



- Fishing Report
- June
- July
- August
- Sept.
- October

2009 FISHING REPORTS

St.Mary Angler: 2009 Season in Review.

Precipitation:

We can't really effectively review the fishing season without first assessing the amount of the water available to drive the rivers we fly-fish. The amount of snowfall we received last winter was just a whisker above the long-term average for the Kootenay Region. So we were in pretty good shape from the start of the 2009 campaign. In terms of the spring runoff, most of our rivers experienced their highest freshet flows in the first week of June, but experienced no significant flooding. Rainfall throughout the season was below average in May, above in June, July and August and just slightly below in September. We got a little wetter than we wanted in August, but on the whole things we were really good in terms of floatability and providing lots of cool oxygenated water for the fish.

Temperature:

Daily temperatures are also an important factor in understanding the fishing season on the whole. The daily temperatures this season were all slightly above the long term normals except for September. September was quite frankly 'whacky' as the monthly average daily high temperatures were a whopping 3.7° Celsius (8.7° F.) above the norm. So we experienced some fantastic September fishing weather. The season lasted until the end of the first week of October when we shut things down due to a cold snap. What this all meant for us is that once again we were blessed with enough precipitation and good warm temperatures to undertake another passionate season of fly fishing.

Rainfall (millimetres):

Month	May	June	July	August	September
Rainfall in 2009	19.2	52.4	53.6	64.2	12.6
Rainfall in 2008	34.2 mm	36.2 mm	29.6 mm	28.6 mm	18 mm
Average Monthly Rainfall (long term)	42.6 mm	52.7	38.2 mm	31.6 mm	27.3 mm

Temperature (Celsius):

Month	May	June	July	August	September
Temperature in 2009	18.7	22.1	27.1	26.1	23.3
Temperature in 2008	18.4 C	21.6 C	27.5 C	25.7 C	20.4 C
Average Daily Max. Temperature (long term)	17.7 C	21.6 C	25.6 C	25.4 C	19.6 C

The Alpine Lakes:

We started getting into shape for the season by visiting our favourite spring alpine lakes to stretch out the casting arms. By May 17th on our trip to Premier Lake it had turned over and the weather was just spectacular; sunny for the most part with only a few clouds and some light wind on the Lake. The temperature hovered around 18 degrees Celsius on that day (65° F.). These conditions were perfect for spring fly-fishing. Between the two anglers, 35 fish were caught and released. The average size was between 14 and 16 inches with the biggest stretching the tape to 19! This Penask Rainbow was a real beauty. All the fish landed appeared very healthy, with about 60% of them in spawning colors, typical for this time of year.

The Rivers:

We continued to fish the lakes and followed the steady hatches of chironomids, damsels, callibaetis mayflies and flying ants into mid June. By then our casting arms were in good shape and we were anxious to reacquaint ourselves with the art of dry fly fishing. By June 22nd we were onto the St.Mary for our first float, about one week behind 2008's inaugural trip. As we did not experience a large 'bank topping' freshet this spring, we didn't see any significant creation of new channels or braids along the River corridor.

Both the Elk and St.Mary rivers rounded into form ahead of schedule this year as we had good fishing on both before we even got out of June. By early July the rivers seemed about two weeks ahead of schedule in terms of the end of the freshet, and more importantly, their fishability. During our July 3rd trip to the Elk we had clear blue skies with temperatures topping out in the high 20's Celsius (84+ °F.). The overall water conditions were prime for this early in the season. The pools and runs were formed up nicely as the water level had dropped and the clarity of the River approached 'crystal'. During this float, the fishing was excellent as the two anglers caught and released about 45 fish between them. The St.Mary River was also fishing well early on and by the third week of July we were fishing the Skookumchuck River. By the end of July the grasshoppers were dominant throughout the fields and we were seeing hatches of tan caddis and gray duns coming off the St.Mary and fishing was great!

By August the rivers were in their summer groove, but we did experience a stretch of rainy weather east of us over on the Elk River in the first couple of weeks. Lucky for us we have the St.Mary River, which did not get the thunderstorms and continued to fish very well. During this period the St.Mary provided good catch rates with the odd cutthroat in the 17 inch class showing up for the anglers. By the third week of August things had settled down over on the Elk and the fishing was up to the usual standards again. During our August 23rd float, the fishing was very good as the two anglers caught and released over 20 cutthroats each. The average size was 14-15 inches with a couple fish over 16 inches. The big fish were chunky with bright markings and that trademark brilliant orange cut along the jaw line. By later in the month we were able to get into the Bull River for the first time. An early season slide had hampered watercolour up till then. but once it cleared up it did not disappoint as we caught a lot of nice

fish, and the scenery, as always, was just fantastic.

September brought us an incredible stretch of beautiful, unseasonably warm weather. By now the water levels on the St.Mary and Elk were at their summer lows, but the fishing was very good. We were seeing good hatches of green drakes and by the end of the first week of August we were experiencing hatches of blue winged olives as well. We fished the St.Mary and Elk through September and got back to the Bull River as well.

We continued to fish after October 1st with good success and landed some pretty big fish. On the last day of the season we caught a real beauty cutthroat of about 18 inches. This fish was all fattened up in wait for the impending winter. While the fishing still looked good, the weather did not cooperate and we had to shut things down.

The Columbia River:

After we shut the down our East Kootenay rivers, we took a few clients over to the West side to fish for those big rainbows on the Columbia River. As most of you know, we started our guiding business on the tailwater section of the Columbia River downstream of Castlegar in the early 90's. This stretch of the Columbia is about 3 hours from Kimberley or about 2 from Spokane Washington. Over the past 5 years the Columbia has seen a dramatic increase in the number of fish per mile and returned to the type of fishery it was decades ago. This is a result of the reconstruction of the spillway on the upstream dam at Castlegar which reduced nitrogen supersaturation which was causing the fish to get the "bends". This problem is now gone and the fishing has responded incredibly well.

"Wow" is about the only thing I can say about the Columbia these days. The rainbows we were catching ranged from 16- 25 inches! And these Rainbows look and fight like their Steelhead cousins. In mid to late October we fished for nine days on the Columbia and had some great success. On this piece of big water you need to be able to cast well; you must be able to cast to a specific spot when the rainbows are rising to a point to feed. These fish fight very hard and break-off is real problem, but a good one to have. Because of the success of these October trips, we are going to start offering full time guided trips on the Columbia in the months of April, May, June and October in 2010.

The best time for very large Rainbows is April, May and October. Late June we will be offering a split trip. Two days on the St.Mary and 2 days on the Columbia. What a trip that will be!

So there you have it, another year in review. 2009 was a great year for dry fly fishing on the St.Mary, Elk, Skookumchuck and Bull rivers. We also rediscovered our grove on the Columbia River in October. We had good weather during the season, and our flexibility of river venues really was a bonus when we endured a stretch of wet weather on the Elk. The season started early, rounded into form ahead of schedule and really produced very well throughout. We had a wonderful year of fishing and greatly enjoyed and appreciated your patronage. We hope to see you next year and are booking 2010 trips now.

