

EASTERN SIERRA FOCUS

By CJ Webb - September 2025

Weather had been consistently centered on the new moon as it approaches its first quarter with a few days of clouds going into a few days of rain. We had another dousing on the 29th for two days. The new moon has had an effect on conditions at our elevation and as it increases in temperature it only means that rain showers will follow. We have had this occurrence about every month. When the wind arrives it will drop the temperature and then it rains. This occurred in May through August with the same pattern

Mule Deer Summer Migration will start in a couple weeks as their hides are into the “grey” phase and they will be getting ready for their return to their winter homes. But be watchful and continue to look for white butts and/or eyes in your headlights when driving. Early morning and dusk are the worst times so please be vigilant and stay alive. Glance left and right along the road edges as they browse the brush along the roadside.

FISHING TIP: Nymphing

The main portion of a trout’s diet comes from below the surface like caddis larva, midges and other macro-bugs and this is where nymphing comes in. To catch trout and other fish feeding below the water’s surface, grab some stoneflies and midges and have these tips in your mental arsenal!

Keep a Tight drift: Removing slack from the system will help your drift look as natural and drag free as possible. The more line on the water, the more drag you will get from the different currents. By keeping your line short and using your rod length to reach where the fish are, and you will be positioned for a drag free drive. Thus you will present more realistic looking bugs and fish are more willing to eat them up!

Fish as deep as possible: If you aren’t bumping the bottom you aren’t deep enough. You need to estimate the overall depth of the section you are fishing and set the indicator. By setting the indicator to 1 to 1 ½ of that depth you stand a better chance to get your fly to the bottom. But be careful not to set it so deep that there is too much line out in shallow water-resulting in too much drag and an unnatural drift. This balance will come with practice.

Don’t be afraid of heavy flies or weight: Getting your fly where fish are feeding is the name of the game. In most cases, this will require a weighted fly, split shot or a combination of both. Experiment with different weights, combinations and flies to get you in the right zone.

Treat every bump as a strike: As you drift your fly along the bottom, bumping rocks and vegetation is inevitable. The rough part is determining what bumps are strikes (fish on) and what is the bottom (potential lost flies). If you get in the habit of treating all bumps as strikes, you will stand a better chance of setting the hook on a subtle take. I’ve had this happen many times and got frustrated on the upper Owens and let the guide fish and he explained it as he fished and how it’s done.

Give your fly movement: As insects move through the water, they don’t always follow a straight line or trajectory. By adding some movement by way of small twitches or swinging your fly through the current, you stand a better shot of getting that fish to bite.

Inland Water Fishing Regulations have changed since 2020, so download the app to see if there are any changes to the waters you frequent. <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/regulations>. - *Go to Notices: and click on "Quick Guide" to download the app.* 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. This will probably make the new regulations easier to understand.

Interesting Item – “NOISE”

It doesn’t matter because “FISH DON’T HAVE EARS”. Let me introduce something called the lateral line. Almost every fish species has one (it’s the horizontal raised or dark-colored line along the flanks of a fish) and they use this line of specially-adapted cells and nervous system to sense movement, vibration and pressure changes. You know things like bank anglers tramping around, or someone line-dancing in an aluminum skiff.

The fish might not have ears, but they can sense movement and vibration better than we can, so that person who was hammering in pegs at a well-known trout lake recently and then wondering why the bite was slow 10 yards out, might want to re-think that procedure next time out. To be clear; fish are highly-adept at sensing sound and vibration underwater and any foreign noises will be warning sign for pressured fish, and a likely cause for concern with just about anything else living underwater. Stealth and subtlety matter.

Legislative News: UPDATE of AB-817

AB-817: Sport fishing licenses: electronic display: 12-consecutive-month licenses was **Approved by the Governor October 7, 2021. Implementation started January 1, 2023.**

This bill would (until January 1, 2030), authorize the Director of Fish and Wildlife to allow 12-consecutive-month sport fishing licenses to be issued in addition to

certain calendar year licenses. The bill would require the Director to provide the Legislature, on or before January 1, 2025, recommendations for increasing fees for all sport fishing licenses to levels that provide adequate resources to fund sport fishing, including all necessary supporting activities, at the department.

