

ST.MARY ANGLER FLY SHOP

571 - 304th Street
Kimberley, B.C. V1A 3H5
TOLL FREE: 1(800)667-2311

[June](#)[July](#)[August](#)[Sept.](#)[October](#)

St.Mary Angler: 2015 Season in Review.

Overview of the Conditions.

Fishing Report

Last winter left us with a snowpack across the mountains of southeastern British Columbia that was far below normal. As of May 1st the snowpack in the East Kootenay region, including the St.Mary and Elk Rivers, was 46% of 'normal'. Over on the upper Columbia River it was 72% of normal. The low snow levels for the East Kootenay were a little concerning to us right from the start due to the implications for low flows and high water temperatures during the hot days of summer.

With the low snowpack in the East Kootenay we did not see any significant flooding during the spring freshet. Since the flows on the upper Columbia River where we fish are managed by four large upstream dams; the spring, summer and fall flows were all prime for fishing.

In addition to the small freshet, we also experienced below average rainfall during the spring of 2015. This meant we were able to start fishing the St.Mary and Elk rivers early as we hit the water in late June, weeks ahead of schedule. The below average rainfall persisted from May right through August leading to low stream flows and elevated water temperatures.

High water temperatures became a significant threat to the health of freshwater fisheries across western North America in 2015. Many fisheries in Washington and Oregon were closed due to high stream temperatures. Southern British Columbia saw pretty well all of its freshwater fisheries from southern Vancouver Island through the Okanagan and into parts of the West Kootenays closed to fishing. Fortunately, while some of the small tributaries of the St.Mary and Elk rivers were shut down due to temperature concerns, the St.Mary and Elk remained open and fishable. We are very fortunate that the St.Mary, Elk and Bull rivers are fed by high mountain streams and headwater lakes that keep the cool water flowing in a

drought year like 2015. The concerns over water temperatures disappeared in late August and early September when we saw a spurt of above average rainfall that cooled everything off and improved stream flows for the fall.

In terms of air temperatures in the East Kootenays, they were quite a bit hotter than the long

term average. The temperature was 4 to 7 degrees F warmer than normal from May through August. The hot weather in conjunction with the lower than average rainfall created one heck of a hot dry season. Temperatures were also warmer than the average in October making for a warm and prolonged fall fishing season. It was an extraordinarily hot and dry summer across the West in 2015, but our East Kootenay fisheries remained open and produced well right into late fall.

Over on the upper Columbia River the temperatures were also quite a bit above average from May through October, with the exception of September when it was normal. From May to July it was from 5 to 9 degrees F warmer than normal. Again, rainfall was below average for pretty much the whole season. Fortunately, this did not create any water temperature problems in the spring and fall when we fish for the big rainbows. The stretch of the upper Columbia we fish is already hundreds of miles downstream of its headwaters and receives inflow from many streams and rivers by the time it gets to us. The upper Columbia River is a very robust and resilient piece of water and we experienced excellent fishing conditions in 2015.

The fishing season started in late April with us guiding for the big rainbow trout on the upper Columbia River south of Castlegar B.C. We started the summer fishing season for wild Westslope Cutthroat on the St.Mary and Bull rivers in late June and early July on the Elk. We got to the Skookumchuck River in mid July. The season lasted into late September on the St.Mary, Elk and Bull rivers. Over in the West Kootenays we fished the upper Columbia River with our fly and spey rods into mid October finishing with the release of some really big rainbows.

East Kootenay Temperature and Rainfall (Station ‘Cranbrook A’, B.C.):

Month	May	June	July	August	September	October
Temperature in 2015	20°C (68°F)	26°C (79°F)	29°C (84°F)	28°C (82°F)	19°C (66°F)	15°C (59°F)
Average Daily Max. Temperature (1981-2010)	18°C (64°F)	22°C (72°F)	25°C (77°F)	25.0°C (77°F)	19°C (66°F)	11°C (52°F)
Rainfall in 2015	25 mm (1 inch)	46 mm (1.81 in.)	33 mm (1.3 in.)	15 mm (.59 in.)	32 mm (1.27 in.)	31 mm (1.22 in.)
Average Monthly Rainfall (1981-2010)	42.6 mm (1.7 in.)	52.7 mm (2.1 in.)	38.2 mm (1.5 in.)	31.6 mm (1.24 in.)	27.3 mm (1.08)	18 mm (.7)

Columbia River Temperature and Rainfall (Station Castlegar, B.C.):

Month	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
Temperature in 2015 (Average Daily Max.)	16.5°C (62°F)	23 °C (73°F)	28.5°C (83°F)	31.1 °C (88°F)	28.8 °C (84°F)	20.2 °C (68°F)	15.6 °C (60°F)
Rainfall in	15.3 °C	20 °C	23.6 °C	28.1 °C	28.2 °C	22 °C	12.9 °C

2015	(60°F)	(68°F)	(74°F)	(83°F)	(83°F)	(72°F)	(55°F)
Average Rainfall (1981-2010)	29.5 mm (1.16 inches)	38.5 mm (1.52 in.)	80.2 mm (3.16 in.)	23.9 mm (.95 in.)	18.6 mm (.73 in.)	18.9 mm (.75 in.)	39.1 mm (1.55 in.)
Average Rainfall (1981-2010)	59.3 mm (2.33)	70.3 mm (2.77)	72.3 mm (2.84)	48.1 mm (1.89)	30.4 mm (1.2)	42.4 mm (1.67)	49.4 mm (1.94)

The Spring Season on the upper Columbia River in the West Kootenays.

We fish the 35 mile stretch of the upper Columbia River from the confluence with the Kootenay River near Castlegar, B.C. down to the Canada-U.S. International Boundary. In 2015 this tailwater fishery provided fly fishers with plenty of excellent days of fishing from late April through June. We fished with double handed spey rods from the cobblestone shorelines and gravel bars, in addition to rod sets equipped with dry flies, nymphs and streamers from the platform on our jet powered Jon boat.

The rainbow fishing on the Columbia was very productive this spring. Most of the fish landed fell into the 19-22 inch slot with some bigger fish of 23+ showing up. The water levels were fairly low to start with at around 65,000 cubic feet per second, but moved up through May and June to around 120,000 CFS. The clear water and rising flows produced some excellent conditions as the backdrop for some robust hatches of caddis, callibaetis and mayflies. The Columbia produces hatches like a 'conveyor belt of bugs', so we just have to keep changing things up and matching the hatch. The rainbows this spring were again very strong and colourful; a product of their big river environment and we had a lot of fun catching them.

Summer Cutthroat Fishing on the St.Mary, Elk, Bull and Skookumchuck Rivers in the East Kootenays.

By early July the St.Mary River was in good shape, with clear water and runs formed up nicely as the spring freshet came and went quickly. The St.Mary was ready to fish about two full weeks earlier than usual. The anglers experienced good catch rates of Westslope Cutthroats right from the start. The Bull River was also fishable and producing lots of cutthroat early in July. The Elk River took a little longer to round into form because a fairly large log jam backed up a section of the River during the freshet. Once the log jam broke up and let loose a pulse of water and wood debris, things cleared up nicely. The Elk River then rounded into form quickly with lots of cutthroats being caught on dries.

By late July the weather was hot, hot, hot! The rivers were all crystal clear and the pools, riffles and runs were in prime form. On the St.Mary we were dry fly fishing all three sections of the River from the drift boat. We were working the banks, as well as getting out of the boat to fish up the backchannels with good success and the grass hoppers were

of the boat to fish up the backwaters with good success and the grass hoppers were everywhere. The Elk was also fishing very well with water levels approaching what we normally see in mid August. Catch rates of 20-30 fish per day were common and the odd cutthroat over 18 inches was being landed. The 2015 season was in full swing!

By early August the hot weather was causing the closure of many streams across the West due to high water temperatures. Fortunately, the St.Mary, Elk, Bull and Skookumchuck rivers remained cool and in prime fishing condition. We were on the Bull River on the first of August catching lots of cutthroats with some pushing 17 inches, which is pretty good for this scenic gem of a river. The St.Mary and Elk really produced well in August. By late August the water levels were getting pretty low and water temperatures were starting to be a concern when we received some much needed rain to stabilize things. The St.Mary and Elk continued to produce good catch rates of cuts with big cutthroats in the 17-18 inch range showing up on occasion. On our last August trip to the Elk we enjoyed hatches of October Caddis, Blue Winged Olives and some midges on a great day on the water.

By the first week of September we were seeing some nice Blue Winged Olive and Green Drake hatches on the Elk River. The days were already cooling down a bit as the hot weather had broken. Thankfully we received some rains which caused the water levels to come up a bit and the temperature to cool down. In mid September on the St.Mary River we were seeing large hatches of big October Caddis, as well as some large format Blue Winged Olives, some Green Drakes and Mahogany Duns. All these hatches led to some great days on the water as the cutthroats were loading up on all this food. We finished off the month with a trip to the scenic Bull River against the backdrop of the fall colours.

