

Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

I plan my fishing day around insect activity and fish all stages of the mayfly, which is the predominantly hatch at high elevation lakes in the western US. The Blue Wing Olive Mayfly, a common early season hatch and common name for a great number of mayfly species. On any stream anytime there is a need to carry some type of BWOs in your fly box. In general, the dun has a medium to dark gray (blue dun) tail and wings and an olive to olive brown body. The nymph has a rusty brown to dark brown body (cowdung nymph) with matching tails and legs. The spinners range across from medium to dark rusty brown or olive with clear or light gray wings. Common hook sizes range from 14-18, but can run as tiny as size 26, that's tiny for these eyes, but you know, I will do it to catch those elusive backcountry beauties. Did several back country lakes with huge brooks.

Weather Conditions

Slight thunderstorms hit the Sierra late August after 2 weeks of mild temperatures and "cold" catching symptoms hit many of us during the weather change. Aspens got hit and they are turning yellow from 9500 feet down to 8100 feet and will be going into full yellow within days. Warm weather has been a mainstay in the Sierra this summer, and reports of an El Nino for this winter. Paiute "sign" predicts that we are in for a good winter. Aspens will change radically and it's been windy.

Legislation - SB 1148

The California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision (CFWSV) developed the Strategic Vision with the final document rendering SB 1148 which is approximately 40 pages with 6 revisions and it has many key issues including implicit price deflator for hunting and fishing licenses, setting base fees for licenses and MPA regulation and also boosting the dollars from HIFF (AB 7-2005) for the wild and heritage trout programs giving them priority over the hatchery programs. These "tag-along bills" are not all good for the well being of the general angling public. [If this passes, everyone will be scratching their head and wondering what happened.](#)

More info available at www.vision.ca.gov or http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201120120SB1148 (get the final "6 times revised" copy)

ROCK CREEK LAKE has been good, and fish are hitting a variety of wooly buggers and Loebergs with an olive bird's nest as the dropper, also Crystal Humpy #16, and Taylor's Fat Albert #14. Mosquito Flats is low but running clear with mostly small trout but great fun. Heart Lake has a big brown cruising.

CROWLEY LAKE continues to drop at about 6 inches/day, but fishing is still good. Water temps on the bottom are colder away from inlets improving fishing in a wider area. Water is clear than it was and fish are holding in about 7-9 feet up Green Banks, Six Bays and Leighton. Indicator will improve your bite but stripping is the best. Try extended body BWO as callibaetis imitation among weeds near Owens mouth. Nymphs: try bright red blood worms or albino Barons. Try Copper Tiger Big or Beaded Red/black Optimidge mid-morning and beaded Gray/Black Optimidge w/green flashback 316 or Shaft emerger large in bright sun overhead. Try Ultimate Damsel, Jensen's Callibaetis as top fly. Streamers working it are Rickard's AP emerger, small punk perch rust or olive, Doc's TL Special in cinnamon #12 early.

UPPER OWENS water conditions are around 64cfs. Mud snails are everywhere so clean all your gear with care and help prevent the spread. Nymphing with attractors and a fair amount of weight is the best method. Try Stimulators, Para Caddis #18, Elk hair Caddis #16-18, Missing Link (Mercer's) and Griffith's Gnats in #20. Nymphs working are olive bird's nest, zebra midge #16-18, copper zebra midge Tungsten Zebra midge #18-20, reddish/brown San Juan worm and Prince #14-18

CONVICT LAKE has been producing well with Alpers taking wooly buggers in black and burgundy #6 or 8 off their best.

MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN water is clear with cooling and overnight lows in the upper 30s. Fishing has been great since the temperatures have lowered; watch for fish at inlets and outlets actively feeding. Patterns working are Griffith's Gnat #20-22, parachute Adams #20, Brook's sprout midge #20-22, and flying ant's sizes 16 to 18. Nymphs: Black zebra midge #20-22, Copper John #16-18, Olive Bird's nest #18, Hare's Ear, Pheasant Tail and Callibaetis nymphs. Streamers: Doc Randol's Twin Lakes Special in black or olive size 10-12, Rickard's seal bugger, and olive Matukas; Trail your streamers with a nymph (bird's nest, hare's ear or pheasant tail).

HOT CREEK – Water and fishing conditions are good with a 16cfs. DRAG FREE drift is essential or take lessons. The Hopper window is shorter due to the temps but a nice evening Caddis hatch and they'll be easy to see, just watch for bugs with SOS flags trying to stay afloat. Try small dry parachutes, CDC Trico, Profile Baetis, Brook's HC Caddis, Para Kicking Hopper, Fat Albert #10 and Chernobyl Ant. Still some Tricos early and this could change with the cooler temperatures. New Zealand Mud Snails are still around so it's imperative that fly fishers help prevent the spread by NOT WADING in Hot Creek.

SAN JOAQUIN – Water bottomed out at 12cfs and is clear and cold. There are a lot of wild fish and holdovers concentrated in pools so do a bit of walking and catch some nice wild trout. Flies working are Royal Wulff #14-18, Stimulator's #14-16, Yellow humpy #16-18, Chernobyl Ant #12, parachute Adams #16, and Elk hair caddis #16-18. Nymphs are sizes 18-20, copper John (red and green), BH copper micro mayfly, prince nymph and bird's nest. Streamers, black Twin lakes special #10, #10 Crystal bugger, slump buster olive/brown #10-12 and Muddler Minnow #10-12. [Shuttle may or may not be running.](#)

JUNE LOOP – has been doing great on black, and olive woolies, grey ghosts, and spruce flies. Also, Silver Lake has been stocking Alpers so try some top water dries near Rush Creek for best results. Give rush Creek a shot just off the north loop road.

LUNDY LAKE has been great but some tapering since they lake level has dropped due to demand on water elsewhere.

VIRGINIA LAKES has been good most of the summer Twin Lakes specials, olive crystal buggers with emerging caddis. Emerging midges are working very well under any peacock body streamer. Use Tentwing Caddis size 14, grey Hackle Peacock, and Para-Adams #14-16. As the temps return to last week's, the flying ants and hoppers will take some nice natives. Blue damsels returned early today and are cruising the tops of the willows around the lake. Rickard's AP emerger, seal buggers, Hornbergs, and Cowdung are all taking hits like a pro.

EAST WALKER – Current flow is 123cfs but fluctuating daily (cubic foot per second) and is fishing fairly well. Nymphing has been the best producer but there is still some hot dry fly action as well. Patterns to try are Rainbow Warrior, Copper John,

Flashback emerger, Zebra midge BH swimming caddis, wooly bugger, Para Adams and E/C Caddis. Water temp is in the mid to high 60's depending on the time of day. Evening temps are dropping nicely as the sun goes down keeping the browns comfortable. Trico spinner #20-22, Organza Trico #20-22, Griffiths Gnat 318-20, Yellow Humpy 318, Brook's CDC Baetis Emerger #20-22, spent Partridge Caddis #18, Para olive caddis #18, and Taylor's Fat Albert #10-12. Take care in handling trout when returning them to the water. They deserve the best.

WEST WALKER – Water is thin 27cfs, and catching is good only in pools. Try a large attractor/indicator and tiger, crystal or flashback Zug as the bottom fly (dry-dropper). Terrestrials are still around so try black ants, and hoppers with a dirty brown outer body. Hoppers are small so don't try and hit the fish a gargantuan leggy "thing". Be slight in your presentation and have a lot of fun and stealth is the word!

See you on the water! CJ (12.9)