

EASTERN SIERRA FOCUS

By CJ Webb

STAY ALERT DEER MIGRATION - Mule deer are starting to migrate to their summer grounds at lower elevations and crossing the roads. This seasonal event causes accidents and death, so please vigilant and watch out for deer browsing on shrubs near or along the roadside.

Trout Season Opener Weather: An upper ridge will begin to move in today, covering much of California and the Western CONUS (continental US) Tuesday. That ridge becomes more dominate as the week progresses, continuing with above normal temps. Some cooling by Saturday is possible, as the ridge weakens slightly, in response to a shortwave cresting the ridge to our north. Meaning - beautiful weather until it isn't.

Weather Conditions – The weather has been unstable most of the month from April 1st to the 21st, *cloudy days, sprinkles, clearing to warm and repeat from *. Hopefully it will move into a better weather pattern for opening of Trout Season. Winter was full of surprises with lots of snow, and lots of consecutive days of heavy wind making it hard for everyone to move around. Snowpack as of April 1st for North Sierra came in at 164 percent of normal; Central Sierra came in at 165, and Southern Sierra was 162 percent of normal. Mammoth Mountain came in at 669 inches of snow or almost 56 feet, most likely the largest measured snowpack in the state. "California has experienced more than 30 atmospheric rivers since the start of the water year, with six in February and statewide snow water equivalent has nearly tripled since February 1st," said the state's chief hydrographer, Karla Nemeth, the director of the Dept. of Water Resources. Opening weekend weather is supposed to be clear and sunny which will be an unexpected event. If the action slows down on the lake, just look up and watch skiing action around the bowls.

Fishing Tip:

Trout and their food are cold blooded and are affected by water temperature. Rivers and Lakes that are shallow have a daily fluctuating water temperature due to the up and down weather changes. You can check these trends on your phone or the internet. You will want to target your angling late morning or early afternoon when the warming sun brings on hatches of midges and Callibaetis. These hatches tend to shut down as evening approaches so change to streamers. Larger trout cruise the drop-offs in search of a bigger meal and throwing a streamer is a better bet. Try darker colors with flash or even UV, sometimes it's better to just do a strip and dip with streamers just as a searching pattern.

News:

CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF FISH AND WILDLIFE 2020 Proposed- Strategic Plan/Trout Management and Hatcheries

No update as of Nov 5th, 2018 due to public meetings for the proposed 2020 Inland Fishing Regulations. This is probably why the last set of comments from the 2018 meetings was stalled so the proposed fishing regulations would be included in the new Strategic Plan for Trout Management and hatcheries.

CDFW has been talking about simplifying their state trout regulations for the last couple of years. **They've released their proposed changes, which are relatively significant. The chance to comment is on the web-site.** This is very important if you have an opinion on their changes. Here are the changes with all the information below. CDFW web-site info page: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Fishing/Inland/Trout-Plan/Regulation-Simplification>.

Please provide comments to these changes for any water on these 22 pages if you feel it would be detrimental to the resource. They need your input in order to make better decisions on all these waters. Please submit your comments prior to May 3rd, the shut-off date.

TIDBIT'S

RECYCLE FISHING LINE IS FINALLY BACK

Fly Fishers International had a program and installed 40 recycling tubes around Mono and Inyo County, but no one to maintain them. There are clean-ups led by various-governmental organizations; and they help, but something more comprehensive is needed. Janet Barth (Sierra Club/Mammoth Lakes) set out to clean up fishing line and created a report on a program to clean-up and recycle fishing line in the Eastern Sierra waters called Tangle Free Waters. It calls for the installation of 30 new fishing line recycling tubes from Twin Lakes outside Bridgeport to Diaz Lake in Lone Pine. The tubes are PVC pipe that resemble a periscope that are easy to install and cheap. Barth's calculations estimate the cost at \$15.33.

Recycling would be done through Berkeley, a fishing company in Spirit Lake, Iowa. They send free mailers to people who want to recycle fishing line with this program.

Barth has reached out to Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Coordinator Matthew Paruolo to get Mammoth Lakes Recreation (Paruolo's employer) to take on the project.

To educate anglers, Barth would like every fishing license to come with a brochure about Tangle Free Waters. Every licensed angler would know the location of recycling tubes and would not be able to litter out of ignorance. Her report proposes a Green Fish

Certification for organizations and sporting goods stores that would incentivize stores to join the Tangle Free Waters Program. Stores could pass out bags for customers to put line into and then return to the store. The store would then mail the line to Berkeley.

The program will cost about \$25,000 and take a full-time staff member to run.

