

# Delta Fly Fishers

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Flyfishing

June 2012

## President's Message by Marty Kjelson

Thanks for the first half of 2012 and all your support. We've had a great series of enjoyable activities on land and water, all possible due to the efforts of our Board and loyal membership. Our late spring/summer is upon us opening new waters following ice-out in the high country and a lot of productive waters to be explored. We have some great outings planned for June, including Shad in the Valley, Lake Davis, and the Lower Mokelumne River in the Delta. Fishmeisters Harvey Hamlow and Jerry Neuburger will and are setting us up for success and a great experience together with good friends. Joe Balderston will help us tie some great flies for Davis. We hope each of you can join in the fun.



Closer to home, don't hesitate to ask a friend on a day trip or overnighter, particularly new club members and/or those that need some mentoring. Our annual catfish derby at Oak Grove Park is always a winner with the fish eager to cooperate on a number of – yes - baits! The fish or young folks don't care what they eat as long as they bite. Come

join us to help serve food or simply walk around the pond to greet folks. Many of the single moms need a hand, and you'll be doing a great thing and meet some wonderful, devoted parents.

We had another fun time at the one fly contest at White Pines Lake. The woolly buggler crowd seems to catch the most and biggest fish. Congrats to Harvey Hamlow and Earl Summers for their wins. My zebra midge only caught a few fish but they were of quality and very hot! Some of our super fisherman appeared to be targeting 3" bluegills rather than trout. Nevertheless, we had a great time, good food and fellowship, with the club up there. White Pines is close and makes for a nice day outing.

Our annual picnic promises to be another great event with abundant tasty food, the best fellowship, and Bill Laughlin's super raffle. Thanks to Earl and Bill and their team for making the event so successful each year.

Our Board met in mid May and made two decisions I'd like to share with you. One is that we will give advertising opportunities in the newsletter to interested parties in the commercial flyfishing community for a specific cost/donation. We felt that making that process more defined would be helpful and more equitable to all. We have a variety of support from these folks, and we encourage each of you to support them in return.

Secondly, The Board wishes to clarify that Delta Flyfisher's sponsored outings only pertain to those that are announced in the newsletter and on the Club's monthly calendar. Individual and small group fishing are always encouraged but will not be formally sanctioned as club outings. This policy is made to help clarify our club's insurance liability. Any questions on these issues or other topics of the Board's activities are encouraged by all members. Our newsletter and web page continues to be a wealth of information for all members. I encourage regular viewing of both.

I want to bring attention this month to the great conservation section written by Ron Forbes. I was impressed by Ron's ability to boil down a great number of complex and recent conservation issues that helps all of us to be informed of key issues affecting our great fisheries and aquatic resources. Thanks, Ron.

I'll end my note to you to share "my first fish" on a fly story. When one is over 70, we claim the right to tell stories (over and over again). Ha. Anyway, I was about 14 yrs. old and had been fishing our local stream called the Onion River in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. My Dad fished it for trout with a fly rod and, yes, worms. One day I had my fly rod - I think it was a Herder's fiberglass rod - and happened to see trout rising to what I believe were white Miller flies, a moth of some sort. Well, being a Herder's fan (the Cabela's of the 20's to 50's) I had some of their white dry flies along, though had never used them. To my amazement, the trout were very cooperative, and needless to say, that hooked me on flyfishing.

I'm sure each one of you has a story of the first fish you caught on a fly. Share it with me and we'll get it in the newsletter. We'll learn from that!

Thanks, Marty.

## FUTURE EVENTS SCHEDULE

### June 2 - Oak Grove Park Catfish Derby

**June 6 - 2012 -Fly of the Month Fly Tying Session**  
Davis Lake flies: Damsel Fly nymph, blood midge

**June 3 - SOLD OUT! DFF jet boat trip with**  
Orland Outfitters, shad fishing on the Sacramento River

**June 9 - SOLD OUT! DFF jet boat trip with**  
Orland Outfitters, shad fishing on the Sacramento River This trip is exactly the same as featured on the flyer but will take place on the 9th rather than the 3rd.

