

Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb - May 2020

2020 Fishing Season is Open

Last week Mono County opened for fishing, this week Inyo County opened and all rivers lakes and streams are now open for fishing. The "Department" is currently stocking all waters and Desert Springs will hit the road this coming week.

STAY ALERT DEER MIGRATION

CalTrans and the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife urges drivers to be alert during the start of deer migration into their summer environment. Points to consider when traveling. 1) Be extra alert when driving near areas wildlife frequent, streams, rivers and reduce speed so you can react safely. 2) Pay extra attention during the morning and evening when wildlife are often most active. 3) If you see an animal on or near the road know that another may be following. 4) Don't litter, trash odors attract animals to roadways. 5) Pay attention to road shoulders and watch for movement or reflecting eyes. Slow down and honk your horn if you see an animal on or near the road.

Weather Conditions - Spring storms

May was a surprising month with moderate weather and some wind and a sudden drop in temperature then temps rising daily increasing the run-off down the mountain. The April 25 opening that was postponed to June 1st was beautiful and anglers would have been happy with the conditions. Not many times do you get that kind of weather at high elevations for that spectacular EVENT. But it was no surprise to a lot of us that fishing would begin prior to the postponement date. In fact it happened so fast that even the hatchery managers had to get the lead out, so to speak.

Some lakes above 9500 feet will still have some snow around the edges with snow banks breaking away so be careful and stay safe. Note: Sat. 5-30-20, it's snowing at Virginia Lakes right now and over the Sierra Crest looking south from Vista Point. High winds pushed this system into the area starting at 7am Saturday and should be through the area by 11pm.

Fly-Fishing Apps

"Fish Head Nervous Water Apps LLC, \$6.99, iPhone, Android"

Not only the best app for steelhead rivers, but surf, and also helpful in most any trout-fishing situation around the country. It has a river directory with flows and where and when to find the best windows of action. It's handy when you're actually packing to go fishing; it's quick, organized with the most pertinent information available.

Orvis Fly Fishing Green Mountain digital, iPhone, Android - This is the grand-daddy of fly-fishing apps that is free and packed with tons of general interest fly-fishing news, advice,

discussion, and entertainment you'll never be able to digest it all. It has Tom Rosenbauer's podcasts; casting videos for every stream, flats, or surf situation; knot-tying instruction; fishing reports; up-to-date news feeds; fly pattern descriptions and recommendations with built-in links so you can buy flies you're interested in. It's sort of geared toward beginners, but its solid information and we could all use a little tune-up now and again. --Loren Elliott

"The Pocket Fisherman by Magic Mobile"

This app will help you find out more about the specific species of fish, as well as regulations and records of 49 Continental states regarding fishing in their deep waters. The app also comes with a GPS map that tracks the nearest tackle shops and marinas. You can easily identify the fish by either searching for its name or looking at the gallery of fish images. It's the most comprehensive fisherman app so far as it comes with a summary of each type of fish, description of appearance, weight, natural habitat, and its average length.

Legislative News:

AB-1387 Sport fishing licenses: 12-consecutive-month licenses. No update as to when this will be heard again as it is listed as: Active Bill - In Committee Process - Set, first hearing. Hearing canceled at the request of author.

CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

A comprehensive evaluation of the sport fishing regulations is underway. CDFW has worked to develop a process to revise sport fishing regulations guided by five tenets:

1. Maintain or increase angling opportunity;
2. Improve regulatory consistency across waters;
3. Align sport fishing regulations with CDFW's current fisheries management goals and objectives;
4. Reduce complexity and confusion; and
5. Protect the resources.

CDFW is scheduled to submit the final regulatory package to the Fish and Game Commission (FGC) in June 2020. The FGC will consider the proposed regulations and take public input at its meetings in June, August, and October of 2020. The meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Notice Hearing: June 24-25, Santa Ana
- Discussion Hearing: August 19-20, Fortuna
- Adoption Hearing: October 14-15, Oakland

The 45-day formal public comment period will begin soon after the Notice Hearing, around July 1. Additional information will be placed on this page as it becomes available. Visit the [FGC website](https://fgc.ca.gov/) to follow meeting dates and agendas (<https://fgc.ca.gov/>)

Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW):

Fish Planting Schedule - Dear California Anglers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has removed the Fish Plant Schedule from their website in order to slow the spread of COVID-19 by preventing

public crowding at water bodies. Fishing is still open and CDFW will continue stocking trout at locations where social distancing by anglers and physical distancing of Hatchery Staff can be maintained. We ask that members of the public avoid interacting with Hatchery Staff while fish are being stocked, and to please continue to implement social distancing. PLEASE NOTE: Local CDFW offices will not have access to the Fish Plant Schedule. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Updated trout releases will be on their web-site eventually at: (<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.

