



Sonoma County
California
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Rich and Christie G's Cabo Dorados

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Headwaters...

We're three weeks away from the solstice...the event where my optimism is suddenly restored by the lengthening daylight and my spirits rise in anticipation for another year's fishing. Not much to report from this past year. I spent nearly as much time fishing out-of-state as I did plying the waters of Northern California. Drought and low-water curtailed my enthusiasm for fishing my usual haunts and, as I drove to Seattle to celebrate Thanksgiving, the lack of flow in the Russian, Eel, Van Duzen, Mad and Smith Rivers all punctuated our continuing water crises. Our weather forecasts promise the strongest El Niño ever, but a persistent high pressure system remains over the Pacific Northwest and pushes most of the rain and snow around us in a pattern similar to what we experienced last year. So we wait...wondering...hoping for a deluge of abundance with minimal destruction.

The Russian River is closed to fishing because of low-flow, so our annual **RRFF Steelhead Clinic** will occur once again **at the RRF Casting Pond in Dan Galvin Park**...actually an excellent venue for this event but not preferable to fishing on the river. The **Beginning Fly Fishing Class** is currently full and will begin sometime toward the end of January, once we are clear of the holidays and everyone has caught their breath. In the meantime, our **Saturday Winter Fly Casting Clinics** can exercise your arm and help exorcise the frustration of not-fishing for our coastal steelhead. These clinics are held the first and third Saturday of each month, from noon until about 2:30 pm (weather permitting).

I hope each of you has a wonderful holiday season and that this winter does indeed lessen the effects of our drought, giving all of us hope for the renewed health of our fisheries in the coming year. May the snow fall, the rain splash and our lakes, rivers and their tributaries all find nourishment with this **Season's Greetings!**
~ Steve Tubbs

November Pyramid Lake Outing



Ten RRFF members experimented with a November trip to Pyramid Lake and I'm sad to say it did not fulfill our expectations. The morning air temperatures were in the high 20's, but the shallow water temperatures remained in the high 50's. So the cutthroats were staying out in deeper water, beyond where even our groups' considerable casting skills could reach. Local spin fishers throwing spoons and jigs 150 feet got the most grabs. This was true for even accesses with close drop-offs like the rocks at Pelican Point, Sand Hole, and Block House.

We ended up fishing mostly at Dago Bay, located at the southeast corner of the lake. It was the popular spot and the ladder line stretched out at least half a mile. We didn't see a lot of hook-ups, but our club did get about one fish per angler. I think Ed Barich hooked 3 fish on Friday. I landed only one all weekend.



Don catches one at Dago Bay

Most of our hook-ups resulted from stripping shooting heads with a black woolly bugger and black or white Pyramid tadpole fly combination. We even tried "balanced leeches" fished under an indicator – which wasn't very productive without many fish cruising the beaches, but I'm going to try it next March.



Ed's first Pilot Peak fish

Some new regulations at Pyramid Lake are worth mentioning. Anglers must have an ID tag permanently attached to their ladder and cannot leave them unattended for more than one hour and trailers must be 100 feet back from the water. These changes should end the practice of people leaving their ladders out all day and Bogarting good sections of beach.

Dinners were a welcome relief from the slow fishing. Thursday, Don Shaw served lasagna and a walnut and cranberry salad. Friday, Alan Cason introduced a Cowboy Stew, which was delicious and easy to prepare and Tom Mersich provided pumpkin pie with whipped cream.

Unfortunately, we missed having Diane's creamy scalloped potatoes, coleslaw and brauts on Saturday. That's because after 2 days of slow fishing, the outing came to an ignominious early end due to predictions of snow and travel advisories over the I-80 summit on Sunday – and we all left by 4PM Saturday.

Talk to participants Alan, Don, Tom, Doug and Sage Mackay, Chris Castellucci, Ed Barich, James W, and Steve Tubbs for personal accounts of this trip.

~ Ken Magoon

"Angling the Lower Sacramento"

"Angling the Lower Sacramento" is, of course, a presentation on the Lower Sacramento River. It's more than showing off the grip-and-grin photos of the big wild rainbows. It's not about drifting the river, per se (although drifting is covered). This presentation focuses on precisely what an angler needs and the locations of access areas for wading anglers and boat launches for those who drift. The presentation will educate the fly fisher on the entire Lower Sac.



Lance & Kirsten Gray

Lance and Kirsten have more than 50 years combined experience in fly fishing. Lance started fly fishing with his father and brother Lincoln at age 7. In his teens, he began tying flies commercially for shops all around Northern California. At 17, he went to work at Powell's in Chico, working in the fly shop and building rods. He guided for Powell's, conducted fly-tying and fly-fishing schools, and traveled.

