

# Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

## **Watch for Deer Migration - STAY ALERT!**

### **Winter 2015-2016**

*The General Trout Season opener greeted anglers with a multitude of weather conditions depending where you fished. Overall fishing was better at lower elevations due to warmer temperatures and active hatches. Upper elevations saw a lot of stormy weather but it didn't deter the "icemen".*

*Early May followed the pattern of late April with snow, rain and cooler temperatures for most of the month, but it's "Mother's" job to keep us in suspense, and she does it well. Another set of light storms are due to hit in the next few days so get ready for "less catching" at high elevations and frozen limbs.*

### **An Observation on Fly Rods**

*Early summer, barring any human discomfort, is a great time to explore lower elevation waters, be it streams, ponds or reservoirs. I particularly like to try out new equipment and up until last year had been seen lugging around numerous rods from spot to spot along a stream or rock hopping around a lake. I've tested many fly rods over the years and have never quite settled on one that I enjoyed casting until last summer, a 7' 2-piece bamboo rod (my first short, and my first cane). I was unable to do much casting last year (rotator surgery) and about 40 days ago (prior to my kitty losing her equilibrium), I pulled it out, lined and reeled it up and the tip broke (no need to explain how, that's another story called the "Closet"). Well, having 2 tips is nice, but I had decided to wait until the repair of #1 tip was done, but I could not control my anticipation and did manage to sneak in a quick trip to the ponds at Lundy with the 2nd tip, and found it to be effortless, smooth, light and the zing noise was like an orchestra in my ears. I'm astonished that I would take pleasure in something so incredible, and the best part is it was from a great rod maker (unnamed), and saddened that I waited so long. Now, I am of the opinion, if you have never, and would like to, DO IT. You can't take it with you.*

### **News -**

#### **R.L. Winston Rod Company Acquires Bauer Fly Reels**

According to Annette McLean, Winston VP of Operations and Rod Design, "We are excited that Bauer Reels will now be a part of the Winston family. While Bauer will continue to be run as a separate company, they plan to do a lot together in looking at how best to help the business grow over the months and years." McLean giving her view of the unique features of Bauer reels, says, "I have long admired Bauer. The heart of these high-performance reels is in the innovative design of the systems themselves. The thin, light-weight drag system gives a smooth, uninterrupted transition, is virtually zero maintenance and has industry-leading internal non-wear carbon fiber parts for better performance."

**Newest Addition to the Bauer Family** - Famed angler, and adventurer, Jeff Currier, who travels extensively exploring new fly fishing frontiers, is also a celebrated artist and writer. His travels are followed on the popular BLOG, Jeff Currier Global Fly Fishing (<http://www.jeffcurrier.com/>). Currier remembers when he was first introduced to Bauer's

reels, "I'll never forget the arrival of Bauer Reels more than two decades ago with their eye catching revolutionary large arbor design. I fished them at the get go and admired the craftsmanship, smooth drag and durability. Today I'm proud to join the Bauer Advisory Team and be a part of the innovative fly reel company for many years to come."

**DFW reports 2016 stocking** will be on a weekly basis and not on an every other week as previously reported. This was confirmed on May 23rd, and will commence the week of June 6th, 2016.

**REMINDER: DESERT SPRINGS** trout farm is on line for 24,400 pounds of trout up to 8 pounds. Additional funding for increasing the numbers might also be on the table. All Mono County waters were heavily stocked prior to the trout opener by DFW and Desert Springs out of southern Oregon. **FISH and GAME COMMISSION** has two new members that were filled by Governor Brown making the Commission fully seated. Russell Burns, 55, of Napa, "I have met with and interviewed Russell Burns," said Bill Gaines of Gaines & Associates Government Relations, sportsmen's advocate. "He is an avid angler and hunter, and I am confident that he will serve our outdoor community very well." Peter Silva, 63 of Chula Vista, has been president and chief executive officer of the Silva-Silva International since 2011. He served as assistant administrator for water at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from 2009 to 2011. He has been involved with Southern California Metro Water District, State Water Resources Control Board, and Border Environment Cooperation Commission and served in several positions in the City of San Diego PUD, and the list goes on. This position requires Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$100 per diem. Both are Democrats.