We will be attending tradeshows in the New Year and hope to see you there. [Click](#) for dates, locations and contact us for will call tickets if you will be attending.

Have a safe winter and don't hesitate to call us at 1-800-667-2311 to chat about next year's available days.

Take care,

Kelly and Karen Laatsch
St.Mary Angler

(Report #20, 2009/10/02)

Big Cutthroats Show Up on Our Final Float on the Elk River.

Today we floated the Elk River against the backdrop of fresh snow on the mountaintops. We are definitely into fall now as the temperature topped out at 8°C (47°) today. While we experienced little wind on the trip, the rain was with us for most of it. In terms of the water level, the Elk River is in the normal range for this time of year. The temperature of the water in the morning was 48°F, warming up to 53°F by the afternoon.

We fished with nymphs in the morning as we floated down the River through some nice runs. We changed over to dry flies as the day warmed up and the hatches started to appear.

On the day the two anglers caught and released about 25 fish between them. It was definitely a big fish day as most of those landed were in the 15 to 16 inch class, nice fish indeed! The largest cutthroat landed was an 18 incher. It was very healthy and obviously has been feeding heavily in anticipation of the winter season around the corner.

Once the hatches of Blue Winged Olives, Mahogany Duns and Green Drakes started, they continued throughout most of the float. We responded with Blue Winged Olives, Dun patterns, beetles and Green Drakes. We also tossed some Adams and Caddis patterns sized 14 to 18.

So we are now finished guiding for the 2009 season. The Rivers really fished very well throughout the fall and the hatches are still coming off even with the cooler weather. More importantly the fish are feeding like crazy as the season winds down.

That's all Folks!

Today was our last trip of the 2009 season. The season has been very good to the anglers, as the Rivers have fished well. We are very grateful to all of our clients who used our services this year and in the past. I hope you have a safe and healthy off-season and we hope to see you out on the water in 2010.

Feel free to call us anytime to discuss fishing dates for next summer, or to get a pass to one of the tradeshows we will be attending after New Years. When we know our [tradeshowschedule](#) we will post it.

Yours truly,



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop

(Report #19, 2009/09/22)

Bull River Report: the fishing remains productive, as the conditions remain 'fall perfect'.

Today we decided to float the majestic Bull River. The Bull is a special place as it is nestled into the Canadian Rockies and possesses great scenery and spectacular views.

The weather today was absolutely beautiful! There was not a cloud in the sky as the temperature reached a high of 24°C (75°F). It was a very nice fall day with the trees in the midst of turning to bright orange, yellow and red, a spectacular backdrop for a day of flyfishing.

The water level on the Bull River is quite low now, but normal for this time of year. This makes rowing the boat a little more exciting for the guides! Over the summer the River was off colour a few times due to the big rain events we had from time to time, but today the Bull was nice and clear.

We worked out of the boat for most of the day as we went from hole to hole looking for pockets of fish. On the Bull the guides will often drop the anchor beside a big rock, or anchor up on a River bank allowing you to get at water that is impossible to reach from shore. There are also a couple nice spots on the Bull where we can get out of the boat and fish from shore. The Bull is different than the St. Mary and Elk rivers in that it has a lot more boulders and pocket water were the fish hold. That said, they are similar in that dry fly fishing is the best way to bring up those feisty cutthroats from the depths of the water.

The Bull River fished great again today. The average sized fish caught was a little bit bigger than normal as there were many fish in the 12 to 15 inch range. On the trip the lone angler caught and released around 30 cutthroats. The biggest cut on the day was a nice 17 incher. The cutthroats on the Bull are not as robust as those on the Elk or the St. Mary, but they do look and fight very well.

In the fall the Bull River can produce a big hatch of October Caddis, as well as Blue Winged Olive and Mahogany Dun hatches. On this day we only saw some Blue Winged Olives hatching. In terms of artificials the angler used Blue Winged Olives, H&L Variants, Royal Wulffs, and Adams (sized 14 to 18).

As we were driving up along the remote road to the Bull River, we stopped to see a mother black bear moving along with her 3 cubs, so cute. Needless to say, everyone was happy to view the ‘3 little bears’ from the vantage point of the truck.

While we are into late September, we are still experiencing great conditions, so if you act fast you can still book a float by calling 1-800-667-2311.

I hope you have had a good year of fishing wherever you are.

Yours truly,



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop

(Report #18, 2009/09/15)

St. Mary River Report: fall conditions have arrived!

The Canyon section of the St. Mary River, from Wycliffe down to the St. Eugene Mission, was our destination today. The weather was just beautiful with a high reaching 24°C (75°F), with very little wind. Fall is now here as the trees are starting to change colours as they move from their many shades of green toward bright orange and yellow. It was a gorgeous day to be out on the water!

The St. Mary River is very low now, normal for this time of year. It is not uncommon for us to have to hop out of the boat a few times during the trip to get over the odd patch of 'skinny' water. Although the water in the runs is low in spots, one quickly realizes it does not bother the cutthroats as they have moved into the pools and deep runs along bank edges of the River. This has made it easier to track them.

So on the day we floated mostly, getting out of the boat to fish the prime water. We dry fly fished the whole day through and had lots of great action. While your cast does not need to be long on this River, you have to get a good mend as things are quite 'drift sensitive' at this time of year. Your fly must look like a natural bug floating down the seam in the water to get success. If it is being dragged by the leader the fish will know right of way and you will not hook a fish. That said, with practise and getting out and fishing, this challenge is quickly overcome.

On the day, the lone angler caught and released 25 cutthroats, and they were all really nice. This is the bonus of being the only angler in the boat, you get the guide to yourself as well as the opportunity to hook all the fish that come to your fly! What was funny today is that he also caught quite a few whitefish on the dry fly as well! The biggest fish caught on the trip was a nice 17 inch cutthroat which put up a good fight. We caught a lot in the 15-16 inch range, they were beautifully marked in their traditional colours.

We did not notice any hatches on the St. Mary River today. In terms of artificials, we used Orange Stimulators as they resemble the October Caddis, as well as the Stim Chew Toy which is also a good pattern (sized 12-14). We also tried the Parachute Adams, Blue Winged Olives, H&L Variants, Orange and Tan Caddis (sized 14-18).

We still have some available days for this fall, so feel free to call us at 1-800-667-2311 to chat about them. If you already know your schedule for next year, you can book for 2010 now and not make your deposit till the New Year.

I hope you have been getting out to fish this season,

Take Care,



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop

(Report #17, 2009/09/08)

A huge Green Drake hatch makes for a lot of fun on the Elk River!

