

The Barbless Hook

April 2021

Edited by Mark Spruiell



President's Message

by Albert Mansky

Hi Guys and Gals:

Well spring has finally sprung. The temperature is still pretty cool in the morning with some frost and the trees are in bloom. Trout season is just around the corner, finally. I got out to do some fishing at Kistler bass pond on March 20th. The fishing for me was "so-so." I hope to have better luck on my April trip to Kistler. I had two hits at pond two. I missed setting the hook the first one. Oh well, he wasn't that big anyway. But the second one swallowed my brand new white popper and broke my leader. So, if any of you guys are lucky enough to catch a big bass at Kistler at pond two with a white popper still in its mouth, I sure would like to have my popper back. I talked to the rancher's son on the morning of March 20th. He was taking his son out turkey hunting. March 20th was the opening day of the youth spring turkey hunting season. Anyway, he told me that they moved all the big bass into pond two. Food for thought on your next trip out to Kistler.

Some of you guys do more than fish, like myself. Spring turkey season opens on March 27th. I look forward to getting out in the woods on opening day and hearing those gobblers yelling their heads off. Whether I get one or not, it doesn't matter. I look forward to getting out of the house after staying home with this "stay in place order".

I was able to get my second vaccination shot at the Oakland Coliseum. It was a breeze, in and out. Other than the ten minute wait for any after effects from the shot, I was back home by the time I was scheduled for my appointment.

Some good news, so to speak, to share with you. Alameda County has started to lift their restriction on indoor events. I heard back from the Livermore Rod and Gun Club about the use of their club house for our monthly club meetings. The club house is available again, but the bad news is they



Rainbow caught by Bob McCollum on his recent trip to the Trinity and Lower Sac. Check out the Member Reports section for more pictures.

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are restricted to only twenty people at a time. I'm not sure at this point when we will start holding our club meetings again at their facility, since we normally have between twenty five to thirty members at our club meetings. I'll keep you informed on this subject as time goes by. In the meantime, we will continue to have our monthly meetings via Zoom.

Spring is in the air and I hear those trout calling to me, COME AND GET ME IF YOU CAN. So, get out there and do some fishing. In the meantime, get your vaccination shot if you haven't already done so. Till next time, stay safe and stay healthy.

Al

New Member!

TVFF welcomes new member Rick Watts. Glad to have you Rick!

Welcome!



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April Meeting – Florida Peacock Bass & Freshwater Fly Fishing

Hai Truong is the founder of [SoFlo Cichlids](#). You may know him as 'Urban Angler Miami'. He started guiding out of public demand from social media in 2010-2011 and has done so successfully in south Florida for the last decade. Every single client and trip has met their mark, whether it be a personal best (PB) goal, multi-species or total count. He has never been skunked or rained out in his entire career guiding due to open and clear communications, "knock on wood".

He has been fishing locally in Miami-Dade since he was five years old, catching his first peacock two years later in 1984, when they were introduced and has been chasing them ever since. His thirst for



knowledge and keen observations has led him to understand not only his local waters, but building relationships with clients has proved to be priceless.

He is an experienced photographer that will capture unique shots, offering his clients at no extra charge, simply another one of his passions and it clearly shows. He has successfully been a contributing writer for several magazines across Florida. He has also contributed to other outlets on social medias, websites and various publications across the country. He's a speaker at fishing shows and has made several cameo appearances in fishing television shows across Florida, Canada and Europe.

Please join us on Thursday, April 1st at 7pm for Hai's presentation. Check your email for an invitation to the Zoom meeting.

Raffle Information

For the club's next meeting on Thursday, April 1st, winning participants in the raffle will have their choice of the first seven items below. Item 9 (the Fenwick rod) will be awarded last. As always you must be present, or in this case still online, to win.

Tickets must be purchased online through the [club store](#) by end of day on Tuesday, March 30th. An email will be sent to you prior to the meeting with your ticket numbers. If you have not received the email by noon on the day of the meeting please contact me, Steve Johnson, at 925-980-5433.