Also, the CAF&G Commission hired Valerie Termini to serve as the Executive Director early May, and the first female Executive Director. She comes from California Ocean Protection Council staff where she served as the fisheries policy advisor and as interim Executive Director. "President Eric Sklar stated "she has shown real vision in addressing challenges and has demonstrated expertise in facilitating resolution to complex issues working with a diverse groups of stakeholders. We are thrilled that she will be bringing this skill from her previous experience to the Commission's work to the great benefit of the state."

**CALTRANS REMINDER** - The "Rock-fall Project" will resume on US395 along Mono Lake starting mid-July in order to avoid the bird nesting season. The project also includes a plant establishment program on the six slopes to reduce erosion, establish healthy soil, and promote successful revegetation. Be prepared for daily lane closures with delays no longer than 20 minutes Monday thru Thursday from 5am to 8pm and Fridays 6am to 3pm with flaggers and a pilot car. Notices will be posted when the dates are determined.

#### **CONWAY RANCH - No update yet.**

#### **FISHING REPORT - If it was easy, they call it catching!**

**ROCK CREEK LAKE** thawed on the 14th of May with DFW stocking just in time to greet all anglers. Mosquito flats road has not been plowed to the parking area at the trailhead. Resort will open on Memorial weekend. Creek flow has been good. Jim King stated that on their trip to the Kern Plateau, they saw a lot of fish in Golden Trout Creek,

more than ever before. Recommended Flies: Red Copper John #14-18, Hares Ear #16-18, and Zebra Midges #14-18.

**CROWLEY** - The Lake is not full but higher than the past several years. Bottom temp are 51-53° and water is clear with minimal weeds. Good numbers of trout are in Big Hilton at 11-14ft of water. Sandy Point has been the most consistent along the subsurface bank in 13-18ft of water. Recommended Flies: Albino Baron early then Red/Black dubbed-head Optimidge mid morning, also shaft emergers on sunny days. Skies have been gray so try bright patterns like Copper John, Flashback Pheasant tail trimmed to look like a Chironomid. Water temp is still on the cold side for the perch bite to take off.

Check with Crowley Lake Fish Camp for current list of flies and specific areas to fish. A second Crowley Cam at the Fish Camp boat ramp is streaming video, so click it.

**UPPER OWENS** water conditions are good and hatches are improving. According to Tom Loe, currently the bite is red hot. Avoid spooking the fish off their redds by scouting the area especially above the Benton Bridge. Downstream above the Benton Bridge from the fishing monument is open with the same regulations as Crowley. It remains closed from this point UPSTREAM to the Benton Bridge until MAY 28. Weed growth will make it tough to keep your flies clean in the sections down from big Hot Creek. Reports state that blue wing olives (BSO) are getting action from the small resident trout, and small dark early caddis and micro midges are triggering feeding activity on warmer days. Attractor patterns will get looks from the left-over hawks. Patterns to try: San Juan worms, crystal soft eggs, Agent Orange and Assassins for nymphing below an Under-cator. Also, BWO adult #16-18, small parachute midges, flashback pheasant tails, Crystal Chironomid pupa, broke back midges, crystal tiger, and zebra midges for midge larva or emergers. LOOK for oval depressions that appear brighter, or scraped clean in the riffles below pools. These are active spawning redds and you MUST AVOID STEPPING on them. If you don't know what they look like, you're better off staying out of the water and fish from the bank.

NOTE: This section upstream from the Benton Bridge is open year round; down from the bridge is now closed to ALL angling. Special regs are in place here year around. **CONVICT** was heavily stocked with 4,000 pounds of trophy trout for the opener with a lot of them still waiting to be caught. Recommended Dry Flies: Adams#14, Female Adams#16, Cutter's Caddis #14-16, Elk Hair Caddis#16-18, Stimulators#12-16, Black/Red Ants, Sierra Bright Dot, Royal Coachman and Hoppers. Streamers: Woolly Buggers (black, brown, olive, or green), Matuka (olive, or black), Olive or Rainbow Hornberg#12, and Muddler Minnows. Wet Flies(Nymphs): Prince Nymph, Flashback Pheasant Tail, Hare's Ear, Zebra Midge (red and black), Red Copper John and San Juan Worm (brown or red). Weather has hampered the catch but if you are creative with your presentation and drop your flies with extra weight, it might prove a better option.

