

Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

STAY ALERT DEER MIGRATION – Deer crossing is still heavy, please stay vigilant and watch for deer browsing on shrubs along the roadside. Also, please do not interfere with wildlife as you never know the situation and interference can only harm young wildlife.

Weather Conditions – Summer fire season has brought haze and light smoke to our elevation the past couple weeks as the fires continue to burn on the west of Yosemite. Thunderstorms hit the area starting the 20th for 45 minutes and 6 hours on Saturday and 4 hours Monday creating flood conditions on some highways. The pattern will continue for the next several days according to NOAA predictions. Tuesday and Wednesday was hazy without any precipitation.

Fishing Tip:

Water temperature is always critical when fishing in July and August and often earlier if your area is in a low water year. Thermometers are a great tool to determine water temperature. When water temps reach 70's mid-day this can be lethal for trout for any length of time as they prefer temps in the mid 50's.. It's wise to incorporate this rule -- when the water you are fishing exceeds 70 degrees; it's time to stop fishing. The higher the water temperature the lower the dissolved oxygen levels will be. Trout will always move from their usual feeding lanes for the deepest and coldest water they can find and usually hugging the bottom. When fishing the warmest part of the day or the summer, try and concentrate on shaded areas provided by trees, brush and undercut banks out of direct sunlight.

NEWS: Rush Creek Dam System

Southern California Edison (SCE) owns and operates the Rush Creek hydro-electric system, which includes three dams in the Mono County/June Lake area: Agnew Lake, Gem Lake, and Rush Meadows. SCE controls water levels in the dams to prevent water from exceeding restricted levels established by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to protect the public in the event of a large earthquake. SCE will modify Rush Meadows Dam (the dam farthest away from June Lake) this year to maintain the water levels. This will consist of constructing a 22-foot high by 12-foot wide notch at Rush Meadows Dam, and will conduct construction activities at Agnew Dam. Starting July 16 crews will be staying at a camp near the construction site and swapped out once a week; this will decrease the number of helicopter flights. Helicopter flights will start at 7am through dusk daily and will stop by 2pm on most Saturdays. Project completion and demobilization of all crews and equipment will be October 31, 2018.

Legislative News:

AB-986 - Update (Gallagher) 12-Month Fishing License/Veterans Discount. June 13 - "From committee: Amend, and do pass as amended and re-refer to Com. on V.A., June 14 - "Read second time and amended. Re-referred to Com. on V.A." Currently in the Senate Appropriations and will be heard on August 6, 2018,

AB2465 (Gallagher) Position: Support (CSL is the sponsor) This bill would require the department, on or before February 1, 2019, to convene a sport fishing industry group, to be known as the R3 Group, with "R3" standing for "Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation." Under the bill, the purpose of the R3 Group would be to collaborate with the department to identify barriers to sport fishing that contribute to the decline in sales of sport fishing licenses. The bill would specify the membership of the R3 Group and provide for the R3 Group to identify the above-described barriers to sport fishing and develop and approve recommendations for removal of those barriers, and submit to the Legislature, as provided, a report containing the approved recommendations.

Anglers have a voice in the political process, so please make sure your state Assembly Member and State Senator hear from you.

Committee Action Date: 07/02/18

Committee Motion: Do pass as amended

Committee Hearing Date: August 6, 2018

SB 518 (Berryhill) (Formally SB187) 12-Month Fishing License POSITION: Support Today, California has an antiquated and costly licensing system whereby annual fishing licenses expire on December 31st of every year, regardless of when it was purchased. This has contributed, in part, to significant declines in fishing participation rates and license sales. This legislation aims to increase fishing participation rates, license sales and state revenue by making annual fishing license valid for full 12-months from the date of purchase at a premium of 130% of the annual calendar-year license (\$62.86). This provision is also included in AB 986, introduced by Assembly Member Gallagher. This is an act to add and repeal Section 7149.06 of the Fish and Game Code, relating to fishing.

House Location: Assembly in committee process

Recommend: PASS

Committee Location: Assembly Appropriations

Committee Hearing Date: **06/27/18**

To read more go to:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=2017201805B518

CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Strategic Plan for Trout Management....etc.

I phoned to get an update from Public Information Officer, Andrew Hughan but he is currently on special assignment and you will be directed to Roger Bloom and left a message and no reply as of 6/27/18 and 7/26/18. Therefore no update on the CDFW public meetings held around the state for trout anglers to voice their interest, needs, and novel ideas about the statewide management of trout resources regarding the revision and creation of a new Strategic Plan for Trout Management and hatcheries including simplification of inland trout angling regulations. For additional information contact Andrew Hughan at andrew.hughan@wildlife.ca.gov or (916) 322.8944.

Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW):

Updated trout releases will be on their web-site (<http://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FishPlants/>) or call their specific region (Inland Deserts 855.887.1275)

CDFW Launches Electronic Reporting System for Commercial Fish Landings - CDFW announced the availability of E-tix, a new electronic reporting system for commercial fishery landings that came on-line July 1, 2018. With the cooperation of the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, the E-tix application has been adapted to allow electronic reporting of all California landing records.

CDFW has an updated free downloadable app for Freshwater Sport Fishing Regulations application at <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/regulations>. It tracks your current GPS location and will tell you the regulations of the water where you are standing and regulations for waters within a designated area or approximately a five-mile radius. Take a look, it's pretty thorough.

HIGH FLOWS COMING TO OWENS GORGE

The 500 cubic feet per second flows scheduled for the Owens River gorge in late June were postponed until later this month. But the impact of flows 10-times greater than what has been released hasn't been postponed. What about the fish and their habitat?

According to CA Fish and Wildlife biologist Steve Parmenter, the penstock between the Middle and lower Gorge Power Plants has to be dried for safety reasons as LA DWP fix a mechanical problem. All this precedes the construction of a flume, scheduled for September, to begin restoring flows in the length of the gorge.

Parmenter is the go-to guy for trout in the Gorge; he's been around since the litigation in 1991 that resulted, 24 years later, in putting water back in the once bone-dry Gorge. He stated, "brown trout need three things, Cool, clean water, deep pools, more than three feet and gravel riffles," providing a smorgasbord of aquatic insects. All of the above could improve with the planned flows. That assumption isn't theoretically. According to Parmenter,

back in 2003, LADWP ramped up flows to 700cfs in the Gorge over a period of a few days.

The duration of this year's flows is far longer, roughly two months compared to a few days. But, the mathematics of stream power indicated the proposed 500cfs flows don't have near the power of those in 2003, according to Parmenter. "Fish do a pretty good job taking care of themselves," Parmenter said. "The flows are high, but not out of the natural range. Fish hunker down and weather the storm."

Again, anecdotal evidence says the fishing experience could improve after the high flows. A few years after the 2003 release, Parmenter got calls from anglers asking "what did you do, the fishing is great" in the Gorge.

Not everybody is convinced; Phillip Anaya's states he and others want to see an environmental analysis done before the Gorge ramps up to 500cfs. He believes a big release will disrupt the hatch and limit the food the trout eat.

Fishing Report

LOWER OWENS is at **743.7** as of **6/26**. The flow should taper when DWP turns down the wheel.

ROCK CREEK LAKE reports lots of fish being caught with streamers, black, olive or dark olive with flash. Some areas currently have a Mosquito deficit but it's wise to carry your strongest Deet, eucalyptus oil or favorite "bug-be-gone", they are brutal.

UPPER OWENS – Flow is at 595.7cfs as of 6/24
Conditions and Hatches: Good – Water's clean and the fishing is picking up, especially above the bridge and it's definitely hopper time. Older planters are starting to move upstream and if Crowley's algae bloom continues to build we might start to see the first push of browns coming out of the lake. Tricos have started hatching; giving us a better reason to get out there early, 6 am is not too early. Look out for fish keying in on specific hatches midday. Most decent sized fish are eating under the cut banks. DRIES: Stimulator #16, Extended Body BWO #16, Elk Hair Caddis #16-18, and Parachute Adams #16-20. HOPPERS! NYMPHS: #12-16 Bead Head Prince, #16-18 Pheasant Tail, Flashback Hares Ear #14-16, Anderson's Bird of Prey #14-16. STREAMERS: Meat Whistle, D's Hoover Mover, and Big and ugly. Dead drifted or strip under the banks on a type 3 sinking line.

CROWLEY LAKE – Lake had actually been coming up but it looks like they're starting to drop the lake. The level is now about 5 ft below the spillway. The lake should be nice and full for the foreseeable future. It's on, most boats are way up in the Mcgee channel but if you don't want to be part of the zoo there are fish all the way out to 20'. The fish are NOT glued to the channel but are also spread out over the flats feeding on midges, mayflies, damselfly and....wait for it....PERCH FRY! Sandy Point has fish on the edge of the drop off on the

north side? The fish planted a month ago have had time to scatter and the Hiltons have gone very quiet. Alligator Point is also spotty? Some fish in north arm channel and off Green Banks Bay, some in 13 ft, but most out in 20+ft. Also in 2-7' feet along the shoreline but this is not consistent. Albino Barons, Red Barons early and later in the morning go to Copper Tigers, Red/Black dubbed head Optimidges, then Flashback Gray/Black Optimidges, Shaft Emergers when sun is overhead - all small.