Cost of tickets are:

- \$1.00 - 1 Ticket
- \$5.00 - 6 Tickets
- \$20.00 - 25 Tickets

The raffle items are listed below.



Point 6 Trout Unlimited logo boot socks, medium weight wool



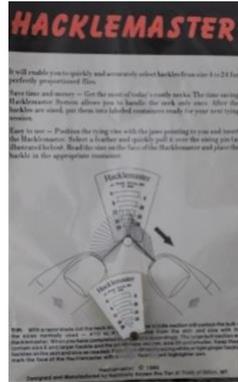
Rio WF7F Trout line, Main Stream level



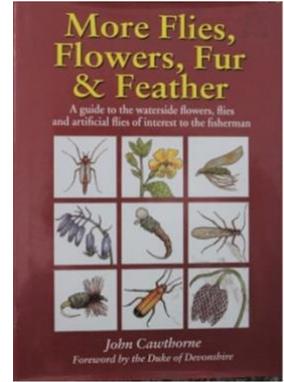
Hatch Guide For Western Streams



MFC River Steel Forceps



Hacklemaster – quickly select hackles from size 4 to 24



More Flies, Flowers, Fur & Feather



ERA3 (one size fits all) hat and Eagle Claw Hat Hook/Tie Clasp



Concannon Captain Joe's Petite Sirah 2017



Fenwick Fenglass, 3 piece, 7' 9", 6 weight fiberglass rod with case and sock

BSA Fly Fishing Merit Badge

Needed... Instructor Coaches

The BSA has received approval from the local county health department to conduct the 2021 summer camp with some restrictions, including a maximum of 50% capacity.

In 2014 we put together a Fly-Fishing Merit Badge program for the Boy Scout Wentle Reservation summer camp located in Willits, CA. The BSA does not have counselors that are able to do the instructing so we were asked to find volunteers to teach the merit badge. Every year the number of scouts and leaders has grown and since 2014 over 1100 Scouts and leaders have participated in the program. Each year they are coached by volunteers from around the Bay Area who spend a few days at the camp coaching the scouts.

We need volunteers to help with the 2021 summer camp.



The 2021 summer camp will have 7 one-week sessions starting June 20th through July 31st.

This is open to all fly fisher men and women who want to help. Even if you do not feel comfortable teaching casting or tying, we can pair you with people that do and the best way to improve your game is to teach it. Do not let that deter you from volunteering. As a wise man once said, “The best way to learn it is to teach it”.

This is a great opportunity for the Fly-Fishing community to introduce new youth to the sport along with helping promote interest and respect for the greater outdoors. **If you are interested in volunteering your time or would like more information let me know. I can send you a link to the signup web site and additional details.**

The camp provides meals and accommodations during our stay making it easy on us. Plus, there is GREAT Bass Fishing on the private lake where 5lb Large Mouth Bass aren't uncommon! You will have access to the lake during your stay along with the use of their boats.



Plus you get the personal satisfaction of helping a young person tie their first fly and maybe even catch their first fish on that fly.



If you participated in the past or have expressed an interest you will be receiving an invite in the next week from “Sign Up Genius” to sign up. If this is new and you are interested please let me know and I’ll add you to the distribution list.

Please contact me if you have any questions or want more details and **pass this information on to anyone you feel might be interested in participating.**

Daniel Kitts
510-816-2846
dckitts@aol.com

Frank Harris Youth Scholarship

Diablo Valley Fly Fishers are accepting applications for their Frank Harris Youth Scholarship, which sends a Bay Area youth age 10 to 15 to The Fly Shop's five-day FishCamp. This annual scholarship covers the cost of attendance at The Fly Shop's beautiful Antelope Creek facility north of Redding, Calif. Find more information and a link to the application form at diablovalleyflyfish.org/FishCamp. The deadline for applications is April 30, 2021.

Outings and Activities

Please visit the [Event Calendar](#) on the TVFF website for a complete list of all upcoming meetings, outings and activities.

