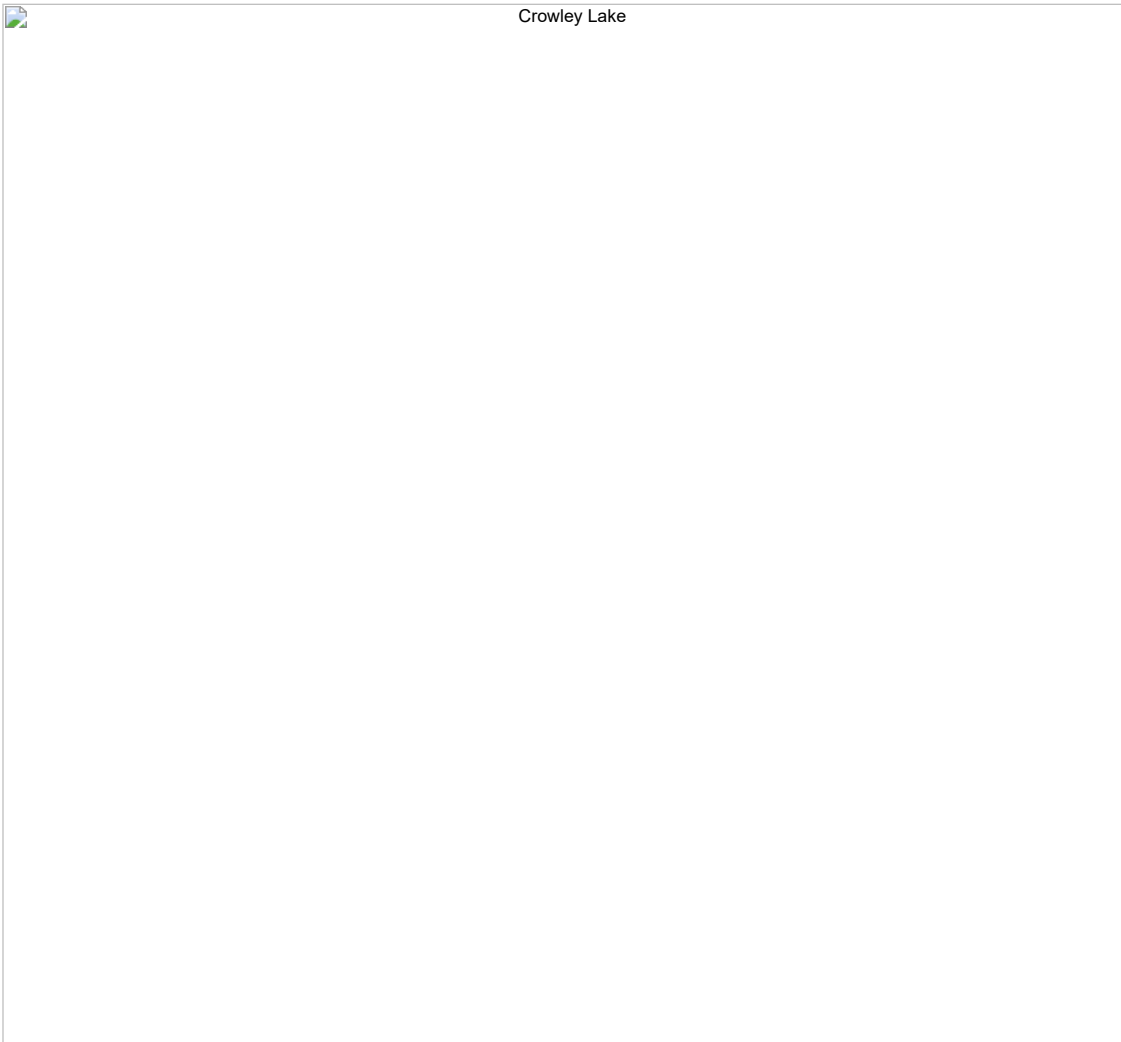




Crowley Lake



Crowley Lake

Suggested Flies for Crowley Lake area:
Eastern Sierra Hatch Selection

Other Local Favorites:

