

FINNY FACTS

San Diego Fly Fishers

July 2019

Cleaner Water, Brighter Streams, Better Fishing

Volume 42 No. 7

SAN DIEGO FLY FISHERS
Monthly meeting
July 1st @ 7:30 PM
Southwestern Yacht Club



Please join us for an evening of exciting information on the research being on Halibut and White Seabass

Please bring a friend and come early to socialize over no-host food and drinks

Find out more on our upcoming fishing trips

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Don't Forget

Time to renew your membership with San Diego Fly Fishers for 2019.

President's Message

Now that our annual June fundraiser has been successfully pulled off - thanks again to all of the volunteers who assisted with the event - we are getting ready to head north to the Golden Trout Wilderness as this issue goes to press, to work on one of our club's conservation programs, using the funds we raise, as I mentioned last month. Gary Strawn, our Conservation and Education chair, has been working to coordinate all of the volunteers, and teaming with our hosts to protect those beautiful golden trout that somehow manage to survive in the high mountain meadows.

And on the education front, in the next few months we will start to prepare for the fall term when the kids are back in school, and begin scheduling dates for our Trout in the Classroom program. If you are interested and available - hopefully you signed up a few months ago - Gary will be in touch with you.

We've also got plans in the works for a few more local, club outings to fish our local lakes. Your Board of Directors are planning events for July and August; the August outing will take the place of our regular club meeting, so look for details coming out on the date, time and location for that chance to fish with your fellow club members.

Speaking of outings, we also have two out-of-town trips planned for the fall. You've heard both Mike Gilroy and Larry Sorenson talk about the respective trips to the Yuba River and the San Juan River. Contact them to sign up, or see them at our July club meeting. I hope we will see the results from the recent rod building class, on display there.

Speaking of your dedicated Board of Directors, we could use two more volunteers to help out. Please consider lending your time and talents to your club in this way; the time commitment is not significant, when you consider that you are working for something you really enjoy - fishing! You can send me a note at president@sandiegoflyfishers.com if you are willing to serve.

Don't forget to send any of your ideas and suggestions for your club to any board member. We are always looking for more great ideas.

I hope you are enjoying your summer with days on the water.

Wishing you good fishing,
Sherry Ashbaugh
2019 President
San Diego Fly Fishers

president@sandiegoflyfishers.com



July Events

June Events

Membership meeting
Gala Fundraiser

July 1 @ 7:30 PM

Club Outings

- ◆ South Mission Beach (beach parking lot)
- ◆ Lower Otay Lake

July 2nd @6:00AM
July 13th @ 7:00AM

Project Healing Waters

June 8th and 22nd @9 AM

Fly Tying at the Aspire Center

Fly Casting At Santee Lakes
Contact: [Lee McElravy](#),

June 16th @9 AM

Casting Clinics

Basic/Beginners Class

- ◆ Every Sunday At Lake Murray @ 9 AM

Intermediate Class

- ◆ First and Third Sundays at Ski Beach on Mission Bay
- ◆ **Note: the July 7th class has been cancelled**

Contact [John Wylie](#)

Fly Tying Congress

- ◆ Every Thursday at San Carlos Rec Center @ 6:30 to 8:30PM

Contact: [Paul Woolery](#)

**It's Time for U to get involved with your club! Contact any board member for ideas on how you can contribute
SDFF is a service organization.
Ask yourself
What service can I provide?**

Speaker Programs

JULY 2019

Hubbs Research Center
Halibut Program

Please join us for an interesting presentation regarding the research on halibut. We all love to catch these great local fish. This is a chance to learn the good work being done with the support of our Conservation Funds

Come early and socialize! Join us for some no host drinks and food in the bar. Don't be shy, introduce yourself. You will be welcome. Questions, Look for our greeters. We will assist you.

