

EASTERN SIERRA FOCUS

By CJ Webb

STAY ALERT DEER MIGRATION - Mule deer are starting to migrate to their summer grounds at lower elevations and crossing the roads. This seasonal event causes accidents and death, so please stay vigilant and watch out for deer browsing on shrubs near or along the roadside.

Weather Conditions – Early June weather was great and continued through the 18th then “Mother” suffered another migraine and the temperature dropped to 28 degrees on the 22nd. The highs will return early next week to help melt the remaining snow. Run-off is at its peak and will stay that way for a couple more weeks until the mass is reduced.

Fishing Tip:

Achieving the perfect “dead drift” casting a dry fly. Most anglers will admit there is a hidden exhilaration when you watch a fish rise from beneath to take your bug. Dry fly fishing isn’t the easiest skill to master and requires good casting and management of the fly on the water. The trick is to place your bug with an appropriate cast resulting in a fly that looks and drifts on the water like the real thing. That could be an adult caddis, mayfly, or stonefly returning to the water’s surface to lay its eggs, or a terrestrial blown into the water from stream-side vegetation. The first step is to key into tracking your fly on the water by using a highly visible fly a couple sizes larger with a white post or poly yarn on top to provide a focal spot to follow. Follow your cast by watching where the fly lands and never take your eyes off it as it drifts. A well-executed overhead cast is the best cast to help achieve a delicate weightless presentation that will land silent and natural.

The “splat” is a beginner’s first accomplishment and you will know it when you do it. The only way to avoid this is to practice stopping the rod at “eleven o’clock” when you are ready to deliver the fly. Yes, it will take practice, so get out there and give it a try. You can’t fish underwater all your life without knowing the experience of seeing a Trout rise to a fly. It’s a truly “ahh” moment.

Legislative News

AB1387 - Assembly member Jim Wood of Santa Rosa authored Assembly Bill 1387 that will transition California’s calendar-based fishing license to one that is valid a full 365 days from the date of purchase. The bill, sponsored by the California Sportfishing League (CSL), is co-authored by Assembly member James Gallagher of Yuba City and a bipartisan group of 12 other legislators. **It has been set FOR Hearing ON July 9th at 9:30 a.m.**
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billCompareClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB1387

CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF FISH AND WILDLIFE **2020 Proposed Fishing Regulations - UPDATE** <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Fishing/Inland/Trout-Plan/Regulation-Simplification>

The recent discussion between Harry Blackburn, a Mammoth Lakes fly fishing guide and Roger Bloom as reported to Chris Leonard that “Roger believes changes – whatever form that may be, unbeknownst to anyone yet – would happen at 2021 at the earliest.” Chris also reported that he had a conversation with Roger and he said that the Department is compartmentalizing the various 5,000 submitted comments into identifiable groups of representation. They sorted through the data, and identified sources of comments, then grouped those sources together. It was obvious to DFW which comments came from outfitters, guides, spin anglers, fly anglers, etc. Roger also stated that the vast majority of submitted concerns were rationale and on target and they have grouped data to find consistency across all groups. They will not collect any fish census data until they have an idea of what changes may take place. Roger stated that he would like to see the Guide License Daily Trip Logs become computer driven so they can at least look at that data across the state, but this is beyond his decision making. It comes more from enforcement. Roger also stated that DFW has decided to take a breather before continuing. Chris stated that DFW is all ears and that no decisions have been made yet so keep voicing your concerns if you have any regarding protection of an area that would be harmful should it be open all year plus a 5 fish limit.

Here is a list compiled by California Fly Fisher that needs serious consideration: The American River, Berryessa Lake Tributaries, Bridgeport Reservoir Tributaries, The Carson River, Davis Lake (Plumas), The Fall River, The Feather River, The Golden Trout Wilderness Area, Hat Creek, Heenan Lake, Hot Creek, Kirman (Carmen) Lake, The Klamath River, Lee Vining Creek, The Little Truckee River, The Mad River, Martis Lake and Tributaries, The McCloud River, The Owens River (Inyo and Mono), Putah Creek, The Trinity River, The Truckee River, and The Upper Truckee River. This is only a partial list of the proposed trout-angling regulations (see link above for the remaining changes). CDFW intends to consider all submitted comments before submitting its final draft, probably in July, to the California Fish and Game Commission. **The Commission in turn will have a formal public comment period that will likely begin in August and run for several months.**

