

Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

Fishing tip:

The Eastern Sierra weather pattern this past winter is non existent with one minor exception, that the snow pack over the crest is 30-40%. February is when the big blast always hits the Sierra, and it hit again around the 22nd but with very little snowfall. March started out unstable with a light dusting of snow, rain and finally started to warm up by the 10th. Spring is here if you haven't noticed.

OK, for once Punxsatawney Phil was right, and I turned in my hunting license on rodents for this year only!

Spring run off has started in some areas and the flows are slightly up with West Walker, East Walker, Hot Creek and Owens running with good clarity. Bridgeport Reservoir is full but release won't increase until full-on thaw starts. There's always a bright side, but this year probably won't have one due to the low water, so we'll have water through most of the summer and fish food will be plentiful.

If you plan to fish the Eastern Sierra within the next few weeks, bring extra layers of clothing as weather can be unpredictable, and if you plan to fish the Bishop area, bring bug juice, they are hungry and seeking new meat.. Just when you think it's too early, you'll become part of the food chain.

Be safe if you walk in and around desert brush, watch for snakes, as it's warmer than normal this time of year and the diamondbacks are creatures of temperature so be alert and prepared, and don't take chances unnecessarily.

Legislation

The State's Wild Trout program, has received funding through AB7 which was signed into legislation in 2006 has hired 12 biologists and a Coordinator for their threatened trout position. Other than that, everything in AB7 will remain as signed by the Governor.

The Department of Fish and Game press release regarding the mud snails in Hot Creek Hatchery has been working overtime to reallocate and reorganize where the added 40,000 pounds of fish will come from to stock the mud snail negative waters in Mono County, and a bit of juggling is being done to accommodate the anglers for the 2007 season.

Fish and Game Commission lost Michael Flores to R. Judd Hanna of Mill Creek, and Mr. Hattoy, the new President recently passed away, and at the time of this writing the President's position had not been filled.

Fishing Report:

Remember to check the regulations prior to fishing unfamiliar water that is new to you concerning limits, size, etc.

ROCK CREEK is frozen and the road crew will probably start on the road earlier than usual due to the lack of snow.

HOT CREEK – water is clear, with comfortable temperatures and midges are hatching. Bring a bevy of midges to be prepared. The point is being prepared with all your midge imitations. The breezy afternoons always prevail so come geared up for everything. Please stay out of the water to prevent the spread of the New Zealand mud snail. Fish over

20" were the norm last week with sub surface flies. It's been an unusual year for snow patterns, and we haven't seen much in the way of precipitation. Use your arsenal and if you've got the "stuff", you'll get the "fish".

CROWLEY is ice free and will be ready for the opener.

MAMMOTH BASIN still under snow and ice and the Lake Mary Road should be open earlier this normal.

SAN JOAQUIN ROAD plowing will not start until May 10th as that is the agreement between MMSA and CalTrans.

JUNE LAKE is ice free and the loop road is open. June Lake marina cage culture program will be releasing some great fish for this opener. Tubing will be great as water temps will only increase eliminating bladder and long hot-chocolate/coffee breaks once the season opens.

GULL LAKE is ice free and ready for tubers.

SILVER LAKE is ice free and waiting to kill your dreams.

GRANT LAKE is ice free and always a challenge.

TIOGA PASS ~ Discussion has begun as to what their target date to start the road. The Park Service will start on April 15th, and you can drive all the way up to Ellery Lake. If temps increase everything will change accordingly.

LUNDY ~ Road is open and the gate is still up, but there is less than 8 inches of snow on the ground.

VIRGINIA LAKES road was plowed to Rand Road on the 16th of March, a record for my 32 years of operation. The lakes are free of snow and only the ice remains, it's dark and Little Virginia has a small pocket of water open. Trumbull is the same, with only a small opening at the east side of the lake.

EAST WALKER flow is at 90cfs and won't increase until the Bridgeport Reservoir (Rez) fills to capacity which should start in about 3 weeks. I scouted the area and found midges everywhere. Midge cache needs to be in tow in order to hit the right combination when you arrive and switch often because what hits this morning probably won't be getting tugs tomorrow. Bring everything and try it all. You won't be disappointed. San Juan worms worked one day, and birds nests the next, but tiny zebra midges, rainbows, WD40's, Tail-water Tiny, and Mercer's Midgling in root beer. A reliable source reported 26 fish over last weekend with one topping 23".

Piranhas (no-see-ums) are not here as yet, but its early don't give up hope to make your annual blood donation to their drive, they'll be very appreciative.

BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR is ice free and the water is fairly high and clear. Water has not been stocked as yet but DFG bows will be arriving in about 3 weeks.

WEST WALKER flow is 190 cfs but it's early, it will get higher as the temps increase and run-off kicks in.

SONORA PASS road crew is considering a start date and waiting to see what the next series of storms will produce.

Night temperatures are warm and the likelihood of snow is nil unless we get winds in excess of 80 mph to push out the high system for the barometric pressure to return winter conditions. Optimum temps for snow at 8138' on Conway Summit is 28-32 degrees.

MONITOR PASS closed with no date on opening set.

See you on the water, CJ (7.3)

For updates you can email me at vlr@qnet.com