

EASTERN SIERRA FOCUS

By CJ Webb

CalTrans has had their “STAY ALERT DEER MIGRATION” on their overhead Guide signs since opening of Trout Season and want drivers to be aware that the Mule deer are STILL migrating to their summer grounds at lower elevations and continually crossing the roads. This seasonal event causes accidents and death, so please stay vigilant and watch out for deer browsing near or along the roadside. First deer on the Virginia Lakes Road was hit August 13 around 8:30pm and was a fawn.

Weather Conditions – Early AUGUST weather was cool but warmed up until the morning of August 11th we awoke to 28 degrees causing the aspens leaves to turn over and soon followed with patches of yellow up and down the Virginia Lakes road that continues daily. The last half of August was hot with cool evenings. Daily afternoon cloud cover managed to cool down the surface temperature just enough bring hope of some type of surface action and open up the bite. What to expect in September, that’s an unknown but something to look forward to as summer starts to wind down.

CA DFW NEEDS ASSISTANCE - James Erdman

The CDFW will be performing a “depletion” survey of Hot Creek near Mammoth on September 18-22, 2019. We will need plenty of volunteers to assist. Looking for 20 or more volunteers. If you are capable and willing perhaps you may have the time to join us.

We will be shocking three reaches on consecutive days. Preparation on Thursday 9/18. Shocking 9/19, 20 and 21. Clean-up 9/22.

We will need netters, live car handlers and measure/weighing folks. Also people to clean the block nets above and below designated reaches. This is similar but more detailed than the cursory shocking we have conducted over the last three years. This is the final survey to collect data for comparison to information collected before the drought (2005).

If you can assist that would be great. Please pass along this information to anyone you know that might want to assist. It is tough work, on your feet all day. You will need to bring waders, water and lunch for each day. Some refreshments will be provided. You can come for one day or all five.

Please let me know if you can make it. My phone number and email address are provided in the signature box below. More details, maps and times will be provided to those interested as the dates get closer. Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope to see you at Hot Creek.

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CALTRANS HIGHWAY WORK to continue on all California’s State Highway System. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) allocated more than \$1.1 billion for a total of 133 State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects throughout California, including the 47 fix-it-first projects funded by Senate Bill 1 (SB1), the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017. The funded projects will replace or improve 880 lane miles, 30 bridges, 474 congestion reducing devices, and repair 83 culverts to prevent flooding on highways.

So let’s keep our cool and be patient at all highway construction/repair projects as this will only make our next fishing trip quicker with better roads and safety measures for all travelers.

Fishing Tip: Humbling refusals!

When refusals are nagging at your competency, switch to a more sparsely tied fly on a lighter hook. The fish are taking duns off the surface and quite consistent, but they refuse your fly. Trout rising steadily learn to use just enough energy to suck in floating duns. But our offerings are much heavier than the naturals they imitate and require a stronger “suck” than the sucking rhythm the trout is used to.

Switch to a more sparsely tied fly on a lighter hook, perhaps less dubbing, and a single hackle wrap and without wings similar to a small spider; if you don’t have one, switch to a smaller fly. The trick is to find a fly light enough for the trout to inhale with the same energy it uses to inhale naturals.

Legislative News – *CA Legislature resumed August 12th; at that time all standing bills not resolved will be heard. Good news is that the “Bill” is not dead.*

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

CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF FISH AND WILDLIFE **2020 Proposed Fishing Regulations - UPDATE**

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Fishing/Inland/Trout-Plan/Regulation-Simplification>). No change.

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

The next meeting is September 3, 2019 teleconference meeting agenda is now available at <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=174167&inline>. Please refer to the agenda for important meeting information and deadlines.

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 very handy.

AT THE BENCH: New materials/tools



Kreelex is one of the hottest streamer patterns on the Missouri River in Montana. The main ingredient in The Kreelex streamer pattern is...you guessed it...Kreelex flash! Actually it is the only ingredient besides lead eyes and some thread.

More supple than Krystal Flash, and just a touch less flashy: Kreelex is a very unique material. The flashy aspect seems almost dulled metal rather than polished metal. When you look at this stuff, it looks like it almost changes color with movement going from a dark, almost black, to it’s dyed color. How this works with the "Kreelex fly" is that when you let it drift (either dead or swinging) it doesn’t look like much, but give it a twitch and all that flash lights up! Much like a wounded baitfish struggling for life. It’s weird, you will just have to try it yourself. Guides really like it on dirty-water streamers. It may also be something you will want to try on saltwater flies.

