

The Barbless Hook

November 2020

Edited by Mark Spruiell



tri-valleyflyfishers.org

President's Message

by Albert Mansky

Hi Guys and Gals:

I hope this message finds you in good spirits and health. Well, it looks like Fall is about to arrive FINALLY. The trees are starting to turn their Fall colors and dropping their leaves, especially in my back yard. Although there's no rain in the forecast, it's still early in the rainy season. I hope we get a wet winter this year. We certainly don't need another drought year or drought season again. Every time we have a drought, they ask us to conserve water, then they raise the water rates because they're losing money. Like they say, "it's a dual edged sword."

I know some of you have been able to get out there and do some fishing, even with this pandemic hanging over our heads. I'm finally able to do some fishing for the first time this year. I hope to have some pictures and stories to tell you in the December newsletter.

As you are aware, 2021 is just around the corner. That means it's time to elect your TVFF Officers and Directors for next year. We welcome those new members to our club to take an active interest in running the club by joining the board. We are always open to new ideas. We would like to scuffle some of our current Directors responsibilities around, but we need your help to fill their vacancies. More to come on this subject in a separate e-mail to the general membership.

In the meantime, stay safe and stay healthy.

Al



Happy Thanksgiving!

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November Meeting – Lance Gray: Fishing the Valley Rivers

Come join us for our November Zoom meeting on the 5th at 7pm as Lance Gray gives a presentation on fishing the valley rivers. This is a Club presentation that he also won rave reviews for recently with his Zoom presentation. We are pleased to have Lance join us and share very detailed information on river access points for wading and boat access, best spots to fish, tactics, how to fish the very different rivers, and rigging and fly setups with a detailed Q&A at the end (prepare your questions now). It is timely, since the valley rivers will be loaded with



steelhead and salmon and that means the “Egg Drop”. Specifically, Lance will be talking about the Lower Sac, Feather River and the Yuba Rivers, and he will cover wading and boat accesses.

Please check your email for the meeting invitation and for more information about the meeting and raffle.

Outings and Activities

Please visit the [Event Calendar](#) on the TVFF website for a complete list of all upcoming meetings, outings and activities.

Surf Fishing Workshop – November 7

This is a hands-on workshop event with recent club speaker and guide Evan Praskin at a local beach (from Baker Beach to Marina Beach) to be determined based upon surf and tides. The goals of this workshop are determining where/when to fish, how to read the beach, how to rig your rod, which flies to use, casting, and safety. The outing runs from daybreak till noonish - exact time to be set when we know the beach. Target species are surf perch, striper, halibut, and whatever is swimming by...



Feather River Steelhead – January 5 & 9 (weather permitting)

These are two separate one day up and back trips to the Feather River at the town of Oroville to fish for steelhead with up to six TVFF members each day. As of now we will observe the Club protocols around Covid-19... more updates on this as we get closer to the actual dates.

It is a walk and wade trip, typically involving crossing the river in knee high water and fishing up/down the mid-stream gravel bars with indicators and high-stick nymphing. It is suggested that you bring along a wading staff as you may be wading in quicker water that is up to waist high if you want to gain access to more fishing spots.

This will be the third year for this Club trip. The first year we had eight members bring a total of 23 fish (wild and/or hatchery raised) to the net, including chromers up to 24" in length. The second year was less productive as the main wave of Steelhead moved through the system the month before the season was open in this section (the hatchery person I spoke with said they had over 1000 fish come into the hatchery one day!). The



Feather can be a productive and exciting water that offers a nice day trip being only 2:45 hours away from Pleasanton/Livermore. Our day will encompass a full day of fishing with a streamside break for lunch, you will need to bring your own food and beverages. Please note you will also need a Steelhead Report Card in addition to your 2021 license.

Contact Alan Wyosnick if you have any questions about this trip.

Member Reports

Bob McCollum – Heenan Lake

Fishing was good once I finally figured out what they wanted. Caught seven or so. Hard to take good pics when fishing from a float tube. Best fish was about 24" and about 5 lbs. Caught with a fly that I tied. Very strong Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, good fighters. In fact, they shredded my fly (see before/after pic). All fish caught with barbless hooks and released.





Bob McCollum – Lower Sac

Spent two days fishing on the Lower Sacramento. Great weather and lots of eager wild rainbow trout. Salmon are in the river and are starting to dig redds. They should drop their eggs in another week or so, especially if it rains this weekend. Fished the upper river from the posse grounds to Anderson the first day and Ball's Ferry to Jelly's Ferry the second day. These two stretches are very different and gave a nice range of fish, scenery, and solitude.





