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Fish Sniffer

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39 Years
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Sportsmen

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Every Cast Counts

Everything in life counts. Maybe that statement is cliché, but at this point in my life; being a writer for the Fish Sniffer for ten years, fishing for over 30, and now married with three kids, everything in life really does count.

Earlier this month, several stars aligned allowing me about four hours to drive to the Delta, launch the boat, blast full throttle through white-capped waves and into a section of the west reach that I thought might have an early run striped bass. Or two?

So again, everything in life counts. That includes wind filled days that don't afford you the ability to stand up straight even in a wide-bodied deep-v boat so you can cast a massive topwater lure.

And with every cast trying to make sure I don't fall out with each wave that hits the hull, in the back of my mind I'm thinking, "What am I doing this for? Maybe staying home would have been a better idea."

Nah. The problem with a wandering mind is that you (in this case, I) lose touch with what counts. Literally. I think I can speak for many anglers around the world when I say adventure is what keeps us alive. Not sitting at a desk -- that's something we have to do to make a living. Its not what makes you feel alive.

So its time to grind. You keep casting away looking for the perfect moment. Every cast counts during the time you invest on the water.

The tide is right. The sun is setting. There should be a big striped bass lurking in the

CONTINUED ON PG 18



This hefty striper was hauled in by Roland Aspiras recently while throwing lures in the Delta.

Photo Courtesy of Roland Aspiras

GONE
FISHING
by
Roland
Aspiras

INSIDE Area Reports

FRESHWATER REPORTS

American Basin - Lake Berryessa	6
Bullards Bar - Lake Camanche.....	8
Collins Lake - Davis Lake	9
Don Pedro Lake - Folsom Lake.....	12
Los Vaqueros Reservoir.....	14
Lake Oroville - New Melones Lake.....	15
Pardee Lake - Shasta Lake	16

SALTWATER REPORTS

Berkeley Marina - Bodega Bay	20
Half Moon Bay	21
Monterey Bay	22

FEATURES

Where...When...How...

GO FOR IT: Staff	4
MAP FEATURE: Dan Bacher.....	10-11
SPOTLIGHT ON CONSERVATION: Dan Bacher.....	19

STAFF TACKLE

What We're Using



Ernie Marlan - fished the California Delta for striped bass. He used a Lew's Custom Plus Speed Stick rod teamed up with a Quantum Smoke Heavy Duty 200 reel. He threw a variety of topwater baits and caught a handful of fish with the largest weighing in at 8 pounds!



Paul Kneeland - fished a very smoky Shasta Lake with Mark Kalinowski and John Brassfield in the Fish Sniffer 21' Rogue Jet Coastal. They caught rainbow and brown trout to 19 inches using a Lamiglas 7 1/2 foot ultralight graphite rod with a Daiwa Lexa low profile line counter reel loaded with 6 lb test PLine fluorocarbon line. They trolled Hot Ticket and Speedy Shiner spoons in red, black and white behind Bottom Line Tackle cannonball flashers off the Canon Downriggers at 80 to 100 feet deep and 2.2 mph.



Dan Bacher - fished for rainbow trout at Lake Alpine. 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 and chartreuse glitter Berkley PowerBait and 1/8 oz. gold and black Panther Martins.

Anglers Go Deep at Kokanee Power Lake Pardee Derby II

Each summer, the saga known as the Kokanee Power derby circuit slowly plays out on lakes across Northern California. The latest installment was the 'Lake Pardee II Team Kokanee and Trout Derby' held on Saturday August 14. There was a great turnout, and once again the fishing was challenging for both kokanee and trout.

Originally scheduled for New Bullards Bar Reservoir, the derby was moved to Lake Pardee because of ramp access concerns at Bullards Bar. While a last-minute change is never fun for anybody, I was excited to finally get a chance to fish a late-summer derby at Pardee. This is the time of year when pre-spawn fish form tight schools in deep water.

Once I heard the news that the derby was moving to Pardee, I immediately scheduled a pre-fishing trip on August 1 with my daughter Grace. We headed straight upriver to one of the areas where pre-spawn kokanee usually

start to stage in August. Not surprisingly, there were several boats already working the area I was interested in. We made several passes through the vicinity and picked up some nice 14 to 16 inch kokanee. We left the area to scout other regions of the lake, but were only able to catch small fish. The bigger kokanee were holding between 95' and 105' deep. The smaller fish, which were lighting up the screen in clouds on my sonar unit, were holding above 85' deep.



