

Lake Tulloch

Small lake, but large trout on the prowl offered

By Marvin Mitchum

Lake Tulloch is one of the smaller lakes in the Mother Lode chain of lakes. The lake is perched at an elevation of nine hundred feet. Because of the lower elevation and smaller size, it is known for great angling adventures for sizeable fish without a lot of competition from other anglers.

The lake offers exceptional fishing for large and smallmouth bass, rainbow trout, and panfish. There is a solid population of all species of fish

here. The potential of catching a 20-inch rainbow or a 3-pound smallmouth is excellent on Lake Tulloch.

Tulloch is known for its splendor and pristine scenery. Winter will bring heavy rain and impressive waterfalls off of Table Mountain. The magnificent rock formations carved by the glaciers are a marvelous site to see in the river canyon. Eagles and osprey soar above the canyon walls. If you are lucky you might see a deer taking a leisurely swim across the river.

In hunt of big rainbows, I start searching in late October and continue

through February. Water temperatures run in the 52–54 degree range. The lake has turned over and the larger trout are finally in the upper water level of the lake.

On a recent trip in early December, our plan was to fish streamers throughout the day in the Stanislaus River arm. After hours of casting with no success,

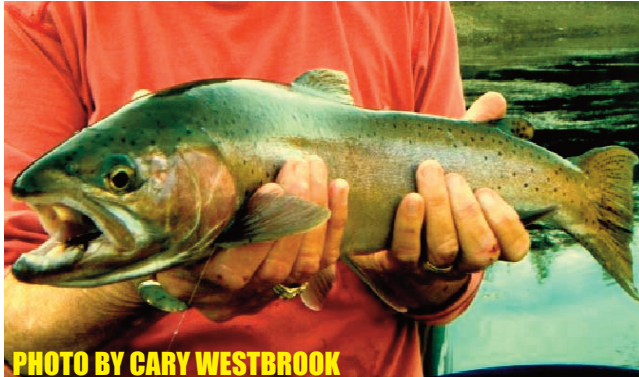


PHOTO BY CARY WESTBROOK

it was apparent these fish did not crave what we were offering. The morning was

overcast and windy, following a night that had been illuminated by a full moon - a few negative factors to overcome.

We decided to alter our game plan, leaving the main river and moving on to explore some of the smaller arms. When we arrived in the shallower water; it was still overcast but the water temperature had come up a degree or two and was very calm.

We noticed some decent sized fish cruising and without delay started casting streamers to some

very large rainbows in the 20-inch range. A few fish followed our offerings but did not strike. After evaluating the conditions, we noticed that the water was much clearer and calmer. We downsized to smaller streamers and immediately had very large fish on. We caught and released a few large and lively rainbows in the 16 to 22-inch range.

The morning was overcast and wintry; the afternoon was cloudy and balmy. The conditions were tough and we struggled for success. A point to remember: when they go after, but refuse your offering; downsize your fly.

As we started to head back to the dock, we marveled over the magnitude of the trout we had taken that day. We worked hard for a few good fish. When you chase large fish you usually do not see big numbers but it only takes catching a couple of exciting quality fish to make your day on Lake Tulloch.



PHOTO BY MARVIN MITCHUM

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