

What's Hot and What's Not™ (THE Northern California Flyfishing Report) from *Fish First!* – updated 7 March 12

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NCDGA page numbers: NCDAG page numbers in the comments section refer to page numbers in the Northern California DeLorme Atlas and Gazetteer.

| Fishery | Water Conditions | Fishing Conditions, Techniques, and Hatches | Flies | Comments |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| Baum Lake | Clear, mid 40s, lake level is normal. | Fishing is good. Finally...the mass of BWO's and midges hatching! Best fishing is on overcast or rainy days when the BWO hatch lasts most of the day. No need to get there early. Hatches start around 11am A parachute BWO with a midge dropper is a deadly combination in the main current. These fish will clue in to the fly pattern. Change flies often to find the hot fly. Streamers on a type 6 sink tip will get a bugger or leech down along the weedbeds where big fish will lie in wait for a big meal. A slow strip is a works best this time of year when the water is cold. | Lake woolly buggers/streamers J Fair wiggle tail (olive, brown, burnt orange) BH woolly bugger (black, olive, brown), crystal bugger, mini bugger black/olive, seal bugger (rust, olive, black), hale bopp leach (brown, olive), Mack's bugger, bunny leach (white), chub minnow (#6-12). BWO/Baetis nymphs Hogan's S&M nymph, Hogan's better baetis, Burk's crystal hunchback, Hogan's olive military may, tailwater tiny, flashy pheasant tail, Sloan's mighty may, Burk's olive hunchback two-tone, Mercer's micro mayfly, tung split case BWO (#16-22). BWO dries (Listed elsewhere in report). | Light fishing pressure. A float tube or pram is best. NCDAG pg 48 |
| Feather River (Hwy 70 bridge to Gridley) | Clear, low 50s F, good flow in low flow (600 cfs), high flow below the Afterbay (1,700 cfs) at Gridley. | Fishing is fair to good. Reports of spring steelhead moving up the river. Swing the riffles and tailouts below Hwy 162 bridge with a pond smelt, alevin, or bugger. Swing riffles, tailouts and drop-offs with a 10' versileader or poly leader to keep the fly down. Green caddis pupas, beadhead nymph, BWO nymphs are also top producers under an indicator or high-sticked in riffles and tailouts. Fishing will continue to improve with more spring run moving up the river. | Egg patterns Sucker spawn oregon cheese, Fox's fertilizer (shell pink, fire orange, flo red), glow-bug (peach, pink, champagne, light yellow, cheese, chartreuse), Pettis' Unreal egg clusters (gold nugget, burnt orange, dark roe, light row), clown egg, Pettis' unreal single egg, unreal egg cluster (dk roe, burnt orange) (#8-16). Salmon sac-fry (Alevin) patterns Gummy fry, Hogan's central valley alevin, Simmons' salmon fry, Sloan's American Alevin (#10-12). BWO/Baetis nymphs and Attractor beadhead nymphs (listed elsewhere). | Heavy fishing pressure on the weekends above highway 70. Access from Oroville State Wildlife Area. Be sure to have your steelhead card signed and dated before fishing. NCDAG pg 68, 78. |
| Feather River, N.F. (Cresta powerhouse to Lake Oroville) | Slight tint, mid 50's F, 465 cfs below Grizzly Creek, 130 cfs below Poe Dam. | Fishing is fair to good. Recent weather will muddy up the river from Pulga to Poe but it will clear in a few days. Best fishing is midday when trout are rising to hatches of midges and BWO's in riffles and tailouts. Hatches are isolated. Cover water along the railroad tracks to find big noses rising. High stick with a rubberleg stone and a BWO nymph dropper in deep runs with no indicator and plenty of split shot to get the flies down between the boulders. Flows below Poe powerhouse have been consistent and wadeable. Strip sculpin and buggers on a sink tip line. Be sure to use at least 10# tippet for these large aggressive fish. The river below Cresta