HOT CREEK - Water condition is good. Flows are at **51.3cfs as of 7/26**, Best fishing seems early to mid morning but there's something going on all day. Runoff is over but we've been getting thunder storms keeping the flows up. Even with the increased flows the weeds are growing fast, combine that with fishing pressure and the fishing is getting a lot more technical. Caddis hatches have become more consistent, good throughout the day. PMDs start hatching around 9 but they're close to being done. Little Yellow Sallies are done. Female Trico hatches are getting stronger. Don't forget the male Trico emergence in the evening. Dries: Parachute Adams #12-20, extended body BWO #16-18, Elk Hair Caddis #16-18, Parachute Caddis #16-18 and Stonefly dries #14-16. Nymphs: Zebra Midge #18-20, Tungsten Psycho #18-20, Bottom Roller Caddis #14-18, Nitro Caddis #16-18, Anderson's Bird of Prey #14-16, Iron Sally #16-18. Streamers: Meat Whistle, Crystal Bugger and D's Hoover Mover.

CONVICT LAKE – Action is mainly at the southwest corner and the outlet even toward the aspens on the south shore on a consistent basis. Resort has stocked constantly with larger fish. Suggested flies would be dark buggers, light Spruce Flies, or even a crystal bugger in dark olive, burgundy or black size 8 or 10 and even try a point fly to search around 15 feet or so. Some action on hoppers near the north shore below the trail as it's warmer now. Also try a Loberg and/or an Aggravator as a dropper. But don't forget the Convict Lake Marvel (bugger with a prop) in green and brown.

MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN – Water conditions are great in all lakes. Lakes have been stocked again with Desert Springs Fish a couple days ago and again. Summer doldrums appear to have arrived and aside from the weekly plantings fishing has slowed down but there are opportunities to be had. Early and late with midge patterns is probably the most consistent but all of the lakes have Callibaetis and Damsel hatches with Twin Lakes having the best hatches of both. Mayflies start emerging between 9:30 and 10:30 with the damselfly starting an hour or two later. Don't forget that the

mayfly's spinner fall coincides with the emergence so you'll have to figure out which of three stages they're focused on. Streamers: Dock's Twin Lakes Special #10-12, Crystal Bugger #10-12, Beldar bugger #10-12, Pops Bugger #8-12. Nymphs: Barr's Copper John #12-18, Zebra Midge #14-18, and a Lightning Bug #16-18.

SAN JOAQUIN – Flows are 67.8cfs as of 7/26.

Conditions are fair and still consistent as are the hatches. Fishing pressure means that hiking away from the campgrounds is no guarantee of solitude. Nymphing has been a better choice than dries. Flies to try: #16 PMD Zebra bead nymph, #16 Golden Stone, #16-18 Pheasant Tail, #16-20 Purple Prince Nymph, #16-18 Yellow or Tan Stimulator, #18 Elk Hair Caddis, ants and mayfly patterns #14-16 you prefer.

JUNE LOOP – The surface dry fly bite took a downturn with the rain and cooler am temp but try the mornings and evenings when the wind is calm. Toss some elk hair caddis, mosquitoes, ants, gnats, BWOs, and parachute Adams. I like letting the fly ride the surface a few seconds then start stripping in, it will produce better and don't worry if the fly goes submarine. During mid day switch to dragging streamers and buggers with a nymph dropper at around 20-15 feet with linking line. Rush Creek will produce with dries, buggers, nymphs, San Juan worms, and egg patterns especially in the undercuts. This is going to be a great hopper season so hurl them upstream and let it drift near the banks and over deeper pools. Best bet for an Oregon Rainbow is Silver Lake; they have been consistent in serving up those great trophies, so stop in the store and find out what's working.

LUNDY LAKE – Road closed 1/2 mile past resort due to a landslide on the road to the upper campground. Resort reports anglers getting into some nice rainbows on dark woolly buggers size 10, Flash-a-Bou's size 10, Carey Specials (olive chenille body) size 10, Olive Hornberg's with a prince nymph on point. County is also expected to stock trophies shortly. Back ponds are huge with bugs from around 8am to 6pm. Looks like the trout may have to change their belt size with all the available food. Keep a low profile or perfect your presentation with a lighter weight rod. No current report but you can rely on the above information.

