

EASTERN SIERRA FOCUS

By CJ Webb May 2021

2021 Inland Water Fishing Regulations have changed, so download the app to see if there are any changes for the waters you enjoy fishing <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.

NOTE: Purchase your 2021 Sport Fishing License as you never know when a Warden will appear. The best way to ruin a fishing trip is to be cited for non-compliance.

Trout Season Opener Weather: A late season winter-like storm brought strong wind and light snow over the crest. The bulk of the moisture pushing Sunday into Monday with continued cloudiness through the 27th with below normal temperatures. The ridge weakened by late Tuesday cresting the ridge to our north leaving a second dusting over the Sierra crest. Meaning: Unstable weather until it isn't.

Winter Weather - 2020-2021 – Winter was full of surprises with one 3 day storm starting the 27th of January closing US 395 until the 31st with CHP shuttling traffic north and south until the plows could get two lanes cleared. Also very heavy wind dominated the winter making it hard for everyone to move around. With the State Dept of Water Resources March 2nd snow survey the results were close to dismal, meaning with three weeks remaining to make up the additional 40% didn't happen. The snow pillow measurements and rain fall numbers indicate the northern areas came in at roughly half of normal: Gem pass hit 58-percent of normal to date; Mammoth Pass, 66-percent. The story at Sawmill and Big Pine Creek is grim with 32- and 17-percent, respectively (4-25-21).

*Spring storms are usually cold and blustery with sprinkles then clearing to warm and repeat from *. The weather has been stable most of the month from April 1st up to the 12th-13th with heavy winds and a trough was expected to set up over the West Coast and allow wetter storms to break through as it did in late January but it did not happen. California moved into the last winter month with 40-60 percent of normal (depending on location) with the Snow-Tel site at 9400' at Virginia Lakes canyon shows 22" of snow.

STAY ALERT DEER MIGRATION - Mule deer are migrating to their summer grounds in large numbers at lower elevations and will continue to move up higher.

This seasonal road crossing causes accidents and death, so please stay vigilant and watch out for deer browsing on shrubs near or along the roadside early morning and at dusk.

Fishing Tip: High Dirty Water of Spring Run-off

With the anticipation of spring brings high dirty water that can be a blessing in disguise. A well known fact is the best hatches are often right before and immediately after spring runoff, but that still leaves the dirty water to deal with. According to Landon Mayer, the "trophy trout King" he said "reading water becomes one of the most important ways to locate trout during high water. Unlike lower water settings, when trout you can see are forced to concentrate in deep water or near structure, trout in higher flows have the freedom to disperse and hold in areas that supply any break from the current or soft-water breaks i.e., anywhere you can see a physical slowing of the flow. During runoff trout need three key elements to survive: cover, oxygen, and food and in that particular order. If a fish does not have cover or safety it becomes stressed, and will often stop feeding for fear of being detected by a predator". He suggests "looking for **Edges** where the water is slow moving and can feed without stress. But avoid wading until you cover a section of that riverbank to avoid spooking other trout. **Obstructions** - Logs, overhanging branches, large boulders and anything that provide security are a trout's ideal location because of the cover. **Eddies** - "an eddy is like a lazy Susan to trout and larger and more abundant in high water and trout use them more frequently because they offer shelter from the surging current in the main channel. **Side channels** - sometimes become small creeks in high water and provide a more comfortable current for the trout" according to Landon. **Rigging** - "...the water near the bottom is often barely moving compared to the water rushing above. So in high water it's more important than ever to have your fly near the bottom where it's easily available to the trout". Indicator's can be problematic but an anchor rig (Czech nymphing) keeps the line tight from the rod tip to the fly using a specially designed leader. Landon suggests "a typical nymphing rig is 10 to 14 feet long (total) and starts with a 7.5-foot 2X tapered leader. Add 2 feet of 2X Umpqua Bi-Color Indicator Tippet, or some other high-vis nylon like Gold Stren. When attaching different sections to build the leader, he prefers a triple surgeon's knot adding 2 feet of 3X connector tippet, followed by 3 to 6 feet of 4X or 5X tippet. This long, thin tippet diameter is critical, not because trout might observe larger diameter fishing line, but because larger diameters have more surface area, and are more affected by the surging current than the thin stuff and cut through the flow like a razor to get your fly deep and move it slowly at the speed of the bottom current". He also uses a small light fly on top and adds a heavier

anchor fly to the bottom by tying monofilament to the eye or the bend of the upper hook.

