

JOHN BERRY FISHING REPORT 6/10/2010

During the past week, we have had no measurable rain, moderate winds and warmer temperatures. Flooding receded downstream and the Corps of Engineers has begun drawing down the lakes. The lake level at Bull Shoals Dam fell two and one tenth feet to rest at eleven and one tenth feet above power pool of 654.00 feet. This is twenty nine and nine tenths feet below the top of flood pool. Up stream, Table Rock Lake fell one tenth of a foot to rest at one and nine tenths feet above power pool or fourteen and one tenth feet below the top of flood pool. Beaver Lake fell four tenths of a foot to rest at five and one tenth of a foot above power pool or four and five tenths feet below the top of flood pool. On the White, we have had round the clock generation with one brief period of low water to accommodate the ladies from Casting for Recovery last Sunday. Norfork Lake fell one and one tenth of a foot to rest at seven and five tenths feet above power pool of 552.00 feet or twenty and five tenths feet below the top of flood pool. On the Norfork, we have had limited generation with a few periods of no generation (mostly at night) that allowed for limited wading. Now that an aggressive draw down of the lakes has begun, I estimate that it will take at least a month to complete.

There were significant changes to trout fishing regulations effective January 1, 2010. The Catch and Release section on the Norfork River will be increased from its current size of 1.1 miles to a new total of approximately two miles. The new upper boundary will be the bottom of long hole and the new lower limit will be the Ackerman access. The new regulations will also allow for multiple hook points in Catch and Release sections on the White and Norfork Rivers . Up to three treble hooks will be allowed. All hook points must be barbless. Of interest to fly fishers, is that the new regulations will allow the use of droppers, multiple fly rigs and articulated multiple hook streamers.

On the higher flows, we have been receiving; the key to success has been to fish brightly colored San Juan worms (red, hot fluorescent pink and cerise) and egg

patterns (peach and orange). You will need long tippet leader combinations (up to twelve feet) and plenty of lead (AAA split shot). One of the most successful tactics has been to fish droppers. Rig a San Juan worm or egg as you normally would. Then tie a twenty inch 5X tippet to the bend of the hook (use an improved clinch knot) on the worm and tie a small nymph (try a copper John) on the tag end. Fish as you normally would. Most fish will be caught on the nymph.

The caddis hatch is essentially over. The sulphurs are now in full swing. This is our major mayfly hatch of the year. They are yellow to orange mayflies that are size fourteen when the hatch begins and will get progressively smaller as the hatch continues, generally ending at size eighteen. The best way to fish this hatch is to fish copper John or pheasant tail nymphs before the hatch starts. When the fish begin feeding on emerging sulphurs, switch over to partridge and yellow or partridge and orange soft hackles. When you observe trout taking adult insects, change over to sulphur parachutes. The key to success is a perfect drag free drift.

Most of the best top water action has been on the upper river from White Hole down to Rim Shoals. The hot spots have been the Narrows, Wildcat Shoals and Roundhouse Shoals in Cotter.

Rim Shoals has been another hot spot. The hot fly here has been copper Johns and prince nymphs. If you want to wade on high flows (up to 17,000 CFS) you can obtain the services of the water taxi at Rim Shoals Trout Dock. For a nominal fee they will ferry you to wadable water and pick you up when you are ready to return.

We have a significant alga bloom on the White and Norfolk. When the water rises, a significant amount of it is washed down stream. This dirties the water and makes for difficult fishing as you must constantly clean the alga from your hook. It has significantly cleared out on the Norfolk but remains a problem on the White. The upper river below Bull Shoals Dam is clear.

Crooked Creek and the Buffalo River are lower and clearer. The water is at a comfortable temperature and the small mouths are becoming active. Carefully check the water level before entering Crooked Creek or the Buffalo River. There are no dams on these streams. They both have large drainages and are prone to flooding during and following any rain event. The water can rise very quickly.

On the Norfolk, we received wadable water earlier in the week and there have been some nice midge hatches. The hot flies have been elk hair caddis, parachute Adams (size 20 -24), green butts, bead head green butts and Dan's turkey tail emergers. On higher flows cerise San Juan worms and peach eggs have been the hot flies. Try a dropper here. Use a sow bug near the dam and a copper John on the lower river.

Dry Run Creek has fished well. The most productive flies are sowbugs and worm brown San Juan worms. With summer here expect more families to be fishing here. It can get crowded, particularly on the weekends. You can fish early or late to avoid the crowds. There are fish everywhere. Spread out and try new spots. The most successful technique is to fish a nymph under an indicator with a short line. There is very little room to cast here.

The water level on the Spring River is lower and clear. The aluminum hatch (canoe day trippers) is in full swing. Many boaters on the river have little experience and can be a nuisance. To avoid them, you can fish at the Lassiter Access. This is upstream of the put in point for most of the canoe outfitters. Be sure and wear cleated boots and carry a wading staff. There is a lot of bedrock that can get very slick. The hot flies have been olive woolly buggers with a bit of flash, cerise San Juan worms and pheasant tail nymphs.

Remember that the White and Norfolk Rivers are infected with didymo, an invasive alga. Be sure and thoroughly clean and dry your waders (especially the felt soles on wading boots) before using them in any other water. Many manufacturers are now making rubber soled wading boots that are easier to clean and are not as likely to harbor didymo.

Practice water safety and always check conditions before you leave home.

John Berry is a fly fishing guide in Cotter, Arkansas and has fished our local streams for over twenty five years.