- Streamers:
- Perfection Perch #8-12
 - Punk Perch #8-16
 - Woolly Bugger #8-10
 - Cole Bugger #8-10

Midges

- Optimidge #14-22
- Zebra Midge #14-22
- Drifter's Crystal Midge #14-22
- Disco Midge #14-22
- Drifter's Gilly #14-18


Nymphs

- Barr's Damsel #8-10
- Flashback Pheasant Tail #14-18
- Prince Nymph #10-14
- Bird Nest #10-14
- Burk's Damsel Nymph #10-14

Denny's Seal Bugger #8-10
Cinnamon Twin Lake Special #8-10
Brown Mohair Leech #8-10
Marabou Muddler #6-10
Olive Matuka #6-10
Hornberg #8-14
Loeberg #12-14
Grey Ghost #10-12

Directions:

Hwy. 395. 10 miles east of Mammoth Lakes at an elevation of 6,720 feet. This eastern Sierra reservoir, created in 1941, has 45 miles of shoreline and is located 28 miles north of Bishop, and 15 miles southeast of Mammoth Lakes.

 Crowley LakeDirections

Notes:

Crowley is best fished from either a boat or float tube. It is a rather large lake at 6,500 acres with plenty of weed beds and shallows holding "trophy-size" trout and perch. The lake was created in 1941 when L.A. Water & Power dammed the Owens River. Best tubing is at Green Banks, Alligator Point, Layton Springs, Sandy Point, and McGee or Hilton Bay. McGee and Hilton Bays are particularly good in the mid-summer months. They are shallow flat feeding areas located within major springs and are nearby the outlets of spring creeks. This keeps these areas high with oxygenated water and extensive weedbeds. An afternoon Easterly wind occurs during many afternoons which brings cool water from the deeper Eastern shore to these areas. This wind creates favorable currents that maintain these shallow areas with cooler waters. Use sinking lines with 2x to 3x tippets for streamers. Floating lines with a 9 foot leader and indicator is the choice for nymphs and midges with a 5x or 6x tippet. The fish can be hitting flies anywhere from the surface to about 12 feet in depth. Select the proper sinking line, accordingly. A 5wt to 7wt rod is your best choice.

 MF San Joaquin

The Fish

There are four types of **Rainbows** in the lake: Coleman, Kamloop, Eaglelake, and Colemankamloop hybrids, along with **Lahontan cutthroat** and **Brown** trout. Crowley once held the state record for Browns at 25 lbs. Now, it is the large Rainbow strains that gives Crowley a long and unique fly fishing season.

According to Curt Milliron, fishery biologist at DFG's Bishop Station, "The three strains really complement each other, the Kamloops are a good shallow-water fish, anglers get a lot of these early, but they are also running into the tributaries and spawning at the time of the opening weeks of the season. So as those fish come recover, they give a second bump to the fishery in June and July. You'll notice the Kamloops from their aerial leaps and aggressive runs. The Coleman fish are in deeper water for the opener. They are pelagic fish, so the trolls get into a lot of these fish in the middle of the lake." The Coleman also do not hold only a 4% success rate.

Milliron also said the Eagle Lake trout spawn in the spring, but noted that even the smaller ones don't get caught early. "They tend to show up in July. They also capacity to survive for more than one year, and they provide a lot of the larger fish that people catch. They probably survive 10 times better than the Kamloops." These often show up as 2 1/2-pounders or larger fish the following year". The Eagle Lake trout have large spots, big shoulders and a small head for a classic "fish". Eagle Lake Trout and the Lahontan Cutthroat are the only trout native to the Eastern Sierras. Hot Creek Hatchery plants 15,000 to 30,000 Lahontan Cutthroats 10" size. Some now reach 18" in the lake.

During the Fall, many of the larger fish provide a lot of the action. These fish are either the wild fish spawned from Crowley's tributaries or holdovers from the previous stocking. Two types of Browns are planted within Crowley, the Scottish "Loch Levens" and the Germanic "Von Behrs". The Hot Creek Hatchery has planted 50,000 fingerlings in the 6"-10" size into Crowley Lake since 2008 annually. These are triploid trout so they cannot reproduce but they do grow to a large size quickly. They were introduced illegally in the early 1960's and the State Record of 3 lbs. 10 oz was caught at Crowley. About 400,000 Rainbows are planted in the Spring, up to 100,000 Kamloops, 150,000 Eagle Lake Strain, and 150,000 Coleman Strain. Another 50,000 are planted in the fall near the season end. Many of these will hold following Spring.