**June 6 - Fly of the Month Tying Session with Joe Balderston**  
Davis Lake Flies: Damsel Fly & Blood midge

**June 13 - General Membership Meeting**  
Annual Barbecue (See details below)

**June 16 -Mokelumne River Float Outing**  
(See details below)

**June 20 - DFF Board Meeting**

**June 22 – 24 - Lake Davis Outing (See details below)**

**August through December**

**August 25 - Monterey Bay Kelp Bass - Santa Cruz Pier**

**September 19th - 23rd - Annual Bridgeport Outing**  
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### SATURDAY, JUNE 2ND - CATFISH DERBY

It's that time of year again, Delta members, how about spending a morning performing a little public service while getting to know your fellow Delta Fly Fishers? You'll have that opportunity on Saturday, June 2nd, at San Joaquin County Parks and Recreation's CATFISH DERBY.

Our club has been an integral part of this event and the other two county-sponsored fishing derbies for many years. The county provides the fish and prizes, and we provide the bodies to get the job done. Our purpose is to provide food and drinks for the "contestants" who fill out a form that the County hands out for each of the five different designated categories. The County provides prizes for the top three folks in each category who catch the heaviest catfish.

We certainly need all the volunteers we can get to help take food orders at the counter, sell coffee, hot chocolate, and cook hot dogs and wrap them in tinfoil with the buns, help "contestants" fill out registration forms, help with weighing in catches and distributing prizes at 12:30.

The more we have behind the counter the better because around 8:00 a.m. folks start filing in for coffee, hot chocolate and donuts to warm them up and help make the donuts go down better - and it gets crowded!

We have two crock pots, one for cheese and one for the chili set up by the hot dog cooker. To get a real first-hand-good-feel experience, walk around the pond and help any person who may need advice on how to have the hook tied on their line. Some of the contestants have only a mom or grandmother to help the young kids and some don't know how to set up their gear and bait - or they may even need help in how to cast.

We need members to show up at 5:45 a.m. to get the boathouse set up for the public to buy snacks. If you can't make it before 6:00 where entrance is accessed through the corporation yard east of the main entrance only for our club members - it closes at 6:00 a.m. and the public can't get in that way - then plan on arriving around 8:00 a.m. so you don't get caught up in the traffic jam coming through the main gate at 6:00 a.m. Traffic at times has backed up to the freeway from the main entrance! If you use the main park entrance, tell the person in the booth that you are a member of the Delta Fly Fishers and are there to help with the derby then proceed to the boathouse and join in an experience where you'll come away with a good feeling for the rest of the day.



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**Any corrections?** Please contact editor Herman Spalinger at 209 477-3412 or [pontuber36@att.net](mailto:pontuber36@att.net).

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## Wednesday, June 6th

Join instructor Joe Balderston for a Lake Davis fly tying session Wednesday, June 6th

Davis Lake flies: Damsel Fly nymph and blood midge

Joe will be the lead tier on June 6 at 6:30pm at the Oak Grove Nature Center tying two flies that are high on the Lake Davis Hatch Chart for June, Brian Chan's Baby Damsel Fly Nymph and Ralph Cutter's Martis



Blood Midge Emerger. Both of these flies have proven themselves to be winners in our Sierra Lakes and are especially important insects in the Lake Davis fishery.

Brian Chan is a professional fisheries biologist who has managed small lake recreational fisheries and promoting and marketing freshwater fishing in the province of British Columbia for the past 30 years. He is a fly fishing author, producer, lecturer, and an angling guide.

Brian's comments on the Baby Damsel Fly Nymph: "Trout feed heavily on juvenile damselflies in both the early spring and late fall periods." Prime habitat for these over-wintering nymphs is the cattail and bulrush patches located in the shallow areas of the shoal or in water less than 10 feet deep. Juvenile or baby damsels are poor swimmers. They typically swim for 3 to 6 inches before pausing and slowly sinking back down through the water. The bead headed Baby Damselfly Nymph pattern falls very naturally through the water. The marabou tail provides life-like movement when retrieved and as the fly drops.

This pattern is best fished on a floating line and leader between 12 and 20 feet in length. After casting out, allow the fly to reach the desired depth zone and begin a retrieve consisting of several slow 2 to 4 inch long strips followed by a 10 to 15 second pause. Trout will often take the fly during the pause.