Today we floated one of the lower sections of the Elk River. The weather started off crispy cool in the morning, but warmed up to a comfortable 18°C (65°F) by midday without any wind. The absence of wind is a very nice addition to a day of fishing on the Elk. There were only a few high clouds in the sky and it was mainly sunny as the day progressed, so we had a lovely September day on the water.

The Elk River is now in its summer low flow period. So the River is very fishable as the runs are perfectly formed, while the pools remain deep and clear. We dry fly fished all day getting out of the

boat quite a bit to roam along the bank edges looking for feeding fish, as well as those cuts parked in really shallow water. During our foray along the edges we tried to stay out of the water until we got to the spot that looked the most inviting. We sometimes found ourselves in tough areas to cast, so knowing how to roll cast into a run and make a good mend on the line, was very useful!

We had a great day on the Elk today as the lone angler caught and released 20 cutthroats and had a lot of fun. The biggest fish he landed were a few in the 16 to 17 inch class. These were very pretty cutthroats with big shoulders and defined spots on the body framed by that bright orange slash on the jaw.

Today the hatch was quite something to see as a huge batch of Green Drakes came off during the day! We also saw a few Blue Winged Olives emerging as well. So logically we 'matched the hatch' and tied on both Green Drakes and Blue Winged Olives! We also fished Royal Wulffs and H & L Variants (sized 16 to 18). In the afternoon we used some foam bugs with success including Chernobyl Ants and Grasshoppers (sized 10 to 12).

Fall Fishing is Popular: We have a number of trips booked into October so many anglers are choosing to get away from the crowds and take in the fall angling. If you want to join in the fall fishery, give us a call at 1-800-667-2311.

Hope to see you on the water soon.

Yours truly,



Kelly Laatsch, Chief Guide, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop

(Report #16, 2009/09/02)

The St. Mary River is in its late summer groove.

Today we floated down the St. Mary River from the Pump-house to the Wycliffe takeout. The River was so beautiful today. We started out amid the cool morning air, with things warming up during the course of the day to a nice 27°C (81°F). There were only a few very high clouds, more importantly, there was no wind. September is a wonderful month to get onto these Kootenay streams and fish. The Rivers are all fishing very well now and the weather is historically very nice at this time of year!

The water levels are now at their summer lows which means we are glad we do our floats in shallow draft rafts. If we were using a hard shell drift boat on the St. Mary at this time of year, it would mean a bumpy ride. That said, there are still many deep pools and nice runs in which the fish hold and we are fishing with enthusiasm.

Our approach to the fishing today included floating part of the day and jumping out to fish the runs. The River is very easy to walk along and cross in specific areas now. All you need is good felt bottom boots so you do not slip on the glistening rocks. We dry fly fished all day. Our modus operandi was to cast our lines out into the runs, put a good mend on the line (which is very important) and wait for a fish to rise and take the fly!

Today we noticed that the fish were a bit 'finicky'. They would come up to the fly, look at it, possibly

Today we noticed that the fish were a bit skittish. They would come up to the fly, look at it, possibly take a nip at it and then disappear. As you know it is a full moon this week so the fish are obviously feeding heavily at night. But we still had quite a few hook-ups and we would fight them, land them, take a picture and release them back into the wild. Each angler caught and released around 15 to 20 fish today, which is great fishing! They did pick up a couple of 16 inch fish and the anglers were really impressed with how hard these little wild things pulled. The 16 inch cutthroats were chunky and strong, in addition to putting on quite a fight.

In terms of bug action, we saw a few Green and Grey Drakes hatching, along with some small Duns, and a few Caddis in the air. During our session we used smaller sized H&L Variants, Royal Wulffs and Parachute Adams (14 to 18s), as well as regular Adams. You can still use bigger attractive patterns later on in the afternoon, such as grasshoppers, Chernobyl Ants and various Stimulators (sized 8 to 12).

We are now seeing a few more bears coming down from the mountains looking for food as the up slope berries are drying up. We are seeing them coming down to the rivers to drink in the early mornings and later on in the evenings.

The rivers are now in peak form, and weather and scenery are excellent, so feel free to call us at 1-800-667-2311 to book a float.

Hope to see you on the water soon.



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop

(Report #15, 2009/08/27)

St. Mary River Report: conditions are excellent!

The Canyon section of the St. Mary River - from Wycliffe down to the St. Eugene Mission – was our route today. The weather was absolutely gorgeous! The temperature reached a high of 28°C (82°F) with no wind under a clear blue sky. The mornings are now much cooler, but very exhilarating!

The St. Mary River has reached its optimum summer flow and is crystal clear. The pools are well formed and the runs are looking fabulous. The cutthroats are now in their summer locations as they lurk in the deep pools, hide behind big rocks or rest under the over hanging banks waiting patiently for their next meal to float by!

We floated in our Maravia boats getting out on a few sections to walk and cast the runs. As always, we dry fly fished all day. The St. Mary River is one of those few waters where you can pull out your dry fly patterns in the morning and never have to put them away.

On this trip we had a newly wedded couple who had received the float as a wedding gift. She had never fly fished before, but landed 15 fish. All together they caught and released about 30 fish and had a great time.

The biggest fish landed was 16 to 17 inches and we saw a few more big ones come up to the fly and to the boat. The fish were very active as they fought well and looked spectacular in the sunshine for that

brief moment when we were releasing them.

In terms of hatches, we really did not see many bugs on the trip. That said, the grasshoppers are now omnipresent and the fish are munching them steadily. During the float we used many flies as we like to keep changing to see which ones work better, even if we are having success. We hate to get caught in the trap of using the same old thing because that leaves us vulnerable when the fish go off what we are using. But hey, don't get me wrong as we will keep a fly on when it is crushing them! We used Red Humpies, Lime Trudes, Hi Vis Parachute Adams, Royal Wulffs and Stimulators (sized 14 to 16). We also tossed a few Fat Albert's, Chernobyl Ants and, of course, grasshoppers (sized 10 to 14).

We are now seeing many deer starting to hang close to town, you know bucks looking for does. They seem to be everywhere we turn in Kimberley. One client said it best when he dubbed the deer he saw outside the shop a "Kimberley Dog". These days you do not have to go far to see wildlife on your trip as even before you leave the shop you can see a doe or buck, or a "Kimberley Dog"!

Around the Bend:

September is around the corner and it is a wonderful month to fish here as the Blue Winged Olives, Green Drakes and Mahogany Duns hatch at this time. It is the time of year when there are few people on the water. So if you want to get away from the crowds and have excellent fishing come on up and fish the Elk and St. Mary Rivers with us.

Hope to see you on the water soon.



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop, 1-800-667-2311

(Report #14, 2009/08/23)

Elk River Report: perfect conditions make for excellent fishing!

Today we were back floating a section of the Elk River. We floated on one of the two lower stretches of the River near the hamlet of Elko.