powerhouse is open all year, while above Cresta powerhouse closed on Nov. 15 th . | Attractor beadhead nymphs royal flush, Hogan's Steelie Caddis, hare's ear, twenty incher, Hart's dark lord, copper john (red, black, lime, copper) Hogan's amber wing attractor, Tungsten Hotwire prince (olive/copper & Green/Yellow), Queen prince, bird's nest, black AP, prince of darkness, king prince, dirty bird (tan, olive), Hogan's drifter, biotic nymph, Hogan's Red Headed Step Child (#10-18). BWO/Baetis emerger/dries Brook's KD dun, fluttering mayfly cripple BWO, Harrop captive dun, BWO extended body, Brooks CDC dun baetis, hackle stacker BWO, loopwing paradun, parachute BWO, twilight baetis dun day-glo, BWO CDC transitional dun, Brook's sprout baetis, quill body baetis cripple, Harrop's CDC BWO emerger, Quigley's loopy cripple stacker, Burk's silhouette dun (#16-20). River woolly buggers/streamers BWO and nymphs and Golden stonefly nymphs (listed elsewhere in report). | Expect light fishing pressure. Access along Hwy 70. Open to fishing from Cresta powerhouse to Lake Oroville. NCDAG pg 59. CDAG pg 51. |
| Frank's Tract & San Joaquin Delta (including Mildred, San Joaquin River, and nearby sloughs) | Clear to slightly off color (3-8 ft visibility, low to mid 50s F. | Fishing is poor to fair. Water temps are slowly warming so expect the stripers to get into their spring bite soon. Some aggressive schools of fish are beginning to show up. Anglers with the best action are moving around a lot and fishing shallow, deep, drop-offs, and weedbed edges until they get some action. Be sure to find a strong running tide. Use T-14 with a fast strip, but be sure to pause every few strips. Topwater action has not really started yet. Try the San Joaquin, Franks, and the Disco Bay area. Most fish are running 2-5 lbs. Recent wind has put a damper on the bite, but look for it to improve with a few days of calm weather. | Striper patterns Flashtail clousers and whistlers in chartreuse/white, pink/white, all white, and black (2/0-3/0), pearly poppers (red/yellow, green/yellow), gurglers, crease fly. | Boat needed - rentals are available at Sugar Barge Marina on Bethel Island. Light fishing pressure. NCDAG pg 96 and 106. New CDAG pg. 72, 73. |

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| Mokelumne, Lower (below Comanche reservoir) | Slight tint, low to mid 50's, moderate flow 255 cfs by March 2 nd . | Fishing is good. Cloudy days provide hatches of BWO's midday and sunny days provide good hatches of caddis. Some dry fly action in the afternoon but the best success is nymphing tailouts and runs with a beadhead nymph and caddis pupa dropper for the possibility of steelhead. Recent reports of steelhead in the 21 to 23 inch range. Cover water with drift boat, raft or pontoon boat for best action. | Attractor beadhead nymphs royal flush, Hogan's Steelie Caddis, hare's ear, twenty incher, Hart's dark lord, copper john (red, black, lime, copper) Hogan's amber wing attractor, Tungsten Hotwire prince (olive/copper & Green/Yellow), Queen prince, bird's nest, black AP, prince of darkness, king prince, dirty bird (tan, olive), Hogan's drifter, biotic nymph, Hogan's Red Headed Step Child (#10-18). BWO/Baetis nymphs (listed elsewhere in report). | Moderate fishing pressure. Access along highway 12 and 88. CDAG pg. 65 |
