

# Southern California's WINTER TROUT

**T**INY CURRENTS OF AIR plucked at my clothes as the warm sun peeked over the lip of a canyon wall. It was just after 9 A.M., and in the preceding hour the air temperature had jumped a dozen degrees. The small streambed stretched away and uphill, curving in front of me, water dancing lightly among the rocks. I could see no evidence of a hatch. I knotted a size 14 Adams to my tippet, applied a bit of floatant, and flipped it upstream to a small pool formed by a large boulder and a downed tree trunk.

At touchdown, the Adams disappeared in a splash. Expecting only a midget, I was surprised as 12 inches of startled brown trout raced around the little pool, putting on a wonderful display before being led into the net to be admired and released.

The air temperature was approaching 70 degrees, and as I climbed around a steep section of rock to take position at the lip of another pool, sweat beaded on my forehead. Except for my fishing partner, long gone ahead of me on the steep mountain trail, there was not a soul in sight. I took two more good fish, one brown and a barrel-shaped rainbow, before pausing to strip off my long-sleeved shirt and cool down.

While replacing the matted Adams with an Elk-hair

Special-regulation  
wild trout waters  
about an hour  
from Los Angeles

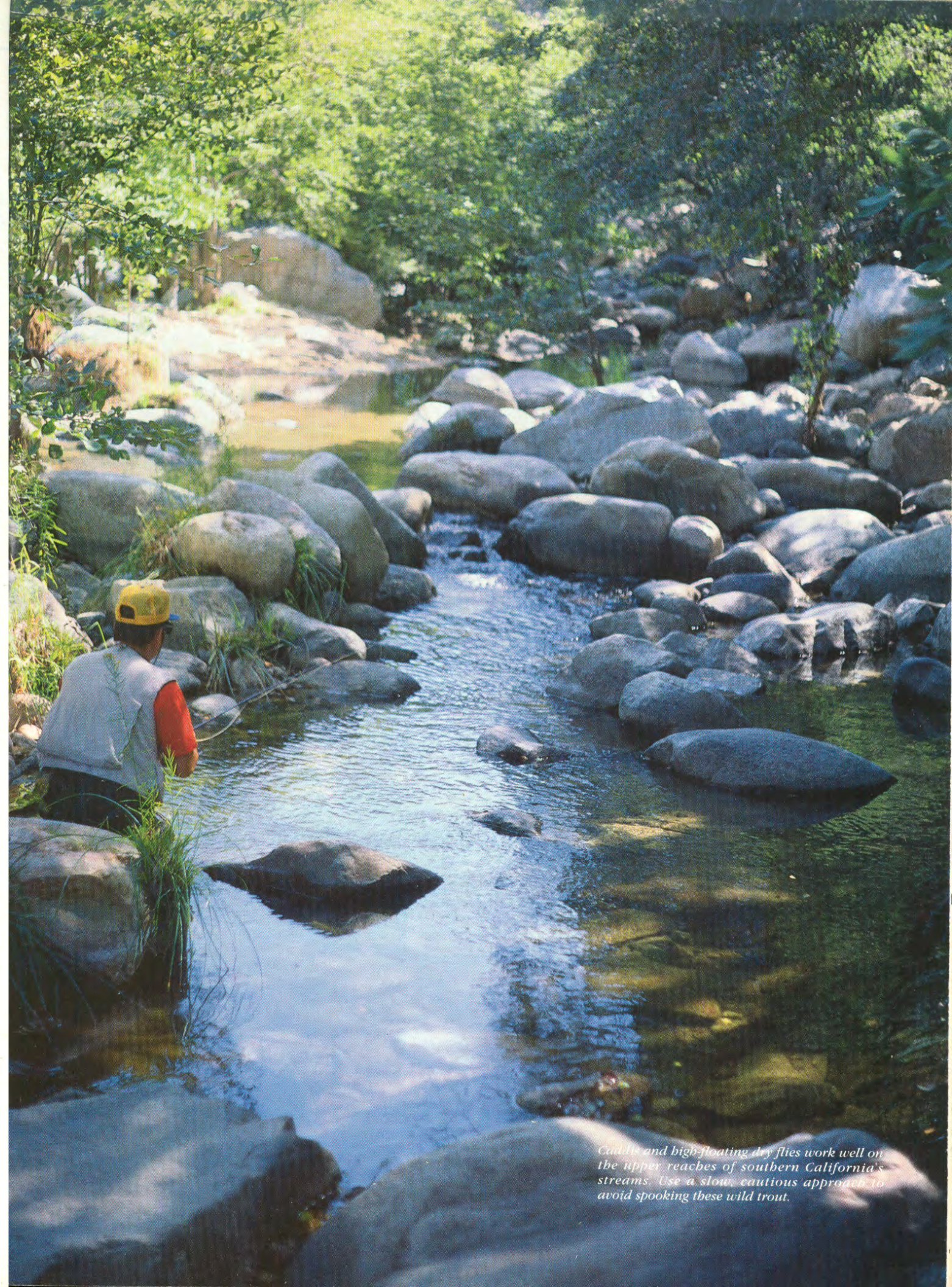
RICHARD BEAN

Caddis, I felt a strange sensation of disbelief once again. I still couldn't quite come to terms with the day. The sun burned brightly in a pastel blue sky. The water sparkled with sharp reflections as it leaped and whirled past the rocks. A few insects began to flutter near the surface, and as I watched, one disappeared in a quick, darting splash. For a moment I felt as dislocated as a Jules Verne hero, ripped out of my time and place and thrust into some unimaginable future. I stopped to remind myself that this wasn't a spring outing on some High Sierra creek. Instead I was less than an hour from southern California's busy freeways clogged with the remnants of the morning rush hour, and it was not spring but the dead of winter, January 11 to be exact.

## A Different World

ACROSS MUCH OF NORTH AMERICA during the winter months, trout fishermen huddle close to the heater, tying flies and dreaming of spring, or they struggle to clear driveways and sidewalks of the latest snowfall. Spring seems a long way off. But in southern California I can cast dry flies over willing trout during the winter months.

A lot can be said both for and against living in southern California, a land dominated by the politics



