

# FLY FISH OREGON

## SOUTHEAST REGION



- Hex Cripple

## Amidst expansive desert landscapes, trophy trout abound!

At first glance, the vast expanses of semi-arid southeastern Oregon might not appear to hold much of interest to fly anglers. Look closer, however, and you'll find some extremely rich trout fisheries. In the Klamath Basin, the Williamson and Wood Rivers and Upper Klamath Lake are legend for their trophy rainbows. Push further east, and you'll encounter some stellar desert streams (like the Owyhee, Blitzen and Malheur), and memorable stillwater fisheries, like Mann Lake. You'll drive a few extra miles to reach these waters, but the rewards for your perseverance are uncrowded stream banks, unwary trout, and some breathtaking Great Basin landscapes that quickly take you back to the time when only the Paiute, Klamath and Modoc peoples wandered this vast land.

### FLY FACT:

*The Hex Cripple is a fly pattern that imitates a crippled or injured Hexagenia mayfly – the largest mayfly in North America. This insect is large enough to interest even the huge Rainbow trout of the famous Williamson River in Southern Oregon. It is customarily fished from dusk until dark.*

## Noteworthy Fisheries

### UPPER KLAMATH LAKE

Oregon's largest lake holds some of the largest wild rainbow trout in the lower 48. Fish of 10 to 12 pounds are available in good numbers, and bigger ones are there. To effectively chase the lunkers, you'll need a float tube or boat; large streamer and leech patterns are your best bet.

### WILLIAMSON RIVER

When Upper Klamath Lake warms up, the big rainbows move into the Williamson. And during the famed Hexagenia hatch in early July, anglers have the chance to take rainbows that can push 15 pounds on a dry fly. When the "Hex" hatch isn't happening, you'll have to fish streamers deep. A boat is recommended, as there's little public land along the Williamson.

### WOOD RIVER

The Wood is a beautiful spring creek that meanders through the cattle country of Klamath Valley, north of Agency Lake. Its native browns and rainbows average 4-6 pounds, with larger fish always possible. Fishing can be especially hot in August when the trout key in on grasshoppers that blow into the river. Because it flows almost entirely through private land, a small boat is a big help in attacking the Wood.

### MANN LAKE

With the Steens Mountains as a backdrop, Mann Lake provides a stunning setting for pursuing a unique strain of trout, the Mann Lake cutthroat (adapted from the Lahontan cutthroat). Fishing for 18 to 20 inch trout is best in early spring and early fall. Wading anglers will do fine, as the trout cruise the shoreline. Be wary of the weather – Mann is far from civilization, and tough weather/winds can blow in very quickly.

### MALHEUR RIVER

The Malheur offers good fishing for wild Redband trout and planted rainbows (up to 20"), amidst striking high desert scenery. Both headwater and tailwater fisheries are available.

### OWYHEE RIVER

The Owyhee is a tailwater fishery that meanders through a deep canyon. It's rich in insect life, and can offer great caddis hatches – and planted brown and rainbow trout up to six pounds.

### BLITZEN RIVER

A small canyon stream on the west slope of the Steens Mountains, the Blitzen comes into fishing shape in the summer time and offers good fishing for native Redbands amidst a gorgeous setting.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### NATURE TOURING

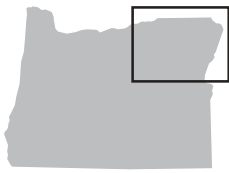
Southeastern Oregon is the least populous area of the state, but it boasts some natural wonders. The Steens Mountains (60 miles south of Burns) rise to nearly 10,000 feet, and mark striking contrast to the surrounding desert and prairie lands. Crater Lake, northwest of Klamath Lake, is America's deepest lake, and rests in a basin that peaks at over 8,000 feet. It's truly breathtaking!

### GOLF

Running Y Ranch (5790 Coopers Hawk Rd, Klamath Falls, 541-850-5500, Green fees, \$55-\$65.) Voted America's best new affordable public course in 1998 by Golf Digest, Running Y blends in elegantly with its wetlands environment.

For information on recommended guides, outfitters and lodging, please contact Communications Manager, Oregon Tourism Commission, 503-986-0005.

