

# Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

## Summer-2016

*Early June changed the pattern of late May with light breezes to heavy wind with strong gusts that would roll your tube or pontoon. Cooler temperatures for half of the month were the norm, but warmer days ensued between windy conditions with warm days followed by wind then cooler days and a bit annoying for anglers with a time constraint searching for a window for a nice trophy.*

### News -

**DFW stocking** is still on a weekly basis and continues to be consistent in all waters.

**LEE VINING FIRE** – About 835 acres was the approximate total acreage that took the heat just west of US395. All the structures along the highway from the Mono Inn to Tioga Lodge on Mono Lake managed to escape the fire except for the old barn across the road from Tioga Lodge. Access was available around the town via 120 East to Dobe Meadows Road north then west on 167 which intersect US395 and the Lundy Lake road. I drove through on the 27th and was amazed at the work they did in saving all the structures and now the clean-up and installation of the phone and power lines to the immediate area will be a job. These amazing men deserve more than what they get in risking their lives. **CALTRANS REMINDER** - The "Rock-fall Project" will resume on US395 along Mono Lake starting mid-July in order to avoid the bird nesting season. The project also includes a plant establishment program on the six slopes to reduce erosion, establish healthy soil, and promote successful revegetation. Be prepared for daily lane closures with delays no longer than 20 minutes Monday thru Thursday from 5am to 8pm and Fridays 6am to 3pm with flaggers and a pilot car. Notices will be posted when the dates are determined.

**CONWAY RANCH** - No update yet, but there was a bird Chautauqua over the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. At the last meeting of the Mono Basin RPAC, they mentioned their concerns, and Tony Dublino commented on all the concerns including the sheep grazing, Bighorn issue, and that the Bridgeport RPAC wants to see the ranch used for economic benefit and that sheep grazing continue to maintain the agriculture character.

**FISHING REPORT - If it was easy, they call it catching!**

**ROCK CREEK LAKE** - Recommended Flies: Red Copper John #14-18, Hares Ear #16-18, and Zebra Midges #14-18. Road to Mosquito Flats is open.

**CROWLEY** - The Lake is not full but higher than the past several years. Crowley is experiencing a good cycle for fly fishers. The Daphnia bloom is finally gone. Fish are feeding midges and the bite is back ON. Fish are deep so go 3 feet above the weeds and weed edges are at 16-17 feet. LADWP will start dropping the water level and until that happens, fish deep. The huge concentration of trout merge into a small area and this provides opportunities on a more consistent basis day to day. Trout are seeking cooler water and more oxygenated water so take a float up to McGee Bay. If the bite slows go to a copper Tiger as the bottom fly about 8 to 10 inches from the bottom. Don't forget Alligator Point as its holding good numbers of fish. Check with Crowley Lake

Fish Camp for current list of flies and specific areas to fish. A second Crowley Cam at the Fish Camp boat ramp is streaming video, so click it.

**UPPER OWENS** Water conditions remain good here as flows remain stable. Fish will be planted around the campground for the summer. Special regs remain in place above the bridge. As summer rolls on look for the smaller resident fish, and those that will get planted to provide action along the UO. Small dark caddis & micro midges are triggering feeding activity from the resident trout on the warmer days. Attractor patterns will get you looks from what is left of the bigs. SJ worms, crystal Vanderleeches, crystal soft eggs, Assassins, and Agent Orange patterns have got us into them while nymphing below an Under-Cator. Size 16/18 adult Blue Winged Olive patterns, & small parachute midges will replicate the hatches. Flashback pheasant tails, & Assassins are spot on replicas for the nymph stage of this cold water mayfly. Use #18-22 Gillies, crystal chironomid pupa, broken back midges, crystal tiger, & zebra midges for nymphs that imitate midge larva or emergers. Caddis larva are present on the stream bed pumice rocks now. Olive crystal caddis imitations can be a good call for the resident fish grubbing the bottom. Parachute adult midges will get you looks when the fish are feeding on the "clusters" late afternoons. I have seen a good number of trout fry along the banks, and in the slack water. Small Punk Perch, & crystal leeches fished below an Under-Cator can get some nice bows to hit these "strymph" patterns as they hunt for the tiny meals.

