The Cast

Sonoma County
California
Volume 46, Issue 11
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New Member Kevin Ostrom's
Big Catch – Putah Creek
#18 black and brown WD40

President's Message

Catch and (not?) Release

The practice of releasing wild trout and salmon has become fairly ingrained in the modern-day community of fly fishers. The fact that so many of these species now have threatened or endangered status compels us to enjoy catching them while making every effort to ensure a safe and harmless release. It's a philosophy that has become almost universal among fly fishers, to the point where keeping a fish is almost considered a mortal sin in our community.

But when it comes to catching and keeping planted trout, the waters become a bit murkier. At our recent outing on Lewiston Reservoir last month, I suggested to the participating members that on one day we keep enough of the trout we caught so that each of us could have a plater for dinner. We would be eating a few of the literally thousands of rainbows put into the lake each year by the DFW and local businesses; so, the harm to the population would be minimal. Most of these fish were being preyed upon by local wildlife such as eagles, egrets and lampreys; so, few of them would see the next season anyway. But I could tell that the concept of keeping a fish caught on a fly made the guys a bit uneasy, and that reluctance to break a good habit

for even a day is not such a bad thing. It means that in some ways we may have evolved from our forefathers in terms of conservation ethics.

My motivation to take a break from catch and release for one day a year had two parts. The first was that fish has historically been a source of nutrition for our species. I can certainly understand if anyone hates to eat fish as a matter of personal taste. But many of us fish eaters (myself included) put a lot of thought into the safety of the fish we purchase for dinner and avoid serving fish from local waters to our families due to concerns about the pollutants these fish contain. If these fish are not good enough for us to eat, what about the other creatures that eat them? If we consider ourselves conservationists, maybe we should think about what the quality of this food source says about our stewardship of this world.

My other motivation was mostly nostalgic. Like most of the older folks in the club, I am only a couple of generations removed from the days when fishing was not only a sport but an essential way of putting some protein on the dinner table. There was a certain amount of pride involved in doing that, and every once in a while, we can be forgiven for indulging in that sentiment. We may be weathered and wrinkled on the outside, but part of us will always be that grinning ten-year-old bringing home fish for dinner.

Tight lines,

~ Ed Barich

Lewiston Reservoir Outing Report

As in years past, the RRFF had an outing on Lewiston Reservoir above the Trinity River on the third weekend in October. This year we had the largest group ever, including Jeff Cratty, Don Shaw, Mike Kast, Chris Castellucci, Gregg Wrisley, Matt Cardle, Bill Laurie and Ed Barich. For that bigger-than-ever group we rented two cabins at the Lakeview Terrace resort on the west shore of the lake. Having the expanded lodging allowed each of us to claim a real bed, and no one needed to be the guy sleeping on a cot, thus making the stay more comfortable for all. As usual we ate well - thanks to the full kitchen where we could prepare full dinners like Gregg's build-it-yourself burritos, Ed's surf and turf, and Matt's New Orleans jambalaya (Bill always reminds us that our reputation as a "fly fishing and fine dining club" remains intact).

We were blessed with bluebird weather the whole weekend. Mornings were chilly, but midday temperatures were in the mid 70's. The water surface temperature was a frigid 45F at daylight, warming up to 53F in the afternoon – a perfect trout environment. As it was last year, the water coming into Lewiston from Trinity Lake was crystal-clear, making the fish wary of boats and overhead casts. It took a day for our anglers to locate where the trout were hanging out and determine what they were eating, but using our group experience allowed us to solve the puzzle. Although fish were rising everywhere, we soon learned that most of the action could be gained using sub-surface techniques. Jeff had not fished the lake before, but was very successful stripping nymphs on an intermediate line. Using a zebra midge as a dropper under an October caddis dry fly "indicator", Ed concentrated on fishing the shallow flats where schools of rainbows cruised. Although we did spot some large fish, they were uninterested in our offerings and the ones we were able to catch ran from 10 to 15 inches. When the action got slow, there was always the opportunity to admire the fall colors of the Trinity canyon (often while missing a diving indicator.)

All in all, it was a good outing for enjoying the outdoors and hanging out with our fellow RRFF anglers, but towards the end of the weekend we all became concerned by reports of the wildfires back in Sonoma County. Several of us had planned guided floats on the Trinity or Lower Sacramento River for after the outing, but those plans were cancelled so that we could get back to our homes and be with our

families during that stressful time. Hopefully, the only drama in next year's trip will involve finding more ways to fool the wary trout of Lewiston Reservoir.

~ Ed Barich

Matt & Gregg on Lewiston

Chris with the Fall colors

Heenan Lake & East Fork Carson River Outing Report

RRFF hosted an outing to Heenan Lake and the East Fork Carson River at Grovers Hot Springs State Park (GHSSP) October 3-6. We had a small group for this outing, but there was no shortage of adventure, camaraderie, and fun. After escaping the grips of work and home responsibilities, finding my winch battery was dead, and forgetting to pack a pillow, it was no small miracle for me to arrive first. As is tradition at this State Park, I listened to the lecture about bears at the ranger shack and proceeded to pick one of my favorite campsites.