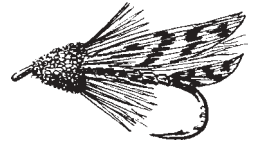
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# FLY FISH OREGON

## N O R T H E A S T R E G I O N

– Muddler Minnow



## Rainbows, Smallmouth and Steelhead, in Solitude

Framed by the rugged Willows (historical home of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce) and the Blue Mountains, northeast Oregon is reminiscent of the wide spaces of Montana and the Bavarian Alps. The splendid scenery is complemented by first-rate fly fishing. The Grande Ronde is a nationally-renowned summer steelhead river; the Minam and Imnaha are incredibly scenic and offer good trout fishing; and the John Day River (at the west end of the region) is the West's premiere smallmouth bass fishery. This part of the world is far from any urban center; visitors here will more often than not enjoy solitude.

### FLY FACT:

*The Muddler Minnow is one of the most famous fishing flies ever created. Originally intended to imitate small minnows and sculpin, the Muddler can be fished in a variety of ways to interest a wide variety of fish. It is reliably effective in most waters, from small coastal streams to big rivers like the Grand Ronde in the Northeastern highlands of Oregon.*

## Noteworthy Fisheries

### GRANDE RONDE RIVER

Tucked into the northeast corner of the region, the Grande Ronde is considered by some to be the best river in the west for taking steelhead on a dry fly. Action peaks in October, but fish can be caught with sinking flies throughout the fall and winter. Elk, black bear and other wildlife abounds in the upper sections of this breathtaking river.

### IMNAHA RIVER

Originating in the Willows, the Imnaha provides fine small-water fishing for native rainbows, especially for those willing to hike a bit. Steelhead enter the river in the fall and provide good sport; smallmouth bass inhabit the lower stretches of the river near its confluence with the mighty Snake River.

### MINAM RIVER

Like the Imnaha, the Minam is mostly a wilderness river. Access is by foot, horseback, or a chartered flight into the Minam Lodge. The Minam boasts native rainbows and small numbers of steelhead in the fall...and spectacular scenery whenever you visit.

### EAGLE CAP WILDERNESS

The nearly 300,000 acres that comprise the Eagle Cap Wilderness host the upper stretches of the Imnaha, Minam, and Lostine Rivers, as well as 75 fishable lakes. The rivers hold wild rainbows, the lakes a mix of brook, rainbow and cutthroat trout. You may have to hike a bit to reach these lakes. But against the high peaks of the Willows, it's a worthwhile trip.

### JOHN DAY RIVER

The John Day is Oregon's longest river, and the second longest undammed river in the U.S. Flowing through stark canyon lands, it has become home to a noteworthy population of smallmouth bass in the lower 100 miles of the river – during the height of the season in June, even an inexperienced fly angler can take 50+ bass on a popping bug cast to the shore. In the fall, epic runs of steelhead enter the John Day (the largest wild population of steelhead in the U.S.). For those floating the river, evidence of the native peoples who once lived here abounds in the form of petroglyphs and pictographs.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

THE WALLOWAS – called the Alps of the West – offer innumerable hiking and camping opportunities. Craft connoisseurs will appreciate the offerings of artists in the small town of Joseph. High voltage white water rafting is available in the Hell's Canyon stretch of the Snake River. For those fishing the John Day, a visit to the fossil beds and pictographs around the John Day Fossil Beds (near the town of Fossil) is well worthwhile. You might also check out the renovated Hotel Condon in Condon.

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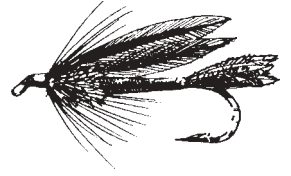
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# FLY FISH OREGON

## NORTHWEST REGION

– Spruce Fly



## Bounties from the Sea for the Fly Angler

Mist enshrouds majestic Douglas firs. Ferns and moss tangle in a riot of green. And picturesque rivers plunge from the Coastal Range to the Pacific, bringing a steady flow of anadromous fish within the fly rodder's reach. Northwestern Oregon has no single marquee river, but instead offers a host of lesser-known but fertile streams that offer winter and summer runs of steelhead, a variety of salmon, and sea-run cutthroat trout – sometimes called bluebacks. The cutts – which move from river to ocean, depending on food conditions – offer a unique fishery; special efforts are being made to bolster the already healthy populations. We've mentioned some of the larger rivers below – most creeks that enter the Pacific hold fish at one time or another, so the angler willing to explore may reap rich rewards.