All our rivers fished very well in September as things cooled down and the fish gorged themselves in preparation for winter. As usual there was very little fishing pressure on the rivers in September leaving our clients to have them pretty well to themselves.

Fall Fishing for Big Rainbows on the Upper Columbia.

Late in September we went back over to the Columbia to chase the rainbows on this rambunctious piece of water. The weather remained very good this fall, as we experienced lots of warm and sunny days with only a few rainy ones. The flows on the Columbia were very good for fishing rainbows providing a nice assortment of exposed gravel bars and cobble strewn shorelines to go along with the big eddies and runs. The water was nice and clear. We fished all four sections of the Columbia from the confluence with Kootenay River down through Trail, to where it crosses the border into the U.S.

On each trip we readied our jet powered Jon boat with rods to fish nymphs, streamers, dries, as well as the spey rods. We caught a lot fish in the 20 inch plus range and had good daily catch rates. We saw a nice diversity of hatches coming off in September and October including; big October Caddis, Midges, Green Drakes, Blue Winged Olives, Mahogany Duns, etc. On our last trip out for the season the anglers landed 20 rainbows during the day including the biggest fish of the year – a spectacular 28 inch rainbow. This fish hit hard

including the biggest fish of the year... a spectacular 20 inch rainbow. This fish hit hard, then took off into the current and put up quite a fight. In the Columbia River, every time you throw out your fly you never know what size fish you are going to catch, these fish fight so hard, it makes for some very exciting fishing.

So there you have it, another year of fishing with the St.Mary Angler is complete. I am sure there are many enjoyable memories etched into the minds of all those anglers we accompanied out on the water this year. 2015 was hot and dry throughout the West. Fortunately for us, the unique geography of our rivers and some timely late August rain, allowed us to enjoy excellent conditions throughout the season. The spring fishing on the upper Columbia was excellent and the fall provided some exceptional days of rainbow fishing. The summer season on the St.Mary, Elk, Bull and Skookumchuck rivers produced a lot of beautiful Westslope Cutthroats for our guest anglers.

As always, we greatly appreciated the patronage of our guide service and the fly shop in Cranbrook, B.C. We wish everyone a healthy and enjoyable winter and hope to see you in the shop, or out on the rivers of the East and West Kootenays next year.

We will be attending tradeshows in the northwest U.S. in the New Year. We are also hosting another trip to Christmas Island in February to fly fish for bonefish and GT's. While our February 2016 trip is already full, if you have an interest in coming along with us next year, just drop us a line as we are now booking for 2017.

Feel free to contact us via our [email](#) or at 1-800-667-2311 to talk about the rivers you would like to fish, or to book a float trip for 2016. Be sure to follow us at the [Facebook](#).

Take care,

Kelly & Karen

St.Mary Angler Fly Shop

PS To find out which tradeshows we will be attending in early 2016, [click for dates](#), [locations](#) and to contact us for will call tickets if you will be attending.

2015 Fishing Reports

Report #22 (October 6, 2015)

The Upper Columbia River Produces the Biggest Rainbow of the Year!

The Upper Columbia River Produces the Biggest Rainbow of the Year: :

This fall has been spectacular, with lots of warm and sunny weather and only a few rainy days. Today was another beauty on the upper Columbia River.

Over a discussion at morning coffee we decided to float the section of the upper Columbia River launching at Genelle. This allowed us to head upriver in the morning to work the top end, are then move back downriver in the afternoon.

Again the weather was very nice today, a little chilly in the morning, but as soon as the sun came out it was absolutely beautiful.

The flow of the Columbia is up a bit lately, but remains crystal clear, just awesome conditions. After making sure all the rods were ready to go we launched the boat and jetted upriver. We traveled for about 10 minutes then I cut the motor and began rowing down river. The guys began to fish the runs and along the bank edges with their nymphs and indicators. Wow, the fishing was down right awesome! The anglers caught 20 rainbows during the day including the biggest fish of the year... a spectacular 28 inch rainbow trout!

This fish hit hard, then took off into the current and put up quite a fight. After it was finally wrestled to the boat we took some pictures and released him back into the deep cool water... wow. In this river every time you throw out your fly you never know what size of fish you are going to catch, these fish fight so hard, it makes for some really exciting fishing.

The only hatches observed on the water during the day were some very small Blue Winged Olives early on and later in the day, a few October Caddis. The hatches were few and far between, so we decided to nymph most of the day. Which turned out to produce the biggest fish of the year.

This fall the Columbia River has produced very well and clients seem to be very happy!

We are still guiding on the Columbia for another week. This weekend is our Thanksgiving weekend. The weather looks great and guys are still heading out to fish the Elk, Bull and St. Mary Rivers. What a great fall this has turned out to be.

Have a fun weekend with your families and friends.

Tight Lines!

Kelly

PS there still is time to book a trip is you are free, if so call us at 1-800-667-2311.

Report #21 (Sept 20 2015)

report #21 (Sept 27, 2015)

Roll on Columbia! We are back on the big river chasing the fall rainbows!

Today was an absolutely beautiful autumn day. It was very cool in the morning with the some frost on the windshield, but warmed up quite nicely to a high of 20°C (70°F) by early afternoon! It was so warm after lunch that it felt like summer, but the cool mornings remind us that it is definitely fall. We decided to put the boat in on the lowest section of the Columbia below the City of Trail to work the runs and big back eddies down towards the Canada-US border.

After we put our jet equipped Jon boat into the water at the Indian Eddy boat launch, we donned our jackets and cruised down to the first piece of promising water. Once rigged up with a streamer rod and a nymphing rod, I positioned the boat and began rowing along the bank edges looking for big rainbows. At this point the jackets came off as the things were warming up, and the anglers got their bugs into the water. The fishing started off with a bang as a nice 20 inch rainbow trout slammed the fly. Wow! These rainbows pull hard! This one took off and ran quite a ways. After a summer fishing cutthroats in the East Kootenays, one forgets just how strong these big river trout can be as they often take you into your backing quickly with a “zing” of the reel.

As the anglers fished with the nymph and streamer setups, they noticed some rainbows rising. So they grabbed their dry fly rods, put on a Mahogany Dun, and casted 40-50 feet to where the fish were coming up. You have to get a good drift long enough for the rainbows to find it, and if you do that you might just fool one! One this occasion they did manage to fool a few of them, and wow what a take. One rainbow hit the fly particularly hard and took off like a rocket!

Over the course of the day the anglers caught and released 15 rainbows each. The average sized fish landed was 20 inches. The biggest fish was a very nice 24 inch chunky rainbow. While a few were caught on the dries, most of the fish landed today were caught on steamers and nymphs in the big back eddies. The guys were pretty pleased with the success on the day.

During this trip we cruised up and down this section of the Columbia checking out different runs, flats and the big eddies to find the fish. The hatches coming off included the big October Caddis, Midges, some Green Drakes, Blue Winged Olives and Mahogany Duns. In response, we used patterns for all these flies with success. As for streamers we used a black stone pattern, Kelly's Super Streamer and for nymphs we used both Prince's and Hare's Ear nymphs.

Out on the water today we saw a lot of bird life. We also noticed many people out enjoying the beautiful weather as well; some riding their horses along the river and others hiking the trails with their dogs.

It was very nice day to be out and enjoying the fall colors, weather and the outdoors in general, life is good!

We are back to the Elk River for a couple of trips then coming back over to the Columbia again next week.

While the season is winding down, the fishing will remain excellent over here on the Columbia throughout October. As long as the weather holds up we will continue to fish!

So call us at 1-800-667-2311 to talk about a fall fishing trip today!

Take care,

Kelly

Report #20 (September 25, 2015)

The Bull River produces for one last time!

Fall is now here in spectacular fashion as the trees have changed colors and the crisp cool nights are here to stay. The weather was awesome today so we headed up to the Bull River for one last go-round!

With fall here, we started a little later in the morning in order to hit the water after the sun had heated things up a bit. Today we headed up to the Bull River at around 9:30 and hit the water at about 10:15 a.m. for a day of dry fly fishing.

The water temperature started off at a cool 49°F (9.5°C), warming up slightly as the day progressed. However, the air temperature reached a balmy 20°C (70°F) later in the afternoon.

The guys started to pick up fish right from the beginning of the float and continued to land fish all day long. These Bull River cutthroats are still coming up to the surface to take the dry fly. I think they know winter is coming and they need to eat as much as they possibly can.

The anglers fished from the boat quite a bit, casting into areas that one just can't reach when fishing from the bank. They tossed their flies behind rocks and big boulders, as well as into the deep pools. There are a couple places on this Bull float where one can get out of the boat and fish from shore. They took advantage of these places to stretch their legs as they fished the bank edges.

The water in the Bull River is crystal clear and the level has come up after the recent rains we have had. The improved water level has made floating our raft much easier and the fish

we have had. The improved water level has made floating our raft much easier and the fish seem to really like it as well.