WHAT'S
HOT
by
Jack Naves

There was some mixing between the larger and smaller kokanee classes, but for the most part the bigger fish were down deeper. With eighteen fish in the box, we headed home, satisfied with the first of several scouting trips to come.

For my next pre-fishing trip on August 8, I was lucky enough to be invited by Jim Brittain of Orangevale to fish in



The 1st place winner of the Junior Division Adam Naves shows off a 15-inch kokanee. The fish was taken in the Mokelumne River arm during the Lake Pardee derby on August 14. Adam cranked the fish all the way to the surface from 105 feet down.

Photo Courtesy of Jack Naves

CONTINUED ON PG 21

WHAT'S HOT continued from page 2

shallows looking for an easy meal. Or not. The waves were getting bigger and the wind gusts harder.

In the back of mind I'm thinking, "I should probably leave before dark so I don't have to navigate through this slop all the way back to the ramp."

Keep casting away. Bomb after bomb into the shallows.

I guess its time to switch up to a different lure. Bombs away. Each cast and each crank of the handle is starting to count even more as the sun tucks away behind the mountains.

New lure, first cast, first crank, second crank. Something decides to knock on the door.

Game time.

The Phenix M1 is doubled over, braid humming through the guides and the Daiwa Lexa's drag is letting out line smooth as butter.

So on this trip, I'm obviously solo with no one to help me except for my trusty Minn Kota Riptide set on spot lock. Without it, I'd be in some major trouble trying to fight this fish and maneuver the boat manually in gale

force winds.

I had no phone. I left it at home in my haste to get out of the door and on the road. The only communication method I had was a VHF radio attached to my PFD if something dire were to happen.

A million things are running through your mind in moments like these. But you come to your senses when the fight is over. Yep. A respectable striper is boat side ready to say hi. No phone, but I had the GoPro. No net, but I had a knock-off Boga Grip.

Into the boat it goes, hooks out of its mouth and the GoPro falls off the dash twice as I'm trying to get a pose with the fish. I let out a loud primal scream as I'm holding the fish up to the camera. "YEAH!"

Back into the water it went for a revival session. Moments later it was biting down on my thumb and I let it go. It swam with ease.

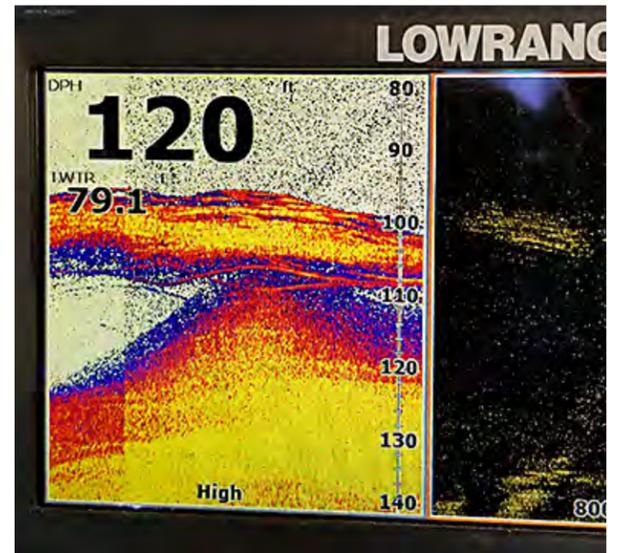
My hope is that someone else gets to meet it in the future off a fishing trip, a cast, and a crank of a reel handle. A moment where every cast counts.

GONE FISHING continued from page 2



Quality 15 to 17-inch kokanee like these are currently being taken out of Lake Pardee. These fish were caught between 100 and 113 feet deep by the 3rd place team of Jack and Gina Naves of Roseville.

Photo courtesy of John Brassfield, Trucksmart Stores



A late-season kokanee angler's dream at Lake Pardee. This huge school of pre-spawn kokanee was stacked up between 98 and 110 feet deep on Jack Naves's sonar screen. Getting these fish to strike isn't always easy. Try speed changes, stop-start motions, and sharp turns to get them to go.

his boat. Jim was coming fresh off of a victory at the New Melones derby, and I was anxious to see what kind of tricks he had up his sleeve. What impressed me the most was how aggressive Jim was with this turns. We were running short setbacks, and Jim would make almost 180 degree turns to stay on top of biting schools of kokanee. We ended the day with thirteen nice kokanee plus several smaller fish in the box. After exploring different parts of the lake, I was starting to formulate a final game plan for the derby.