### FLY FACT:

*The Spruce Fly is another very old pattern that has remained popular because of its effectiveness. Originally intended to imitate small trout and minnows, the Spruce Fly is one of the most versatile streamer flies ever developed. Fish this fly for Sea Run Cutthroat (Blue Back), Half-Pounder Steelhead, and trout on all Oregon coastal streams.*

## Noteworthy Fisheries

### ALSEA RIVER

Flowing from the Coast Range to the Pacific north of Waldport, the Alsea is noted for its winter steelhead fishery. Most are hatchery fish, weighing from 5 to 20 pounds. Resident and sea-run cutthroat trout also provide sport for fly anglers, and are especially attracted to red patterns when salmon are in the system.

### SILETZ RIVER

The Siletz is known for its run of summer steelhead – the most prolific on the north coast. It also hosts runs of chinook salmon and winter steelhead. The Siletz's north fork offers the best fly water, and is about as pretty a coastal stream as you could imagine.

### WILSON RIVER

The Wilson is the closest coastal river to the Portland region, and offers good fly angling for steelhead, chinook salmon, and increasingly, sea-run cutthroat. The cutthroat present an emerging fishery, and have become a focus for anglers on the river in the late summer/early fall.

### TRASK RIVER

The Trask sees runs of winter and summer steelhead, sea-run cutts, and chinook salmon. It may be the best water for fly anglers to pursue chinook (king salmon). Hooking one of these leviathans on a fly rod can be a humbling experience – with a 30 lb. king on an eight weight rod, you'll feel as though you've hooked a whale.

### MIAMI RIVER

The Miami offers runs of steelhead, chinook and sea-run cutthroat trout, but is best known for its chum salmon, which arrive in the fall. Sometimes called dog salmon thanks to their prominent teeth, chum run between 15 and 25 pounds, and will eagerly take green flies.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### NATURE TOURING

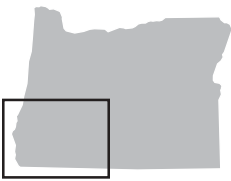
If anglers are able to look beyond the river, they'll find a coastline of astonishing beauty. North of Tillamook, Cape Meares and Cape Lookout state parks showcase the Beaver State's rugged coastline; south of Cannon Beach, you'll find Haystack Rock, one of Oregon's most photographed landmarks. Whale watching tours are available in the spring and fall. The Oregon Coast Aquarium in Newport brings marine wildlife to you. Beachcombers have hundreds of miles of public beaches to roam, and hikers will find thousands of miles in the Oregon coast range.

### GOLF

The Westin Salishan (near Lincoln City) offers challenging links-style golf with ocean views.

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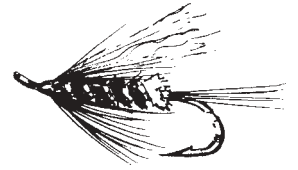
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# FLY FISH OREGON

## S O U T H W E S T R E G I O N

– Green Butt Skunk



## America's Most Storied Steelhead Waters

Mention “steelhead” in fly fishing circles, and it’s a fait accompli that the fabled waters of southwest Oregon will enter the conversation. The North Umpqua and Rogue Rivers are much celebrated in angling lore and literature, and are regularly fished by politicians and potentates...and humble anglers in quest of a noble fish in a breathtaking setting. Whoever you are and whatever you do for a living, these challenging rivers level the playing field; the fish are the ultimate arbiters of angling status.

### FLY FACT:

*The Green Butt Skunk has been a favorite on steelhead rivers for a long, long time, and for a good reason: it is one of the most effective fly patterns ever developed for sea-run rainbow trout! It is a particular favorite on the North Umpqua River in Southwestern Oregon.*

## Noteworthy Fisheries

### NORTH UMPQUA RIVER

The North Umpqua is a river of astounding clarity and beauty – and offers 30 miles of fly fishing only water that provide more variety than any other steelhead river in America. There are long runs, tranquil pools, enticing tailouts, fishy pocket water – all accessible from the road. While the North holds fish year round, it is best known for its summer run fishery, which generally peaks in late August. Die-hard steelheaders who endure cold winter days on the river celebrate the arrival of wet wading the North Umpqua, where cool waters balance the 80+ degree air temperatures!

