

Our 39th Year

"The Magazine for West Coast Sportsmen!"

The Pyramid Lake Opener – Fantastic Fishing!

Pyramid Lake, Nevada is famous for large Lahontan cutthroat trout, and is considered one of the top trout fisheries in the world. After fishing the first 3 days of the season, it certainly gets my vote as Number One!

John Brassfield of Auburn and Brian Garcia of Alta joined me in the Fish Sniffer 21' Rogue Jet Coastal to fish the aqualine waters of the huge lake. We were joined by brothers Mark and Stan Kalinowski of Concord in Mark's 22' Rogue Jet Fastwater. We journeyed to the lake on Thursday afternoon, opening day eve, and stayed in one of Pyramid Lake Lodges large trailers. We enjoyed dinner and drinks from our easy chairs in front of the trailer, and gazed at the view of the Pyramid across the lake as the sun set.

Opening morning we were up at 5 and headed to the boat ramp at

WHAT'S HOT by Paul Kneeland

5:45. We came around the corner of the highway to where we could see the boat ramp, and my, my, there were truck and trailer lights as far as you could see! The line started at the ramp, curved around the perimeter of the parking lot, up the entrance road to the highway, and back down the highway at least a quarter mile!! We had expected something like this, so we were patient and drank coffee as we eeked along slowly toward the water. The Pyramid Lake Rangers were on hand, and they did a good job keeping the flow of the launch going. We were finally in the water about 7:20 and decided to head to the east side of the lake. The air temperature was 48 degrees with a mild north wind blowing. We crossed the lake in the Coastal at about 30 miles per hour, and started fishing at the south end of Hells Kitchen in 100 feet of water. There



were already several boats fishing the kitchen, with groups of 5 or 6 boats congregated at the north and south ends, most of who were either jigging

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Central Coast Yields Shallow-Water Rockfish on Light Gear

Imagine employing bass-fishing gear and techniques to fish for species that you normally would have to use deep-sea gear to access. And while we're at it, how about mild weather and smooth tranquil



"The perfect Purisima limit". The author poses with a 50/50 limit of huge vermillion and brown rockfish. The market-quality table fare of these fish is a bonus on top of the experience of pursuit.
Photo Courtesy of Phenix Sportfishing

seas? This year, I've been introduced to a new area that offers all of this, plus market-quality fish to boot. The area is the Central Coast of California.

More specifically, I've had the pleasure of fishing onboard the Phenix, which is part of the Patriot Sport-fishing fleet. These boats typically deploy out of either Port San Luis or Morrow Bay Landing. These quaint ports off the Route 101 corridor offer a laid-back style of fishing amongst landscapes that greet the beautiful coastline.

A light-tackle fishing departure is something that I look forward to anytime I'm in the Central Coast area. I recently had the opportunity to break from a family vacation at Pismo Beach to see what kind of bounty the ocean would provide.

My most recent trip kicked off on Saturday, October 2 on a dark, foggy morning. While motoring his way out of the Port San Luis Harbor, Captain Kyle Dyerly peeked out of the wheelhouse and remarked, "Misty out here!" He was right, and I quickly

GONE FISHING by Jack Naves

made my way to the protected area at the back of the boat. The full-day trip allotted us enough time to run about 2-1/2 hours south to Point Purisima.

The long haul allowed me to get familiar with some of the locals on the way down. I had already rigged my rod with the same lures that many of the local anglers were using - Hookup Baits. I first learned about these tube baits while fishing alongside of Captain Kyle on a previous excursion. Always one to imitate success, I tied up a copycat tandem rig similar to what Kyle had been using. When jigged up and down, the setup looks like two baitfish darting around in a circle.

After some fun conversation on the way to our spot, the motors suddenly idled down. This always makes my heart race and gives me butterflies in my stomach. The anticipation that fishing is about to commence never gets old! I quickly made my way to the starboard bow and pulled my rod

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What We're Using

Ernie Marlan -fished the delta for stripers and largemouth bass with his son Andrew Marlan. The duo aught several fish with the biggest striper weighing in at 12 pounds and the heaviest largemioiuth weighed in at 3 ½ pounds. They used Lew's reels and rods and the most productive lure was a crawdad colored ½ oz Rat-L-Trap.

Paul Kneeland - fished Pyramid Lake with John Brassfield of Trucksmart stores and Brian Garcia of Alta in the Fish Sniffer Rogue Jet 21 Coastal. They caught Lahontan cutthroat trout to 9 1/2 pounds, using an Okuma 8'6" SST steelhead Rod with an Okuma Cold Water SS line counter reel loaded with 10 lb test Soft Steel line. They trolled 4 inch Silver Horde and Lyman plugs in brown and blue/ white colors and Silver Horde spoons behind Vance's Cannonball flashers, trolling off Canon Downriggers at 40 to 80 feet deep and 2.7 mph.