The cutthroats were very active today with these dry fly anglers landing 20 fish each. The fish were very healthy and colorful. The biggest fish released was a nice 17 inch cutthroat which put up a good fight as these wild fish can be very aggressive for their size.

The hatches on the River today included October Caddis and small midges. The flies that were most productive were the Blue Winged Olives, Orange or Yellow Stimulators, Orange Caddis, Green Drakes and tan or red Fat Alberts (sizes 12 to 14).

We did not see much wildlife on the Bull River today, but we did get a surprise when a group of horses from a hunting camp came down to the river to drink as we floated by.

The rivers are all fishing very well this fall. But remember if you are heading out to fish at this time of year it is best to start a little later. For best results you have to hit the water once the morning sunshine has warmed up the water temperature in order to get some activity on the surface.

Columbia River Bound:

We are off to fish the upper Columbia on Sunday and will get you a fishing report shortly after that. The big rainbows on the Columbia have been fattening up all summer and now we want to experience their big tug on our lines!

Tight lines and take care,

Kelly

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to book a fall trip for big rainbows on the upper Columbia River.

Report #19 (September 14, 2015)

The Fall Hatches are Abundant on the St. Mary River

Today we floated the St. Mary River from the put-in at the Kimberley Golf Course down to Wycliffe. The nights are now quite cool so we start a little later in the morning, meeting at our shop in Cranbrook around 9:00 am. We want to get out on the water a little later so the sun has had a chance to warm things up to the point where the fish are active on the surface before when we start fishing.

The weather today was very nice with temperatures reaching a pleasant 15°C (60°F). Later

in the afternoon the clouds started to move in as a change in weather was coming. But overall the day was quite nice. The fall colors are starting to pop, making the river corridor look remarkably vibrant.

The water conditions on the St. Mary have come up about 8 inches from the low point last month when we were quite dry. The recent rains have really helped the rivers come back to their normal levels for this time of year. The temperature of the water was 11°C (52°F), nice and crisp for these active trout!

The fishing in the morning started a little slow, but the October Caddis were coming off and the fish were already looking up. The two anglers landed about 15 fish between them before lunch. In the afternoon the fishing was quite good till about 4:00 p.m. when the weather moved in.

Most of the fish landed were in the 12-13 inch range, with a few in the 15-18 inch slot. Overall the fishing was very good on this day. The cutthroat trout were quite chunky and healthy and put up a really good fight when hooked.

During the float, the anglers often got out of the boat to fish the runs and channels. The cuts like to live along the bank edges and like to hunker down under some kind of protection whenever possible. So if you can get a good cast into a run, and mend your line so the fly floats naturally long enough for the fish to spot it, you can draw out a big guy to come up and slam the bug. You just have to make sure you hook up the fish and do not pull the fly away too quickly once they strike; which happens a lot more than everyone likes to admit!

In addition to the larger sized October Caddis, a few other hatches came off on this day including some large format Blue Winged Olives, some Green Drakes and Mahogany Duns. As I have mentioned in the past, the cutthroats in the St. Mary do not really key on the hatches. Therefore, in addition to the imitations mimicking the natural hatches mentioned, the cuts also readily took our red or tan Fat Alberts and Chernobyl Ants. These fish will take whatever they feel like!

The St. Mary River continues to provide good fishing action this September. When you couple the quality of the fishing with the backdrop of fall colours and lack of pressure out on the rivers now, it really is an awesome time of year to be on the water fly fishing.

The afternoon weather brought out many birds to feed on the river enjoying the bug hatches. As always in the fall, there are many bears down in the valleys of the backcountry now, so always be prepared to bump into them. Give the bears their space and try not to walk up on them and spook them---always make yourself visible and make lots of noise.

Columbia River Bound:

Soon we will be guiding anglers over on the upper Columbia River in search of the big fall rainbows. Once we get a few trips in, I will have a report on that piece of exciting water!

Tight lines and take care,

Kelly

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to book a fall trip for big rainbow on the upper Columbia River.

Report #18 (September 6, 2015)

The Blue Winged Olive and Green Drake Hatches Have Arrived!

Today our destination was an afternoon float on the Elk River. We started off later in the morning getting our boat in the water and ready to go on one of the lower sections by lunchtime.

The day had started off nice and warm with the sun beaming down on the water triggering a lot of fish activity. The temperature reached 12°C (55°F) by the late afternoon. We did get some rain for an hour as we were floating, but then the skies cleared up and the sun came out again. Very typical for this time of year!

The water levels have come up recently as a result of the recent rain we have been getting. The water clarity remains good.

We fished from the boat as we moved down river searching out the nice runs. On a couple of occasions we got out of the boat to fish the most promising ones. Good thing we did as the fishing was on fire!

Because it was a cool rainy day, the hatches were exploding on the Elk River. The Blue Winged Olives were popping off, as well as the big Green Drakes throughout the day. So we put on some Green Drake artificials and the cutthroats came readily to the surface and ate that particular fly pretty much all day long! Wow, was that ever exciting; ants, beetles and Blue Winged Olive patterns also worked well.

In one run the two anglers caught and released 20 fish! A nice 18 inch cutthroat was hooked up as we were floating downstream, casting along the bank edges and behind rocks. The fish now are so colorful, vibrant orange with a big red cut along the jaw. They are very fat, chunky and healthy looking fish.

We dry fly fished all day using 4 and 5X tippets. The cuts readily took the fly on the surface. The anglers just had to watch for the boil around the fly, then lift up!

It seemed like the big fish would just come up, sip the bug and then drop back down under

the water. While the smaller fish were coming up so hard and fast they would basically hang themselves on the line! It was a great day of fall dry fly fishing on the Elk!

Bear Watch:

Well it is that time of year when the bears are moving around the valley looking for food. As it was a dry summer and all the berries are long gone now, they are on the hunt. Make sure to take precautions when you head out into the back country; make lots of noise, be aware of your surroundings and if you come across bears, give them lots of room.

The rivers are still fishing very well, aided by the recent cool weather and rain. After the Labor Day weekend most people have headed back to work and the kids are in school. This means the rivers are mostly empty of fishermen and you can pretty have the place to yourself. Some days in the fall it is like you are on your own private river! So come on up and check us out. The beautiful fall colors are starting to emerge which is another fun bonus to fishing in the fall!

Hope to see you soon!

Take care,

Kelly

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to keep track of all the fall hatches.

Report #17 (August 29, 2015)

Elk River Report; the water is cool and the fish are very active.

The Elk River fishes very well this time of year so it was the natural choice for today's float. We all met up at our Fly Shop on Cranbrook Street and took an early morning drive over to the Elk.

Upon arrival, the lower section of the Elk was looking nice so we put in at the slide spot and started our float down to Elko. The water conditions were amazing; crystal clear and cool. The recent low evening temperatures have really helped to chill the water nicely and keep it cool throughout the day.

The choice of the anglers was to dry fly fish all day. So starting with a beetle pattern they proceeded to cast. They could have successfully fished nymphs or streamers for bull trout and cutthroats had they desired to do so. But hey, when a nice cutthroat comes to the surface and grabs your fly, there is nothing better than that!

We floated down the runs casting along the bank edges, behind rocks and along the log

jams. When drifting a river in this manner, one always has to be very aware of where your line is. If you get too close to a logjam you might get caught up and lose your fly, your leader or even a good portion of your fly line. Unfortunately, this can translate into lost fishing time as you scramble to reassemble things. That said, sometimes a big guy will come out the shadows and look at your fly, and if the drift is perfect the cutthroat will grab it and you are off to the races. But be vigilant as there are risks involved!

Today's weather would have been beautiful, if not for the smoke from the forest fires drifting in from Washington, Montana and Idaho. Recently the air quality has begun to improve somewhat and with the rain coming this weekend we expect to get back to clear blue skies to go with the crisp mornings!

The fishing was very good today. In fact, this year in general, the fishing has been very good. Despite the extended heat and low stream flows the fish have been very active throughout.

On this float of the Elk, each angler caught around 20 fish each with all of them over 14 inches. So today was pretty much a big fish day!

The cutthroat on the Elk are very chunky now and very colorful. They have a lot of energy and they take the fly on the surface with power.

October Caddis, Blue Winged Olives and midges were hatching today and if you had these patterns in your box you did quite well. Mahogany Duns and foam beetle patterns also worked well out on the River. So remember to keep a good assortment of flies with you when you head out on the water.

So far this season we have not run into any black or grizzly bears just yet. But we know they are out there and in the fall we expect to see them when out in the backcountry. So remember to be respectful of their needs when you come across them...give them plenty of room!

We are now on the precipice of fall. I think it is the best time of year to fish if one likes to fish the hatches. So come on up and float a river, it is absolutely beautiful in the fall and the elbowroom improves nicely as folks turn to other pursuits!

Take care,

Kelly

PS drop into the shop if you are in town, or give us a call to track the fall hatches at 1-800-667-2311.

