

The Barbless Hook

August 2021

Edited by Mark Spruiell



tri-valleyflyfishers.org

August Meeting

The club's August Meeting is our annual picnic, and this year we're holding it at the Rod & Gun Club's covered patio. This event is open to all TVFF members, their spouses, significant others, and family members. This is always a terrific time to enjoy the sharing of great food and drinks, and to engage with other members in an informal and fun atmosphere.

As is customary at this annual event, the Club will provide grilled tri-tip, chicken, and drinks, while each member is expected to bring along a side dish or dessert. Please [register](#) by August 1st so that we can get an accurate count for food and drink purchases.

Raffle tickets for the Roberts Lower Sac guided trip will be available for purchase at the picnic, or you can buy them in our [online store](#). If we sell at least 15 tickets, the winner will be drawn during the picnic, but you do not need to be present to win.



Look what landed in Rob Fletcher's lap – Baja 2021. See the Member Reports section for more trip reports.

Raffle Tickets!

Raffle tickets for the Roberts Lower Sac guided trip are available online in our [Members Store](#) through August 3rd.



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President's Message

Albert Mansky

Hi Guys and Gals:

Well summer has arrived and the weather is HOT. We're into another record fire season this year. I'm not sure how much of the recent fires has impacted your fishing outings. Be careful if you venture out and remember that breathing in all of that smoke can damage your lungs. I'm still recovering from my knee surgery, so needless to say, I haven't done any fishing at all. It looks like our reservoirs just might hit an all-time low for water storage this year. We'd better have a normal or above average rain season next year. It maybe already too late this year for a normal salmon run, with low water flows and high water temperatures for the young smolts to survive. Time will tell when next year rolls around as to how many salmon return to the rivers to spawn.

I hope you all remember that our annual picnic is coming up on August 5th, at the Livermore Rod and Gun Club, starting at 5:00 pm. I'm looking forward to seeing a lot of you folks there. If you haven't signed up for the picnic, please do so on our [web site](#). There will be plenty of food and drinks to go around for everyone. Please bring a side dish to share with your fellow members.

Remember to take care of yourself. We are not out of the woods yet with this pandemic. Your health is important to all of us. In the meantime, play it safe with your health and I look forward to seeing you all at the picnic.

Al

Raffle Information

The winning raffle ticket for the Jim Roberts guided trip will be drawn during the club's [annual picnic](#) on August 5th. [Online ticket sales](#) will close end of day on August 3rd and tickets will also be available for purchase at the picnic. You do not have to be present to win.

Tickets are \$20. You may purchase more than one ticket, however each online ticket purchase has to be done as a separate transaction.

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The trip includes lunch, flies, and a full day of fishing from a drift boat. It is good for one or two anglers. Anglers must have a valid fishing license and a steelhead report card.

The trip value is \$500, so a \$20 investment is just a fraction of its worth.

Outings and Activities

I'm assuming that most of you have you have been VACCINATED and are looking for some great fishing opportunities. Sorry, there aren't any. No one has stepped up to be fishmeister for any new fishing outings and the two upcoming ones are full.

One of the problems is most of our trips have been put together by just a few Members and it's time for some others to step up. If you've never sponsored a trip before, think of somewhere you like to fish and contact me. I'll put you in touch with an experienced fishmeister who will coach you through the processes.

Due to a lack of interest, the Advanced Nymphing Clinic was cancelled.

If any members with boats are interested in a late fall/early winter Delta Outing, please send me an email and let me know if you prefer early or late November or December?

Martin Plotkin
Outings Director

Member Reports

Ken Tetzl

Not much to report. I have fished the Middle Fork of the Stan a few times. Pretty good dry fly action in some pools. Very hot.....temperature wise!!!! I ventured to the back pond at Shadow Cliffs last week. Very hot too but did catch a few good bass on poppers in the evening. Not bad.

Does anyone know why the Lower Stanislaus is running so high during our drought??? 1500 cfs is crazy!!??

