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Bishop Creek



Bishop Creek

Suggested Flies for Bishop Creek:
Eastern Sierra Hatch Selection

Nymphs:
Prince Nymph #20
Hare's Ear Nymph #20

Drys:
Parachute Adams #18-20
Royal Wulff #16-18
BWO Sparkle Dun #18-20
BWO Parachute Dun #18-20

Streamers:
Woolly Bugger #10

Directions:

From Highway 395 in downtown Bishop, turn west on Line Street / Hwy 168 and drive 18 miles to Lake Sabrina. The day use parking is at the end of the road. At 168 is the South Lake turnoff. Going past the turnoff on Hwy 168 you go through the community of Aspendell and the North Fork turnoff is 2 miles past Aspendell.

To go to south fork of Bishop Creek, turn left at fork; follow South Fork upstream 5 miles toward Weir Lake.

To go to the north fork of Bishop Creek, turn right at the North Lake turnoff 2 miles south of Aspendell.

Notes:

Bishop Creek is ten miles long and is the largest tributary of the Owens River. There are two major dams on Bishop Creek at Lake Sabrina and South Lake. Below Lake Sabrina, Bishop Creek has 5 smaller dams known as Intakes for power generation. Bishop Creek also has three forks: North, Middle, and South. The North Fork flows into North Lake and is unimpaired with a dam. The Middle Fork flows into Lake Sabrina and joins the North Fork just southeast of the community of Aspendell. The South Fork flows through South Lake and combines with the Middle and North Forks about 2.5 miles northeast of Aspendell. At this point the three forks are one creek flowing northeasterly into the City of Bishop.

Lake Sabrina: Sabrina Lake is 200 acres in size at 9,130 feet elevation. It was created by an earthen dam built in 1908. It's also a very popular destination with a marina and the small community of Aspendell is nearby with some provisions available. It is heavily stocked with 30,000 10-12 inch **Rainbows** each season. The lake record for Rainbow is 15 Lbs. 12 oz. The lake also contains **Brookies**. Sabrina Lake is deep, so most flyfishing options are along the southern shore near the inlets. Along Hwy 168, is Intake 2 which can be float tubed and can hold some fairly large Rainbows and **Browns**. Bishop Creek, below Sabrina Lake, is also heavily used by roadside fishermen. It is heavily planted with Rainbows but also consists of Brookies and Browns. Your best flyfishing opportunities, however, are within the backcountry. The season is last Saturday of April to October 31st. Often, the lake is froze over until late May so that only ice-fishing is available until the thaw. Sabrina Lake Backcountry has it's own bowl of lakes with exclusive access. *Click Lake Sabrina on the map above for details.*

The **Middle Fork** below Lake Sabrina gets a lot of fishing pressure since over 40,000 rainbow trout are planted within these waters annually on a biweekly basis. It contains a large number of wild trout in Browns, Brookies, and Rainbows. Both sides of the creek have fishermen trails and the overstory cover is often trimmed by fishermen. There are a couple of large pools directly below the dam usually with some large Rainbows staring up at you. These pools get so much attention that the trout actually grin at your offering. Better fly fishing is downstream of these pools. The creek flows with a moderate 2% gradient for the first mile to the North Lake. This section has a gravel substrate and is heavily planted with hatchery rainbows. Just beyond the North Lake Road crossing, the creek drops at an 8% gradient into a canyon with pocket pools and glacial deposits. Hatchery Rainbows descending from their placements upstream will be in the pocket pools. The creek has a moderate once it reaches the confluence of the North Fork just upstream of Cardinal Resort and continues with this gradient to Intake 2. This section contains mostly Brown class and planted Rainbows. About 19,000 Rainbows are planted between Cardinal and Intake 2, annually. The stream has a gravel/cobble substrate with some large pocket water, and plunge pools. This section also has some nice wide riffle water.

Intake 2 often gets planted with Rainbows, including Trophy Size Rainbows. The shoreline is heavily fished by bait or lure fishermen, fly fishermen prefer to tug stream float tube.

The **North Fork** Bishop Creek below North Lake meanders through a meadow and cascades down to Cardinal Village. The section of the creek near Cardinal Village contains a large number of wild trout in Browns, Brookies, and Rainbows. Just below North Lake, where the creek runs through a meadow, the creek has excellent cover with overhanging undercut banks and pools. There will be about an equal mix of Browns and Brookies of over 3500 trout per mile. There will also be a number of Rainbows as CDFW stream with over 20,000 rainbows annually.

