

The Cast



Russian River Fly Fishers

Sonoma County California
Volume 49, Number 3
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Eel River Steelhead
(See "The Eel River" story by Greg Jacobs, pg. 2 below)

Since June 1977
Visit our website at
www.rrflyfisher.org

President's Message *Spring Approaching*

With warmer weather on the way and spring just around the corner, it's time to shake off those winter doldrums and get casting again. The RRFF will be having casting clinics at our casting pond in Galvin Park on Saturday March 5 from noon to 2:30PM. Then starting on March 17, we plan on switching to weekly Thursday sessions, 4:30 – 7PM (weather permitting). The sessions are open to the public, so feel free to bring friends or family who are interested in learning to fly cast. We will have some rods available for loan to visitors who do not have their own equipment.

For those of you who want to cast and feel a tug at the other end of the line, early spring in California offers some of the best fishing opportunities. The past two months of drought have halted steelhead fishing on our coastal rivers, so be sure to check for low-flow closures before heading out (707-944-5533). Lake Ralphine at Howarth Park in Santa Rosa gets bi-weekly plantings of rainbow trout (check CDFW website for dates) that can be caught on a fly – a good setting for beginners. Elsewhere in Northern California, the Lower Sacramento River and Baum Lake have been providing good rainbow trout action (see articles in last month's CAST). Further away, there are reports of a trophy-sized Lahontan cutthroat trout being caught by fly anglers at Pyramid

Lake in Nevada. Those are just a few of the possibilities, and there are many others in between.

With this winter's COVID outbreak waning, opportunities to get out of the house are appealing, but please continue to follow all local regulations to ensure your health and safety while you enjoy the great outdoors.

Tight lines,

~ Ed Barich

**Check out the Russian River Fly Fishers
on the Internet at
www.rrflyfisher.org
for outings information, RRFF events,
member news, photos and more!**

Note:

We encourage members to check our **website calendar below** and get out there and go fishing.

<https://www.rrflyfisher.org/club-calendar-and-trip-signups.html>

We continue to have monthly outings planned through June (with signup sheets and trip leaders) and later months are still in planning stages.

- March - Pyramid Lake (Chris Castellucci, trip leader)
- April – Clearlake (Mike Borba, trip leader)
- May - Baum Lake (Ed Barich, trip leader)
- June - Manzanita Lake (Ed Barich, trip leader)

Talk to the trip leaders if anyone needs any suggestions on equipment or mentoring on the water.

RRFF General Meeting
**Penelope Gadd-Coster, VP & Program
Chair**
Wednesday, March 9th
7:00 P.M. – Zoom Meeting

For our March General Meeting, Greg Vinci will join us and give his presentation titled, *Northern California Trophy Waters*. His talk will cover the following waters: Mokelumne, Lower American, Lower Yuba, Lower Feather, and Putah Creek.

Greg Vinci is a fly-fishing writer and photographer whose works can be seen in many fly fishing and outdoor magazines such as Fly Fisherman, American Angler, Flyfishing & Tying Journal, Salmon & Steelhead Journal, Northwest and Southwest Fly-Fishing magazines, California Fly Fisher, Sierra Heritage and Runner's World, Gray's Sporting Journal, and others. His photography has appeared on the covers of California Fly Fisher, Fly Fishing & Tying Journal, and Sierra Heritage.

Eel River-Winter Report **By Greg Jacobs**

I signed up to fish the Eel for the third winter season in a row. I had prior success with guide Jason Cockrum, but my casting arm was killing me. I had decided I would cancel if I could not see a doc before leaving. As it turned out, my orthopedic physician had an appointment cancellation, and I got into his office about a week before the trip. He had replaced both my hips and over the years we talked many times about my fishing habit. I told him I wanted to continue to fish, so his physician assistant gave me a cortisone shot in the right rotator cuff area. I was determined to fly fish and fortunately, the injection seemed to help a little. I stayed at the Miranda Gardens, a funky but nice old motor lodge in Miranda, thinking that I would be close to fishing. It was—sort of.

The South Fork of the Eel is a great stretch, but without much rain during January, it had gotten too low. So, Jason decided we would hit the main fork. It was farther from my motel than I had planned. We put in near a place called Holmes, downriver from where Larabee Creek intersects the Eel. We planned to take out at Stafford, which is upriver from Scotia. These are little communities on the old Redwood Highway, barely surviving from the days of leisurely trips to the *Avenue of the Giants* to view the majestic

stature of the coastal redwoods. This area is a step back in time and now bypassed by Highway 101, as is the Miranda Gardens Resort. At least the town of Miranda has South Fork High School, some restaurants, a decent market, and gas station, but nothing open early enough to eat before going out in the early A.M. to fish. They don't have microwaves in many rooms at the Resort. So, I settled for cold burritos and room made coffee.