*Caddis and high-floating dry flies work well on the upper reaches of southern California's streams. Use a slow, cautious approach to avoid spooking these wild trout.*



Deep Creek (right), which parallels the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail for part of its length, has fast dry-fly sections and slower, deeper sections that hold browns over 20 inches long. Deep Creek, the West Fork of the San Gabriel, and Bear Creek are managed as wild trout waters. The San Gabriel in the Los Angeles National Forest has more than five miles of special-regulation wild rainbow trout water.



RICHARD BEAN PHOTO

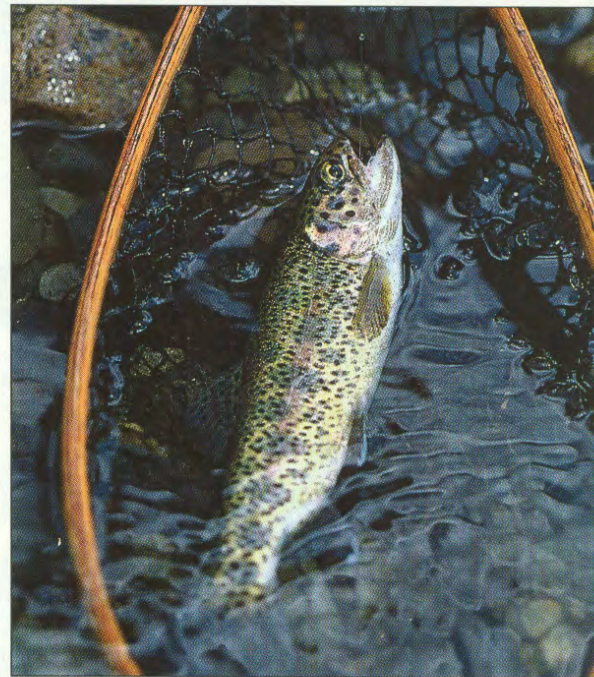
and rhetoric of water. Many residents regard water as a tool for continued expansion of a society already bursting at the seams. The Los Angeles area's vast population, jammed into a coastal plain, is surrounded by mountains that trap the noxious vapors generated by a feverish lifestyle.

Given the public's attitude, the miracle is not that I can catch trout in January but rather that there is any water left in which to fish. The arid mountains of the southern desert effectively trap and channel enough water to create a handful of trout streams—streams that are hardy beyond belief. Trashed by slobes and pummeled by ever-increasing numbers of city dwellers who treat them as combination swimming pools and garbage disposals, the streams nevertheless survive and in some cases even prosper.

### Deep Creek

IF YOU DRIVE FOR ABOUT an hour east from the Los Angeles area to the city of San Bernardino, California, then up the winding staircase of blacktop to the small mountain community of Lake Arrowhead, and then branch off on Hook Creek Road and down a dirt Forest Service track, you come to the upper reaches of Deep Creek, one of southern California's trout streams.

Recognized and managed as a wild trout stream by  
*Continued on page 70*



PAUL UPDIKE PHOTO

*"In warmer drier years, the best angling often occurs in January and Febuary . . . ."*

New

## The "Ultimate Wading Shoe"

joins forces with the ultimate in sure-footed traction.

Now, Korkers Studded Soles are available on the Borger "Ultimate Wading Shoe." Fifteen carbide tipped steel studs are anchored into the polyester/nylon blend felt sole for the ultimate in sure-footed traction.

The double layer uppers look and feel like leather yet wear better and remain soft and flexible. No finer materials can be found for the "Ultimate Wading Shoe."

Designed by Gary Borger. Professional fly fisherman. Biologist. And, subjected to thousands of hours of on-stream testing. For more information, call 1-800-826-0002. In Wisconsin 1-715-536-5521.