“With a Little Help From my Friends” – Alan Wyosnick

This Beatles song kept playing in my head as I was finally having some success at Milton and Baum lakes. I had almost thrown in the towel when it came to Stillwater fishing due to my previous lack of results at these two well-known places. As a dedicated stream/river nymphing diehard I thought it would be good to expand my horizons last year and give both of these lakes which have solid reputations a try for the first time. Unfortunately, my lack of experience in this new environment was very evident and resulted in a lot of casting practice with no rewards.

I had since found out several members of our club (Chris McCann, Mark Spruiell and Rob Farris) were very skilled in the ways of Stillwater and of course, like other club members, very willing to share what they knew. I was still apprehensive due to lack of success in the past but decided to try it again when Rob enthusiastically

talked about going into Milton mid-June soon after the road was opened. From the expert insight I received from Chris and Mark along with Rob's lakeside coaching on the right flies, leaders, rigging and eventually reading the lake, etc., it turned out to be just what I needed to start catching some beautiful brown trout.

Armed with the success at Milton, I decided at the last minute to run up to Baum three weeks later and see if I could apply my newly acquired knowledge there as well. With my rod bent over on the 4th cast, that Beatles tune popped in my head again. After several dozen fish up to 20 inches into the net at these lakes, I feel grateful for the generosity of other club members. A couple of lessons learned for me... don't be hesitant to expand your horizons and take advantage of the friendly, knowledgeable advice the TVFF members are happy to share.



Truckee Watershed – Denis Haire

Michael Freitas experience:

Friday night arrived at Stampede reservoir and met the crew. Fished Little Truckee near the corner of the meadow with Gary Prince. Good company but no fish.

Saturday morning fished the Truckee River under the Glenshire bridge, caught one small fish on a pheasant tail nymph under a thingamabobber. Saturday evening fished the Little Truckee near the base of the dam. Not much happening until dusk and then the fish started rising. Hooked one good fish that immediately broke off my tippet. Unfortunately, it was too dark to tie on a new one since I did not have a light.

Sunday morning fished the base of the dam again. Lots of PMDs, but no action for me. Fish were rising in three locations down the seam but I could not figure out what they were taking. I helped Gary Prince land a nice sized fish just above me, and then watched him fight and lose another one a little while later. Gary was tenacious and did not want to leave but I gave up and headed back to camp.

Sunday evening headed back to the base of the dam to wait for dusk and try to get the fish I missed the night before. Incredibly the same thing happened again. A fish broke off my 5x tippet in nearly the exact same spot between the two boulders. I guess it was not meant to be.

Monday morning headed out to the corner of the meadow of the Little Truckee but decided to try something different. Instead I headed out onto highway 80 and parked near the bridge after Horner's Corner towards Truckee. Fished for a while and caught one small fish using a Perdigon under a thingamabobber. From there I decided to take the scenic way home and headed out to highway 49 via highway 89. I stopped at several spots along the highway and fished the North Fork of the Yuba. Caught small fish at every stop so overall a nice way to end the trip.

Denis Haire experience:

After an obligatory stop at the Mountain Hardware and Sports store in Truckee to stock up on any last-minute flies and gear, we all individually arrived in the Loggers Campground. We were greeted with intense heat (easily in the 90's) and a need for something to drink. I think we were all reminded of the seriousness of the drought as we looked at the Stampede Dam Reservoir low water level. As the source of water for the Little Truckee, this was a sign of things to consider for tactics.

The Loggers Campground was a great location as it was less than 10 minutes to the Little Truckee and maybe 20 minutes to the Truckee River. The group, including Greg Blandino, James Kirschner, Gary Prince, Mike Prokosch, Jim Felardo, Gary Prince, Denis Haire and Rob Farris (fishmeister) quickly set up camp at their respective sites in anticipation of getting to the river.



Although hot, a welcomed wind through the trees helped make that exercise go quickly. With camp set up it was time to rig up. The questions begin: what will the bite be and when?