The article has two other methods that he prefers and "views the high water of spring an opportunity due to the trout unpressured, comfortable and they feed aggressively". Part Two in May.

News:

INTERNATIONAL Fly Tying Symposium 2021

Will be held in Parsippany, New Jersey on November 20-21 to celebrate their 30th anniversary and will be the largest of its kind. The host hotel is at 1 Hilton Court, Parsippany, New Jersey, some 51 miles or about an hour drive from New York's J.F. Kennedy Airport in the Mack-Cali Business Campus. According to Furmisky, it is the largest event for fly tying with more than 100 of the world's best fly tiers plus every book, video and material on display for sale. Admission to the 2021 Symposium is \$15 Saturday, \$12 Sunday or \$22 for a two day pass. Lectures, seminars, featured fly tiers and book signings are scheduled for both days along with fly tying classes with the experts.

Tiers and Exhibitors are invited to join the Symposium Family

Would you like to become a celebrity fly tier or an exhibitor at the symposium? It is not difficult, and the information and application forms are posted on the website. Chuck Furimsky is always looking for talented and creative tiers that are happy to share their knowledge and fly tying skills. Exhibitors whose business is to supply everything we need to expand our fly tying get enormous exposure, and being at the symposium is a very wise choice. Review the website at internationalflytyingsymposium.com and welcome to the symposium family. Feel free to contact Chuck Furimsky at 814-926-6145 for questions. See you in November!

TIDBIT'S

RECYCLE FISHING LINE IS BACK in 2021

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 in 2020. 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.

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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.

Legislative News:

AB 817 - Assembly Member Jim wood of Santa Rosa

authored Assembly Bill 1387 in 2019 which has been reintroduced as AB-817 and 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. On 12-APR-21 the following history action was applied: "From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. With recommendation: To Consent Calendar. (Ayes 15. Noes 0.) (April 8). Re-referred to Com. on APPR."

AB817 is also different because of its sponsor. In years past, such proposed legislation had been sponsored by CSL, but this year, the Coastal Conservation Association of California (CCACAL) has picked up the torch to sponsor the bill.

In 2020, our CA Fish & Game Commission approved our state R3 program, which is designed to "Recruit, Retain, and Reactivate" (R3) new anglers and hunters in California. The 365-day license served as one of the critical steps in getting more anglers fishing. CDFW is completely onboard with R3 and growing this program with the 365-day license in place.

According to Rob Southwick and Assoc., a national marketing and economics firm which analyzes fishing license sales through the country, states that offer a 365-day fishing license are outperforming revenue of states that only offer a calendar-based license. Currently, there are 14 states that offer a 365-day license, and according to the study, those states that have had a 365-day license since 2006 have seen their revenues grow faster on average. This is definitely the right move for California, a state that has seen fishing license costs go up, higher than the rate of inflation and an average decline in sales since 2008.

UPDATE of AB-817: Sport fishing licenses: electronic display: 12-consecutive-month licenses has been Set FOR Hearing ON 28-APR-21 9 a.m.

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: <https://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. The new regulations didn't alter this change.

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)

AT THE BENCH: New materials for winter tying!
Semperfli Waxed Thread comes on a generous 240-yardspool that has a thread-keeper at one end. This is a polyester thread meaning it dyes well so colors are good and color range is wide and does not stretch. It is a multifilament thread and slightly twisted so on a hook it will flatten well and the slight twist helps keep the bundle of filaments together on the bobbin. Another feature is you can spin the bobbin to twist and untwist, cording or flattening the thread as desired. It is lightly waxed to increase friction when wrapping thread around a smooth slippery metal hook-shank the thread stays put or when you tie a knot or whip-finish the knot stays put. The down side is you may not want waxed thread when tying in a feather-slip wing using a pinch-and-loop technique will tend to buckle or roll the wing or deer hair to the back. When splitting thread with a fine needle, it slips clean. I've used 8/0 and 6/0 and both are strong and well colored, but prefer the 8/0 simply because I like finer thread.