Dan Bacher - fished for rainbow trout at Davis Lake.. 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 glitter Berkley PowerBait and nightcrawlers on sliding sinker rigs with Size #4 and #6 Gamakatsu baitholder hooks.

GONE FISHING

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Michael Elmendorf of Hesperia hoists a large bocaccio rockfish that was the largest fish landed on the Phenix on October 2. The fish slammed a grey Hookup Bait on the port side of the boat.
Photo Courtesy of Jack Naves



The author hoists two large vermillion rockfish that hit a Hookup Bait tandem rig. Besides putting up an excellent fight, these rockfish provide excellent table fare and are striking in appearance.
Photo Courtesy of Phenix Sportfishing



The author's copycat rig of Captain Kyle Dyerly's tandem Hookup Bait rig. A short top shot of 40 lb mono is tied to the 65 lb braid mainline. Next, tie a 24" long 40 lb mono leader to a crane swivel at one end and a Hookup Bait (grey pictured) at the other end. Run your main line through the open end of the swivel so this leader slides freely up and down the mainline. The mainline is then tied to another crane swivel that acts as a stopper to the sliding leader. This stopper swivel has a shorter 18" leader to a second, lighter Hookup Bait (red pictured).
Photo Courtesy of Jack Naves

from its holder.

"Eighty feet from top to bottom, let 'em down" crackled over the PA system. Anglers around the boat scrambled to get their gear to the bottom. I peered down the starboard rail, and somebody near the rear corner was already loaded up on a nice fish! I swung my lures under the rail and made a smooth looping cast into the leading side of the drift.

The angler at the back of the boat swung a huge brown rockfish over the rail, but nothing touched my offerings. Once my lures had drifted under the boat, I quickly reeled up and made another cast. Just as my line was getting vertical, I felt a tick and then my rod loaded up hard! I was onto a nice fish, so I steadily cranked the rig up towards the surface.

To my delight, a large vermillion rockfish appeared out of the deep. Deckhand Dustin Miles quickly had the fish tallied and into my bag on ice. Although it makes me an odd-duck, I always bring about 30 pounds of ice inside of my gunny sack during party boat trips. It's no fun packing it down the boat, but it makes for just the right amount of ice to keep my fish cold until I get home.

With the first fish under my belt, I started scratching out quality brown and vermillion rockfish about every other cast. It was not one of those red-hot, limit out on one drift type of days. A larger than usual swell had come in, and the fish were skittish to say the least. At one point, my Hookup Bait got slammed, and I thought I had a possible lingcod or halibut on the end of my rod.

Despite my initial excitement, I had

forgotten that I was using light bass-fishing gear. The false alarm turned out instead to be the largest vermillion rockfish I've ever landed.

The Captain worked hard to get through the tough bite, making several short-distance moves to different depths and locations. After putting a pretty decent sack together early, my rod went cold. Captain Kyle made a longer run north, and I used the opportunity to rig up my second rod with something new.

At our next stop, I deployed a sixteen-ounce sinker with a short twelve-inch leader to a hook. I baited the hook with thin strips of cut squid and sent it down to see if anything would be interested. After bouncing the bottom for several minutes, I felt a light tap-tap-tap, almost like a nibble from a small striped bass. I missed on my first hook set, but on the second round of nibbles I was able to connect. Surprisingly, my rod loaded up hard, and a few minutes later I hoisted a large brown rockfish onto the deck.

The big swell had put the fish into a finicky mode, but never the less we grinded on spot after spot until the reward of quality rockfish loaded our sacks. My old-school bait setup landed all brown rockfish, but after a while I decided to switch back to the twin Hookup Bait rig which landed mostly vermilion.

Deckhands Dustin and Chase made quick work cleaning our catches on the way back to harbor. Once again, I enjoyed some laughs with the regulars at the rear of the boat. I've found the best way to quickly learn a new fishery is to chat with the Captain,



This proud group of anglers shows off a mix of vermillion, brown, and bocaccio rockfish onboard the Phenix on October 2. Quality fish like these are available to anybody willing to venture off the Central Coast of California while the rockfishing season is open.
Photo Courtesy of Jack Naves

deckhands, or some of the regulars and locals. Their advice will shorten the learning curve and have your rod loaded up more often.

When we returned to harbor the sun was shining, but looking back towards Pismo Beach an ivory wall of fog obscured any chance of getting a glimpse of my resting quarters. I

would have to wait until I arrived back with my family to lay eyes my destination.

If you are just passing through, or looking for a relaxing break from urban ports, book yourself a trip onboard the Phenix. You can book a trip at PatriotSportfishing.com or by contacting them at 805-595-7200.