**HOT CREEK** flume is at 58cfs and aquatic weeds are still an issue although not as bad as last fall. Trout are moving into the larger riffles thanks to the added water from the warmer days. A good bet when water levels are high from run-off or rain is Punk Perch or Loeberg streamers. During cooler periods try midges, scuds, and attractor patterns.

When the sun hits the water try size 20-22 midges, pheasant tails #20, and bird's nest patterns. Surface presentations should use a 10 foot leader with small parachute midges, mayfly adults, and BWO's or clusters.

NOTE: Year around fishery with special regulations.

Please DO NOT WADE in Hot Creek to avoid spreading the New Zealand Mud-snail to other waters. Please protect this resource!

**MAMMOTH BASIN** - Road is open and all lakes are thawed but Lake George still has some ice on it. Desert Springs stocked its first load in the basin on the 20th.

**SAN JOAQUIN** - Road to Agnew Meadows, Devils Postpile and Rainbow Falls is projected to open mid-June due to the amount of snow pack on Mammoth Mountain.

**JUNE LAKE** has been fair to good with everyone fishing the first 5 to 10 feet and that is not where the fish are comfortable. Get a pocket thermometer and tie on some line marked every 10 feet with a felt pen and then fish according to the action. Try a double fly rig, if nothing, hitch another bug to it. Make sure and use loop to give your flies more action depending on the bugs of choice.

**GULL LAKE** has turned up some really nice trophies so bring your best bugs and drop them near the reeds. Check in at the shop and get the latest info on patterns. It might be tough to pull them up so your imagination is your best weapon.

**SILVER LAKE** Has been stocked by DFW and there are still some of the large rainbows from Desert Springs of Oregon. Fishing was good overall according to non-fly anglers. My suggestion is to hit the inlet and outlet for browns cruising for larger morsels to arouse their appetites. Try large flashy flies as it's been very gray the last week or so. Try some East Walker killers, JJ's Special, Loberg's, Halloween's, anything with some rubber to create movement.

**RUSH CREEK:** Flows above Grant Lake are 52cfs and 49cfs below. Fishing conditions have been fair and not many fish in the area was reported. Recommended Flies: Purple Prince Nymph #14-18, Red Copper John #14-18 and Woolly Buggers in black or olive sizes #10-16.

**GRANT LAKE** is low but some run-off has added water to the middle section of the lake, try the south shore or the inlet (park and walk) or the rock jetty where you can park and walk to the water and cast to trophy's cruising for smaller fish. Check with Ernie's or the Grant Lake Marina for current info.

**LUNDY LAKE** is down but rising a bit with the snow pack melting up canyon. The lake will come up when Edison lets the lake rise to meet their water requirements. The resort will open around mid June from the latest report. You can hit the ponds for some great dry fly action or the inlet on the south west side of the lake with streamers. These are always a good option to run-off conditions. DFW planted last week, but no report on the fishing except for my sneak trip and I did well on small Brookies with #20 Griffith's Gnats.

**BIG VIRGINIA** has about 15% ice and should be clear by Thursday. Fishing has mostly been with bait and a bit cold for hatches, although I've seen the small midge ducking for cover during the last week with the ongoing storms hitting the area.

**LITTLE VIRGINIA** thawed May 19th with the wind pushing the remaining 1" of ice around until it disappeared.

A few float tubers managed to spend an hour or so in the water but the temps were really cold, around 45 to 49°F, but they all seemed to be having a great time, no report on what they were using, but I'm sure it was Mousetail or jigs even with their fly rods. We are opening on the 26th and I was too busy to check on their method of fishing. A lot of fish have come out including brook trout. Weather has been cloudy, cool and snowy with wind most of the week with temps running around low 30's and around 38 to 40 during the day. On my return from Mammoth, I heard a couple of rolling thunder claps toward the east this afternoon with an incredible visual to match.