MADE IN U.S.A.  
**WEINBENDER**  
The Craftsmen of the Northwoods

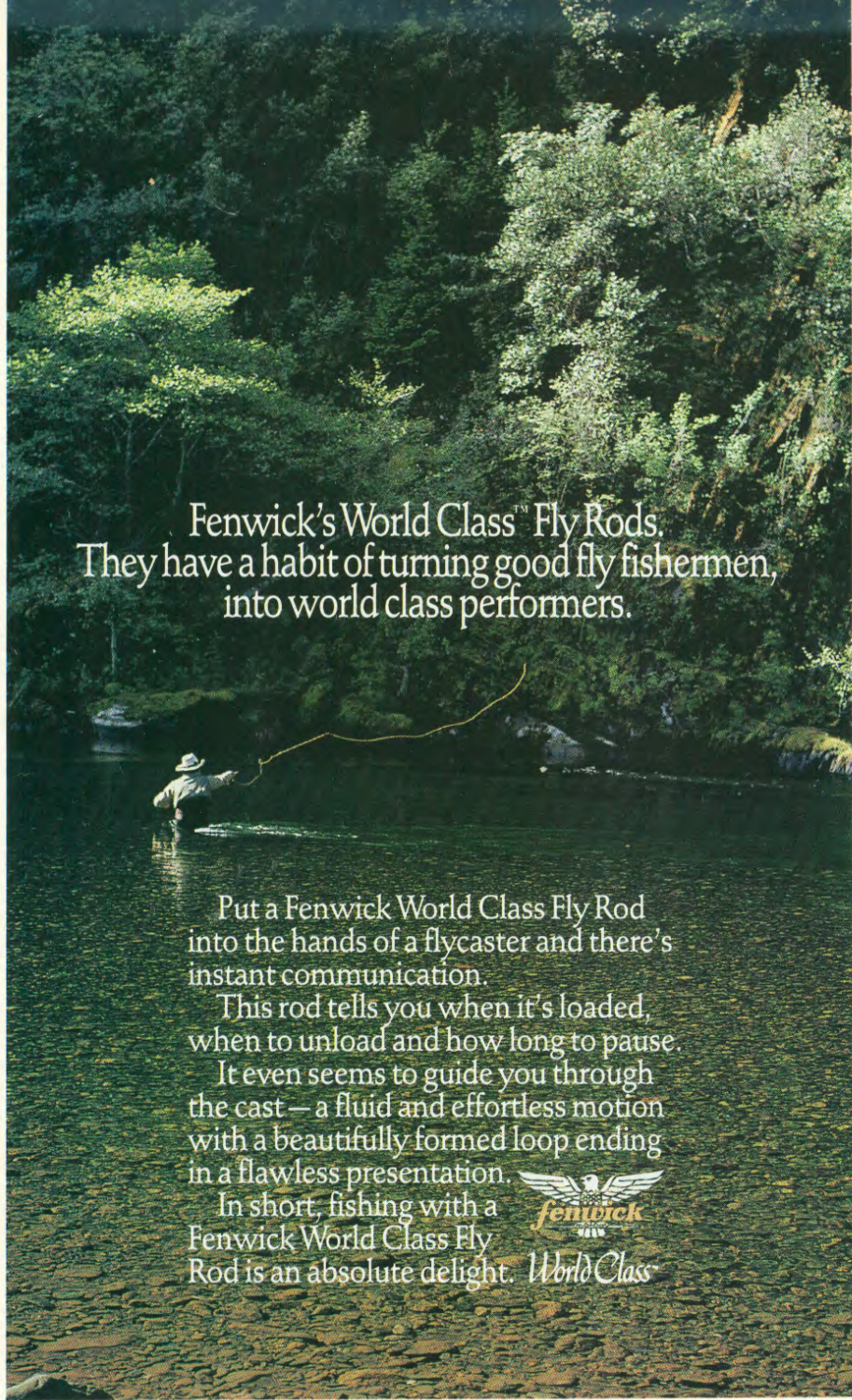
### Varnished French Tinsels

## LAGARTUN Varnished French Tinsel

*Finally, a tinsel made for fly tying with "x-strong" core. 6 sizes, 8 colors. Contact your dealer.*

**LAGARTUN** 16173 Glynn Road, East Cleveland, Ohio 44112





Fenwick's World Class™ Fly Rods.  
They have a habit of turning good fly fishermen,  
into world class performers.

Put a Fenwick World Class Fly Rod  
into the hands of a flycaster and there's  
instant communication.

This rod tells you when it's loaded,  
when to unload and how long to pause.

It even seems to guide you through  
the cast — a fluid and effortless motion  
with a beautifully formed loop ending  
in a flawless presentation.

In short, fishing with a  
Fenwick World Class Fly  
Rod is an absolute delight.