Social hour begins at 6:30PM
Meeting Begins at 7:30 PM

Upcoming Programs

August: Evening fish outing on Monday 6th at the Outboard Motor Cub

September: Jake Wells - Yellowdog outfitters Montana - Yellowstone program

October - Alex Cady, Guide topic Fishing Mission Bay

November - Doug Hendricks - Sierra Drifters will discuss new fishing regulations.

December- Yard Sale - Fly Tying demos.

If you know of someone who would be a good candidate for speaking to the club let us know. For information contact [Jim Castelluzzo](#)

We look forward to seeing at our next meeting!

Happenings

LOWER OTAY LAKE

San Diego Fly Fishers is hosting a fishing event at Lower Otay Lake in Chula Vista on **July 13th from 7:00AM until Approximately 11:00AM**

Monster Bass and slabs of fighting Bluegill.

Strouds Tackle has generously donated two \$ 50.00 Gift certificates. One will be awarded for the largest Bass and one for the largest Bluegill. More on the details later. Bring a tape measure if you want to do catch and release. You will need a good picture! No guide shots!

We will gather in the parking lot near the pay station at 7AM. Kim Jones has volunteered to give a short “tip” session. Kim an expert fly fisher and really knows how to be successful on the San Diego County lakes.



Lower Otay Lake

After fishing, SDFF will serve some food and drinks in the picnic area next to the pay station (avoids having to pay another fee for the main picnic area near the dam.

Please visit the Lakes Website for information on the fishing and launch fees and rentals (boats and kayaks). <https://www.sandiego.gov/reservoirs-lakes/lower-otay-reservoir>

Be sure to read the Lake Regulations.

There will be a sign-up sheet at the July meeting. Please sign up there or email/Rsvp by email at outings@sandiegoflyfishers.com or Contact Mike Gilroy at 425 418 8164

PLEASE let us know by July 10th if you are going to attend so that we can plan the food and drinks

Volunteers Needed

San Diego Fly Fishers is a service organization. So please ask yourself...

“What service can I provide to my Club”?

Service Opportunities

We need someone to step up and serve as Vice President. Contact [Sherry](#) for information.

Fishing Outings

Volunteers are needed to help organize a Lower Otay outing in Aug or Sept. Please step up and give us a hand. Contact [Mike Gilroy](#) or [Jim Castelluzzo](#)

We are also looking for a Club Outing to the East Walker river in Late Sept or Early Oct. Please let us know if you are interested in going. We would stay in Bridgeport and fish the Walker or the lake. Contact [Mike Gilroy](#) or [Jim Castelluzzo](#)
This one is going to be EPIC!!!!

This is a chance to help run a fishing outing for Club members. We are seeking volunteers to organize a day of fishing on our local waters. It's fun and easy. Pick your favorite water and contact [Jim Castelluzzo](#) or [Mike Gilroy](#) and we will help you get started.

- ◆ Pick a local lake
- ◆ Pick a location for the bay
- ◆ Pick a location for the surf

The whole idea is to involve more members in creating fishing events and get us on the water monthly.

Fundraising

- ◆ We need 2 or 3 more volunteers to help serve on the committee
- ◆ Contact: [Warren Lew](#)

Greeters are needed at our Monthly meetings!

We are planning to have 2 or 3 greeters at each event to help new people into our Club. It's a great way to serve the Club and meet new Flyfishers.
Please contact [Jim Castelluzzo](#) or [Sherry Ashbaugh](#)

Project Healing Waters

- ◆ Help with this important program that serves Veterans in need.
- ◆ Contact: [Lee McElravy](#) to learn how you can contribute

Fly of the Month July

Dancing Caddis Inverted



Hook: TMC 2302 or 200R Â size 12-18
Thread: Black 6/0
Body: Dry fly dubbing light brown or light olive
Wing: Elk or Deer hair
Thorax: Peacock herl
Hackle: Brown
Head: Thread