The Truckee and Little Truckee Rivers both have an incredible population of wise, wild rainbows. Both rivers are healthy and support a large number of aquatic insects. Understanding, or at least being informed of the type of hatches was of great value. Thank goodness for the club's entomology class! And those hatch charts become even more valuable. From nymphs to dry flies for both the morning and evening hatch, one should anticipate the range. And I am sure those fish have seen them all. Seems to me I need to update my flybox!

There is a truism that 10 percent of the anglers catch 90 percent of the fish on these rivers. It's not easy and it takes many, many hours on the water to master. Wise fish require wise anglers. This truism was put to the test on this trip. So enough with preparation and philosophy, on to fishing! After an early dinner, we decided to fish the Little Truckee for the evening hatch. At about 6:30pm, Gary and Mike headed to the meadows as Rob, Jim and myself hit the area below the power plant.

Rob determined the water temperature to be 58F, ideal for the evening hatch. The water level was low as many rocks and river bed were showing. Being unfamiliar with the water I went with a confidence fly of a black rubber legs on a Euro Rig. The rocks were covered with moss so getting deep was a challenge. I did luck out to catch a nice rainbow before dusk, as well as another strong take that broke me off. As dusk drew closer, around 8:30 the hatch of caddis in their "behavioral drift" started. As I did not bring a dry fly rig, all I could do is watch. Lesson learned; bring a second rig! As usual Rob did catch some fish.



The next morning (Saturday) after a quick breakfast, we headed to the Truckee and at the water by 7:30 am! We landed at the Glenshire Bridge run and to our surprise there were no other cars there. It looked like good pocket water under the bridge.

The air was already warm and we quickly suited up and got to the river. Water flow was good with a temperature of 62F; good conditions! Using everything from beaded pheasant tails to crayfish we all entered the river. Of course, the best seam was further out so wading above the hips was required!



In the four hours we were there, four fish were caught: two by James, and one each by Rob (a classic Truckee river fat boy) and Michael. By the time we left the water temperature was up to almost 70F so it was definitely time to observe the voluntary "Hoot Owl" closure to help reduce fish mortality.



After a light lunch, short siesta and a light early dinner it was time to head back to the Little Truckee for the evening hatch. This time I brought two rods! As we crossed the river at about 6:30pm we could see lots of midges hatching on the water. Shaking the bushes did show some caddis so we had a better idea of what to expect. We all nymph fished until about 8pm and then waited, and waited, and waited, and waited for the hatch. I really learned from this to just stop and observe, to not disturb the fish early, and be patient. Take the time to see the rises and possibly what type. Are they feeding on the surface or just underneath? What are the currents I will have to deal with when casting? As Rob might say, "We need to crack the code" or as I thought, "We are being schooled by these wise...". Rob discovered that a slow retrieve after the swing was bringing him success. After some strong hits and more lost fish than landed, we headed back to lick our wounds with a cold one (s) I must say crossing the river in the dark was challenging, but "you've got to pay your dues."



Not to be deterred, it was back to the Little Truckee in the morning and hopes for the PMD hatch. As we approached the river, we could see the fish from the trail! Big fish just sitting there in the usual spots. The norm of nymphing to start until the hatch began. I was fishing a beaded pheasant tail with a jigged hare's ear to start. I was trying to get deep but often caught on the rocks and moss. Still trying to learn that Euro style. And of course Rob did find that hole with the big one....



At about 10:30 the PMD hatch set in and it was productive. We could see the fish feeding but trying to find the right fly was the challenge. After determining the right color and size they were still very selective (ah wise ones). We even had the DFG as a spotter for us on the trail above Frustration Pool! Good drifts and presentations and they did not bite. I even had them swimming within five feet of me. But by noon as we started to head up the trail, Gary Prince had figured it out. He found a great hole where they kept rising to his orange colored PMD. It was entertaining watching him from above and seeing the fish rise.