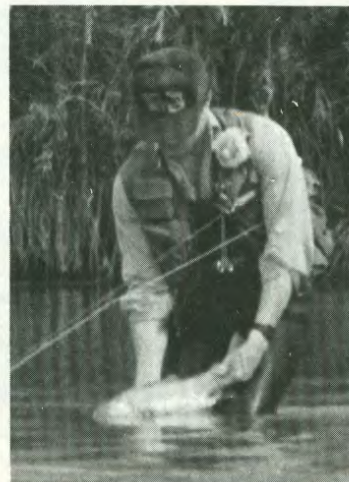


## There's a rainbow waiting for you on the San Juan

For world-class fly fishing and trophy-sized trout, fish the exciting waters of the San Juan. Special-catch and catch-and-release waters mean larger fish for you! To get information on lodging, guide service, and transportation, return reader response card or contact

Farmington Convention & Visitors Bureau,  
203 W Main, Farmington NM 87401 (505)326-7602

Year-Round Trout Fishing  
70 In Northwest New Mexico

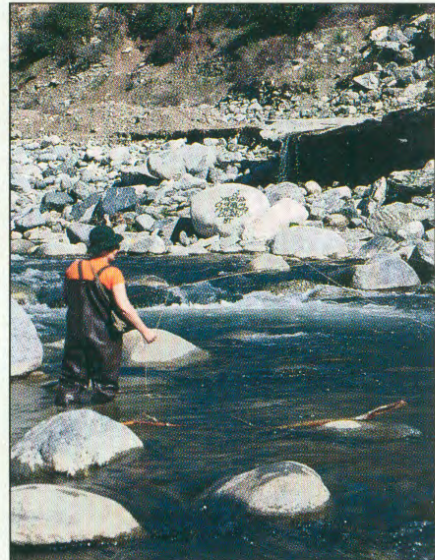


NEW MEXICO USA  
Land of Enchantment

## S. California Trout . . .

*Continued from page 68*

the California Department of Fish & Game, Deep Creek starts near Arrowhead at an elevation of about 8,000 feet and tumbles north until it reaches the desert floor near the town of Hesperia. Various roads connect with the stream in such places as



RICHARD BEAN PHOTO

*The West Fork of the San Gabriel has about five miles of no-kill water, which volunteers have helped improve by placing gravel for spawning beds. A paved road provides easy foot and bicycle access.*

Splinter's Cabin and Devil's Hole. A tiny trickle at its top, Deep Creek gathers volume from other smaller streams until halfway down the mountains, where it deepens and you need chest waders to reach the best casting spots at the base of the deepest pools.

Because of its rapid fall to the north as it courses through a steep canyon, Deep Creek is really several streams in one. High in the mountains it bubbles through huge boulders and passes tall stands of pine. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail parallels the stream for most of its length, creating access for those willing to hike to the fishing. At its headwaters the stream is a typical freestoner, quick and clear, with many tiny trout living in the faster sections. A dry-fly enthusiast using a handful of patterns can catch dozens of these little trout in a morning. Just about any fly will work; the fish live in a sterile environment compared to a spring creek, and they slash at any fly they see.

At the transition zone, halfway down the mountain where the tall trees give way to scrub oak and manzanita, the stream slows, and you can find occasional beaver ponds. The fish in these waters are larger and a bit more choosy, and finer leaders are needed to

ensure consistent fishing.

My best fish from Deep Creek is a 17-inch brown caught on a caddis pattern at dusk in the stream's upper stretch. The brown lived in a deep pocket formed by two boulders the size of compact cars. The pool, perhaps six feet by four feet, had water entering in a sideways rush, glancing off one of the big rocks, and swirling around nearly 180 degrees before emptying into the pocket below. The flow had undercut one of the boulders to a depth of perhaps six feet, while the exiting flow was less than six inches. I had positioned myself below the hole on my knees and tried for several casts to get an inch or two of float before the strong undertow sucked the fly down into the dark depths. On perhaps the eighth or ninth cast, using only the leader and a couple of feet of line, I bounced the fly off the rock, and it landed just right. It disappeared in a flash of spray, and I nearly fell into the pool, reacting to the strike.

The battle was fierce. I scrambled and held on while the brown tore up the small pocket in a desperate attempt to break the leader. Through no skill of mine, the end came when the fish lunged in the wrong direction and slid into the net I had stretched into the water. I cradled the fish and yelled for my fishing companions to come see it, but they didn't hear me. When the fish regained its strength, I let it slide through my fingers and into the dark water.

Others have also landed large fish from Deep Creek. Don Stehsel, a member of Deep Creek Flyfishers, a club dedicated to preserving the fishing on its namesake, has caught several 20-inch-plus browns. He fishes the late evenings on the larger pools, pounding the surface with a deer-hair mouse designed for bass fishing, and entices the biggest, most predatory browns to strike.