1. If you are not using a barbless hook crush the barb now.
 2. Start the thread a eyes gap behind the eye and wrap to the bend of the hook.
 3. Dub the body forward to about the 2/3 - 1/3 position on the hook.
 4. Tie in the hair wing on the bottom of the hook at the point where the dubbing ends.
 5. Trim the butt ends of the wing and tie down the butt ends creating a tapered thorax.
 6. Tie in the hackle and peacock herl where the body, wing and thorax meet.
 7. Wrap the peacock herl forward covering the thread thorax and tie off.
 8. Palmer the hackle forward over the thorax dry fly style and tie off and trim.
 9. Create a small head with the thread and whip finish.
 10. Trim the hackle flush with the top of the fly, causing the fly to lie inverted on the water.
- Note: Â If you have a rotating vice invert the hook prior to tying in the hair wing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x07j9N6IDkc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYSLoLq5Jds>

For more information contact [Paul Woolerly](#)

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Rod Building

We will plan another class in the Spring of 2020. Stay tuned.

In the interim, if you are beginning your own project and would like some advice or recommendations please free to contact [Jack Duncan](#)

Rod Building help is an important benefit of being a San Diego Fly Fisher. In the coming editions of Finny Facts and on the Website look for "Tips from Jack" to help those who want to build their own rod.

JACK'S TIP OF THE MONTH– July 2019

Here's another opportunity to take advantage of an oversupply of a very high end blank: The Sage MOD blanks just went on sale at Madison River Fishing Company (mrfc.com) for \$300, marked down from \$425: a 40% price reduction.

The Sage MOD is the Company's high end medium fast action rod, meant to be a compromise, all around rod, with an action between Sage's very fast One models, and their deep flex, slower Circa models.

The four piece rods, are available in 2 through 6 line weights all 9 feet in length. There are also two Spey rod length models available: a 6 wt. and 7 wt. both 13 feet in length. So here's another early season chance for you Rod Builders to own a rod that retailed for \$850 for about \$400, including high end components and hardware. If it interests you, and feel you'll need some help crafting the rod, I will be available to help selecting the components and wrapping the blank.

It's interesting to me the two largest high end American rod companies, Winston, and now Sage, have so early in the season, significantly reduced prices on their highest priced rods and blanks. A 40% price reduction is a very large reduction. It may mean the companies have hit a price point with a very high level of buyer resistance. Too bad, but the good news is, these great rods are certainly worth what we can build them for.



Casting Corner

San Diego Fly Fishers is happy to offer two free clinics each month to help you learn to fly cast or improve your skills. Several of our instructors are certified by the FFI and can help anyone develop the skills that will help you get the most out of your casts.

Basic fly Casting Lessons

This Clinic is best suited for beginners and novice fly casters. The clinic will help you develop the basic techniques necessary for successful casts with a fly rod. No experience is required to participate.

Where: Lake Murray (Kiowa Drive entrance)

When: Each Sunday (weather permitting) at 9 AM

What to Bring: You may bring your own equipment or use rods provided by the Club. No fishing license is required.

Intermediate Fly Casting Instruction

This clinic is run by FFI Certified Casting Instructors Dennis Panish and John Wylie and is intended to aid fly casters in enhancing their skills and learn to cast efficiently in different conditions. One goal of the clinic is to help fly casters solve problems with their casting strokes. If you suffer from "wind knots", learning how to "double haul" or increasing your distance this class is for you. Tell our instructors what you want to work on and they will help.

We provide single hand casting as well as basic double hand spey cast instruction.

Where: Ski Beach on Mission Bay

When: First and Third Sundays (weather permitting) at 8 AM (class typically lasts 1 hour)

What to bring: Bring your rod and let's work on your casts!

Questions? Email [John Wylie](mailto:John.Wylie@san-diego-fly-fishers.com):

Tip of the Month:

The second essential of the casting stroke: Smooth Acceleration to a Stop. It sounds easy right? Maybe, but this essential is harder than it sounds, but by focusing some practice time on making sure we have Smooth Acceleration and a Firm Stop to our cast can really show benefits!