In 1993, Lance and Kirsten started Saltwater Innovations, a company that manufactured and distributed products for saltwater fly fishing. Lance's Crystal Popper, Gray's Billfish Fly, the KO Charlie line and the Raghead Crabs, are all Saltwater Innovations products. Kirsten worked behind the scenes, handling the day-to-day operation running the manufacturing floor of the company.

In 2003 they launched Lance Gray & Company, a full-service outfitter offering guided trips, fly-fishing schools, workshops and a travel agency. Lance conducts presentations at fly clubs and outdoor shows and supports local groups like Cub Scouts and 4H. He's a signature tier for Solitude Fly Company,

pro staff member for Sage and Rio and is a featured writer, with articles published in Angling Trade Magazine, California Fly Fisher, Fly Fishermen, Sierra Fisherman and Northwest Fly Fishing.

Kirsten is a fantastic photographer who's had images published in periodicals and on websites throughout the outdoor industry.

Please join me in welcoming Lance at the Wednesday, December 9 General Meeting.

~ Joe Banovich
RRFF Program and Speaker Chairman

LINING FISH

Our trip to the Smith River started somewhat usual.....toss the stuff together and scoot. We arrived Saturday, November 7, with the river open to fishing from below Rowdy Creek to the mouth, which was just fine with us. However, no fish were to be spotted from Ship Ashore, the Sand Hole, or the Piling Hole, and up to and including Rowdy Creek.

Upon an early check out Sunday morning, the gal manning the desk at Ship Ashore mentioned they had opened the river to fishing above Rowdy Creek that morning. Whoa! Let's check it out a bit. Turned left at the 101 bridge and saw a guy landing a fish just upstream. Phoned Ship Ashore.....KEEP the room!

Checked Ruby and Jed parks and fish were rumored lost that morning or very previously in the week. Good! We went to Ruby as there was no crowd there. We had rising water.....sticks and leaves and other debris. Also one twenty minute shot of rain that deposited 9 inches of water in the boat.

After we bailed and bailed with cut off water bottles we went back to fishing, picked up a few sticks and a few leaves, then something different.....a loooong chunk of mono. Someone must have snagged and left it in the river.

Lee unexpectedly commands: "Hold this line." I put down my fly rod and grabbed the monofilament. Pulled a lot of the loose end in. WOW! How long is it? Started pulling the other end. Whoa!!! It is

pulling back.....and it's big! What to do? Bring it in; wrap it around something. So I'm coiling it around my hand while Lee holds the "fish" end. Forever I coil it seemed—at least a couple hundred feet!! What is this?

The next command: "Cut my fly." I cut off the mono from my hand and cut his fly. Lee starts tying two lines together to get the fish on the fly rod all the while keeping tension with one finger! Then he says: "Cut the tied ends and hold the line." While allowing the fish to run out and get on the rod a loop went around his middle finger and became too tight to remove. Youch! He has the fish line wrapped to nearly amputation on his finger. I got enough momentary slack to free his finger, the fish on the rod, and we played it for about 20 minutes before I was able to net it.

Nothing left to do but remove the silver Kastmaster, go back to the room, dry out, and take a shower before dinner.



What a hoot!
..... Susan Bostwick

Oh yeah is this what they mean by "lining"
fish?
..... Lee Soares



Conservation Corner 3: *The 4 "H's" continued: Hydropower (Dams)*

Dams, like almost nothing else in fisheries conservation, can cause blood pressures to rise and battle lines to be drawn between constituencies along riverways. They have powered industries that have changed the fortunes of war, brought life-giving water to millions of acres of otherwise non-arable land, and controlled devastating floods. And they have dramatically re-shaped anadromous fisheries and the people who rely on them.

Like many things, the effect of dams is not a simple thing. There are always winners and losers, even amongst fish species. Sonoma County doesn't have to rely on the variable snowpack of the Sierras for our water because of the dam that creates Lake Sonoma. The Potter Valley Project actually adds water to the Russian River watershed (at a cost to the Eel). Monticello Dam on Lake Berryessa creates a tailwater fishery for wild rainbow trout on Putah Creek that would not exist while the lower dam at Lake Solano creates a productive year-round habitat.

But the clear, over-riding effect on wild anadromous fisheries is overwhelmingly negative. These effects include the potential flooding of more of the McCloud River by [raising Shasta Dam](#) by 18.5 feet.



We lack a complete knowledge of how river systems work. This was recently highlighted by the unintended negative consequences on downstream steelhead by trying to help Deschutes River salmon above Round Butte Dam ([The Drake, Fall 15](#)).

Mitigation efforts for the effects of dams can often reach incredible levels. The scheme to [truck chinook salmon above Lake Shasta](#) (\$16M for the first 3 years) looks small when compared with major dam removal (\$220M for the dams in Washington - of course the price tag was \$20M when proposed before litigation 20 years ago).