**TRUMBLE LAKE** was ice free as of May 15th with a few anglers tossing lures bait and Royal Coachman, with very little luck, and I guess they were more interested in keeping warm than catching fish. Temperatures have kept the fish confused as to what is happening on the surface, so I guess they are a bit on the lazy side. Should a huge hatch of 3" "anything" should hit the surface, you'll see the strike.

**EAST WALKER** flow continues to bounce around 190-200 this past week mainly due to the run-off and the on-going storms that have returned prior to the Memorial weekend. Flows are perfect making the entire river fishable so check behind huge boulders and the deepest slowest water. Stealth mode is very important as the fish are very spooky. There are still a lot of eagles and several ospreys hanging out in the area and this has a tendency to make those fish wary of predators. Jim Reid reported "the fishing down there has been a little tough for some anglers and not quite so bad for others. The successful anglers we've spoken with have been getting into 1 to 4 fish per day with most of them being over 16". It seems fishing on the California side using small midge patterns has been the best, we haven't had any news on streamers or dries. Word has it that if water conditions are good, the EW may receive brown trout plantings (not sure if it's one or many plantings). Suggested Dries: Baetis size 14-16. Nymphs: Try Zebra's 16-18, pocket water Baetis #16, Tungsten Psycho #16. Streamers have to be big and meaty so get creative and downright flash and ugly.

Reid stated he also had a couple good reports from the Rosachi section in Nevada, "not high numbers of fish but some very good quality going over 25". On the CA side the best patterns have been: WD-40, top secret midge, flashback emerger, San Juan worm, Copper John, rainbow warrior, Tail-water Tiny. On the Nevada side it's been dark lords, San Juan worms, micro stones, and Poxystones.

**BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR** - Lake was stocked and DFW bows again and ready for action. Fishing has been mixed depending on the weather, and we've had a lot of weather. Also, last season an unexpected load of catchable browns appeared out of nowhere and I'm wondering how hungry and chubby they are. I've asked around and no one seems to know how they are doing as yet. The wind was the major factor most of this past week and kept tubers at bay. If you tube, try the drop-offs with Lo-Berger, leeches and perch patterns to see what's stirring. Also try Callibaetis nymphs, broken back midges, and flashback pheasant tails for some action. The Rez should fish great after run-off fills the lake. Check with Jeff at the marina for current fly patterns, boat rentals and current fishing information. Jeff is renting boats from the shoreline near the break wall. Also check with Ricky or Jim at Ken's.

**WEST WALKER** flow hit 606cfs on the 7th then 1040cfs on the 18th and has slowed due to latest blast of weather and is currently 504cfs. Flows will continue to fluctuate with the temps increasing the run-off in the next few weeks. Fly anglers were reporting nice size rainbows being caught and released. Look for great action where the water is flat along the curves and edges and try Woolly Buggers, leeches and stone nymphs. Don't overlook the pools as a surprise could be sitting on the bottom. Mono County stocked 400 pounds of 1 1/2 to 3 pound rainbows just before opener. North County Chamber and Mono County will be making 7 plants during the season mostly in July and August to support their 2 fishing derbies, "How Big is Big" and "Size Doesn't Matter". Check their website for details (Northern Mono County Chamber of Commerce).

**KIRMAN LAKE** - Only a few reports on Kirman this week, it's very unusual but it seems like the anglers casting lures or flies from the shore are actually doing better than the float tube anglers. Fly anglers are using leech patterns like Simi seal leeches, seal buggers and mini leeches with soft hackle and AP emerger droppers. Anglers that have had the most success have been getting into 2 to 4 fish for a half day, mostly cutthroat.

**TIOGA PASS** - The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) met the County half way on the 12th of May and opened the pass on May 18th, but is subject to storm closure and will reopen when the roads are clear.

**Please note:** Tioga Pass might finish the resurfacing project on State Route 120 but no info was available.

**SONORA PASS** opened at 3pm on May 18th and is subject to storm closure which always reopens as conditions improve during summer months.

**MONITOR PASS** opened on May 10th and is subject to storm closure. Phone 1.800.427.7623 and punch in the highway number for all highway conditions

See you on the water smokin' reels, CJ (16.5)