In the afternoon, Rob and Gary continued on to Milton Lake where they camped and then encountered a crowd of 10 boats on the water the next day, and few fish. On the water at 6am, Rob hooked up with two

medium-sized browns with a wiggle tail and then doing his dry fly thing for two more on the surface. Gary really worked the dry flies from his boat and shore fishing for a couple more. Something has changed in the lake as the last three trips by club members have seen smaller fish of about 12-15" when the average size was between 15-18" last year. Hmm...



In the evening again we went back to the Little Truckee one more time. Mike, Greg and myself and later Michael Freitas started nymphing.



Michael Freitas did catch one on a zebra midge but broke him off and Greg had some big hits with alligator rolls to break him off! The hatch wasn't quite as strong as the previous night, but Mike had a very strong hit in the same spots he had the night before! That fish certainly had his number.... It was back to camp to have a campfire and enjoy the rest of the evening.



O'Neill Forebay – Bob McCollum

Hot times on the O'Neill Forebay yesterday – both the fishing and the 107 degree temperature. Caught about 20 hard fighting stripers.



Lots of willing stripers at O'Neill Forebay today! Very aggressive strikes. Lots of fish. Lots of action. I marked several large schools of stripers on clouds of bait fish. (Pic of my FF screen below.) The stripers were smaller yesterday than a couple of weeks ago. Largest were 2-3 pounds. Not big, but certainly big fun!



Adventure on the North Fork of the Stanislaus River – Mitchie McCammon

The night before the trip was full of excitement and hopefulness. Lori Day and I were looking forward to going back to Hope Valley where we were the previous Sunday. This was our first trip without anyone to help us. Upon waking up and looking at the map, I saw the words “Tamarack Fire” right near where we were planning to fish. That was why we switched gears and fished the North Fork of the Stanislaus.

After finally arriving at the day use area (I may or may not have made a few wrong turns to get there), we eagerly got our gear together and proceeded to hike to the water. Did I forget to mention the bottom of my new car scraped the asphalt as I slowly drove into the parking area? Maybe we should have taken the hint. Anyways, it was a beautiful day, and we were the only ones on the water. The pools were deep, crystal clear and fish could be seen happily swimming.

We both started with dry flies, mine was a yellow Sally. I could see the little fish come up and look at my fly then go back down. I even had some interest with a couple of soft strikes. At this point I decided to do a dry dropper and added a prince nymph onto an elk hair caddis. The fish seemed to like the caddis and ignored the nymph. Once again, I delved into my fly box for the perfect dry fly. It was time to try my favorite fly, the parachute adams. I let Lori know this and showed her what it looked like. She chose a tiny size 18 in gray. I chose a size 16 in gray. Let's just say these fish wanted the smaller fly so Lori was the winner. She caught a wild brown trout about 9 inches long.

We continued to fish, and I was determined to catch one. At some point I looked at Lori and saw she wasn't fishing and had a strange look on her face. She said she fell and hurt her ankle. I asked if she sprained or broke it, but she wasn't sure. My mom brain and Girl Scout leader instincts started to kick in. We were in the canyon with no cell service and had to hike out about a mile.

What were we going to do? First, I told her to keep her boot on then gave her my wading staff. We sat on a large boulder to regroup and assess the situation. After a minute Lori closed her eyes and said, "I don't feel good. I think the altitude is getting to me." It was looking like she was getting heat exhaustion. Of course, being the good friend I am, I yelled at her to open her eyes and started thinking about how I was I going to cool her down. It took me a few minutes to realize the river was right there and I had a plastic bag in my pack. So off to the river I went to fill the bag, then came back and dribbled it on her head. It was refreshing and did the trick, but we still had to hike up a mile to get out.

I realized I had a gallon Ziploc bag in my pack, so I filled that with river water in case we needed to douse her again on the hike out. I had a small backpack, my fishing hip pack, Lori's hip pack, and two fly rods. Don't forget the gallon Ziploc of river water was also in my pack. Lori had both wading staffs and was gingerly making her way up the trail. It was slow going, but Lori was awesome! We stopped one time, and I gladly dribbled more water on her head. It was a little less weight to carry. We finally made it back to the car.