Ralph Cutter and his wife, Lisa, should need no introduction to our members as founders of the California School of Fly Fishing. Ralph has been known to don a wet suit and visit the fish in their own environment with a camera when he has a particular question that needs solving. Ralph's comments on the Martis Blood Midge Emerger: "Treat the fly and leader with floatant then heave it and leave it. If the fish are rising to midges around yours but won't grab, trim (gnaw) the elk hair down to just a nubbin. At times they selectively want the pre-emergent, and that's what you just made." Both of these fly patterns are the result of numerous trial-and-error hours on the water and are tested and proven winners.

The class is limited to ten tiers and has a fee of \$3 to cover

the expense of the materials to tie eight flies. Tying kits are available to those that don't have tying equipment. To sign up, go to the club's Facebook event page and when taken to the list, scroll down to the event and click on the "Join" tab on the right hand side. If the digital world is just too much of a challenge, call Jerry Neuburger, 209-369-5752, and ask him to write your name as a tier in the comments section.

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## Delta Fly Fishers Barbecue... June 13th at 6:00pm.

A-C: Bread, dinner rolls, butter  
D-G: Hot main course (casseroles, etc.)  
H-K: Cold Drinks  
L-N: Hot or cold veggie plates  
O-R: Desserts  
S-Z: Salads

Come one, come all! Can it be June already? Where has spring gone? Put the date on your calendar, and if the past barbecues are any indication of what to expect, come hungry! And you might bring a jacket too as it can get cold later. Also don't forget you need to bring your own plates, glasses, silverware, paper towels or napkins! In any case, Delta Fly fishers are again morphing into their summer activities. The June 13th barbecue will kick off the travel season for many in the club with destinations like Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Wyoming and Utah high on their trout fishing calendar. Others will head for the salt with Baja, the Yucatan and other destinations south offering crystal clear water, giant fish, and exotic food and atmosphere. Back to the barbecue. It's a pot luck affair with an alphabetical range for different dishes with New York steaks provided by the club. Please refer to the list of who's to bring what at the top of this article. Bill Laughlin states the raffle will be the second largest of the year, only surpassed by the raffle at the annual dinner, so make sure you bring some bucks to buy raffle tickets. There will also be raffle prizes for the ladies too. The club's general membership meeting will move to the Nature Center at Oak Grove Park for the summer month of August with the president providing the program in August, usually an outstanding video. REMEMBER, there is no membership or board meetings in July - we're all gone fishing.

## White Pines contest winners - Earl Summers & Harvy Hamlow



## June 16th - Fishing Top Water For Largemouth On A Three Mile Drift Down The Mokelumne

June is prime time for top water action in the delta for largemouth bass, and the Mokelumne is a great location to do an evening drift in a pontoon boat, kayak or pram fishing for America's game fish.

The evening starts with a 4:00p.m. arrival and assembly of various craft. A short refresher seminar on fishing for LMB will take place at 4:30 on the lawn at B&W Marina. B&W is located on Brannan Island Road 10 miles west of I-5 on Hwy. 12 just after crossing the steel girder swing bridge. Launch time is 5:00p.m. with the fleet moving into the river to cover both banks down to Korth's Pirate's Lair Marina. If both sides of the river are counted, it amounts to six miles of prime water for working poppers, gurglers and divers for the delta's "other" fish.

The tides on June 16th are prime for a drift with high tide at 5:20p.m. and only a minor outgoing with an eight inch drop by 8:30pm (Sunset). This moderate tide should allow personal water craft such as a pontoon boat to move slowly down the river, especially when close to the bank in quiet water.

**Recommended Equipment:** Pontoon boat, pram, kayak, canoe (No Float Tubes Please), Life Jacket, Seven weight rod, Floating line (two weights above rod weight if possible. (7 wt. rod, 9 wt line) Any reel, drag not necessary 20 pound leader, a selection of poppers, gurglers, sliders, and divers. 1/0 to 3/0. Mosquito repellent, Sun Block, Late lunch, drinks, snacks.