On the 12th of August, just two days before the derby, I made a last-minute pre-fishing run with Rj Sanchez of Oakland. Once again, we tried to scout new waters outside of the hotspot in hopes of finding big kokanee. While we picked up a few nice fish away from the crowd, the majority of fifteen to sixteen-inch fish were holding in one specific area of the lake. I figured I would just have to go down swinging, and planned to fish upriver amongst the horde of boats on the morning of the derby.

As expected, there were at least 20 boats working the area I wanted to fish as dawn broke on the derby. Undeterred, I weaved through the fleet of boats looking for a school of kokanee on the fish finder. One thing I've noticed over the years is that kokanee don't seem to school up until late in the morning. At least thirty minutes passed, and nobody had netted a single fish. A few boats started to scatter from the area, but I remained. I knew it was just a matter of time before kokanee would school up and start biting.

While making a sharp 90-degree turn at a steep bank, one of the rods popped out of its down-rigger clip. At first I thought it was from the added pressure of the turn, but it was the inside rod! I reeled like crazy but there was nothing

there but some empty hooks.

I circled back through the area and my wife Gina shouted, "Bite...Bite!" I ran to the rod and popped the line out of the clip, but it felt like the line had broken. There was no pressure at all. I knew that the fish had rocketed to the surface so reeled as fast as possible to catch up. Sure enough, I felt pressure, and then pumping action. The first kokanee of the morning was on! Gina skillfully netted the fish and we finally broke the ice.

The action steadily picked up, and boats started scratching out kokanee as they schooled up. We stuck to our game plan until 1:15 pm, when we pulled lines and raced back to the weigh-in station. I had set a goal of twelve fish, and we bested it by one – we ended with thirteen nice kokanee in the box!

I have been fishing these derbies for thirteen years, and I have never seen fishing as tough as it has been this year! To adjust for the slower fishing, Kokanee Power changed the format of the derby. They made it a two-fish weigh-in instead of the usual three-fish weigh-in. *The results are posted here:*

ADULT TEAM KOKANEE (2 FISH)

1. Doug & Ron Philpott 3.26 lbs.
2. Pat Pagnella, Jason Greene, Mark Poling 2.49 lbs
3. Jack & Gina Naves 2.32 lbs
4. Brian Thomas, Wade Johnson, Mike Clark 2.28 lbs
5. Nathan, Cynthia, & Nathaniel Lenard 2.27 lbs
6. Kevin & Karla Smith 2.21 lbs
7. Stan Ita, Jim Fox 2.14 lbs
8. Rene Villanueva, Brian Hough 2.09 lbs
9. David & Julie Mayo 2.08 lbs
10. John Dahl, Brian Austin 2.08 lbs

ADULT TEAM TROUT (2 FISH)

1. Doug & Ron Philpott 6.20 lbs
 2. Jerilyn & Kirk Emge 4.41 lbs
 3. Stan Ita, Jim Fox 3.24 lbs
 4. Randy Bergquist, Bill Back, Dave Ade 3.13 lbs
 5. Ken McDonald, Rick Silva 2.37 lbs
 6. Jack Schultz, Alan Traynor 2.25 lbs
 7. Kevin & Karla Smith 1.57 lbs
 8. John Dahl, Brian Austin 1.18 lbs
 9. Greg Vanni, Nick Davisport 0.48 lbs
- ### Junior Kokanee (1 fish)
1. Adam Naves 1.15 lbs
 2. Grace Naves 1.13 lbs
 3. Jack Duvall Jr. 1.12 lbs
 4. Emma Jo Duvall 1.11 lbs
 5. Kaitlyn Contreras 0.97 lbs

BIG KOKANEE SIDE POT

1. Doug & Ron Philpott 1.67 lbs.
- ### Junior Trout (1 fish)
1. Aaron Lujan Jr. 1.85 lbs
 2. Jake Redding 1.31 lbs
 3. Parker Moore 0.92 lbs

BIG TROUT SIDE POT

1. Jerilyn & Kirk Emge 4.41 lbs

As you can see, Doug and Ron Philpott ran away with the prizes. They won the team kokanee, team trout, and big kokanee side pot as well! Unable to put any fish over sixteen inches into the box, we slid in at third place. To my delight, my son Adam won the Junior Division, with his sister Grace coming in at second place right behind.

Congratulations to the winners and all of the entrants who battled the heat and slow fishing this year. Based on the huge schools of next-year's fish, we'll have an easier time putting fish into our boats at the 2022 Pardee derby. I'll see you there.