Thankfully, this story has a happy ending. Urgent care said Lori had a broken bone in her ankle, but the orthopedist said it was a sprain. The only photo we have of the day is Lori's foot in a boot. Despite the adventure we had, Lori still wants to fish! Now that's what I call one tough cookie!



Tight Lines,
Mitchie McCammon

Wolf Creek – Chris McCann

Well, I was re-inspired by Dave Fontaine's last set of speakers, Laurie and Ken, who spoke about the Western Native Trout challenge. I decided to start the challenge by redoing my California Heritage fish. I didn't want to just re-do the same circuit as the first time, so I went investigating new locations for each of the target fish.

My first mission was the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT). I have caught a fair number at Heenan Lake



for the lake-based and in Meiss Meadows for the stream-based LCT. I wanted to find a new location so off to the California Heritage website and I began reading about restoration projects and came upon Wolf Creek.

Wolf Creek begins at Wolf Lake along the PCT and drains into Pickle Meadows; the designated waters are from the outflow of the lake to the bridge at FSR062. The drainage is a small mountain creek, anywhere from 6" to 24" deep. The contours are from running waterfalls and boulders to lush and meandering meadows. There are about 8 miles of water available.



Access is thru the Marine Mountain Warfare post at Pickle Meadows. ID is necessary to travel thru the post although no registration or reservations are required. The creek is about 5 miles up a well-maintained dirt/gravel road. There are a couple of steep inclines but manageable. I would suggest a medium clearance vehicle 4WD is not required as long as it isn't too wet.

The road travels several miles of the creek along two large meadows and ends at the top of the second meadow. From this parking point, there is another several miles of creek accessible by hiking up a deteriorating trail. Hiking is easy to moderate, the trail begins well defined although is easily lost a mile up the drainage. This really isn't a problem as you are following the creek and can navigate the terrain.

The fish are VERY spooky, much more than I would have expected. I do not believe it is from overfishing as the stream banks show very little erosion. The typical small dry patterns are the staple, Elk Hair, Ants or Beetles are the go-to choices. Be careful as you approach the water, do not cast a shadow and try to obscure your profile with the brush and grasses. You only get a couple of casts in each location, after that no matter how stealthy you are, the fish are put down.



Please remember you are in a very primitive area, there are no bathrooms, no cell coverage and a large population of wildlife. There were numerous piles of bear scat around the drainage, so be aware and make noise as you work your way through the brush and high grasses.

Conservation – Plastics

Gary Prince



“One word, plastics”, from The Graduate with Dustin Hoffman 1967 (click to watch)

This advice was given to the young graduate many years ago. Little did we know that plastics use would explode years later. 50% of all plastic that has ever existed, has been produced in the last 13 years. It's a huge worldwide environmental problem! By 2050 it's estimated that plastic in the ocean will weigh more than fish. In the 2020 Surfrider foundation beach cleanup, 90% of the garbage cleaned up was plastic. It seems to be almost the entire problem.

Recycling efforts have been very ineffective. 9% of plastic sold every year in the U.S. is actually recycled. We can be diligent to put plastic (with the triangle arrow shape) in blue recycle trash bins, however most of it is not recycled. It is not recycled due to lack of demand and few markets for it. That leaves 91% going into landfills, the ocean, rivers, out of car windows, etc.

There will be a measure on the November 2022 California ballot that would require plastic packaging sold in the state to be recyclable or reusable. This will affect food and other packaging while beverage regulations are already in place. There is also a requirement for manufacturers to reduce packaging by 25% by 2030. No problem with reducing some pill and vitamin containers, by much more, as I'm often opening bottles that are 75% empty. I also cringe at some of the Costco multipak packages that seems excessive. Every single paper towel roll is wrapped individually, for example. If approved by voters, it will ban Styrofoam and other polystyrene food packaging, such as clamshell boxes for takeout foods from restaurants, stores and supermarkets. There would be a 1-cent fee for each package that would be paid for by the manufacturer. This could raise as much as \$1 billion annually to fund recycling, beach cleanups and other pollution programs. The measure is opposed by the American Chemistry Council (a trade association that includes Dow, Dupont, 3M and Exxon Mobil and others). They call it a massive taxpayer-funded giveaway. I guess the 1-cent required of the manufacturer could be a 1-cent increase in cost to consumers. I'll take the hit personally.