## The San Gabriel's West Fork

NOW MANAGED AS southern California's first (and only) no-kill fly-fishing-only stream, the West Fork of the San Gabriel River, in the Los Angeles National Forest, has a long history of destruction, resurrection, and ongoing abuse. The stream has about 5½ miles designated as a no-kill zone. Stretching seven miles from Cogswell Reservoir to where it joins the North and East forks in the middle of an off-road vehicle (ORV) recreation area, the West Fork is a picture-book stream that offers some surprisingly good angling.

*Continued on page 72*

# FISH CANADA

## NORTHERN ONTARIO



CATERING TO FLY-FISHERMEN FOR  
OVER 20 YEARS

EXPERIENCE SOME OF NORTH AMERICA'S  
FINEST SPECKLED TROUT/BROOK TROUT  
FISHING IN THE REMOTE NORTHERN  
REGIONS OF ONTARIO'S VAST ALBANY  
RIVER COUNTRY.

ENJOY EXCLUSIVE WILDERNESS  
FISHING ON OVER 200 MILES OF  
SECLUDED TROUT STREAMS.

DAILY FLY-OUTS BY HELICOPTER



EXPERIENCE AN EXCITING NEW  
ANGLING ADVENTURE  
"HELI-FISHING"

We offer daily fly-outs from the main lodge to the headwaters of dozens of remote trout streams, previously inaccessible. You spend anywhere from a day to five days floating these primitive waters downstream with freighter canoe and native Ojibway Guide.

ASK  
ABOUT  
HELI  
FISHING

To receive quick response with complete details  
and brochures... Call our Ontario Fishing Hotline

TOLL FREE  
**1-800-465-3326**

Ask For Ext. 6

MIMINISKA LODGE, P.O. BOX 305,  
PICKLE LAKE, ONTARIO POV 3A0, CANADA



## TROPHY TROUT FISHING FROM TWO PRIVATE SPRING CREEKS

WILD, RAMBUNCTIOUS RAINBOWS—averaging 2 to 5 pounds on ranch streams.

ACCOMMODATIONS—new, attractively furnished cabins with full bath, each with its own view of stream.

MAIN LODGE & DINING ROOM—serving superb gourmet meals. (American Plan)  
FLY SHOP—handling Orvis, Cortland, and other fine products.

FLY TYING ROOM—complete with tying tables, vises, tools, fishing library.

COMPLETE RECREATION ROOM  
TWO CASTING PONDS

FLY FISHING SCHOOLS—conducted by famous instructors.

GUIDED WILLIAMSON RIVER FLOAT TRIPS—depart daily. This stream produces trout in the 3 to 12 pound class.

Southern Oregon's  
Finest Fly Fishing Resort Ranch



Call or write for FREE color brochure  
**TAKE IT EASY FLY FISHING RESORT**  
P.O. Box 408-A, Fort Klamath, Oregon 97626  
Phone: (503) 381-2328  
Your Hosts: Randy and Cynthia Sparacino

## SPECIAL BOOK OFFER!

### GEORGE HARVEY-Techniques of Trout Fishing and Fly Tying

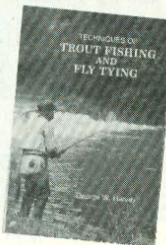
Revised and Augmented - Now in Hardcover

Autographed copies with Fly Tied by George Harvey Available April 1 **\$29.95**

Autographed copies without Fly by George Harvey **\$24.95**

ED KOCH - **Terrestrial Fishing** Available March 1 **\$24.95**

CHARLES MECK - **Meeting and Fishing The Hatches** Available NOW **\$14.95**



#### Other autographed books available through Flyfisher's Paradise

Atlantic Salmon Fishing - L. James Bashline	<b>\$24.95</b>
Ed Shenk's Fly Rod Trouting - Ed Shenk	<b>\$16.95</b>
Fishing the Midge - Ed Koch	<b>\$12.95</b>
Joe Humphreys' Trout Tactics - Joe Humphreys	<b>\$14.95</b>
Night Fishing for Trout - L. James Bashline	<b>\$19.50</b>
On the Trout Stream With Joe Humphreys - Joe Humphreys	<b>\$29.95</b>
Pennsylvania Trout Streams and Their Hatches - Charles Meck	<b>\$14.95</b>

**FLYFISHER'S PARADISE**  
P.O. BOX 448, PIKE ST.  
LEMONT, PA 16851  
(814) 234-4189

ORVIS • CORTLAND • SAGE • METZ  
LOOMIS • POWELL • HARELINE  
THOMPSON  
CENTRE COUNTY'S FULL LINE FLY SHOP  
CATALOG \$1.00

M - W - F 12-8, T - Th - Sat. 12-6

## S. California Trout . . .

Continued from page 71

The stream once contained a steel-head run before the lower river was channelized into concrete drainage for flood control and before dams turned the free-flowing river system into a series of short, disconnected sections. It is regarded now by water managers not as a stream but simply as a conduit.

