



## Mammoth Backcountry



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Suggested Flies for Mammoth Backcountry area:  
[Eastern Sierra Hatch Selection](#)

Other Local Favorites:

- Dry Flies:**  
[Parachute Adams #16-18](#)  
[Olive Caddis #16-18](#)  
[Royal Wulff #16-18](#)  
[Griffith's Gnat #16-18](#)  
[Henry's Fork Hopper](#)  
[Chernobyl Ant](#)

- Nymph Flies:**  
[Hare's Ear #16-18](#)  
[Prince Nymph #16-18](#)  
[Pheasant Tail Nymph #16-18](#)

Directions:

Enter the town of Mammoth Lakes from Hwy 395, take Lake Mary Road to the Duck Pass Trailhead, Lake George to Crystal Lake and Deer Lake Trailhead. Or Gondola Station at Mammoth Ski Resort and take shuttle to Rainbow Falls. Trail follows Crater Creek and drops into Fish Creek at Island Crossing.

**Notes:**

The Mammoth Backcountry consists of a chain of lakes upstream along Mammoth Creek from Lake Mary. The trail goes over Duck Pass and drops into Du Purple Lake and Fish Creek. You can loop back to Mammoth following Fish Creek into Fish Valley and head back up to Rainbow Falls near Devil's Postpile will get you back to Mammoth.

From the Duck Pass Trailhead at 9,200', the trail takes you to **Duck Lake** on about a 2.5 hour (3.5 mile) hike going up to 10,450'. Duck Lake consists of **Ra Brookies**. The 'bows can get up to 2-5 lbs. in this lake. Nearby **Pika Lake** also contains Rainbows and Brookies. Going further past Duck Lake, you reach 9,900' elevation from the PCT. Purple Lake has Rainbows, Brookies, and some Golden/Hybrids. Continuing south on the PCT from Purple Lake is **Lake Vir** acres) at an elevation of 10,320 feet known for large Golden's. They have been planted since the 1930's and the California State record was caught here in at 9 lbs 8 ounces. The lake does not have adequate spawning tributaries to enhance the population but does have a rich source of insect life to allow the fe get to a size of 11-16 inches. Distance from Duck Pass Trailhead is 12 miles.

The first part of the trail is a moderate hike going to Arrowhead, Skelton, and Barney Lake. **Arrowhead Lake** (12 Acres) is about one mile from the trailhead shaped like an arrowhead with a large rock outcropping on the southern end. The preferred areas to fish are the inlet and outlets of this lake. A side-trail will the lake. Arrowhead Lake holds Brookies and Kamloop Rainbows of a smaller size, 10-13". **Skelton Lake** (9,900' ele) is about 1/2 mile further or another 1: Skelton is a 12 acre lake with Brookies. Fish the inlet side among the reed beds. **Barney Lake** and **Red Lake** is another 3/4 mile or 30 minute hike further a Barney, a 9 acre lake, fish the shoreline opposite the trail. Both lakes contain Brookies. Barney Lake was named after Bridgeport resident, Barney Peeler. **Woods Lakes**, a lower and upper. The lower lake has brookies while the upper lake contain Rainbows.

From the Duck Pass Trailhead you can take a different trail going to Emerald Lake and also back to Lake George. **Emerald Lake** contains Brookies. Hammil Lake and Way Lake can be reached by going off-trail from Emerald to the West. **Hammil Lake** contains Brookies while **Way Lake** is fishless.

At the Duck Lake Trailhead is another trail that veers to the east to **Heart Lake**. Heart Lake is at 9600 feet and is less than a mile from the trailhead. Heart Lake contains Brookies.

**Crystal Lake** (13 acres) can be accessed by the trailhead at Lake George, elevation 9160 feet. It's a 45 minute hike going a little over one mile and a 600' elevation gain to 9550 feet. Crystal has been identified with Brooks, Rainbows, and Browns in the 9-12" size. However, a survey by DFG in 2003 indicates that only a self-sustaining population of Golden's exist. About 4.5 miles from the Lake George Trailhead are the **Deer Lakes**. There are three lakes of about 10 acres each at 10,600 feet elevation and a 2200 foot gain. Each lake contains Rainbows. The waters of Deer Creek below the lakes to the PCT also have Rainbows.

From Rainbow Falls TH, you follow the trail along Crater Creek. There is no access to the MF San Joaquin due to the steep topography. The trail reaches Fish Creek at Island Crossing. Continue upstream as the canyon gets steep and impassible going downstream. Fish Creek has plenty of Brookies and Rainbows. The trail reaches Iva Bell Hot Springs and connects back to Fish Creek with nearby Second Crossing.

**Sharktooth Lake:** Fishing is considered poor here.

**Sharktooth Creek:** Paiute Cutthroats were planted here in 1968 and covers a 2 mile stretch of the stream. Surveys have been conducted in 5 year interval with the determination that a stable population continues with most fish in the 6-9 inch class. The stream has some good natural barriers near the confluence Lost Keys Lake and a low gradient section upstream where the cutthroats were placed. Beyond this section is a steep gradient to the outflow of Sharktooth stream is open to fishing since the Paiutes are not within it's native range and is difficult to access.

**Lost Keys Lakes:** There are three lakes about 5 acres in size. Each lake has self-sustaining populations of Rainbow Trout. Going off-trail you can reach th Lakes, the largest lake also has Rainbows.

**Long Canyon Creek:** This creek is a small, rapid, alpine trout stream that contains brookies. Good Access with trail following the creek.

**Marsh Lake:** This lake is fishless.

Downstream from Island Crossing is the confluence of Fish Creek with **Stairway Creek**. Stairway Creek is of note since Paiute Cutthroats have been planted creek as well as Sharktooth Creek. The Paiutes were planted in 1972. Surveys have found stable populations within the creek of 4-7 inches. The creek in it except from the westside at Mammoth Trailhead. Both ends of the creek have extreme gradients and the fish remain within the moderate gradient of the str trail (26E16) terminates. See **Isberg Pass** (West Side Sierra)

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

### Duck Pass Lakes from Lake Mary to Barney Lake:

Open all year, 5 trout daily bag limit, 10 trout in possession.

### Duck Lake and Deer Lakes:

Open all year, 5 trout daily bag limit, 10 trout in possession.

### All lakes and reservoirs except those in Inyo and Mono counties with exceptions :

Open all year, 5 trout daily bag limit, 10 trout in possession.

### All other 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 0 trout bag limit, artificial lures with barbless hooks only and trout must be released unharmed and not removed from the water.