Report #16 (August 23, 2015)

Report #10 (August 25, 2015)**St.Mary River Report; cool, refreshing and productive!**

It was very cool this morning, a crisp 5°C (41°F). Yesterday it rained all day and through the night which helped to refresh our parched landscape. We chose the St. Mary River as today's destination float. As the day went on it cleared up very nicely with blue skies and temperatures reaching a pleasant 20°C (70°F).

We floated the Canyon Section of the St.Mary, from the Wycliffe put-in down to the take-out at the St. Eugene Mission. We reached the River around 8:30 a.m., and while I was putting the boat in the water one angler immediately hooked into a fish while waiting to go! That is always a good sign. After landing the fish we piled into the boat and pushed off to start the day. The anglers quickly began to cast along the bank edges, trying to get a good drift on the fly.

The morning was quite cool so the fishing was a little slow, but as it warmed up the fishing picked up. As we know from experience, the St.Mary River cutthroat trout like the sun on the water, so by mid morning the fish seemed to be quite happy rising readily to our the presented dry flies.

The anglers had lots of opportunities to catch many fish today. However as beginners, they saw lots of fish come for their fly, only to pull on the line too quickly, or not quick enough to hook up the fish! As the day progressed the guys figured things out and managed to hooked 30 or so fish between the two of them. Quick learners! The biggest fish landed was a nice 15 inch chunky cut.

During the float we stopped and got out of the boat on a number of occasions so I could show the boys how to read the water, where the fish lie, as well as casting techniques and how to mend properly. There is still enough water in the River so we could walk up the back channels and fish nice runs from the shore. So we did not need to sit and fish from the boat all day.

We observed some small midges hatching during the float, but saw lots of hoppers in the bush and grass along the River. The cutthroats on the St.Mary are very aggressive and if you get a good float with your bug they will either come up and look at it, or slam it hard! The St.Mary cuts are not hatch oriented. If they like the drift on your fly they will let you know it!

The flies used today included the Royal Wulffs, Stim-Chew Toys, Fat Alberts and Purple Haze. It is best to have a wide selection of flies in your box as you never know really know what will move them. One day they will take a certain fly and the next they will change to something else.

The fishing on our rivers continues to be very productive. We have received some well needed rain so the rivers are in good shape. So come on up and give it your best shot. It is

starting to feel a little like fall is in the air, which is great because the fishing can be spectacular in September and October! We just love the colors of fall and cool evenings, my favorite time of the year!

Hope to see you on the river soon!

Have a good one and take care,

Kelly

Ps Call us at 1-800-667-2311 or drop into the fly shop to talk about fishing conditions, available days on all the rivers we fish, or what flies you should have in your box!

Report #15 (August 16, 2015)

Elk River Report: a well deserved busman's holiday!

Very few days come along during the season when Karen and I get a day off together to go fishing, but today was one of those rare days! The quick consensus was to go for a walk and wade on the Elk River, so off we went on for a nice day on the Elk.

Driving over we could see some storm clouds rolling through the valley, which was nice to see, as water is a concern this season. The rain is what we need and it had the additional feature of reducing the temperature so it was not too hot today.

We parked down on the lower section of the Elk River and hiked about a mile upstream to where we crossed the River to get to a pretty good-looking section. While crossing the Elk we noticed that the water was quite cool, which is also good given the heat. The level of the Elk River is down a bit over normal conditions, but it is in really good shape and very clear.

Once we found our respective spots on top end of the good-looking run, we rigged up our dry fly rods. We started with 4X leaders with a foam pattern beetle, and then began casting.

The fishing started off slow as the storms were in the area and the barometric pressure had dropped. We endured a brief downpour, then the fishing picked up. After a while we decided to change things up and switched to 5X tippets and put on smaller patterns including H&L Variants and ant patterns. We casted our lines, mended accordingly, then watched as the cutthroats tracked the flies, came up nice and slowly to take the fly only to realize they were hooked! And the fight was on.

We fished for a couple hours, hiking along the Elk to check out different spots we have had our eyes on. We landed a few fish in each hole, with the biggest being a nice 17-inch cutty.

There were no hatches of note happening on this day, just a bunch of grasshoppers in the adjacent fields. In terms of artificials, we used ant, caddis, beetle and grasshopper patterns along with some Fat Alberts on this walk and wade.

The clouds grew darker again in the later part of the afternoon and we were caught in another rain shower. Again, it was nice to have some rain for a change.

During our time fishing we saw lot of beavers doing their job, cutting down trees and hauling branches off, as well as a lot of bird life.

On the whole it was great for Karen and I to get out to do some fishing and hiking together. It was a nice reminder of what everyone else gets to do in the summer time!

River Roundup:

As you are well aware, we have had a hot summer with little rain this season. Recently, some rivers in our region have been closed to fishing from August 15 to Sept 15 due to the low flows and high water temperatures. This includes Michele Creek and some tributaries of the Elk River.

The St. Mary, Elk, Bull and Skookumchuck rivers remain open, but are being monitored at this time. Cool evenings and more rain will definitely help keep them open! Check before you head out fishing to make sure you are not fishing in any of the closed rivers.

Have a good one and take care,

Kelly

Ps Call us at 1-800-667-2311 or drop into the fly shop to talk about conditions and available days on all the rivers we fish.

Report #14 (August 8, 2015)

The St. Mary River has hit its summer groove!

Today was another beautiful day here in the East Kootenay region of British Columbia. The day started early as our group of anglers wanted to get on the St. Mary River and fish while it was cool in the morning. The temperature this morning hit a low of 7°C (45°F). Wow, it sure can cool down in the evenings even in early August. The nice thing about it cooling down so much at night is that it keeps the water temperatures down, which is good for the fish and those of us who pursue them.

The two brothers on this trip were very excited about hitting the water. This pair of anglers fish a lot down on the coast with spinning gear but are new to fly-fishing. But they were

...and a lot of them on the boat with spinning gear, but all new to fly fishing. But they were eager to learn the art of fly-fishing while chasing some St.Mary cutthroat trout.

So after the boat was readied in the water and tethered to the shore, the anglers got a quick dry land lesson on how to cast and how to make the fly drift naturally down a run. These experienced anglers picked up the concepts quite quickly, now it was time to see if they could execute it!

Our float today was in the Canyon Section of the St. Mary. During the trip the anglers fished from the boat, implementing the technique taught to them at the start and managed to get out of the boat and cast from shore as well. The St.Mary water level now is about where it usually is at the end of August. So the anglers had to get out of the boat a couple times to get through the more skinny sections.

The St. Mary River was in a giving mood today as the fish were happy to come up to the fly and hit it with aggression! The brothers hooked up on many cutthroats throughout the day, sometimes doing so simultaneously. During the float they learned how to lift the rod to hook the fish and how to let the fish run. Of course they lost many fish, but what a way to come up to speed on fly-fishing with an in the field experience on the St. Mary River!

These beginners each caught 18 to 20 fish in the 13 to 15 inch range. They both had a 17-inch cutthroat on their lines, but could not land them. Perhaps next time. The fish in the St.Mary River are all healthy looking; very chunky and colorful.

The insect activity on the St.Mary River at this time of year consists of a few midge hatches with lots of grasshoppers roaming the riparian vegetation. The St. Mary River is not a 'hatch oriented' river like the Elk. The fish in the Mary will eat anything so long as you can get a natural drift long enough for the fish to spot it, be fooled, and eat it.

The flies used today were mainly foam patterns, such as the Red Fat Alberts, grasshopper patterns and Chernobyl Ants (sizes 12-14). The traditional patterns used included stimulators (yellow and orange), Royal Wulffs, Parachute Adams (split wing) and Lime Trudes (sizes 12-16).

Today we spotted a few eagles and ospreys on the River. There is so much bird life to see out on the water now, but when you are out there fly fishing you are so busy casting, mending and hooking up on fish that you don't always notice them much.

If you have never been up in the Kootenay region of southeastern British Columbia yet, we recommend you put it on your "must see" list and come on up soon. If you like fishing and being in the great outdoors, this is a great place to see.

If you are in the Cranbrook area feel free to drop in to our Fly Shop at 401 Cranbrook Street and chat with our very knowledgeable staff. They will give you the latest tips, equip you to fish and direct you to wherever you want to go!

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Take care

Kelly

Ps Call us at 1-800-667-2311 for directions to our fly shop or to talk about available days to book a float trip.

Report #13 (August 1, 2015)

The Bull River has lots of cool clear water and is fishing very well!

The summer is cruising right along and what a great summer of fishing it has been out on our rivers. I can't believe it is early August already!

Today's destination was the Bull River. The drive up the Bull River is a little different than others as the guide always leads in the truck with the clients following behind in a second vehicle. It is necessary to take multiple vehicles because the Bull is too remote for any shuttle service. It is a dirt road that requires a four-wheel drive, or a vehicle that you do not mind driving on dirt and gravel roads.

We have two sections of the Bull that we regularly float. The guide usually makes the call on which section to fish upon arrival after a quick review of the conditions. Once a decision has been made the boat is readied on the riverbank while the clients prepare their dry fly fishing rods. On this day, each angler started off with a big attractor pattern, a Fat Albert and a grasshopper, using a 4/5-weight fly rod with a 4X or 5X leader/tippet.