It was a beautiful day to be on the Elk as it started off with a crisp cool morning building to a temperature of 27 °C (81°F) punctuated by a clear blue sky. It was perfect fishing temperature made even better by the fact that there was no wind! The water conditions were also perfect; clear to the bottom of the nice runs and pools that have formed up throughout the season. So the day was shaping up very good even before we hit the water.

We started the day off by sliding the boat into the water over a nice steep bank. We then set up our rods up with a smaller tippet and the "fly" of choice for early morning success. We jumped into the boat and started casting immediately after shove off. We tried to get good, controlled casts with appropriate line mending to ensure the fly looked like it was floating naturally. With a good drift on the fly the fish will track it along the seam and then come up nice and slowly before it swallows your fly. One must be patient enough not to not jerk the fly out of the fish's mouth. After one loses a couple of fish the need for patience becomes obvious! Once the fish is hooked you have another challenge, that is to avoid lowering the rod so much that the fish pops off the fly. So there is something to think about out there.

but after a few fish one figures it out. The Elk River is also fun because it offers many opportunities for us to get out of the boat and work some pretty nice runs.

The fishing was very good today as each angler caught and released over 20 cutthroats. The average size was 14-15 inches with a couple fish over 16 inches. The big fish were chunky with bright markings and that trademark brilliant orange cut along the jaw line. On the whole, all the fish looked very healthy and colourful.

The bug activity was not very prevalent today as we didn't see many hatches of note. The small hatches we did see were made up of caddis and tan duns. The most effective flies we employed included the smaller traditional bugs in the morning, including Lime Trudes, Royal Wulffs and black or cinnamon Ants (sized 14 to 18). In the afternoon we had success with the bigger bugs including grasshoppers, Chernobyl Ants and Stimulators (sized 10 to 14).

The weather is now beautiful and the fishing is great. So give us a call about available days.

Take care,



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop, 1-800-667-2311

(Report #13, 2009/08/20)

Bull River Report: clear and fabulous!

Well if you can believe it, we went and fished the Bull River today. Up to now the crazy weather had kept us off the Bull all summer! With all the rain we have experienced the Bull River has not been clear enough to fish. Much to our chagrin, it has been a constant chalky white to chocolate brown from all the runoff from the tributary creeks.

Today, however, the River looked great. We have had a few 30°C (86°F) days recently that dried everything up and now the water conditions looks excellent. We had about 4 to 5 feet of visibility on this float, perfect for dry fly fishing!

The fish today were very active as these high altitude cuts only have so much time to feed and fatten up for winter. So the cutthroats were looking 'up' today and feeding on dry flies was full on! So we put the boat over the bank edge and started to cast our lines as soon as we were able.

Casting behind rock structures, or close up against the shoreline, is the best way to fool these cuts into taking our flies instead of the naturals on the water. Right from the beginning we were catching cuts. On the Bull River we do not get out of the boat as much as on the St. Mary River. That said, on the Bull the guides will anchor up close to the choicest holes where they will direct you to cast your fly, so you will get plenty of casting opportunities. You have a big advantage from the boat as it takes you places you could never get to on foot in this remote system.

So how did it fish? How about "fabulous right from the beginning!" Each angler caught and released around 25 fish with the size ranging from 12 to 14 inches. We did see a couple nice 15 inch cutthroats that were very brilliant in colour and healthy in stature. The biggest fish we released was 16 inches and beautiful. Again the fish have wintered well and in this case summered well as there has been virtually

...again the fish have finished their, and in this case, summered their as there has been virtually no fishing pressure till now due to the weather.

There were very few hatches today. We did see some caddis and of course, many grasshoppers in the fields. It has been so cool this summer that the grasshoppers have not been so noticeable and active. But they are out in force now.

As for the effective patterns on the day, we used the usual dry flies to fool the fish. Our repertoire included small sized 16 to 18 H&L Variants, Parachute Adams, and sized 12 to 14 Lime Trudes, orange and yellow Stimulators and Tan Caddis. We also used with success a few different grasshopper patterns later in the afternoon when the sun was right above us.

So after a long wait, the Bull is fishing great!

Weather Update:

Finally the weather has smartened up and the forecast for our area is going to be nice and warm - holding like this for a couple weeks. Come up and enjoy the river fishing and scenery with no crowds to get in the way!

Hope to see you on the river soon!



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop.

PS Feel free to call the fly shop at 1-800-667-2311 to check with us on current conditions and available days.

(Report #12, 2009/08/04)

Elk River Report: things are settling down and clearing up.

Today we ventured out to the Elk Valley where we were hoping to fish the Elk River. The quality of our trip was dependent on how well the Elk had settled down from the recent rains, so we kept our fingers crossed. We thought that since we did not get any rain last night and with the morning temperature a nice 25C, it was worth a shot.

Upon arrival at the Elk the water was still a bit cloudy with up to 7 feet of visibility, but good enough to put the boat in and fish! On the day we ended up with very little wind, although we did get some rain in the afternoon, but not too much.

We floated most of the day, only really getting out of the boat at our lunch hole where the anglers thoroughly worked over the section. The fishers wandered up and down the River while the lunch was being prepared - one of the benefits of taking a guided float.

The fishing was somewhat slow in the morning with only a few fish coming to the fly. But as the afternoon rolled around it was like the dinner bell was rung. As long as the angler lifted the rod at the correct time to hook the fish, success was had! Sometimes these cutthroat like to take their time clamping down on that fly, so watch out you don't pull it right out of their mouth. That said, after a few misses everyone seems to catch on and learns a little patience.

We caught a few nice 17 to 18 inch cutthroat's today, while most fish came in at about 15 inches. These cuts are fat with wide 'shoulders' - very healthy looking fish indeed!

In terms of the hatches; Green Drakes and midges were the most prevalent. We started the morning using small bugs such as Cinnamon Ants (sized 16-18), then moved onto Black Beetles, Tan Duns, H&L Variants and Tan Caddis (all sized 14-16). We had to run a 5X or 6X leader and tippet when fishing in the morning. But by the afternoon we switched to bigger bugs such as Chernobyl Ants, hopper patterns and Fat Alberts (sized 8-12).

On the float we noticed many bird nests along the Elk, in particular the osprey and eagle nests. It was very cool to see the young birds in and about the nests learning to feed and fly.

Water and Fire Update:

The Elk Valley has been hit with many thunder storms recently. As of this past week we have gone over to the Elk River only once since this report. So we have been fishing the St. Mary River as it is crystal clear and fishing very well! It looks like the skies are clearing up and we are in for some nice weather for awhile. You may have heard about all the forest fires in British Columbia this summer, but they are not happening in our part of the Province. We have no fire's burning near us so the air quality remains good as well!

Hope to see you on the water soon!



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop, 1-800-667-2311.

(Report #11, 2009/07/27)

St.Mary River Report: Freedom of Choice is Great!

