

Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

Fishing tip: Deer Migration - STAY ALERT!

As winters go this was disappointing if you read the Farmers Almanac, or maybe I just picked up the one for the New York. Winter was very mild producing only 5 storms with a few minor ones in between. The largest storm produced about 30 inches at 8100 feet and about 4-5 feet at Virginia Lakes with drifts into the 6 foot range. March came in like a Lion and went out with a fury putting more needed moisture into the ground. April started out great with a couple days of spotty rain. Agencies that measure the snow pack have a difference of opinion as to the water content, and DWP said we were at 48% of normal. Spring finally hit the Sierra with night temperatures in the high 30's to high 40's, but until the night temp increases and stabilizes we won't see run-off crank up. There go the daffodils!

As always, Eastern Sierra weather is unpredictable; come prepared with extra layers of clothing, and pack the bug juice as the mosquitoes ordered groceries and they'll be delivered on the 26th.

Be safe if you walk in and around desert brush, and watch for rattlesnakes. I saw one last Wednesday on 395 near the Point Ranch just south of Bridgeport, no kidding!

News - DFW reports that 2014 stocking will be down by 10% due to the first million dollars taken out of licenses that are required to go wild trout programs. Hot Creek is still only stocking mud-snail positive waters.

About 825,300 pounds of trout will be stocked in less than 100 waters in Inyo and Mono counties which average about four tons per fishery.

Regulation changes opened the West Walker on March 1, 2014 with catch and release "winter rules" until the regular season starts April 26.

On February 17, Richard "Dick" Cabela founder of the retail and catalog sporting goods giant Cabela's, Inc., died at the age of 77 at his home in Sidney, Nebraska. He was a staunch proponent of wildlife conservation and a recipient of numerous awards and recognitions through the years. He started around a kitchen table in 1961 with \$45 worth of fishing flies purchased at a furniture expo in Chicago and a small advertisement in a local paper offering 12 hand-tied flies for \$1. Though his first effort generated only one response, after placing a different ad in Sports Afield, the orders began to surge and turned into an industry leader with 50 stores across the US and Canada as well as a flourishing online retail sales outlet.

Remember to check the regulations prior to fishing unfamiliar water concerning limits, size, and any other restrictions.

ROCK CREEK has 75% ice which is unstable with water around 2/3rds of the lake and NOT safe to be on. Road was plowed the 15th of April. There is open water at several areas along the shoreline of the lake. Also, try the stream near US 395 where it's accessible with standard nymphs or dries for the best action until the lake is ice free. Mosquito flats road is plowed but the gate is still locked. Resort scheduled to open by Memorial weekend.

CROWLEY is ice free and ready for opener with hundreds of thousands of small and medium sized trout. Because of the excellent food sources in the 5280-acre reservoir, trout grow to

catchable size and weight at three-quarters of a pound. About 10 percent of the trout caught (50,000 trout) during opening weekend will weigh over a pound and a half. These fish are from stocks planted in previous years or are wild fish produced in Crowley's tributary waters. DWP recently stated they will continue to raise the level of the lake until Opening Day and then lower it at sometime over the summer.

UPPER OWENS water has been dirty with inconsistent flows due to water being moved down east portal to Crowley. Try some large flashy patterns. Dries working are Parachute Adams, Stimulator, Elk Hair Caddis, and CDC Baetis emergers. Nymphs working are zebra midge, red copper John, prince nymphs, pink San Juan worm, red rainbow warrior, flashback hares ear, flashback pheasant tail and birds nest. Streamers to try, crystal bugger, Carey bugger, Doc's Twin Lakes specials, Matuka, and double bunny.

CONVICT is simply beautiful and again I spotted some nice fish, under the bridge enjoying the deli. They sure are beautiful sitting there just finning. Fish the inlet and outlets and keep your line tight should a "hefty" be cruising the area and take your offering. Try some streamers with rubber legs, also Matukas and Pistol Pete's. Use just enough line to drift by their nose and don't overcast.

HOT CREEK flume is at 35cfs and water is clear, flows are not really high, but it is producing when the temps are at their peak. It's a stealth approach to get into some poundage and knowing how to throw a good drift is "key". Reports say trout are taking midge larva early in the morning and small baetis in top mid-day. Some caddis on the warmer afternoons and can be spotty on the bite. Try some parachute Adams and Griffith's gnats. Nymphs taking fish are wd40 flashy, rs2 emergers, micro mayflies, miracle nymph disco midge, and copper zebra midge.