Like the rest of California, the coastal rivers North of The Bay have been affected by dams to the detriment of anadromous fisheries. There are 1440 large dams in California today, alongside countless smaller man-made impediments to fish movement like detention dams, debris dams, diversion dams and “Arizona crossings”. In the Russian River watershed, the Warm Springs Dam that created Lake Sonoma is the biggest blockade to ancestral spawning grounds for salmon and steelhead.



Fortunately though, the tide of unrestrained dam building has changed, and organizations like Trout Unlimited and CalTrout have been able to successfully advocate for removal of outdated dams. While there is a long way to go, there is now regular news of dams coming down from around the country. One of the biggest fights we’ll ever see in the near future will be the attempt to restore the 3rd largest salmon run on the West Coast through the removal of the [lower four dams on the Klamath](#). Closer to home in the Russian River watershed, there are some notable recent success stories. The Sonoma County Water Agency has already removed the Crocker Creek and Mumford dams (2002-3) and the Dutch Bill Creek Watershed Group removed the [Camp Meeker Dam](#) (2009). Hopefully this continues and we’ll see (and maybe be part of) the removal of

more outdated and useless dams that impact our local watersheds.

How to get involved and make a difference:

1. Get fired up. I guarantee that watching a compelling movie (like [DamNation](#) or [A River Between Us](#) or [Russian River: All Rivers](#)) or reading one of the many excellent books on the subject such as [Finding the River](#) (the Elwha in Washington), [Recovering a Lost River](#) (the Lower Snake in Washington and Oregon), or [River of Renewal](#) (the Klamath) will get your blood boiling.
2. Join your local watershed group (like the Dutch Bill Watershed Group) and support dam removal where appropriate.
3. Hold your elected government accountable (California Resource Conservation District or Sonoma County Water Agency) for removing useless and damaging dams.
4. Join larger organizations (like TU, IFFF, or CalTrout) that can petition for dam removal and make sure your local chapters are active (Redwood Empire TU).

~ Derek Campbell
Conservation Chairman

Amazing Amazonia

I joined a group going to Brazil to fish at two locations in the Amazon River drainage (aka “Amazonia”). (There is a pretty cool map in the November 2015 National Geographic). This drainage has 20% of worlds river flow and covers about 2/3 or Brazil and substantial parts of 8 other surrounding nations from the Andes to the Atlantic Ocean.



We flew to the city of Manaus, population 2 million, near the junction of the Rio Negro and Amazon Rivers in the middle of Brazil, about 800 miles from the Atlantic ocean. There, the Rio Negro is about two miles wide before it joins with the Amazon.

Next day, we flew west on a small plane and took a 1-2 hour boat ride to a floating eco-lodge on a lagoon off the Amazon River in one of the largest nature preserves in Brazil. It is an area rich with nature – jaguar, monkeys, birds, caiman, pink dolphins and all kinds of fish and butterflies. <http://www.pousadauacari.com.br/> We did not see any jaguar.



This caiman was one of several around the lodge and seemed to live under our rooms:



The lodge is run by the local communities and this year they have added a catch and release flyfishing program on a trial basis. We fished primarily for Pirarucu' (aka Arapaima). It is an odd (but beautiful!) creature and comes up to breath air every 10 minutes or so. We used 12-weight fly rods to toss 4-6" streamers with 7/0 hooks and intermediate tip or sinking lines with 60-80 lb test leader casting from skiffs. My biggest was about 75

lbs and the biggest fish anyone landed was about 120 lbs. We did hook some bigger fish but we could not land them – this fish gets up over 400 lbs and is said to be the largest fresh water fish in the world. When they get hooked, they jump and they pull like crazy. For the bigger fish, we had to jump on shore to land them after checking to make sure there were no caiman around. We also caught Arowana using poppers and floating lines. Some flies were lost to nasty little red-bellied Piranha. I would have to say that the flyfishing trial season was a success!



My second week we flew out 1-2 hours from Manaus to the northeast and then took a 5-hour boat ride on the Rio Negro and Rio Marie' to fish for Peacock Bass (butterfly and spotted), staying on a floating hotel-barge. Not as much nature on the Rio Negro system and lots of buzzing insects while we were casting but fishing was good. We used 9-10 weights intermediate tip lines and 60 lb test leaders casting 4-5" streamers from skiffs. My largest Peacock was 14 lbs. Most landed bass over 20 lbs with the largest at 25 lbs.



I really enjoyed this trip.

~ Mike Spurlock
11/23/2015

Meanwhile . . . in Cabo



Sunday, November 8, Rich and I arrived for an early 6:30 A.M. fly fishing adventure in Cabo. Fanny Krieger recommended I use Baja Anglers since fly fishing was most important to me. We boarded a small boat, large enough for two anglers and two captains. We were asked if we wanted to fish inshore or out deeper for Marlin. I suggested we stay inshore considering we love Mahimahi.