What can you do?

- Use recyclable shopping bags. Ask for paper.
- Use reusable food containers.
- Don't use so many Ziploc bags. (I have 5 sizes, so when I do use one, it's the smallest for the amount to be stored).
- Drink beverages from reusable cups.
- Don't use plastic straws. (Straws are for wimps anyway)
- Avoid plastic bottled water. (Use your own refillable bottles)
- Avoid clothing made with plastic.
- Support and purchase from environmentally responsible companies.
- Shop at farmers markets where you can provide your own reusable bags and containers.

Gary Prince
TVFF Conservation Director

Best Practices for Fishing in a Drought Year

***July 22 Update:** I planned to fish the Little Truckee this past Tuesday, and upon inspection decided that it was not ethical to do so. Very low water in the canyon on the drive up, and low water with warm air temps up top by the dam as well. So I abandoned that and headed to Milton Lake instead. The Upper Little Truckee above Hwy 89, Prosser Creek, and Independence Creeks feeding the LT were all mere trickles as I drove by. We are in for a rough summer I'm afraid so please strongly consider the following article for alternatives.... Rob*

Mike Wier – CalTrout Field Reporter

As hard as it is to admit or accept, California is heading into another drought year. After having three good winters in 2016, '17, and '18, California broke out of the last dry cycle and was in relatively good shape. For a time, our fisheries were thriving again. In my experience, 2018 was one of the best trout fishing years of my entire life. The winter of 2018 was also



one of the best snowboard seasons I can remember in many decades. The temperatures stayed cold for several months and much of our precipitation in the high country fell as snow as opposed to getting more rain at high elevations the previous year. I believe the fishing was so good in 2018 because there was a cohort of trout that had survived the drought years and when everything exploded with new life, they had a ton of food and less competition. The few that survived got very big. Then, 2019 seemed like an average winter, but 2020

numbers came in far below average. We got a bit of precipitation upfront in December, January, and February. Then it pretty much stopped. None of the usual big March, April, or May storms came through. Because of the timing of the precipitation, we hardly had a spring runoff in most of the Sierras.

It's now creeping into early summer and many of our rivers around the state already look like Fall flows. Every reservoir you drive over is down significantly. Many of them never made it to the top this spring to begin with. A state of emergency has already been declared in the upper Klamath basin due to being critically dry. Other parts of California are bound to follow.

As anglers we are also stewards of the resources that we use. It's up to us to change and adapt our practices based on the best available science and current environmental conditions. I am proud of the angling community of which I am a part of and how much it has evolved in the past few decades. More and more anglers are becoming conservationists and also taking the time to study and learn about the resources they use and how best to interact with them in more sustainable ways. Fifty years ago, catch and release fishing was a radical concept, now it's standard practice among fly fishermen. Twenty years ago, it was still common practice to keep the biggest fish you catch. Now more and more anglers are realizing those trophy trout are way more valuable to the ecosystem for their genetics and brood stock. Also twenty years ago, grip and grins were the norm for fish photos, but now more and more anglers are realizing the value of keeping fish wet and photographing them in the water. As a community, we are all moving in the right direction, but in years like this we need to do even more to ensure that our cold-water fisheries remain sustainable and healthy. Here are some tips that can help you navigate fishing in a drought year.