Kistler Bass Ponds – April 10

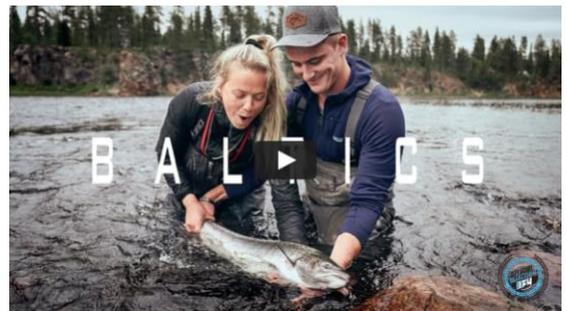
Kistler bass ponds are located outside of Oakdale, California. These are unguided trips, and excellent ones for both families and those new to fly fishing. The ponds are close to the Tri-Valley, have excellent shore access as well, and can accommodate large groups such as TVFF on several different ponds. Fishing is available from either the shoreline or from float tubes or pontoon boats.



International Fly Fishing Film Festival – April 9

Consisting of short and feature-length films produced by professional filmmakers from all corners of the globe, the International Fly Fishing Film Festival showcases the passion, lifestyle, and culture of fly fishing. The films at this popular event have captured the attention of anglers around the world.

The film festival is holding virtual screening events this year. [Click here](#) to buy a ticket. You must start watching within 48 hours, but then you’ll have seven days to finish watching. Visit flyfilmfest.com to see previews of this year’s selections.



Hat Creek Salmonfly Hatch with Baum & Manzanita Lakes – May 13-16

This is a 3 night-4 day trip to explore 3.5 miles of fishable wild trout water at Hat Creek, and to fish Baum and Manzanita Lakes. The trip is open for those wishing to fish the full four days, or just to join us for a subset based upon time availability.



The event is scheduled for the traditional large Salmonfly and Golden Stonefly hatches that occur during this period on Hat Creek, as well as several other spring hatches. We will be fishing five different areas on Hat Creek from knee deep riffles at the Powerhouse and mid-stream to the gin clear, quiet flats, and the downstream area of thigh deep water. This is a wading trip although it is recommended to stay out of the water unless absolutely necessary as the fish are very skittish due to the fishing pressure. It is barbless hook, catch and release water only. Fishing styles can include Euro nymphing, streamers, and indicators in the riffles, with dry fly presentations on the flat water.

Baum and Manzanita offer the opportunity to use watercraft (electric motors only on Baum and no motors allowed on Manzanita), or to wade and fish the shoreline as well for both rainbows and browns.

This [outing](#) is currently fully subscribed but there is no cost to join the waitlist.

Truckee Watershed – June 25-28

This is our annual 3 night-3 day [camping trip](#) headquartered at Logger Campground, Stampede Reservoir with three days of fishing the Big Truckee, Little Truckee, and Milton Lake for rainbow and brown trout. It coincides with the peak of multiple aquatic hatches in the area and will include river wading opportunities and a day of either float tube, pontoon, pram or bank fishing at Milton Lake. Fishing techniques to be used include traditional indicator nymphing, Euro nymphing, streamers, and dry fly techniques.



Baja Inshore Fishing – July 17-24

Six days fishing out of panga boats for a variety of saltwater species. Our host, Gary Bulla, operates out of Baja Joes on the beach in Ventana between LaPaz and Cabo on the Sea of Cortes. Home cooked meals, bar and single occupancy cabins, can't ask for more. Fishmeister Martin Plotkin has been going down to fish Mexico for the past 25 years and this location and trip set up has to be the best. All lodging (single occupancy) and locally and home cooked food is provided, as is daily guide services. Contact Martin if you have any questions about this [outing](#).



Member Reports

Fundamentals of Fly Fishing Class – Rob Farris

Congratulations to our recent class of seven graduates in the Fundamentals Class, including Betty Blandino, Jillian Haisley, Robert Low, Lawrence Soares, Tom Crow, Darina Rauschendorfer, and Kyle Wagner. This year's class was a full day event followed by a Saturday morning casting lesson from Gary Turri to get everyone prepared for the rivers and lakes this season. A number of our new graduates will be attending at the Kistler events so make sure that you say hi, and offer a hand if it appears that they could use some assistance.