After 30 minutes of heading north, the captain hooked Richard up with a spin rod and live bait measuring about 10 inches long. I insisted on using a fly rod, and rather enjoyed hoisting the heavy line and fly out of the water - stripping rapidly between casts.

Within 20 minutes I saw the water starting to stir up behind the boat and then Wham! - I set the hook with a big strip. All of a sudden my reel was whirling in delight, while I tried to continue to strip. Need I say more? My glove was sliced in two, and two fingers had small cuts in them. The captain was screaming at me to let the fish run. I was trying to hang onto the rod and pressed it into my chest. The reel was whistling and the handle kept spinning into my breast - over and over. What a dummy! I will know better next time. I have a huge black and purple bruise, but it was so worth it. We ate some of our catch on a beach in Cabo under candlelight and brought the rest home in a bag.

Apparently Baja Anglers is the only company that provides fly fishing gear and guided boats for fishing in Cabo. If someone knows of another company in Cabo who takes you out on a boat with fly gear, please let me know. I want to go back!

~ Christie G

Calendar of Events

Winter Fly Casting Clinics – From 12:00 noon until 2:30 pm (weather permitting). RRFF Fly Casting Clinics are held the first and third Saturday of each month.

December

- 5 Russian River Steelhead Clinic (K. Magoon)
- 9 General Meeting - Vets Building 6:30 PM
- 10 - 13 **RRFF Steelhead Outing to American River** (B. Laurie)
- 16 Board of Directors Meeting 7:00 PM

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January

- 13 General Meeting – Vets Building 6:30 PM
- 14 – 18 **Outing TBA**
- 16 **Eagle Canyon Trophy Trout Lakes** (J. Vallerga)
- 20 Board of Directors Meeting 7:00 PM
- 21 – 24 Gualala River Steelhead fishing (B. Laurie)

February

- 4 - 7 **Outing TBA**
- 10 General Meeting – Vets Building 6:30 PM
- 17 Board of Directors Meeting 7:00 PM
- 27 **Cioppino Dinner**

March

- 9 General Meeting – Vets Building 6:30 PM
- 9 **Eagle Canyon Trophy Trout Lakes** (J. Vallerga)
- 11 – 12 **Red's Fishing Tackle, Duck Decoy and Sporting Collectibles Show** – Vets Building
- 13 Daylight Savings Time Begins.
- 16 Board of Directors Meeting 7:00 PM
- 17 – 20 **Pyramid Lake** (K. Magoon)
- 19 Summer Fly Casting Clinics every Thursday 4:30 – 7:00 PM

August

- 21 – Sep 3 **Idaho, Montana Camping, Fishing, Float Trip.** Maximum 12 RRFF members. Sign up now. This will be a two week trip through the great rivers, streams and lakes of Idaho and Montana. It will include an optional one to three day fishing float trip. Details to follow (B. Laurie)

The RRFF Steelhead Clinic will be held at the RRFF Casting Pond on December 5th!

RRFF Newsletter Submissions

Newsletter materials are due the fourth Monday of each month. Please email submissions as an MSWord doc to our newsletter editor:

Lorin Ngum - lorrin@aol.com

Russian River Fly Fishers
P.O. Box 2673
Santa Rosa, CA 95405



Russian River Fly Fishers Membership Application

I acknowledge in this agreement, and fully understand, that it is a release of liability. I further acknowledge that I am waiving any right that I may have to bring legal action or to assert a claim against Russian River Fly Fishers (RRFF) for its negligence. Any member who invites a non-member (including member's spouse and family) agrees that such guest is bound by the same conditions and agrees to so advise the guest. I have read this statement and agree to its terms as a condition of my membership in the Russian River Fly Fishers. This agreement is valid for all RRFF sanctioned events, (fishing outings, picnics, meetings).

Name _____ Date _____ Referred by _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone _ _____ Work Phone _ _____ E-mail Address* _____

How Can You Help the RRFF? _____

Occupation _____ Signature _ _____

* Required for e-mail newsletter

Please mark one of the following categories:

I apply as a new member: **Single membership** – \$50 annual dues **Gold membership** - \$1,000.00 (one-time)

Family membership – \$55 annual dues **JOIN ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org**

Junior membership – \$25 annual dues

Existing membership renewal: **Single membership** – \$50 annual dues **Gold membership** - \$1,000.00 (one-time)

Family membership – \$55 annual dues **RENEW ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org**

Junior membership – \$25 annual dues

Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 30th of any year will cover the balance of that year and also the membership dues for the following fiscal year. The RRFF fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th

Please mail this application and your check payable to: **Russian River Fly Fishers, P.O. Box 2673, Santa Rosa, CA 95405**