Fishing tradition lives on the North. Anglers generally rely on “greased line” techniques, and will sometimes entice steelhead to strike skating surface flies on the pools along the Camp Water (made famous by Zane Grey) and in smooth tailouts. Another part of the tradition is retiring to the Steamboat Inn for their superb dinner; visitors can regale each other with tales of steelhead caught and lost during the wine and appetizer social hour. When the bell rings, revelers retire to the dining room.

Anglers and conservationists the world over have rallied to preserve the North Umpqua’s habitat and fishery. Special regulations apply here (no weighted flies). Fishing is not easy on the North, but it is nonetheless a wonderful experience – just ask Jimmy Carter, Tom Brokaw and the many other notables who fish here!

### ROGUE RIVER

Equal in stature to the North Umpqua, the Rogue also gained prominence in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, largely in thanks to the pen of Zane

Grey. The upper sections of the Rogue offer some decent trout fishing, especially a tailwater below Lost Creek Dam, which has been dubbed “The Holy Water”. However, it is steelhead – specifically “half-pounders” – that have made the Rogue’s international reputation. (While winter, spring and summer runs of mature steelhead are also available in the Rogue, it’s the late summer/early fall run of half-pounders that gets the most attention.)

Half-pounders are small summer steelhead that return to the river after only a few months in the saltwater (mature fish spend one to three years at sea). Half-pounders go from 16 to 20 inches (closer to two or three pounds, in reality) – and they feed more aggressively in fresh water than their mature cousins. Combine this with the fact that they tend to hold in schools or pods, and you get a fishing experience that provides fast and plentiful action. Most fishing for half pounders is done in the Middle and Lower Rogue. (The incredibly pristine lower 50 miles of the river is designated “Wild and Scenic” and can be floated in 3 to 5 days.)

### UMPQUA RIVER (MAINSTEM)

The mainstem of the Umpqua River is formed near Roseburg where the north and south forks meet. While the mainstem holds steelhead and salmon at various times of the year, its main attraction for fly fishers is smallmouth bass. During the summer, anglers can land bass by the dozens. While most are 6” to 12”, fish occasionally approach five pounds. The Umpqua is best fished from a boat or float tube, which gives anglers the opportunity to cover the most water.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### NATURE TOURING

- Crater Lake, roughly 60 miles east of Steamboat Inn, is America’s deepest lake, and rests in a basin that peaks at over 8,000 feet. It’s truly breathtaking!
- Wild steelhead can be viewed 11 miles from Steamboat Inn, at a pool on Steamboat Creek. The pool has a docent who explains the fish’s lifecycle to visitors.
- Numerous hikes with waterfalls are available along Highway 138.

### GOLF

- Bandon Dunes and its sister course, Pacific Dunes, are ranked amongst the best courses in the country. They’re on the coast in Bandon. (888-345-6008).
- Eagle Point Golf Course (541-826-8225), a Robert Trent Jones, Jr. design ranked among “The Top 10 Public Courses of 1996” by Golf Magazine.
- Myrtle Creek Golf Course (541-863-4653) is a challenging layout set amongst rolling countryside west of the Cascades.

### WHITE WATER RAFTING

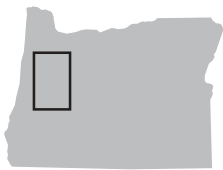
The Rogue is a white water rafting hub, as well as a renowned steelhead fishery. Many outfitters work the middle and lower sections of the river.

### WINE TASTING

Many fine wines are coming from Southwest Oregon. For a list of wineries, visit [www.oregonwine.org](http://www.oregonwine.org).

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# FLY FISH OREGON

W I L L A M E T T E V A L L E Y R E G I O N

– Elk  
Hair  
Caddis



## Suburban Angling At Its Finest

Urban dwellers in Portland, Salem and Eugene are treated to a special perk – quality fly fishing that's close to home! In the Willamette Valley it's quite conceivable to land a steelhead before your first cup of coffee at the office – or catch the evening hatch after dinner for wild rainbows! And one need not sacrifice quality for convenience – the upper stretches of the Sandy River (near Portland) are as unspoiled as any wilderness river – and the McKenzie (east of Eugene) is nationally renowned for its beauty and willing rainbows. Angling opportunities like these don't just bring visitors to Oregon . . . they bring new residents!