I've been to GHSSP many times with family and friends to fish, hike, bike, connect, soak in the hot mineral springs, and dip my head in fresh Sierra snowmelt. This is where I go to reboot.

Ed Barrich arrived about 90 minutes after I started setting up camp. We knew Gregg Wrisley was running late and Rick Baker was planning to drive up on the 4th, so we proceeded to the E Fork Carson around dusk to try our luck. To keep things simple, we fished the river above Hangman's Bridge. This section of the river was reported to be generously stocked with rainbow trout. The reports draw fisherfolks in big numbers, so the stock gets reduced pretty fast. Both Ed and I had some takers, so the 'ice' was broken.

As we packed our gear into our vehicles, we saw Gregg driving back towards Markeleeville. He had obviously arrived in the area and went straight to the river. By the time we all arrived back at camp, it was dark and getting cold. Gregg invited the rest of us to his camper for burritos. Hot food was appreciated and delicious!

We decided to go to Heenan Lake on 10/4 (Friday) in hopes of avoiding crowds. I guess one could say the lake was not THAT crowded because only a couple of trucks had to park on the road leading to the parking lot. If you had anything bigger than a float tube, there was a bit of a wait to access the launch ramp (really a rocky dirt road that ends at the lake shore).

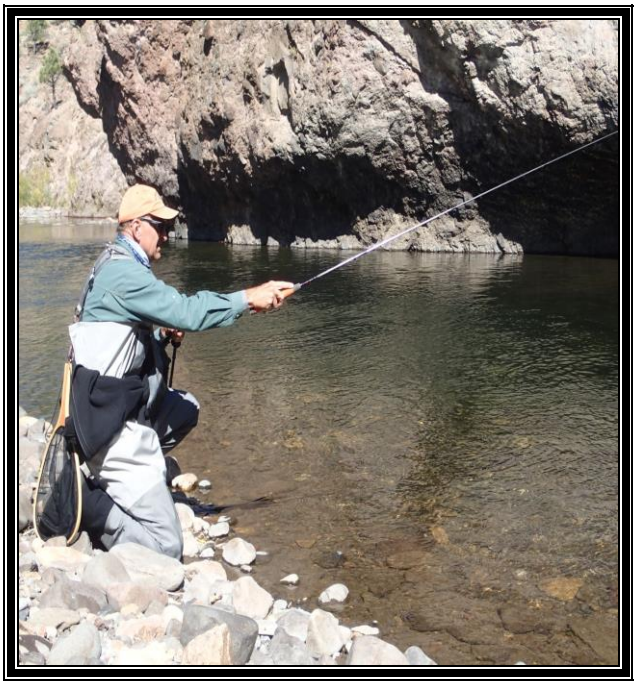
We spread out around the lake. The algae bloom was still active, but there was about 6-feet of visibility into the water. We saw some cruising fish, but the bite was not very heavy. I hooked a nice Lahontan Cutthroat on a leach after trying several other methods. A group of locals were hooking fish

by jigging chrominids about a foot off the bottom. To me, that looked like some slow and somewhat boring fishing. Late in the day, some fish started feeding topwater. You just had to be at the right place at the right moment to hookup then. I think we all got goose-egged there.

It was dark when we arrived back at camp, so we decided to travel to Minden, NV to seek dinner. We ended up at a Mexican food restaurant. It looked nice enough and the food was decent, but could definitely qualify as a 'dive'. Nobody left the place hungry or sick; so, we made it out in good shape.

Saturday was our day of adventure. The plan was to hike into a lower canyon section on the E Fork Carson. A guide gave me directions to this place that began with, "Go to the Markleeville Airstrip and find this dirt road near the end of the runway…". Keeping one eye skyward, we arrived at the airstrip and found the road. After parking at a nearby primitive campground, we hiked up the road, found the trail, and proceeded down the winding path to the river. Luckily, it was somewhat cool. We were in full regalia (waders, boots, etc), and this would not have been a fun hike on a hot day.

We arrived at the river and stripped off a few layers. The weather was clear, the sun was bright, and the air was crisp. I had accessed the river a couple years prior about a mile upstream, so our plan was to find that trail later in the day and hike out. If nothing else, it would save us about 600 feet of elevation gain as we hiked out. The only challenge we faced was to find the trail leading out and back to our vehicles.



I forgot to mention the river. It was beautiful. Flows were good, life (fish food) was clinging to the rocks, and bugs were hatching. Unfortunately, the fish population was not all that abundant. We fished many holes and slots with no takers. We could look down on many of these spots from the bank. The water was crystal clear and we could not see any fish. Gregg and I had heard rumors of fish being harvested from this wild fishery. I believe the limit is 2 during normal trout season. A zero-limit may be needed here.

After encountering a few too many fisherfolks, we decided to hike out. I bushwhacked back into a gully and found a creek bed that eventually got us to the trail out. There were fewer switchbacks on the trail and "road" out, so we felt like we were climbing walls for much of the way back.

