




# Upper Owens River





Upper Owens River

Suggested Flies for Upper Owens River:  
[Eastern Sierra Hatch Selection](#)

**Other Local Favorites:****Streamers:**

Woolly Bugger #6-8  
Mohair Leeches #8-10  
Matuka #6-10  
Shock Collar Leech #8-10

**Nymphs:**

Hare's Ear Nymph #12-14  
Pheasant Tail Nymph #12-14  
Bird Nest #12-14  
WD40 #18-22  
RS2 #18-22  
Brook's Sprout #20-24  
San Juan Worm #14-16  
Disco Midge #18-22

**Drys:**

Olive Caddis #16-20  
X-Caddis #12-16  
Joe's Hopper #10-14  
Parachute Adams #12-16  
Trico Sparkle Spinner #22-28  
Olive Sparkle Dun #18  
Royal Wulff #16-18

**Directions:**

The Upper Owens River can be reached from Hwy 395 by way of Benton Crossing Road or from the Owens River Road, 7 miles north of Mammoth Lakes. The Upper Owens River consists of 15 miles of "Spring Creek" type of water flowing from it's headwaters at Big Springs and emptying into Lake Crowley. There are three ranches with private waters that start about a mile below Big Springs and extend about 4 miles to Long Ears. Access to Long Ears is about 5 miles downstream from Big Springs, turning left on a dirt road past the cattle guard. The Benton Crossing access has numerous dirt roads covering about 10 miles of the lower reaches to the river mouth. Hot Creek can be reached by taking Hot Creek Road directly off Hwy 395 next to the Mammoth Airport. Access at upper parking lot as well as the parking lot above the hot springs.

 Hot Creek Directions**Notes:**

The Upper Owens is one of the finest Spring-fed streams in the Sierra. It is best in the Spring when **Rainbows** come upriver from Crowley to spawn and in the Fall when the **Browns** make their migration. There is a one mile section below Big Springs campground which presents itself like a freestone stream with plenty of deep pools, eddies, and runs. The river then reaches a meadowland environment within Alper's and Arcularius Ranch. If not guests of those ranches, you can pick up the stream again at Long Ear's and have about 18 miles of meadow stream to the mouth of Crowley Lake.

During the early season in May casting Olive Caddis with a drag-free drift is preferred. Later in the month while the fish are returning to Crowley, using streamers and Beadhead nymphs will find the fish in deep undercuts and holes. By early July, most of the big fish have returned to Crowley but there are still plenty of smaller fish that will take dries. In October, the Browns make their way upriver. Use Streamers and weighted nymphs working the undercuts and holes. Most anglers prefer to use small nymphs like Copper Johns, Caddis pupa, midges, Prince Nymphs, Black caddis, and Flashbacks in sizes #16-20. The trick is to keep your nymphs small and on the bottom with lots of weight and sinking line. Also, stripping streamers like Olive Matukas, silver streamers, and Olive or Brown Woolly Buggers will take fish during the afternoons.

**Hot Creek** (*Click map for more detail*) is a small stretch of Spring Creek water open to the public below the Hot Creek Ranch. There is about 1 mile of stream available until the thermal springs occur. This water is strictly C&R with barbless flies. So surveys indicate that there are more fish(11,000) per that mile than any stream in the Sierras. Most of these fish are browns in the 8-12 inch class. Hot Creek heavily fished and the fish will be very wary of the presentation. The best time of the year to fish Hot Creek is the early summer when there is plenty of runoff the hatches are active. Caddis is your best bet with #16-20 dries, #18-20 emergers, and #18-20 green larvae patterns. Weeds tend to choke off Hot Creek in later part of summer in August and September for nymphs, this is a good time to try Trico's and Caddis patterns. The Dry Fly season picks up in October with onset of the Fall Baetis Hatch.

Guide **Tom Loe** of Sierra Drifters had a remarkable Brown caught by his client, Dr. Cary Kutzke, during the Opener weekend of May '06. It was a 27 inch, te brown. Large browns cannot migrate up to Hot Creek from the Owens River due to the thermal springs in the lower reaches of Hot Creek. Therefore, this big was a wild, home-grown.