The amount of power needed for a particular cast is influenced by a number of factors, the amount of line to be cast, the wind direction, distance to target, rod weight etc. Just as accelerating a car from a stop through an intersection... start slow, steadily accelerate through the intersection. Your fastest speed should be as you exit the other side.

Same with a cast! Power should be applied at the start of the cast slowly at first, *steadily increased as the cast progresses, and peaking at the end of the stroke.*

A majority of the power should be applied in the last 45% of the casting stroke. Lastly there should be a crisp stop at the end of the casting stroke forcing the rod to come out of its bend. As the rod straightens, or unloads, a loop is formed.

How can we improve our Smooth Acceleration to a Stop skills?

Think about throwing an apple stuck on the end of a stick to a target 15 feet directly in front of you.

Or think about playing with a 5 year old hitting a beach ball back and forth.

Working on Smooth Acceleration to a Stop can help us dial in those nice looking loops and help us put the fly exactly where we want on our next cast!

Conservation & Education

San Diego Fly Fishers is a service club with a long history of supporting a variety of conservation, habitat and educational programs. The Club's primary focus is to support projects that serve our local habitats, fisheries and schools. We also support other conservation organizations with projects in California. Our activities are supported by Club members through "boots on the ground" volunteer work and via the donations received at Club fundraising events. We work closely with a number of local, regional and national organizations to support research, improve habitats and foster a conservation ethic for future generations. We are very proud of our work and the ongoing support from our membership. If you wish to join us in this service work please contact the Committee Chair, [Gary Strawn](#)



Nine Mile Creek at Casa Vieja meadow.
Golden Trout restoration project area.

Southwest Council FFI

San Diego Fly Fishers is affiliated with the Southwest Council of Fly Fishers International (FFI). Look for more happenings in the SW region in future editions of Finny Facts.

Southwest Council Fly Fishers International

Who or What is the Southwest Council ?

The Southwest Council of Fly Fishers International represents all of Southern California and Nevada. Fly Fishers International is a 54 year old international non-profit organization dedicated to the betterment of the sport of fly fishing through Conservation, Restoration and Education. Fly Fishers International and its Councils are the only organized advocate for fly fishers on an national and regional level.

For more information Contact [John Wylie](#) our Representative for FFI

<https://flyfishersinternational.org/>



Project Healing Waters

Project Healing Waters (PHW) Fly Fishing is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and disabled veterans through fly fishing and associated activities including education and outings. San Diego Fly Fishers (SDFF) is proud to be a local affiliate of PHW. Our San Diego based program, serves veterans locally by providing opportunities to learn fly casting, fly tying and fly fishing. We are a service organization and are pleased to offer opportunities to our veterans to help them find out more about the arts associated with fly fishing. If you are looking for a good way to contribute to our veterans and your Club, please let us know.

Fly Tying

Where: The Aspire Center (in Old Town, San Diego)

When: first and third Tuesdays at 9 AM

Fly Casting

Where: Santee lakes, Santee CA

When: third Saturday at 9 AM



Fundraising

On June 3rd, the Club had its annual raffle at the Southwestern Yacht Club. Although the doors opened at 5:30PM, the raffle started a little late, as tickets were still being sold after our scheduled start at 7:00PM.

Attendance was higher than expected, so the room we reserved was a little smaller than we needed. This year's attendees were treated to a complimentary "sauna". Not only did Members win some great prizes, but we lost some weight, too!

Master of Ceremonies Tim Huckaby hosted the raffle, entertaining us the entire evening. With Todd McGovern pulling tickets from the raffle drum, Tim announced the winners, many who were very pleased with what they won

During the evening, Helen Grundler won a new 12 foot Wet fly tenkara rod. Just what she wanted! A Temple Fork Finesse, 2 weight, 4 piece rod went to Lew Walsh, and Mark Smith's ticket was pulled for a Lamson Liquid Reel with 2 extra spools. Jan Denardo was the lucky winner of the restored Hardy bamboo fly rod. So, who won the Renzetti Traveler fly tying vise? The winner was Mel Ochs.