Cindy Kamler founder and director of Wildcare Eastern Sierra, a non-profit based in Bishop that rehabilitates injured wild animals said that they treat about 500 animals a year and most of the animals injured by fishing line that Wildcare treats are birds, and this program would help to decrease the number of animals injured from fishing line.

LUNDY CANYON INHOLDING - Permanent Protection

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust, Wilderness Land Trust and the Mono Lake Committee are partnering to permanently protect a 49.3-acre inholding in Lundy Canyon. The property frames the upper entrance of this iconic Eastern Sierra canyon, is entirely within the Inyo National Forest, and includes a portion within the Hoover Wilderness and a portion adjacent to the Wilderness boundary within sight of the Lundy Canyon trailhead. This dramatic and scenic location is next to waterfalls, a popular hiking trail, and endangered Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep habitat. In 2004, the Wilderness Land Trust identified the property, a former mining claim, as a high-priority acquisition for transfer to the Inyo, and has been working to acquire the property through two private ownerships. Eastern Sierra Land Trust sees this as a rare opportunity to reduce the risk of inappropriate development in Lundy Canyon. The Inyo has confirmed that this acquisition is a high priority. The property is in escrow, and is predicted to close within the month. Completing the transfer to public ownership will take one to two years. The lowest property line is at approximately 8500 feet above sea level and the property extends up the canyon wall from there. The property is on the south side of Lundy Canyon on a steep talus slope with no established vehicle access.

Legislative News:

AB1387 - Assemblymember Jim Wood of Santa Rosa authored Assembly Bill 1387, state legislation that will transition California's calendar-based fishing license to one that is valid a full 365 days from the date of purchase and a mobile phone app that makes fishing easier and more accessible. The bill, sponsored by the California Sportfishing League (CSL), is co-authored by Assemblymember James Gallagher of Yuba City and a bipartisan group of 12 other legislators.

According to Southwick and Associates, a national marketing and economics firm which analyses fishing license sales throughout the country, states that offer a

365 day license are outperforming revenue of states that only offer a calendar-based license. They also concluded that in order to maintain adequate conservation funding, changes are needed to the State's sport fishing license structure, pricing and/or marketing approaches. Recognizing this marketing flaw, 14 states have transitioned to a 365-day license. California's sport fishing license remains among the costliest in the country, second to the State of Washington. Since 1986 the price of California's resident annual fishing license has increased 216 percent, which is 41 percent greater than the rate of inflation. Today, the license costs 110 percent over the national average. If passed, it will

1 replaces the current calendar-based system for a fishing license that is valid a full 12 months from the date of purchase with no increase in the fee charged for the 365-day license.

2 Requires CDFW to create an app where anglers can display sporting fishing and hunting licenses on mobile devices.

3 And anglers to sign up for automatic license renewals.

If passed, the 365-day license will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2021, after CDFW updates its Automated License Data System, therefore saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars by not requiring software redesign. It was referred on April 9th with a 14-0 vote and sent to Appropriations and heard on 04/24/19 and put into suspense as it has to do with money. So now we wait.

It would be great if anyone reading this would please phone Mr. Bigelow's office in Sutter Creek at 209.267-0500 and tell them that you support this bill.

CDFW 'Buy a Stamp' to help a Game Warden

Officials at the CDFW are urging anglers to contribute to a Warden Stamp Program that helps game wardens and the enforcement of fish-and-wildlife laws.

According to the CDFW, purchase of the \$5 stamp will "procure vital equipment, protective gear, and training for wildlife officers and enhance the department's K-9 Program." Information on how to make a donation is available at: www.wildlife.ca.gov/wardenstamp

CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION RUSH CREEK - June Lake

The Fish and Game Commission approved the change for Rush Creek from a put-and-take fishery to a catch-and-release one from Grant Lake downstream to Mono Lake.

Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Stocking

Updated trout releases will be on their web-site (<http://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FishPlants/>) or call their specific region (Inland Deserts 855.887.1275)

CDFW has an updated free downloadable app for Freshwater Sport Fishing Regulations application at <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/regulations>. It tracks your current GPS location and will tell you the regulations of the water where you are standing and regulations for waters within a designated area or approximately a five-mile radius. Take a look, it's pretty thorough.

AT THE BENCH: New materials for winter tying!