Loe's Brown

## Fishing Regulations (Effective March 1st, 2021)

**Deadman Creek downstream from Hwy 395 to Big Springs.:**

Open all year. 0 trout. Only artificial lures with barbless hooks. Creek is often dry just above Big Springs.

**Upper Owens River from Benton Bridge road crossing upstream to Big Springs.:**

Open all year. 0 trout. Only artificial lures with barbless hooks.

**Upper Owens River from Benton Bridge crossing to Crowley Lake:**

Last Saturday in April through July 31st. No restrictions, 5 trout.

Aug 1st through Nov 15. Artificial lures, 18 inch minimum, 2 trout.

**Hot Creek (Mono Co.). Hot Creek from the State hatchery property line to the confluence with the Owens River.:**

All year. Only artificial flies with barbless hooks may be used. 0 trout.

**All other creeks and tributaries:**

From the last Saturday in April through November 15, five trout daily bag limit, 10 trout in possession; and, from November 16 through the Friday preceding the Saturday in April, 0 trout bag limit, artificial lures with barbless hooks only and trout must be released unharmed and not removed from the water.

**Lake Crowley**



Lake Crowley

**Fishing Map Available**

Covers the water of Lake Crowley. Shows lake topography, GPS Long./Lat., camping areas, road access, and below-surface stream channels. Special Features are Suggested Flies, Midging Rigs, Streamer Tactics, Fishing Season and Regulations, Fish Identification, Where to Fish, Catch & Release Procedures, and Stream Etiquette guidelines. Printed on Rite-in-the-Rain Paper that will allow you to write those special notes. Waterproof and Durable.

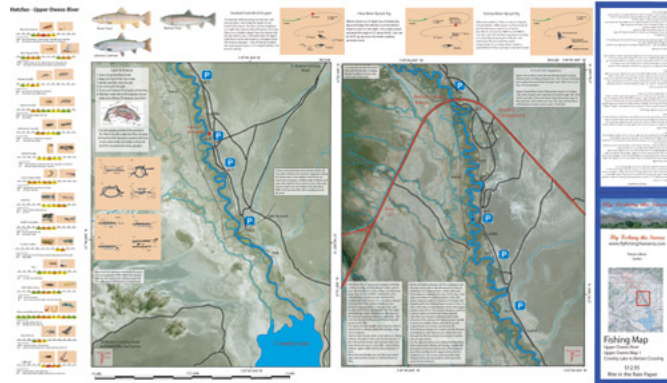
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**Upper Owens 1, Lake Crowley to Benton Bridge Crossing**

Map of Upper Owens River



Covers the Owens River between the mouth of Crowley Lake to Benton Crossing Bridge. Satellite photo background depicts vegetation surrounding the river. Shows camping areas, GPS Long./Lat., road access, trails, and fences. Access through the Stream Fence are shown. Special Features are the Hatch Chart, Fishing Season and Regulations, Fish Identification, Catch & Release Procedures, Nymphing Rigs, Knots, and Stream Etiquette guidelines. Printed on Rite-in-the-Rain Paper that will allow you to write those special notes. Waterproof and Durable.

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**Upper Owens 2, Benton Bridge Crossing to 1/2 mile below Long Ears**



Upper Owens 2

Covers the Owens River between the Benton Crossing Bridge to 1/2 mile below Long Ears. Satellite photo background depicts vegetation surrounding the river. Shows camping areas, GPS Long./Lat., road access, trails, and fences. Access through the Stream Fence are shown. Special Features are the Hatch Chart, Fishing Season and Regulations, Fish Identification, Catch & Release Procedures, Nymphing Rigs, Knots, and Stream Etiquette guidelines. Printed on Rite-in-the-Rain Paper that will allow you to write those special notes. Waterproof and Durable.

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Covers the Owens River between 1/2 mile below Long Ears to the Arcularius Fence. Satellite photo background depicts vegetation surrounding the river. Shows GPS Long./Lat., road access, trails, and fences. Access through the Stream Fence are shown. Special Features are the Hatch Chart, Fishing Season and Regulations, Fish Identification, Catch & Release Procedures, Nymphing Rigs, Knots, and Stream Etiquette guidelines. Printed on Rite-in-the-Rain Paper that will allow you to write those special notes. Waterproof and Durable.

**Upper Owens 3, 1/2 mile below Long Ears to Arcularius Fence**

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