As we pushed off from shore the anglers quickly starting casting as we commenced our way down this beautiful River. The Bull River has some amazing views tucked up behind the Steeples (Rockies). It really is a must see when you come up to this part of the world.

The water levels are holding up quite nicely on the Bull River this hot and dry summer. With near normal levels, the River is staying cool, which is good for the fish. As you may be aware most of the rivers in the southwestern part of British Columbia have been close to trout fishing because of the ongoing drought. Fortunately, our southeastern region of the Province has not been impacted so severely and we have not seen any fishing closures. During our float we casted our lines along the bank edges and behind big rocks hoping to hook into fish. Fortunately for us the big attractor patterns, and a few other guide patterns, helped us fool the fish many times today as the anglers landed 15-20 fish each, mostly in the 12-14 inches class.

In addition to all those 12's to 14's, some bigger fish were encountered as well. There is a place on the Bull known as the Cave Hole where one of the anglers was able to make a nice side cast and flop the fly under the big rock ledge. The fly floated along through the run long

enough for a big cutthroat trout to track it, come up and sip the fly off the surface, getting itself hooked!

This cutthroat was a nice and chunky 17 incher that put up a strong fight. The angler had to let him run a bit at first, but then brought him in quickly allowing for a fast and safe release back into the depths of the waters of the Cave Hole.

In terms of the hatches observed while out on the water today, we only saw a few midges. That said, the grasshoppers were dominant along the edges of the stream.

The flies used today included; ant and beetle patterns, grasshoppers, Fat Alberts, Royal Wulffs, H&L Variants and Trudes. Of course they fished a few of our guides patterns as well.

This day out on the Bull River was spectacular. In addition to the fishing and the magnificent scenery, we managed to see a deer, an elk, a bear and a family of cougars while on the River. While we were packing up after our lunch, we spotted a cougar with her cubs upriver. So needless to say we hurried into the boat and drifted out of the area. What a day for wildlife!

The season is in full swing now. So give some thought to coming up or over, and checking out our rivers for yourself. If you do come, please make sure you check to ensure you have the right licenses and be sure to review the regulations before you hit the waters.

Also remember to check to see if there is any fire bans in effect before you light any combustibles.

Hope you are having a great summer!

Take Care

Kelly

Ps call us at 1-800-667-2311 to book a float trip today!

Report #12 (July 26th, 2015)

The Elk River has cleared up and is fishing great!

It was an Elk River day today. A group of eager fly fishers was picked up at the Canadian Mountain Cabins in Kimberley early this morning. We then loaded up the vehicles and headed out over to the Fernie area to fish the Elk.

Along the way we had to stop at the Jaffray General Store to buy their coffee and strudel, an absolute must! After the hour plus drive, we stopped along the highway, got everything ready and then slid the boats gently into the Elk River to float the lower section.

The weather was overcast and cooler on this day, peaking at around 20 °C (70 °F). By noon the rain had started and continued throughout the rest of the day. This liquid reprieve is exactly what the streams and rivers of our area needed, so it was nice to see.

The water level in the Elk River now, is similar to what we usually see in the middle of August. That said, the River is in great condition; crystal clear and just an amazing trout stream!

The guys rigged up their dry fly rods and then set up the bull trout rods as well. They fished from the boat mostly as it was positioned well along the runs or the bank edges making for simple straightforward casting into prime fishing water. The fish love to hangout under the overhanging banks or along structures such as logs and boulders that are scattered throughout the stream.

When we did come upon a nice long run or a back channel, the guys would get out of the boat and fish while walking the bank edges! It makes for lots of variety and lots of fun.

The River fished very well on this trip. I think the rain helps as it can kick start a number of hatches on a summer's day like today. Unfortunately, the Beatis and Green Drakes took there time to emerge. They finally showed up later in the afternoon much to everyone's surprise and delight!

The fish, however, had a love affair going on with our artificial beetles decked out with legs and the Purple Haze. The cutthroats came up and took these flies very aggressively. The average size caught and released today was in the 15-16 inch range with a few pushing 18 landed as well. The cuts were very healthy and fat and they showed off their cutthroat colors so nicely when held for the camera!

The anglers caught and released at least 30 fish during the day. It was very productive fishing and fun was had by all, even in the rain.

During the float we saw many types of birds along the Elk, as well as some grazing deer.

Around the Horn:

The Elk, St. Mary and Bull Rivers are all fishing very well now. We are in the prime summer fishing window so come on up and see what all the fuss is about; beautiful rivers and great fishing in the Canadian Rockies!

Hope to see you soon.

Take Care,

Kelly

Ps call us at 1-800-667-2311 to book a trip today!

Report #11 (July 19th, 2015)

The Upper St. Mary River is Fishing Very Well.

Today we decided to float the upper stretch of the St. Mary River from the Power-line down to the takeout at the Pump-house. This section can be a very productive piece of water to fish, although you must traverse a few rapids near the end of the float.

The weather has been a "wait 10 minutes" type of situation this past week as showers and some thunder have been rolling through the valley. The guides are pretty good at finding spots along the River to pull over to get you out of the rain during these 20 minute weather events. Overall, today was quite nice with a high of 28 °C (82 °F). In general it has been great to get some rain in the area as it has sure cooled everything down quite nicely.

The water level on the St. Mary River is currently at what we usually see in the first week or so of August. The guides are not out of the boats and pushing yet, so that is good news. The River is clear and fishing very well.

As we floated this section of the St.Mary today we were able to get out of the boat and fish the runs with the dry flies from the bank. We also walked up some of the back channels and fished them as well. The St. Mary River braids a lot so it provides many nice places to get out of the boat and cast. While we floated we casted our lines close to the bank edge, along the logjams and behind big rocks to lure the cutthroats up to take the fly on the surface. The only trick, if one can call it that, is to get the fly to float freely, naturally, with no drag, so the fish can find it and slam it!

The fishing was very good in throughout the morning, it slowed down a little after lunch, but picked up again near the end of the afternoon. One of the anglers caught and released around 20 fish, while the other, a beginner, caught and released another 10. He was very excited with the fish he caught!

Again, the fish were quite chunky and healthy looking, with an average size in the 14-15 inch slot. The biggest cut was a nice 17 incher which was landed in addition to a nice bull trout.

Hoppers are now everywhere! We are also seeing some midges and caddis hatching. Today we used hoppers imitations, sizes 12-14, lime trudes, sizes 14-16, and lots of foam pattern

stones and big attractors.

Elk River Update:

There was a pretty big landslide on the Elk River over a week ago. It left the River pretty dirty, but has been clearing up since then. Fortunately, we are hearing that the fishing has remained very good. It has been a tough couple of years for the Elk in terms of the natural hazards impacting the River. We have a few trips slated for the Elk next week, so we will let you know how things are looking after that.

I hope you are able to get out on the water for some dry fly fishing this summer.

Take care,

Kelly

PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to check for available days or fishing conditions.

Report #10 (July 10th, 2015)

The St. Mary River Report: Summer is Here!

The fishing season on the Elk, St. Mary and Bull Rivers is now in full swing! We are guiding enthusiastic anglers down these rivers most every day. Today's report is from one of the floats we did on the lowest section of the St. Mary River that terminates at the confluence with the Kootenay River.

We are now starting the daily float trips early as the hot summer weather is upon us. We are noticing that the fishing slows down around 5:00 pm, which is pretty well the warmest part of the day, so it makes sense to be wrapping up by then.

It seems everyone loves getting to the shop bright and early and why not? Checking out our great selection of flies, chatting with the guides about the destination of the day, and of course, drinking coffee, is an excellent way to start a summer's day! After today's ritual "shop talk" the guys loaded all their gear into the guide truck, piled in, then took off down to the put-in on the St. Mary.

The weather was a tad cooler this morning as we experienced some thunderstorms last night. We definitely needed some rain and it was nice respite from the heat.

After the boats were launched we floated over to the first run casting some big stone patterns on the dry fly along the way. The fish seemed a little more active today with the cooler weather and moved onto flies readily! As usual, if the angler put a good drift on the

weather and moved onto flies readily: As usual, if the angler put a good drift on the artificial, the fish would jump on the fly to drown it, then eat it!

The anglers landed 15 to 20 fish each and lost just as many on their float today. The St.Mary cutthroats must be eating well as they are pretty chunky this year. The biggest fish caught on this day was a beautiful 18-inch cutthroat. This fish hammered the fly just along the bank edge. In this case we had to move the boat and the fish down river a ways to find a suitable place to land him. This maneuvering of the boat and the fish always seems add to the excitement!

During the day we saw a few midge and stone fly hatches coming off. These hatches were robust enough that later in the day it motivated what seemed like every swallow on the

St.Mary to come for an early dinner. The flies that worked well on this day included; Royal Wulffs, Lime Trudes, H&L Variants, and of course, the big attractor patterns such as Stimulators, Stone Flies and Turk's Tarantula.

