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Fryingpan River Report

November 3, 2014

UPPER FRYINGPAN

FLOW: 99 cfs

WATER CLARITY: The reservoir is in the process of turning over, which is adding a bit of color, most noticeable in the upper few miles of the tailwater.

OVERALL RATING: 8 out of 10

THE SHORT AND SWEET: Hatches consist primarily of midges, baetis, and a few caddis. Best dry fly activity has been later in the afternoon. The streamer bite has been fairly decent, despite the low flows. The reservoir is currently "turning over," which adds a greenish tint to the river for the next few weeks.

FOOD SOURCES PRESENT: Blue winged olives, midges, caddis, mysis shrimp

IN DEPTH REVIEW: The Fryingpan is a true pleasure to fish in the fall, and November offers up fine hatches, light crowds, and big fish. As mentioned above, the lake is in the process of flipping over, which adds a vegetal tint to the upper few miles of river. This isn't a deal breaker, and the fish certainly don't seem to mind at all. Considering the amount of vegetation in the river for the next few weeks, you'll be doing your fair share of "moss tossing." Nymphing is the name of the game until later in the afternoon, but you should always be prepared for anything! The biggest bugs you will encounter in the upper reaches of the Fryingpan are caddis, which we are seeing in a creamy near-white color in size 18, and some larger black specimens closer to size 16. The caddis are starting to sputter out, but as of now are still a big factor.

The other bugs on the scene are blue winged olives and midges. BWOs having been hatching strong in the afternoon, usually around 2 or 3 pm. Midge activity seems to be starting and closing out the day, so keep those little dries handy. With the low flows, it is time to think about stealth in your presentations. Long leaders and utilizing 6x and 7x fluorocarbon tippets are the name of the game for the foreseeable future. If you are getting refusals on your dry fly offerings, be sure you're using fluoro, and most importantly, throw your dries in a downstream presentation. Keep brightly colored fly line well away from the fish you are casting to. Be aware of spawning browns throughout the river!

Mysis shrimp spill out of the reservoir on a daily basis into the tailwater, which is the reason you will see so many large fish in the upper few miles of river. These protein-packed freshwater shrimp are a favorite snack when there aren't any insects actively hatching, so be sure to carry a few patterns in your fly box. Mysis are clear when they spill into the river, and begin to turn white or opaque as they begin to die. Mysis can't survive in the river, as they are more acclimated to the depths of the reservoir. These patterns are a factor only in the upper half mile or so of river.

Streamer fishing can be quite productive (and a great way to stay warm) on the Fryingpan in November. Carry a palate of colors in black, white, rust and olive. Cover a lot of water while throwing these big bites, and vary your retrieve and fly until you find that magic combination!

APPROPRIATE PATTERNS:

DRIES: Sparkle Dun Baetis 20-22, Roy's Fryingpan Emerger 20-22, Hackle Dun Baetis 20-22, Peacock Caddis 16-18, Outrigger Caddis 16-18, Bill's Midge Adult 22-24, Skittering Zelon Midge 20-24, Morgans Para Midge 20-22, Hatching Midge 20-22, Stillborn Midge 22, Sprout Midge 22-24, CDC Transitional Midge 22, Befus CDC Midge Adult 22

NYPHHS: Sparkle Wing RS2 20-22, RS2 plain, 20-22, Chocolate Thunder 20-22, Juju Baetis 20-22, Glass Bead Baetis 20-22, CDC Loopwing Baetis Emerger 20-22, Biot Baetis Emerger 20-22, Medallion Midge 20-22, Cap'n Hook 20-22, Desert Storm 20-22, Black Beauty 20-22, Flashtail Egg 14-18, Will's Mysis 16-18, Sea Monkey Mysis 16-18, Motown Mysis 16-18

STREAMERS: TC Autumn Splendors, TC Stingin' Sculpins, Slumpies

HINTS: Sight fishing is much more productive up here over "fishing the water."

MIDDLE RIVER FRYINGPAN

WATER CONDITIONS: Clear and perfect. Most of the vegetation you will find in the upper river is gone once you get a few miles away from the reservoir.