Gary Strawn donated a case of Stone IPA beer, which was won by Lee McElravy.

Everyone had a great time, and the Club raised over \$11,000, with all of the net proceeds going to stream and fisheries conservation, and education programs promoting fly fishing.

This was all made possible by your generous donations and support. Thank you!

The raffle would not have been as fun or as successful without the help of these wonderful volunteers : President Sherry Ashbaugh, Scott Penwell, Webmaster David Collins, Jim Castelluzzo, Gary Strawn, Jeff Clark, Treasurer Bruce Harris, Fred Gregory, Lori Roads, Warren Lew, Paul Woolery, Alan Thompson, Gordie Zimm, Lee McElravey, Steve Vissers, and Jack Duncan.

Also, a special thanks to Rick Vorst of Stroud Tackle, Don Davis, Mike Fry, Mike Gilroy, Jack Duncan, Jim Castelluzzo, Mark Lindshield, Mike Hillygus, Dayle Mazzarella, and Tim Huckaby for their exceptional generosity to this year's raffle.

...some pictures are on the next page.

Fundraising



June Fundraiser



Membership

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RENEW YOUR 2019 MEMBERSHIP TODAY

Currently we are more that 220 members strong! Approximately 45 members still need to renew for this year. Please renew and enjoy the full benefits of being a San Diego Fly Fisher

[Renew online](#)

Contact: [Alan Thompson](#)

Or Renew at the next Monthly SDFF Meeting

SDFF has four membership levels

Individual.....\$40

Family.....\$50

Individual Military.....FREE (Active Duty Only)

Family Military.....FREE (Active Duty Only)

Please welcome our newest members!

FAMILY

[David Woods](#) Family

[Vernon White](#) Family

INDIVIDUAL

[Maria Garcia](#)

[Jay Gross](#)

[Mary Browne](#)

[Klayton Symmes](#)

[Ezekiel Ramirez](#)

[Adria Jefferies](#)



Feature Article

July 2019

One Fly Rod for San Diego Area Angling

By Craig Smith

A 9 foot 5 weight fly rod is the most common first fly rod purchase made by anglers getting into fly fishing. That is because fly fishing is still primarily thought of as a trout fishing technique by non-fly anglers. But for most of the world, nation, and even San Diego County, trout are not nearby or only available in small numbers. Here in the San Diego area, when we take in both freshwater and saltwater species, there are dozens more species available the fly angler. Even in freshwater, there are at least 6 other species present in greater numbers and availability (largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, redear sunfish, common carp, catfish). Many burgeoning fly rodders visit us at Stroud Tackle, looking for their first fly rod and want to fish both fresh and saltwater. So, what would I recommend as choice for best all-around rod fly rod choice for the San Diego County area? I would suggest that would be a 9 foot 7 weight rod.

The San Diego area is a great place to go fishing regardless of the type of gear used. We have numerous fresh and saltwater venues close by. It is even possible to fish both fresh and saltwater in the same day. Swimming in our local waters is a large variety of fish species that will take a fly using a variety of techniques. Those species come in a wide range of sizes but most that we catch will weigh less than 10 pounds. We will start by looking at the freshwater scene.

So, what about those trout? The majority of local trout that anglers pursue are hatchery fish that are stocked our local lakes. Most of the trout stocks occur from November through April and the fish range in size from 8 or 9 inches to over 10 lbs. With a 7 weight rod you can fish floating, intermediate, sink tip and sinking lines with nymphs, streamers and dry flies. The 7 weight will feel like a heavy rod for the smaller fish but it can handle the biggest stocked trout. When it gets windy like it often does on our local lakes, the heavier line used with a 7 weight will help many casters deal with the breeze. If you are pursuing those small wild fish that still exist in a few mountain creeks the 9 foot 7 weight rod will be longer and heavier than you want, but it will cover most local trout fishing situations.