We enjoyed a hearty paella dinner and good company that evening. Once again, nobody left hungry.

Gregg fished Wolf Creek and E Fork Carson River on Sunday and had some luck. Ed and Rick headed home. I stuck around in the morning for a mandatory soak in the hot springs and then took the long way home in hopes of figuring out a way to extend the trip one more day.

MANY thanks to Ed, Gregg, and Rick for participating in the outing. We'll slay 'em next year!

~ *Matthew Cardle*

Crabbing at Baker Beach

Jeff Cratty organized a crabbing outing at Baker Beach on the southwest side of the Golden Gate for the Dungeness crab sportfishing opener on November 2nd. Commercial fishing will not open until 2 or 3 weeks later.

Jeff arrived about 5:30 am to grab some spots. Rick and I, along with his daughter, arrived about 7 am in the darkness. Many people were already there with rod holders staking out their spots.

We used 12-14 ft casting rods with a weighted crab cage with 6 snare loops, baited with squid and anchovies. The idea is to cast out as far as you can and let it sit for 5-15 minutes, then give the rod a good pull and reel in as fast as possible - keeping any snared crab legs tight. You can tell right away if the snare has tightened on any crab legs from the tension as you reel in. Keeper crabs are males measuring 5 3/4 inches.

We got about 10 crabs but only two keepers. Jeff has had much better luck in the past. The real haul was had by a kayaking club that went out with a large number of larger crab pots about 50-100 yards off shore. They made quite a haul. Our theory is that all of those pots had so much scent in the water that it attracted most of the crabs.

Anyway, it was a beautiful sunny day at the beach!

~ *Mike Spurlock*

Jordana with a keeper

RRFF Winter Fly Casting Clinic

I wanted to remind all RRFF members that our Thursday Evening Fly Casting Clinics have ended for 2019...!

Beginning **Saturday, November 2nd**, we will initiate our **RRFF Winter Fly Casting Clinic** schedule. The winter clinics will ***begin at noon and last until 2:30 pm.*** They are held on the **first and third Saturday of each month** (weather permitting) until Daylight Savings Time resumes next March. **We do not practice fly casting in the rain!**

Please join me in thanking our volunteer fly casting instructors (all RRFF members) for their considerable donation of time and energy. It is this spirit of camaraderie and sharing that sets the RRFF apart. That said, you can visit us at the Casting Pond to practice and improve your fly-casting abilities.

Our **RRFF Fly Casting Clinics** are **FREE** and are **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Beginners are always welcome!** We do have some equipment available for use at the Casting Pond if you do not have your own.

Now is your perfect opportunity to learn new fly-casting skills!

Won't you join us?

~ Steve Tubbs

November General Meeting

November 13, 2019 - General Meeting at the Veteran's Memorial Hall, 7PM featuring a presentation on Putah Creek by Richard Loft

November's Speaker – Richard Loft

Richard has been an avid fisherman all his life, starting at age 10 in West Covina, CA. He loved fishing so much, that before he had his drivers' license, he would hitchhike up to Silverwood Lake or into Azusa Canyon, to fish for the day. His Mom used to tell stories of Richard's exploits throughout his youth as he tried all ways and means to go fish.

Richard was turned on to fly fishing 9 years ago, by Bob Arwine at Sweeney's Sports in the Napa Valley. The minute he tried it--on our local Putah Creek, in an old pair of Neoprene Waders, Richard was totally hooked-- literally. Since then he has easily logged thousands of hours fly fishing on his favorite local river--Putah Creek. He has also fished a few hundred hours on the Yuba River in Marysville, the Truckee, and the Little Truckee, the Feather the American, the Lower Sac, the East Walker, the East Carson, the Pit, Hat Creek, and the Stanislaus River.

Richard also is a conservationist and has done volunteer service work with Putah Creek Trout, Department of Fish & Wildlife's Heritage Wild Trout Program, and served as a mentor for the Napa RCD's SLEWS Youth program. He has also taken several classes at the Napa Juinor College towards an Environmental Sciences Certificate; notably his favorite, "Wildlife & Fisheries Biology" taught by the Napa RCD's Dr. Jonathan Koehler.

Editor's Note: We had several great articles submitted this month but were not able to include them all in this edition due to space limitations. Next month, you can look forward to: (1) updates on Steelhead in the Classroom, (2) another fantastic article from Steve Tubbs; and (3) an exciting tale of fly-fishing for sharks. Stay tuned. . .

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November Calendar of Events

November 2019 Casting Pond Clinics on Winter Schedule: 1st & 3rd Saturdays 12 noon - 2:30pm

Nov. 2 Crab Fishing Outing at Baker Beach (Jeff Cratty)

Nov. 7-11 Trinity River (Bill Laurie)

Nov. 13 General Meeting at Santa Rosa Vets Hall, speaker Rich Loft, Putah Creek (Don Shaw)

Nov. 20 Board Meeting

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

RRFF Board of Directors

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Russian River Fly Fishers
c/o Mike Spurlock
20 San Domingo Way
Novato, CA 94945

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* _____

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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 1st 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**
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