

LAKE ALMANOR IS HEATING UP!

By Doug Turner, Kittle's Staff Member

The roads are clear to Almanor and the lake is no longer holding ice as of this writing. Thanks to a great winter the lake is full and will hopefully stay that way through summer. Fishing activity has thus far been fairly light, but those that are out there are catching some quality fish. East Shore visibility continues to be limited due to heavy in-flows especially the Hamilton Branch, which is flowing high, fast and looks like chocolate milk. The West Shore visibility is better and has been producing fish to trollers and bank fishermen. Reports from local guides are revealing their clients are picking rainbows and browns in the 2-4 pound range. With warmer weather ahead the fishing will only get better. Water clarity should greatly improve in the next few weeks, barring more big spring storms. While the fish bite is nowhere near the "hot" category, it should get better every day and all indications are it's going to be a great season.

Trollers seem to be doing best right now fishing fast (2 ½ to 3 mph) using a variety of bright colors with dodgers and lures like the Speedy Shiner. Down-rigging or lead core at 8 to 15 seems to be the best depth right now. As the water clears and the smelt really begin to be the main thing on the menu for Bows and Browns, try switching to darker colors and smelt imitations. The "Hex Hatch" is not far off and the big trout will make that their favorite meal. Insect imitations or live baits like crickets and meal worms are a hot item jigging over the side. Trailing a crawler behind a dodger or running a naked crawler is a "go to" when others methods aren't producing. Now that the ice is gone and you can access most of the shoreline open to the public, bank fishermen



6.5 lbs. Rainbow Trout, July 2016

are having decent success. Try fishing "Geritol Cove" at the Canyon Dam boat ramp. Most of the "bankees" finding success, are floating aired up crawlers or dough baits off the bottom. As I mentioned above, the Hamilton Branch is un-fishable right now, but later in the summer it can be a hot spot for bank fisherman.

When we bought our place at Almanor a few years ago I was stoked when I found one of my neighbors was Duncan McIntyre a seasoned guide at the lake for many years. We hit it off right away and I found that he was very willing to share with me what works for him. On a warm day last July he called me and asked if I wanted to go out even though there was not much going on, as the bite had been in a slump for a week or so. Good quality fish were still being taken, but hookups were down and you had to work for them. I jumped at the chance as slow bite or not, because every moment I spend with him makes me a better fisherman. I am glad I decided to go, as we ended up having a very productive day. We put seven good fish in the boat averaging 4 pounds with the biggest a 6.5 rainbow. Slow and steady was the key. I learned more in one morning than I had trying to teach myself in three years up there. Duncan

is the owner of Mac's Lake Almanor Guide Service.

If you are new to fishing Almanor I strongly suggest you take the time and spend a little money to book one of the several great guide services there. You will not only catch fish, but beyond that you will learn how to fish there. I have always been impressed on how willing the guides are to share with you what works.

By this writing the smallmouth bass fishermen will be out and about fishing the shoreline and taking great quality fish.

I would like to make mention of the fact that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as decided that the Brown Trout should no longer be planted in the lake as they feel since it's a non-native fish to the lake it does not belong there. Locals here are now for the most part releasing the browns taken, to insure they will continue to flourish.

If you have questions regarding what tackle you will need for success, come in to Kittle's and see me or another staff member. We carry everything in the way of tackle, baits and lures you will need and all have been time tested at Almanor.

With Almanor only a couple hours' drive from the valley and the fact that it holds good water through the summer, I have always been amazed that there is not more fishing pressure. It's a big lake with plenty of room for everyone, so if you want a shot at taking a huge trout, land-locked King salmon or smallmouth it's a great bet. I will be out on the lake every free minute until late fall. I can easily be recognized, as I will be the guy in a green boat with a smile on my face.

Happy fishing!