I wrote the DFW Director of Communications in Sacramento about the restructuring of fees as written.

The bill would require the director, on or before July 1, 2028, to submit a report to the Legislature evaluating all sport fishing licenses, as provided.

DFW is still not providing an update and I'll have to try another source from our Rep. Kevin Kiley after two more calls to DFW sources. Everyone keeps passing me to another person? This is quite annoying!

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: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/wardenstamp>

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 Desert at 855.887.1275).

NOTEWORTHY: - The Department just stocked Little Virginia with a load of fish that was supposed to go elsewhere but "that" road was closed to traffic.

GUIDE'S HINT - Loop Knots with Hopper Patterns:

Gary LaFontaine is one of my fishing heroes. A deep thinker and innovator who have helped countless fly fishers. One of my favorite tips from Gary was using a loop knot for large dry-fly patterns. Anglers usually think "streamers" when discussing loop knots, but Gary realized years ago, large dry-flies move more naturally when tethered to a loop knot versus a standard clinch. I (George Daniel) know of several excellent western and Midwestern fly-fishing guides who use nothing but a loop knot when fishing large dry-fly patterns, so learn this knot if you plan to fish larger terrestrial patterns this season.

AT THE BENCH:

See-through Sybai Bodyflex Tube – Interesting stuff. I have some ideas about how I'd use this, but I have not used Bodyflex or similar in my tying. It's like a Mylar tube but more durable and less flashy. The easiest use is as a sheath. Tie a fly, and as the final

step slip a length of Bodyflex over the dressed hook shank and affix with epoxy or resin. Interesting stuff! It's kind of like the Chinese finger torture we use to play with as kids!

CDC Feathers by Fulling Mill - This new super premium high quality CDC Feathers has been treated with a waterproofing agent to ensure optimal buoyancy. Perfect for use as dry fly wings, bodies and mobile hackles on both nymphs and dry flies. It comes in 19 colors and is \$9.95 a package which I think is a bargain if it really floats as stated.

Montana Fly Barred Marabou - Custom dyed with brilliant colors and perfect barring. From leeches to sculpin patterns, this marabou will give your streamer patterns a natural mottled look that fish can't resist.

It comes barred in Black, Brown Rust and Olive on 17 background colors. I'm especially excited about the mini barred 2" size. Both are \$9.95 from Fulling Mill.

ROCK CREEK LAKE – Same report as last month.

Lake has been stocked regularly and no report for the lake but try the same arsenal you would use for Virginias and/or Saddlebag as the elevations are similar. Drag out your cache and tie on a large bugger or leech pattern and toss on a dropper about 18" below the big bug. It's been up and down with flies due to the amount of other items being used, as in most of the Sierra lakes this summer.

UPPER OWENS – Flows are 82cfs as of 10/3.

Unfortunately the big news is the cattle are inside the fences. This is a planned event, for various reasons the ecosystem depends on grazing and now that the deer and Antelope aren't doing their job it's up to the cattle. Having cattle along the banks is beneficial in the short term so they rotate them from section to section every couple of weeks. Unfortunately it doesn't really matter if you're downstream from them because the grass and weeds make it harder to fish.

With the water coming out of Grant Lake (42 cfs), the silt is getting flushed out of the tunnel, and the water quality had turned bad but it's improving fast. The water temperatures are coming up, now in the mid to high 50's, usually the fish turn on when it hits 58. The hatches are picking up, besides the ever present midges, the morning caddis and Trico are improving with a few PMD's late morning. We are starting to see some bigger lake Rainbows and the Browns start moving up, this usually starts in early July but they have started early, possibly because of the colder water coming in. Also avoid walking through the shallow gravel tailouts; there are eggs in the gravel that do not like being trampled. If size is

not important you can pick up some 6"-8" browns on dry flies. We are also seeing the stockers moving upstream from below the bridge. Dries: Brooks CDC Baetis #18-20, E-Z Spot Trico #18-22, Caviar Midge #22, Spent Partridge #16-22 and Missing Link #16-22. Nymphs: HDA Fav #14-16, Expecting Scud #16-18, Glass Bead Micro May Olive or Brown #20-22, Weiss BP Light #18-20, Zebra Midge #22-24, T-Midge #22-24, Real Midge #22-24, Olive midge patterns #20-24 and Chamois Caddis #14-18 (Crane fly imitation). Streamers: Kesslars H/B/S Olive & Natural (#12).