Trinity River and Lower Sac – Bob McCollum

Had a couple of good days on the Trinity River and the Lower Sac with guide Dave Neal. Floated the secluded Canyon run of the Trinity. No adult steelhead but caught four feisty resident trout/"half pounders". A beautiful day on the water. Fished the Lower Sac on the second day. The Sac is an awesome fishery but can be challenging sometimes. The bug hatches didn't materialize so the fish sulked for lack of a better term. But it only took a few good fish at the end of the day to completely erase any frustration or disappointment. Landed a nice 20" fish, about 3.5 pounds. We got a few good fish to the net in the end.





Improved Accuracy Casting Workshop – Denis Haire

What a glorious day to work on fly casting. A bright cool morning without a hint of a breeze. Fortunate for us the day before was a little bit windier and the white flower blossom petals were flying like snow! Having completed the introduction to casting class with Gary Turri a month before, and doing some limited practice I felt ready for more instruction. Having learned that this would be a full class of six students, there was anticipation in the air.

Arriving at San Ramon Central Park we found Gary busy setting up hoops and cones at precise distances of 20, 30 and 40 feet. As it turns out this would be our classroom for the day. After we all arrived there was instruction for the equipment setup for the day. First, due to the large number of white petals on the grass area, we used pink yarn on our leaders, typically 0x to 4X. Next, as with any class there was the introduction of participants. What a great mix of beginners and experienced, and all members of TVFF! With a quick review of the agenda for the day and pairing up with a partner, it was off to casting!



As an initial assessment we all cast to the various rings and cones. It should be easy to land that indicator in a thirty-inch diameter ring with an eight-inch cone. After about ten minutes of casting, we all performed a drill/game as a baseline for our skill. We all reported back that it was much harder to do than anticipated. This drill helped to set the expectations for the workshop to improve our accuracy at hitting those targets consistently.

The teacher in Gary then kicked in with a review of some of the elements that make up a cast. Without giving away his class notes, there were meaningful breaks in the casting exercises to realize the many “micro



adjustments” required to make casts of various lengths. By illustration how a rod performs during casting, the need for a tight loop followed by his demonstration really helped drive home the points. As we continued, Gary had us working as both a student and coach (brilliant idea!). As we started working in pairs again, one would cast as the other would observe and comment. Using some other teaching aids he has developed, there was noticeable improvement by all of us.

As a final check for the day, we all challenged our improved skills against our baseline using the same casting drill from earlier in the day. In looking around I could see the others accurately hitting the targets with greater consistency. It was rewarding to see the group improve and leave with more excitement about the next outing. These real-world learnings of “micro adjustments” are a reminder that success in fly fishing is constant learning and reinforcement of good habits. And it makes it fun!



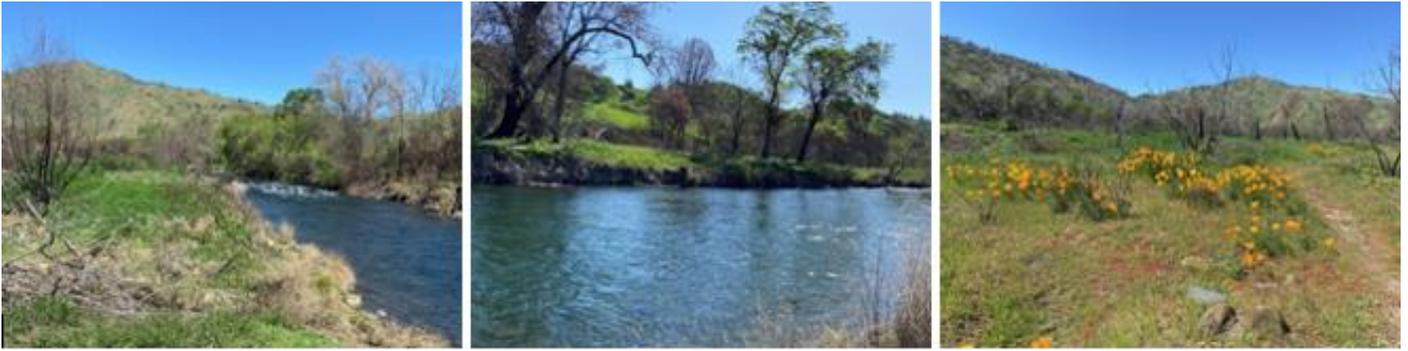
Speaking for the group, we all learned a tremendous amount in a quick-paced three hours. The group instruction as well as individual attention that Gary delivers made this a class well worth the time. I would highly recommend any of his classes.

