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# Fish Sniffer

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Lake Camanche Map Feature



See Page 16

33 Years  
Serving  
Sportsmen

VOL. 34 - ISS. 2

Jan. 9 - 23, 2015

SEE OUR NEW BAJA  
ROUNDUP SECTION ON  
PAGES 28-29

Our  
33<sup>RD</sup>  
Year

"The Magazine For West Coast Sportsmen!"



Spencer Humphrey of Stockton holds up a limit of stripers taken on chicken livers in the Sacramento River near Chain Island on December 17.

Photo by JACK NAVES, Fish Sniffer Staff.

## Striper Fishing In Hot Chocolate

I had just turned out my lamp and laid down when it began. It started as a faint pitter-patter, and then erupted into a loud rumble. I flicked on my backyard porch light and peeked through the blinds. Rain was pounding the surface of my back porch.

I was trying to get to bed early on the evening of December 16th for a planned fishing trip to the delta the next morning. The boat was packed and safely tucked under its waterproof cover. I was going fishing rain or shine the next morning, so I crawled under the covers and went to sleep.

Spencer Humphrey had been asking to join me on a delta striper trip ever since we went camping the previous summer. The striper fishing was off to a slow start in the West Delta, so I kept putting off our trip until the fishing picked up. Compared to last year, this year's fall striper run has been slow for me, producing only a few small keepers each time out. I planned our trip around some nice-sized tides I identified on December 17, and our trip was finally set.

On the morning of our trip, there was a break in the rain as I pulled the boat out of the driveway. It started to

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WHAT'S HOT?  
FRESHWATER  
by Jack Naves



## Spotlight on Conservation

## Central Valley Salmon Win A Major Court Victory

See Page 26

## Fishing The Sea Of Cortez – In The Rain!

A group of friends and I took our annual trip to the Sea of Cortez and the East Cape of Baja over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend last year. We left a hot, sunny Sacramento valley and landed in Cabo San Lucas in the rain! I have never seen it rain in on one of these trips, and we experienced a remarkably different climate for summertime in Baja.

I was joined by Bridget Looney, my brother Ken Kneeland and his buddy Ray Lantta from Merino, Colorado, Merv and



Fish Sniffer publisher Paul Kneeland displays a nice yellowfin tuna taken on Baja's East Cape.

Photo by PAUL KNEELAND, Fish Sniffer Staff.

Patti Arnold of Citrus Heights, and Bob and Mary King of Gridley. Driving from the airport with overcast skies, we noticed all the trees and shrubs in the dry desert were all lush green and many were flowering. Several of the arroyos actually had flowing water in them!

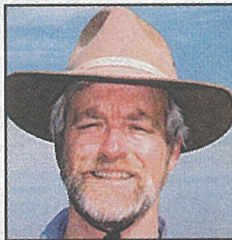
Hotel Palmas de Cortez is known as the "Gem of the East Cape" for good reason. The rooms are large and spacious, and all are nicely air-conditioned. The bathrooms are large; all done in natural tile, and feature a huge glassed in shower with room to share with 3 or 4 of your closest friends! There are two swimming pools, with the largest being an "infinity" pool that appears to overflow right into the sea.

We found our rooms, settled in for a moment, and then all met down at the palapa bar overlooking the beautiful Sea of Cortez. We toasted our good fortune for being in one of most pleasant places on earth, surrounded by good friends, and planned our fishing excursion for the next morning.

Breakfast starts at 6 am, so I was up and making sure everyone was up and getting ready by 5:30. We met in the huge dining room just as it was getting light in the east. Breakfast was buffet style, with bacon, sausage, eggs, fried potatoes, French bread, your choice of toast, coffee, fresh fruit and juices and more. Then we headed down to the boats, approximately 75 yards from the hotel pool!

Merv, Patti, Bob and Mary boarded

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GONE  
FISHIN'  
by Paul Kneeland

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## STAFF TACKLE What We're Using

**Sheldon Bright** - fished the California Delta and caught several largemouth bass to 3-1/2 pounds while throwing a Aurora Craw colored Lucky Craft LV 500 crankbait in canals that switched back and forth and had varying depths between 2 and 6' of water. Bright's rod and reel of choice was a 7' KVD 705M rod, teamed up with a Abu Garcia reel spooled up with 15-pound Berkley Fluorocarbon line.



**Cal Kellogg** - trolled Rollins Lake for trout. Cal used a pair of 7'6" Vance's Tackle ULT 762 trolling rods topped with Abu Garcia 5500 LC line counter reels. The reels were spooled with 10 lb moss colored Trilene Big Game line. On the business end, Cal pulled Rapalas and Gulp! Crawlers teamed with Vance's Lil' Slim Willie Flashers.