The commonly available local freshwater fish are largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, and carp. With a 7 weight rod you can cast any fly that you would use for bluegill, crappie, and carp as well as many smaller flies used for bass. The 7 weight rod has enough backbone to deal with the largest local bluegill and crappie, which can reach sizes in excess of two pounds, yet is not so heavy that it overpowers moderately sized fish. It might feel like too much rod when catching small bluegill, but remember, we are selecting a "do all" rod. When casting large wind resistant deer hair bugs, poppers, or streamers for bass, a regular 7 weight line can be a little light for easy casting. But you don't need to get a heavier rod. Instead use a heavier line. A 7 weight rod will easily handle standard weight forward 8 or 9 weight line for casting most of the distances we toss bugs for bass. Or you can go with one of the many specialty lines that are made for long distance casting or for carrying bigger flies. Two popular series of floating lines are the Rio Outbound Short and Scientific Anglers Titan Taper lines. Both of these line series are two to two and a half weights heavier than the AFMA line rating standard. For sinking lines, match the rod with a 250 grain sinking integrated taper line like a Rio Stripper or Scientific Anglers Sonar line.

Feature Article June 2019

In other parts of California, I have fished for and caught double digit size striped bass with a 7 weight rod matched with a 250 grain fast sinking integrated shooting taper line to cast 5" long flies. So a seven weight rod is certainly capable of subduing most largemouth bass and carp that you will run across.

When we move from freshwater to the salt, the 7 weight is perfect for the surf zone. While I typically fish a 6 weight rod in the surf, I often use a 7 weight, especially when the wind or the surf is up. It is not so heavy and stiff that you can't feel the fight of a smaller perch but it still has enough backbone to deal with a 5 pound corbina, a 24 inch halibut, or even a 36 inch shovelnose guitar fish. Paired with a 250 grain integrated shooting taper line it will cast any fly you would use in the surf.

If we move back into the bays, the 7 weight is again a great all-around rod. I usually use 5 and 6 weight rods in the bays but I always have a 7 weight rod along. Depending on the water depth, current speed, and wind, I match it with a floating, intermediate, sink tip, or 250 grain integrated shooting taper. I have also used 8 and 9 weight rods in the bays but find the 7 weight less tiring to cast all morning and it will handle any fly I want to toss. It will also tame most of the fish commonly caught in the bays including 10 pound halibut and even 15 pound bat rays. The only time I have ever felt that I didn't have enough rod in the bays with a 7 weight is when I have hooked some large bat rays, but then even a 10 or 12 weight is not enough for some of the big rays.

If we move outside the bays and surf zone for some inshore saltwater angling, we find that a 7 weight starts feel a bit under gunned as fish get bigger and faster. When you get to the kelp beds and beyond, heavier rods in the 8 to 10 weight range are usually better options. However, you can still get by with a 7 weight for mackerel, bonito, and calico bass if that is your only option and you rarely get outside the bays. If you are fishing tight to the kelp it might be tough to stop a calico bass headed back into cover with a 7 weight rod, but if you are in more open water it will still handle a 5 pound calico or a 5 pound bonito if you make sure you use the butt section to fight the fish and not the top half of the rod. I have even brought a few firecracker yellowtail to the net. Rigged with the same lines you would use in the bay, you can cast batfish patterns used for inshore fishing. If you are casting crease flies or poppers for bonito or calico bass on the surface I do recommend going up to a WF-8-F line or use something like a 7 weight Rio Outbound Short or Scientific Anglers Titan Taper line.

There is not a single length and weight fly rod that is ideal for every local fly angling situation. I have a couple of dozen that I use. I could narrow that down to about four rods from 3 weight to 10 weight that match well to most of our local opportunities. But if I were limited to just one rod here in our home waters it would be the 9 foot 7 weight. I would certainly be making some compromises compared to an ideal rod for some fishing conditions and fish.