The West Fork had been popular among local fly fishermen for decades, but in 1981 the Los Angeles Flood Control District effectively destroyed the stream by flushing some 50,000 cubic yards of silt out of Cogswell Reservoir and down the stream. Trees and streambanks were ripped away, clogging the bridge approaches and destroying most of the cover required to maintain suitable water temperatures for trout during the fierce summer heat. Insect and fish stocks were effectively destroyed by the stream flooding, and many fishermen felt it would never recover. The San Gabriel's recovery is a testament to nature and the hard work of a small group of anglers.

Aided to some degree by hard rains during the winters of 1981 and 1982, the stream discharged most of the silt from the reservoir. A combined effort headed by Cal-Trout, the Pasadena Casting Club, the Department of Fish & Game, and the U.S. Forest Service resulted in a massive restoration effort using volunteers from many area fly-fishing clubs.

The volunteers placed more than 100 tons of spawning gravel in what would become the no-kill portion of the stream. They also planted willows, grasses, and trees to help establish streamside vegetation. Finally, 110 wild rainbow trout captured from another area stream were released in the spawning areas to speed the West Fork's recovery as a self-sustaining trout fishery in its upper reaches. About two miles of the West Fork of the San Gabriel below the no-kill section receive extensive stockings to maintain a put-and-take fishery there.

Unfortunately, as the stream was recovering, in 1986 the West Fork was again pounded with a flood control district torrent of water that wiped out the spring spawn, uprooted many of the spawning beds so carefully installed, and caused extensive insect and fish losses. But despite this latest disaster, the river is again recovering, and the fishing is still worth sampling.

The West Fork, like the lower sections of Deep Creek, is at low enough altitude to retain fishing activity throughout most of the winter months. In warmer, drier years, the

best angling often occurs in January and February, before the heat of spring sets in.

At the lower end of the San Gabriel a seven-mile paved road (unauthorized vehicles prohibited) provides both foot and bicycle access from the roadside parking lots to the start of the no-kill area about two miles upstream and on to Cogswell Dam. The no-kill area is clearly marked with signs provided through the restoration program.

## Bear Creek and the Santa Ana

FROM A DAM at Big Bear Lake, Bear Creek flows to the upper Santa Ana River drainage east of the city of Redlands. Also accorded wild-trout status by the California Department of Fish & Game, Bear Creek lives a precarious existence. Much of its flow appears to come as leakage from the base of the old dam at its head. The water district in Big Bear Lake has begun building a new dam, and possible water loss to the stream threatens the population of wild brown trout there.

It's a classy little stream, and although choked with brush in places, it has enough fat brown trout (and some say enough rattlesnakes) to stock several streams its size.

Bear Creek reaches into the upper Santa Ana River, another tiny, brush-choked stream with fine fishing. It's tough casting in the dense brush overhanging most of the stream's better pools, but the Santa Ana can be wonderful for the angler willing to crawl and crouch and cast with only a leader and a yard or so of fly line.

## More Southern Cal. Streams

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA also has other trout streams worth noting. The North Fork of the San Gabriel holds fish, and the headwaters of the East Fork offer day-hiking fishermen their choice of several tiny streams. On the northern, desert side of the San Gabriel Mountains, Little Rock Creek, Bouquet Canyon, Big Rock, and a couple of others too small to name have modest fishing, supported by occasional stockings during wet years. On the south side, strung along the face of the mountains just above the spreading housing tracts, you may find fish in Cucamonga Creek, Lytle Creek, and San Antonio Creek. Many of these little streams are nothing more than trickles by summer, but in spring or late winter they contain enough flow for some careful fishing.

Yearly variations in rainfall and  
Continued on page 74

## KAUFMANN'S STREAMBORN

EVERYTHING FOR THE FLY FISHERMAN  
WORLD WIDE TACKLE, TRAVEL, SCHOOLS, GUIDES, ADVICE  
FREE — 96-PAGE COLOR CATALOG — FREE

Catalogs Outside U.S. & Canada \$5

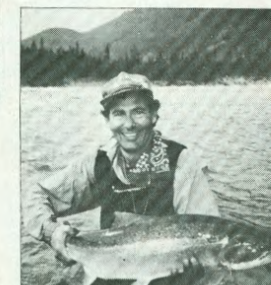


**SALTWATER**  
Christmas  
Venezuela  
Bahamas  
Belize

3 LOCATIONS  
DOWNTOWN SEATTLE  
206-448-0601  
BELLEVUE, WA.  
206-643-2246  
TIGARD, OR.  
503-639-6400

FAX 503-684-7025  
PHONE 503-639-6400

Write:  
KAUFMANN'S  
P.O. Box 23032A  
Portland, Or. 97223



**STEELHEAD**  
British Columbia  
Deschutes  
Alaska



**PRIVATE LAKES**  
Grindstone &  
Douglas Ranches

SAGE • SIMMS • METZ  
PATAGONIA • ORVIS  
LEWIS CREEK • 3-M  
UMPQUA • D.B. DUN  
CORTLAND • LAMSON  
TIEMCO • CLIMAX

**NEXT DAY SERVICE** ACTION OPTICS  
STREAMLINE

**IF WE CATALOG IT — WE STOCK IT**  
**CALL FOR YOUR FREE CATALOG TODAY!**

The serious angler wants to improve his casting, cover the water more effectively, and ultimately catch more fish. The number of fish caught is usually proportional to the angler's casting ability. That's where the new IM 700 fly rods come into play. Every fly fisherman must learn the basics of fly casting, but there is a point where the rod can quicken his development. Loop control is vital under all fishing conditions. IM 700 fly rods will produce tighter loops with less effort. IM 700 fly rods possess the sensitivity for short delicate casts and the power for long line casts. Maximize your casting ability which ultimately will earn you more fish. Get a grip on the new IM 700.