| Putah Creek (below Lake Berryessa) | Clear, low 50s F, low flow (118 cfs below lake Berryessa). | Fishing is fair. Flows are currently steady and fishing has improved. Fishing starts around 9am with trout keying on midges and BWO's subsurface. Indicator nymph with small midge and BWO nymphs under a white indicator on 6X or 7X tippet. Use plenty of stealth at these low flows. Best of the dry fly action is in the afternoon when trout are keying on emerging BWO's. Best action is between the dam and Access 3. Do not fish over spawning trout and stay away from redds. | BWO nymphs Hogan's S&M nymph, Hogan's better baetis, berry nymph in gooseberry, Burk's crystal hunchback, Hogan's olive military may, Mercer's BWO trigger nymph, Kyle's beerhead baetis, tailwater tiny, flashy pheasant tail, Sloan's mighty may, Burk's olive hunchback two-tone, Mercer's micro mayfly (#16-22), Mercer's Midgeling. BWO dries and Midge pupa (Listed elsewhere in report). | Moderate fishing pressure. NOTE: Take precautions not to transport New Zealand mud snail. Catch & Release all year ! NCDAG pg 85, 95. |
| Pyramid Lake (outside of Reno) | Clear, good lake level. | Fishing is fair. Best fishing is when there is chop on the water. Standing on a ladder casting buggers on a shooting head to the ledge where Lohanton's cruise is the best technique. Currently, water levels are up. Best access is from a boat or float tube when its not hazardous conditions. Big Lohanton Cutthroat are cruising along the drop-off in 5-10 feet of water feeding on tui chubs. Strip a pyramid bugger with a tadpole dropper with a foam back. Vary your retrieve between slow and fast with a pause to float the tadpole. Use a fast sinking shooting head on a 7 or 8wt rod to fight big fish and making long casts. | Pyramid Flies Estaz woolly worms, midnight cowboy buggers (black/purple, chartreuse/white, olive, black), Tadpole (black/purple, chartreuse/white, olive, black) (#8-12), Mahalo midge (black/silver, Fuchia #10, 14) | Expect light to moderate fishing pressure. Fishing from a float tube or pontoon boat is an option. Note: Day permit required. Open October 1 st -June 30 th . |
| Sacramento River, Lower (below Keswick Reservoir) | Green tint, low to low 50s, normal flow (4,000 cfs). | Fishing is good to excellent. An early spring and low flows have brought out good spring hatches. In the morning, high stick a caddis pupa with a BWO dropper in riffles and tailouts. Best of the hatches and dry fly opportunities are in the afternoon with rainbows rising to caddis on the flats and along the bank with vegetation. A drift or pontoon boat gives access to plenty of Wadeable water. Good reports of rainbows over 20." Best wading reports are from Los Molinos and Posse Grounds (above Sundial Bridge). | Caddis pupa/emergers Lawson's caddis emerger (tan, olive), Hogan's Yuba pupa, Hogan's swingin' caddis, Fox's poopah (olive, tan), Hot wire caddis, Anderson's peeking green, green machine, Fox's springtime poopah, Amber wing prince, M's Dirty Bird, Hogan's steelie caddis, Hogan's good & plenty nymph (tan, olive), Silvey's prime time pupa, Silvey's submerger caddis (olive, tan), Silvey's edible emerger (#12-18), King Prince (#12-16), M's Iron Sally (#16). Egg patterns and PMD nymphs and Attractor beadhead nymphs and BWO/Baetis nymphs and Golden stonefly nymphs (listed elsewhere in report). | Drift boat fishing is provides best access. Wading access around Cypress bridge and Posse Grounds. NCDAG pg 46, 57. New CDAG pg. 41 |
| Stanislaus River, Lower (below Tullock Reservoir) | Slightly off color, high 40s F, low flows (227 cfs at Orange Blossom bridge). | Fishing is fair. Best action is in the afternoon with trout feeding on caddis and BWO subsurface. BWO's are the top producers on rainy days. High stick nymph riffles and tailouts with a caddis pupa and small mayfly nymph. Strip buggers on a sink tip line in tailouts and slow deep runs. Most trout run 10-15 inches. This is a good winter fishery less than 2 hours from the Bay Area. | River woolly buggers/streamers J Fair wiggle tail (olive, brown, burnt orange) BH woolly bugger (black, olive, brown), crystal bugger, mini bugger black/olive, seal bugger (rust, olive, black), hale bopp leach (brown, olive), Mack's bugger, bunny leach (white), chub minnow (#6-12). BWO/Baetis emerger/dries (Listed elsewhere in report). Midge pupa (Listed elsewhere in report). BWO/Baetis nymphs (Listed elsewhere in report). | Moderate fishing pressure. Access from Tullock Rd and from 2 Mile Bar. NCDAG pg 108. |
