

Notes, News & Reviews



PHOTO BY DON VACHINI

Treasure Lakes, CA

By Don Vachini

Anglers intent on adding golden trout to their catch list will find the Treasure Lakes basin, located west of Bishop, California, to be one of the most accessible Eastern Sierra backcountry destinations.

Nestled in a desolate, glacial cirque guarded by serrated sentinels, seven stepladder still waters situated within the John Muir Wilderness sit like azure jewels in a ring of white granite. Collecting ice and snow melt, their spillage forms the headwaters of the South Fork of Bishop Creek, which trickles down canyon into South Lake, a principle water and power source for the town below.

Reached only via bipedal locomotion, the lower two lakes offer solid prospecting, according to Curtis Milliron, a California Department of Fish and Game fisheries biologist in the Bishop



PHOTO BY DON VACHINI

office. Existing right at timberline, in-tandem Treasure Lakes 1 and 2 (10,646 feet in elevation) possess abundant food forms, adequate spawning habitat, and contain healthy, self-sustaining populations of 6- to 12-inch golden trout. Cut off to fish migration by impassible falls, lakes 3 through 7 are currently barren, having been recently mitigated for mountain yellow-legged frog habitat.

Depending on the previous winter's snowfall, these waters are usually ice free by late June, with the trail normally cleared by mid-July. Driving from U.S. Highway 395 in Bishop, take West Line Street (California Highway 168) approximately 14 miles before turning left on South Lake Road, which ends at the trailhead. From here, the moderate, 3-mile ascent to "gold" is well marked. Wilderness permits (needed for overnight stays) can be obtained at the White Mountain Ranger District in Bishop. For current information call (760) 873-2500 or visit www.fs.fed.us/r5/inyo/about.

Watched over by towering Mt. Gilbert and Mt. Goode, the lakes' shorelines are surrounded by stands of gnarled conifers and scrub willow. While shallow, 5-acre Lake 2 will keep visitors engaged with truncated "nuggets." Milliron hints that 12-acre, 30-foot-deep Lake 1 is more noted for modest-sized prizes. Trailside coves get more attention from day hikers, but the steeply-inclined, north side of the lake serves as a less-pressured hangout. Here, a huge boulder and talus field enter the water, creating prime habitat for trout over 10 inches, but necessitating athletic rock hopping, caution, and creative casting with deep retrieves from treacherous, granitic perches by anglers.

Although the inlets and outlets are always productive locales, scouting structure from a higher vantage point is also advantageous. Pan-size fish consistently cruise the contours

of shoreline drop-offs; heftier fish tend to keep to the depths during daylight hours. However, campers can take advantage of morning and evening shadows, which draw specimens of all sizes to the surface, usually right near shore.

These are perfect waters for a 3- or 4-weight rod and floating line; fly choices are pretty much standard Sierra issue. Among others, Parachute Adams, mosquito patterns, Stimulator, dark-hued Flashback Pheasant Tail, Bead-head Copper John, and ant patterns, either presented as part of a dry/nymph dropper setup or under an indicator, often provide the implements for mining the gaudy "treasures" within the Treasures.



PHOTO BY HARTT WIXOM

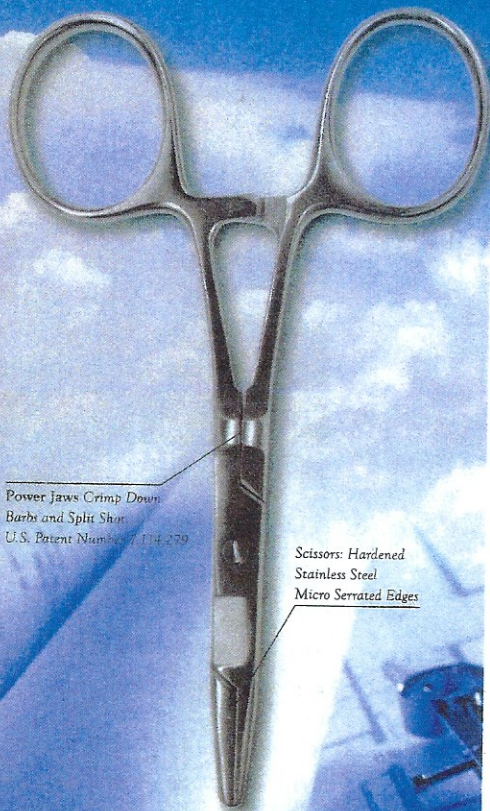
Ruby Marsh, NV

By Hartt Wixom

I'd long read about the trout and bass fishing in eastern Nevada's Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Upon arrival, the scenery below the towering Ruby Mountains was as spectacular as advertised. Yet, the fishing provided an unusual challenge. A friend and I caught big trout. The bass were hard to come by.

Ruby Marsh is shown on maps as a lake. It is not. It is a sprawling swamp interspersed with dikes, leaving one wondering where to cast a line. Some marshes dry up from year to year. Those with a high water table, depending on snowpack in the nearby

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