VIRGINIA LAKES – Conditions were perfect until the thunderstorms arrived last week, and turned a lot of the wildflowers into flowerless stalks. Fortunately it didn't rain but thunder claps were in the distance. Most of the airborne bugs thought ahead and bought stock in bungee cord to keep the rain from washing them all into Nevada. A variety of stoneflies, caddis, and occasional hopper have moved into the main menu. Best shot would be a Seal Bugger burgundy and dark olive, dark streamers with crystal flash some caddis patterns are still working well and several nymphs including Gillies, zebra's, dark

lord and prince's have done well. Good dry action when the sun warms the surface late afternoon; green body mosquitoes, dark comparadun's if you can find them, or tie some up using olive dubbing super slender with a darker elk hair than the usual bleached material. Keep your flies on a diet as most bugs are not really fat, and the water distorts anything hitting the surface.

Both Trumble and Big Virginia lakes have seen great action last week before the weather. Big V produced some really large fish and turning over the Lodge fish board frequently. When it warms up toward the weekend this should improve surface action with a few bugs testing the air to venture from their security. Try some leech patterns, damsels, buggers, hoppers, soft hackles and Zug bugs.

BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR – Water level has dropped SOMEWHAT. Guess I'll be looking for some size of the 1 pound browns that were stocked late in 2016 from Desert Springs Hatchery in hopes they might hit 3 pounds plus during the this summer. The meadow is getting some smoke from the fire, but doesn't seem to be as bad as in the Mono Basin. Fairly consistent breeze has hit the lake several days in a row. Lots of fish from 2 to 6 pound class with a few browns up to 6 pounds have been spotted. Flies to try are soft hackles, ice cream cones, zebra midges, blood midges and damsel nymphs. As the summer progresses and the weeds on the bottom of the lake continue to grow, look to increase your leader to make sure you stay out of the weeds and are hunting at the top of the weed line. Check with Ken's as to the "fly-of-the-day" they have great hands-on information.

KEN'S SPORTING GOODS - WE ARE NOW ONLINE WITH OUR NEVADA LICENSE TERMINAL! It took awhile but we have the new terminal and it is fully functional!

EAST WALKER – Water conditions are fair to good with flows at 183cfs as of 7/26. The weather has cooled down a little since last week, but water temps are into the upper 60's and seeing sporadic hatches. Keep your distance from Murphy's pond due to slime weeds unless you enjoy cleaning hooks every cast. The fishing is fairly tough but if you get your drifts right you should be able to pull some pretty good fish down there. Still seeing bigger mayflies emerging early along with the Tricos but they are definitely fading. Recommended Flies: **DRIES:** Big flies to get fish to come up and eat them. Stimulator #8, Para-wolf Purple #10, Chernobyl Ant #6-16

NYMPHS: Radiation Baetis #16, Copper Zebra #16, BH Prince Nymphs #12-14, Olive Birds Nest #10-14, Caddis Larva #10-16, Nitro Caddis #14-18, Stonefly Nymphs #6-10, **STREAMERS:** Meat Whistle #2, D's Hoover Mover Rust #4, Hornbergs #10-12

HONEYWELL POND – The pond got another mowing this week and the weed situation is in good

shape now. We had several clients on the pond this week and it seems as though the main flies to try there are damsel nymphs for a while. Lots of patterns have been tried but the damsel nymphs have been by far the number one producer. The fish are pretty hot as we've had lots of reports of anglers being broken off with 3X tippets lately.

SCEIRINE RANCH - The ranch is still hanging in there with some pretty good reports there. Like the Cali side, the Nevada side has benefited from the cooler weather and the fish have become a bit more active. In addition to the patterns that are working upstream, dark lords, prince nymphs, copper johns and soft hackles have also been working on the ranch.

KIRMAN LAKE – No recent report. Hopefully DFW will stock fingerlings again to get the lake going again. **WEST WALKER** – is running at **164cfs as of 6/26** with flat water just below the bridge for about one mile starting at the BRIDGE with a lot of rough water then flat water near Chris Flat campground. I drove along the river yesterday and saw a few anglers flinging flies and watched for a bit and the one man got a great strike but it spit it. He was in a curve just below the flat water after the first campground. If you want to give it a shot look for calmer areas through the canyon. **For** fly anglers try hoppers, ants, elk hair caddis, stimulators and chubby Chernobyl's with soft hackle, pheasant tail and Zug Bug droppers.