| Trinity River (near Lewiston) | Clear, low 40s F, low flow (300 cfs). | Fishing is fair. Best numbers of steelhead are from Lewiston to Douglas City. Golden stones, psycho prince and #16 BWO nymphs are good producers of big steelhead. Look for steelhead and brown trout rising to march browns in the afternoon. Good access at Lewiston, Bucktail, Steel Bridge and Douglas City. Tip: flows are low. Approach drop-off's, tailouts and runs with stealth before floating over their heads. | Steelhead wet flies/streamers Mossback, assassin (natural, copper), Herniator (silver, copper), cone sucking bunny, egg sucking crystal leach, general practitioner (black, orange), comet, green butted skunk, coal car, skykomish sunrise, prism, purple peril, silver hilton, winters hope, Gareth's fire fly, red ant (#4-8). Golden stonefly nymphs jumbo john, Morrish cone stone, Morrish WMD, Poxyback golden stone nymph, Mercer's poxyquill golden stone, Pat's Rubberleg. Attractor beadhead nymphs and Egg patterns (listed elsewhere). | Moderate to heavy fishing pressure in the Lewiston to Douglas City area. Fly only section below Lewiston Lake is closed. NCDAG pg 45. New CDAG pg. 31, 32, 40. |

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| Yuba River, Lower (from Englebright dam to Marysville) | Clear, low 50s F, moderate flow, 721 cfs below Englebright. | Fishing is good to excellent. Good numbers of rainbows are rising to march browns and PMD's in the afternoon. Still some skwalas around but fish are not keying on them as much as in past weeks. In the morning, nymph tailouts, riffles and runs with a rubberleg stone and a small BWO dropper. Midday, walk the river searching for fish activity. Boiling fish indicate activity sub-surface. Swing soft hackle march browns and PMD's. Slashing rainbows is a good sign to switch to a dry. Reports of a few fin-clipped Feather steelhead in the system. Good reports and access above highway 20. Flows are very Wadeable but pick your spot to cross wisely. | Midge pupa glass bead midge (red, black), crystal dip, disco midge, brassie, desert storm, zebra midge (rust, black), WD40 (olive, chocolate) WD50 tungsten (olive/wine), skinny nelson, biot midge, crystal HBI (#18-22). Skwala Stonefly Adults/Nymphs Hogan's split wing skwala, Hogan's skwala, Bullethead Skwala, pixy-back Skwala nymph, Mercer's tungsten skwala nymph, tungsten bead skwala, flush floater skwala (#8-12). BWO/Baetis nymphs (listed elsewhere). Golden stonefly nymphs (listed elsewhere). Attractor beadhead nymphs (listed elsewhere). BWO/Baetis emerger/dries (listed elsewhere). Pale evening dun dries Hackle stacker PED, Fluttering mayfly cripple PED, loop wing comparadun PED, PED parachute, sulphur parachute (#14-20) | Water above Hwy 20 bridge is open from December 1 st until August 31 st . Access at the Hwy 20 bridge and Sycamore Ranch campground. NCDAG pg 78,79. |
| <p>Other Reports General Trout Season (streams not listed under the special fishing regulations have closed on Nov 15 and re-open the last Saturday in April). Check the DFG regs to make sure the stream you are fishing is legal to fish. Sacramento River, Upper (Lake Siskiyou to Lake Shasta) Current mild weather is creating spring conditions. Fish rising to midges and mayflies mid morning followed by small black caddis in the afternoon. Nymphing will bring good numbers but prospecting with a caddis emerger will find pods of feeding trout. Flows are good and the river is fishing from Dunsuir to Delta. Klamath River (Iron Gate to Seiad Valley) Flows are 1300 cfs. Best fishing is below Iron gate where trout and the remaining steelhead are holding in runs and riffles. A rubberleg stone with a beadhead or egg dropper is hooking most