

Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

Entomology, the study of insects, can appear overwhelming at first, as fly fishing books list a huge number of fly patterns (mayfly) with unpronounceable Latin names for trout food. However, there are only ten to twenty primary mayfly hatches throughout the year, and in any 2 to 3 week period the trout should be focused on as few as one or two species. Combined with one or two other insect types (caddisflies, stoneflies, etc.) your fly selection can be trimmed like a well manicured young lady. Take a look at your fly boxes and see if you can't pare them down to three or four fly patterns per water or even per outing, you'll be amazed at what you'll be using and packing. BUT THEN, you always have to have that great fly or two that worked well for you on your last trip, and of course you have to take them so stash the 8 or 9 in another fly box and see if you actually had to use them.

Weather Conditions

Thunderstorms hit the Sierra early August after several weeks of high temperatures. Warm weather has returned to the Sierra, and with all the signs of a good winter ahead, I believe a normal plus winter is headed our way. Two weeks ago DFG stocked a huge load of trout and with it came wet weather which slowed catching unless you were fishing with scuba gear. Rain pushed every imaginable bug into the waters and trout were super picky turning their noses up at most offerings.

Strategic Vision Legislation -

The California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision (CFWSV) developed the Strategic Vision with the final document rendering six (6) bills dealing with various aspects of fish and wildlife throughout the state; AB 2179 deals with enforcement and penalties, AB2283 deals with renaming DFG and setting forth their duties along with using all current supplies, logos, etc. until exhausted, including all IT (Information Technology) information. Recently amended AB 2402 removed a lot of items from the bill as introduced and negotiations are on-going. SB 762 deals with the taking and possession of fish and game along with related technical changes. SB 1148 which is approximately 40 pages has many key issues including implicit price deflator for hunting and fishing licenses, setting base fees for licenses and MHPA regulation and also boosting the dollars from HIFF (AB 7-2005) for the wild and heritage trout programs plus many other items. SB 1166 is directed at big game management and funding by the Fish and Game Commission. These "tag-along bills" are not all for the well being of the general angling public.

More info available at www.vision.ca.gov or http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=20110120SB1148 (Great bedtime reading).

ROCK CREEK LAKE has been good, and fish are hitting Olive woolly buggers and Hornbergs with a Grey Hackle Peacock as the dropper, also Crystal Humpy #16, Rubber leg Stimulator and Taylor's Fat Albert #14. Mosquito Flats is low but running clear with mostly small trout but great fun.

CROWLEY LAKE continues to drop at a slower rate. Temps on the bottom are just over the 57° mark. Windy as usual so look for fatties in the 18-22" range in the McGee area. The big fish are chasing Perch so try Nymphs and streamers. Early am use red blood worms or albino Baron and Copper Tiger small or BH red/black Optimidge. By 8am it is #16 Optimidge

Flashback, Ultimate Damsel, Jensen's Callibaetis or Perfection Perch as a top fly. Rickard's AP emerger and small punk perch rust or light olive. Give it your best shot.

UPPER OWENS water conditions are around 64cfs with temps in the 80-90's and wet wading is perfect. Mud snails are everywhere so clean all your gear with care and help prevent the spread or email me and I'll get you some terrific pate recipes. Nymphing with attractors and a fair amount of weight is the best method. Try Stimulators, Para Adams #20, Elk hair Caddis #16-18, Missing Link (Mercer's) and Griffith's Gnats in #20. Nymphs working are olive bird's nest, zebra midge #16-18, copper zebra midge Tungsten Zebra midge #18-20, reddish/brown San Juan worm and Prince #14-18

CONVICT LAKE has been producing well with Alpers taking woolly buggers in black and burgundy #6 or 8 off their best. **MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN** water is still clear and lake levels are dropping, Lake Mary is 3 feet from its highpoint. Watch for cruising fish in shallow water. Patterns working are Griffith's Gnat #20-22, parachute Adams #20, Brook's sprout midge #20-22, and flying ant's sizes 16 to 18. Nymphs: black zebra midge #20-22, Olive Bird's nest #18, and Callibaetis nymphs. Streamers: Doc Randol's Twin Lakes Special in black or olive size 10-12, Rickard's seal bugger, and olive Matukas; Trail your streamers with a nymph (bird's nest, hare's ear or pheasant tail).

