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# Fish Sniffer

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Loon Lake Map Feature



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Vol. 37 - ISS.19

Aug 31 - Sept 7, 2018

Special Section  
Baja Roundup  
PG 30-31



"The Magazine for West Coast Sportsmen!"

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## STAFF TACKLE

### What We're Using



**Cal Kellogg** - trolled for trout at French Meadows Reservoir from his Hobie Pro Angler 14 kayak. Cal chose a Vance's Tackle trout rod teamed with an Abu Garcia 5500 line counter reel spooled with 10 pound moss green Trilene Big Game line. On the business end Cal ran an 8 pound test Vanish Fluorocarbon leader tipped with an orange Ex-Cel Spoon. To get the spoon down to the fish, Cal employed a small portable Scotty downrigger. Using this gear Cal caught trout to 17 inches.



**Paul Kneeland** - fished Flaming Gorge Reservoir, Wyoming with Mark Kalinowski of Concord in Marks 22' Rogue Jet. They caught kokanee to 21 inches and 3 1/2 pounds using a Cousins 7'6" ultra light graphite downrigger rod with a Daiwa Lexa 100 level wind reel loaded with 8 lb. test Yozuri TopKnot fluorocarbon line. They trolled Vance's watermelon dodgers followed by a hot pink Yakima Bait Tight Lines kokanee spinner hootchie at 55 feet deep and 1.4 mph off the Scotty Downriggers.



**Dan Bacher** - fished for rainbow trout at Spicer Reservoir. He used a Berkley Ugly Stick GX2 6' 6" medium action spinning rod, teamed up with a Shakespeare GX235 spinning reel filled with 6 lb. test P-Line CX Premium Fluorocarbon Coated Line. He fished with chartreuse Berkley PowerBait, 1/8 oz. gold and black Panther Martins and 2/5 oz. gold/red stripe Little Cleos.

## 2018 High Roller Lingcod Derby: Big Seas, Determined Anglers & Monster Lings!

The bite had gone from nerve rackingly slow to red hot in the span of minutes. It was go time and I needed a giant.

Digging through my cooler of frozen bait, while struggling to keep my feet on the wildly pitching bow of the California Dawn, I found the bait I was looking for.

It was an 18-inch mackerel that weighed nearly 2 pounds. When I caught the mackerel a month before, I'd carefully brined it, wrapped it in plastic wrap and tucked it away in the freezer thinking it might come in handy during the annual High Roller Lingcod Derby.

Pinning a massive 10/0 Gamakatsu octopus hook through the mackerel's head, I then positioned a scary sharp 8/0 Owner treble hook in the mackerel's back about 3 inches from the tail.

Easing the rigged mackerel into the water accompanied by a 32 ounce sinker, I slowly thumbed the rig to the bottom.

Controlling the speed of the rig was crucial since the last thing I wanted was for that big bait to start spinning and foul the leader at such a pivotal moment.



**GONE FISHING**  
by  
Cal Kellogg

Presently I felt the sinker hit the bottom. I engaged the big Penn Senator and cranked the reel handle twice. A one pound sinker wasn't enough weight to hold the bottom, but the two pounder was just about perfect and as a result my line stayed nearly vertical.

I expected action right away but that didn't happen. Five minutes passed and then ten...Periodically I'd drop the bait, find the bottom and then reposition the rig just off the rocks.

CONTINUED ON PG 21



Will Cook captured the top spot in the 2018 High Rollers Lingcod event with these two Point Reyes monsters!

Photo courtesy of CALIFORNIA DAWN SPORTFISHING, Berkeley.

## Kokanee Pandemonium Breaks Out at Stampede Reservoir

I had just landed a nice kokanee and was trying to get my line back in



The kokanee have been running large at Stampede Reservoir this season, with fish over 16 inches being common.

Photo by JACK NAVES, Fish Sniffer Staff.

the water. "Kirby...right there" I uttered while pointing to his rod. I dropped my rod to grab the net, only to see a rod tip shaking on the opposite side of the boat. "Gary, your outside rod!" I exclaimed.

The next few minutes were a blur of pumping rods and nets flying in every direction. When the dust had settled, all six rods laid in tangled heap across the back of the boat. Although the boat trolled onward, no fishing lines were in the water. We couldn't get corn on our hooks fast enough. The sun still hadn't crested the eastern peak, but a glowing smoky haze laid silently over the water. Kokanee pandemonium had broken out on Stampede Reservoir.

Each year, it seems like one body of water rises to the top as the best kokanee fishery in Northern California. Lake Berryessa held the title for a number of years, only to be knocked off by the

drought and the sudden resurgence of Whiskeytown Lake. Last summer at the Whiskeytown Kokanee Power derby,

I proclaimed it was the best kokanee fishing I had ever seen.

Whiskeytown fished great this year and has the current edge on other lakes as far as average size. However, I have NEVER seen anything like the kokanee fishing this year at Stampede Reservoir.

Let me provide some examples. During my first trip this year on August 4 with Kirby Desha and Gary Ledbetter, we limited out for the three of us in 45 minutes flat. Our limits included three fish over sixteen inches.