Semper-Fli Bodyspan – Bodyspan is an elastic spandex material that is very stretchy and brightly colored. It’s actually kind of weird, but I have been

considering it's possibilities recently. Ideally suited for tying nymphs and buzzers, it makes great bodies, ribs, and shell backs. It also comes in a 5 yard spool which is a good supply.



What is really nice about this stuff is how stretchy it is. It’s so stretchy in fact, that you can stretch it to the size that you need and will work anywhere from sizes 12 -20. It works really great for tying a quick caddis.

Semper-Fli Nano Silk – This tying thread is a Gel Spun Polyethylene thread that is very thin, but very strong that produces a clean, strong body. How thin? They are calling this a 30 denier/18/0 thread. Now that’s thin. A lot of midge patterns are just tied with 70 denier Ultra or 8/0 Uni-threads. 18/0 is those threads...but halved. However! This is no straight “midge” thread. No, this thread is more than that. It works well for building very fine bodies and small heads for the most discerning of trout; Nano Silk also works amazingly well when tying small deer and elk hair winged flies that call for a small tie in point while holding strong with greater torque. If you are one who often asks, “How can I get a cleaner looking fly” be it nymphs or dries, you may want to check this thread out. While the price may seem a little high for thread, it is well worth the cost if you are wanting cleaner, and more slender flies especially for those picky tailwater trout. Oh, and did I mention this stuff is STRONG? For it’s size, you can really crank on it.



There are heaps of uses for these materials. I was even able to whip up a few caddis nymphs using Bodyspan, Kreelex, and Nano Silk. They were quick and easy ties that worked really well.

Half-Hitcher, an object that sits in my hand like a rather nice pen. The Smhaen Half-Hitch tool is all metal, looks

like anodized aluminum, the surface is exceptionally smooth – thread simply glides over it.

Wrap thread around the barrel, one or more wraps, place the tip against the eye of the hook, gently pull at an angle and the thread slips off the tapered tip and, hopefully, over the eye to tighten on the head of your fly. Whip finishing is more deliberate, with a whip-finishing tool you can form nicely shaped head, whipping by hand you can hide thread under dubbing. Or now I can throw on a couple of hitches, pull right then turn the tool around, thumb on the button to slide out the hidden cutter, and pop the thread from the head.

Shmaen Half-Hitch tools come in three sizes: blue-midge; red – regular; green – large. The cutters can be unscrewed and replaced. (Tying small flies, maybe size 18 and smaller, the midge half-hitch tool comes into its own, a couple of tight hitches make a very neat little head.) From Shmaen stockists at £24.95 each, a bit pricey but the convenience is very handy and would make a nice Christmas gift to yourself.

Pull and Tear – Terra Dubbing Brush

A tight twist of wire bristles in a knurled aluminum handle. This brush looks and feel more aggressive than a Velcro patch, or two strokes from the Terra brush seems to do the same as some brushing with a Velcro covered popsicle stick.

The wire bristles are tightly packed and stiff. Dubbing fibers tangle in the brush, pull down and the fibers are pulled and even broken where softer nylon bristles and hooks (Velcro) are more gentle but need more scrubbing to tease dubbing out as nicely.

A simple and effective tying tool. Ideal for synthetic dubbing, good for seal and hare type dubbings. Available on-line for about 4.50.

Fishing Report

LOWER OWENS – Water, fishing and hatches are fair to good. The flows are steady at **202.1**cfs as of 8/29. Flows are getting higher and the prediction is it will continue to come up over the next couple of weeks, but if you can stand the heat and high flows you should have plenty of privacy. Most fish will be caught nymphing. There is some surface action in late mornings. Keep an eye out for Stonefly and Mayfly hatches around noon. Sort of a broken record but click on any stream report right now and you'll know what's happening here. Micro Caddis emergence starts at daybreak followed immediately by the female Tricos and then around 9 the spinner fall commences. Recommended Flies DRIES: Para Adams #14-16, Spent Partridge Caddis #16-18, Yellow and Tan Stimulators #14-16, Brooks Hot Creek Caddis #20-24, Emerging Female Trico #20-22 NYMPH: Pheasant Tail #14-18, Tungsten Psycho #16-18, Barr's Trico Emerger Black #20-22. STREAMERS:

Woolly Bugger Olive & Black #10-12, Mini Sculpin Olive & Black #10-12.