Pyramid Lake Update

The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council recently announced that Pyramid Lake will reopen to the public on November 2nd under temporary special regulations during the COVID-19 emergency. For example, the fees for fishing and camping permits have doubled, no seasonal permits are available, and the council is limiting the number of camping permits that are allowed on each beach to reduce congestion. [Click here](#) to view the full press release.

Be the Heron

Domenick Swentosky – TroutBitten

Just after dawn, I rounded a river bend and cleared the floodplain, leaving the broken hemlocks and growing sycamores behind me. On countless mornings, I've seen a blue heron lift off from the shallow riffle ahead, cutting through the morning mist with a graceful lift and a few forceful flaps of its large wings.

Heron spook easily. So this time, I crept along the remaining cover of the tree line, emulating the caution of the heron itself and trying to catch a glimpse of this



Photo: Cornell University

mysterious bird. I paused, methodically scanning the shallows until I found it — a mottled grey, thin form that moved far slower than I did. Its gaze was focused on the water ahead. And the limbs blowing gently in the breeze moved more than did the heron as it waded upstream.

I crouched and watched this patient hunter for ten minutes. Its cautious steps intermingled with long pauses, until finally the inevitable happened. The blue heron struck its prey with a swiftness wholly opposite of the stalking I'd just watched. Then, with a trout in possession, the heron took off through the grey morning skies and ducked behind the tree line.

I hope the range of the Great Blue Heron falls within your fishing territory. The large, crane-like bird that my young sons once called a Pterodactyl is the epitome of stealth. Watching a heron on the water is a lesson that every angler should take in, because this fish-eating bird is the ultimate trout hunter. It wades within striking range of its target by sneaking into position. The slender bird is a patient and efficient predator. And any trout angler can well learn the lessons of stealth by watching this avian model.

Be the heron on the river.

But the heron has an advantage that we do not. It has the luxury of time. While watching a heron glide into position, you might go through your whole lunch and make a cup of cowboy coffee beside the river, all before the bird is halfway into position. The heron doesn't rush through the water. It casts no waves that give away its presence. The heron is a noiseless, inconspicuous presence among its prey. And it blends in by moving slower than the surrounding elements.

Truth is, the heron has more time than any of us ever have. Because our days are filled with schedules and routines that permit limited hours for chasing trout. And that's less time for wading into the perfect position, undetected.

The heron is also smaller and more camouflage than you, and it knows the environment with more detail than even a daily angler.

Regardless, we can learn much about wading a river for trout by observing the heron. Take time to watch these compelling predators — these master hunters of the river. Because the lessons of incomparable stealth are unforgettable once you've seen them.

Be the heron on the river.

Fish hard, friends.

Fall River

Michael Wier – CalTrout

When you think of California and all it has to offer, what are some of your favorite natural places? Is it the forest, mountains or maybe the beach?

For me, I get the most enjoyment from our cold-water resources.

Naturally when I say, “cold water,” what comes to mind are lakes, rivers, wetlands, delta, estuaries and even reservoirs. These are the areas that I spend the most time fishing, boating, swimming, rafting etc.

However, our natural cold-water resources include a few lesser-known components that are just as important to the entire operating system.

First, the Sierra snowpack and glaciers in the high country. Snowfields store and release a large majority of California’s cold water into the river systems and lakes on any given year.



Fall River Valley by Brian Miller

High alpine meadows are also natural reservoirs that trap water from snowmelt, spread it out onto the land, and slowly release cold clean filtered water throughout the season.

Meadows are one of the most bio productive components of our water system. They support a lot of terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna, as well as provide habitat for many of our unique native inland trout. Meadows are also important in storing large amounts of carbon.

One of the lesser known – but just as important components of the water system – is California’s network of underground aquifers and springs.

Underground aquifers are created when rain and snow melt seeps down into the ground through fissures in the rocks or lava. From there it pools up in ponds, lakes and underground rivers where it hits solid bedrock.

If you are like me and grew up using a well on your property, then you will already know the importance of these underground aquifers. They are truly one of nature’s best tools for storing cold clean water.

With new emerging technologies we can gain a greater understanding of where these aquifers are located and how they work. This opens implications for recharging groundwater aquifers and using natural underground storage options which would alleviate the need for more environmentally impactful and less effective surface storage options such as reservoirs.

Natural springs are places where underground water wells spring up to the surface.

There has always been something very mysterious and romantic about springs for me. It is fascinating to see cold clean water bubbling up out of the earth.

Makes you wonder where it came from, how long it’s been down there and what types of geology it has it flowed through.

Turns out, California Trout funded a study of springs in the Mount Shasta area. By studying specific isotopes, researchers concluded that some of the water had been underground for as long as 25 years before resurfacing.

The average time underground was 8 to 14 years for springs in the Shasta area that is primarily volcanic geology. It also comes up super filtered, clean and cold.