Today we decided to stay close to the shop and fish the St. Mary River. The recent thunder and lightening storms have been generating a lot of rain over on the Elk Valley which has caused the Elk River to cloud up quite a bit. Fortunately, the St. Mary River, aka "Old Dependable", is blessed with a headwater lake which allows most of the sediment coming from the upper watershed to settle out above the River. So the St. Mary remains clear and we have a great place to fish while things get sorted over on the Elk.

We have had unstable weather the last few days. Once again things started off beautifully with a clear blue sky in the morning, but by late afternoon thunderclouds had formed. Good for us the storms did not move in till later that night. That said, we did get a few light showers while on the Mary during the day.

So under a beautiful blue sky we launched the boat on the Canyon Run stretching from Wycliffe down to the takeout at the Mission. The temperature maxed out in the mid 30's°C (mid 90's F) by mid afternoon.

The St.Mary River has come up a few inches in the last few days but remains very clear with the runs and pools forming up quite nicely. Our primary approach is to float the River casting to the runs as we pass by. We also 'park' the boat in the odd nice pool where we are able to cast to the cutthroats in the

hope of fooling these wild fish. Our third approach is to get out of the boat and walk up the back channels. So we have a lot of options for fishing this River, which we took advantage on this trip.

When fishing for cutthroat trout, always remember to get a good mend on your line so the fly floats naturally down the seam. You will notice that the cuts tend to wait to the last second - just before the fly starts to drag - before they rocket up and eat the fly. So you must ... be ... patient! It is also advantageous to really work the water in front of you and cover the River in a methodical step by step fashion.

Today the River fished well from the morning till about 5.00 P.M. when the storm started to roll in. As per usual when storms appear, the fish stopped feeding as the barometric pressure dropped. I guess it was time to hunker down to see what the Mother Nature had in store for them! On the day the anglers caught and released a dozen fish each with a nice excited cutbow at around 18 inches plus being the star of the day. We also caught and released a couple nice brookies.

The Grass-hoppers are now throughout the fields. While on the River we saw a hatch of Tan Caddis come off, in addition to some Gray Duns. We fished dry flies all day and once again we had success on the Royal Wulff, as well as Red and Green Humpies, Tan Caddis, Parachute Adams and H&L Variants (sized 12 to 16). The foam patterns we fished included Chernobyl Ants, beetles and Fat Alberts (sized 8 to 12).

We had an exceptional wildlife viewing moment as well today. While we were stopped for our picnic lunch in a lovely shaded spot adjacent to a good run, we saw a large Elk walk across a shallow part of the River just upstream, quite a sight to see.

So, we are fortunate to have the choice of different rivers and fishing techniques which helps us adapt whenever Mother Nature throws us a weather curve ball.

Hope you are getting out on the water to fish wherever you are!



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop, 1-800-667-2311.

PS: Feel free to call the fly shop at 1-800-667-2311 to check with us on current conditions and available days. If you are in the area come into the store for information on where to go and of course check out the best fly selection in our area!

PSS: Just a reminder that the bucks are out right now in and around the town of Kimberley. So please be cautious when driving on the highways and byways as you make your way up here to fish the streams of the Canadian Rockies.

(Report #10, 2009/07/22)

The Bull River is rounding into form.

As the fishing season is moving into the prime summer phase, we decided it was OK to venture back into a higher elevation stream today. So we took a ride up to the Bull River where we floated one of the sections above the Aberfeldie Dam.

The weather looked excellent as we started off the morning with temperatures over 30°C (mid 80's F). It was hot with a clear blue sky. Hot weather is a must for floating the Bull River because as a high mountain river the water can cloud up quickly when it rains. So we plan daily to ensure you are up there when it is hot with little chance of precipitation to increase the prospects for an enjoyable trip.

Upon our arrival, we found the level of the Bull a little high, with about 6 feet of visibility, but *definitely* fishable. So we slid the boat into the water then quickly pulled over and began rigging up our fly rods.

The Bull River has a tremendous amount of structure with numerous boulders and rocks to manoeuvre around. So our approach is to row adjacent and around these vertical elements casting into the pocket water where possible. Often we will anchor the boat to the bottom of the River, midstream, and get the clients to cast behind rocks and along logs. We are also able to get out at some locations to fish the promising runs. We are working sections of the Bull that would be very hard to access by foot. That is the good thing about having a boat on the Bull River; you can go easily where others can't tread.

The Bull fished very well today as each angler caught and released about 25 fish. The cutthroat looked very healthy with many of them in the 12 to 14 inch class and a few nice 15 to 16 inchers. When it is a clear day like today the cutthroats seem to lie in wait, looking upwards waiting for the food to come right down the trough. So if you get a good drift on the fly and mend your line consistently you will have 'success'. Success means at least the fish will come to your fly, but it is up to you to hook them up!

There were not many hatches to speak of today, as all we saw was a small caddis hatch coming off. So we fished mainly Caddis, Parachute Adams and Royal Wulffs (sized 12 to 16). We also tossed some Stimi-chew Toys and Fat Alberts (sized 10 to 14).

As a more remote area, this River valley has a lot of wildlife. On the day we saw many deer with young, as well as many ospreys and eagles working out of their nests high up in the trees.

It was a great day to be out on the Bull River.

Take care.



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop, 1-800-667-2311.

PS Since our trip to the Bull we have been experiencing a number of lightening storms in the area. The increase in rain has caused the Bull River to swell and get dirty. Hopefully we will be getting calmer weather shortly so the system will clear up and you can go up there to fish yourself!

(Report #9, 2009/07/20)

Skookumchuck River Report: the Emerald Waters are Crystal Clear!

Today we decided to venture north of Kimberley to fish the canyon stretch of the Skookumchuck River. It was a beautiful day to scout out the River to see what surprises may have been left to us by winter and the subsequent freshet. The temperature today got way up to up to 95°F (35°C), so it was a hot one. A trip to the 'Skook' means an early morning start as the trip up the valley takes about 90 minutes. The scenery is spectacular on this trip. Along the way saw many deer and elk and as we drove past Columbia Lake, the start of the Mighty Columbia River, we paused to take some scenic shots

before continuing to our final destination.

We arrived at the Skookumchuck River, unpacked our gear and loaded up to hike for about 45 minutes along the River back into the canyon section. As we closed in on our preferred stretch of the emerald stream we could see the water was crystal clear up to 10 feet in depth. The River was still a bit high, a little too high for us to cross, but it is quickly falling to its summer level. As we fished in the morning the water temperature started out at about 50°F, but by the afternoon it warmed up to about 65 degrees. As the water warmed, so did the dry fly fishing.

During the trip the two anglers caught and released about 30 fish between them. The biggest fish caught was a robust 17 inch cutthroat on a dry. There isn't anything better a fisher can experience than the take, fight and release of a beautiful wild cutthroat in a setting like this! It is what gets so many of us out here in an effort to cast another fly to see if you fool another fish. On the whole, the cutthroats were chunky and colourful, showing off those trademark colours that make them so appealing to all fly fishers. The hatch out on the Skookumchuck today consisted mainly of Gray Drakes and Caddis flies. That said, we saw numerous grasshoppers out in the fields during the hike so we expect the fish to start keying on them shortly. On the River we casted Parachute Adams, Royal Wulffs, Lime Trudes and Red or Green Humpies (sized 12 to 14). We also tossed a few Elk Hair Caddis (sized 12 to 14).