The bottom stretch of the St.Mary River has a lot of bird life this season with many nests of eagles and osprey, which catch one's eye as we drift by.

Regional Round Up:

The East Kootenays have been very warm the last few weeks, but this recent spate of cooler weather and accompanying rain sure has helped out the backcountry. The forecast is for rain and showers over the next few days. This is great news, as it will cool the rivers down and keep the fish happy.

Remember you need specific licenses to fish certain waters, so check the Regulations before you head out to fish on any river or lake in the East Kootenays.

The fishing has been very good this year on all our rivers. So come up and check it out!

We hope to see you out on the water soon!

Take care,

Kelly

PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss the latest dry fly fishing on our the St.Mary, Elk, Skook and Bull rivers.

Report #9 (July 5th, 2015)

The Bull River is Rounding into Summer Form and Fishing Well!

Fishing the Bull River has been on our minds for the past few days. So an eager group of anglers met at the fly shop in Cranbrook around 8:00 a.m. this morning. After the exchange of the usual early morning pleasantries, we all headed up to the Bull River.

The Bull River is about a 45 minute drive from the fly shop to where we like to fish on the upper stretch. We have two stretches of the Bull we usually float. After making our choice to fish the upper one, we began rigging up the fly rods. This group of guys just wanted to dry fly fish, so we put on a new 4X leader, picked out a traditional fly like an Adam or Caddis pattern, and tied them on.

The weather was hot, 29 to 30 °C (84-86 °F) with very little breeze. The water conditions are still a little high and fast, but dropping everyday. The runs are forming nicely and the fish are up and feeding on the hatches. Sometimes these fish don't even need a hatch as they will eat whatever drifts over them.

The Bull River is a great river to fish from the boat as you can get to places that are very hard to reach from walking the bank edges.

Today the fishing started off with a bang as the cutthroat were coming up and checking the out the flies from the first casts. If one got a good drift through the run, the fish would hit it aggressively. The fishing slowed a bit in the middle part of the day, but on the whole it was consistently pretty good. We spent some time at one particular spot, called the "Blue Hole", where the cuts have a bluish tinge to them, which was pretty interesting to see!

The anglers caught and released 25 fish each and many of them were healthy and fought well. The biggest fish caught was a pretty 16 inch cutthroat trout.

The dominant bugs on the day came from a black and brown caddis hatch, in addition to some stone flies. The flies that we used included; caddis, Royal Wulffs, H&L Variants, Fat Alberts and Lime Trudes. The big attractor patterns seemed to attract the cutthroats attention pretty well, with the added bonus of being nice and easy for the angler to see!

The wildlife up in the Bull River valley today included a few deer along the river banks and many ospreys and eagles tending their nests.

All our rivers are fishing well now. If you go out on your own, make sure you check the regulations before you fish. Please abide by the "No Fire Ban" that has been activated in our region because of the hot and dry weather.

I hope to see you out on the water soon!

Take care,

Kelly

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PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to review available days and discuss the latest dry fly fishing conditions.

Report #8 (July 2nd, 2015)

The Elk River is Rounding into Form and the Dry Fly Fishing is Fine!

Today we decided to float the Elk River from Fernie down to the hamlet of Elko near the southern end of the Rocky Mountain Trench. The weather was absolutely beautiful for most of the day. The temperature topped out at 29 °C (82 °F) with only a few high clouds bumping around.

There was very little breeze on the water on this trip, which is very nice when one floats this lower section of the Elk. When the wind blows down here it can make for some ugly rowing and challenging casting conditions!

The Elk River experienced a large pulse of debris coming down from Hartley Lake a few days ago which really dirtied things up. The water is now clearing in the higher sections of the River, but on the lower part the water has only about 3-4 feet of visibility. The fishing however, was good on the lower section even with the reduced visibility today.

We dry fly fished throughout the day with our 5 and 6 weight rods. We fished primarily from the boat working along the bank edges as we moved downstream. We did get out on occasion and fish a promising looking back channel, or nice run. The runs are slowly forming and the fish are making their way up to their summer niches. During the float we did not touch a fish in some areas, while we hooked up multiple fish in other runs. So the fish are not yet spread out across the system as they will be once they all find their place in the available habitat.

On this float the anglers caught and released about 25 cutthroats each, all on dries! The cutthroats were very healthy looking, with some being quite chunky. Because of the warm winter we experienced I am sure the cuts have been feeding well throughout the winter months, especially since January. The average sized cutthroats landed and released were in the 13 to 16 inch slot. The biggest was a nice 17 inch cutthroat that put up a robust fight.

The hatches coming off on the bottom end of the Elk included some caddis, green drakes and stone flies. We also saw some small midges hatching as well. The flies that were effective were the stone patterns, Fat Alberts, orange or yellow simulators, H&L Variants, caddis and Trudes.

The Elk River is alive with bird life now and we also saw a couple of deer near the River sipping water as we floated by.

Early summer conditions are now forming in the rivers in our area and all are fishing quite well.

Come on up and float the wild and pristine rivers of Southeastern B.C. for yourself!

Take care,

Kelly

PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss the latest fishing conditions and to review the available days.

Report #7 (June 21st, 2015)

The St.Mary River is in excellent form and fishing very well!

Today we decided to do our annual guide's reconnaissance float trip down the St. Mary River. We put in seven boats at the Kimberley Golf Course and floated all the way down to the Kootenay River takeout near historic Fort Steele.

For many years we have floated the River close to opening day, cruising through all three lower sections (the headwater stretch excluded) with no worries. This year we probably should only have floated two of them as the River level is already at mid-July flows.

The goal of this float was to see how the St.Mary has changed over the winter and to check out the back channels and basically review all the runs. We also wanted to have a nice lunch on the River with all the guides to kick the season off!

The weather was beautiful as per the past few weeks, which has been mid-summer like. The temperature today ranged between 28-30 °C (82-86 °F). The Kootenay Region of southeastern B.C. has been experiencing record breaking temperatures this June. On this day we had a little cloud cover in the morning, then clear blue skies in the afternoon. We had to stay covered and put on lots of sunscreen on this trip.

The water conditions are crystal clear down to 6-7 feet and the runs are already starting to form-up. There is no more snow pack up high, so the River is already in prime fishing condition, the earliest in the past 6 years!

Today we dry fly fished all day. The first thing we did was put on a stone fly pattern then started floating and casting along the bank edges. Our boat stopped at one nice hole right out of the gate and we placed a short cast along the riffle edge... then... wham, a nice 15 inch cutthroat grabbed the fly, what a great start!

The fishing today on the St.Mary was outstanding for this time of year. There were many hatches coming off all day; caddis, stone flies and even green drakes. This gave the hungry cutthroats a fine smorgasbord of food to choose from. That said, the fish in the St.Mary are not hatch oriented. If one throws a pattern and makes it float naturally down the run, you will entice a fish to hit it.

During the day we caught and released about 20 cutthroat per angler and probably lost that many more. The cutthroat looked very healthy and chunky, very nice to see.

The biggest fish landed was about 16 inches long. We hooked a few smaller cutthroats and on a couple of occasions saw a big bull trout chasing after the little guys as we reeled them in.

As we floated down through the three sections of the River we noticed a lot of bird life including; eagles, ospreys and mother ducks with their babies along side of the river bank. As we approached the confluence with the Kootenay River we also noticed many fish on the flats cruising up into the St.Mary. The fish are all moving into their summer holds now and it was awesome to see it in action.

Overall the fishing was amazing on this day and the fishing in the past week has been just as good. So many hatches and so much food on the water which we think make the fish active and perhaps even happy!

River Roundup:

The Elk River is also clear and has been fishing well during the past week. However, we just heard yesterday that the Elk clouded up from an upstream break up of some debris and logs, which had backed up the River then broke loose. We will keep you up to date and let you know when things start to clear up.

The Bull River is also fishing very well now. The Skookumchuck River is still a bit high to walk and wade, but the water levels are coming down and should be in good shape very soon.

Come on up and experience early dry fly fishing at its best, the rivers all in fine shape and fishing very well!

Take care,

Kelly

PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss conditions and to book a trip.

Report #6 (June 11th, 2015)

Upper Columbia River Report: the weather is hot and the rainbows are eager!

The Columbia River has been fishing quite well overall for the last couple of months of spring. Recently the odd thunderstorm has slowed it down a bit, but the fishing remains good. Today we fished from the put-in at **Genelle**, downriver past Murphy Creek to the City of Trail, B.C.

The weather has been very nice the last couple of days. Today it reached a summer like high of 34°C out on the River, that is whopping 93°F! High temperature records were broken all over B.C. this week. Out on the water when it is hot and sunny it is a good idea to cover up and apply sun screen as the reflection off the water can be crazy!