Semperfli Knotted Pheasant Tail Legs

The ready-tied Hopper/Daddy legs are a time saver unless you have little going on during the winter as most of us had. These are one of the super additions to top water flies and maybe not essential to the pattern, but adding a few legs seems to inspire confidence. Meaning I feel a "legged" fly has added attraction and fish seem to nail flies with legs. They are easy to tie for a few flies (Daddy requires 6 legs and 12 knots). A stick of pre-knotted pheasant is ideal, the knots are consistently placed, and all you need to do is sort out the number of legs you need and cut them off and tie them in. The colors of Pheasant Tail Legs are natural, picric, claret and dark. The cock pheasant tail is dyed/stained with picric acid to give a super yellow/olive color.

LOWER OWENS is at 251cfs as of 4/27.

It is still a little dirty starting about 9 gates down but getting better. Hatches have been a lot shorter in duration, but the trout don't seem to care. Overall, nothing is new, midges early with mayflies and caddis midday - mid-afternoon. Not great dry fly action but the nymphing is so good it's hard to complain. I haven't heard anything about evenings but once we get through this unsettled weather it should be worth a shot. On a side note, guides have been reporting Tricos on Hot Creek (only 3 months early). If they're hatching up there maybe there will be good news in the next couple of days. Recommended Flies: DRIES: Extended Body BWO #18-22, Hi-Vis BWO #18-22, large dries with #22-26 midge emergers and adults, Stimulator #8-12,

Para Caddis #16-20. NYMPHS: Pheasant Tail #14-22, Hares Ear #16-22, Zebra Midge #18-22, Olive Hot Spot Jig #18, B/H Prince #10-14, Chamois Caddis #14-18, Bottom Roller Phsyco Rhyco #10-14, Uncased Caddis Green #14-16, Juju Baetis #18-20, Glass Bead Micro May Olive # 20-24, Caddistropic Pupa #16-18, Gold Bead Epoxy Stone #8-10. STREAMERS: Wooly Bugger Olive & Black #10-12, Mini Sculpin Olive & Black #10-12.

ROCK CREEK LAKE - No report and still frozen

UPPER OWENS – Flows are at **55cfs** as of 4/27. The warm weather has caused the water to dirty up again above Hot Creek but dirtier below Hot Creek. The diversion from Grant Lake is over and the flows are almost half of what they were 2 weeks ago. The lake fish have been in the river long enough now that realistic patterns are working a lot better. The spring spawners are spread throughout the system so don't expect to find large numbers in any one spot. The fish are starting to move into the shallower faster water to feed so don't get hung up on just the slower deep pools. The bites are getting earlier so beat the crowds and get the first grabs. Midges first thing and small mayflies from 12-2 (# 20-22) and watch the caddis hatch improve at the same time. There are some really big fish eating caddis on the surface but it's inconsistent and hard to time it. The resident fish have been keying into micro mayflies and midges, so we suggest trailing a midge or mayfly in the size 20-26 behind an attractor nymph to keep the action rolling between each lake fish. On some afternoons the dry fly fishing can be productive but be ready to throw size 18 through 22 dry flies. Streamer fishing has been OK.

CROWLEY LAKE -

No report, but the wind was brutal Saturday.

HOT CREEK - Water condition is great. Flows are at **34.9cfs as of 4/27**. It's all about the Mayflies! With the great weather, the fishing has picked up along with the crowds. There has been a pretty good mayfly hatch around the mid-morning. Anything from tiny little Tricos (8-10 am) to big BWO's (blue wing olive). Yes Tricos, only 3 months early. The dry fly fishing can be good depending on the time of the hatch. Right now, nymphing is the preferred method. Make sure to use some small split shot to get your flies down to where the fish are. Water clarity is super clear and enough water in the system where you're not constantly cleaning your fly. It was crowded because of the opener last Saturday. There are plenty of spots to fish on Hot Creek. Look for deep runs, back eddies, and bucket holes. The fish are in there and they're hungry. Spend some time trying to

match the hatch, even if it takes flipping over a few rocks).