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Guide Frank Pisciotta with the newly dubbed Delta Rodettes



Jean Fujimura, LaDonna Seeley, Dena Mason's mother, Dena Mason, Jeanette Neuburger

## Tips on Making a Stripping Basket by Bruce Rollans

I purchased a Thomas the Train Step Stool at an Elk Grove store, "Bye Bye Baby". They come in blue, red, yellow and pink. For reason(s) unknown to me, the blue is a softer material and very easy to drill into while the red is more difficult and easily cracked while drilling.

Sallye suggested I get pink, but I did not want to spend the money. First, when turned upside down you will see a few molded ridges inside which make the stool more stable under load. If you have a Dremel tool, you can easily cut away these ridges; however, if not just leave them as I cannot see how they would interfere with fly line leaving the basket.

Next I drilled several 1/4" holes in the base into which I placed nylon bolts, 1/4"X 2 1/4" and fixed them in place with nylon washers and nuts. I then drilled several 1/4" holes in the front of the basket just above the juncture with the base. These serve to drain excess water from the basket.

Finally, I cut 2 slots (see photo) as a means of affixing the basket to your waist with a belt. I may later cut a notch on the opposing sides, which would be a place to rest the rod when not casting. I could not find this step stool in places such as Target or Walmart.



## Tips on catching Shad

The American Shad in California is an "introduced" species, another immigrant from the east coast, brought to California in the late 1800's by the California Fish and Game Commission. It is an anadromous fish that spends its juvenile life in fresh water then migrates to the ocean where it grows to adulthood.

At about three or four years the fish migrates back to fresh water to spawn with the females being pushed to the surface of a moving river, and at the urgings of smaller males surrounding them, discharge their eggs into the current. The fertilized neutral density eggs roll along just above the river floor and soon hatch. It's estimated that about 20% of the migrating fish die during this pilgrimage with the rest returning to the ocean.

The last week in April usually marks the first appearance of shad at Verona where the Feather River joins the Sacramento River. The fish will remain in most of the Valley rivers until July, and sometimes even into August.

Prior to the many rim dams on the Sacramento and the fish-grinding pumps in the south Delta, the shad runs were so thick that people used to "bump" for shad in the Sacramento River.

What is "shad bumping?" Well, here's a quote of a post by "Fern-dog" on the Fishsniffer website: "We never used a light. What you did was get your boat (usually a 12-15 aluminum) get in next to a rocky bank (about 4-8 ft out) get your OB motor tilted up for a good prop wash and place a large metal-framed chicken wire net in behind the prop and net the shad as they "Bumped" into the net. For some reason they would be attracted to the prop wash. It was not unusual to get 6-8 shad in the net at a time. It was work! On a good night you could get 50-60 shad then smoke-em up with some cold beer. Good stuff! The nights with a full moon were always best, and the best time was right at sunset and shortly thereafter."

The fish migrate in schools of from 15 to over 100 and have a habit of traveling in a fairly narrow column of three to four fish wide a foot or so off the bottom along a current seam. If you can put your fly in the seam on a consistent basis, you'll catch lots of fish. If you're too short in your cast or your swing too high in the water column, you'll spend the day watching others catch fish.

If your line is too heavy, you'll hang up on the bottom before your swing is done and since the bottom is usually gravel or rock, you will go through a lot of flies and catch very few fish. Since shad are somewhat flat and wide but narrow across the shoulders, once they turn in the current they can really load up a rod. While they don't jump, their size (one to eight pounds) and flat bodies can create some reel spinning runs before the angler gets control.

Why American Shad hit a fly is somewhat of a puzzle. Shad are filter feeders feeding on algae and plankton. While some evidence exists that they do eat small aquatic insects on their freshwater migration, it's believed that they strike flies out of aggression. The resultant flies are brightly colored attractors

that don't resemble anything in nature. While a shad's upper mouth structure is fairly substantial, the lower jaw is composed of very thin tissue. Putting too much pressure on a fish can sometimes result in a hook tearing out before the fish is landed.

**WARNING:** American Shad are a very slimy fish, so slimy that you even have to rinse your net after each fish. And bring a towel for your hands as well. If the fishing's really good, bring two.