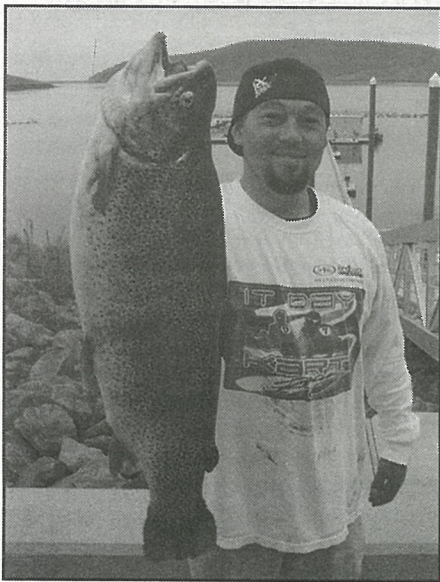
**Ernie Marlan** - fished the Sacramento River with Captain David Hammond of Delta Pro Fishing. They targeted sturgeon in shallow water ranging from 5-7 feet deep. They hooked a nice striper around ten pounds first thing in the morning, but it wasn't until early afternoon when they got the classic sturgeon pump and hooked a monster sturgeon that went 8 plus feet long. The fish was released at the boat safe and unharmed. The fish was caught on roe and 7' Phenix Black Diamond 15-40 line rating teamed up with an Avet Reel with 60lb FINS Braid.





## What's Hot...FRESH

• Cont. from Page 1



David Baxter of San Jose set a new rainbow trout record at Los Vaqueros Reservoir on December 22 when this massive 13.72 lb. rainbow smashed his Kastmaster.

Photo courtesy of LOS VAQUEROS RESERVOIR, Livermore.

speckle my windshield, but as I merged onto Interstate 80 in the pre-dawn darkness. I picked up Spencer in Lodi, and we made our way west to the Sacramento County boat ramp at Sherman Island.

Once we were on the water, our first stop was an area near Chain Island where I've had good success in the past on incoming tides. The low tide was slack, and we patiently waited for the current to start flowing upstream.

Spencer had never been striper fishing before, so I told him not to worry if it seemed slow during the slack tide. "Once the current gets going, we'll start getting bites" I relayed. We were soaking chicken livers and pile worms in the muddy delta, which resembled a river of flowing hot chocolate.

When the river gets blown out by big storms, soaking bait is about the only game in town. Weeks earlier when we planned the trip, there was no way to know that one of the biggest storms in recent years would blow out the river just in time for our outing. We need the rain, so I'd rather have muddy rivers than reservoirs that resemble the barren landscape in the original 'Planet of the Apes'.

Tap-tap-tap...Spencer had the first bite of the day on one of his rods. As the current picked up, our other rods started getting

bites as well. The 53 degree water made the fish much less active than they had been on my previous trip about six weeks earlier. Although the action was pretty slow, we still had enough bites to keep us busy. After a few hours, one of Spencer's rods pumped several times and loaded up with pressure. "I think you might have one on that rod", I said.

Spencer reeled in what turned to be our first keeper of the day. We were using circle hooks, so setting the hook wasn't necessary. When the fish grabbed the bait and turned away it basically hooked itself. I scooped up the fish with the net, and we had it on ice a few minutes later after bleeding it.

As the tide waned, Spencer's other rod started pumping in a constant motion. A short while later we had the second keeper of the day in the cooler. Not long afterwards, the high slack tide made for slow fishing.

Slack tides are typically pretty slow when anchoring with bait. My preference is to troll during the slack tides in the delta, but with the water sitting at about two inches of visibility, using lures was pretty much out of the question. After several hours, the outgoing tide finally started to flow downstream.

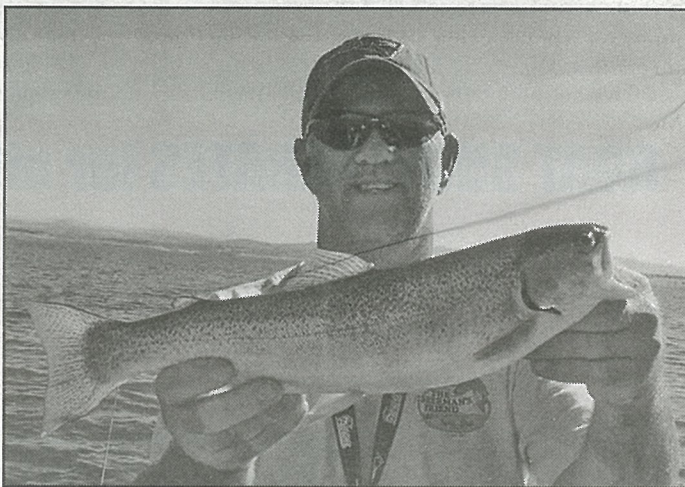
With two stripers already on ice, Spencer was running a sturgeon rig when his rod slammed down after several hard taps. The fish didn't run like a sturgeon, but I was thinking it might be another striper. I scooped the unknown species into the net, not being able to identify it through the cloudy water.