These findings helped California Trout stop a proposed Nestlé water bottling factory from coming into the small community of McCloud which would have impacted the local blue-ribbon fisheries.

Historically springs have always been an important resource for California's residents. Many Native American villages were centered around springs if they were not near year-round flowing river.



Fall River by Mike Wier

Springs still provide a large part of our water for hydropower and municipalities. Springs are also a hugely important resource for wild trout, especially in Northern California.

Many of our best wild trout rivers are supplemented by springs that provide year-round cold water.

Some of the best spring-fed wild trout rivers include The Pit River, Hat Creek, The McCloud, The Upper Sacramento and the biggest spring fed river in California, The Fall River.

The Fall River is part of a vast complex of springs that well up around the Fall River

Valley mostly due to volcanic geological formations surrounding the valley.

The Fall River complex includes Spring Creek, Crystal Springs, Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park, Big lake, Eastman lake and the Tule River all of which are primarily spring fed. The only tributary that is primarily fed by precipitation is Bear Creek which flows into upper fall river.

The Fall River flows a little over 23 miles through the valley and is the largest Spring Creek in California and one of the biggest in the western United States.

Due to the consistent bountiful flows of natural spring water, the Fall River boasts one of the highest populations of wild trout of any of California's waterways making it a paradise for trout fisherman.

The cold consistent flows support a vast network of aquatic vegetation which in turn supports a huge quantity of aquatic insects. The legendary hatches of Fall River are famous among fly-fisherman.

The most famous of which is the early summer Hex hatch. These giant yellow mayflies can be nearly 2 inches in length and make for quite an experience for lucky anglers who time the hatch right.

For better or worse, depending on how you look at it, much of the upper Fall River is private. Most people access the water by hiring guides out of Fall River Mills or through Clearwater Lodge, which is located nearby on the Pit River.

All the guides that work Fall River have access to private boat launches and can take you up or down the river from there depending on where the best fishing is that day.

There is however one public access point along upper Fall River off Island Rd. that is owned by California Trout and open to the public. You can launch your own craft if you can unload it from your truck and put it in the water by hand. There is no boat ramp. Also, no gas-powered motors are allowed at this put-in.

For the past five years, California Trout along with its partners UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Fall River Conservancy and Orvis have been conducting a study of the wild trout population.

In addition to population dynamics and how fish move throughout the system the study has concluded that there are two distinct sub populations of rainbows within the fall river complex.

Most fish in Fall River can spawn eight months out of the year because of the cold consistent temperatures of the springs and the perfect substrate in and around the springs. This population makes up over 3/4 of the overall number of wild trout. The other sub population spawn exclusively in Bear Creek and maintain traditional spawning times in the spring based on rain and snow melt flows.

After spawning, the fish all intermingle within the entire Fall River complex and all of the trout have the ability to move around throughout the entire fall river complex throughout the year.

This information led CalTrout to helping advocate for more consistent regulations throughout the Fall River system. In this latest round of California regulatory overhaul of the fishing regulations we've advocated for a uniform regulation throughout the entire fall river complex and better protections for wild trout.

The current proposed new regulations will allow for year-round fishing and harvest of two wild trout during the summer season and catch and release during the winter months.

In addition to fishing, the spring waters from Fall River supports an abundance of other wildlife including thousands of migratory birds. There is also a robust agricultural economy thriving within the fall river valley based around that cold clean water.



Fall River Osprey by Brian Miller

When the river leaves the valley a portion of it is immediately piped to the Pit one powerhouse for Hydropower generation. From there that same water flows through a network of five different power houses along the Pit River before reaching Shasta reservoir. The power generated from that water supports thousands of homes and hundreds of communities throughout California. Shasta is the largest reservoir in California by volume.

The Pit River being the biggest tributary with a large amount of its volume contributed by the Fall River springs. From Shasta reservoir the lower Sacramento River carries water to hundreds more communities and fuels Millions of dollars worth of agricultural enterprises throughout the Central Valley. Some of that water even find its way all the way down to Southern California making its way over the grapevine and into the greater Los Angeles basin.

I hope this story helps illustrate that California's natural springs are not only a great resource for recreation and wild trout fishing but are also one of our greatest ecological assets.

Please help us in studying and protecting California's natural spring water resources. For more information on the work we do visit caltrout.org.

Items for Sale

Pontoon Boats – Dennis Rankin



Two boats available:

- 9 ft Colorado Pontoon, Trout Unlimited, good condition (one fill valve needs work or replacing), complete with oars, 27# thrust trolling motor and old battery. \$150.
- 6½ ft Bucks Bag Pontoon, complete with oars, good shape, also has live fish bag. \$175.

Contact Dennis – (925) 784-5666