The Columbia up here is now running at about 120,000 cubic feet per second. So it has come up, but remains clear and free of floating debris. We are not seen any sticks, bark or logs floating down the River. This is a nice bonus when you are fishing in the big back eddies that can collect a lot of stuff as they do their eternal swirl.

As soon as we put in, we turned right and jetted down the River. We continued until we came to a spot where we found some rainbows feeding at the surface. So we pulled out the dry fly rods and proceeded to catch a few nice rainbows “surface slurping” which is quite exciting. Even the smaller guys in the 15 to 16 band pulled like crazy. For the rest of the day we mainly fished pupa patterns using nymph techniques, lots of fun!

On this trip the lone angler in the boat caught and released around 20 nice sized rainbows. These fish are hot and fight like crazy till you can get them close to the boat and can take a picture. The biggest fish released today was a nice 20 inch rainbow. This angler is here for a couple of more days so we are hoping to find some bigger ones to wrestle in.

In terms of the hatches, we only saw a few midges come off during the day, as well as a few caddis showing up. The artificials that were working well included; Kelly’s caddis, prince nymphs, super streamer, copper Johns and callibaetis may flies.

Out on the River today we saw lots of Canada geese with their goslings chugging along the shallows besides the bank edges. We also saw some eagles and ospreys hunting in the same area...

Rivers Around our Region:

All the rivers in southeastern B.C. opened for fishing on June 15th. Currently, the St. Mary River has about five feet of visibility and the water level is dropping steadily. There is very little snowpack left in the mountains as I write, so the rivers should be fishing quite early this year.

Book now and come on up and enjoy some incredible dry fly fishing this summer on the Elk, St. Mary and Bull rivers... you will not be disappointed!

Take care,

Kelly

PS you can always reach us directly at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss conditions and available days.

Report #5 (May 31st, 2015)

The Lake Fishing Report: A roundup based on what we have heard from our fly shop patrons.

Today I am going to do something a little different. Many local anglers have come into the shop over the course of the spring and told me about how good, or bad, the lakes in the area are fishing. So I will write this fishing report based on what they have told me in addition to what I have seen.

This year the lake fishing season opened quite early as they iced off in the middle of March. With the warming and the subsequent turnovers and run-off starting early, many lakes were fishing very well early on.

The weather was pretty nice through April and May and the water conditions were normal. However, as the warm weather built, some of the lower elevation lakes saw their water levels drop to abnormally low levels. For example, Horseshoe and Lazy Lake have dropped low enough that the weeds are showing along the shallows. Fortunately, last week saw quite a bit of rain and helped raise the levels somewhat. The high elevation lakes like Premier, White Swan and Whitetail are also holding less water than normal, but again the rain helped them out a bit. While we are not experiencing the extreme drought conditions of Idaho, Washington and California, things have been pretty dry this spring.

The anglers in our area (men and woman alike) have been doing a lot of lake fishing this spring. They have been coming into the shop and reporting on their successes on a regular basis. They have told us the following:

Premier Lake was fishing outstanding this spring until we had a week of hot weather. Since then it has slowed down quite a bit. It was almost as if the summer fishing kicked in. Under the warm weather conditions of summer, one has to fish deep, and use pulling patterns such as leeches, woolly buggers, and micro leeches to have much success.

White Swan was fishing great from the May Long Weekend up to fairly recently with chironomid techniques. However, it has now become a little spotty depending on the day you go out.

Whitetail Lake has been fishing the best of all the lakes this spring. Folks have had wonderful experiences using chironomids. Now with all the food hatching on the Lake, including caddis flies, damselflies and dragonflies, using these patterns along the shallows has worked out quite well. It is a blast to actually sight fish for the big rainbows on Whitetail.

Some of the smaller lakes around Premier Lake and Lazy Lake have also been worth the effort. Nice rainbows are being pulled out of these lakes using chironomids, as well as leeches and callibaetis emerger patterns.

Overall the spring fishing for rainbows on all these lakes has been very good. While there have been days that have been slow because of natural factors such as the heat, or because the fish are gorged from a big black ant hatch coming off the day before. On the whole, the fishing has put a lot of smiles on the faces of the many men and women who have come into our shop to talk about it!

We have seen some big fish coming out of the lakes in our area this spring. I just heard about a 24 inch rainbow out of Premier Lake. We usually see mostly 16 to 18 inch rainbows from there, which often put up an impressive fight, taking guys into their backing and jumping desperately! But this big one is a pleasant surprise.

Everything has been hatching in the last little while; chironomids, callibaetis mayflies, damselflies and dragonflies. There is lots of food on the water now so the fish can be picky about what they focus on. But if you imitate these patterns and use the proper techniques that accompany them, you will have success!

When one is fishing on any lake, if you are not catching fish you must be prepared to try many different flies, as well as alter your technique. Fishing is seldom 'easy' and you must be willing to change. You can use a wet line and pull leeches, woolly buggers, doc spratley's or half backs. Or you can stay with the chironomid technique and find a drop off ledge and fire chromies, snowcones, prom midges or the red daiichi patterns. Using a good selection of chironomids is never a bad idea!

People coming into our shop have been telling us how aggressive the loons have become on the lakes over the years. It seems the loons, eagles and osprey know exactly the day the truck comes to stock the lake and they sure get a good feeding then! Or one of those silly loons decides to follow "your" fish towards the boat and then snatches it right off the end of your line just before you net it! As Uncle Vic used to say, "Everyone has to eat!"

The Rivers are about to open!

We are just a few days away from the rivers officially opening on June 15th. The exception is the upper Columbia River which does not close and we have been fishing a lot this spring.

In terms of the St.Mary, Elk, Bull and other rivers we fish, things are looking good as the snow pack is going down rapidly after the recent rain we had. Now with this upcoming stretch of hot weather I think the rivers will clear very fast. So book early this year and get out and enjoy what we have to offer!

Take care,

Kelly

PS you can always reach us directly at 1-800-667-231

Report #4 (May 24th, 2015)

The Columbia River is producing some fine rainbows!

Our fly fishing destination today was the stretch of the Columbia River from **Castlegar down towards Genelle**. There are many great fishing spots found along this piece of water ranging from big back eddies to nice extended runs along the stream banks.

The weather has been very nice for some time now, but recently unstable weather patterns have been moving in with thunder, lightning and heavy rain. Fortunately, on this Sunday the weather was still nice with highs of 25-27 °C (77-81°F). This valley from Castlegar right down to the Canada/US border can really get warm as it holds the heat well.

The water conditions on the upper Columbia are normal for this time of year about 88,000 cubic feet per second. We are fishing in a tail-water stream, below a dam so this River usually does not get affected by high spring run-offs with the accompanying dirty water. The Columbia is a great place to fish at this time of year as the rainbows are hungry and it is open all year around. Most every other stream in this region is closed because of spawning and spring run-off until mid-June. So if you are not into the springtime lake fishing and prefer rivers, this will fill your need perfectly!

Today was another good day of fishing with the streamer and nymphing rods. We used the jet boat to make our way up to the specific run or eddy of choice, and then turned the motor off and flicked on the guide powered rowing feature. This allowed the guys to cast into the prime water with the guide holding them in place.

On this stretch of the Columbia you need to be able to cast as this is not a beginner stream. The fish can definitely spook if you are right on top of them, so it means giving them some distance and casting to them. That being said, these techniques can be very effective! The clients cast 10ft, 6 weight rods using streamers or nymphs. These longer rods help with the presentation of the fly and make it easier to mend on a big river like this.

The fishing started off a little slow in the morning, with only a couple of fish landed and released. But by noon the situation changed as the guys figured out what the rainbows were hitting on. They moved around the River to find a few good spots and caught and released 20-25 fish between the two of them. Nice sizes, averaging 18-20 inches. The biggest fish landed was a nice 22 inch rainbow that hunkered down and pulled hard for some time till we managed to bring it to the boat for a quick picture before release. This rainbow had very bright colors and looked very healthy and strong for its size. When you are fishing the Columbia River you never know what size you are going to hook and even the smaller ones can pull and fight very hard!

The dominant hatches were the small Black Midges and Callibaetis which came off periodically during the day. A few caddis flies hatched here and there, but they are not in full go mode yet. Kelly's Super streamer, Taylor's tan steamer, Prince Nymphs, Lightning Bugs, Cooper John nymphs are just a few of the flies that were used.

A couple places on the River where we fished today, were frequented by eagles and ospreys fishing for their young. We saw a few of the resident Canadian geese on the banks. We were hoping to see some wild turkeys, but did not get that opportunity, perhaps next time!

River Roundup:

Come on up and check out our area. We are booking days right now for summer dry fly fishing on the Elk, St. Mary and Bull rivers. The runoff is leading us to believe that it looks like an early start this year, so give us a call if you are interested and we can talk fishing and available days.

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS you can reach us directly in our fly shop at 1-800-667-2311

Report #3 (May 17th, 2015)

Destination: Echo Lakes

Today we decided to head out and fish one of the high mountain lakes in our area. So we drove into the Echo Lakes to fish the both of them. The Echo Lake road trip is somewhat of a drive and it can get very bumpy, but heck, it is an adventure and the fishing can be quite good!

