

"Why-To" Fishing Tips

by Jeff Darlington



The two best times to fish is when it's rainin' and when it ain't. — Patrick F. McManus

If you've never read humorist Patrick McManus' work, you're missing some of the simplest distillations of outdoor enjoyment. The truism above reflects the level of fanaticism that anglers have for fishing: come hell or high water, anglers will grab their rod and reel and disappear for days at a time at the merest mention of phrases like "mayfly hatch," "lunker trout," or "don't tell nobody, but ..."

Simply put, fishing is one of the most rewarding activities one can enjoy in the outdoors. It combines the raw pleasure of the outdoors with complex feelings of hope and joy, longing and belonging, anticipation and reward. And if you're lucky, a good fishing trip can leave you about a pint short of adrenaline.

But fishing is so much more than just fish. Don't get me wrong, the thrill of hooking and landing a fish is one of the most electric feelings in the world. But what began as a rather unique method of subsistence hunting has evolved for myself and millions of other anglers into a leisure activity that allows one to experience the beauty of one's natural surroundings with all five (or more) senses. American outdoor writer Hal Borland wrote in 1954, "If you ever wondered why fishing is probably the most popular sport in this country, watch that boy beside the brook and you will learn. If you are really perceptive you

will. For he already knows that fishing is only one part fish."

Indeed, here in the Mono Basin, a half-day fishing trip can expose you to more beauty than most people see in a year. Open your senses to it, and you will be amazed.

... peering over a rock at a beautiful rainbow trout holding in the shade in Rush Creek, remembering the role of local anglers, CalTrout, and the Department of Fish & Game in securing minimum stream flows for the streams that feed Mono Lake.

... walking along Lee Vining Creek under the shade of willows, aspens, and cottonwoods, listening to songbirds and gulls as you choose your steps on the river rocks.

... flyfishing with a loved one in the Parker Lake shallows while dozens of Violet-green Swallows weave a tapestry of sight and sound in the air around you.

If you do it right, fishing is not just a pursuit of fish, but a spiritual communion with nature. I encourage you to give it a try here in the Mono Basin, and to drop by the Committee with a fishin' tale or two (the taller the better). 🐟

Jeff Darlington is the Committee's Office Director. He and his new wife Christiana love to spend time outdoors with their dog Malone.

Recommended Reading

The Mono Lake Committee carries several excellent fishing books. Here are some of my favorites:

- for the local angler: *Angler's Guide to the Eastern Sierra*, by John Barbier
- for the deep thinker: *Pavlov's Trout*, by Paul Quinnett
- for fans of wild fish and wild areas: *Pursuing Wild Trout*, by Bob Madgic
- for the comparison shopper: *California Fishing*, by Tom Stienstra
- for the trout enthusiast: *Sierra Trout Guide*, by Ralph Cutter
- for the naturalist: *Fishes of the Great Basin*, by William & John Sigler
- for anyone wanting to read a magical story about fishing, environmentalism, and life: *The River Why*, by David James Duncan

To order a book from the Mono Lake Committee Bookstore, email us at (bookstore@monolake.org) or call Ramona at (760) 647-6595. Or visit us in Lee Vining. Remember that proceeds from all sales in our bookstore (including fishing books!) benefit the protection and restoration of the Mono Basin. So if you're going to buy a fishing book, put your dollars to work by buying it here!