It looks like the Skookumchuck River wintered well and is approaching its prime. In the next few days we plan on fishing the Bull River so stay tuned for a report from there.

Take care.



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop, 1-800-667-2311.

(Report #8, 2009/07/15)

Elk River Report: ... and the Green Drakes looked huge!

Our float today was one of the lower sections the Elk River. During the previous night it rained heavily throughout the Elk Valley, which resulted in the River rising about 6 inches. So the day started off cool, but the temperature climbed to a comfortable 77° F (25°C) by mid-afternoon.

As we hit the water we immediately noticed the colour was off and the temperature was around 47 degrees. Unfortunately, the fish were not up and feeding on the surface at this point. So we started the day doing something we hardly ever do as we went to Plan "B". That is we put away the dries and nymphed in the morning. While we picked up a few fish this way we did not want to get down the River too fast so we stopped for an early lunch at one of our many lunch sites. After a nice riverside lunch we headed back out to fish. At this point the River was clearing up and a hatch of Green Drakes was coming off. The Green Drakes looked huge on the River as they sat atop the water about an inch! So we quickly changed our flies over to a Green Drake pattern. Our adrenaline was pumping as we tried to control our excitement!

It was like Mother Nature had thrown a switch and the dry fly fishing turned back on. We got into the boat and floated down to another spot, fishing along the way and picking up fish on almost every cast. Over the course of the afternoon the two anglers caught and released about 45 fish between them. It was great production considering the slow start in the morning.

These Elk fish, like those on the St. Mary, have also wintered well. They are very healthy looking with their trademark bright slash on the jaw of the cutthroat. The biggest fish released on the day was a nice 19 inch cutthroat and they also caught many more in the 15 to 16 inch range.

Besides the big hatch of Green Drakes we also had a size 16 brown caddis hatch, but the Green Drake hatch is what caught everyone's attention. In terms of Drakes we used size 12, as well as sized 14 Stimuli Chew Toys and H&L Variants. We also tossed a few Fat Alberts (size 12 and 14) and Chernobyl Ants (size 8 and 10). In the morning we fired Prince Nymph's and Pheasant Tails (size 12 and 14).

While the day started slow, this trip to the Elk finished very strong. We hope you can make the trip to southern Canada soon and experience this fishing for yourself!

Take Care,



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop.

PS call the Fly Shop at 1-800-667-2311 for available days.

(Report #7, 2009/07/7)

St. Mary River Report: big rain brings big hatch.

Today we floated the Canyon section of the St. Mary River from Wycliffe down to the take-out at the Mission. The morning started off with rain falling as we were getting ready to leave. So we put on the waders and rain jackets and the headed off to the River. The overnight rain caused the River to come up a little, but it remained clear and fishable.

We started off the trip by floating and casting until we found a nice run to pull over and work more intensively. We then walked the run from the top casting and allowing the fly to float naturally through the section in the pursuit of cutthroat. We then proceeded to float and stop throughout the day where the water looked most promising.

Today the weather took its toll on the fishing success, but considering we experienced a huge thunderstorm roll through the area, the fishing was still pretty good. Up to the point of the storm the fish were not feeding. However, after the storm the barometric pressure went up and the cuts came up to feed actively and the River seemed to "come alive" with a plethora of hatches. On the day our 'honeymooning anglers' caught and released 15 fish between the two of them. Not bad for a couple of beginners with more than fishing on their minds!

The biggest fish on the day was a nice cut-bow around 19 inches in length, along with a number of healthy 15 to 17 inchers. It seemed like the bigger fish were the most actively feeding after the storm. The fish were all very chunky and healthy looking; they obviously have over-wintered well.

The dominant hatches that emerged after the storm were the Green Drakes and the caddis flies. So we outfitted our lines with imitation Green Drakes (sized 12 or 14), an emerging caddis pattern (sized 14) and Fat Alberts (sized 10 and 12). We also used Stimulator patterns and Parachute Adams (sized 12 and 14).

So today was one of those days when the Mother Nature was in control, but it did not stop us from having another good day on the St. Mary River.

I hope you have already had a chance to get out on the water this season.

Yours truly,



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop, 1-800-667-2311.

PS Just a reminder that in the Province of B.C. you are only allowed to run one fly (no droppers) and must use a barbless hook. On the St. Mary River it is 'catch and release' only and you cannot use a strike indicator, or weight on the line. Please check the regulations before you fish any stream or lake to make sure you are in compliance with all the management prescriptions.

(Report #6, 2009/07/03)

Elk River Report: things are ahead of schedule and looking good!

Today we decided to venture over to the Elk River for a float. Our specific destination was to float the lower section of the Elk down to the pullout at Elko. It seems the rivers in the Upper Columbia Basin are all about two weeks ahead of schedule this spring in terms of the end of the freshet, and more importantly, their fishability.

The weather lately has been just wonderful as a high pressure system has settled right on top of us creating clear blue skies with temperatures topping out in the high 20's Celsius (84+ °F). The mornings and evenings are still cool, but the middle of the day is heating up nicely. In terms of the water temperature it has been starting off the day at around 8.5° C (47° F), and warming up by late afternoon into the 11-13° C range (52-56 °F).

The overall water conditions are prime for this early in the season. The pools and runs are forming up nicely as the water level drops and the clarity of the River approaches 'crystal'. When the sun is out the fish are feeding aggressively no matter the time of day.

We mainly floated on the trip today. However, when we floated over some of the most prime looking water we just had to get out of the boat and walk back up stream to fish the run. During the float, the fishing was excellent as the anglers caught and released about 45 fish between the two of them. The Elk fish appeared to have over wintered well as they looked big and healthy with the average size caught being 14 to 15 inches. We were fortunate enough to catch a few in the 18 inch class; nice chunky fish with their trademark brilliant red-orange cut illuminating the jaw.

The hatches of most note today were the Green Drakes, the Caddis and if you can believe it, three different species of stone flies hatching on the River over the course of the trip. So we had lots of natural food to imitate today. We had good success using Elk Hair Caddis, Yellow and Orange Stimulators and Green Drakes (sized 12 to 14). We also used Royal Wulff's, H&L Variants, Ant patterns and Stone Flies sized 10 to 14 which also produced well.

During the course of the float we saw a few adult deer accompanied by their young quietly sipping at the River's edge. We also noticed quite a few more ospreys and their nests than we have seen in

previous years.

The quality of the fishing this spring has really started off at a high level. Both the number and size of fish caught has been good, the weather has been beautiful and on top of it, there is still very little traffic out on the rivers!