Phase-Out of Printed Regulations Books

As part of a broader effort by the department to go paperless, CDFW is in the process of transitioning to online regulations books and will be decreasing the number of printed books shipped to license agents and CDFW offices in 2019 and beyond. The cost to print and ship regulations books is significant, and money saved will be put toward fish and wildlife conservation. This year's booklets will also be returning to the smaller, mostly black-and-white format.

AT THE BENCH

Will return in June - So keep your fingers nimble and tying.

Fishing Report

LOWER OWENS Flow is 198.5cfs as of 5/29. LADWP has closed access to the Owens River Gorge and the climber's parking lots on Chalk Bluff Road. The Owens River, Section 7.50(b)(134)(E) From footbridge at lower end of Pleasant Valley Campground east (downstream) 3.3 miles along Chalk Bluffs Road to the redwood sport fishing regulations sign, is currently NOT open to fishing.

The lower section below the Pleasant Valley Campground on the east side of Bishop is open to fishing. Check DFW regulations and please obey signage along the river. Recommended Flies: DRIES: Large dry with #22-26 midge emergers and adults, Hi Vis Baetis #16-20, Stimulator #6-10. NYMPHS: Pheasant Tail #14-22, Hares Ear #16-22, Zebra Midge #18-22, Olive Hot Spot Jig #18, Barr's Flashback BWO #16-18, Jigged hares ear #12, B/H Prince #10-14. STREAMERS: Woolly Bugger Olive & Black #10-12 | Mini Sculpin Olive & Black #10-12

ROCK CREEK LAKE - Lake was stocked last week. Jim King stated he hadn't talked to anyone fishing there but there were anglers on the lake and along shore. No sign of much runoff in the Rock Creek drainage, and the area ended up with only 30 something percent of average snowpack this year. Forest Service pulled the barricades away from the boat ramp road, and the hatcheries were notified they can stock at the ramp. Looks like a Desert Springs stocking next week. Jim also said, "It's already hit 75 degrees at 9700 ft this week! Sometimes the high temp for the entire year!"

UPPER OWENS – Flow is 68cfs as of 5/29 above the Confluence. Fishing conditions are good - Very few reports as guides and locals are not getting out much but that should change next week. DRIES: Stimulator #16-18, Griffiths Gnat #20-24, Para Adams #20-24, Para Extended Body BWO #20-22, Elk Hair Caddis #18-20, Brook's Sprout Baetis #18-22. NYMPHS: Barr's Uncased Caddis #14-16, Zebra Midge #18-22, WD-40 black #18-24, Prince Nymph #12-16, Red Copper John #14-16, San Juan Worm #12-14, Egg Patterns #12-16, Pheasant Tail #18-22, Tungsten Peacock #14-18, Tungsten Jig Baetis #18-20, STREAMERS: Shock Collar Leech #10, Woolly Bugger White, Olive & Brown #6-14.

CROWLEY LAKE – The Crowley Lake Fish Camp is doing a staggered opening this weekend, click their logo above to see details. Saturday, May 30th for Private Boats, with DWP boat inspections at the lake only, not in Bishop. Limited Dispersed Camping will begin on May 31st. Boat Rentals start June 1st.

HOT CREEK - Trout season opened May 23 and has been fair to good with flow at 63.7cfs as of 5/29. Very few reports as the guides are still not getting out much. DRIES: Stimulators #16-18, R.P. Emerger #22, Real Midge #24, Stillborn Midge #20-22, Extended Body BWO #16-20, CDC Baetis Dun #20-24. NYMPHS: Bottom Roller Phsyco Rycho #10-14, T Midge #24, Zebra Midge #18-22, Grey/Olive Scud #16-18, Medallion Midge #22-24, Harroup's Surface Emerger Brown/Olive #16-18, Tungsten Phsyco Baetis #18-20, Tailwater Scud Tungsten #14-18. STREAMERS: BH Bopp Leech Olive & Brown #12-10, Woolly Bugger Olive & Brown #12-10.

CONVICT LAKE – Sorry, no report.

MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN - Road closed.

SAN JOAQUIN

The roads to Reds Meadows and The Mammoth Lakes Basin are currently closed.

JUNE LOOP - Lakes were stocked last week along with the Desert Springs beauties. Try some Hornberg's,

woolly buggers, and check the edges for dry fly action as the temps have been perfect for hatches. Fishing has been insane according to Jeremy at Ernie's in June Lake. Stay tuned.

LUNDY LAKE – Sorry, no report.

VIRGINIA LAKES – Trout season opened May 23 And Little Virginia and Trumbull Lake thawed the 12th of May and Big Virginia's thaw was wind assisted by the 15th. Tubers hit the water with great action using a double nymph rig with a bead head hare's ear and pheasant tail, or prince nymph. One tuber picked up 50 fish, but he was gone when I went to check how what he used. But Greg Long did exceptionally well for 3 days using his set-up with a 2 fly nymph rig.

BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR - Trout season opened May 23, 2020. The Res is full and will be lowered as the temperature increases. Mainly bait anglers with very little on fly action. Check Ken's Sporting goods for current flies.

EAST WALKER –Flow is 150cfs 5/29 and has stayed within 50cfs up or down this past week but it hasn't hurt the fishing much. Fishing has been a little up and down and tough for some anglers this past week. The weather flipped the switch with colder temperatures and wind but has leveled off and much warmer now. The caddis should start popping again with the warmer weather which should trigger some good dry fly action.

Nymphing reports over the past couple weeks have been good, also some really good dry fly and stream action in the late evenings if it happens; fickle is the word for it. The same goes for the streamer fishing, up one day and down the next. Your best shot is nymphing. Patterns to try: **DRIES: REALLY** big Chernobylly Mousey looking stuff, Mother Shucker #22-24, Stillborn Midge Black #20-22. **NYMPHS:** Prince Nymph #12-16, Dead Drift Crayfish #8, Bottom Roller Psycho #10-12, Copper Zebra #16-18. **STREAMERS:** Meat Whistle, Sculpzilla, Hornberg #6-8, Flashbugger White #6-12.

HONEYWELL POND - The pond fished very well Saturday and clients were out again Sunday so more reports will come later. All of the fish caught were on small leech patterns and soft hackles. As the weather warms up the dry/dropper action should get better. Give Ken's Sporting Goods a call if you want to book some time on the pond.

SCEIRINE RANCH – The ranch hasn't had anyone for about a week, prior to that it was fishing well. Lots of nice fish in the 14 to 20 inch range caught. The California side is mostly nymphing with caddis nymphs and some streamer action. Soft hackles and small

stonefly nymphs have also been doing well. Courtesy of Ken's Sporting Goods.

TIOGA PASS State Route 120 (Mono County) is closed from Crane Flat to the Yosemite National Park east gate at this time. National Park Service officials manage Tioga Road inside Yosemite National Park. For updates contact the Park Service at (209) 372-0200. New reports or rumors said it may open on June 1st or 2nd.

KIRMAN LAKE - Sorry, no report.

WEST WALKER – Trout season is open with general summer regulations. River is running at 934cfs as of 5/28 and 358cfs higher than last month same time. Some flat water just below the bridge for about a quarter mile starting at the BRIDGE with rough water then calms as it nears Chris Flat campground. I drove along the river 8 days ago and didn't see an angler. The West is high and dirty right and looks like fudge-drizzled chocolate custard. Not many fly fishing reports this week due to the run-off and when the snow is gone it will diminish as fast as it came and the river will be fishable and when that happens it should be great.

Roads that are currently open:

SR 120 East of US 395 (watch out for deer/wild horses!)
Burcham Flat road
Green Creek road
Dunderberg Meadows road
June Loop
Sonora Pass 108
SR 270 Bodie road is open but State Historic Park is closed temporarily.

Roads currently closed:

Reds Meadow road to Devils Postpile closed but there are discussions underway to determine if and when the roads will open

Lane Closure Report - Week of 6/1-6/5

Inyo, Mono & Eastern Kern Counties — The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) would like to alert the traveling public to be careful of workers on the highway, to Be Work Zone Alert and Move Over where possible. Work schedules are subject to change due to traffic incidents, weather, availability of equipment and/or materials, and/or construction-related issues. The scheduled lane closures for the week of May 26 through May 29 are:

Mono County:

• **Aspen/Walker Shoulder Project** – On US Highway 395, from Devils Gate Summit (PM 88.0) to the junction of State Route 108 (PM 93.7) construction crews are widening the highway. Traffic may encounter up to 20-minute delays as vehicles are piloted through the active work zone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week beginning Wednesday, **May 27, 2020.**

• **Highway Maintenance** - On State Route 120, from Baxter's Road (PM 31.6) to Dobie Meadows Road (PM 39.86), crews are crack sealing the highway. Traffic will encounter lane closures with no anticipated delays, Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm.