Don't Fish

First and foremost, I feel it is important for every angler to be able to recognize and determine the specific stressors on a fishery; these are indicators that you should potentially not fish in that spot on that day. The fact of the matter is fish are having a hard time these days due to a myriad of environmental factors and stressors. Even if we put angling pressure completely aside, we are seeing an extreme downward trend when it comes to population abundance of wild salmonids in California. CalTrout's 2017 SOS report states that 45% of our native salmonids will be gone in 50 years and 78% gone in 100 years if current trends persist. The most common stressors include water temperatures, dissolved oxygen levels, diminished flows, ground water levels, impacts of wildfire, legacy impacts of mining and other extraction, agriculture operations, pressure from other anglers or wildlife, and/or pollutants in the waterways.

When it comes to trout fishing, dissolved oxygen levels are super important. Trout breathe oxygen just like us; they filter it out of the water through their gills. That's why trout are a coldwater species. The colder the water is, the more dissolved oxygen it can hold. Both temperature and flows play an important role in the amount of dissolved oxygen in any given waterway. Most anglers are probably not going to be carrying a dissolved oxygen meter, but many will have a thermometer and can visually gauge how the flows are doing for any given waterway. Prime metabolism for trout occurs between 55 and 65°F. Catching trout in temperatures above 68 can become stressful for them. Above the low 70s can be lethal. I highly recommend checking water temperatures before fishing for trout, especially in creeks and rivers. If conditions don't look optimal, consider opting out of fishing there and head somewhere different, or target warm water species.

Stillwater Fisheries

Stillwater fishing can be a great alternative to stream or river fishing, especially in the hot part of the summer. Most of California's natural lakes are found in higher elevations where the water is typically cooler throughout the hot summer months. Many of the lower elevation lakes are impoundments and those reservoirs are typically pretty deep. Anywhere you have deep water there will be a thermocline. That means the surface temperature may be on the warm side for trout, but 5 or 6 feet down there is typically a temperature change and that colder, deeper water will be suitable for trout year-round. In lakes, the fish are typically spread out more as well. This lessens the impact of angling pressure because anglers are not just concentrated on specific areas like a riffle or a pool in a river.

You often hear the argument that stillwater fishing is boring. Many conventional anglers fish with bait or troll from a boat. Fly-fishing can be a lot more interactive. You can kick around in a float tube and work the deeper sections of the lakes or walk the banks and sight fish for cruising fish. Sight fishing is my all-time favorite method of fly-fishing and high-country lakes in California can provide a very fun and interactive experience. It's often more like hunting than fishing. I try to find vantage points where I can see well into the water and look for cruising fish. You must cast the fly right into the perfect position based on which way the fish is heading and how fast your fly sinks. There are also lots of spots where fish continue to feed off the surface of high-country lakes throughout the summer – sometimes all day long. It's hard to find something better than catching big trout on dry flies out of crystal-clear lakes.

Hoot Owl Closures

If you are going to be fishing in streams and rivers, please carry a thermometer and make a point to check water temperatures. During the last drought cycle, many anglers voluntarily enacted hoot owl closures on lots of California's famous fisheries; most notably, the Truckee River. A hoot owl closure basically means that anglers voluntarily restrict fishing to the mornings and evenings when you might hear an owl hoot; the water temperatures are also cooler. We then give the water a break during the hottest parts of the day. Even the guides follow these rules and take a siesta with their clients if they have a full day trip. Hoot owl closures are typically enacted because temperatures are reaching above 70 degrees, but they can also be in place because of low flows. As I mentioned before, both temperature and flows affect the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water. Some streams might be cold enough but have very little flow which stagnates the pools and can be stressful for fish.

Spring-fed Systems

One of California's greatest assets is its cold-water Springs. Throughout various parts of the state, we have several primarily spring-fed wild trout rivers that maintain fairly cold temperatures year-round. Water that is stored underground has the perfect thermal barrier and typically maintains a set temperature that is much cooler than the surface temperatures. The closer you are to a spring source, the colder the water is going to be. The longer it flows on the surface in a stream or river, the more it has a chance to be warmed by the sun. Spring-fed rivers typically have the most consistent cold-water temperatures that last throughout the entire year. That's why spring-fed systems typically hold robust populations of wild trout.