Mojave River Hatchery in San Bernardino Reopens after major Renovation in 2018. The Mojave River Hatchery in Victorville, northern San Bernardino County, has reopened after an extensive and much

needed overhaul to promote more efficient trout production for anglers in Southern California. The CDFW invested several hundred thousand dollars on the project, including pressure washing and disinfection 6,000 linear feet of rear ponds and associated plumbing, coating all fish rearing surfaces with Food and Drug Administration-approved epoxy coating to improve fish culture conditions and installing new manifolds for the water recirculation loop to improve efficiency. Fish production at the hatchery has already resumed and healthy juvenile fish have been brought in from other CDFW hatcheries for additional growth at the renovated facility. The first batch of catchable-sized fish from Mojave Hatchery was anticipated in early March, with others to follow. Millions of fertile trout eggs are also being shipped to Mojave for incubation and rearing into catchable fish for stocking later in 2018. Sorry I missed this bit of important information in last year's report.

CDFW 'Buy a Stamp' to help a Game Warden

Officials at the CDFW are urging anglers to contribute to a Warden Stamp Program that helps game wardens and the enforcement of fish-and-wildlife laws. According to the CDFW, purchase of the \$5 stamp will "procure vital equipment, protective gear, and training for wildlife officers and enhance the department's K-9 Program." Information on how to make a donation is available at: www.wildlife.ca.gov/wardenstamp

CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

The next meeting is August 7-8, 2019 for the California Fish and Game Commission.

Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Stocking

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 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 very handy.

TIDBIT'S –

The Fly Box that Breathes

The Hydrophobic SD fly box from Tacky, it's waterproof and breathes. These are tough polycarbonate boxes with clear tops and blue silicone rubber fly-holding inserts. The plastic top of this box is perforated to expose a layer of breathable fabric – same sort of stuff is used in breathable waterproof clothing. The lid seals to the base thanks to a substantial silicone gasket/seal – a clever design. It's then fixed in the base, a silicone rubber insert with slots for holding flies. It's a tough

solid box, with an excellent hinge, and a loop for attaching a lanyard. Once closed, it's waterproof so you can fall in without drowning your flies. The main selling point is that it lets the moisture out. From Fulling Mill and stockists.

AT THE BENCH: New materials

Moonlit Fly Tying Hooks - The buzz among the guides, vendors and fly tyers first at the Western Idaho Fly Fishing Expo and a few days later at the 2019 Washington Sportsmen's Show was on premium fly tying hooks. Since Euro-nymphing is rapidly taking over the underwater trout world, Moonlit has developed a 60-degree standard wire jig hook in sizes 10-18. Size 14 seems to work the best since it is barbless (ML058). The hook point is long, thin, rapier-like wire that penetrates quickly with little resistance – a well thought-out design when fishing with light tippet favored by Euro-nymphers. They come in packs of 25 hooks retail for \$5.29 for all sizes of this model, and 50 hook packs retail at \$9.79. Go to www.moonlitfishing.com

Moonlit Slotted Tungsten Beads – Moonlit also has slotted tungsten beads that are available in five different sizes from 2.0 mm to 4.0 mm. Each size comes in five different colors, including an eye-catching metallic Blue. Other colors are Black Nickel, Chartreuse, Gold and Black. A 20 bead pack retails for \$5.29 for all colors and sizes. The 40 and 100 bead packs retail for \$9.79 and \$18.04 respectively.

Fly Floatants:

Fluff Dust (similar to Frog's Fanny) is a water-repelling form of silica and comes in a wide-necked bottle; drop a (dry) fly tied to its leader into the bottle, close the lid and shake. The fly is fully coated in extremely fine powder, the idea being it forms a fine, water repellent layer on the fly. Simply shake or false cast the excess powder away.

High and Dry, another floatant "contains both a desiccant drying agent and (floatant) powder" says the High and Dry bottle. Again, this is a wide-necked bottle, the fly needs to be attached to nylon so you can drop it in and take it out. Because High and Dry contains a desiccant, it can dry a fly and then the floatant will of course help it float, so this formulation can revive a fly where straight floatants should be applied to a fly before it gets wet.