We hope you get out on the water soon.



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop, 1-800-667-2311.

(Report #5, 2009/06/28)

The St. Mary River is Rounding into Form Early in the Season.

Our fishing trip today took us down the St. Mary River from the Golf Course - aka the Pump-house, down to the Wycliffe Bridge. Our previous float was from Wycliffe down to the Kootenay River so this trip was going to give us a chance to inspect the third leg of the St. Mary River we fish. The weather was again gorgeous with a high of 25°C, about 77°F. There were just a few, high puffy clouds and only a very light wind, nothing to concern us.

The water is now clear to the bottom of the River and the level is dropping daily. The back channels are a good place to find the cutthroats feeding on the surface. They seem to be holding in these calmer areas where they do not have to work too hard against the current to snatch the odd morsel of food. That said, we can now see that since last week many cuts have moved into their mainstem summer lies and we are seeing them in the runs where we expect to see them come summer.

Our approach on today's float was to mostly drift and fish, however, we did get out a few times and fish some of that classic looking water where you just have to get out and walk and wade. We also made a few forays into the back channels, which sometimes had the feel of little lakes, and we proceeded to catch a few of those 'lazy' cutthroats!

The fish were definitely hungry today. As soon as we started the float we casted into a nice little run and "bang!" a fish came up and hammered the fly. Just a reminder to remember to let them take the fly down, or you will pull it right out of their mouths! I am saying this to you because early in the season we all can use a little reminding as we all can be a little bit rusty!

The first fish caught was a nice cut-bow which again jumped high out of the water and then started to pull the line out – so we just let him run! It was a nice 16 inch cut-bow, which has the look of a cutthroat with the red cut along its jaw line, but also has rainbow characteristics in the body and overall shape. Today was a great early season day as between the two anglers they caught and released around 50 fish. The average size was about 14 to 15 inches with the biggest running 17 to 18. We released a number of females that had just finished spawning so they were not as chunky as their male counterparts, but on other hand, they were feeding very well and were hitting the fly with gusto.

In terms of the insect activity we saw Stoneflies, Grey Drakes and Yellow Sallies hatching on the River. The most effective imitations were Stone flies, both yellow and orange sizes 10 to 12, Fat Alberts, sizes 8 to 10, and Royal Wulffs, Parachute Adams, Truk's Trantulas and Yellow or Orange Stimulator's in the 8 to 14 size range.

At this time of year we always seem to see a mother deer or two with their young ones along the River as we did today. She was hiding them in the tall brush, but we could see them as we quietly drifted by. We also saw an eagle and more merganser ducks with their chicks in tow. A couple of times we casted along the bank edges only to see the ducks quickly scurrying their young out of the way, very cool!

The fishing has started off very well this season, so if you have some time to come out with us, just give us a call to book a day. You will greatly enjoy the scenery as well as the fishing.

Kelly

Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop, 1-800-667-2311.

(Report #4, 2009/06/22)

The St.Mary River is Shaping up Well Early in the Season.

Today we decided to float the St. Mary River for the first time in 09'. Yes the winter is over and here we go again, even if it is only a test run. With all the water in the system we took the opportunity to float two sections of the St.Mary today. We put in at Wycliffe and floated all the way down to the Kootenay River where we pulled out below Fort Steele. This trip was our chance to see how the River morphology has changed and where the fish are holding now. We did not experience a large 'bank topping' freshet this spring so we didn't expect too many new channels or braids to have been cut along the River.

The weather was very nice as the day began and the temperature flattened out at 25°C, about 77°F. We had a couple of rain bursts to contend with, but it remained warm so we were not bothered much and the wind was absent.

The water levels on the St.Mary are coming down steadily and the clarity is very good for this time of year. We now have about 3 to 4 feet of visibility. As there is very little snow left in the high country, from here on in we expect the River to stay clear. With the spring water levels there are quite a few back channels on the lower St.Mary and it appears the fish are just finishing up the spawn and starting to move back towards the main channel. The fish that have yet to leave the back channels were aggressively feeding on the surface today.

While we covered a lot of water as we moved over two sections of the River, we dry fly fished as much as we could. Our real mission was to inspect all the water we could experience, so we did not spend too much time on any particular pool or run.

The fishing was very good for the beginning of the season. During the float we found the fish concentrated in certain areas along the River where we would catch 3 or 4 of them in quick succession. We would then continue to float for a bit until we observed more fish feeding along the bank edges and under the riparian vegetation and continued our quick casting as we were swept downstream. The fish we were hooking up were on average 12 to 14 inches. Just before the confluence with the Kootenay River we caught a nice 17 inch cut-bow. It was very feisty as it jumped out of the River three times! Wow that was fun! Between the 2 of us we caught and released around 25 nice cutthroats. Overall, the River fished very well as it starts to settle in for the 2009 season.

The Stoneflies are now hatching and moving up the River, we also saw Yellow Sallys and the odd small beetle on the water. We responded with Stoneflies sizes 8-10 that worked well. In addition, we tossed Parachute Adams. Yellow and Orange Stimulators. Roval Wulffs and Big Truk's Tarantulas. which also

produced fish.

During the float we observed a good sized Bald Eagle's nests with the immatures feeding and the watchful parents patrolling over head. We also saw a number of Ospreys as well as a number of Mergansers with young in tow. We startled a deer with her two fawns drinking at the water's edge.

Rivers Report:

Given the freshet is over early this year, we will be guiding clients this week. The Elk River is shaping up nicely as well.

Hope to see you up here this summer.



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop, 1-800-667-2311.

(Report #3, 2009/06/11)

Premier Lake Report: evening is a fine time to get out and fish!

Today we decided to jump in the truck and drive up to Premier Lake to cast a few lines in the early evening. The weather was just beautiful throughout the day and into the evening with temperature hovering around 22°C (72° F.). There was no wind to speak of apart from an occasional light breeze, but the water remained very calm.

The water in the Lake has now cleared up to about 20 feet and one can easily see fish cruising below the surface.

On the drive up to Premier we were anxious to get the rods in the water. Upon arrival we quickly pulled our pontoon boats off the truck then rigged up our fly rods. Our thought was there might be a chironomid hatch in the evening so we built a 16 foot leader/tippet. We then added a strike indicator, a b-b shot and a fly to the line. Once that was all set up we got into our pontoon boats and rowed ourselves to the first bay at about 6.00 P.M. As we positioned ourselves we noticed a pair of loons leaving the bay, which caused us to muse whether that was a good or bad sign! After a few casts we saw no fish cruising, so we decided to follow the loons lead and leave the bay. We rowed across the Lake to another one of our favourite spots, changed the fly to a leech and fished it on the chironomid set up.

The fishing turned out to be pretty good. We caught and released around a dozen fish between the two of us. We caught a couple spawners, but the rest were the silver bullets Premier is famous for. The average size was a nice 17 inches and they jumped clean out of the water upon hook-up. The biggest fish we caught was a nice 19 inch rainbow in great shape.