• **Mono Sign Project** - On U.S. Highway 395, from Topaz Inspection Station (PM 120.1) Little Walker River Road (PM 93.01), crews are replacing highway signs. Traffic will encounter lane closures with no anticipated delays, Monday through Friday, from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Aspen/Walker Shoulder Project – On U.S. Highway 395, from Devils Gate Summit (PM 88.0) to the junction of State Route 108 (PM 93.7) construction crews are widening the highway. Traffic may encounter up to 20-minute delays as vehicles are piloted through the active work zone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week beginning Wednesday, May 27, 2020.

• **Mono 108 Truck Turn Around Project** - On State Route 108, 1.7 miles from the junction of U.S. Highway 395 (PM 13.4). Crews are creating a safe turnaround for restricted trucks. Traffic should not be affected during this construction project.

• **Northbound Long Valley AR Chip Seal Project** – On the northbound lanes of U.S. Highway 395 near Crowley Lake, from 2.3 miles north of Rock Creek Road (PM 12.6) to 0.7 miles south of Obsidian Dome Road (PM 35.4), construction crews are placing a thin blanket of asphalt concrete. Traffic will encounter lane closures with no anticipated delays, Monday through Thursday, from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm, and Friday, from 6:00 am to 3:00 pm.

2020 CalTrans Road construction

Olancha-Cartago 4-lane project update US 395

Caltrans is in the final stages of design and right-of-way acquisition for the project which will upgrade 12.6 miles of the current two-lane highway to a four-lane access-controlled expressway. The new alignment will begin four miles south of Olancha to four miles north of Cartago and will close the gap between the existing four-lane sections to the north and the south. The new expressway will feature wider shoulders, a class-III bike route, a non-motorized multi-use undercrossing, and intersection improvements that will benefit pedestrian and bicycle mobility.

Some preconstruction activities beginning soon include utility verification and relocation, vegetation removal and/or relocation, staking the new alignment, installing desert tortoise exclusion fence, and other preliminary items. This \$83 million-dollar project is jointly funded by Inyo, Mono counties' Transportation Commissions, Kern County of Governments, and

Caltrans with State Transportation Improvement Program funds and a tentative completion date of late 2023.

Current Status of Inyo and Mono Counties

Last week Mono County opened for fishing, this week Inyo County opened - all rivers, lakes and streams are now open for fishing.

The **Inyo National Forest** announced today that most developed recreation sites will remain closed through June 30. The **closure can be rescinded as needed**. The order does not close trails, trailheads, and general forest areas, which remain **open** for public use.

The forest closure includes visitor centers, campgrounds, picnic areas, and day use areas and their facilities (restrooms, water and trash services). While trailheads remain open, restrooms, water, and trash services will not be available.

South Tufa (Mono Lake), Convict Lake, Hot Creek, and June Beach Day Use areas are closed.

The Crowley Lake Fish Camp is doing a staggered opening this weekend; click their logo above to see details. Saturday, May 30th for Private Boats, with DWP boat inspections at the lake only, not in Bishop. Limited Dispersed Camping will begin on May 31st. Boat Rentals start June 1st.

Hotels, motels and condo rentals in Mammoth are still prohibited by county and state mandates. Inyo County has rescinded the short term rental ban so hotels are starting to open up again in Bishop.

Some private campgrounds are starting to open again in Mono County, National and state parks, USFS and BLM recreation areas are still closed.

The guide service's are open but are not allowed to guide on Forest Service property until June 1. Guides are booking trips for Crowley Lake, Lower and Upper Owens, Crowley tributaries and other venues but no Hot Creek, June Lake Loop, East and West Walker River.

So far the following local events have been cancelled: Mammoth Lakes 4th of July Parade and Fireworks, and Bluesapalooza.

The roads to Reds Meadows and The Mammoth Lakes Basin are currently.

See you on the water; keep 'em bent CJ 20/5