

Becker Lake, Big Lake Notes

AZ Fishing Guides Presentation: February 28.

For those that missed this presentation by a local guiding service about fishing lakes in AZ, particularly Becker and Big Lakes, here are some of the main points I picked up:

Big Lake:

Many large cutthroat and rainbows are caught here. It is one of the best waters in the state.

Big Lake trout eat primarily on midge larvae and pupae (chironomids), and especially on scuds (freshwater shrimp). Both are present year round.

The most effective scud patters are in colors of green, beige, and brown, and importantly include a "hot spot", of red or orange midway along the body, representing an egg mass in the pregnant female. Trout are tuned into selecting such scuds for their higher nutritive value. Try to find a source for hot spot scud patterns. Size should be 12 to 16's. Red colors may also be effective.

In Big Lake, anglers should target drop offs and rocky prominents near shore where trout must move along.

Our personal experience has found the first weeks of October are very hot for spawning cutts in shallows of Railroad Cove, very near to the boat launch.

Dry flies are also very good at this time.

Both midges and scuds are best fished under an indicator.

Depth is important, as scuds occur near the bottom, while midges slowly migrate towards the surface, taking many hours. Fish scuds a feet above the bottom.

Gear should be a fairly heavy rod, 5 or 6 wt, with tippetts of 4 or 5X.

Becker Lake:

Midges work well here too, but damsel fly nymphs constitute a large part of Becker trout diet. These are active year round, but especially in spring and early summer as these nymphs swim towards shore. Their movement is very rapid, best imitated by retrieving the fly rapidly along the bottom, working from offshore towards shore. Buggers, leech patterns, and Elvis probably simulate damsel fly nymphs. Colors should be browns and olives in size 14 to 12.

By summer, adult damsels (dry flies) and terrestrials (hoppers and ants) are hot.

Work along weed beds where damselfly nymph patterns may also be hung under indicators.

Fishing from shore is possible here, and sometimes more effective than from a boat. From shore it is easier to present a fly moving in towards shore.

In fall and winter, fish deep. Trout are often just off bottom in deepest waters of 15 feet or so.

General:

Two fly rigs are most effective, with a larger attractor pattern above.

Midge larvae are always present, and should be the go to fly when all else fails. Fish small patterns in 16 to 20, think zebra and sno-cone midges, in reds, black, and cream.

Take time to observe insect and fish activity. Look for birds on the water that show where and when these insects are emerging. Notice what insects are on the water surface. Fish stomach pumps are useful in really seeing what trout are selecting. These pumps are sold in local shops, and instruction on use of these pumps may be found on line.

Trout are pretty much always feeding. If you are not catching fish after a half hour or so, change tactics. Move into a different area, depths, or change patterns.

Trout sometimes concentrate on daphnia, very small organisms that cannot be easily imitated by flies. At these times, enjoy the view.

Use breakaway indicators when fishing at depths greater than your rod length. (Very Important!)

Trolling leech patterns is generally effective at all times.