ROCK CREEK LAKE - Mosquitoes are still there, so bring your Off Backwoods Dry 30% Deet, it's the best for your skin according to the recent studies. Same report; I'd stick with the same action near the inlet. Try Woolly Buggers in Dark olive, Black or Burgundy size 8 even toss a dark purple in the mix. Also try caddis patterns, small stoneflies, moths and the balanced leech. Walk up the stream and see what's happening where the MOSQUITOES hide out with every bug that knows the area. You'll be surprised once you walk the bushy areas and it will give you a better appreciation of what you've been missing.

UPPER OWENS – Current flow is 111cfs as of 8/29. Fishing has gotten a little tougher on the Upper Owens. The larger fish coming out of Crowley are spreading out and with all the fishing pressure they're getting a lot more selective. Tricos are hatching at first light with the spinner fall mid morning, PMD mayflies are hatching around noon, and the Caddis and male Tricos in the evening. And then there are the hoppers, Hoppers, HOPPERS. Hopper action is best when the wind blows. Fishing seems to shut down in the late afternoon, but picks up again around sunset. DRIES: Stimulator #16-18, Elk Hair Caddis #14-18, Extended Body BWO #14-18, CDC Spring Hopper Tan or Yellow #10-16, Streambank Hoppers #10-14, Rubber Leg Parachute Hopper #10-16, Brooks Sprout Trico #18-22. NYMPHS: Hares Ear #14-18, Radiation Baetis #16-18, Barr's Uncased Caddis #14-16, Zebra Midge #16-18, WD-40 black #18-20. STREAMERS: Shock Collar Leech #10, Woolly Bugger, Olive & Brown #12-10

CROWLEY LAKE - The dreaded Daphnia population has exploded so if you're in an area where the fish are suspended, move on. Deep water midging will be most productive outside the weed beds in McGee Bay. Look for fish from 2 to 30 feet of water, sorry but that's the way it is. On the bright side, the shallower you fish the less of an effect the Daphnia have. The surface temps. are still below normal but the fish are moving towards the stream mouths. The damsel and callibaetis emergence has picked up and the perch fry are now eating size, several anglers have caught large fish that have coughed up 20-30 perch fry at a time. There are fish showing inconsistently all around the lake so with a little exploring you might find the next hot spot and have it to yourself for a while. DRIES: Damsel adults and Callibaetis duns and spinners. NYMPHS: Copper Zebra #16-18 | Shaft Emerger #16-18, Albino Baron #16-18, Bubba's Callibaetis #14-16, Damsel Flies #12-16 STREAMERS: Marabou Leech Brown #12, Crystal Bugger Olive #12, Punk Perch #14-16, Balanced Birds Nest #14-16

HOT CREEK – Water and fishing conditions are good. Flows are at 65.2cfs as of 8/29 and continue to drop. The weeds are still not a factor, and Hoppers are everywhere. Most fish are looking up and want a fly sitting high off the surface. If you are getting refusals, treat your fly, or go down a size. Tricos and Caddis start the day with a smattering of PMD's but the small Stoneflies are gone. The PMD's are starting to fade but still keep an eye out for them. Evenings are Midges and male Tricos with plenty of Caddis if the wind dies down. DRIES: Spring Creek Hopper #12-16, Parachute Extended Body BWO #16-18, Chernobyl Hopper #14-12, Spent Partridge Caddis #16-18, Stimulators #16-18. NYMPHS: Hares Pheasant #14-18, Barr's Uncased Caddis #14-20, Jujubaetis #16-20, Zebra Midge #18-22. STREAMERS: BH Bopp Leech Olive & Brown #12-10, Woolly Bugger Olive & Brown #12-10

CONVICT LAKE – Same report. Marvel wet flies are perfect for catching the big ones in the lake. The best way to use the fly is to thread your line through a 1 1/2 in. plastic bubble and a swivel large enough not to be pulled through the bubble. Attach a 5-6 ft. leader to the swivel using 4 to 6 lb. test line. Tie your fly to the leader and fill the bubble completely with water. Cast your fly out into the water. The bubble will sink about 3 inches per second. Reel the fly in slowly with a twitch from time to time. Strike any unusual pull or drag as fish sometimes bite softly. Marvel flies are available for purchase in the general store. This is a good method for that fly, but standard streamers should also work. The resort is consistently loading the lake up with nice trophies so don't miss out on the action.

MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN – Both water and fishing conditions are good. Stripping streamers is still productive, make sure to fish structure. Also fishing dry dropper rigs will work this time of year, especially with Callibaetis patterns. As the hatch progresses they will switch from nymph to adult. Callibaetis and Damsels are now emerging mid to late morning especially on Twin Lakes, the Callibaetis Spinner fall coincides with the emergence so just another piece of the puzzle to figure out. Start concentrating along the weed lines and drop offs as new hatches are going off. Early and late fish midge dries in and around the weed beds. UPDATE: Lake Mary now has big Damsel hatches as well, late morning until early afternoon. If you're in a boat or float tube cast out towards the drop offs and fish back towards shore or any weed beds or logs where the Damsels can crawl out to emerge. Shore fishing is a little trickier but any place you can cast out into the lake is worth trying. DRIES: Stimulators #12-14, Yellow Sallies #12-14, Parachute Adams #16-18, Griffiths Gnat #20-24 NYMPH: Red Copper John #14-16, Zebra Midge #16-18, Everson's Filo Swimming Scuds #14-16, Sierra Damsel #12, Janssen Emerging Callibaetis # 14-16

STREAMERS: Docs Twin Lakes Special, Brown, Olive, & Black #10-12

SAN JOAQUIN – Flow is 86.3cfs as of 8/29. If you decide to head down there I recommend the afternoon. The magic number for flows is under 100 and we are just getting there. The Drakes are emerging off and on throughout the day with primetime in the evening, anytime you get to use a #12 dry fly is a treat. DRIES: Stimulators #14-18, Flavilinea Dun #12-16. NYMPHS: Hares Ears #14-18, Red Copper John #14-18. You can call the Visitor Center for current status at (760) 924-5500 for updates on the conditions.

JUNE LOOP - Stop in at Ernie's for the latest info on all lakes. When you see fish feeding on the surface mostly in the mornings when it's calm roll with dries including gnats, mosquitoes and caddis. You'll get more hits in lakes anywhere when stripping in with the fly slightly submerged. As the day goes on switch to streamers and buggers deeper with sink line or add some split shot dragged and twitched along. Also try a bead head wet fly with a nymph dropper.

JUNE LAKE – Periodic plants of the Oregonians have been put in by Ernie's Tackle and Ski Shop's Trout Fund and the individual Marinas/Resorts. Remember it's called fishing not catching. It will seem slow everywhere due to the warm days and warm water. There are a lot of fish everywhere you just need to adjust your sights a bit lower and take some advice. It never hurts to learn a new method for catching those bottom hugging buffet munchers.

SILVER LAKE - Same report except try and keep all your sunscreen and lotions off your hands when handling flies, fish can detect odors. Labor Day Horseshoe Tournament and BBQ is coming up Sat. the 31st. so give them a call for details. The fishing at Silver has been doing well even especially with the cooler water from above. It's warm all over and it puts the fish down, so go deeper than you normally would and try something different.

GRANT LAKE - Bruce at the marina figures the lake has dropped about six feet since it was over the spillway. As the level drops it frees up more access to shore fishing. Chuck some large flies near rock outcroppings along the shore where there are no fisherman. Put extra weight above the fly to get it down as surface water is warm, and they love cold water especially the browns.

RUSH CREEK - Rush Creek has been putting out some nice bows coming down from Silver Lake including a 2lb4 using a grasshopper fly pattern.

LUNDY LAKE – Similar report as last month's. Water level is holding at the current level and haven't heard if

they plan to do more work in the fall. Check in with Bob Owens at the resort and get the latest fly info before you hit the water. This bug thing is crazy and it's everywhere, and they are coming off consistently with terrestrials, ants, hoppers and very small gnats. Check the water's edge and also the bushes for bugs and try your luck with some dries. Man cannot live on streamers alone. Bob still says most anglers hitting the water in boats are trolling large streamers. Stake out your area and be observant to what's fluttering around. Not sure when Bob will shut down the resort, but he still has a lot of customers staying at the resort.

BIG VIRGINIA – BFEF dumped some nice tagged fish this last week and they are still being caught. The thermometer hit a high around the 18th thru the 21st with no prediction of moisture in the forecast. Flies working are black, dark olive, white and dirty doc woolly buggers size 8 or 10. Olive Matuka's size 8, grey ghosts, callibaetis, black elk hair caddis, any moth pattern, Hale Bop leech in olive and a couple standard dries. Also try seal buggers, leech patterns, Matukas, and soft hackles.