Fishing Report

LOWER OWENS - The flows are steady at 6773cfs as of 6/27. The flows are still holding steady even while the runoff continues. It seems that they are holding back on the flows out of Crowley because of the high flow going into the Owens downstream but with Crowley coming up a foot every 4 days they will run out of options soon. The water flowing into Pleasant Valley

Reservoir is moving through so fast that the silt doesn't have a chance to settle out and the lower river has a pale blue glacial look to it. Early its midges followed late morning with caddis and mayfly hatches. Stoneflies start around noon. The only catch is that the most productive times are not consistent from day to day. Not a whole lot of surface activity.

Recommended DRIES: Griffith's Gnat #20, Extended Body BWO #20-22, Para Adams #18-20, Elk Hair Caddis #16-20, Parachute Caddis #16-18, Brooks Sprout baetis #18-22, and Yellow and tan Stimulators #14-16.

NYMPHS: Zebra Midge #18-20, Baetis B/H #18-20, Barr's Uncased Caddis #14-16, Tungsten Caddis #14-18, Birds Nest Olive or Natural #12-16, Stonefly nymphs - #14-16, Barr's Flashback BWO #18-22, Chamois caddis for the crane flies and #12-16 for the stoneflies.

STREAMERS: Big and ugly, always. Pick your favorite large streamer and chuck it everywhere. You will catch fewer fish but there's a chance to catch much larger fish this way.

ROCK CREEK LAKE -

The lake is ice free and tubers are casting themselves into rotator problems. Some action when the temperature turns the bugs on, but most are subsurface. Try Woolly Buggers in Dark olive, Black or Burgundy size 8. Also try some caddis patterns, and small stoneflies. You might want to walk up the stream and see what's happening higher where the greenery is coming alive with, guess what; yup you guessed it, MOSQUITOES.

UPPER OWENS – Current flow is 125cfs. Fishing Conditions and Hatches: Fair to Good: The Upper Owens river has been fishing well. As with many of the other rivers locally, the flows are very high. Below the confluence of the Owens River and Hot Creek the water is fairly muddy so try and fish above the confluence in the clearer water. Maybe it's the wind of the last few days but the caddis hatches have become more sporadic. The midday PMD hatches have also become inconsistent. Dry flies have been very effective in areas with clearer water especially dry caddis imitations size 14-18. Streamers and nymph rigs have also been successful. Recommended Flies:

DRIES: Stimulator #16, Extended Body BWO #16, Elk Hair Caddis #16-18, Parachute Adams #16-20.

NYMPHS: #12-16 Bead Head Prince Nymph, #16-18 Pheasant Tail, Flashback Hares Ear #14-16, Olive birds nest #14-16, zebra midge #18-22, Juju Baetis #18-22, Splitcase BWO #18-22, Olive WD-40 (standard or flashy) #18-22. **STREAMERS:** Meat Whistle, D's Hoover Mover, Tan Sculpzilla, Olive or Black Woolly Bugger, Olive Slumbuster, Olive Baby Gongga, Olive Double Gongga. A sink tip or full sink type 3 is **recommended**; otherwise add some splitshot to help your bug get down in the water column.

CROWLEY LAKE - Conditions and hatches are poor to fair. It has been reported to be slow due to the daphnia bloom. Surface temperatures are now coming back up to 62-65. The Store reported that the fishing seems to be getting even tougher but there seems to be a chance of improvement, now if we can only get the wind to stop. Hilton, McGee and the bays in the south end have been showing more fish. The doldrums of the runoff are upon us. Fishing is sporadic and scattered. A couple of decent days and hope springs eternal but then several tough days have you scrambling to cancel upcoming trips. The mayfly hatch is getting stronger so don't be afraid to try some #16-18 mayfly nymphs late morning. The perch are in the shallow water spawning, 9' to 12'. The best areas seem to be somewhere up north, and it's just very frustrating. The south end has been showing flashes of okay. **Recommended Flies:** Copper Clown, Albino Baron in grey or black. Also the larger blood midges have started showing up in the north end.