## Noteworthy Fisheries

### MCKENZIE RIVER

Flowing west from the Cascades east of Eugene, the McKenzie hosts redbreasted rainbows, cutthroat and steelhead – in short, something for everyone! Combine this with beautiful scenery (especially on the upper stretches of the river), and you understand why the McKenzie is a must stop for many visiting anglers. Because of extensive private lands, many fish this river from the drift boat that bears its name. The McKenzie offers some prolific insect hatches – beginners can have memorable days if conditions are right.

### GOLD LAKE

This fly-fishing-only lake in the Cascade Mountains southeast of Eugene holds both rainbows and brook trout, and offers scenic and productive angling (though you won't fish alone). A float tube, pontoon boat or canoe is ideal. Callibaetis mayflies attract both fish and anglers in the summer months, and provide steady dry fly action.

### WILLAMETTE RIVER

Anglers attending a sporting event or lecture at the University of Oregon will do well to pack a rod, as wild rainbows and cutthroat can be had in the middle of Eugene. This stretch of river has some excellent hatches, including a large green caddis dubbed the McKenzie Caddis. A bit further south and east, the Middle Fork of the Willamette also offers good fishing for rainbows to 20".

### NORTH SANTIAM RIVER

East of Salem, the lower North Santiam River flows strongly from the Cascades and fishes well for steelhead, with the run hitting its peak in late spring/early summer. Above the dams that tame the lower river, the upper North Santiam is an easily accessible trout stream that provides steady fishing for planted rainbows.

### CLACKAMAS RIVER

Much of the Clackamas is within an hour of downtown Portland, and though it can get crowded on weekends during the height of the winter/summer steelhead runs, its upper reaches are worth the trip. Depending on the season (and your inclination), you'll cast in forested canyons for steelhead or hatchery rainbows. Good populations of native rainbows are available in the lower river closer to town, and this stretch sees few trout anglers.

### SANDY RIVER

The Sandy begins on Mount Hood and flows 50 miles to its confluence with the Columbia near Troutdale. While the Sandy hosts healthy runs of Chinook (King) salmon and some resident trout, steelhead are the primary attraction for fly anglers. The Sandy boasts both winter and summer runs of steelhead, which makes fish available all year long – almost every year; wild steelhead topping 20 pounds are reported . . . and the upper stretch of the river is as pretty as you could hope for – and less than an hour from downtown!

### LOST LAKE

Lost Lake reflects reflects Mount Hood on its surface – and during July, that surface is dimpled by brown, rainbow and brook trout taking giant Hexagenia mayflies. While the "hex" hatch is the fly fishing highlight on Lost Lake, other hatches continue through the summer – and the idyllic setting (close to Hood River) is always a treat.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

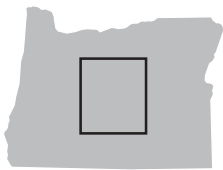
The Willamette Valley is Oregon's population center, and home to Oregon's two largest cities (Portland and Eugene) and the state capital (Salem). Portland is regularly recognized amongst America's best places to live, and offers bountiful cultural attractions and first-rate restaurants. Eugene is home of University of Oregon, and offers commensurate college town amenities. The western sections of Willamette Valley have emerged as a major wine-making region, yielding many first-rate Pinot Noirs and Pinot Gris.

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## FLY FACT:

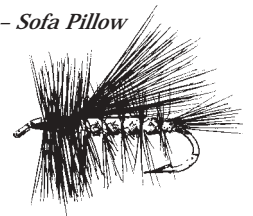
*The Elk Caddis is the fly pattern you are most likely to find in fly boxes carried by trout anglers in the Willamette Valley, on the upper McKenzie, or anywhere else trout are found. The Elk Caddis imitates any number of caddis flies, and is especially effective during the dense hatches of caddis that begin in the Spring, and end in the late fall. If any fly carries a guarantee, this is the one.*



# FLY FISH OREGON

## CENTRAL REGION

– *Sofa Pillow*



## Cascade Lakes, Spring Creeks & the Deschutes – It Doesn't Get Much Better!

If Oregon is a fly angler's dream come true in terms of diversity of water and fish, then the central region is the Beaver State's *piece de resistance*! To the north, the lower 100 miles of the Deschutes River teems with native "Redside" trout year round – and in the late summer and fall, attracts anglers from the world over for its steelhead runs. In the middle, the Metolius offers an unparalleled spring creek fishing experience. Below Bend, there are the productive and picturesque Cascade Lakes, the more intimate Fall River and upper Deschutes...and countless lesser known waters if you're willing to explore. Combine incredible fishing opportunities with some of Oregon's most diverse scenery, and you can understand why many consider this region an angler's paradise.

