

Around the Southwest

News, Views, and Piscatorial Pursuits

Grass Lake, CA

By Don Vachini

When iffy weather altered our plans for a lengthy day hike to the Lamarck Lakes tucked high along the eastern Sierra Nevada crest, Brandon and Suzette Parker and I instead opted for a lower-elevation destination along the same trail. An invigorat-

More pond than lake, this intimate, 2-acre fishery benefits from submerged nutrients, the proximity of pine and aspen forest, and surrounding lush grasses, all of which account for a viable, insect-based food cycle for its brilliantly-attired brook trout. Notable hatches include

caddisflies, BWOs, and midges, with terrestrial ants and beetles contributing to the bountiful smorgasbord.

In reality, conditions here are too good. Factoring in the amazing spawning potential, there simply isn't enough available food to go around and thick densities of truncated 6- to 8-inch brookies are the end result.

While the lake's inlet channel is a fish magnet, plenty of char also patrol the edges where lake joins meadow. Although plenty of backcasting space is available, the only real degree of

difficulty is remaining out of the vision of the fish. Casts need not be lengthy, just parallel to the shoreline and close to the overhanging growth. Residents compete aggressively for any offering presented near this structure.

An abundance of juvenile trout resides in the feeder creek. No more than 5 feet wide, its clean, sandy bottom and overhanging vegetation provide both sanctuary and spawning habitat. When you are only yards away from these fish, keeping a low profile, short, well-placed casts of little more than the leader, and constant sight of the fly become paramount.

A 3- or 4-weight rod, floating line, and 9-foot leader are ideal for presenting basic flies to always-hungry inhabitants. Size 14 to 18 beadhead nymphs, Zebra

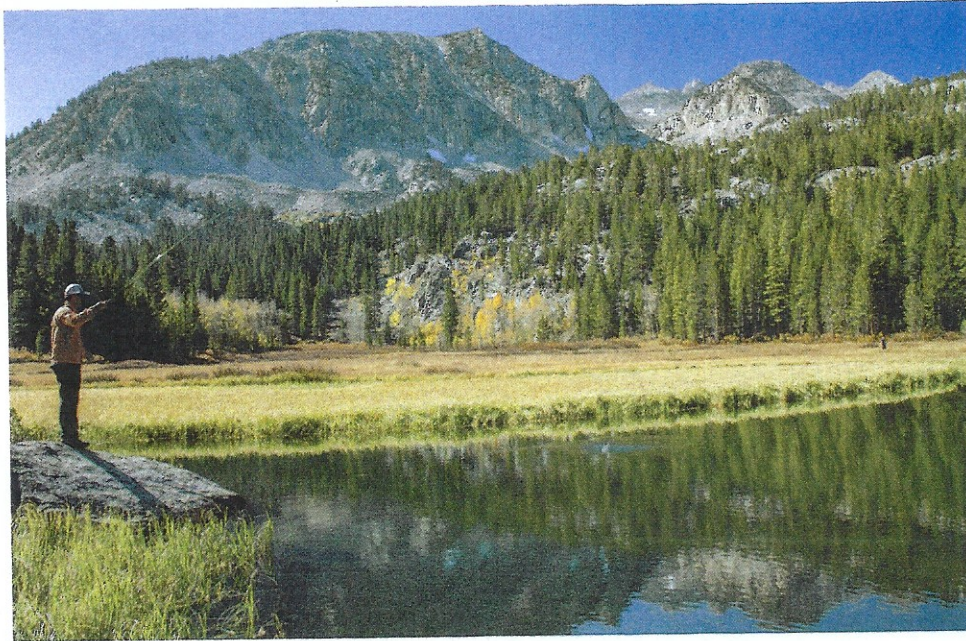


PHOTO BY DON VACHINI

ing, 1-mile ascent took us past the John Muir Wilderness boundary, and then we followed a signed spur trail to look down on Grass Lake. Bordered on three sides by overhanging grasses from a sprawling meadow, it is easy to see how this tiny, 9,900-foot-elevation lake earned its name. A closer glance revealed myriad interconnecting concentric rings shattering its surface. By my reckoning, it could have easily earned the "Trout Lake" moniker.

Practically salivating, we split up, each working in opposite directions. Relieved when the clouds dissipated, we enjoyed the late-afternoon tranquility and nonstop action under the scrutiny of majestic 13,417-foot Mount Lamarck.

Eventually accounting for this lake, rivulets of its snowmelt initially gather in Upper and Lower Lamarck Lakes before tumbling downslope in the form of Lamarck Creek. Nearly 2 miles later, it slowly meanders across a tundra-like meadow to form Grass Lake. Escaping flows fall swiftly downhill to eventually enter the North Fork of Bishop Creek, which forms North Lake. Below here, the North Fork joins two other forks to continue a steep descent down Bishop Canyon to terminate in the Owens River.



PHOTO BY DON VACHINI

Midges, and Copper Johns are effective. Effective dries include Elk Hair Caddis, Parachute Adams, and Griffith's Gnat.

From US Route 395 in Bishop, drive 19 miles on West Line Street (State Route 168) to the North Lake turnoff. Carefully negotiate the single lane road for a half mile and park adjacent to the Bishop Pack Station. Hike 0.125 mile on a dirt road to the Inyo National Forest campground where the trail splits. Follow the left branch marked Lamarck Lakes.

Though not a trophy destination, Grass Lake definitely combines a short hike with confidence-building trout. My future intent is to bring my two youngest granddaughters here to have them enjoy what they will probably know as "trout lake!"

Abundant lodging and dining opportunities are available in Bishop. Contact the Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor's Bureau, (760) 873-8405, www.bishopchamberofcommerce.com.

Lewisville Lake, TX

By John E. Wood

For most of us, the thought of fly fishing evokes images of pristine streams and beautiful clear-water lakes situated amid a wild landscape or a wide expanse of open saltwater flats far from the rush of big-city life. These are the images we dream of, but for many, those images are the exception, not the norm because we live in urban and suburban settings and escape to wild places infrequently. Fortunately for those of us who live and work in urban areas, there is always a need for water storage and where there is water, there are fish and angling opportunity.

For anglers living in and around Denton County, Texas, one opportunity comes in the form of Lewisville Lake, a 28,980-acre impound-



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