

Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

Fishing tip:

This winter was very mild producing only 5 storms with a few minor disturbances in between. April started out great with a lot of areas above 8000 feet starting to show large amounts of water, but mid month brought in a series of spring storms without much moisture except over the crest. Agencies that measure the snow pack have a difference of opinion as to the water content, but all I can see is around 3 -4 feet of snow at around 9700 feet at Virginia Lakes. Wind drifted snow is normally deeper in the trees. Any additional moisture below that elevation soaked right into the ground. DWP reported 37% of normal for early February which was better than the January water content of 19% of normal.

Spring finally hit the Sierra with night temperatures in the high 30's to low 40's but until the temp increases substantially run off won't start to crank up.

Eastern Sierra weather can be unpredictable so come prepared and bring extra layers of clothing, and don't forget the bug juice as the mosquitoes have had all winter to learn the art of camouflage.

Be safe if you walk in and around desert brush, and watch for rattlesnakes.

News - DFG reported that AB7 is still driving some increases. Hot Creek is still only stocking mud-snail positive waters. The secondary well at Fish Springs killed approximately 40K fish when DWP did maintenance on the main well assuming the secondary was capable of supplying enough water to the one raceway. Overall increase of stocking is expected but it depends on a lot of factors related to the current economy, but it does look good.

Regulation changes for the West Walker and Crowley were submitted last fall and will be discussed this summer in Mammoth Lakes.

Remember to check the regulations prior to fishing unfamiliar water concerning limits, size, and other restrictions.

LOWER OWENS is at 275cfs and producing nicely with #20 midges and scuds according to Dave at the Fly Shop (Bishop).

ROCK CREEK is frozen and you can get right to the ice but it may be unstable opening weekend. Road was plowed the 17th of April. There is a small section of open water at the southeast corner where the inlet is located. Try the stream near US 395 where it's accessible with standard nymphs or dries for the best action until more snow melts. Mosquito flats road is plowed but the gate is still locked.

CONVICT is simply beautiful and I saw some nice fish, really nice fish under the bridge getting some rays awaiting the deli. Trails are clear for almost 2 miles and they are ready for the opener. Try some streamers with rubber legs and don't overcast, just enough to drift by their nose, also Matukas and Pistol Pete's. Fish the inlet and outlets and keep your line tight, the hawks are spooky but game.

HOT CREEK flume is at 55cfs and water is very clear, flows are not really high, but it is producing when the temps are at their peak. It's a stealth approach to get into some poundage and knowing how to throw a good drift. Bring small midges

Fish between 18 to 20" were taken last week with sub surface flies, zebra, micro midges and rock worms (spotty). If you use your best presentation, you'll get into some nice trout. Please stay out of the water and help prevent the spread of the New Zealand mud snail.

CROWLEY ice free and ready for opener with over 500,000 fish stocked last fall, a lot were fingerlings- but a good portion will be in the 12" range by opener. These trout were stocked into November last year at 6 to the pound, 4,000 pounds of rainbows, two to the pound and they still have browns, cutthroats and Eagle Lake bows earmarked for the lake. Also they have been holding 150,000 to 180,000 pounds of bows to be stocked just before opening weekend. **MAMMOTH BASIN** road crew hit the asphalt and is working on the road now. Lake Mary has blue ice meaning it's starting to get thinner but no open water.

SAN JOAQUIN is projected to open by May 11 with Reds Meadow road to Devils Postpile by the 29th.

JUNE LAKE loop has been open most of the winter. The June Lake cage culture program did not raise fish this past winter due to a technical problem. Try some streamers in dark patterns using quick action near weedy areas by the west end of the lake. There are a lot of deer moving into in the area, so stay alert and avoid wrecking your vacation.

GULL LAKE iced out very early and was stocked for the opener.

Try streamers, buggers and a dropper near the reeds.

SILVER LAKE also iced out late March and stocked but I'd hit the smaller areas of the inlet and outlet for browns cruising for larger morsels to fill whet their appetites...

GRANT LAKE is on the low side anticipating the run-off, but that's still a lot of water to fish, try the south shore or the inlet for fish cruising for smaller fish. Check with Ernie's or the Grant Lake Marina for specifics.

LUNDY ~ Road is open to the second gate. But resort will not be open until early June from the latest report. You can walk in the last 1 ½ miles and try the ponds for some great dry fly action or the inlet on the mountain side of the resort. Water is down a bit.

VIRGINIA LAKES road has been open all winter (a first in my 36 years there) and the County plowed the circle at Big Virginia for ice fishermen on the 6th. Big Virginia has water on top the ice in the south west corner of the lake with dark spots. Little Virginia has very little water showing at the inlet and outlet. Ice may only be safe from 5am to 7am, so use extreme caution when going out on the lake; it could be a bit iffy. Weather has been cooler with some rain at higher elevations and the night temperature has been in the high 30's.

TRUMBLE LAKE may have some open water in time for opener so Tubers might get some action, but it depends on the intensity of the heat in the next week

EAST WALKER flow is at 152cfs and coming up slowly, and the reservoir will rise so the flows can increase on a moderate scale instead of flushing everything down the pike. I scouted the area and found midges everywhere. San Juan worms, birds nests, tiny zebra midges, WD40's, and Tail-water Tiny all in micro sizes (20 & 22). Be sure and stop in at Ken's for the exact pattern of the day.

BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR is fairly high and clear. Water has been stocked and DFG bows are ready. A huge load from the hatchery will hit the water Wednesday and more are expected to be stocked before Saturday.

WEST WALKER flow is 836cfs but it's early, it will get higher as the temps increase and run-off kicks in.

TIOGA PASS ~ The Park Service started on April 15th and they are moving fairly fast. The road will be open to the park entrance by opening weekend, but the weather and road condition is the main factor.

SONORA PASS - Target date for opening is Friday, April 27th.

MONITOR PASS opened on the April 8th.

See you on the water, CJ

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