This spring has been unbelievably beautiful and today was no exception! The temperature reached a comfortable 23°C (73°F). There was just a bit of wind on the lakes, which can be an advantage when chironomid fishing.

The water levels are normal for this time of year as the run-off is in full go-mode right now. The high mountain snows have started to come off which is great to see! The lakes have also all turned over in the past month. We have a wide assortment of clear, pristine lakes to choose from up here.

We took the pontoon boats, got out onto the lake and fished along the drop off ledges. Looking for fish in the shallows, we cruised around the lake till we spotted some nice rainbows! We anchored up the boats, strung the rods at depths ranging from 12 to 15 feet and began to chironomid fish. Just a reminder, if you are not catching fish in the shallows keep moving out into the deeper water and run a longer leader. When fishing with chironomids you always have to keep changing things up to be most productive and catch fish. Never sit still on the water. The more effort you put in, the more success you will have.

Some of our group did well with chironomids, but others did even better hanging a leech over the drop off ledge. At one point a fish was hooked on the surface using a traveling sedge pattern, which was quite exciting to see! It can be hard to fish dry flies on lakes, but when it happens it is quite exciting. 20 to 25 rainbows were caught and released on the day.

The biggest fish that was caught was a nice 22 inch rainbow which took the angler into his backing and jumped a few times. Some of these fish, even at 16-17 inches can be very scrappy! They will run you into your backing and jump like crazy in the process of bringing them in. But the best part is being outside in the high country fishing on these gorgeous lakes, what more can one ask for!

May is now in full swing and everything seems to be hatching. Chironomids, Callibaetis, May Flies, Damsels and Dragon Flies were all present on the water. The artificial flies that worked well included; Callibaetis in grey, size 16, Black Chironomids, Chromies, Black or Maroon Micro Leeches, size 14 to 16.

In terms of wildlife on the water, we saw loons, eagles and ospreys all living their lives and feeding their young in the nests. We also saw deer and elk on their drive out to the lakes.

Runoff Report:

The spring freshet is in full swing right now, which is great to see. Meanwhile the Columbia River, which is controlled by upstream dams and thus has stable and clear flows, is fishing very well.

I encourage everyone to get outdoors in your area, or come on up and check out southeastern B.C. with us. And remember, the U.S. dollar is very strong right now versus the Canadian buck so it is very favorable to those who use them!

back, so it is very important to those who use them.

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call us to talk about guided trips on the Columbia River at 1-800-667-2311, it is fishing very well this spring.

Report #2 (May 11th, 2015)

Columbia River Report: the hatches are robust and the fishing is excellent!

The Columbia River was our destination for this spring day. We launched our jet boat at the Indian Eddy boat ramp at Trail and headed upriver to fish the section stretching from Murphy Creek down to the City of Trail.

This Mother's Day weekend was absolutely beautiful with temperatures reaching the low 20's °C (70°F). We could feel the thermals as we traveled upriver to start our run. It would be cool at first, then there would be an unexpected rush of warm air blasting through. The skies were clear blue and the day was wonderful.

The Columbia River has been quite low most of this spring as the upstream reservoirs fill. In the last week the water flow of the River started to creep up slowly which has made the fishing in this stretch of the Columbia spectacular. On this day the flow of the River was about 63,000 cubic feet per second, up about 10,000 from the previous week.

The rods were all set up and stored nicely in the jet boat ready for use before we launched. We carry a nymph rod, a streamer rod and a rod set up for dry fly fishing. This means that once on the water, all one has to do is pick up the rod of choice and begin to cast! We use the jet boat to get where we want to be on the water and then turn off the motor at the top of the eddy or run and then row into the prime water. Meanwhile the anglers are left to cast into the eddies or along the bank edges looking to hook up on a nice rainbow!

The day was a complete success. On the first set of casts we were into fish and it continued like this throughout the late morning into the late afternoon! It did slow down at certain times, but then we would adjust to the changes in hatch, as there were multiple hatches on the day!

The biggest trout caught and released was a nice 23 inch rainbow which jumped like crazy before we could get it into the net and take a nice picture. Many of the fish landed were in the 10-22 inch range. Some of the rainbows had just finished spawning while others looked

the 12-22 inch range. Some of the rainbows had just finished spawning while others looked pretty chunky, overall they were a group of healthy and aggressive fish!

The hatches on the Columbia River can only be described as ‘robust’ today. It started with a huge caddis hatch and then switched over to callibaetis and then mayflies, wow. When the Columbia is producing this conveyor belt of bugs, you just have to keep changing things up and matching the hatch. These rainbows will shut down on one fly and move onto the new bug in minutes, so stay on top of it!

In terms of the flies that were working for us today it included; Prince Nymphs, Lightening Bugs and Copper Johns, Stone Flies and Kelly’s Super Streamers, sizes ranging from 12-16. We never tried the dry flies today, but some fish were coming to the surface, so I am sure a caddis pattern would have worked well.

We saw a lot of bird life on the water today, including many ducks, Canada geese, as well as a mother eagle hunting for her babies out over the water.

Spring Round-up:

Well the 2015 season is now in full swing. All the lakes in our region are fishing quite well and the Upper Columbia is fishing fantastic!

Remember that all the small streams in our region are now closed (April 1st – June 15th) for the spring run-off and the spawning period. This includes the St.Mary, Elk, Bull, etc. Spring has come 2 to 3 weeks early this year so everything is way ahead of normal.

So the time to fish the Columbia has arrived. Give us a call and come over and check it out for yourself!

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call us to talk about guided trips on the Columbia River at 1-800-667-2311.

Report #1 (May 10th, 2015)

Premier Lake Report: the rainbows are out there, so here we go again!

Today our destination was Premier Lake, a really good spot to hook some nice rainbow trout. Premier is located in the East Kootenay region of British Columbia way up in the

alpine. We are fortunate in that there are many lakes that fish very well in the southeastern part of our Province.

All our lakes are open and fishing very well now. The low snow pack this winter has given us an early start to the season as most of the low lying lakes have been open since late March/early April.

The weather is always unpredictable in the spring and you can expect everything from snow, rain and wind to brilliant sunshine! This past week the sun was out in full force. The mornings started off quite cool in the 4-6°C range (39-43°F), but by the afternoon up to 18-20°C (64-68°F). The wind would also pick up in the afternoon from time to time as it drifted down from the peaks. On this day it was nice with just a little breeze.

Premier Lake has already turned over, so the water is clear, but rising a little each day as the snow melts.

On this trip we fished chironomids. This calls for a dry line with leaders and tippetts running anywhere from 10 to 20 feet in length. Most folks build their own leaders using an indicator, the length of leader of choice (which depends on where you are on the lake), a swivel (which are now in fashion) and your favorite chironomid.

Next you want to position your boat on the lake with the wind at your back and over a drop off ledge. The next step is to anchor up so your boat can't move at all. Then go ahead and cast your line over the drop off ledge, letting it sink for a few seconds before you retrieve it. You must remain patient and wait till the fly is almost back to the boat before casting again. The fish tend like to follow it all the way back sometimes, so be ready. When you see the indicator go down, lift the rod gently and, bingo, you hook the fish! This method is very effective for this time of year.

You can also hang a leech off your chironomid rig as well. We also tried Callibaetis nymphs with no indicator on a dry line today, casting toward the shallows. All the lakes in our region get Callibaetis hatches and the trout love to feed on these guys.

Another technique worth trying is using a leech with a wet line, stripping it back slowly towards the boat. This approach can be very effective as well. So one has a lot of options for fishing for rainbow trout on our lakes in the spring.

On this trip to Premier the chironomids were hatching during the warmest part of the day. When this is happening, one has to put the time in and you will be rewarded. We could see the fish moving into the shallows and as soon as we saw them, we started to fish them. It was a great day on the water as a couple of us caught and released 25-30 fish!

The biggest fish was a nice 18 inch rainbow. It was very healthy looking with beautiful markings on him! Most of the fish caught were in the 15-18 inch range. These rainbows really like to jump and pull pretty hard so we had lots of good fights on the water!

The dominant hatch was the chironomids sized 14-18. We also saw some Callibaetis nymphs starting to come off. We put on an assortment of sized 16-18 flies including: Black Chironomids, Red Daiichi, Tan Callibaetis, Prom Midge and Chromies (black or white head). A few 12-14 black or maroon leeches were also tossed!

Premier Lake is a magnet for birds as we observed eagles and ducks along the bank edges. Of course we also saw the resident loons which can be an annoyance to anyone trying to land a fish if they are around...but that is nature for you!

Area Roundup:

Even though all the lakes opened really early this year they are just starting to get hot now. We are very pleased to say that fishing in the East Kootenays has started for another season.

So come and enjoy the outdoors with us!

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS drop into our fly shop in Cranbrook to talk about rod setups and check out the latest assortment of gear and flies. Call us to talk about guided trips at 1-800-667-2311.