(Editor: Denis also provided a [short video](#) from the class.)

An Update on the 2020 “Burn” at Putah Creek – Rob Farris

Last fall we once again experienced some devastating fires, including a massive fire that rolled right down the mountain crossing Putah Creek and on down towards Fairfield. Having fished Putah for years I took a short trip up this past Friday to see how much damage was incurred, and whether the creek would still be fishable. And the answer is clearly yes; it remains a very viable fishery and improved in some ways.

Viewing the landscape, it is clear that the fire was a very hot one from all the burned trees, but also the charred intensity of them. I spent the day fishing for a few hours and then exploring all the normal access areas from #5 up to #1 at the bridge and the RV resort. The fire seemed to have two legs with one rolling through access #4 & #5 and another leg up at #1. All of the lower and upper parking areas are open with little to no damage that would impact parking. The other areas at access #2 & #3 (although the gate here is still closed) seemed not to be impacted by fire at all. The resort at the bridge was saved and is in full operation. The damage was severe in the impacted areas with many trees seriously scarred and just as many completely down, with many limbs and pieces caught downstream in the rocks and eddies. I guess we can call that positive trout habitat, assuming you can get a fly in there. However, as is typical, there were many areas that the fires improved by burning out short vegetation (my nemesis blackberry and poison oak bushes) and allowing for MUCH easier access to the creek and trails. I primarily fished the southern bank, which was wide open, with many folks hiking the now easily accessed and open northern bank.



Fires that are unconstrained can be very dangerous and scary occurrences, of course. But with fire comes a natural renewing and refreshment that is beginning to be evident at the creek. Most of the downed trees have been swept downstream or cut up, and the landscape is beginning to show spring's growth of grasses, poppies and lupine.

Putah access has been known for its challenges in the past, and it's nice to enjoy a more open and enjoyable environment. At least for the next several years until those pesky bushes grown back... As to the fishing? Well, Putah continues to be a tough fishery. The Berryessa dam increased the flows by 30% the night before so that added to the normal challenge. As usual, it was all a very small Euro and Indicator nymphing exercise with #24 Zebra midges and a #20 WD-40. Sad to say that only resulted in one grab while I was there, which was better than the guide and his client that were fishing upstream from me. So what did I do? I went to turning over rocks to see what was going on. And they were covered with midge nymphs in... size 28 and 30's. Yikes! But at least they, and the snails, didn't get destroyed by the fire. We just need to wait a bit for them to grow so we can attract those large Putah rainbows. It's a tough fishery for sure, but only 1.25 hours from home. What's not to like?

Kistler Bass Ponds – Dave Meister

Dave provided the following picture from the club's recent Kistler outing:



New Fishing Regulations for 2021

Rob Farris

In October 2020, the Fish and Game Commission adopted the largest regulatory inland sport fishing package in their 150-year history. The new regulations took effect on March 1st, 2021. One of the largest and most consequential changes is that all waters are now open year around (with 0 take and barbless only during the expanded and spawning season over the winter). Of course, there are special exceptions so you'll need to read the regs, but this is clearly a major change for most waters.

Additional regulations in section 5.0 of the Freshwater Inland Regulations for Black Bass, and the Saltwater Fishing Regulations for Ocean and Delta fishing were less impacted. Both Freshwater and Saltwater regulation links and a "summary" can be accessed on the TVFF website on the [Resources](#) page, under the Licenses & Info heading. The state has put together a new cellphone app to access all the regulations, but I have not found it to be very useful. You may want to become familiar with the regulations for the waters you will be fishing before you leave home.