The rod may feel too heavy for smaller fish and too light for bigger fish. But it will work well and be a perfect match for the majority of local angling situations when paired with the right line. If I were going to limit myself to just freshwater, or just saltwater I would make a different choice for a single rod. However, if limited to a single rod that will work for most our local fishing, both salt and fresh, my choice is the 7 weight.

Fishing!!!!

BAJA ADVENTURES by John Ashley, SDFP member

Some of Baja's best fly fishing can be done on foot, sneaking around on the swinging tide in the mangrove estuaries of Baja California. The *esteros* don't give up their treasures easily; down in Southern Baja, you've got to work for your fun. The primary obstacle is distance. There aren't major airports close enough to make flying a better option. So you're faced with at least fifteen hundred miles of Baja's notorious highway, Mex 1. This road is its own adventure, it features wheel swallowing potholes, wandering cattle and lane barging semi trucks. All of this can make a six-hour drive day feel like four weeks in a pressure cooker.

The fishing, however, makes it completely worthwhile- if you know how to get to the good water. The game is to follow the tide as it drops to dead low. Since you're in a closed system, the entirety of the estuary's water has to catch up to gravity's pull by squeezing through narrow channels and cuts. These constrictions force the water to do some crazy things, currents are magnified, and the whole place can go from brimming with water to walkable mudflat in an hour. That's why, if you're going to take advantage of the best fishing, you've got to be ready to move as soon as you the mudflats are navigable.



Walking on the floor of the estuary is an odd experience. When I first saw the mudflats I assumed I'd sink as soon as I set foot on them. I imagined my flip-flop would get sucked off somewhere down in the anoxic, sulfurous, muck. I was completely wrong. The mudflats are relatively firm, the sediment is usually grainy, clean and peppered with partially buried scallops, squirting clams and bits and pieces of algae. In the deeper pools you'll see small sculpin and other baitfish zipping around. Often there are rays gliding by and you'll see moon snails laying smooth whorls of eggs on the sand. The walk is a pleasant experience, there are all kinds of living, wiggling things out there, you never know what you're going to see.

Fishing!!!!

On a typical excursion we're forced to wade across shallow stream-like arteries that drain semi-submerged mudflats into larger, flowing arms of the estuary. These are like rivers, they eventually come together at the mouth of the estuary and empty out into the sea. All of these waters are fishable. We, however, are looking for something else. We walk until we reach larger channels fringed with mangroves – and then we start hunting.

The best spots combine mangroves with nearby deep water. In these holes, tucked up into the gnarled aquatic root matrix are some of the most violent three to five pound fish you will likely encounter. In the mangroves, the grouper is the king.



To be clear, these are baby broom tail grouper (the adults leave the estuary and become monsters in the hundreds of pounds range) and they're not exactly regal. They're more like little donkeys; stubborn, unnaturally strong, prone to ridiculous behavior and in the end kind of loveable. A typical grouper hook up starts with a gut-punch strike that will more than likely cause you to involuntarily vocalize. Common utterances range from the semi-religious to the vulgar. My brother makes a noise that's a cross between an unintelligible word (it might be in English but I'm not certain) and the sounds you make when you're working through a night of food poisoning. The strike is more of a vicious yank than a slow building pressure; grouper aren't subtle, they're pissed off.



Fishing!!!!

Fighting these little beasts doesn't require finesse. First, you must immediately turn the fish. Failure to stop these little bulldozers will put you into the mangroves, game over. The best technique for bringing one around is the ol' clamp and crank: CLAMP down on your fly line like a Wilton on steroids. In fact, clamp so hard that it kind of feels like you're doing something wrong. Next, put your rod sideways and CRANK. Pull until your rod noodles into the type of arc that's got catastrophic failure written all over it. That's the kind of pressure you need to put on these fish. I've got a particular rod that I like for fishing grouper it's a discontinued TFO model called a Mini-Mag. It's only eight feet long, half glass and half carbon fiber, it's more winch than fly rod- perfect for grouper fishing. If you can put enough pressure on the fish, it may make one more run but as soon as it gets its head up into clean water, the game is usually over.