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Ron Forbes, DFF Conservation Chair, presents a check of \$500 to Restore the Delta's Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla. DFF's Board of Directors voted the donation at the April Board of Director's meeting due to Restore the Delta's efforts to halt the overdrafting of the delta's resources and RTD's stalwart opposition to the new peripheral canal

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### Conservation by Ron Forbes

"It has always been my private conviction that any man who puts his intelligence up against a fish and loses had it coming."  
John Steinbeck

During our monthly Board of Directors (BOD) meeting in April, the directors had a discussion of the Delta Fly Fishers concerns about our fisheries, conservation, and environmental issues. Our club has a long, positive history in these areas.

Presently we are looking for projects in which our club can become involved. Several suggestions have been made, but we need more suggestions from the membership that they feel the club can perform and that will have a positive impact on our local fisheries. Hopefully the projects would involve, but not limited to, the Mokelumne and Calaveras Rivers, their drainages, and possibly the Delta. Our BOD's meetings are always open to the membership so please feel free to attend with your ideas and suggestions. The meetings are on the third Wednesday of the month at Oak Grove Regional Park. If you have some ideas but can't attend, please call me at 209-368-5767 or e-mail me at [bluse03@yahoo.com](mailto:bluse03@yahoo.com).

During the discussion, it was decided our club can take an active role in supporting organizations that take positive action supporting the Delta and our fisheries. The BOD voted unanimously to help fund:

- Restore the Delta
- The Foothill Conservancy
- The California Sportfishing Protection Alliance

All three groups will receive checks in the amount of \$500 each.

Saturday evening, May 19th, I had the pleasure of attending a Restore the Delta fund raising dinner to present Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla (Restore the Deltas CEO) our check. She was very pleased to receive our contribution. Our check and another from a fund raising high school student in Rio Vista were the two largest individual checks Restore the Delta received that evening.

## A Different Delta and A Reality Check

When you live in an area, you have a tendency find it difficult to imagine what that area was like 50, 100, or 150 years ago. That is true of our area, and especially the Delta. The Delta today is not the Delta that gave rise to its native species. In doing some research on another Delta issue, I came across an article in the California Water Blog about the changes that have occurred over the last 150 years by six well-known people from UC Davis. The authors are J. Lund and R. Krone, Professors of Environmental Engineering, Peter Moyle, Professor of Fish Biology, J Mount, Professor of Geology, Ellen Hanak, Public Policy Institute of California, William Fleenor, Research Engineer.

The title of their article is "Stressed Out - Dealing with the Delta's Non-Native Landscape." Today's Delta is not the Delta that existed over 100 years ago. Originally the Delta was about 3/4 million acres of fresh water and tidal marsh. Today it has over 1/2 million acres of farmland with 61,000 acres of open water and 75,000 acres of tidal marsh. The river as it flows through the Delta has been totally altered. There is now less than 34% of original water flow into the Delta and 46% less water is leaving the Delta as it has in the past.

The normal seasonal water flow patterns have been altered to the point where increased export pumping has made the Delta the only place in the world where water flows uphill. Because of the construction of dams and levees, habitat and spawning areas upstream from the Delta have been reduced by at least 70%. With increased export pumping, salinity has drastically increased. If you read last months Conservation article, you realize that farming is the biggest producer of toxins and pollution in the Delta followed closely by cities that add polluted waste water and other contaminants.

Numerically, the native species have long since been passed by non-native species. In talking with fish and game biologists from DFG and USFWS, I have been told that there are now over 140 non-native species in the Delta. The invasive species include plankton, plants, clams, and fish that have been brought to the Delta by fisherman, marine shipping sources, aquarium hobbyists and wildlife agencies. The species that evolved within the Delta are now trying to exist in an environment which was non-existent when they evolved.

In addition to the biologically caused stresses listed, there many other causes of stress. This includes stress caused by contaminants from agriculture, old mine waste (e.g., the Penn Mine disaster on the Mokelumne) and urban and waste water runoff .

Water flow is also a major source of stress on native species. Upstream from the Delta 56% of the water is diverted. Of the water reaching the Delta, 9% is used and 35% is exported via the pumps. The seasonal change in flow patterns also has caused huge problems, especially with the salmon runs. Change of flow patterns caused by dredging for the ports of Stockton and Sacramento, along with the loss of water from the San Joaquin River, create major problems too. And the Delta's eastside disruptions and reductions in stream flow from the Mokelumne, Cosumnes, and the Calaveras Rivers and increases in groundwater pumping create still more issues for the Delta and its native species.