CROWLEY LAKE

Recreational Advisory Issued at Crowley Lake due to Potential Harmful Algal Bloom August 26, 2025, 12:03pm. DWP has asked everyone to stay out of the water at Crowley Lake after tests were confirmed of the presence of harmful algal blooms. LADWP is working directly with the Regional Board and has posted signs with a recreational advisory of "Danger" have been posted at the Marina and Hilton Creek Drainage. Thank you and Stay Safe!

HOT CREEK - Flow is 46cfs of 10/3.

Report: Due to the flows dropping, bird predation has once again become a problem. The result is that the fish will be out in the feeding lanes during the stronger hatches but once they are over they will move back to cover. When that happens you need to fish tight to the bank weeds or swing streamers under the banks or weed beds.

PMD, Trico and Caddis hatches have improved and the fishing is good but there is a definite slow down about 10, especially at the Interpretive Site. Speaking of the Interpretive Site, the morning hatches, especially the Trico hatches have picked up considerably but so have the crowds and the fish are getting picky. If you're not seeing hatches don't forget the scuds.

Down in the canyon the hatches are rapidly improving, but with the flows dropping and the weeds growing it's even more critical to make accurate casts and keep your drifts short. Caddis migration starts around 7, along with the Trico emergence then the Trico spinner fall 9-10, PMD hatch midday followed by Caddis hatch. Hopper patterns are becoming more effective and with the dropping flows and thicker weeds the Hopper dropper nymphing is becoming more effective. Two guide tips: 1) when casting, if you're looking at the weed beds, you will hit them, so look at the clear lanes. 2) Your drifts should be 4 seconds or

less followed by a smooth but aggressive back-cast - You will be amazed by the number of hookups you didn't even know were there.

CONVICT LAKE - Always try large dark streamers in olive, dark Burgundy, red/black leech patterns and Pistol Pete's in dark colors. Work the inlet and outlet and watch for any surface activity especially near the southwest corner. The only fly I would use would be a large BH woolly bugger in dark colors with or without a blade. Also, try a two fly rig using an Olive Crystal Woolly Bugger with a bead.

SAN JOAQUIN - Flow is 22cfs as of 10/3 and is pretty low. Hatches have been weak and fishing has been pretty poor unless you want to walk a couple miles below the drop-off. It would appear that there's a lot of catch and keep going on so with the lack of stocking the fish numbers are down...

Report: Fishing up by the dam is poor, try down below the bridge. The water coming out of the dam is warm 24 hours a day but if the nights are cool the further down you go the lower the temperatures will be. The water temperature has been remaining in the 60's well into the afternoon and with the expected cool down that shouldn't change; it's still a good idea to check water temperatures. Fishing is still tough but with no crowds it's worth the effort. Lots of small midges and a good Trico hatch around 7:30 followed midday with caddis and Damselflies. Seining shows LOTS of small mayfly and stonefly nymphs. It's still a good idea to check Ken's report up in Bridgeport. Dries: Stimulator #10-18, Parachute Adams #16-22, Elk Hair Caddis #14-22, and Ant Patterns #14-18. Nymphs: Pheasant Tail #14-20, Hares Ear #12-20, Zebra Midge #20-22, Copper John #14-18 and Prince Nymph #10-20. Streamers: Black Woolly Bugger #8-12 and Slump Buster #8-12

JUNE LOOP - Gull or Silver Lake have seen good action with the latest stocking. Weather has been up and down for a few days, then clear since the moon is at 50%. Last week was warm with lots of bugs in the bushier areas along Silver Lake's west shoreline and the west end near the greenery. Try dark green or rainbow Hornbergs, top water dries and some midges along the lake edges. This is an excellent place to perfect your casting toward bushy areas either with a fast roll-cast or a steeple cast.