The **South Fork** runs for about 6 miles below South Lake. There is a pool called the **Weir Pond** below the dam which is planted with trophy sized Rainbows. The area is of activity and the trout become quite educated. The Tyee trailhead starts at 9,100 feet elevation just below the lake and proceeds along its eastern shoreline for about 1/2 mile. The trail forks to the left taking you up a ridge toward the Tyee Lakes where you can take the trail further down to South Lake Road for an exit. Along the trail is:

Little George Lake: About 2.3 miles from the trailhead at 10,160 feet. Consists of small Brookies.

George Lake: 2.7 miles from the trailhead at 10,700 feet. Consists of Brookies.

Tyee Lakes: Going over an 11,500 foot ridge you drop into Tyee Lakes, about 4.25 miles from the trailhead at 11,000 feet. There are 6 lakes within this group stream a mile. Lakes #1, 4, and 5 contain brookies and rainbows. Lake #2 contains just Brookies and Lake #6 contains just Rainbows. Lake #3 is managed as "fishless". The lowest elevation is 10,300 feet. The nearest exit is 1.5 miles further downstream where the trail meets South Lake Road at the Tyee Lakes trailhead.

The first mile of the **South Fork** below the lake is a high gradient of 11% with stair stepping riffles and small pools. This section has a mix of Browns and Rainbow 2200 trout per mile. The next mile is much more moderate with a 4% gradient. This section has pocket water, runs and riffles, boulder, cobble, sand and gravel, and banks. This section has mostly Browns, up to 4000 per mile, and a few Rainbows. About three miles below the dam, the creek enters a long stretch of a 5% gradient traditional riffles and runs, a few pools. It is boulder dominant with good cover and undercut banks. Mostly Browns numbering about 1400 fish per mile and average 6 inches.

The South Fork converges with the Middle Fork near Big Trees Campground to form **Bishop Creek**. From Intake 2 to the confluence with South Fork, this section has a gradient of close to 6% and consists of stair-stepping pools and riffles, boulder and cobble substrate with a fair cover from the boulders. From Big Trees to Intake 3, this section that is about 3/4 mile in length. This section has cascading glacial deposits, boulder cover, and pocket water. The section consists of Browns with a density of about 1000 per mile averaging about 6-8 inches. The next section of Bishop Creek downstream of Intake 3 has cascading glacial deposits, fair cover, pocket water. It runs about 1/2 mile with a gradient of 5.4%. This section is under a minimum requirement to maintain a stream flow of at least 13 cfs. The section consists of Browns averaging about 1000 fish per mile with a 6-8 inch size. Downstream of Intake 4, Bishop Creek enters a steeper canyon with a gradient of over 10% to the confluence of Coyote Creek, at Intake 5. This section has both Rainbows and Browns. Below Coyote Creek, Bishop Creek consists of riffles and runs with a substrate of cobble and sand to Intake 5. It still has Rainbows but the numbers drastically decrease to about 1200 per mile and the size is usually less than 6 inches.

Bishop Creek enters Bishop near Bulpitt Park. Within this area CDFW will plant about 2000 Rainbows annually around the park.

For the adventurer 4WD, **Rocky Bottom Lake** and **Funnel Lake** both have a good population of Rainbows in the 12-14 inch size class.

Fishing Regulations (Effective March 1st, 2021)

Bishop Creek:

From the last Saturday in April through November 15, 5 trout daily bag limit, 10 trout in possession; and, from November 16 through the Friday preceding the last day in April, 0 trout bag limit, artificial lures with barbless hooks only and trout must be released unharmed and not removed from the water.

Sabrina Lake:

Last Saturday in Apr. through Nov. 15. No restrictions. 5 trout per day. 10 trout in possession.

All Lakes and Reservoirs in Inyo and Mono Counties (except Bridgeport Reservoir and tributaries; Convict Lake; Crowley Lake; George Lake; Grant Lake; Gulches Lake; Horseshoe Lake; June Lake; Lundy Lake; Mamie Lake; Mary Lake; Rock Creek Lake; Sabrina Lake; Silver Lake; South Lake; Twin Lakes (Mammoth); Twin Lakes (Inyo); Virginia Lake, Lower and Upper):

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

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