AT THE BENCH - Fuzzy Mobility

A ready-to-wind dubbing rope and not a traditional tying material, I have seen so few patterns that use emu probably due to the size of the plumes, length and width. The feather has at least two types of fiber: at the base of the long feather a few inches of fuzzy barbs, each barb is like a tiny ostrich barb; near the tip the barbs become firmer and smoother. The nice thing is the barbs never 'marry', they stay open and mobile wet or dry. The only trout pattern I've seen is an emu body, the fine fuzzy stuff, ribbed through with pearl tinsel to make an unusual palmered body, and then a partridge hackle at the head in sort of a soft hackle spider. It dyes well and I've seen natural dun, heather blue, and brick. It is unusual and may eventually find its place on the tying bench. Can be purchased from Chevron Hackles.com

GLOSSY TINSEL - Semperfli Quick Dub Glint

Quick Dub has a new version by adding "glint", a strand of fine glossy tinsel type stuff twisted around the core. As before this has a strong fine twisted core trapping fine long fibers, so when you wrap the core around the hook you get a slim body with a dubbing-like fuzz of fibers. Both Quick Dub and the Glint versions might be worth a try if you find dubbing annoying. It comes on a spool from Semperfli.

KLINKHAMER PURISTS

Partridge has updated the Klinkhamer X-treme by changing the size designation, so for the #16 was formerly size 20, and the #14 was formerly size 18. The new sizing makes sense in terms that most tyers understand and a size 14 or 16 will be about the same size as a more conventional hook.

DEGREASING PASTE – What you say?

It's a thick sticky sort of waxy "stuff" which acts to both degrease and as a very mild abrasive. It sticks to your finger tips; a tiny amount is enough to rub down a tippet length or a full leader as it takes the sheen off monofilament and prevents it floating on the water surface. A simple effective degreaser and de-glosser (new word). From Hunt's Original (www.huntsoriginal.co.uk). Probably a few places handle it here in the states.

Polly's Patterns in the August Issue.

US 395 ROAD CONSTRUCTIONS -

Check the CalTrans web-site for current status of all highways as their work schedule is subject to change due to traffic incidents, weather, availability of equipment and/or materials, and/or construction-related issues.

MONO S R 89 CHIP SEAL PAVEMENT PROJECT

On SR 89, construction crews are placing a chip seal on the highway with daily lane closures that may delay traffic up to 20 minutes Monday through Thursday 7am to 6pm and Friday 6am to 3pm.

LEFT TURN SLEEVE--CONWAY SUMMIT & US 395

CalTrans is in week two of their 40 days to complete the project. You can check the website for more specific information and any other road delays in both Inyo and Mono counties at:

www.dot.ca.gov/d9/projmgmt/projects.html

Sheep Ranch Shoulders Project near Bridgeport

From Buckeye Road to 2.9 miles of Swauger Canyon. Road; road widening to facilitate bicyclists with daily lane closures up to 30 minutes 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or less. Suggest alternate route at Holbrook Junction through Wellington to 182 into Bridgeport, or it will take an additional 30 minutes wait time heading south.

INYO 395 CHIP SEAL PROJECT- On US Highway 395 near Big Pine from the south junction of State route 168 to Warm Springs road. Daily lane closures that should not impact traffic from Monday thru Thursday 6am to 8pm and Friday 6am to 3pm

RECIPE of Interest – Cilantro-Buttered Trout with Tomato Salsa – Serves 4

4 whole rainbow trout, dressed
2 lemons sliced
4 sprigs cilantro plus 1 T chopped
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
½ C (1 stick) butter
2 T lemon juice

Cooked brown rice

Tomato Salsa:

2 cups chopped ripe tomatoes
½ onion, diced
3 banana peppers, diced
¼ C Italian dressing
¼ t red pepper flakes

Combine all salsa ingredients and refrigerate.

Please 2 or 3 slices of lemon and 1 sprig of cilantro in the cavity of each fish. Season with salt and pepper.

Melt butter and add lemon juice plus 1 T of chopped cilantro. Set aside.

Grill trout over hot coals for 6 to 7 minutes per side until meat turns white, basting occasionally with cilantro-butter mixture. Serve with tomato salsa and brown rice.

See you on the water and keep 'em wet CJ