[2021 Freshwater Fishing Regulations](#)

[2021 Saltwater Regulations](#)

The key over-riding regulation that applies to all streams, rivers, and lakes for the entire state regarding trout had the most significant changes. It is the new standard. Only those waters that are specifically called out in the [exception listings](#), section 7.40 (anadromous and hatchery fish and waters, i.e., Feather, Yuba, Sacramento, American, etc.), section 7.50 (b) (extensive trout water exceptions), and section 5.84 (expanded takes for Brook Trout) are exempt and treated differently from the "new standard", section 5.85.

5.85. TROUT. As used in this section, daily bag and possession limits, unless otherwise noted, mean the total number of trout in combination, including but not limited to rainbow, golden, brown, and cutthroat. (a) General Statewide Regulations:

(1) All inland lakes and reservoirs; and ponds entirely on private lands, except those listed in Section 7.50(b), are open to fishing all year with a five-trout daily bag limit, and 10 trout possession limit.

(2) All inland streams, rivers, and canals, except those listed in Section 7.50(b), are open to fishing from the last Sat. in Apr. through Nov. 15, with a five trout daily bag limit, and ten trout possession limit, with no gear restrictions. From Nov. 16 through the Fri. preceding the last Sat. in Apr., a zero trout bag limit applies, and only artificial lures with barbless hooks may be used. In waters where the bag limit for trout is zero, trout must be released unharmed, and should not be removed from the water.

(3) Exceptions: (A) All waters in Section 7.50(b), Alphabetical List of Trout Waters with Special Fishing Regulations, are those having regulations different from the General Statewide Regulations for trout. (B) Brook Trout bag and possession limits may be taken in addition to the statewide trout daily bag and possession limits. See Section 5.84.

Frequently asked questions:

Why did CDFW change the sport fishing regulations?

These changes stemmed from a CDFW effort to address anglers' concerns about the complexity of the inland sport fishing regulations by simplifying and streamlining them, and better aligning them with CDFW's current fisheries management goals and objectives. The underlying goal was to make it easier for anglers to understand the regulations while maintaining and protecting the fisheries.

How have the regulations been simplified?

The regulations have been simplified in three main ways:

- The special fishing regulations for inland trout (non-anadromous waters) are separated from regulations for hatchery trout, hatchery steelhead and salmon (anadromous waters) to make it easier to understand the bag and possession limits. The special fishing regulations for trout remain in Section 7.50 and will be included in the Freshwater Sport Fishing regulations booklet effective March 2021. The special fishing regulations for hatchery trout, hatchery steelhead and salmon are moved to Section 7.40, and will be included in the Supplemental Sport Fishing regulations booklet effective June 2021.
- The District regulations, which formerly followed political boundaries, have been consolidated into consistent statewide regulations in a watershed based approach similar to the Special Regulations.
- The Special Fishing Regulations were standardized and consolidated through application of a suite of regulations based on fisheries management goals, including angling seasons (closures), bag and possession limits, size limits, and gear restrictions.

How will I know if the regulations are changing for my favorite fishing location(s)?

Anglers can view and download regulations for all inland water bodies in the 2021-2022 Freshwater Sport Fishing Regulations Booklet, which can be viewed and downloaded at the CDFW Regulations webpage (see link above). Inland trout (non-anadromous) waters will remain in Section 7.50, while regulations for waters supporting hatchery trout, hatchery steelhead, and salmon (anadromous waters) have moved to a new Section 7.40.

These are current as of March 1, 2021 and may change at any time so make sure that you check carefully before you go out. This listing does not include the Anadromous (steelhead, salmon, etc.) and Hatchery fish and streams as that regulation will be published in the late spring. The regulations are also written with an overall trout regulation in non-specific streams and rivers. Check carefully before you go to determine any regulations for the streams and/or lakes you will be fishing.