It was only three hours from my home in Sebastopol, and now a far easier drive than just a few years ago. (Unless there is a slide closing the road, which is not infrequent.) I met Jason early Saturday morning, and we did our own shuttle. He had his drift boat rigged with a gas motor, a great advantage on the main Eel, which had a lot of frog water. We made a ton of drifts right up against the bank and about 2 P.M. is when I got a steelie. I thought, "Oh boy!" at the end of the first day. We have this place dialed in. There were only a few boats around.



Jason ready to push his boat under the old concrete bridge

Sunday was busy in the A.M., but with the Niners playing, we had the river to ourselves most of the day. But what usually *happens* when you start to count your chickens—*happened!* We got skunked the second day. My arm was hurting a little more from my swift rod tugs trying to set the hook every time the indicator jiggled.

If I had not caught that first fish the day before, I might have gone home Monday morning, but I thought, "What the hey, I was there, and how many

chances for steelies do you get?" We put in at, "High Rock" on Sunday, and had to get around, but in our case, we had to get under the summer bridge on the Eel. This is an old concrete bridge that seems to have survived over the years. Normally, you pull your boat around the bridge, but guide Jason decided to remove his seats, the high vertical leg locks, the motor, and we slipped the drift boat under that low lying bridge. That was the excitement that day.

Jason works for AC Fly Fishing, Redding, and on Monday, we were accompanied by a second AC Fly fishing boat rowed by a co-worker, Harry King, who was learning the ins and outs of the Eel River. He had brought his dad along. In the small world department, Harry's father taught at my high school, Analy, not called West Side anymore, when I was there but he transferred to El Molino High School in Forestville before I had a chance to take classes from him.

At any rate, things were quiet for a while, until I got two nice fish late that morning, ten minutes apart. That was a pleasant surprise. Both days we experienced nice weather. It was cold but clear, until the wind came up the afternoon. We had to tow Harry's boat a couple of times to save him from difficult and exhaustive rowing.



Greg's #2 steelhead

I had one more chance Monday afternoon when I hooked *one of those fish you never forget*. Jason got really excited by the size of that fish and he usually does not get excited. But after a few moments, that fish destroyed me, and then it got away. I was shaking for some time after. I forgot about the bum shoulder for a bit. Still two for three is not bad in any league, and at least there are some steelies still left in the Eel,

but not many. I have gone out with Jason to many spots like the Lower Sac, Fall River, Pit, and Baum Lake. He knows how to find fish, and that is all a guide can do—put you onto fish. I have driven up to Eureka many times on the way to the Mattole River, and Klamath, and until the last three years, had never fished the Eel. I wished I had.

Yuba River Outing Report **By Ed Barich**

On the weekend of February 12-13, the RRFF had an outing at UC-Davis Sierra Foothills Extension property on the Lower Yuba River. It was a large group, including Ed Barich, Anthony Bendik, Gregg Wrisley, Spencer Bader, Dave Stone, Dave Weber, Carl Kiyota, Jeff Cratty, Matt Cardle, Joe Hiney, Mike Tibbet, Mike Bluto and Malcolm Zollinger. Most of us stayed at motels in the Yuba City area and gathered in the evenings for dinners at local restaurants.



Morning walk upriver

The section of the river we visited is the tailwater below Englebright Dam and above the Hwy 20 bridge that is reserved for barbless hook/catch and release angling for wild rainbow trout. Our hopes were for some dry fly action, with the Skwala stone fly hatch normally present at this time of the year. Alas, we found very few Skwalas at the river, leaving sub-surface presentations as the only practical method of enticing action. Compared to our previous outing on the property in December, less trout were hooked on this weekend. The biggest excitement came when Mike Tibbet hooked a large steelhead while swinging a beaded rubber-legs fly on the upper reach of the river using a trout-spey rod. The fish put up a long

fight, jumping several times with big splashes, only to be lost due to lack of a steelhead-sized landing net.



One of the few Skwala stoneflies found by Jeff

Otherwise, it was a pleasant weekend with abundant sunshine and highs in the 70s, scenic walks along the river, and the good companionship of our fellow member anglers.

When I Fished Hat Creek **By Leafa Fiore**

I'd been to Hat Creek several years before. At that time, the Powerhouse 2 parking lot looked like Costco's lot on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. There were so many people in the creek that I didn't think there was room to fish, even if I could wedge in. Casting? Casting? Blind casting. Sure, sometimes something worth doing is worth overdoing, but come on! That was not my first experience with spring creeks. My very first season fly fishing, I journeyed to that other fishing mecca, Fall River. One look at that clear water and I knew that I wasn't good enough to grace its unblemished waters. My non-fishing husband and I rented a boat from Lava Springs Lodge and headed to Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park for the day instead. Saddened, I hoped someday to be able to present a dry fly to those Fall River wary beauties.

