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Fish Sniffer

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Mokelumne River Map Feature

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Since 1982

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Special Section
Baja Roundup
PG 26-27

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"The Magazine for West Coast Sportsmen!"

Amador In Winter: A Great Place For Trout Junkies

Later the fog would burn off, but just after dawn when I arrived a heavy overcast hung just above the lake and the bank was wet and slick with dew. The muddy shore gave way to the seemingly black water. With zero wind the lake's surface took on the properties of a giant mirror punctuated with spirals of faint mist that slowly crept toward open water.

Working at the water's edge, I rigged my spinning rod with a clear bobber, followed by a 30-inch leader sporting a No. 8 black woolly bugger. Once the bobber was filled with the water it probably weighed over an ounce.

Bringing the rod back I let go with a blistering cast. The heavy bobber combined with the fact that the reel was spooled with fine diameter 8-pound mono allowed me to shoot the fly far down range, thereby allowing me to cover a



GONE
FISHING
by
Cal Kellogg

maximum amount of territory from my outpost on the bank.

When the rig splashed down I allowed it to settle below the surface for a moment and then started a slow steady retrieve with the bobber just beneath the surface.

As the bobber and fly came into sight 30 feet away I was already thinking about my next cast when I detected a flash behind the gear. A beat later the water swirled and my line came to life.

The trout's first reaction to the sting of the hooked was a brief but vigorous series of headshakes. When that failed to shake the fly loose, the fish panicked and bolted. Line screamed out of my reel against the resistance of the drag.

For the next several minutes I kept the pressure on the fish as my buddy followed me back and forth, up and down the bank, net in hand. At one point I almost had



Sam visited Lake Amador in late November, tossed out a Berkley Mouse Tail and scored his first ever trout.

Photo courtesy of the LAKE AMADOR CAFÉ,
Lake Amador.

the trout within range of the long-handled net only to have it storm off on a sustained 20 foot run that ended when the fish catapulted out of the water!

CONTINUED ON PG 19

Wide Open West Delta Stripper & Sturgeon Action

I looked up to check my stripers but it stood frozen against the clear blue sky. I spooned a mess of cured salmon eggs onto a square of netting. As I attempted to form a salmon roe ball for sturgeon bait, I glanced up again to check my rod tip. It was no longer in the sky. Instead, it was pegged almost to the surface of the water, pumping wildly.



Fish Sniffer field editor Jack Naves nailed this 10 pound stripers that slammed chicken livers tied to an 8/0 circle hook using Magic Thread. This fish was landed near Sherman Island, and was released after the photo.

Photo by JACK NAVES, Fish Sniffer Staff.

but the stripers wouldn't give me a break. I can honestly say I have never seen a stripper feeding frenzy like the one we had going on that day.

The trip started at the Brannon Island boat ramp at dawn. Kirby Desha and



WHAT'S
HOT
by
Jack Naves

slowed, and then flip over to sturgeon fishing until the incoming tide picked up.

The bites were sparse at first, with only a few small stripers stealing our baits. In the first hour, we had one small keeper and lost another, but mostly had bait

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Jerry Brown Backs Deal to Increase Pumping Delta Water to Big Ag See Page 22



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STAFF TACKLE

What We're Using



Paul Kneeland - fished Pyramid Lake with John Brassfield of Auburn in the Fish Sniffer 21' Rogue Jet Coastal. They caught Lahontan cutthroat trout to 5 1/2 pounds, using a Daiwa DDX 8' light action IM-7 graphite trigger stick rigged with a Daiwa Lexa 100 line counter reel loaded with 8 lb test P Line Tactical Fluorocarbon line. They trolled Yakima Bait Mag Lip 3.5 in bloody firetiger and Silver Horde 4 inch spoons in watermelon off the Canon Downriggers at 30 to 40 feet deep and 2.5 mph.