**NOTE:** This section upstream from the Benton Bridge is open year round; down from the bridge is now closed to ALL angling. Special regulations are in place here year-around.

**CONVICT** was heavily stocked with 4,000 pounds of trophy trout again with a lot of them still waiting to be caught. Recommended Dry Flies: Adams#14, Female Adams#16, Cutter's Caddis #14-16, Elk Hair Caddis#16-18, Stimulators#12-16, Black/Red Ants, Sierra Bright Dot, Royal Coachman and Hoppers. Streamers: Woolly Buggers (black, brown, olive, or green), Matuka (olive, or black), Olive or Rainbow Hornberg#12, and Muddler Minnows. Wet Flies(Nymphs): Prince Nymph, Flashback Pheasant Tail, Hare's Ear, Zebra Midge (red and black), Red Copper John and San Juan Worm (brown or red). Weather has hampered the catch with wind one day and not the next, but if you are creative with your presentation and drop your flies with extra weight, it might prove a better option.

**HOT CREEK** flume is at 64cfs and aquatic weeds are still an issue although not as bad as last fall. We are finally getting some flushing flows on the "crick". Fishing has been slower with the increased flows. Water levels are running the highest in a few years thanks to the snow melting into Mammoth Creek. The pesky aquatic weeds are still an issue; but not as bad was last fall for sure. Some trout are moving into the larger riffles thanks to additional water on the warmer days. Think about swinging some Punk Perch, or Loeberg streamers when the water levels are high after run-off; or rain. Midges, scuds, & attractor patterns are best during cooler periods; although you will see solid blue winged olive hatches throughout April on the warmer days. #20/22 midges, #20 pheasant tails, #18 Assassins, & bird's nest patterns are best for nymphs. Small parachute midge; or

mayfly adult patterns used with a 10 foot leader are best for surface presentations when the fish are on the adult BWO's, midges/or clusters. This is a year around fishery with special regs in place.

NOTE: Year around fishery with special regulations.

Please DO NOT WADE in Hot Creek to avoid spreading the New Zealand Mud-snail to other waters. Please protect this resource!

**MAMMOTH BASIN** - Road is open and all lakes are thawed .Desert Springs stocked its first load in the basin on the 20th. Campgrounds are at capacity and very entertaining for the bears.

**SAN JOAQUIN** - Road to Agnew Meadows, and flow is 237cfs and run-off has peaked and should start ebbing in a few days. Water is cold and temp should come up once the flows slow down. Stay in sunny spots and shallow slow moving water for any action. Avoid the campground areas and hike a bit for the best action, as they haven't stocked anything down there.

**JUNE LAKE** has been fair to good with everyone fishing at about 10 to 18 feet and that is where the fish are comfortable. Carry a pocket thermometer and tie on some line marked every 10 feet with a felt pen and then fish according to the action. Try a double fly rig, if nothing, hitch another bug to it. Make sure and use Duncan loop to give your flies more action depending on the bugs of choice.

**GULL LAKE** is still turning up some really nice trophies so bring your best bugs and drop them near the reeds. Check in at the shop and get the latest info on patterns. It might be tough to pull them up so your imagination is your best weapon.

