of snow that will keep the lakes filled toward summers' end. If it's stable weather you were hoping for, the Eastern Sierra is not located at the southern tip of Baja. Our famous saying is "if you don't like the weather, wait ten minutes".

Snow surveys for the end of the last 4 months as recorded by LADWP state that the waters into Mammoth Creek were at 171% of normal for the week ending March 10th, meaning we already have 71% more snow than we normally have on March 10. Mammoth Basin has 149% of the normal amount of snow it would have by April 1st meaning that something between 20 and 40 feet of snow has fallen in the Mammoth Basin since winter began. Sierra south of Mammoth is at 139% of normal for that same week, and Sierra north is at 115% as of March 1st. The numbers are based on 50-year averages. Water, water everywhere!

The No-see-ums are still on spring break in Cancun chasing Chiquita's with margaritas and mosquitoes are patiently awaiting the "Supply" to arrive.

Be safe if you cross streams and remember the water is exceedingly cold this time of year. Don't take unnecessary chances, keep a solar blanket in your fly/tackle vest and be realistic about your physical ability to handle high water flows. A wading staff should be a consideration.

News – Automated License Data System operational (ALDS)

Purchase Fishing Licenses ON-LINE – Most tackle shops will be humming so please avoid the rush during opening weekend. Check DFG web-site for locations of terminals if you did not purchase on-line. In 2010 there were 1600 License Agents and approximately 300 opted-out as agents for the Department in 2011. Next Report: DFG stocking update.

Legislation

Assembly Bill 2376 which was approved in the 2010 legislative session and signed into law will create a blue-ribbon citizen commission and stakeholder group to reform the DFG and the Fish and Game Commission. Assembly Member Jared Huffman of San Rafael stated the "Department is dysfunctional" and "it's a mile wide and an inch deep and is structured in a way that makes it vulnerable to political influences." Clark Blanchard, CA Resources Agency Associate Director of communications, and former environmentalist, will be overseeing the reform effort and has placed it on high priority for the State's new Resource Secretary, John Laird.

Fishing Report: All waters above 8100' still frozen.

Remember to check the regulations prior to fishing unfamiliar water as to limits, size, and gear.

ROCK CREEK road is almost open with ice fishing the main activity and very little water showing. Resort plans to open Memorial weekend.

HOT CREEK – The road is dry and open to the canyon section parking lots.. Breezy afternoons (always) so try #20-22 midges early, then go to baetis patterns mid-day in #18-22. Warmer weather induced some major hatches despite the cool temps.

Please stay out of the water to and help prevent the spread of New Zealand mud snails.

CROWLEY was ice free as of the 7th of April and water is cold and fish are spread out with no weeds. Lake is almost full and normal crowds are anticipated for the opener. Last fall saw a large number of fish planted for the 2011 spring.

UPPER OWENS is cold with steady flows, so get those nymphs and streamers down to eyeball level with the trout. Dry (#18-20) action has been good midday during warm afternoons, and use nymph techniques along with baetis mid-day.

CONVICT was also stocked with brutes at the end of last season and again last Friday and should be a hot spot over opening.

MAMMOTH BASIN is still under a lot of ice, but may have some open water at Twin Lakes in a couple weeks.

SAN JOAQUIN ROAD plowing will not start until May 10th as usual, due to the number of skiers taking advantage of the added snow on the Mountain. Reports state they stay open into July so toss in those boards and skis. Check with Forest Service in Mammoth Lakes for an exact opening date.

JUNE LAKE loop road opened April 18th. June iced out early this spring and fishing will be terrific as those Cutthroats are seriously in need of a meal. Oh Ridge campground will open April 27th.

GULL LAKE is ice free and looks great for opener.

SILVER LAKE is open. The resort is in full operation and RV camping is available, campground will open Apr 27th. Rush Creek is in good shape but a bit high. *Federation of Fly Fishers Southwest Council (FFFSWC) is holding their annual Rush Creek cleanup on June 25th. If you want to help, email me (vlr@qnet.com) and I'll get you the info.*

GRANT LAKE is ice free and has been stocked.

LUNDY Lake road will be open to the resort on the 29th. The lake is 90% ice free but low which is normal for this time of year, and the Resort plans to open Memorial weekend. The first campground will be open the 28th, and possibly the 2nd.

VIRGINIA LAKES- The road is NOT plowed to Big Virginia as yet, they are approximately 1.8 miles away. The resort plans to open May 27th. The ice on Little Virginia is 55" and Big Virginia is approx 60" but has started to liquefy from the bottom.

EAST WALKER flow as of this writing is 337cfs, and fishing has been very good according to Jim Reed of Ken's in Bridgeport. He also stated that there have been some 6 to 20-fish days, mostly browns in the 14 to 18" range and larger. Try small nymphs, Zebra midges, San Juan worms and surface dries later in the day. Fish from the "big hole" all the way down 2 miles.

BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR is off-color and very full. DFG stocked a lot fish last fall.

WEST WALKER flow is 491cfs. Water is off-color and running high so try the flat water near the bridge down to Chris Flat. Try some nice attractors over Bird's nest, pheasant tail or Juan worms in the flat area ONLY.

TIOGA PASS – CalTrans plowing begun which included the County approved assistance of manpower and equipment on April 19 and no projected date for opening as yet.

SONORA PASS road crew is at the pack station and still subject to storm closure if conditions worsen. CalTrans reports 22 feet. **MONITOR PASS** scheduled to open April 28, and also subject to storm closure.

See you on the water, CJ 11.4.26