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Upper Basin South Fork Kings River



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Suggested Flies for Upper Basin South Fork Kings area:

Dry Flies:

Parachute Adams #12
Elk Hair Caddis #14-16
Stimulator #12
Madam X #10-12
Royal Wulff #12

Nymph Flies:

Pheasant Tail Nymph #14-18
Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear #14-18
Prince Nymph #14-18
Bird's Nest #14-18
Bird's Stonefly Nymph #8-10
Copper John, Black #18-22

Terrestrials:

Muddler Minnow #8-10
Woolly Bugger, Black or Olive #8-10

Directions:

The most direct route to this region is from Taboose Pass, this pass is regarded as one of the most difficult access trails into the Sierra Crest due to the 6000 vertical feet that must be climbed within the first 6 miles of the hike. There is little cover and the trail can be quite hot during the Summer. The trailhead starts about 5. miles from Hwy 395 at 5,400' elevation taking Taboose Creek Road. Once over the pass, it is about 2.5 miles to the junction of the PCT/JMT.

Notes:

Kings Canyon National Park encompasses the Upper Basin of the SF Kings River. Prior to 1973, many of the streams and lakes were planted with trout. This practice had some drawbacks to the native biota such as amphibians. After 1988, all fish planting within the park was discontinued. Park streams and lakes were managed for a sustainable fishery. Those streams and lakes that could not support a fishery were allowed to go fishless. However, by 1990, it was evident that certain amphibians such as the Mountain Yellow Legged Frog (MYLF) had not recovered enough and a management plan was implemented to eradicate certain lakes and streams of non-native fish. By 2013, 15 lakes and ponds were eradicated of fish. Over the next 25 years, the Park intends to eradicate another 70 lakes, streams, and marshes to reach a 15% level of fishless habitat. Most of these fish removals are within the higher elevations of the park and many are fishless due to the unsustainability of fish within these waters due to lack of food source, lack of spawning grounds, and shallow depths lacking winter survival during freezing periods. This area is the headwaters for the South Fork of the Kings River. The PCT/JMT trail travels through this region from Mather Pass to the north and exiting by way of Pinchot Pass south of Marjorie Lake. There are excellent camping locations along either Bench Lake or Lake Marjorie. Goldens were planted within the Upper Basin during the early 1900's and a self-sustaining population exists within the streams. Most of these waters will continue to sustain the Goldens. However, two small sub-basin lakes have been gill netted to be fishless.

Upper Basin

Other lakes to note:

Bench Lake: (elevation 10,495') This lake has had a long history as a destination for camping, angling and photography. The views are spectacular from the bench position which the lake resides. John Muir visited this area and the impressions he received helped to convince others to create the Kings Canyon National Park. Bench Lake is a little unusual from other high elevation lakes for the Brown trout that reside within. It has Browns 10-14" and Rainbows from 8 inches. With Brookies and Goldens residing near Marjorie, you can easily get the Sierra Grand Slam of all four species within the same day.

Marjorie Lake: (elevation 11,148') has skinny Brookies 8-10 inches. Most of the smaller lakes along the PCT near Marjorie will also have Brookies.

The trail along the SF Kings ends once it enters the Muro Blanco area. You will have to Bushwhack from there downstream to Woods Creek.

Taking the Red Lake Trail behind Fish Springs off Hwy 395. The trail proceeds to **Red Lake** (11.64 acres) at 10,457' elevation, which contains Goldens. The creek, **Red Mountain Creek**, and the two small ponds below Red Lake also contain Goldens.

Fishing Regulations (Effective March 1st, 2021)

Upper Basin Lakes:

Open all year. No restrictions. 5 trout per day. 10 trout in possession.

All other lakes within John Muir Wilderness:

Open all year. No restrictions. 5 trout per day. 10 trout in possession.

All 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 last 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.