



EARLY SPRING TROUT TECH

PROVEN TECHNIQUES FOR MARCH FOOTHILLS SUCCESS



With the recent snow storms, rains and subsequent run-off, many of northern California's lakes and reservoirs are inaccessible, frozen or off-color. Anglers can switch to lower elevation waters for close-to-home, economical getaways, and foothill and urban lakes are excellent ways to enjoy the action during the rest of the cold weather months.

Fishing can be tough and downright unproductive, unless you appeal to the fish's senses; feel (vibrations), sight (flash and color) and smell (scent).

Feel: Trout are first attracted to lures or bait

by vibrations. The trout's lateral line sensor is their "sense of touch," detecting moving baitfish or lures moving through the murky waters of winter and spring.

By far the most effective technique for catching trout is trolling. This allows anglers to cover more water to locate active, feeding fish and present baits or lures right in the trout's face. Slow trolling at speeds from .8 to 1.5 mph is most effective during the cold-water months. Lightweight flutter-type lures such as Needlefish, Sep's Pro Secrets, Triple Teasers, Dick Nites and others offer maximum action and subsequent fish-attracting vibrations and flash at slow speeds.

Trollers will find it beneficial to add flashers or dodgers at this time of year to increase the fish-attracting vibrations. Small ultralight flashers like Sep's Willow-Leaf with gold blades create additional vibrations similar to those of minnows and baitfish. Small 4/0 dodgers with their side-to-side erratic actions create an enticing swimming, surging action to lures or baits.

Pro tip: Leader length behind dodgers is critical, and should be no longer than three times the length of the dodger. The shorter the leader, the more action is transmitted to the lure.

Sight: Dodgers and flashers also produce fish attracting flash as they churn and sway through the water. Gold flashers and dodgers are preferred in off-color water conditions. Silver is effective in clear water, and surprisingly, dark colored lures in purple, blue, green and black offer good contrast and visibility in murky water.

Smell: Offerings should be liberally covered with scent. Scents mask human odor, create a scent path in the water and cause fish to hold on longer due to smell and taste. For trout, Pro Cure's Gels in Trophy Trout, Carp Spit, Trout, Kokanee Magic and Predator work well. These natural, super-effective scents are UV enhanced and will change the way you fish because they offer smell and sight enhancement all in one.

A few of the waters to target:

San Pablo Reservoir: Located in the middle of the East Bay just outside of El Sobrante off I-80. With an ambitious trout stocking program and alpine scenery, it's truly a diamond in the rough. Good fishing abounds from

boat or shore. Rainbows in the 1- to 3-pound range are common, and bruisers in the 5- to 10-pound range are caught every year.

Lake Pardee: Located outside of Valley Springs off Highway 12, Pardee offers full facilities. Receives plants of rainbows in the 1- to 2-pound range, with a mix of monsters up to and including 10 pounds plus, and the beauty of the area and prolific wildlife make Pardee an enjoyable destination. Shoreline anglers using casting or stillfishing techniques will not be disappointed.

Lake Camanche: Located off Highway 12 near Lone, from boat or from the bank, trout anglers can and will score high here. Camanche is a consistent producer of rainbows in excess of 2 pounds, and there are many big fish available and caught year 'round. It's possible on a good day of fishing to have a five-fish limit weighing from 10 to 20 pounds. Full facilities are available, with good shoreline opportunities.

Lake Amador: Known by some as "Sla-

mador." Home of monster cutbows, a cross of rainbow and cutthroat trout. Located near the town of Lone off Highway 12, this small impoundment is a real sleeper. The concessionaires stock the lake with 2- to 5-pound cutbows, plus larger fish in the 10- to 15-pound range. Trollers and shoreline anglers have equal chances of hooking up with a fish of a lifetime here.

New Melones: Just off Highway 49 near Angels Camp, this impoundment is rich with German browns, rainbows and, seasonally, great kokanee salmon action.

Browns can reach 10 pounds, while 'bows run 2 to 5. This time of year, shoreliners have the advantage as fish cruise the shallows in search of food sources.

There are many foothill and urban lakes scattered all over California, offering opportunities for anglers and families, with or without a boat. Travel with caution and be sensible, and take scents with you to improve your chances of success.

One last thing: Always wear a lifejacket!

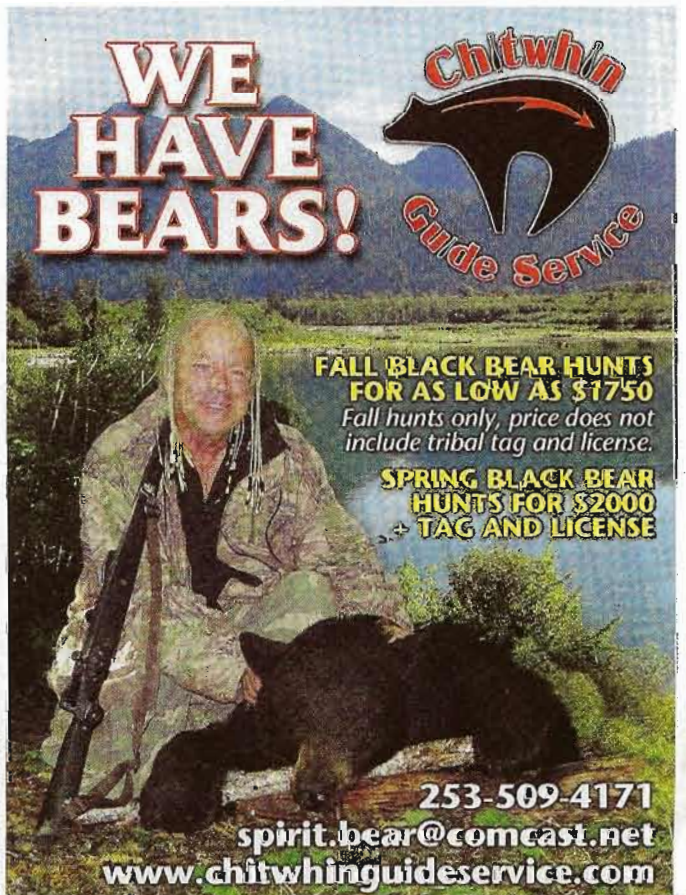
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