Of course this kind of fishing never gets old and before you know it, the sun has dipped down over the sea. The light is fading and it's time to beat the tide, which has turned and is flooding back just as quickly as it had drained. Most of the time you've landed and released twenty or thirty grouper and most likely a handful of other game fish. You're tired, your stripping hand is cut and raw and the thought of a campfire, some SPAM and eggs and a cold Pacifico sounds pretty nice. Baja is simple and good, get down there and have some fun mangrove creeping.

Oh yeah...speaking of creeping. Watch out for the rays. Bucket time is no fun.



Fishing!!!!

A Morning on Lake Crowley
By Warren Lew

Earlier this year, my fiancé, Lori, and I talked about getting away and doing something together. We had all ready done two ski trips to Mammoth Mountain, and since Lori enjoys hiking and the outdoors, I suggested that we drive up again, and use one day to do a guided fly fishing trip on Lake Crowley. We selected Jarett Coons of Sierra Mountain Trout Guide Service, based in Big Pine, who met us at Lake Crowley at 7:00AM to take us out. Our trip was in mid-June, so the morning was a little cool, and we needed our jackets as Jarett brought our boat up to our first stop, the Green Banks area. He set both of us up with long 15' nymphing indicator rigs, each with two midge patterns. Each of our leaders had an O-ring, with a 2 foot length of tippet for the lower fly and a 1 foot length for the upper fly.

It wasn't long before I saw my foam indicator had go down below the surface, and I knew I had a fish on! Unfortunately, I wasn't paying attention, and had too much slack in my line, so I had to strip very quickly and set the hook! Fortunately, the fish stayed on, and Jarett netted a hard fighting German brown which was quickly released.

There were quite a few boats on the water that morning, and not a lot of hook ups. So we ended up doing the "Lake Crowley shuffle", which meant moving several times to find feeding fish. On McGee Bay, it was really slow, and I was concerned that Lori might not get a bite this trip. Jarett was very encouraging, but I was not real optimistic... but before I knew it, Lori announced, "I think I have a fish!" I was so happy, and saw an 18" rainbow jump out of the water close to the boat. She fought the fish, but then her line went slack. Too bad! We had a number of fish take our flies, and it was a beautiful morning on the Lake. Both Lori and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves!

You don't hear too much about Lake Crowley anymore, but it still fishes well. If you would like to use our guide, Jarett can be reached at (760) 920-7716. He was very hard working, knowledgeable about where the fish are, and you will enjoy fishing with him.



Fishing!!!!



Warren and Lori heading out for a day on Crowley



Hal Herritt with a nice double on the North Platte in Wyoming

Guides and Resources

San Diego Fly Fishers does not endorse or recommend any particular Guide or Business. This Information is intended to provide the reader with known providers of services related to fly fishing in our local area and in California. This is not intended to be a complete list of available services.

Guides

Eastern Sierra's

[Sierra Drifters](#)

[Sierra Troutdoorsman](#)

[Pat Jaeger Fly Fishing](#)

[Kern River Fly Shop](#)

Northern California

[Acosta Fly Fishing](#) (Steelhead)

[Fine and Far Fly Fishing](#) (Steelhead/Spey Trips)

[Baiocchi's Troutfitters](#)

San Diego Bay/Surf/Lakes

[Conway Bowman](#)

[Alex Cady @ Fly Stop](#)

Fly Fishing Equipment

[STROUD TACKLE](#)

[THE FLY STOP](#)

[Flies by Favorite](#)

River Flows and Reports

[Dreamflows](#)

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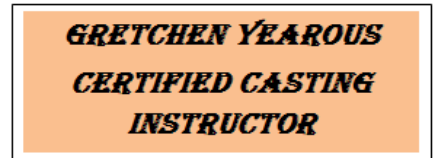
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