### Noteworthy Fisheries

#### LOWER DESCHUTES RIVER

The Deschutes is one of America's great fly fishing rivers. Flowing through majestic rimrock canyons and riddled with rapids, the 100 miles of the lower Deschutes boasts abundant wild rainbow trout that reach 20". Come mid-summer, steelhead begin to arrive, and action can become as hot as mid-day temperatures. No other river in America can offer such top-rate trout AND steelhead fishing (during steelhead season, many fly anglers fish for steelhead in the early morning and near dusk, and for trout during the day). Dry fly aficionados converge on the Deschutes in June for its famed salmon fly hatch.

#### METOLIUS RIVER

The Metolius is a true spring creek that bubbles up from the base of Black Butte (west of Sisters) and flows gin clear at a constant 48 degrees. Renowned for its abundant insect hatches and very selective wild rainbows, the Metolius is also home to voracious bull trout that run to ten pounds and over. These fish are shark-like predators that will attack hooked trout or whitefish of 12" or more! Set in a lodgepole pine forest, the Metolius is as beautiful as it is challenging.

#### CROOKED RIVER

The Crooked is a desert stream that runs off-color from Prineville Reservoir, near Smith Rock. Despite its unseemly shade, the Crooked offers plentiful, aggressive rainbows in a spectacular canyon setting. The fish don't run particularly large, but are numerous and make for a good angling experience for beginners; seasoned anglers will find some good dry fly fishing.

#### FALL RIVER

This attractive spring creek is extremely convenient to the popular Sunriver Resort. It's heavily stocked with hatchery rainbows, which makes for fairly productive fishing; however, the creek's clear shallow waters make even the stocked fish wary. Near the Fall River's confluence with the upper Deschutes, anglers can try their luck on large native browns.

#### CRANE PRAIRIE RESERVOIR

One of Oregon's top stillwater fisheries, Crane Prairie (45 miles southwest of Bend) regularly yields rainbow trout in the 4 to 6 pound class, and 10+ pound fish are taken each year. Though nearly 5,000 acres, the lake is relatively shallow, averaging 11 feet. Most fly fishing is subsurface, using nymph patterns that mimic the damsel, dragon and mayflies, and leeches that are common. Early summer anglers may witness a prolific Callibaetis mayfly hatch. On clear days, Mt. Bachelor provides a monolithic backdrop.

#### HOSMER LAKE

Hosmer Lake (35 miles southwest of Bend) boasts both large brook trout and landlocked Atlantic salmon – a unique combination for Oregon! Big fish are often visible in the lake's clear water – but they are picky; watching several brookies in the five pound class sniff your fly and turn away can be maddening. Even when the fish are unaccommodating, the setting is unforgettable – Hosmer is in the shadow of Mt. Bachelor and The Three Sisters.

#### DAVIS LAKE

Davis is another splendid Alpine Lake holding both large rainbows (to 25") and landlocked Atlantic salmon (to 24"). Hefty largemouth bass also call Davis home. Like Crane Prairie, Davis Lake is shallow, which provides food and shelter for aquatic insects...and their larger prey. Many feel that Davis is Oregon's premier stillwater fishery; the only intangible is water levels. During drought years, Davis suffers.

### FLY FACT:

*The Improved Sofa Pillow was developed in the 1940s as an adult Stonefly imitation. It is available in several sizes to closely imitate the various stoneflies that inhabit the rivers of the Pacific Northwest. It is one of the most important patterns on many Oregon rivers, and is a mainstay on stonefly-rich rivers like the Deschutes.*

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

While the fishing in central Oregon is superb, one of the area's great attractions to anglers is the abundance of non-angling outdoor opportunities. These include:

- White water rafting on the Deschutes River
- Golf at 25 area courses, including Crosswater, one of Golf Digest's Top 100 Courses
- Rock climbing at Smith Rock, one of the nation's premiere climbing venues
- Exploring obsidian-rich Newberry Crater; a broad shield volcano with a large summit crater occupied by East and Paulina Lakes
- Hiking and mountain biking in the adjoining Cascade Mountains

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