It was neither a striper nor a sturgeon, but a Sacramento Pikeminnow at the end of his line. While pikeminnows make for great live bait for stripers, this particular fish was over two feet long - too big to use for bait. After a quick release, we continued fishing for several hours until close to dark.

As twilight approached, a steady rain made its presence felt while we trailed the boat and hit the road. By the time we made the wide left turn onto highway 160, rain was pounding the top of the truck just as it had pounded my back porch the night before. The cool, cloudy water had made for a tough day of fishing, but we persevered and made the best of the situation.

When big rain storms roll through, murky water can make fishing seem like a long shot. While trolling or throwing lures can be shut down by muddy water, soaking bait is still a viable option when seeking out stripers in the delta.

Before you cancel your next trip after a big storm, keep in mind that the stripers and sturgeon will be waiting around even when the water looks like hot chocolate. My only regret on our damp December 17 trip is that we didn't have any real hot chocolate on board.



Robbie Dunham headed out to Lake Camanche on October 18 and caught a few rainbows and bass while trolling including this beauty.

Photo courtesy of ROBBIE DUNHAM.



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#### SACRAMENTO INTERNATIONAL SPORTSMEN'S EXPO AT CAL EXPO

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#### JACKSON RANCHERIA HOTEL AND CASINO PRESENTS AARON LEWIS

December 11, 2014 - Jackson Rancheria is featuring a performance from Aaron Lewis. For more information call the casino at (800) 822-9466.

#### QUAIL SEASON CLOSES

January 25, 2015 - The quail season closes state wide for both mountain and valley quail.

#### GENERAL DUCK SEASON CLOSES

January 25, 2015 - The duck season closes throughout the state. For more information check out the California DFW website at [www.dfg.ca.gov](http://www.dfg.ca.gov).

#### NTAC TROUT ANGLERS CHALLENGE TOURNAMENT AT SAN PABLO RESERVOIR

February 14, 2015 - The NorCal Trout Anglers Challenge Tournament Tour will kick off the season at San Pablo Reservoir. If you love trout fishing, you'll want to participate in these low cost events. Entry is \$15 for adults with pre-registration and kids are free if they pre-register. Boaters and bank anglers are welcome. There will be cash prizes, gear raffles, lots of family fun and you could even end up fishing for a boat and motor during the Tournament of Champions! For more information or to sign up call (916) 768-0938.

#### LATE GOOSE SEASON OPENS

February 14, 2015 - The late goose season for whitefront and white geese is to open and remain open until Feb. 18. Be sure to check regs for special closures.

#### NTAC TROUT ANGLERS CHALLENGE TOURNAMENT AT NEW MELONES RESERVOIR

February 28, 2015 - Entry is \$15 for adults with pre-registration and kids are free if they pre-register. Boaters and bank anglers are welcome. There will be cash prizes, gear raffles, lots of family fun and you could even end up fishing for a boat and motor during the Tournament of Champions! For more information or to sign up call (916) 768-0938.

#### SACRAMENTO BOAT SHOW

March 12-15, 2015 - Cal Expo - Thursday and Friday 12-8 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am - 6 pm. For more information, contact [sacramentoboatshow.com](http://sacramentoboatshow.com), 916-372-4239.

#### SANTA ROSA FISHING TACKLE AND DUCK DECOY SHOW

March 13 and 14, 2015 - This is the place to go for antiques, collectables, new and used tackle and much much more. The event will take place at 1351 Maple Ave in Santa Rosa. For more information call (707) 539-3662.

#### NTAC TROUT ANGLERS CHALLENGE TOURNAMENT AT LAKE AMADOR

March 14, 2015 - Entry fee is \$15 for adults with pre-registration and kids are free if they pre-register. Boaters and bank anglers are welcome. There will be cash prizes, gear raffles, lots of family fun and you could even end up fishing for a boat and motor during the Tournament of Champions! For more information or to sign up, call (916) 768-0938.

#### RENO BOAT AND RECREATION SHOW

March 20-22, 2015 - Every outdoor sports and recreation enthusiast will appreciate the Reno Boat & Recreation Expo. It boasts the latest outdoor gear and accessories, adventure and travel, boats, rv's, camp trailers and more. The event will be held at the Reno Convention Center. For more information call (775) 849-8000.

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