FOOD SOURCES PRESENT: October Caddis, Blue Winged Olives, Midges

OVERALL RATING: 9 out of 10

THE SHORT AND SWEET: The middle section of the Fryingpan is our favorite stretch as of late, due to excellent mid-day hatches and a lack of vegetation compared to the upper miles. Late afternoon dry fly hatches are still quite consistent.

IN DEPTH REVIEW: Some people (most people) skip the entire river except for the top mile, on their quest for a lunker trout. Here's a little hint: Big fish are found throughout the river, from top to bottom. The middle river, at this point, has better caddis hatches than the upper, too. Wind is always a factor on the Fryingpan, and there are plenty of places to duck out of it in the middle section.

Fall BWO hatches are a delight to fish right now, as the weather stays relatively warm and cloud cover is fairly consistent. We tend to see more caddis activity on bright days, BWOs on the cloudy ones. Pay attention to riseforms to determine which bug, and more importantly, which stage of the life cycle (emergers, adults) the fish are most keyed in to. When you are seeing the backs of the fish, think emergers underneath the surface film. When there are noses poking through the surface, think adults.

When fishing caddis, it's all about the action of the fly rather than the pattern itself. Add action to your flies from the moment they touch the water until you recast. The fly skating across the surface is what grabs the attention of the fish. Manipulating the fly is much easier while fishing across stream and down versus upstream casts.

APPROPRIATE PATTERNS:

DRIES: Ethawing Caddis 16-18, Pearl and Elk Caddis 16-18, Peacock Caddis 16-18, Roy's Special Fryingpan Emerger 20-22, CDC Comparadun 18-22, Sparkledun BWO 18-22, Morgans Para Midge 20-22, Bill's Midge Emerger 20-22, Sprout Midge 22-24

NYMPHS: Buckskin 16-18, Graphic Caddis 16-18, Lime Caddis Candy 16-18, Z-Wing Caddis 16-18, Angel Case BWO 18-22, Biot Baetis Emerger 18-22, Tungsten Hoover Baetis 18-22, Sparkle Wing RS2 18-22, Flashtail Egg 14-18, Slinky Midge 20-22, Flashbang Midge 20-22, Flashdance Midge 20-22

STREAMERS: Same as upper river

HINTS: If solitude is what you're after, fish away from the dam.

LOWER FRYINGPAN:

WATER CONDITIONS: Much clearer than the upper miles. The days of heavy rains affecting Seven Castles Creek seem to be behind us at this point.

FOOD SOURCES PRESENT: Plenty of caddis, BWOs and midges. Terrestrials like ants, beetles and hoppers are still a factor on the lower river too (until we get really cold...)

OVERALL RATING: 7 out of 10.

THE SHORT AND SWEET: As summer winds down and fall settles in, the lower Fryingpan still fishes well. Plenty of spawning fish in the lower miles, be sure to give 'em a break!

IN DEPTH REVIEW: The lower river continues to shine through fall here in the Roaring Fork Valley. With relatively warmer temperatures than you will find up below the dam, it stays buggier, longer. Caddis are certainly the main entree, and you have a chance of seeing rising fish on BWOs and midges, too. We haven't experienced a hard freeze here yet, so small hoppers, ants, beetles and the like will put a few fish in your net, too.

The lower river contains the most redds, so be conscious of these vulnerable fish and give them a wide berth. Redds, or spawning beds, are usually found in shallow, gravel-bottomed areas with easy flow. The lower river is riddled with these beds, so exercise caution. Pairs of brown trout populate all of these areas, usually with a nice rainbow or two set up downstream to gobble up any eggs rolling off the beds. Be aware of the fish you are casting to, and do all you can to let our resident wild brown trout breed successfully.

APPROPRIATE PATTERNS:

DRIES: Ripcord Caddis 14-18, Pearl and Elk 14-18, Stimulator 14-18, Baby Boy Hopper 12-16, Renegade 16-18, Foam BWO Emerger 18-20, CDC Comparadun BWO 18-20, Sprout Midge 20-24, CDC Transitional Midge 20-22

NYMPHS: C

STREAMERS: Sands' Stingin' Sculpin, Slumbuster, Sculpzilla, Crystal Woolly Bugger

HINTS: Cover a lot of water, some spots will be barren and others loaded up with willing fish.

[Link to the USGS Real Time Flow Chart for the Frying Pan River](#)