HOT CREEK – DRAG FREE drift is essential or go home. Water is clear and very low (17cfs) and weeds are like kids at Disneyland - EVERYWHERE. Try hoppers in the pm with a mayfly nymph dropper. Try small dry parachutes, CDC Trico, Profile Baetis, Brook's HC Caddis, Para Kicking Hopper, Fat Albert #10 and Chernobyl Ant. Good spinner fall real early morning, and scuds in the weeds. There's always an afternoon breeze so be ready when conditions change and use your best presentation or go home with a black and white paint job. New Zealand Mud Snails are still around so it's imperative that fly fishers help prevent the spread by NOT WADING in Hot Creek. **SAN JOAQUIN** – Water is around 41cfs and much lower than normal but did get a boost from all the rain last week. Not much in the way of stockers for the area but there are a lot of wild fish and holdovers. Flies working are Royal Wulff #14-18, Stimulator's #14-16, Yellow humpy #16-18, Chernobyl Ant #12, parachute Adams #16, and Elk hair caddis #16-18. Nymphs are sizes 18-20, copper John (red and green), BH micro mayfly, prince and bird's next. Streamers, black Twin lakes special #10, and #10 Crystal bugger. Shuttle may or may not be running.

JUNE LOOP – has been doing great on black, and olive woolies, grey ghosts, and spruce flies. Also, Silver Lake has been stocking extra Alpers so try some top water dries near Rush Creek for best results. Never forget the bridge on the access road to Mono Lake but be on the alert for snakes.

LUNDY LAKE has been great during storms, using with small bushy dries with a slight breeze on the water. Flies doing well are olive punk perch, olive leeches, grey ghosts, and Pistol Pete's.

VIRGINIA LAKES has been a good spot most of the summer for tubers and waders using Woolly Buggers and Twin Lakes specials. Emerging midges are working very well, but no one seems to use them. Use Tentwing Caddis size 14, small Grey Hackle Yellow, grey Hackle Peacock, and Para-Adams #14-16. Some emergers have worked over the past week, but this will

increase with the temps as have the flying ants and blue damselflies are cruising the tops of the willows around the lake. Rickard's AP emerger, Hornbergs, and Cowdung are all taking hits like a pro.

EAST WALKER – Current flow is 100cfs but fluctuating daily (cubic foot per second) and the bugs are returning after all the rains. Daybreak to 10am is the window for the best fishing, as water is warming (67-70°). Try trico spinners size 18-22 (Drowned, Organza, Gould's drowned), Brook's CDC Baetis Emerger, spent Partridge Caddis #18, Grey or Olive Parachute Caddis #18, para Adams #16-18, para Kicking hopper, and Taylor's Fat Albert. Nymphs: PT #16-22, Tungsten Psycho #16-20, split case PMD #18, Epoxy Back Baetis #20-22, Burk's Hunchback Infrequens #18 (BHI), Black Two Bit Hooker #18-22, Black WD40 #20, Black or copper Zebra midge #18, GF's sparkle Pupa #18-20, and tan Nitro Caddis #18. Streamer choice would be a black Rickard Stillwater bugger. Take care in handling trout when returning them to the water. They deserve the best.

WEST WALKER – Water is thin holding at 42cfs, and catching is good in pools so use a two-fly rig with large attractor/indicator and tiger, crystal or flashback Zug as the bottom fly. Terrestrials have hit the air, black ants, and yellow hoppers with a dirty brown outer body. Hoppers are small so don't try and hit the fish a gargantuan leggy "thing". Be slight in your presentation and have a lot of fun.
See you on the water! CJ (12.8)