



# Hi-Desert Flyfishers

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The Hi-Desert Fly Fishing Club



## My first trip of the year to Pyramid Lake

There is something about this lake that just tugs at my soul. The last remaining remnant of old Lake Lahontan that has been around for over 80,000 years and still to this day looks very prehistoric to me. It just feels like every single time you visit this lake you are part of its ancient history and this gives me chills throughout my whole body, and of course the fishing is pretty special too.

My trip started when I left Riverside on Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> and making a 9 hour journey up through the beautiful Sierra Nevada mountain range with my destination being just 30 miles northeast of Reno, Nevada. This is where the great Pyramid Lake awaits all fly fishermen wanting to

catch a 10, 15 or 20 pound trout on the fly. On this scenic drive up the beautiful Sierra Nevada Mountains I noticed this year we have a great snow pack and this is great news for all of us fly fisherman for the fast approaching season opening coming up in the end of April.

I arrived at 1 a.m. to the greeting of 40 mph winds, which were blowing me all around the road on the way up starting in the Mammoth Lakes area. I quickly set up my bed in the front seat of the passenger's side of my truck and fell fast asleep. At 4:30 a.m. knocking on the outside window woke me and my friend Ernie Walsh invited me into his trailer to find another great friend, Greg Sano, wiping the sleep from his eyes. The first words out of his mouth were, "you woke me up when you arrived" and for that I apologized and was greeted with a cup of hot coffee and a hot sweet roll. We were about to embark on our journey for the day of fishing Pyramid Lake from ladders.

Mornings at Lake Pyramid always start with a 4:30 a.m. wake up call, coffee and breakfast and out the door before 5 a.m. to get to the beach you want to fish. You must get to your spot and set up your ladder before everyone else gets there. We start fishing one hour before sunrise and throw a shooting head with a woolybugger as the point fly and a beetle pattern as the attractor fly at the beginning of the shooting head. The beetle pattern floats and the shooting head holds it down close to the bottom and

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as soon as the beetle is stripped in, stopped and allowed to float towards the surface, that is when the Lahontan Cutthroat attack with all their fury! The strikes are very jolting and will straighten out your arm at times. Once the light is high enough a lot of us switch over and start indicator fishing with many different patterns. We fish midges, PT's, Copper Johns and Stillwater worms that are very shiny and very colorful and bright. Indicator fishing has become a very deadly way to present the fly to the trout. We use 15 pound tippet for the shooting head applications and 10 pound tippet for the indicator applications. We fish both ways throughout the day but I prefer to fish with the shooting heads early and late in the evenings and indicator fish the middle of the day.

**First day:** of fishing was in winds of 20 to 30 mph but we were very lucky that the winds were coming in from the northwest, which was almost directly from our backs, and this helped us with our casting. The winds swirled and changed to almost every direction as it sometimes does at Pyramid but stayed pretty constant from our backs. Fishing was very good throughout the day and I ended up with 22 fish, 6 stripping and the rest on the indicator.

**Day two:** much of the same, wind about the same speed and direction, fishing was a lot better for me. Early morning stripping was going well, but I could not keep the fish on and had a lot of LDRs (Long distance releases). First hour, 15 fish hooked on the strip but only 6 of them brought to the net. Indicator fishing went well all throughout the day and at times was very fast paced. Around 4 p.m. Rick Proulx showed up and waded out into three foot waves and to his

surprise, started hooking fish immediately on a size 12 Red Copper John Nymph. We both continued to hook fish after fish and the waves and the wind continued with bad intentions. It became so rough out there that Rick was knocked off of his ladder and decided to call it a day after landing 12 fish in just over 90 minutes of fishing. Of course I stayed out and as the evening drew near, the fishing became better and better. I hooked 8 fish in a row while stripping and ended the day with a whopping 54 fish to the net.

Everyone left me on the beach by myself with the exception of my friend from Idaho, Bruce Smith, who is a very fine fisherman and caught 32 fish that day. We talked about the day of fishing so long that the people I was staying with feared something had happened to me and came back looking for me. They were not very happy that I didn't check in with them to let them know I was okay. This was poor judgment on my part and I should have realized that this lake is very dangerous and people drown there all the time and danger should not be taken lightly. I apologized and returned to the trailer to fall asleep and await the next days adventure at the great Pyramid Lake.



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**Day three:** the winds from the southeast, meaning almost directly into your face and across your body which makes casting almost impossible. I hammered myself in the back of the head at least a half a dozen times with my fly and also caught myself on the back cast in the chest and in the waist. Very dangerous when your 27 foot (290 grains) shooting head, traveling at close to 200 mph, hammers you in the chest or the back of the head. Needless to say fishing was very tough, spent most of my time driving around taking pictures and ended up with 13 fish for the day, including a 7 pounder, the biggest fish of the trip for me.