Recommended Flies: DRIES: R.P. Emerger #22, Hi-Vis Baetis #18-20, Yellow Stimulator #8-16, Mother Shucker #24, CDC Baetis Dun #16-20, Para Caddis #18-22. NYMPHS: Tungsten Psycho #2, T Midge #24, Zebra Midge #18-22, Grey/Olive Scud #16-18, Tailwater Scud Tungsten #14-18, S&M nymph #16-18, Tungsten jig Baetis #16-20, Pheasant tail and Hares ear #14-18, WD 40's #20-22, Pheasant Tail #16-20, Little Brown Bug #16-18, Medallion Midge #18-22, Buckskin #16-20, Brassie #18-22, Rainbow Warrior #18-20, Barr's Emerger #16-22, Deep Six Pupa #18. STREAMERS: BH Bopp Slump Buster, Perfection Perch #4-8, Punk Perch #10-16, Hornberg #10-14

CONVICT LAKE – No Report

MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN – Road is not open and Forest Service expects it to be open around Memorial weekend.

SAN JOAQUIN

Running at **94.7cfs** but San Joaquin River access is closed and won't open until early June due to the contract with The Mountain and the winter use.

JUNE LOOP – No Report

LUNDY LAKE – Reports were mixed due to heavy wind in the canyon with most anglers using hardware etc., and no news on fly fishermen.

VIRGINIA LAKES – Anglers who fished Big V Saturday through the ice said there were 30 or so angler's ice fishing and most did pretty well. Reports were good but not for fly anglers. Someone had punched about 5 ice holes on Little Virginia on Friday but no reports and it's hard to cast a fly down a hole. The ice is still pretty thick, I'll go up and measure when it warms up and see if it's going to start opening up. The outlets on all 3 lakes are open about 15 feet out.

BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR – In spite of the crazy winds yesterday the fishing on the Reservoir was pretty good, lots of nice rainbows up to nearly 7 pounds and browns up to just over 6 pounds came in and no reports on fly anglers probably due to the wind. One boat did capsize and anglers were rescued without incident.

EAST WALKER – The flow is low at **49cfs as of 4/27**. Water Conditions are fair. The East fished very well on opening with lots of nice fish caught and released with reports of fish up to 25 inches. Nymphing was the way to go using small midge patterns and stonefly nymphs. No reports using streamers but that should break loose

fairly soon. Patterns to try: Rainbow Warrior, Dark Lord, soft hackle, Psycho Prince, Chubby Chernobyl, San Juan worms, Zebra midge, flashback emerger, Silver Streak, Squirmy Wormy, Chubby Chernobyl, stimulator, biot epoxy stones, and Poxyback stones.

It is strongly encouraged for anglers to pinch their barbs even though it's technically no longer required. Pinching your barbs will help **released fish** stay healthy and in turn keep a healthy population in the river. In spite of these changes the DFW has made to these regulations, hopefully the angling community will take it upon themselves to take care of this world class fishery.

HONEYWELL POND – No Report.

SCEIRINE RANCH - The ranch is still kicking out some very nice fish, lots of browns and rainbows in the 14 to 20 inch range with fish up to around 24 inches. Stonefly nymphs and adult stone patterns are still the best choice for there. The flows on the river are pretty low at around 45 cfs so it's important to find deeper pools and runs where fish are hiding. Report from Ken's in Bridgeport.

KIRMAN LAKE –No reports from Kirman yet, hopefully there are still some fish in there leftover from last year but it's hard to tell. Last year the fishing was pretty tough with just a few successful reports for the whole season. Hopefully the DFW will be able to get some fingerling fish in there this year and get the fishery back on track.

WEST WALKER – No reports lately, but I've seen a few people fishing last week with the nice weather. Water is a bit dirty and running at **233cfs as of 4/27**. A few reports from the West sounded like it was pretty tough. Most of the anglers told us (at Ken's) they thought the water was still just too cold for the fish to be very active. Once this storm system blows through the water should warm up a bit and things should get better up there.