Guinea fowl feather is a good replacement for some of the many soft hackle flies. Also hackle from a jungle cock saddle as they are both really well-marked feathers taken from below the very expensive "nail feather" cape. Found it in a 'grab bag' of bits from an old style dime store last summer and it has lain around in the bag where I store materials; they must be obtainable as jungle cock is now captive-bred in the UK. I prefer the guinea fowl as it really looks great and after stroking it back and snipping out the center of the tip it rolls around the hook easily for a great looking fly and very serviceable as a soft hackle.

ANTELOPE HAIR - Nature's Spirit has great looking antelope hair, it has 3 colors from the skin to the tip with a dark tan, light rust center with light golden/cream tips. I tied the Whitlock Red fox squirrel using Antelope and it's a bit stiffer and floats great as the elk hair caddis does, and it can be used sparingly for a lot of different deer hair patterns.

SILLY LEGS - They've been around for some time, and you would be surprised as to the numerous patterns you can add these too. I haven't tried any on a standard dry fly yet, but who knows what will happen. Some ant patterns have been transformed with legs. Get to your local fly shop and take a look at the myriad of flies and bring a couple legs with you and hold them on the fly to get an idea, it will knock your socks off. But ignore the looks from people and just act like you know what you're doing. I prefer the tan and brown, and also the olive and black, or just black.

Fishing Report

LOWER OWENS is at **637cfs** as of 4/25.

The river is very high. We recommend fishing somewhere else until the flows drop. Wading when the water is this high is extremely dangerous and fishing will be very tough. Recommended DRIES: Griffith's Gnat #20, Extended Body BWO #20-22, Para Adams #18-20, Elk Hair Caddis #16-20, Parachute Caddis #16-18, Brooks Sprout baetis #18-22, and Yellow and tan Stimulators #14-16

NYMPH: Zebra Midge #18-20, Baetis B/H #18-20, Barr's Uncased Caddis #14-16, Tungsten Caddis #14-18, Birds Nest Olive or Natural #12-16 Stonefly nymphs #14-16, Barr's Flashback BWO #18-22, Kingrey's Cold

Turkey Baetis #18-22. **STREAMERS:** Big and ugly, seriously. Pick your favorite large streamer and chuck it everywhere. You will catch fewer fish but there's a chance to catch much larger fish this way.

SB 518 (Berryhill) (Formally SB187) Died on inactive file.

AB2465 (Gallagher) *Position: Support (CSL is the sponsor)* This bill would require the department, on or before February 1, 2019, to convene a sport fishing industry group, to be known as the R3 Group, with "R3" standing for "Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation." Committee Hearing Date: August 6, 2018
Died in Committee

ROCK CREEK LAKE -

General trout season opens April 27, 2019
The road is currently plowed to the snow park. Crews are working on the road and expect to have the road open as far as the Pack Station by April 27th or early the following week. Snow is at the 2nd story level of the main building.

UPPER OWENS – Flows are at **67cfs** as of 4/25. Water Conditions: Fair. **ALERT:** The Crowley lake spring dump has started. The flows from Grant Lake are done. Fishing conditions and hatches: Fair to good. The Upper Owens River has been fishing fairly well. The spring run rainbows we are all so fond of are still in the system, but on some days it can be tough to get them to eat. If you plan on heading to the Owens bring plenty of baetis, worms, and midges as those seem to be the most consistent fly patterns. The Owens River is still a mudfest, so be careful attempting to drive out to the river. Dozens of vehicles have been stuck out there in the past couple weeks and a tow truck willing to make the drive out there will charge you a fortune. Recommended Flies: **DRIES:** Stimulator #16, Extended Body BWO #16, Elk Hair Caddis #16-18, Parachute Adams #16-20. **NYMPHS:** #12-16 Bead Head Prince Nymph, #16-18 Pheasant Tail, Flashback Hares Ear #14-16, Olive birds nest #14-16, zebra midge #18-22, Juju baetis #18-22, Splitcase BWO #18-22, Olive WD-40 (standard or flashy) #18-22. **STREAMERS:** Meat Whistle, D's Hoover Mover, Tan Sculpzilla, Olive or Black Woolly Bugger, Olive Slumbbuster, Olive Baby Gongga, Olive Double Gongga. A sink tip or full sink type 3 is recommended; otherwise add some split shot to help your bug get down in the water column.