In terms of bugs we saw a chironomid hatch, as well as a small calabetis mayfly hatch. In terms of the most effective flies, the black leech was best, but damsels, dragon flies and certain mayflies were also working. We also tossed mayflies, such as copper johns, pheasant tails and prince nymphs – sizes 12-16.

We were off the water and packed up by around 9:30 P.M. After we put everything away we went over to the rocks and looked into the water one last time. Through the polarized sunglasses we could see many fish still cruising along the drop off ledge looking for food.

River Watch:

The St. Mary River has come down quite a bit and is clearing up nicely. We also are hearing that the Elk River is clearing up well. It now appears the bulk of the snow melt is almost complete! We will be floating the river in the next week so and will keep you up to date on its fishability.

Hope to see you up here this summer.



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop, 1-800-667-2311.

(Report #2, 2009/05/20)**Lazy Lake is not the place for lying around in the spring!**

Today three of us decided to fish Lazy Lake, a beautiful spot nestled in the backwoods of Kootaney-Columbia country. The weather was very nice until the mid afternoon when the wind picked up. Three people fishing from a boat can be challenging enough even before the wind comes up! The temperature on the day reached around 20°C (68° F.), most pleasant indeed.

The run-off from the winter snowpack is noticeable now as the level of the Lake has recently risen. However, it remains clear and since it has already turned over, the conditions are great! Our approach today was to go out in the boat and find a drop-off ledge. We would then check to see if there were any fish swimming around, and if so, set up our gear to depth and start casting. In most instances we were rigged up for 15 to 20 feet of depth, but did change to 12 to 15 feet on a couple of occasions to meet the local conditions.

The fishing was very good again today, but some of the fish were a bit 'lazy'. Today they were 'plucking' or 'short striking' the fly. We could tell they wanted the fly, but they were not hitting it aggressively, so we changed the fly down a size to a smaller pattern and that seemed to encourage them to strike. Downsizing the fly is a little trick you can use when they are not getting hooked up!

Between the three of us we fished for about 4 hours and caught and released around 35 fish. We had one person in the boat who was a complete beginner and he managed to hook up a half dozen fish. He did break a few off, but that is all in a day of fishing and learning new techniques. Most of the fish fell into the 16 to 19 inch slot. We did catch a couple big guys in the 24 to 25 inch range as well. The fish in Lazy Lake are all 'Triploid's', that is while they eat and grow large, they cannot spawn.

In terms of the hatches, in the morning hours small chironomids were coming off, but in the afternoon for about an hour and a half the fish were starting to key on the calibatis mayflies. Some damselfly were cruising along the bank edges and some fish moved in to key on them. The dragon flies are also evident, but to fish these patterns you want to fish them later in the evening.

Every lake we go to always seems to have a pair of loons that inhabit it. They are always popping up close to the boat trying to mooch their next meal, and Lazy has its pair. We saw lots of deer out in the fields on the drive up this morning and the eagle's cry was prevalent at times when we were on the water.

In terms of flies, we used chironomids, as well as mayflies. We used snow cones, chromies, prince

nymph's, hare's ears, copper john's and pheasant tails. We could have also pulled black, green or burgundy leeches, green damsels, and green dragons on this day if we had the inclination. Wooley buggers and doc spratleys can also be good as a pulling pattern.

So there you have it, Lake fishing is basically outstanding! The calabatis mayfly hatch has just started and it is shaping up to be a great June on the Lakes!

Rising River:

A quick look at the St.Mary reveals it is brown in colour and approaching full runoff, but still climbing. We expect it to peak in early June... the earlier the better for all of us!

I hope you get out on the water soon.



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop.

PS Feel free to call us at 1-800-667-2311 about available days as they are booking up quickly.

(Report #1, 2009/05/17)

Premier Lake is our first destination of the 2009 season!

Victoria Day has arrived in British Columbia which tells us that spring is here and summer is on the way! It also means it is time to saddle up the pontoon boats and ply the waters of the Lake in search of rainbow trout.

On our maiden voyage of this spring the weather was just spectacular; sunny for the most part with only a few clouds and some light wind on the Lake. The temperature hovered around 18 degrees Celsius, 65° F. These conditions are perfect for fly-fishing. We even like a little wind rippling across the surface of the water as it means the fish feed regularly as they are less likely to be spooked by our activities.

Premier Lake has completed its spring turnover, but has yet to receive much increase in volume as the spring runoff is just starting. At this point in time the water clarity is very good. We expect the weather to heat up air temperatures in the next week which will jumpstart the run-off significantly. Today we used our pontoon boats to paddle around in search of trout. Our approach was to keep an eye open for cruising fish then anchor up at the drop-off ledges and deploy our chironomid gear. Remember to always have your back to the wind when you are setting up your rig.

Chironomids are primarily what are hatching at this time of year and the fish are keying on them intensely. Not to say that other patterns won't work, but when there is a hatch of chironomids why try anything else! Once you set up your leader to the depth you think the fish are feeding at - at Premier Lake this is usually in the 13 to 20 foot zone - put on your strike indicator, your b-b shot and your choice of fly. After that you are ready to go! Remember to cast towards the drop-off ledge and let the fly sink down for a few minutes before slowly retrieving the line.

We had heard that Premier Lake was fishing very good of late and today it continued to perform. Between the two anglers 35 fish were caught and released. The average size was between 14 and 16 inches with the biggest stretching the tape to 19! This Penask Rainbow was a real beauty. All the fish landed appeared very healthy with about 60% of them in spawning colors, typical for this time of year.

As the chironomids were hatching on and off throughout the day we had good success with snowcones, red or black chironomids, black or burgundy leeches, doc spratley's and wooley buggers. We are still waiting for the mayflies to start to come off in any real numbers.

On our ride to Premier Lake we saw a lot of deer and elk out grazing in the fields. The bird life around the Lake was very vibrant and alive and we were greeted with the site of the sparrows diving close to the water on our arrival. This told us from the start of the day that the chironomids were hatching in good numbers.

River Rising:

During the last couple of days the St. Mary River has started to rise and has turned dirt brown as the freshet starts in earnest. The timing of this year's runoff is about normal, but to date the volume has been a little less than in past years. The overall Kootenay snow water index is 84% of normal, so we do not expect any significant flooding this spring. That said, hot weather is predicted for this weekend so we expect the runoff to kick into high gear shortly. With the opening of the rivers set for June 15th the St. Mary may be all sorted out and over the freshet by then.

Rules, Rules, Rules:

Please check the 2009-2011 Freshwater Fishing Regulations as there have been some changes to them since last year. http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish/regulations/docs/0911/fish-synopsis_2009-11_region4.pdf

I hope you get out fishing soon and we look forward to seeing you on the water this season,



Kelly Laatsch, St. Mary Angler Fly Shop.

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 to find out about available days, or to book a trip.