Techniques

Most of the flyfishing is done by using Chironomid-type midges (ie Zebra midge), with an indicator generally at 8-11 feet depth. Local Guides, Mike Peters and I developed a successful midging technique that is being used widely among anglers at Crowley. They use a 2-3 midge rig using Disco, Zebra, or similar midges. These midges are spaced about 6 inches apart and are fished about 6 inches from the bottom. You can use a hemostat attached to the dropper fly to ascertain Adjust your indicator accordingly. Many guides like to use a larva imitation as the dropper with a bead head pupa on the top. When the hatch is fully under way, use a bead-head pupa for the dropper and a bead head emerger on top. If only one fly is getting hit, tie on both the same. A strike indicator is set to help ascertain total control as well as indicating strikes. They apply no movement to the fly as they found that movement generally kept the trout from striking the midge. A split shot the top fly helps to keep tension on the leader. Starting in 2004, many guides were switching from a 3X tapered leader to a straight piece of 8 foot 3X Fluorocarbon 4X or 5X Fluorocarbon tippet tied to it. The thinner diameter of the leader allows the midges to sink more rapidly and the fluorocarbon creates a more invisible color. Bugger or leech patterns trailed by a Beaded Nymph like a Prince Nymph can be a killer combination in a trolling/stripping situation. At times, particularly during trout are chasing perch fry and streamer patterns like the Hornberg and Mohair Leech work well.

The Season

The opening season usually finds fish around the mouth of the Owens River for the Spring Spawning runs. Trout will also congregate around Layton Springs as since the spring will warm up the chilly water early in the season. Sometime in mid-June, the lake will turnover which will make flyfishing difficult. Algae will increase warming waters and weedbeds have yet to develop. During this time, McGee Bay is usually the best option since there is oxygenated water near the creek inlet remain within a thermocline and will seek the areas where the creeks enter the lake as at McGee, Crooked Creek and Hilton Bay. These conditions may persist in additional onset of Daphnia, a microscopic arthropod, causing a shutdown on the trout bite.

In June and July, a damselfly hatch comes off in which stillwater nymphing with Damselfly Nymph patterns can be rewarding. Local Guide, **Tom Loe**, gives some good nymphing:

"The damselfly hatch is a great time to pull imitations of the nymphs #10-14 with a light to moderate sink tip or floating line. Find a weed line or scum line with the current or wind and stay on the leading edge of this as long as you can. Damselflies lay their eggs on this dead vegetation and feed on spent material have accumulated on these unattractive but lucrative fishing areas. The trout will "migrate" with these rafts of dead weed hoping to ambush a damselfly nymph. If you have never experienced a grab on a damselfly now is the time! Fish the nymphs using multiple rapid movements by pulling or stripping the quickly and aggressively. Allow the fly to stop dead and sink periodically, this is called a pause. The grab comes more times than not after a pause. Try to rod tip at an angle when tugging damselfly imitations, you will understand when you break off a time or two after a hard take when the rod can't absorb the bending!"

During July, weed beds form up to 14 feet deep and the fish will reside within the channels of the weedbeds. This can be a great time to fish Crowley. The algae and the water clarity has improved. Perch Fry and Damselfly nymphs will be taking refuge in the weedbeds and working the weedbeds with Buggers, horn damselfly nymphs will be productive. Most of the chironomid hatches will be taking place during the morning. Prime areas are Layton Springs, Green Bank Bay. The weeds start to die off by late July due to water draw-down and are usually gone by September. When the water temperature drops in August, the regrowth of the Algae again. The fish will usually be found in 10-14 feet of water and your best locations are the oxygenated ones like Leighton Springs and Chironomid Hatches will be the predominant food source. September can be the best month of the year, despite the die-off of the weedbeds. The Perch Fry cover and the trout are after them. Use Hornbergs and Buggers with an intermediate line fishing 5-10 feet. McGee is a consistent location, although Green had some excellent years. Chironomid hatches will also extend throughout most of the day. Crowley Lake offers a "Double-Haul" Tournament around the 1st of September. Try to get your fishing in prior to this date as the 400 contestants create an impact on the fishery that lasts a week or two. The fishery usually closes this tournament by early October. Most of the larger fish stage up along Green Banks and Leighton Springs for the Fall spawning up the Owens River. Striped and Stillwater Nymphs are your best bet. By late October, the City of L.A. starts to lower the water level of the lake and this has a significant effect on the temperatures also reduce the Chironomid hatches. Crowley closes up to fishing on November 15th.