But I went back Hat Creek a few years later. My fishing bud and I drove straight to Hat Creek Powerhouse 2 before checking into our motel. We took bets on the number of cars that would be in parking lot. Even at 7 P.M. there were still twelve cars there and at least that many people were wading. There wasn't a hatch on, so we waited until the next day.

But, before I continue about Hat Creek, a few words about the Pit River. With the aid of a guide, we lost nymphs like crazy but missed catching poison oak. My ego was damaged when I took the Pit baptism. The guide kept yelling at me, “Do you still have your rod?” I knew his real concern was for my safety, but you know some guides—while able to show empathy when you land a fish, but they aren’t necessarily able to express themselves in other ways. What he didn’t know was that I’d lost my footing trying to free my fly from a snag. “DAMN right!” I shouted. My rod wasn’t going anywhere. My sensitive nature was restored however after he took a couple of dunks while moving back and forth across the river. The key lesson from the Pit is always keep your weight planted on one foot and pivot on your heel. I never thought I’d find a use for Tai Chi while fishing!

Now back to the Hat. As usual with most fishing spots, everyone congregates near the parking area. Again, the constant casting, even though there appeared to be no hatch. We walked downstream towards the bridge, casting to the snags along the opposite bank.

We casted with that marvelous trout candy, dry stone flies, mending and letting the fly drift fifteen feet or so. I had two hits in the same drift—one on the mend and the second bump right after that. The guide said, “Did you see that?” Man, I hate it when guides say that. My next cast brought in a strong sixteen-inch brown.

Rogue River By Mike Acker

The fish released in the photo was a hoot. At one point, after it had many runs peeling off my reel line, the fish went under the boat along the bank of the Rogue. I yelled at the guide “She’s under the boat!” The guide jumped up from his seat and loudly stomped he’s feet on the boat’s metal sheathing. The fish took off like a rocket.

I landed a smaller fish too. It was a typical half-pounder out of the upper Rogue River. Summer run

fish, caught in the fall. Always fun to see the colors and release to catch another day.



Mike releasing his Rogue River steelhead.

Fly of the Month Float and Fly Minnow By Mike Borba



Our April outing to Clear Lake will be a great opportunity to catch largemouth bass and crappie. The *float and fly minnow* works for both species. I highly recommend watching the video by Hogan Brown’s fly-tying YouTube video below:

<https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=Hogan+Brown+tying+a+float+and+fly+video>

Materials list:

Hook: Eagle Claw or Strike King jig head 1/32 or 1/16 oz

Thread: white or red 6/0

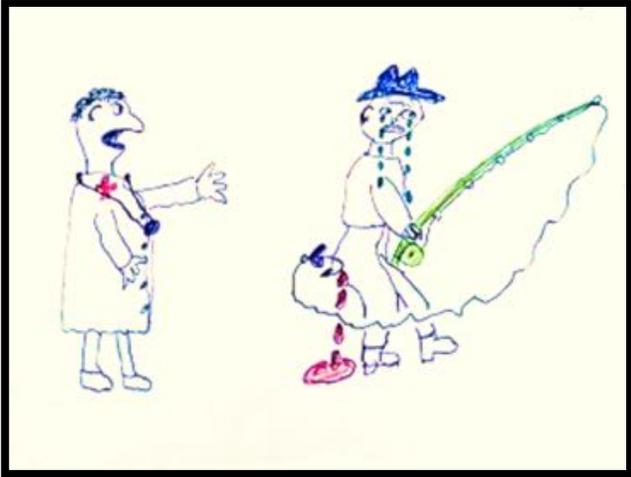
Flash: pearl crystal

Lower body: white Flash n Slinky or Steve Farrar flash blend

Upper body: olive Flash n Slinky or Steve Farrar flash blend

Tying notes: Any streamer body material will work. You could also use Marabou.

Cartoon Corner The Winning Caption



"I really think you need more practice time at the pond with Steve and Jeff!"

Winning caption submission: **John F. Shea**

Cartoon Artist: **Mike Spurlock**

Other submitted captions:

"You should try pinching your barbs. The hook comes out a lot easier." - Anonymous

"Catch and release? My ass!" - Mike Borba

"Looks like you have been attending casting clinics at the pond. Who helped you—Steve or Jeff or Don?" - Anonymous

"No caption needed" - Dan Powers

This Month's Cartoon Caption Contest



Send your caption for this cartoon to: davestone@sonic.net

Women Anglers By Penelope Gadd-Coster

This will be a new monthly addition to the newsletter focusing on events, tips, and education for women anglers that are members of RRF. Let's use this space to share our fly fishing stories, experiences, photos, where we have fished, and tips we can pass along to each other. I am interested in increasing our women's membership numbers and hearing your stories that aren't being shared for this newsletter.