**SILVER LAKE** Has been stocked by DFW and there are still some of the large rainbows from Desert Springs. The water temperatures were starting to slowly warm which is activating fish on the prowl. My suggestion is to hit the inlet and outlet for browns cruising for larger morsels to arouse their appetites. Dry Flies: Adams, Female Adams, Cutter's EC Caddis, and Elk Hair Caddis. Fishing was good overall. Streamers: Woolly Bugger (black, brown, olive, or green), Matuka (black, brown, olive, or green), Hornberg, and Muddler Minnows. Nymphs: Prince, Flashback Pheasant Tail, Hare's Ear, Zebra Midge (red and black), red Copper John and red or brown San Juan Worm. Dries starting to hit are California Mosquito, Yellow Sally or a Sierra Brite Dot. Even throw on a dropper of a midge to help allure the fish up to the surface. DFW dumped in a nice load of catchables both in Rush Creek and into Silver Lake this past Tuesday and we are getting a healthy load of 200 pounds of 1 to 3 pounder's and 200 pounds of 3 to 5 pounder's this coming Monday from Desert Springs Hatchery out of Oregon so the fishing should continue to be rewarding as we continue to hit our normal stride for the summer. Silver Lake Resort's Annual 4th of July Celebration is coming up soon, we will hold our Chris Jones Memorial Scholarship Horseshoe Tournament and BBQ on Monday July 4th starting at 11am so come on over and enjoy some good BBQ and some great Horseshoe throwing.

**RUSH CREEK:** Flows above Grant Lake are still low with a vegetable garden bordering the feeder stream from Rush Creek. Recommended Flies: Purple Prince Nymph #14-18, Red Copper John #14-18 and Woolly Buggers in black or olive sizes #10-16.

**GRANT LAKE** is low but some run-off has added water to the middle section of the lake, try the south shore or the inlet (park and walk) or the rock jetty's where you can park and walk to the water and cast to trophy's cruising for smaller fish. Fishing conditions have been good and fish in the area were mainly taken on the south shore near the gate but mostly around the rock shoals where the speed boats and shore fishermen were avoiding. Check with Ernie's or the Grant Lake Marina for current info.

**LUNDY LAKE** is about one foot over the spillway with the snow pack melting up canyon. The lake will come up when Edison lets the lake rise to meet their water requirements. You can always hit the ponds for some great dry fly action or the inlet on the south west side of the lake with streamers. These are always a good option to run-off conditions. DFW planted, but no report on the fishing except for Henneck's and he always does well using small dries in the ponds.

**BIG VIRGINIA** has been producing some nice Desert Springs trophy's on streamers around 18 feet down with a bit of weight like a drop-shot with 2 flies above the bottom shot. It's kind of unique for fly rods, but it works. Evening dry fly action has been good between the inlet from Red Lake to the outlet of Big V. Most hatches have occurred around 4pm on with hoards of spinners and nothing pushing a nose to sip a few. Water is warming up and fish are deeper than normal. Day temps are running around 72-74 degrees. **LITTLE VIRGINIA** has had 3 stocks from DFW and one Enhancement load late Saturday with trout ranging from 3-5 pounders. Mainly taking anything but dries. But if you have that "golden 007 touch" you should be able to get a big hit on your favorite Matuka or Grey Ghost, Stillwater nymph, or dirty doc. Some action has been on a 2 fly rig with a weighted nymph under a nice chubby dry.

**EAST WALKER** flow is 243cfs and a wading staff is in order so don't be too proud to use it. Use weighted nymph rigs to get into some quality fish, but numbers are low. Tons of caddis, midge, mayfly and damsel hatches going off. Water conditions, clarity are fine and weeds are not an issue. Recommended nymphs: Assassins, FB PT's, and damsel nymphs. Surface action flies: Hi-vis caddis, and parachute mayflies

**WEST WALKER** flow is at 413cfs, Class V water and too heavy to fish but you could probably find some side water in the curves or sides of the main heavy flow and use a small hopper or ant, but watch your fly.

**KIRMAN LAKE** - Only a few reports on Kirman this week. Fly anglers are still using leech patterns like Simi seal leeches, seal buggers and mini leeches with soft hackle and AP emerger droppers. Anglers that have had the most success have been getting mostly cutthroat.

**Please note:** Tioga Pass might finish the resurfacing project on State Route 120 but no info was available.

See you on the water smokin' reels, CJ (16.5)