Loss of habitat is another major form of stress in the Delta. There is major loss of spawning habitat from the Delta because of dams, a reduction of riparian habitat, and a loss original tidal marshlands. More than 70% of original spawning habitats no longer exist.

The ongoing changes in the conditions taking place in the ocean also have a major negative effect on native species such as the variations in the upwelling of the nutrient-rich Humbolt current, EL Nino, La Nina, current and temperature oscillations, etc. And lastly, the authors point out that ocean, inland, and recreational anglers all have significantly helped in the reduction of the native fish species. But they also point out that the major loss of our native fish is directly or indirectly related to the state of California's water management policies.

The authors have come to six conclusions in their article but make the point that these conclusions are not final.

- First, the native species numbers are declining for many reasons. However, they make the point that over the last 150 years water and land users bear a major responsibility in the decline.
- Second, turning the currently existing stressful conditions around to the original conditions is impossible and our current existing situation is not sustainable.
- Third, the ecosystem must now be focused on support of a mixture of native and other species that can be sustained and thrive under these conditions.
- Fourth, groups with interest in the Delta are going to take part in and help pay for a solution that is going to be effective.
- Fifth, it will not be possible to come to an effective system to revive the Delta without scientific leadership (that does not include the pseudo-science of groups like the Coalition for a Sustainable Delta, Westlands Water District, and the Stuart Kesnicks of the southern San Joaquin Valley, etc.)
- Sixth, this is not an easily obtainable goal. And "we will not get it right the first time." We have a problem that started 150 years ago and is continuing . To expect a quick fix is not rational and it will not occur.

Ten years ago, in my naivety, I asked Joe Merz, supervising biologist for East Bay Municipal Utility District, about how the Mokelumne was going to be restored. His answer was that the Moke and the rest of California's water system can never be

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restored to its original state. Eight generations have passed since water issues have become a major issue in California. When I was born, there were 8 million people living in California. Now we are approaching 39 million people living in the state. The best we can hope for is a stable habitat with sustainable and desirable native and non-native plants and animals.

California's water policy is like a speeding train that has been headed in the wrong direction for over 100 years. Unfortunately, the train has been engineered by mediocre leadership of our elected officials and state agencies and has been fueled by corporate agribusiness and urban water district greed. I doubt I will live long enough to see a much-needed change in direction of this train.

Ron Forbes  
Conservation Chair

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### San Joaquin Oak Grove Park's Bug Fest

Each year in May San Joaquin County puts on a day in the park for the youngsters to bring their parents to see the County's displays of a whole lot of our local bugs. There was even a table set up with chocolate covered ants and grasshoppers for consumption – a different kind of snack food for them.



The kids are given a sheet of paper with questions and boxes to check on which bugs they can identify while walking in and around the Nature Center. In conjunction with this festival, our club is asked to participate in tying the flies that trout eat for display to the youngsters.

They were drawn like a magnet to our two fly tiers, Joe Balderston and Larry Schmidt. Each sat at a desk and tied their respective flies and also helped the youngsters identify the flies they were tying that best represented the "bugs" trout feed on. Refreshments are on hand and the youngsters and their parents have a great time participating in the Bug Fest.

Give a big thanks to Joe and Larry when you see them for volunteering for such a task.



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##### Trout Bout (November)

Charlie Reames 209-369-6053

##### Bob McMillan Trout Bout (February)

Steve Cooper 209-956-1032

##### Fishing Mentor Program

Steve Cooper 209-956-1032

## EDITOR'S NOTE

C.J. Webb did not have time to complete her report to be included in this June newsletter. She is training her new staff that helps her and her husband run the resort. Most of her staff come from Europe. Her Eastern Sierra Report, however, can be viewed on her Virginia Lakes Resort website.

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## Used Items For Sale

- 1 pr Cabela's Neoprene boot foot chest waders, size 9 stout - \$50
- 1 pr Patagonia wading boots w/felt soles & cleats, size 8 - \$25
- 1 pr Patagonia flats boots, size 10 - \$22
- 1 pr Reddington wading boots w/felt soles & cleats, size 10 - \$18

Contact Bruce Rollans @ 209-274-0448

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