MAMMOTH BASIN road crew hit the asphalt and the road is clear. Twin Lakes is ice free due to last week's warm-up. Loop road is scheduled to be open by the 26th.

SAN JOAQUIN is projected to open by May 11 with Reds Meadow road to Devils Postpile by the 29th. Pile burning in Devils Postpile was completed in February with the burning of over 200 piles on 59 acres in the National Monument area and National Forest land in Reds Meadow Valley. During the burning, smoke production was minimal due to the safe burning conditions and limited visitation to the Reds Meadow Valley.

JUNE LAKE loop has been open since March 14th. The June Lake cage culture program did not raise fish this past winter but it is holding Kamloop Rainbows for DFW due to water issues at Junction Reservoir. Try some streamers in dark patterns using quick action near weedy areas by the west end of the lake also try the shore with big rocks. There are a lot of deer moving into in the area, so stay alert and avoid wrecking your trip.

GULL LAKE iced out in early March and was stocked for the opener. Try streamers, buggers and a dropper near the reeds. Check in at the shop and see what's hot.

SILVER LAKE also iced out mid March and was stocked but I'd hit the smaller areas of the inlet and outlet for browns cruising for larger morsels to whet their appetites.

GRANT LAKE is on the low side always anticipating run-off, but there's still a lot of water to fish, try the south shore or the inlet for fish cruising for smaller fish. Check with Ernie's or the Grant Lake Marina for specifics.

LUNDY LAKE is ice free and down due to low snow pack and the road is open to the second gate. No report from Edison when they will let the lake fill up. The resort will open around mid June from the latest report. You can drive all the way to the ponds for some great dry fly action or the inlet on the mountain side of the resort.

VIRGINIA LAKES ROAD has been open all winter to Rand Road due to the lack of snow. The County plowed the parking lot at Big Virginia on the 21st. Big Virginia has some water showing at the outlet and the inlet of the lake and the whole lake is dark. USE EXTREME CAUTION if you decide to walk out there. The ice is breaking down very fast due to the warm weather in March and early April.

LITTLE VIRGINIA has water showing at the inlet with water along south shore. The outlet is showing more water daily. The ice will be dangerous and very unstable so use extreme caution and think twice before going out on the lake as it is has water on top the ice and very mushy. Weather has been cooler the last few days with light snow on 4/22 at 8000' and higher with night temperatures running between the high 20's to low 30's. Another storm is due in on Friday making opening day a bit uncomfortable for anyone attempting to fish the open water.

TRUMBULL LAKE has very little open water for fishing but it depends on this week's temperatures as to how much ice will be gone.

EAST WALKER flow is at 22cfs and holding with reports of 6 to 18 fish days. I scouted the area and found a bounty of bugs. Small midges, small streamers and some dries are seeing trout between 12 and 20 inches. Try q San Juan worm, birds nest, zebra midge, Tail-water Tiny, and WD40 in sizes 20 & 22. Be sure and phone Ken's for current conditions due to the drought and the exact pattern of the day.

BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR is low and clear. Lake has been stocked and DFW bows are ready. A huge load from the hatchery hit the water Wednesday and more were stocked before Saturday.

WEST WALKER flow is 248cfs but it's early, it will get higher as the temps increase after the next storm. DFW stocked 1500 lbs. along with 500 pounds of brown trout prior to the March 1st new regulation opener along with Northern Mono Chamber stocking a 750-pound load of 3-5 pound rainbows. Look for great action the entire length of the West Walker from Pickle Meadows to town. Flows have come down with the current cold snap but will return when it warms up starting on Monday. The town will also be hosting two big derbies one in July and the other in August. Check their website for details.

Fishing has been great with fish up to 18 inches on small midges or streamers (olive woolly buggers).

TIOGA PASS ~ The Park Service started on April 15th and they are working their way east and currently at Porcupine Flat which is about half way with CalTrans and the County working their way west. The road is open to the park entrance and they have a target date of early May sometime between the 11th and 16th is the rumor.

***Please note:** Tioga Pass will be undergoing a resurfacing project that is slated to start in May so expect 15-60 minute delays depending on the time of day. No work will take place on weekends from Friday 4:30pm thru Sunday 11:00pm. This will be on-going through 2014 and into summer 2015. Check their website for specific times. If you can't locate it email me at (vlresort@wildblue.net) and I'll send you the schedule.

SONORA PASS – Opened April 17th (subject to storm closure) but has been closed for 2 days and should reopen after the storm.

MONITOR PASS opened on March 7th (subject to storm closure) but has been closed for 2 days and should reopen after the storm.

See you on the water, CJ

(14.4)