Cal Kellogg - fished Lake Berryessa from his Hobie Pro Angler 14 kayak. Cal focused on bass fishing and landed 11 spotted and smallmouth bass to 2.5 pounds. For working offshore structure with Blade Runner Spoons, Cal employed a 7' Cousin's Tackle baitcasting rod paired with an Abu Garcia Revo STX baitcasting reel spooled with 15 pound Berkley Vanish fluorocarbon line.



Dan Bacher - fished for rainbow trout at Rollins Lake near Colfax. 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 rainbow Berkley PowerBait, 1/8 oz. gold and black Panther Martins and 2/5 oz. gold/red stripe Little Cleos.

WHAT'S HOT

Continued from page 1

FRESHWATER

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stealers grabbing our baits as fast as we could rig them up.

After an hour or so, the bigger fish started to move in. I saw my noodle rod pump a few times and then stop. I moved into position by steadyng the rod with one hand and grabbing the reel handle with the other hand. The rod pumped again, and after about five seconds of movement, I slowly reeled in some line.

Suddenly, the rod slammed to the water, but I kept reeling with the rod still in the holder. Once I was sure the circle hook was pinned in the corner of the fish's mouth, I pulled the rod out of the holder and the fight was on.

This fish was clearly bigger than the others I had hooked earlier in the morning. It peeled line off the reel several times before I got it to the side of the boat. Kirby netted the fish, and I got a quick weight

and some photos before releasing it back into the ripping ebb current. The fish came in at just over ten pounds on my Boga Grip, and it marked the beginning of the great feeding frenzy of 2018.

For the next hour, we couldn't bait our hooks fast enough. We lost count, but estimated that we landed between 15 and 20 keeper stripers. As the current began to fade, I tried to prepare sturgeon baits, but it was no use. I finally just reeled in my stiper rods to get some roe balls tied up. It was time to go try for sturgeon.

We moved downstream to deeper water looking for sturgeon on the sonar unit. I wasn't seeing much, but below the Pittsburg power plant, I saw 4 or 5 good marks on the screen. We set anchor downstream from the fish in 56 feet of water. The current was really starting to slow down at the end of the outgoing tide.

Since I only had a few extra roe balls tied up, I started making more once I had my rods cast out.

About two minutes into the soak, I was tying my second roe ball. I peeked at

my sturgeon rod out of the corner of my eye and saw movement. The tip was pumping up and down about four inches at a time. The scene was played out one again as I frantically dropped the partially formed roe ball and reached for my reel handle. With sturgeon, I use standard J hooks instead of circle hooks, so I reel as fast as possible to set the hook.

I reeled like crazy for about seven seconds but didn't feel any resistance. I stopped, and the rod tip started shaking. "He's still there", Kirby related, and I started reeling again. Finally, the rod loaded up and the battle was on. It was five minutes or longer before I had the fish to the boat side. After a quick measurement and release, the sturgeon was back in the water. Although the fish was a 44-inch keeper, I decided to release it.

We saw two other sturgeon caught by nearby boats, including one by the boat



Kirby Desha of Lincoln with a 7 pound stiper that couldn't pass up chicken livers tied to an 8/0 circle hook using Magic Thread. The fish hit during the incoming tide near Chain Island.

Photo by JACK NAVES, Fish Sniffer Staff.



Jack Naves displays his 44 inch sturgeon that inhaled a nickel-sized ball of sugar and salt cured salmon roe in a mesh sack. The fish was landed near Pittsburg, CA, and was released after the photo.

Photo by JACK NAVES, Fish Sniffer Staff.

Captained by David Hammond of Delta Pro Fishing. After the current flipped directions and the incoming tide picked up, we moved back to our stiper spot. Although the bite wasn't on fire, we still were able to land several more keepers to 7 pounds before stopping for the day at 12:30 pm.

If you enjoy fishing for striped bass or sturgeon, now is the time to go. The stretch of the West Delta between Decker Island and Pittsburg is loaded with fish. The bite will remain good until the water temperatures dip below the 56-degree mark. Get into the action before it's too late!



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