—Randi Swisher

*Lamiglas*  
INCORPORATED

P.O. Box U • Woodland, WA 98674 • (206) 225-9436



# ALASKA

*Fish the  
Famed  
Alagnak*

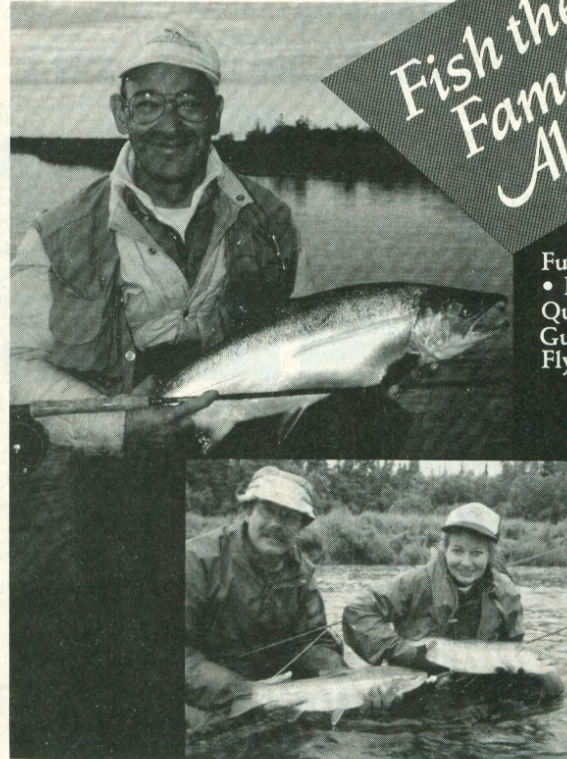
Fantastic King  
and Silver Salmon,  
Trophy Rainbows,  
Grayling and more.

Full Service, Wilderness Lodge  
• Bristol Bay Watershed •  
Quality Staff • Fly Fishing  
Guided River Boat • Daily  
Flyouts Available

CALL OR  
WRITE TODAY  
for our FREE color  
brochure.  
(916) 973-8237

*Alagnak  
Lodge*

P.O. Box 660521, Dept. F90  
Sacramento, CA 95866



## S. California Trout . . .

*Continued from page 73*

snowpack at the higher elevations can drastically alter the conditions on any of these streams, but chances are good that during any year, one or more of the streams offers surprising angling for southern California fly fishers. Some streams, like Deep Creek and the West Fork of the San Gabriel, have enough flow to be viable year-round, while some of the smaller waters are limited to the cooler months. They are best during the winter, at least in the lower elevations. So, instead of pining away the winter months dreaming of Yellowstone or Hot Creek, southern California anglers have a multitude of choices.

### The Proper Equipment

FISHING THE TINY STREAMS of arid southern California doesn't require sophisticated tackle, but it does place a premium on short-range, pinpoint casting. Medium-length rods for 4- to 6-weight lines and 4X to 7X tippets work well. Because of their small size and clear waters, the streams often require chest waders rather than hip boots, because you must often kneel or crouch behind rocks and deadfalls to reach the best (or only) casting positions. This sneaky fishing tactic usually results in discovering too late that the water you knelt into is one inch over the tops of your hip boots.

Most of these little streams have mayflies and stoneflies, but caddis are the predominant fly species. Although some local anglers get exotic in matching the hatches, the type of flies you choose is not critical to success. A handful of Adams patterns, Bivisibles, and Elk-hair Caddis (#14 to #18) should suffice. Wet flies and small, grubby nymphs in shades of gray and brown work fine for subsurface fishing. Hare's Ears, Zug Bugs, and caddis pupae patterns are good flies with which to start.

Some of the smaller streams mentioned in the text are put-and-take stocked waters, but the three main streams—Deep Creek, the West Fork of the San Gabriel, and Bear Creek—are managed as wild trout areas, requiring barbless hooks.