The Tributaries

The major tributary is the Owens River which enters Crowley Lake at the North Arm. There are a number of access roads to reach this area extending from the crossing down to the lake. The fishing can be quite good throughout the season for both Browns and Rainbows. A boundary marker was established in a river between the bridge crossing and the mouth of the lake for protection of spawners. This boundary marker is no longer used. The Upper Owens between the Benton Crossing to Lake Crowley is now open from the last Saturday of April through July 31st. with no gear restrictions, 5 trout limit and switches to a 2 trout minimum) using artificial lures only, from Aug 1st to November 15th.

Smaller tributaries are Convict Creek, McGee Creek, Hilton Creek, Whiskey Creek, and Crooked Creek. All of these creeks receive a Spring spawning run of rainbows and a Fall spawning run of Browns and Coleman rainbows. Recently, there have also been Spring runs of Lahontan Cutthroats into the tributaries McGee and Convict Creeks tend to be more popular due to size. On Convict Creek, there is a study area (UC Berkeley) next to Benton Crossing road, the fishing. Below the study area, Convict Creek is open to fishing from the Saturday preceding Memorial Day through Sept 30th. with a 5 trout limit and no gear restrictions. These regulations apply to the other tributaries as well, with the exception of Crooked Creek. You cannot fish Crooked Creek below the Los Angeles gauging station above the gauging station, Crooked Creek has a zero limit with barbless artificial lures or flies and is open year round. The Los Angeles gauging station is southbound lane.

The lake has a full-service marina. There is also a good unpaved road along its northeast side. A four mile drive on a washboard dirt road access the north Benton Crossing Road off US 395. Season opens on Crowley the last Saturday in April until Nov 15th. From the Opener to July 31st, there is a 5-trout limit open to both lures and bait. Special regulations exist from August 1st until November 15th with limits of two Trout, 18 inches or larger. and you must use artificial lures.

Fishing Regulations (Effective March 1st, 2021)

Crowley Lake (Mono Co.). (See individual listings for regulations on tributary waters which include: Convict, Crooked, Hilton, Hot, McGee, and Whiskey and the upper Owens River.):

Crowley Lake within 1,800 feet of the outlet dam (this area is marked with a series of buoys). Closed to all fishing all year for safety purposes.

Crowley Lake, except for the closed area near the outlet dam (see above). Last Saturday in Apr. through July 31. No gear restrictions. 5 trout per day.

Aug. 1 through Nov. 15. Minimum size limit: 18 inches total length. Only artificial lures may be used. 2 trout.

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.

Whiskey Creek and Hilton Creek downstream from Crowley Lake Drive (old Highway 395):

Saturday preceding Memorial Day through Sept 30th, No restrictions, 5 trout. Summer only to protect Fall, Winter, and Spring spawning

Convict Creek and McGee Creek downstream of Hwy 395:

Saturday preceding Memorial Day through Sept 30th, No restrictions, 5 trout. Summer only to protect Fall, Winter, and Spring spawning

Crooked Creek below the City of Los Angeles gauging station.:

Closed to all fishing all year.

Crooked Creek above the City of Los Angeles gauging station.:

Open to fishing all year. Only artificial flies with barbless hooks may be used. 0 trout.

All other creeks and tributaries:

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

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.



Lake Crowley

\$12.95 pkg

Add to Cart

View Cart

© 2021 [Steve Schalla](#)

This page is not to be copied without my explicit permission.