New California Steelhead Book

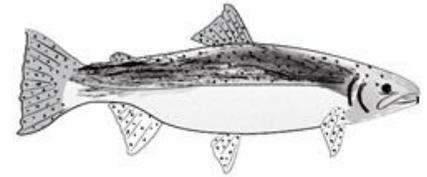
After several years of research and writing, *California Winter Steelhead – Life History and Fly Fishing* is now available. This is a full-color case bound hardback limited-edition book, each numbered and signed by the author and fishery scientist, Dennis P. Lee. The book was printed in the USA on 100-pound premium paper and features a foil stamped linen cover with UV protected dust cover.

California Winter Steelhead – Life History and Fly Fishing includes over 300 pages describing the historical and current status of California steelhead rivers and creeks from the North Coast to the Southern Coast including the Great Central Valley. Chapters cover insightful information on the history of California steelhead fly fishing gleaned from early manuscripts, articles, reports and newspapers. Included is information on historical and current steelhead run sizes, streamflow graphs and access. The book also covers winter steelhead fly fishing equipment including rods, reels, fly lines and leaders, casting and fly presentation. One chapter details the history and current status of California steelhead conservation from its beginnings in the 1800's. The book finishes with color plates of over 100 winter steelhead flies. This book is a great addition to any California fly fisher's library.

California Winter Steelhead

Life History and Fly Fishing

Dennis P. Lee



Foreword by Jeff Bright

Copies are available at www.dennisplee.com, California residents pay sales tax but shipping via US Postal Service to Continental USA address is free.

Can anglers continue to ignore climate change?

Todd Tanner – Hatch

If you ask a dozen fly fishers to describe the major threats to our angling, you'll find a fair amount of agreement. You'll hear their concerns about public lands, and habitat loss, and pollution, and over-fishing, and poor management practices, and invasive species. You may even have an angler mention our kids' addiction to video games. There's a fair amount of consensus regarding all those issues across the outdoor community.

What you won't find, though, is agreement on the single largest threat to our fishing: [human-caused climate change](#). Which is a shame, especially since climate is the only issue that impacts [all of us](#) regardless of where we live or which species we pursue.



Climate is the proverbial 800 lb. gorilla in the room. Everyone with a pulse and an internet connection has heard that it's a [massive problem](#) — and, conversely, that it's not. Some people will tell you that climate change is as obvious as the nose on your face, while others will claim it's a hoax. Some point to the overwhelming [scientific consensus](#), others deny that a consensus exists. Some say that our planet is warming because we're burning fossil fuels, while others believe any warming is natural. There's no such thing as

unanimity on climate change, at least among sportsmen and women, and that's because the discussion has become so incredibly polarized and partisan.

If you share which political party you support, and which media outlets you follow, I can predict with a fair amount of accuracy your views on climate. Which, truth be told, is disturbing. Science is science and it really shouldn't matter whether you get your information from FOX, CNN, or MSNBC, or from the NY Times, USA Today, or Breitbart. As Daniel Patrick Moynihan once noted, "You are entitled to your opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts."

Yet here we sit, debating whether climate change is a "thing" — and if it is, whether it's human-caused or natural, and if it is human-caused, whether it's a problem or not, and if it's a problem, whether we should address it or just live with it, and if we should address it, why not kick the can down the road until we've squeezed another 20 or 30 years of profit and convenience from fossil fuels?

And then there's the related question of whether we should focus on the issue. To use a Shakespearean term, is climate 'germane' to our fishing or is it completely irrelevant? Where do we even start?

At the risk of ruffling a few feathers, let's begin with some actual scientific facts. Climate change is real, it's human-caused, and it's impacting us right now. To quote the most respected scientific organization on the planet, the [U.S. National Academy of Sciences](#) (NAS): "Climate change is one of the defining issues of our time. It is now more certain than ever, based on many lines of evidence, that humans are changing Earth's climate."

The world's largest general scientific society, the [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#) (AAAS), concurs, saying: "The overwhelming evidence of human-caused climate change documents both current impacts with significant costs and extraordinary future risks to society and natural systems."

The scientists at [NASA](#) report: "The planet's average surface temperature has risen about 2.12 degrees Fahrenheit (1.18 degrees Celsius) since the late 19th century, a change driven largely by increased carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere and other human activities."