of the fish in the morning. In the afternoon, switch to a BWO nymph. BWO nymphs under an indicator in slow water will find fish seeking warmth. American River (below Nimbus Dam) Fishing is fair. Open below Nimbus on January 1st. Recent rains have brought good numbers of half pounders and a few large adult steelhead into the system. Swing caddis pupas and traditional steelhead flies such as; Hiltons, green butt skunks and Hartwick's silent assassin on a sink tip line. Fishing riffles and tailouts with a switch or spey rod is a great method for covering water. Pit River #3,#4, #5 (below Lake Britton to Big Bend) Open all year! A rubberleg stone and beadhead dropper (hot fly: #14 black AP) fished in riffles and pocket water will get some action. Big fish tend to hold in deep pools. Dredge a bugger or sculpin on a sink tip line to get the fly as deep as possible. A wading staff and studded boots are essential for wading this river. Very cold here dress warm.</p> | | | | |
| <p>North Coast Steelhead - (Fishing conditions change daily, to check on coastal river low flow closures call the following numbers: North Coast River Closures 707.822.3164. Central Coast River Closures 707.944.5533). Current lack of weather has dropped flows to low levels on some coastal rivers. Coastal rivers need a good flush to bring steelhead into the river systems! The bulk of the rain is on the north coast From the Mad in Eureka up to the Smith River. Current flow forecasts show flows declining in the next week. Another flush will bring more fish into the system and put them back on the bite. Russian River- Recent rain spiked the flows enough to get steelhead moving last weekend but flows are coming down again and fish are holding in deep holes. We need another flush to bring more fish in and get existing fish out of deep holes. Swinging traditional steelhead patterns with a sink tip or Skagit line will hook fish. Smith River- Flows are dropping Expecting a spike in flows on February 18th. This should bring more steelhead into the system and put the remaining fish back on the bite. Swinging traditional steelhead patterns on a Skagit line will hook fish in tailouts and drop-offs. Best action for swinging flies is below Jedediah state park where the river spreads out. If water is off color, use big bright flies. Hartwick's Hoser, Morejohn's spot on prawn (pink/orange) are good flies when water is high and off color. Keep an eye on river flows. This river will blow out quick but will also recover fast. Eel River (main stem) The main stem is high and muddy but fish will congregate around tribs. Swing big leaches in big water. Fishing will improve when flows decrease to fishable levels. SF Eel River is on a steady drop. Best bet is to cover water swinging small intruders, and marabou leaches around tributaries where fish will hold for increased flows. Best bet is to swing flies below Leggit to the mouth of the main stem. Concentrate on tributaries where fish will hold. Mad River is improving with flows on the drop and good numbers of steelhead in the system. Swing an egg sucking leach or big bright steelhead patterns (Trailer trash) on a sink tip line.</p> | | | | |
| <p>WH&WN™ FREE flyfishing report would not be possible without the help of: Craig Nielsen/Shasta Trout Guide Service, Jordan Romney (Putah Fly Fishing Guide), Victor Babbit/Tahoe Fly Fishing Outfitters/Tahoe, Jerry/The Troutfitter/Mammoth Lakes, Ted Fay Flyshop/Dunsuir, Greg/Sweeny's sport shop, Frank Rinella/Nevada City Anglers/Nevada City, Andy/Kiene's Fly Shop/Sacramento, Angler Edge fly shop, Val & Randy Aubrey (www.eaglelakefishing.info), Ken's Sporting Goods/Scott Freeman-EW report. Special thanks to all the WH&WN™ subscribers who have submitted their fishing reports for the fisheries listed in WH&WN, you help keep us honest, accurate, and up-to-date.</p> | | | | |