Next up was on August 7, when we fished the three of us plus Kirby's father-in-law Willie Brusin. We were off the water with 20 fish in the cooler by 7:20 am. There were a few smaller fish mixed in, but for the most part we were

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**WHAT'S HOT**  
by  
Jack Naves

**Legislative Budget Committee Postpones Hearing on Extending SWP Contracts to Fund Delta Tunnels See Page 26**

## Spotlight on Conservation



**WHAT'S HOT**

Continued from page 1

averaging solid fifteen inchers.

Stampede Reservoir is a scenic high sierra lake formed by a dam impounding the Little Truckee River. It sits at an elevation of 5,949 feet above sea level, about seven miles northeast of the town of Truckee. It features two campgrounds and one launch ramp with a single dock. While

I have camped there before, this year I have been making morning runs that take me about an hour and forty-five minutes from my driveway in Roseville.

If you are lucky enough to make it to Stampede this year, I can offer a few tips before heading up. One thing to note is that the dam road is currently closed due to construction, so you have to access the reservoir from HWY 89 to the West. Follow the orange detour signs along the winding back roads. You will reach a hard to read brown sign indicating a left turn to the boat ramp.

I would suggest getting to the ramp just before dawn, as the early morning bite has been the best time to be there. As the day progresses, the action tapers off and tougher fishing sets in. However, there will still be flurries of activity throughout the day. Just remember that Stampede is famous for gusty afternoon winds that will stir up unpleasant whitecaps.

Fishing wise, insane numbers of big kokanee are making the catching process fairly easy this year. That being said, here are a few pointers to set you in the right direction.

During my latest trip at the Kokanee Power derby on August 11, the fish were stacked up over deep water from the launching ramp to the dam. The area south of the islands was also holding a lot of fish. We started catching fish between 50 and 65 feet deep in the morning, but got fish 80 feet down later in the day. In most cases, I was fishing over at least 100 feet of water with the downriggers set at higher depths where I was marking fish. The depths and locations will change as the year progresses, but as of press time it was wide open out there.

You will want to troll in the normal kokanee speed range of 0.8 to 1.3 miles per hour, depending on your preference. Anglers have been doing well using micro hoochies with and without small spinner blades added. Fluorescent orange, pink, and red are the popular colors, but stick with what you have confidence in. Run your lures behind nickel dodgers, and don't forget to tip each hook with a kernel of white shoe peg corn scented to your liking. Tuna seems to be popular these days, but krill and anise are classic favorites.

Once the male kokanee salmon start developing hooked jaws and absorbing their scales, I tend to favor Apex-style lures over anything else. I use a lot of speed variations and turns to elicit strikes from aggressive pre-spawners looking to attack. It's my favorite style of kokanee fishing without a doubt.

If you can make it up to Stampede Reservoir this year, by all means do it. When you factor together the size and numbers of kokanee, 2018 is shaping up to be a class for the history books. Don't miss out!



As you can see, the kokanee at Stampede are still chrome bright and awesome, but some fish like the one shown here on the left are starting to show the first subtle signs of the upcoming spawning season.

Photo by JACK NAVES, Fish Sniffer Staff.



Fish Sniffer field editor Jack Naves shows off a jumbo Stampede Reservoir kokanee that he caught during an early August outing.

Photo by JACK NAVES, Fish Sniffer Staff.

**FRESHWATER REPORTS:**  
CONTINUED FROM PG 20

**SACRAMENTO AREA**  
**Striper Fishing Best In Port**

SACRAMENTO – Although the Port of Sacramento usually produces the best striped bass action in the fall and winter months, big schools of threadfin shad have attracted stripers into the port and Sacramento Deepwater Channel this summer.

“There are massive schools of bait in the port,” said Alan Fong of Fisherman’s Warehouse in Sacramento. “Boaters fishing

with Blade Runner spoons are catching and releasing good numbers of schoolie stripers.”

“A few salmon are being caught by anglers fishing spinners and plugs below the mouth of the American at Discovery Park,” reported Uncle Larry Barnes at Sacramento Pro Tackle. “One customer reported catching a 28 lb. Chinook while anchored up above the I Street Bridge.”

Bank anglers fishing Steelhead Creek and local sloughs continue hooking channel catfish in the evenings. Use mackerel, chicken liver, anchovies and prepared catfish baits.

Other local waters to target catfish include Lisbon Slough in the Yolo Bypass, the Port of Sacramento and Sacramento Deepwater Channel and Sutter Bypass. Fishing is most productive this time of year during the evenings and at night.

- Dan Bacher



This young man did some trolling at Lake Shasta on August 10 and was rewarded with this huge rainbow. Photo courtesy of SACRIVERGUIDE.COM, Redding.

**SAN PABLO RESERVOIR**  
**Catfish, Crappie Action Offer Solid Action**

SACRAMENTO – If you want to hook channel catfish, fish the boat launch area at San Pablo Reservoir. Use anchovies, sardines, mackerel, chicken livers for the top success, advised Marcella Shoemaker of the Rocky Mountain Recreation Company.

Crappie are also hitting crappie jigs and small swimbaits. For the larger fish, try fishing Scow Canyon around the reeds and cover.

Anthony Paul of Hayward caught 2 catfish in Scow Canyon while soaking shrimp. Dimitri and Mario Novoa of Oakland caught 3 catfish and 10 crappie fishing with chicken liver in Scow Canyon.

The latest plant of 1,000 pounds of channel catfish from Tsai Enterprises went into the lake at the boat ramp on August 1.

The lake level is 304.5 feet in elevation and the surface water temperature is 73.9 degrees

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