

effective patterns are 3- to 5-inch baitfish imitations, including Woolhead Mulletts, Deceivers, Clousers, poppers, and gurglers. When the water is clear enough for sight-casting, smaller flies, including shrimp patterns, can be effective.

Although Matagorda is fairly remote, driving to this tiny town from any major Texas city is fairly simple. Follow Texas State Highway 60 south until it ends at the sleepy town of Matagorda and some of the finest trophy sea trout fishing in Texas.

Gaylor Lakes Basin, CA

By Don Vachini

While the beauty of Yosemite National Park is unsurpassed, its myriad natural attractions tend to draw galleries of tourists. Coursing asphalt byways, their motorcades of tour buses, RVs, and cars resemble trails of ambitiously searching ants, somewhat diminishing the “wild” aura of this landscape.

However, on a recent visit, I achieved respite from the hordes by day hiking to a less-visited back-country destination along the eastern

two other people, neither of whom were anglers. On the other hand, I did make acquaintances with dozens of brilliantly attired brook trout.

To attain this serenity, I turned off California Highway 120 at a small trail-head parking lot adjacent to the Tioga Pass Entrance Station (9,945 feet elevation). From there, I began a steep, contouring march along the lightly-forested ridge leading to the abandoned Great Sierra Mine. Nearly an hour later, with heart rate greatly elevated, I caught view of the Gaylor Basin with its stunning vistas of namesake Gaylor Peak (11,004 feet) and White Mountain (12,002 feet).

Nestled along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada crest, five glacier-carved tarns provide a sense of escape. Lower, Middle, and Upper Gaylor lakes are visible from a high saddle while Lower and Upper Granite lakes, tucked in a small, boulder-strewn slot canyon to the north, can be reached easily via a sketchy trail over the finger ridge above Upper Gaylor.

With scattered timber above their turf-lined shores, these bowl-

inches. According to Curtis Milliron, a California Department of Fish and Game fisheries biologist in the Bishop office, no trout have been stocked in these lakes since the 1970s, but self-sustaining populations have managed to endure. “Though not particularly rich in insect populations or nutrients,” he adds, “these lakes support a biomass capable of maintaining moderate densities of healthy, wild trout.”

Milliron further speculates that the network of unnamed, interconnecting streams and rivulets provides scaled-down structure and suitable spawning habitat, and allows fish movement between the lakes—key ingredients to sustaining these fisheries.

No angling restrictions apply here. Two- to 4-weight fly rods are ideal, and floating, sinking-tip, or full-sinking lines all suffice, as does a box of barbless, size-12 through -18 dry and wet selections. I like the Parachute Female Adams, bead-head Flashback Pheasant Tail Nymph, bead-head and Copper John, along with terrestrial and midge patterns. Fish typically cruise in repetitive

patterns between shallows and ledges that drop off steeply. Seemingly unfettered by angler presence along the unobstructed shorelines, the fish tend to strike flies in these shallow littoral zones.

Midafternoon gusts account for a phenomenon known as “upslope blow-in,” whereby up-drafts from the valley collect and lift weak flying insects and dump them into these lakes. Twitching a rubber-leg dry pattern on the surface as the breezes subside will usually attest to the brook trout’s preferences for these “deliveries.”

Nearby Tioga Pass Resort, (209) 372-4471, www.tiogapassresort.com, and Saddlebag Lake Resort www.saddlebaglakeresort.com, are reliable



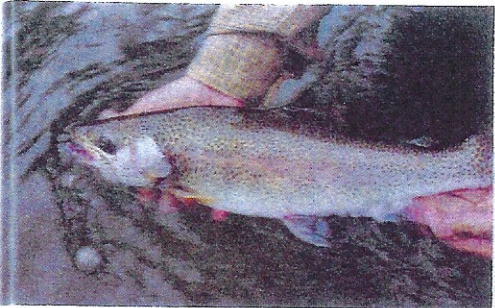
PHOTO BY DON VACHINI

fringes of the park. Here, while fishing a small collection of 10,000-foot elevation lakes draining into the Tuolumne River system, I saw only

shaped, 8- to 10-acre subalpine lakes are inhabited by plenty of hardy and high-spirited brookies ranging from 7 to 12 inches. A few even reach 13

sources of area information. Forest Service campgrounds abound locally and motels are available in Lee Vining, 12 miles east.

July through October offers the best Gaylor opportunities. When visiting, always plan for sudden weather changes, carry sunscreen, and stay hydrated. Oh, and give my best to the brookies!



Guadalupe River, TX

By Lefty Ray Chapa

In the Texas Hill Country, midway between San Antonio and Austin, the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Guadalupe River in the early 1960s, forming deep, cold, and clear Canyon Lake. The gates at the bottom of the dam draw upon this cold water year-round, forming the southernmost tail-race trout fishery in the United States.

While there is no closed fishing season on the river, the "rubber hatch" precludes most fishing during the summer months as this is a very popular tourist inner-tubing destination. During winter and early spring, the float tube outfitters are closed and fishing for rainbow trout heats up. Winter and spring in this part of Texas is very mild. Snow is rare and freezing temperatures occur only occasionally. There is no spring runoff or off-colored water to deter anglers. Breathable waders, maybe a long-sleeved shirt, and a favorite hat form the extent of any angling wardrobe.

The rainbow trout residing in the river are nonnative. In 1966, the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) stocked the first rainbows in the river and later expanded stockings to other rivers, ponds, and lakes across Texas. While the trout do not survive the warmer months in all locations, they do

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