CROWLEY LAKE -

General trout season opens April 27, 2019

HOT CREEK - Water condition is good. Flows are at **63.6cfs as of 4/25**, Hot Creek has still been very productive. The most prominent hatch is the human

hatch followed by baetis and caddis at a close second. Midges are still abundant in the early morning and late evening so it's not a bad idea to carry a few of these imitations with you if you plan on fishing the whole day. Hot Creek remains the most consistent of the local waters around Mammoth, even with the influx of fishermen. If you only have a few hours to fish then Hot Creek is your best choice. **DRIES:** Parachute Adams #16-20, Griffith's Gnat #18-20, High Vis Hatchmatcher #18-20, Brooks Sprout Baetis #18-22, Parachute Extended Body BWO #18-22. **NYMPHS:** Flash back Tungsten Black Beauty #18-22, Tailwater Tiny Olive #18-20, Micro Mayfly Olive #20-24, Tungsten Psycho #16-20, Radiation Baetis 18-22, Olive Scuds #16-18, WD40 #18-22, zebra midge #18-22 **STREAMERS:** Slumpbuster Olive, Crystal Bugger, Olive Bopp leech.

CONVICT LAKE – Ice free as of April 23, 2019
General trout season opens April 27, 2019

MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN –

General trout season opens April 27, 2019
The road to Lakes basin is CLOSED for the winter season. Twin Lakes is starting to thaw near the entrance to Tamarack Lodge and hopefully have enough open water to fish.

SAN JOAQUIN –

General trout season opens April 27, 2019
Running at **576cfs** but San Joaquin River access is closed; call **Visitor Center Info (760) 924-5500**

JUNE LOOP –

General trout season opens April 27, 2019
Road reopened on April 17th at 2pm

LUNDY LAKE –

General trout season opens April 27, 2019
Road closed and gated approximately 6 miles from intersection of Hwy 395 at the Lundy Lake Resort. Snow has not been removed beyond the resort to the trailhead, and is not passable in wheeled vehicles.

VIRGINIA LAKES –

General trout season opens April 27, 2019
Road is being plowed and they are at almost to Big Virginia. Road Closed sign will remain up until they make the loop at the parking lot of Big Virginia.

BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR –

General trout season opens April 27, 2019

EAST WALKER – The flows on the East have been bumped up to about **299cfs**. Water Conditions are fair. The gauge might be damaged as the visual gauge on the

river shows a cfs that is 100-50 cfs different than the online flow rates. Fishing Conditions and Hatches: fair to good. The East Walker River has been fishing fairly well. The last couple weeks the river has had some spectacular baetis hatches. With the water getting warmer the fish have started to move into faster water, opening up more of the river to fishing opportunities. Streamers have been a great option these last couple of weeks as high flows have been pushing bait out into the bigger runs and holes of the river. **RECOMMENDED DRIES:** Big flies to get fish to come up and eat them. Stimulator #8, Parawolf Purple #10, Chernobyl Ant #6-16, #20-22 dark mayfly patterns. **NYMPHS:** Copper Zebra #16-22, BH Prince Nymphs #12-16, Olive Birds Nest #10-16, Caddis Larva #10-18, Stonefly Nymphs #6-10, Hogan's S&M #16-20, Pocket Water Baetis #18-20, black Two-bit Hooker #18-20, Kingrey's Cold Turkey Baetis #18-22, rubber leg stonefly #8-12. **STREAMERS:** Meat Whistle #2, D's Hoover Mover Rust #4, Hornbergs #10-12, White Woolly buggers #10-14, and Orange Jawbreaker #10.

HONEYWELL POND – The pond has fished excellent this week with most anglers reporting 15 to 20 fish per day out there. Some leech action, some dry/dropper action and some stillwater nymphing as well. Mayers mini leeches, stillwater nymphs, soft hackles, zebra midges and chironomids have all been doing well. Lots of fish rising everyday to keep you interested!

SCEIRINE RANCH - Some good reports and some not so good. Just like on the California side you need to get your bugs down and get a good dead drift. The water temps are around 50 degrees now and it looks like most of the storms have passed for the time being so things should get better and better while the flows aren't too high. Report from Ken's in Bridgeport.

KIRMAN LAKE –

General trout season opens April 27, 2019
WEST WALKER – No reports lately, but I've seen a few people fishing this week with the nice weather. Water is dirty and running high at **1270cfs as of 4/25**. If you try side water on a curve where the water is not hitting boulders, you can drop some big heavy bugs near the edge as you might get a big surprise. They are there and they're hungry. Big Prince Nymph with some beef on it should get you down there and maybe run a piece of weight about 12 inches above it so you get a bounce. **SONORA PASS** - Crews are working on the road and no completion date set. They are approximately about 4 to 5 miles in with a Piston Bully pushing the snow to the blower.

TIOGA PASS - Crews are working on the road and currently at the Green Bridge. No date for completion set. See you on the water and keep 'em wet. CJ 19/4