LITTLE VIRGINIA is starting to see more surface action over the last two days or so due to the cloud cover but since the am temps are warmer things have changed. A bit of precipitation hit US395 just north of Mammoth creating a lot of thunder activity over the canyon. Flies working have been my Dirty Doc #10, Prince Nymph #16, hare's ear (no weight) under an olive bugger or leech but don't forget the Zebra midges, copper zebra and reverse. **DRIES:** Olive elk hair caddis, Grey Hackle Peacock, Adams, and a black Gnat have been the best choice for dries. Wrong time of year for salmon eggs, but you might want to bring along some egg patterns in red with a bit of gold as a tag.

BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR – The fishing on the Reservoir has been up and down due to the water temperature, but a good hearty strip and a tug should produce some fish. The surface temperature is a bit high but there is still a lot of cold water coming into the reservoir from snow melt. The fish are deeper than usual and scattered. There has been some pretty good action lately stripping leech patterns down near the dam has produced some nice browns this past week and there are some fly anglers doing well up in Buckeye Bay stillwater nymphing. Be careful with playing and releasing fish if the water temperature gets too high. Keeping a thermometer in your vest might be a great option if you care about the resource.

EAST WALKER – The flows on the East are **315cfs as of 8/29.** "Water temps have now gotten up to where it's 70+ by midday so it's best to keep your fishing to the early morning spinner falls and evening hatches for now. The early morning Trico emergence and following spinner fall is impressive along with the PMD spinner

fall and the enormous (#12-14 2xl) orange and yellow midges flushing out of the reservoir. Caddis are most active early and late. **DRIES:** Spent Partridge Caddis #14-16, Panty Dropper Hopper #10-14. **NYMPHS:** Tungsten Psycho #16-14, Golden Bead Biot Epoxy Stone #8-10, Dead Drift Crayfish #8, BH Chiron Larva Blood #14, Worm-Annalid #16-18. **STREAMERS:** Meat Whistle, Sculpzilla

TWIN LAKES BRIDGEPORT

Like the Reservoir, the Twins are still chugging along, producing some good 2 to 5 pound fish each week, not always for every angler out there but some anglers are doing very well. I would expect the action on all the local waters to get better when the weather starts to cool down, this usually happens around the first week in September. Fly anglers have been using wooly buggers, soft hackles, prince nymphs, seal buggers and mini leeches per JR at Ken's.

HONEYWELL POND – Didn't have any anglers this past week, so check with Ken's Sporting Goods for the latest report.

SCEIRINE RANCH - The ranch fished well again this week, mainly on caddis nymphs and San Juan's, as with the California side, the water is still a little high but if get your bugs down near the bottom you should be able to have some good days out there.

KIRMAN LAKE – No news from Kirman this week, but check with Ken's Sporting Goods in Bridgeport to get the latest news.

WEST WALKER – The flow is 114cfs as of 8/29 and starting to get some decent reports from there. The DFW put some fish in the West this week so the action picked up fairly well; the water is lower and clear compared to a few weeks ago. It's also hopper/dropper season up there for the fly anglers so a good hopper pattern and a soft hackle or prince nymph should produce well.

TRAFFIC ADVISORY from Caltrans:

Lane closure for the week of 8/26 – 8/31/19

Southbound Long Valley Thin Blanket Project – On US Highway 395, from 1.3 miles south of South Landing Road overcrossing on the junction of US Highway 395 & State Route 203, crews will be placing a new asphalt surface on the roadbed. Tuesday, July 23 from 9:00am to 10:00am, the SR 203 southbound on-ramp to US Highway 395 will be closed and a detour will be available.

Conway Guardrail Project – On US Highway 395, 6 miles south of Bridgeport to State Route 270, crews are reconstructing the guardrail system along this stretch of the highway. Traffic will encounter lane and shoulder closures with no anticipated delays. Monday through

Thursday – 6:00 am to 8:00 pm, and Friday, from 6:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Aspen/Walker Shoulder Project – On US Highway 395, from the junction of State Route 108 to 2 miles north of State Route 108, construction crews are widening the highway. Traffic may encounter up to 30 minute delays as vehicles are piloted through the active work zone. Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm.

See you on the water and keep 'em wet. CJ 19/8