Or if you prefer empirical evidence — information acquired through direct observation — over other forms of data, you might appreciate what I learned a while back from the members of a [Montana hunting & fishing club](#).

"Runoff in Montana starts far earlier now than it did 30 or 40 years ago, and it also ends far earlier. Consequently, the rivers and creeks are lower and warmer during the summer, with fewer fish. At the same time, Montana's heavy winter snows come later — when they come at all — and the elk and mule deer have an easier time staying high in the mountains, and safe from sportsmen, until the hunting season is over. Ponds that folks have fished all their lives, the same ponds where they hunt ducks and geese, are drying up and disappearing. Forest fires are increasing, as are the diseases and insects that kill trees."

It's sad to say, but the mountain of empirical evidence continues to grow. I've personally experienced an entire litany of climate-related impacts here in Montana, including warmer winters, earlier run-off, hotter summers, longer droughts, unprecedented insect infestations, dead and dying forests, extended fire seasons, larger and more extreme wildfires, massive amounts of noxious smoke, warmer rivers and heat-related fishing closures.

The climate impacts are different back east, of course, but they're still obvious. Friends from Maine to Florida share stories about increased precipitation, hotter temperatures, higher humidity levels, stronger storms, coastal inundation, growing numbers of ticks and mosquitoes, unprecedented flooding, sea level rise, and a steady northward march of invasive species.

When the changes right out our front doors match up exactly with the dire warnings from our scientists, and when the only people who disagree insist on quoting chapter & verse from the industry that's responsible for the lion's share of the warming ... well, call me crazy but I tend to trust what I see with my own eyes. It's obvious that climate change is already impacting our fisheries.

Which leaves us with little choice but to confront the issue head-on. There are millions and millions of sportsmen and women in the United States — approximately 40 million, by the [most recent USFWS count](#) — and we have to decide whether or not we have a moral obligation to protect our landscapes and waters from the ravages of climate change. Here are some relevant questions we should all ask ourselves — along with my personal responses.

ARE WE REALLY SEEING CHANGES TO OUR CLIMATE?

Yes, as a longtime Montanan, I've seen the northern Rockies grow noticeably [warmer and drier](#) over the last 30+ years.

ARE THOSE CHANGES MAKING THINGS BETTER OR WORSE?

Worse. [Larger wildfires](#), [dying forests](#), [warmer rivers](#), and clouds of [noxious smoke](#) are bad for our landscapes and waters, our fish & game populations, and sportsmen and women in general.

ARE OUR OBSERVATIONS CONFIRMED BY SCIENCE?

Yes, absolutely. There is an [overwhelming consensus in the scientific community](#) that our CO2 emissions are warming the planet and putting our future at risk.

IF WE DON'T ADDRESS HUMAN-CAUSED CLIMATE CHANGE, WILL FUTURE GENERATIONS OF ANGLERS SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES?

There's no doubt about that. If we don't step up now, we'll leave our kids and grandkids a [world damaged and diminished](#) by our inaction.

CAN ONE PERSON MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

No, not really. Climate change is a huge global problem that won't get better without [U.S. leadership](#). One person can't do much. Working together, though, 40 million American sportsmen and women can have a serious impact.

IS THERE A DOWNSIDE TO ACTING ON CLIMATE?

Our [scientists](#) tell us we have to act, and our [economists](#) assure us that switching from fossil fuels to renewable energy will save us money and improve our economy. So while there's always a downside — look at the wagon makers who went out of business with the rise of the automobile — climate action far, far outweighs inaction.

So where does that leave us? Well, we need moral and ethical clarity to tackle a massive issue like climate. Which is why I find myself turning to the [Golden Rule](#). We should treat others the way we'd like to be treated.

The bottom line is that we all love to fish. Our kids and grandkids deserve to inherit clean waters and healthy landscapes, while future generations should benefit from the same opportunities we enjoy right now. And that's on us. We are responsible. Unless we address climate change while [there's still time](#), the places we fish will eventually become [unrecognizable](#). We can't allow that to happen. When it comes to the great outdoors, we have a responsibility to leave it better than we found it. [Contact Congress and tell them to act on climate](#).