Even in the drought years, the spring-fed systems will maintain the best flows and the most optimal temperatures for trout. I won't sit here and list the names of all of our most famous spring-fed rivers, but you

can do some research and determine which rivers are fed by springs. These are snowmelt driven or free stone systems, which are tailwaters. Consider planning your mid-summer trips to fisheries that are predominantly spring-fed. Or tailwaters that come from a deep lake with a cold-water thermocline. But also, please be conscious of crowds and overfishing those particular streams.

Keep Fish Wet

By now you have probably heard us preaching proper fish handling techniques many times over. These practices become more important than ever in a drought year or in any conditions where fish are already stressed. We recommend you employ ethical fishing practices when fishing for wild trout or if you don't plan on eating them.

First off, single barbless hooks are the standard for catch and release. Some areas allow barbless treble hooks now, but we strongly discourage anglers from using treble hooks when planning to release fish. Then, consider upping your tippet size so you can decrease fish fighting times. The quicker you can get a fish in, the less lactic acid they will expend and the quicker their recovery time will be once released. A net helps with this too. Always wet your hands before handling fish and keep them submerged in the water while removing the hook. Never drag a fish you plan on releasing up onto the rocks or the grass. And especially don't handle them out of the water with dry hands. Dry hands and grass can rub off their protective slime layer which protects the fish from bacteria and infections, as well as helps them glide through the water. Also, studies have shown that fish are very susceptible to brain damage if they hit their head on rocks. It's hard for them to do underwater, but once out of the water a couple hard flops on the rock can leave lasting damage and severely interrupt their ability to reproduce successfully.

If you plan on photographing your catch, please consider keeping them just under the water or at least leaving their gills in the water. And if you have to do a grip and grin, make sure the photographer is ready and grab the fish firmly by the wrist of its tail with one hand under the upper part of its belly. Quickly lift it up for a photo, then get it back in the water.

Also, when water temperatures are warmer and there is less oxygen, it might take longer to revive fish. Keep the fish underwater with their heads facing upstream so the current is pushing through their gills. Gently rock the fish back-and-forth with their head facing upstream to flush some water through their gills. Then wait for the fish to kick off itself once it has caught its breath and gained its strength.

Thank you for being considerate in these tough times. It's up to everyone to pitch in to ensure that our resources can sustain themselves for the long run. The responsibility lies on all of us. We also recommend you practice 'leave no trace' fishing and or take the time to pick up a couple extra pieces of trash, even remind others to do the same. Let's leave our streams even better each time we visit them.

Items for Sale

If you need contact information for a member, use the club's online [roster](#).

Norvise Fly Tying Vise – \$180

Norvise, Bobbin with five spools and winder, bobbin hanger, mounting board and tool caddie. Comes with a 24hr limited warranty. – Jim Broadbent

Rod, Reel, Wading Gear, Tying Gear

White River Hobbs Creek 9ft 5wt. Great cheap back up rod. \$20



Wet fly 3/4 reel with Dacron backing \$30



OPST waterproof waist pack. Roll top design. I have submerged this with my phone and fly boxes and they have kept completely dry. Has internal padded organizer that is removable. \$60



Simms wader/gear bag. Fits waders and boots in bottom compartment to separate from dry clothes and gear. Tons of storage up top for jackets, warm clothes, socks, etc. more compartments up top for access to fly boxes, reels, etc. bungee style rod tube holders on both sides. Water repellent material. These are discontinued. In great shape minus missing one stop button on handle. Doesn't affect use.

Asking \$200 obo





Simms G4 waders size large king. If you know Simms, you know the G4's are what the guides use. Repaired many pin hole leaks but still going strong. Comes with opros belt rod holder. Only selling because I've grown out of them. Asking \$350 obo.



Free to whoever wants it, a Cabelas fly tying workstation.



More photos available upon request. Pick up in Livermore or Pleasanton.

James Kirchner