HOT CREEK - The flows are up to 164cfs as of 6/27. These flows are the flows at Mammoth Creek; Hot Creek flows out of the hatchery are constant. Water clarity is going up and down on a daily basis, right now the flows are dropping for the first time in a couple of days due to cooler night time temperatures so we might get a little relief. Caddis, Mayfly, and Little Yellow Stoneflies are hatching in abundance. The beautiful thing about Hot Creek this time of year is that a variety of imitations will be successful. Caddis and mayfly imitations in size 14-18 and small stonefly imitations 12-16 are what will give you a solid chance at some fish. For the most part subsurface fishing has been the best, but the dry fly fishing has been getting better and better as the water continues to clear up. Streamers have been doing well in the evenings when the hatches start to subside. **DRIES:** Parachute Adams #16-20, Griffith's Gnat #18-20, High-Vis Hatchmatcher #18-20, Brooks Sprout Baetis #18-22, Parachute Extended Body BWO #18-22. **NYMPHS:** Flash back Tungsten Black Beauty #18-22, Tailwater Tiny Olive #18-20, Micro Mayfly Olive #20-24, Tungsten Psycho #16-20, Radiation Baetis 18-22, Olive Scuds #16-18, WD40 #18-22, Zebra Midge #18-22. **STREAMERS:** Slumbuster Olive, Crystal Bugger, Olive Bopp leech.

CONVICT LAKE – Marvel wet flies are perfect for catching the big ones in the lake. The best way to use the fly is to thread your line through a 1 1/2 in. plastic bubble and a swivel large enough not to be pulled through the bubble. Attach a 5 to 6 ft. leader to the swivel using 4 to 6 lb. test line. Tie your fly to the leader and fill the bubble completely with water. Cast your fly out into the water. The bubble will sink about 3 inches per second. Reel the fly in slowly with a twitch from time to time. Strike any unusual pull or drag as fish sometimes bite softly. Marvel flies are available to

purchase in the general store. This is a good method for that fly, but standard streamers should also work.

MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN –

The road to Lakes basin is open as of June 24. Mamie has seen some action with good reports if you know the area but it's a 2 mile walk in if the road has not opened.

SAN JOAQUIN – Currently the river is running at **662cfs as of 6/27** but the river access is closed; call the **Visitor Center for current status at (760) 924-5500 for updates.**

JUNE LOOP - Stop in at Ernie's for the latest info on all the lakes. When you see fish feeding on the surface mostly in the mornings when it's calm roll with dries including gnats, mosquitoes and caddis. You'll get more hits in lakes anywhere when stripping in with the fly slightly submerged. As the day goes on switch to streamer and buggers deeper with sink line or add some split shot dragged and twitched along. Also try a bead head wet fly with a nymph dropper.

June Lake – Abby says catching has slowed somewhat since the weekend but should pick up again as summer approaches. They are set to bring in some 1 to 2lb Oregon Rainbows before 4th of July which will be released through their pens. Fishing has been slow due to the cooler temperature the last 4 or 5 days and should pick up once the sun gets a good signal on the water to heat it up.

Silver Lake - The fishing at Silver has been up and down the past couple weeks probably due to the increased run-off coming into the lake. I have no doubt it'll pick up as the flow slows mainly due to the aggressive stocking of those Oregon Rainbows by the Resort.

Grant Lake - The Lake is full up and over the spillway. Best approach is by boat for better access. When it's this full some of the shore fishing gets cut down in particular along the west or highway side. The east or back side is accessible via dirt roads. The bite should improve as the run-off slows and less food is being pushed into the lake via Rush Creek.

Rush Creek - Rush is flowing real high right now and is blown out in some stretches. There are folks fishing it so you may be able to hunt and peck for some slower spots or try a jig hook fly.

LUNDY LAKE – Water level is low and very slow in rising with no date as to when it will reach capacity, also the resort is open from 8am to 3pm daily. Hit the ponds again to check on the hatches. Even though it's been cold early morning a few bugs were on the surface and a dry fly took a beating but got to see a few larger brookies. Bob said with most anglers hitting the water with boats and trolling large streamers and tubers

beating the water at the inlet, a few nice fish have been taken to the net and released (same report as last month).

VIRGINIA LAKES – Finally the sun! Whaat? Wind too! Just when it was starting to warm up and get the fish to hit flies, the change in atmosphere brought in high clouds and wind producing the infamous "Sierra Wave". Wind blew on Tuesday and Wednesday and we'll see what the dog brings in. Small brookies near the inlet and outlets were about the only thing hitting until the BFEF Tourney dumped some nice tagged fish 10 days ago and they are still being caught. Also the County Trophy Trout program dumped a load in Big Virginia and Little Virginia on Tuesday the 25th and I weighed 3 just prior to legal pm fishing time and one topped 5 pounds.