RUSH CREEK ANNUAL CLEANUP - September Phone 760 648 7525 for details if you wish to help in 2026. It was a great turn-out and as always Andrew at Silver Lake Resort was a great host and provided lunch.

LUNDY LAKE - Resort will probably close between late September and October 15th. Try some small midges (cluster, Griffith's Gnat or soft hackles) in the

ponds beyond the resort, but try large buggers in black or olive or a two tone bead head near any bushy areas near the water especially around the lakes southeast corner. They are family owned and operated and working under a few tenuous situations. Try some hoppers and/or large black ant patterns and definitely Craig Matthews's special Caddis if you wander around his web-site.

VIRGINIA LAKES – Again, they both have seen every possible fly pattern, except for a few secret fly's hitting the water. Top water; sub-surface with and without droppers but most used flies have been searching patterns with midges and a lot of bubble/fly action as well. Bring your arsenal and get ready for some exceptional action. Big fish for the summer came out 2 days ago at 7lb 3 oz. Hatches have decreased but fish are still hitting the surface taking emergers. My choice would be a BWO size 16 Dry parachute. Or, para black elk hair caddis just prior to the sun hitting the water, and watches the surface change. Of course my favorite time of day is when the water is silvery and the bats are "bugging" in the air. It's supposed to snow tonight and into tomorrow if the temps are low enough.

TRUMBULL LAKE - has produced some nice "hunks" throughout the summer and this has continued into early October. It was fished heavy at times. Same for the Virginias, except the flies need to have a parachute in the more shallow areas. DFW had stocked throughout September and reports were good with Rickard's nymphs and assorted dries especially Griffith's Gnats.

BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR – Try fishing the west shore and cast toward the dam, but there hasn't been a lot of action due to the temperature of the water. Check with Ken's for the latest report.

EAST WALKER – The East is running about 49 cfs and still fishing pretty well, mostly below the bridge and into Nevada. The "Mile" section is still in recovery mode from the kill it endured last season, there are some fish moving in but the numbers are much better downstream of the Hwy 182 bridge. We're getting lots of good streamer reports as well as dry/dropper and nymphing reports lately. Water temperatures are in great shape so there's no reason not to fish throughout the day. Patterns to give a try: Sculpzilla, Ziwi, Dali lama, double bunny, Darth baetis, Perdigon, copper John, pheasant tail, hare's ear, rainbow warrior, silver streak, naked Chernobyl, Madam X, foam hopper and para hopper. Ken's report.

HONEYWELL POND – The Pond fished great this week with angler reports on great action with leeches and soft hackles, much of the pond still has some pretty

good weed growth but there are some very good lanes where it's not too weedy and the fish are hanging out. With the colder weather the weeds will start to go away and as the season progresses there will be much more water to fish without weeds to contend with. Ken's Sporting Goods.

SCEIRINE RANCH - We're still getting very good streamer and dry/dropper reports from the ranch lately as well, most anglers reporting having very successful days down there. Like the California side, the temps are great and the fish are pretty active both on the surface and underneath. Give us a call if you want to book some time out there!

KIRMAN – We just had one report come in from Kirman this week with a pair of anglers reporting getting just one fish between the two of them. Pretty slow action out there lately, hopefully they'll start getting a bit more active as the weather cools.

WEST WALKER - 44 cfs as of 10/3. We are still getting some good reports this past week with anglers saying the best action in the Canyon along Hwy 395 is up closer to the town of Walker and some decent action in the Pickle Meadows area off of Hwy 108. Fly anglers can fish throughout the day with hopper dropper rigs and have good action as long as they're sneaky.

CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife

CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife 2021 Regulations:

Please provide comments to these changes for any water you feel would be detrimental to the resource. They need your input in order to make informed decisions on all these waters. East Walker needs some adjustment, so please talk to someone in DFW and ask them why they were changed to the current status.

Every person or agency recommending that regulations be added, amended, or repealed must submit a petition to the Commission at the site listed: (<https://fgc.ca.gov/Regulations/Petition-for-Regulation-Change>) using this petition form. You can contact their office to see when the next meeting will be held to submit regulation changes on time and whatever is on the books today can be changed. Also include your comments to Governor Newsom at: (<https://govapps.gov.ca.gov/gov40mail/>). Here is the Executive Director's contact information: Melissa Miller-Henson - fgc@fgc.ca.gov (916) 653-4899 or (916) 653-7229.

NOTE: You must fill out the form in its entirety and reference the statutory or constitutional authority of the Commission to take the action requested (see page 2,

item number 2) and without this they will disregard your petition.

Trout in the Classroom 25-26

New submission dates and registration links for egg deliveries and teacher trainings on the TIC website <https://wildlife.ca.gov/CAEP/R5>. The last teacher training will be on Sunday 11/23/25. Also, once again all teacher Application Forms (CDFW 772 Forms) are now online and can be found on the main CAEP page.

Winter 2025 Trout Session Application deadline is December 14, 2025

Annual Owens River Clean Up

The 11th Annual Owens River Clean Up is scheduled for **Saturday, November 1, 2025**. The event starts at 8:00 AM at Pleasant Valley Campground.

- **Date:** Saturday, November 1, 2025
- **Time:** 8:00 AM
- **Location:** Pleasant Valley Campground, on the east side of the metal footbridge
- **Organizer:** Chris Leonard at 11053feet@gmail.com
- **What to bring:** Gloves are recommended.

Fly-Fishing Apps

onWATER.com App provides boundaries that are found on maps, but now they're on an app so you can explore your water with confidence.

It's Your Water...Explore It - Everything you need to plan your trip, explore your water and relive your experience. Plus we're constantly adding rivers and updating info. From your laptop to your phone it's like having a seasoned guide at your side.

Know Before You Go - Whether you're planning a fly fishing destination trip, just getting out for a day or exploring water on the app instead of working, all the things you need are right at your fingertips.

Detailed River Maps and Real Time Data - Locate access points, boat ramps, camping, parking, and know the distance between them, so you never miss a take-out or honey hole again. Plus current river flows and weather, everything you need to know is in this app. And you won't have to fold it up after you glance at it.

Public and Private Land Boundaries - Stream access laws and public land overlays help you plan where to fish and eliminate the worry that you may be on private property (onWater is for the angler that likes to fish a lot and not make waves).

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Local Fishing Reports and Fly Shops - Connect with local fly shops that serve the area you're exploring. Get current fishing reports, hot flies, stream flows, weather and more. It's your one-touch guide to all the local experts.

Catch and Relive - Snap a quick photo of your catch before releasing it, and add it to your trip log. Uploading the photo also captures the river, flow and weather. Then

archive by trip, water, date or other categories. Add trip notes like the fly used, GPS coordinates and how much bigger your fish was compared to your fishing buddy's. \$3.99/mo. or \$39.99/yr.

"Fish Head Nervous Water "Apps, \$6.99 iPhone and 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 is a 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, appearance, weight, natural habitat, and its average length.

CalTrans Highway work along US 395 – Check the District 9 CalTrans web-site for current status. There is a list of work that will be ongoing. Here is a link for more information. D9PublicInfo@dot.ca.gov

Mono County:

Rock Creek Pavement Project –Rock Creek Pavement Project – On U.S. 395 near Tom's Place, crews are installing electrical infrastructure at the Tom's Place intersection. There will be intermittent lane closures and drivers may experience brief delays. The speed limit is reduced to 55 mph through the project area. Work is scheduled Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. For more information about the project and its detours, visit: [Upper Rock Creek Road Closure, Caltrans](#).

See you on the water! 9.30.25