

Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

Some October silliness on "Fly Casting"

"This is the most elegant, but also the most demanding form of fresh-water fishing, because unlike other casting methods, in fly fishing it is the line itself rather than the lure at the end of it that is cast toward the target, and 30 or more feet of casting line must be stripped of the reel and set into controlled motion overhead with precise, whip-like movements of the rod.

Accurate fly casting is very difficult to master, but it appeals to fishermen who prefer finesse to force and measure their success as much in the quality of the cast as in the quantity of the catch. Such a fisherman, standing in a crystal mountain stream, is the very epitome of the sportsman, as he carefully gauges the wind and water and instinctively makes a hundred minor but crucial calculations. He moves the supple rod back and forth in an easy rhythm, and the faintly whispering line describes subtle parabolas in the air, the infinitesimal fly dancing at its tip, the hook sparkling in the sun. At last, with a final graceful overhead stroke, he shoots the delicate loops through the air. Time stands still. And then a weird, almost animal cry shatters the silence as a well-honed barb bites into the posterior of an angler just downstream. Now comes the elemental test of a fly fisherman's mettle. Without a moment's hesitation, he cuts his line, nimbly makes his way to the stream bank, scoops up his gear, and deposits it in his car with a practiced flick of the wrist. Then, with deft hand motions perfected by long practice, he turns on the ignition, spins the wheel, and speeds away. Is he disappointed? No, for he'll soon fish again--in another country--and he has the satisfaction of knowing that, in a fellow angler's fish story, he's the one that got away". Author embarrassed.

Weather Conditions: We are going into our 3rd week of Indian summer with a little disturbance to hit early next week with the probability of just cold "uncomfortable angler" conditions, but we certainly need the moisture in any form.

News: One hundred mountain yellow-legged frogs, bred and raised in captivity, were recently reintroduced into the wild at the James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve in California. This is the first time they have been reintroduced into their native habitat. Some of the released frogs were fitted with radio telemetry backpacks so their location and well-being can be monitored. My visual of this is hilarious.

Legislation - State Wildlife Action Plan Scoping Meetings (SWAP)

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is in the process of updating the SWAP which examines the health of fish and wildlife populations and recommends actions to conserve species and habitats before they become rare and more costly to protect. The plan also promotes ecological conservation while furthering responsible use and enjoyment by an ever increasing human population. The update, which is scheduled to be completed in late 2015, will allow CDFW to integrate new information developed since completion of the original plan in 2005. There are seven objectives for the update:

- ◆ Create a common vision for fish and wildlife conservation in California
- ◆ Provide an accounting of conservation accomplishments since 2005
- ◆ Stratify analysis of threats and stresses by eco-regions, watersheds, and marine study regions
- ◆ Incorporate analysis of potential climate change impacts

- ◆ Update species at risk, vulnerable species and species of greatest conservation need lists
- ◆ Identifies sensitive habitats
- ◆ Recommend conservation actions that are implement-able, measurable and time bound.

CDFW has done a lot of preliminary work on the SWAP update and wants to share their work with you to ensure a robust plan. Eleven meetings throughout the state have been scheduled since October 3rd and ending November 13th. Check their website to get the exact meeting dates and locations. www.dfg.ca.gov/SWAP/ or SWAP@wildlife.ca.gov

ROCK CREEK LAKE has been good, and fish are hitting a variety of wooly buggers, and Loebergs with a nymph dropper, Crystal Humpy #16, Matuka, marabou leech, Hornberg, double bunny and Taylor's Fat Albert #14. Mosquito Flats is low but running clear with most trout taking small dries, suggest mayfly patterns for some fun during the warmest part of the day. Lower creek is also doing good on small dries like yellow sallies, mini hot Garcia's, brite dots, and para Adams.

CROWLEY LAKE water temps are getting lower everywhere on the lake and algae is making one last attempt in the north end and the "stuff" is moving around and you will most likely have to also. Watch out for Pelican Point which sticks way out into the lake. Also the islands just north of there are also showing. Watch for buoys and go slow coming in when the water is rough as they'll be hard to see. Fishing has been excellent to great in about 13 feet of water in Leighton Springs and Six Bays. Big Hilton is also producing in 8 to 11 feet of water with the occasional fat boy. Mid-week is better with less fishing pressure. Try bright red larvae patterns before 9am, red/black Optimidge or Mickey's Copper Tiger early then go to Gray-black BH Optimidge with and without flash mid morning, then to Shaft Emerger when the sun is high with a drab olive or black Optimidge, but it might be a toss as to whether you want count over quality. Strip bigger Punk or Perfection Perch or twitch a wine or purple leech pattern for an arm bender.

UPPER OWENS water flows are up around 56cfs and action has been slow to good except at Long Ears (excellent). Crowley fish should start moving up river very soon. Nymphing over a dry fly right has been good, and don't forget the cold weather gear, you'll need it. Reminder - the section below the bridge to the monument closed as of OCT. 1st. Try Stimulators, Elk hair Caddis 18, Griffith's Gnats, para kicking hopper, outrigger caddis, mini mouse and meanie bee. Nymphs working are rainbow warrior, green beetle, glo-bug, birds nest, S&M, tungsten psycho, caddistrophic and nitro caddis. Streamers to try are crystal bugger, Doc's Twin Lakes Special, marabou leech, matuka, hornbergs, punk perch and Rickard's emerger bugger.