Little Virginia had been good prior to the temperature drop to 28 degrees and is rose to 42 this morning and this should increase once the wind blows itself out on Thursday. Flies working have been my Dirty Doc #10, Prince #16 (no weight), hare's ear (no weight) black woolly buggers with and without a bead depending on the type line you're using. No dry action yet but that should change this weekend as the sun pounds down on the high elevation lakes.

BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR – The fishing on the Reservoir has been a little hit and miss these days, the surface temperatures are high but there is still a lot of cold water coming into the reservoir from the snow melt. The fish seem to be a little deeper than usual and they also seem to be more scattered. There has been some pretty good fly fishing lately and stripping leech patterns down near the dam has produced some nice browns this past week and there are some fly anglers doing well up in Buckeye Bay stillwater nymphing.

KEN'S SPORTING GOODS - June 9, 2019 – "Well, after a bunch of construction and a whole lot of cleaning the gift shop is finally re-opened! Lots of great souvenirs in there for you or as gifts, everything from t-shirts to magnets are available! It's great to have that part of the shop open again" stated Jim Reed, owner.

EAST WALKER – The flows on the East have been bumped up to about **582cfs as of 6/27**. The gauge might be damaged as the visual gauge on the river shows a cfs that is 100-50 cfs different than the online flow rates. East Walker River - The East has come down to around 570 cfs this week. The fishing down there is still not easy but there are definitely some very nice fish being caught. There are certainly anglers reporting struggling to hook and/or land fish on the river right now but there are other anglers reporting lots of good hook-ups with some nice fish up to the mid 20 inch range being landed. For the successful anglers it seems as though the best technique has been nymphing, and there's been a couple good reports on streamers. Whenever the water is high one of the keys to success is to get your flies down

towards the bottom where the fish are hanging out, so don't be afraid to add some weight to your rig.

Recommended flies: Big flies to get fish to come up and eat them. Stimulator #8, Parawolf Purple #10, Chernobyl Ant #6-16, and #20-22 dark mayfly patterns. NYMPHS: Copper Zebra #16-22, BH Prince Nymphs #12-16, Olive Birds Nest #10-16, Caddis Larva #10-18, Stonefly Nymphs #6-10, Hogan's S&M #16-20, Pocket Water Baetis #18-20, black Two-bit Hooker #18-20, Kingrey's Cold Turkey Baetis #18-22, rubber leg stonefly #8-12. STREAMERS: Meat Whistle #2, D's Hoover Mover Rust #4, Hornbergs #10-12, and White Woolly buggers' #10-14, and Orange Jawbreaker #10. Additional patterns to try are Sculpzilla, Double Bunny, Moal leech, Zuddler, Hell Razor Craw, Prince, Pheasant Tail, Rainbow Warrior, Rainbow Assassin, Wd-40, Flashback Emerger, San Juan worm, Squirmy Wormy, Silver Streak. Courtesy of JR at Ken's.

TWIN LAKES BRIDGEPORT

Like Bridgeport, the Twins have been a little fickle lately, though there has been some very nice fish up to nearly 5 pounds being caught! There has been some decent fly action from anglers tubing or kayaking and stripping streamers near the inlets of both lakes.

HONEYWELL POND – We didn't have anyone on the pond this past week but the upcoming week is booked pretty solid so we should have some reports coming up.

SCEIRINE RANCH - We haven't had any clients on the ranch this past week, like the California side the fishing can be difficult but could definitely be worth the trip!

KIRMAN LAKE – We didn't have any news from Kirman this week, if we get any info we'll pass it along

WEST WALKER – The flows is 1310cfs and it's very high and muddy. It may be a few weeks before the flows come down and is fishable unless you can find an area with side water.

SONORA PASS - Open but subject to storm closure.

MONITOR PASS - **Currently** open but subject to storm closure.

TIOGA PASS - Crews are still working on the unstable section of the road and currently allowing thru traffic only from 10-11am and 3-4pm without stopping as roadside facilities are not available. The opening could change any day.

See you on the water and keep 'em wet. CJ 19/6