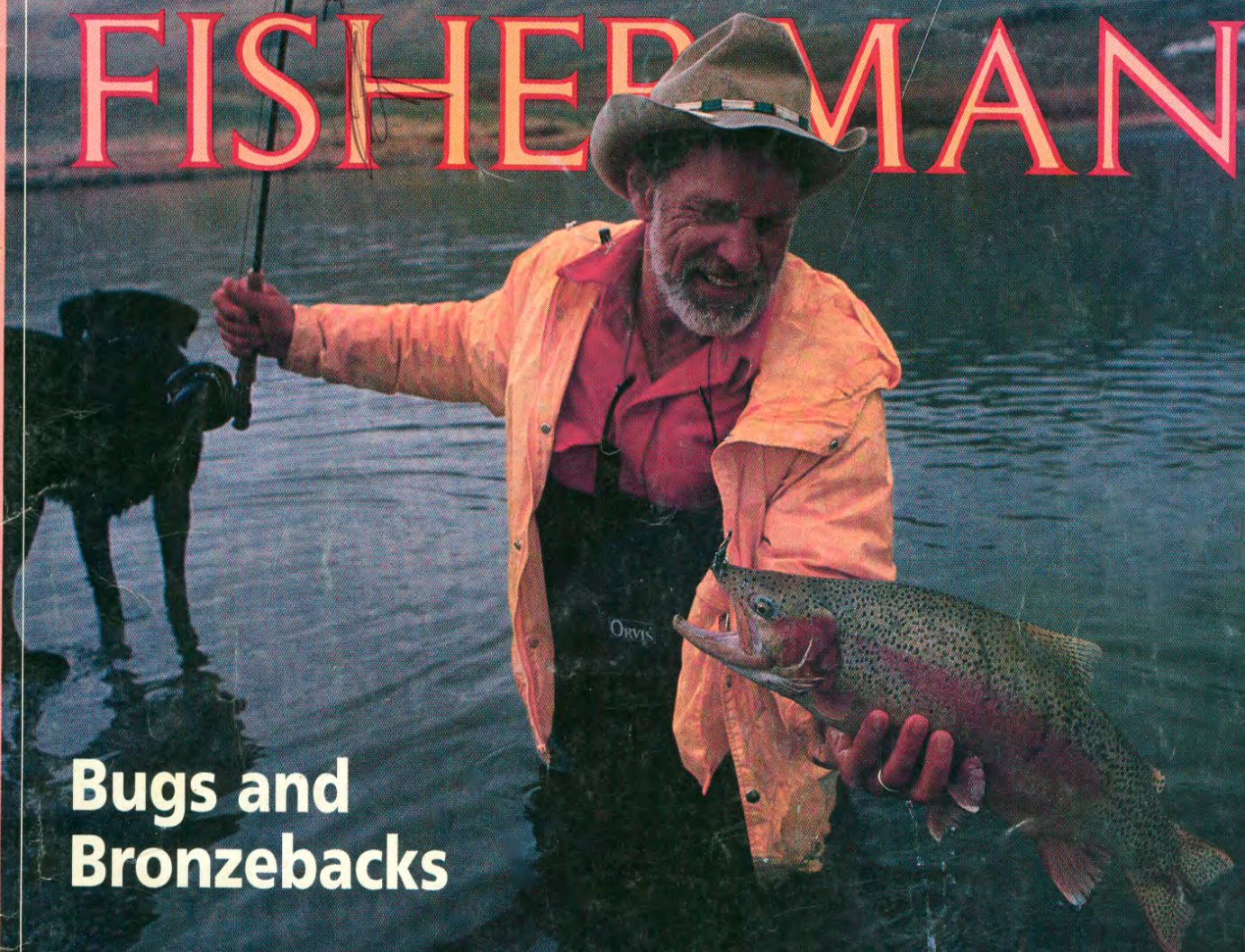
For current information on southern California's winter streams, check with Marriott's Fly Shop. They have three stores located in southern California, but start with the shop at 2634 W. Orangethorpe, Fullerton, CA 92633, (714) 525-1827.

RICHARD BEAN lives in Hesperia, California.

## Learn How to Fight Trophy Fish

MAY 1990 \$3.50/f 1.50  
CANADA \$3.95  
#7747

# FLY FISHERMAN



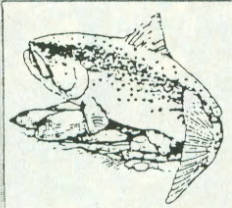
## Bugs and Bronzebacks

## FLY TYING Swimming Nymphs Dubbing techniques

## Minnesota's Reborn Small Trout Streams

## ROD BUILDERS

*CLEMENS  
CATALOG*



## FLY TYERS

## FLY FISHERMAN

Build a better rod and tie a better fly than you can buy . . .

- Incredible selection of quality components and tools including APOGEE®—G. LOOMIS, & LAMIGLAS blanks.
- Absolute finest in fly tying materials. Metz, Antron blends, plumage, furs, hairs.
- ULTRA fly lines \$24.95
- All other accessories.
- Giant 84 page catalog with Rod Building Instructions.

ONLY \$1.00

DEALER INQUIRIES INVITED

**DALE CLEMENS**

444 Schantz Spring Rd., B-2  
Allentown, PA 18104