CONVICT LAKE just stocked Alpers this week and will stock another 150 pounds the week of October 28th and action should be terrific. Dry Flies: Adams, Female Adams, Cutter's Caddis, Elk Hair Caddis, Stimulators, Black/Red Ants, Sierra Brite Dot, Royal Coachman and Hoppers. Streamers: Wooly Bugger (black, brown, olive, or green), Matuka (black, brown, olive, or green), Hornberg, and Muddler Minnows. Wet Flies(Nymphs): Prince Nymph, Flashback Pheasant Tail, Hare's Ear, Zebra Midge (red and black), Copper John (red and copper) and San Juan Worm (brown or red). Check their site for the map and find the best spot for flies.

MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN water is still clear and fishing is good and DFW is still stocking. Nymph around the points along shore lines and dry fly around downed structures and large rocks. Dries working are Griffith's Gnat #20-22, Para Adams #20, Ants #14, humpy's, hoppers, brite dots, callibaetis and match-matchers. Nymphs to try, wd40, midges, western coachmen, AP emerger, birds nest, flashback pheasant tail, hares ear and callibaetis nymph. Working streamers are purple crystal bugger, Beldar rubber legs, BH burgundy Carey bugger, Doc's Twin Lake specials, olive Carey bugger, seal bugger, and Canadian mohair bugger.

HOT CREEK – water is clear and flowing at 5cfs and loads of weeds. Crowds are gone, temps are low and fishing is good. Nymphs will be your best bet and keep your set-up short. Last blast of cold weather killed a lot of weeds and nymphing will be easier. Dries to try, Para Adams #20-22, Elk hair Caddis #18-22, EC Caddis #20, Hemingway special, missing link, para ant, Griffith's gnat and outrigger caddis. Nymphs needed are black WD40 #20-22, prince nym, copper Johns, BH PT #20, Olive or Grey Scuds #18, Fox's Poopah #18, Nitro Caddis #18-20. Forget streamers as the water is too thin. New Zealand Mud Snails are still around so it's imperative that fly fishers help prevent the spread by NOT WADING in the Creek.

SAN JOAQUIN – Water flow is at 7cfs and fishing is good even with the low water level. Dries are your best bet and the smaller the better. Dries to try are CA mosquito, outrigger sally, upright organza, cherynobyl, yellow sally, para Adams, cdc baetis dun, baby boy hopper, stimulator, hatch matcher, brite dot, Griffith's gnat and cdc flying ant.

JUNE LOOP – has been doing great on black and olive woolies, grey ghosts, and spruce flies and starting to see great dry fly action around 11 to 2 or 3pm when the breeze kicks up. Also, Silver Lake has produced some Alpers so try large top water dries near Rush Creek for best results. Rush Creek between Silver and Grant lakes is 39cfs and fishing is fair to good but the dry fly fishing is good mostly on terrestrials and ants. For nymphing use a dry/dropper. Fishing the undercuts by dead drifting streamers under an indicator should produce surprising results. Dries working are para-Adams, Chernobyl ants, Griffith's gnat, brite dots, royal wulff and para caddis. Nymphs can vary between small super-flash PT's, deep six caddis, caddis candy, bird of prey, San Juan's, Prince nymphs, #18 Zug bug and a #16 sizzlin red squirrel. Best streamers are goat leech, crystal bugger, Carey Bugger and a Sheep Creek special.

LUNDY LAKE has been good with some increase in the catch due to the cooler water temperatures. Try the usual streamers on the south shore and tree area on the north shore about mid-lake and drive up to the ponds and work the center debris for brookies.

VIRGINIA LAKES did well most of October until the first storm hit driving the trout down then a slight warming kicked up the catch and the 2nd storm hit slowing the catch to match a snail. Temperatures before and after the sun have been fairly cool so bring layers to peel when the "window" opens and the bite is on. Try Rickard's olive AP emerger, seal buggers, Hornbergs, and Small mosquitoes, Captain, grey hackle yellow and Griffith's Gnat, or use buggers (burgundy, black or olive) for good action. Last stock of 2013 was the 25th of September with a double load from DFW along with our weekly stock.

EAST WALKER – Current flow is 27cfs but fluctuating daily due to snow melt and is fishing ok. Nymphing has been the best producer but there is still some good dry fly action when the air

warms. Patterns to try are Rainbow Warrior, Copper John, Flashback emerger, Zebra midge. Evening temps are dropping keeping the browns comfortable but a bit cool for us. Dries to try are para-Adams, stimulators, royal wulffs, brite dots, ants, terrestrials and small caddis. Nymphs working are copper Johns, rs2, pheasant tails, flashback PT, hares ear, tungsten psycho, wd40, small stoneflies, cold turkey baetis, rainbow warriors and lightning bugs. Streamers working are BH sparkle leech, meat-whistle, Matuka, Belly Ache, Crystal bugger, and Sheep Creek Special.

WEST WALKER – Water is thin 23cfs, but catching is fair to good in deeper pools. Try a large attractor/indicator and Tiger midge, crystal midge or flashback Zug as the bottom fly (dry-dropper). Terrestrials are still around so try black ants, and hoppers, in fact I saw "a few coupled, literally". Be slight in your presentation and stealth is still the best word!

See you on the water in 2013! CJ (13.10)