FFI Women Connect is a great site with videos, trips, flyfishing education for possible ideas:

FFI Women Connect video:

<https://www.flyfishersinternational.org/Get-Involved/FFI-Women-Connect> and Driftless

Rendezvous video: <https://youtu.be/YsRb3nHe3U>

Also, I would love to hear about where you would like to go to fish, where you have fished, and what you would like to learn—let's get the conversation going! Women members of our RRF club can email me at ynegrape@gmail.com as I would like to start planning trips for this year. I am thinking four trips this year. Email me to let me know your thoughts!

Let us pick a date to meet at the casting pond. I would love to meet you there, cast a few lines and talk adventures!

Important Announcement

The Steelhead in the Classroom program is looking for drivers to deliver the live steelhead eggs from Sonoma Water, 404 Aviation Drive, Santa Rosa on March 16 and April 13, timeframe 10am to 2pm. The steelhead eggs will be ready and need to be delivered to the teachers and their schools on those days and times. Can you help? If you can, please call or email me.

Karl Joost, RRF SIC coordinator, joosts@pacbell.net

707-483-6172 - cell, 707-978-3897 - home

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Calendar of Events

RRFF Thursday Evening Fly Casting Clinics will start up again this month. We will have our final winter casting clinic on the 5th. We are OPEN TO THE PUBLIC and beginners are welcome.

March

- 9 RRFF General Meeting – 7:00 PM Zoom
- 16 RRFF Board Meeting – 7:00 PM, Zoom
- 5 Fly Casting Clinics – Noon–2:30 PM (Winter hours)
- 17, 24, 31 Fly Casting Clinics – 5:30–7:00 PM (Thursday evenings)
- 24 – 27 Pyramid Lake Outing (Click on RRFF website for signup)

PLEASE FOLLOW ALL COVID-19 PROTOCOLS!

Visit www.rrflyfisher.org for a complete list of upcoming events!

RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Ed Barich**

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Vice President & Program Chair: **Penelope Gadd-Coster**

331-0762 ynegrape@gmail.com

Secretary: **Brendan Galten**

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Treasurer, Membership: **Spencer Bader**

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Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**

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Casting Instruction Chairman, Facebook: **Steve Tubbs**

765-1787 steve@inspiri2.com

Member at Large: **Don Shaw**

477-5928 donjanshaw@comcast.net

Outings Chairman: **Chris Castellucci**

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Membership Badges & Pond Steward: **Doug Mackay**

575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Raffle Coordinator: **Gregg Wisley**

823-5572 gwwis@yahoo.com

New Member Mentoring: **Jeff Cratty**

796-3691 rjcratty@yahoo.com

Steelhead in the Classroom: **Karl Joost**

978-3897 joostspacbell.net

Member at Large: **Tim Reuling**

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Member at Large: **Mike Borba**

987-8117 mikeborba1954@gmail.com

The Cast Newsletter Editor & Publisher: **Dave Stone**

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Day Fishers & Fly Tying: **Lee Soares**

974-2651 leesoares74@gmail.com

Casting Pond Monitor: **Binky Castleberry**

477-2805 fsh2xsbc@earthlink.net

Conservation Coordinator: **Charlie Schneider**

217-0409 bikecharlie@gmail.com Redwood Empire Trout Unlimited (RETU)

Conservation Coordinator: **Tom Greer**

494-9772 tgreer@gizmodesign.com

Russian River Fly Fishers

c/o Spencer Bader
3310 Conifer Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95404



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).

*Indicates required field.

*Name _____ *Date _____ *How did you hear about us? Referred by? _____

*Address _____ *City/State/Zip _____

*Preferred Phone: Home _____ or Cell _____ *E-mail _____

Occupation _____ *Signature _____

*Mark the following: I'm applying as a new member or I'm renewing my existing membership

Single membership - \$50 annual dues Junior membership (age 16-18) - \$25 annual dues Gold membership - \$1,000 (one-time)

Family Membership - \$55 annual dues—List family members: _____

The club would like to help you meet your needs. How many years have you been fly fishing? _____

Choose any areas you want help with: I would like help learning or improving my cast. I would like advice on fishing equipment.

I would like a lesson in tying knots I would like a lesson in tying flies I would like to have an experienced member mentor me

on local waters or on a club outing. Any other areas not mentioned above? _____

*How are you planning to pay? _____

Note: Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 1st of any year will cover the balance of that year and the membership dues for the following fiscal year. The RRFF fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th. **IF YOU PREFER, YOU MAY JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE at www.rrflyfisher.org**

OR NEW MEMBERS, MAY MAIL THIS APPLICATION TO:

RUSSIAN RIVER FLY FISHERS, C/O SPENCER BADER, 3310 CONIFER DRIVE, SANTA ROSA, CA 95404