**Day four:** winds the same direction but a lot lighter, only around 10 to 15 mph but fishing was tough again so after an hour on the same beach I had been fishing for the whole trip I decided to make a change. I was supposed to leave this day at noon to make my 9 hour drive back home but decided to gamble and look for better water. First stop, Warrior Point at the northern most point of the lake where the paved road ends. I fished here for 1 hour and nothing, picked up and headed for Pelican Beach to fish off of the rocks there, don't need a ladder because the water drops off to over 12 feet just about 50 feet out from shore. This is great indicator water with a midge or copperjohn about 9 feet under your indicator and had heard from friends this was fishing very well the last few days. Started fishing at 10 a.m., met up with a few friends that I fish with from Crowley Lake and asked how the fishing was going. My friend, Guide Mickey Baron, from the Crowley Lake Fish Camp said it was fishing well that morning and he had already landed 13 fish, one close to 10 pounds. I started fishing a size 10

black body midge with amber wire and a double tungsten beadhead to keep it down from all of the waves coming in. I immediately hooked a 5 pound fish and landed it and for the next 4 hours caught and released 21 nice fish. One fish I lost was over 10 pounds that left tears in my eyes because I have yet to bring one of that size to my net. While I was there for the 4 hour period there was one fish 30", two fish 28" and one at 27" landed less than a 100 feet away from me, all on the indicator fishing method.

I checked my watch and found the time to be 2 p.m., my time at Pyramid had come to an end and I bid farewell to all of my friends and started my long journey home, which is always much longer going home than the ride up-- another great trip to Pyramid Lake and many more to come in the future.

P.S. I will be up at Pyramid on Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup> through Tuesday, April 13<sup>th</sup> if anyone would like to come up and meet me I will take the time in the early morning to show you how to catch these beautiful fish. Please send me an email at: [emosf150@aol.com](mailto:emosf150@aol.com) or contact me by phone at (909) 953-1770.



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## It's fishing not Catching



NOT ALL TRIPS ARE PERFECT.....It started with good intentions: an early spring trip to Bishop. Plans to drift the Owens River and a side trip to Upper Hot Creek. Doug Speski called me and said he had some time the following week so I made arrangements with Sierra Drifters and booked the Mt. View Hotel for two nights in Bishop.

We pulled out the morning of March 9<sup>th</sup>. Coffee in hand and excitement in the air we hit Bishop by 1:00 in the afternoon. A quick stop at Brocks to pick up a license for Doug and a few other necessary items and we were off to Hot Creek.

Knowing I was having some problems with my hips and back we decided to try the upper interpretive area of the creek. I didn't want to try my luck hiking down the canyon to the main creek with all the snow on the ground. It turned out the snow was everywhere. You had to park off the main road and hike in about ¼ mile just to get to the water of the interpretive center.

I should have known better.

We hiked through the snow following the tracks of previous fisherman. I was in pretty good shape and proud of myself for making it in, but that feeling would not last. Twenty minutes later, lying on my back, looking at the clear but cold sky, the waters of Hot Creek swirling around my prone body, I began to wonder why I took up fly-fishing. The snow didn't get me but the ice on the bank sure did. One slip, right into the creek, I did a 180' in mid-air so I wouldn't land on my face. Doug didn't see all the action but he was kind enough to take a photo after we got back to the truck.



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I had solid ice from my neck to my toes. Also sprained my ankle coming out through the snow. Does the trip get better? No.



Water flows on the Owens had been all over the place from 150 to 500 CFS. Our guide, 2 Bug Doug was hoping for a good day as the water flows had dropped and were stable. Everything else in the valley had fished poorly over the last three days. All three boats from Sierra Drifters were on the Owens that day. I hobbled down to the drift boat and we were off on phase two of our trip.

I won't bore you with the details, cold, wind, casting till your arms felt like lead. Total score for the three boats. 2 trout. I got

one of them, a 10 or 12 inch brown. Next to lunch it was the high point of the trip. Someone once said, that's why they call it fishing and not catching. I prefer the catching part. It was still a great trip, we learned a lot from our guide and I would go again in a second.....providing I can hobble to the drift boat.



Tight Lines,

Gil

PS, One a side note I got some great rate quotes on the Mountain View Motel. It's on West Line Street in Bishop, 760-873-3409. Call direct and talk to the manager, telling them you're in the fly club. I was quoted these prices for a standard room with two beds: (2010)

Winter -----	\$45.99
Summer-----	\$55.99

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