Waters not opening this weekend include:

McGee Creek from the highway to Crowley Lake
The Upper Owens River below the bridge on Benton Crossing Road.

These areas will open Memorial Day weekend.

MONITOR PASS - Was open but always subject to storm closure and closed on the 23rd anticipating the storm. It should reopen this week.

SONORA PASS - Crews were working on the road until the storm hit. They are close to opening using a

grader with a V blade. Recent storm and added weather may have created additional time to finish the pass.

TIOGA PASS - Crews were at the EAST GATE last week and will begin the process of inspecting water/sewer infrastructure as early as next week if the storm didn't create too much havoc on the pass. No date for completion set.

Yosemite National Park to Re-Implement Day-Use Reservation System Beginning Friday, May 21, 2021

Yosemite National Park - Beginning Friday, May 21, visitors to Yosemite National Park will need a day-use reservation to enter the park. The temporary day-use reservation system will allow the park to manage visitation levels to reduce risks associated with exposure to COVID-19.

Day-use reservations will be required for all users, including annual and lifetime pass holders. Each reservation is valid for three days.

Reservations are available on www.recreation.gov beginning at 8 a.m. on April 21, 2021. Each day-use reservation is valid for one vehicle and the occupants of that vehicle. For more detailed information, please visit: <https://www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/covid19.htm>

Everyone is going to keep a close eye on the East Walker River in regards to the new regulations and we also strongly encourage anglers to pinch their barbs even though it's technically not required. Pinching your barbs will help released fish stay healthy and in turn keep the population on the river high. In spite of the recent changes the DFW has made to the regulations, hopefully the angling community will take it upon themselves to take care of this world class fishery. We also encourage you to keep sending emails to the DFW to try to get them to re-visit these changes and understand how devastating they will be to this river.

CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF FISH AND WILDLIFE **2020 Proposed Inland Water Regulations for 2021**

Below is the link with all the changes on the CDFW web-site info page: Please provide comments to these changes for any water if you feel it would be detrimental to the resource. They need your input in order to make informed decisions on all these waters.

Every person or agency recommending that a regulation be added, amended, or repealed must submit a petition to the commission at the site listed: (<https://fgc.ca.gov/Regulations/Petition-for-Regulation-Change>) using this petition form.

You can contact their office to see when the next meeting will be held to submit regulation changes on time and whatever is on the books today can be changed. Also include your comments to Governor

Newsom at: (<https://govapps.gov.ca.gov/gov40mail/>). Here is the Executive Director's contact information: Melissa Miller-Henson - fgc@fgc.ca.gov (916) 653-4899 or (916) 653-7229

CalTrans Highway work along US 395

Inyo County - North of Cartago to South of Olancho will widen the highway to a two-lane highway.

Mono County - Upgrade signs, striping and guardrail.

Fly-Fishing Apps

"Fish Head Nervous Water Apps LLC, \$6.99 iPhone and Android"

Not only the best app for steelhead rivers, but surf, and also helpful in most any trout-fishing situation around the country. It has a river directory with flows and where and when to find the best windows of action. It's handy when you're actually packing to go fishing; it's quick, organized with the most pertinent information available.

Orvis Fly Fishing Green Mountain - Digital, iPhone, Android is a grand-daddy of fly fishing apps that is free and packed with tons of general interest fly-fishing news, advice, discussion and entertainment you'll never be able to digest it all. It has Tom Rosenbauer's podcasts, casting videos for every stream, flats, or surf situation; knot =tying instruction, fishing reports, up -to-date news feeds, fly pattern descriptions and recommendations with built-in links so you can buy flies you're interested in. It's sort of geared toward beginners, but its solid information and we could all use a little tune-up now and again. Loren Elliott

The Pocket Fisherman by Magic Mobile

This app will help you find out more about the specific species of fish, as well as regulations and records of 49 Continental states regarding fishing in their deep waters. The app also comes with a GPS map that tracks the nearest tackle shops and marinas. You can easily identify the fish by either searching for its name or looking at the gallery of fish images. It's the most comprehensive fisherman app so far as it comes with a summary of each type of fish, description, appearance, weight, natural habitat, and its average length.