



The August 2023 NEWSLETTER

Northern Arizona Flycasters
An active member club of the World Wide organization
“Fly Fishers International”
“Conservation, Restoration, and Education through Fly Fishing”
<http://nazflycasters.com>
POB 50517 Parks, AZ 86018

We support active involvement in cold water fisheries conservation. We work to insure that Arizona’s habitat is not degraded and in the development and maintenance of fly fishing opportunities.

We support the practice of “catch and release”, the use of barbless hooks, and quick and harmless release practices. Fish should never be kept out of the water for over 60 seconds.

Northern Arizona Flycasters meets the first Wednesday of the month at the Arizona Game and Fish Regional office at 3500 S. Lake Mary Road, Flagstaff. Meetings start at 7 PM with a board meeting at 6:00 PM. The meetings are free and the public is invited.

PRESIDENT’S DRIFT :

From the National Outdoor Leadership School. "Lightning Safety for Anglers."

"After months of waiting, it's finally summer! This means it's time to grab your fishing gear and head outside. But have you checked the forecast? Even though the day might start sunny, when you're out fishing the weather can change quickly—you can find yourself suddenly caught in a thunderstorm with electrical activity if you aren't prepared."

Many people think that golfers are at the greatest risk of injury from lightning. However, data shows that people out fishing were involved in three times as many fatalities as golfers. Of the 396 deaths that occurred, 38 of those were to anglers.

According to a [study from the National Lightning Safety Council](#), "From 2006 through 2019, 418 people were struck and killed by lightning in the United States. Almost two thirds of the deaths occurred to people who had been enjoying outdoor leisure activities. Ground current accounts for 50% of lightning related injuries.

Prevention

Prevention is one of the most important aspects of lightning safety. Here are a number of ways you can reduce your chances of being struck.

In urban areas, seek safety in buildings (not small sheds) and vehicles. "When thunder roars, go indoors!"

In the outdoors, there are places with greater or lesser risk, but there is no safe place in a lightning storm.

- Know the local weather patterns and pay attention to the weather.
- Plan wisely to avoid being exposed in a dangerous place.
- Pick your campsites with prevention in mind. The optimal places are areas of uniform tree cover or low rolling hills.
- Know when to seek a better location.
- Monitor approaching storms. Lightning can strike miles ahead of or behind a storm.
- Thunder, a clear sign of danger, can be heard for 10 miles in calm air and much less in turbulent, stormy air.

Avoid dangerous locations, such as:

- Places higher than surrounding terrain like peaks, ridges, and hills
- Isolated, tall objects such as lone trees
- Open terrain such as meadows
- Large bodies of water, especially the shoreline
- Shallow overhangs and caves
- Places obviously struck before
- Long conductors like pipes, wires, wire fences, and wet ropes

When it's impractical to move to a safer location, you should seek uniform cover, such as trees about the same height or rolling hills. Insulate yourself from ground current by sitting on a foam pad or backpack and stay low (lightning position). If you're in a large group, spread out to limit casualties."

The National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) is a leading source of outdoor education and leadership. It is located in Lander, Wyoming. There is a short video associated with this article which addresses some of the myths surrounding lightning safety. I personally know students who have graduated from their courses and as well as a former director. This is a world class organization.

Casey Simpson
President NAF

Reminders:
Club Dues-
\$40.00 Family
\$30.00 Individual
\$10.00 Student

Reminder, our Post Office Box has changed.

New Post Office Box is: POB 50517 Parks, AZ 86018

AZ Fishing License-Check your renewal date

Facebook search under Northern Arizona Fly Casters.

AZ Daily Sun, web edition, under Events.

Website:<https://nazflycasters.com>

EDUCATION –

10 Late Summer Trout Fishing Tips from Top Fly Guides

When midsummer turns into the doldrums of late summer, things can get tough of trout anglers. The robust fishing of spring is just a memory, and the bracing renewal of fall is still weeks away. Streams that brimmed with rising trout in May can be listless and low. In fact, fishing in the warm water of late summer can be bad for the resource: Even if you can get a trout to bite, it may not survive being caught and released if you're not careful.

But trout guides know how to find good trout action during the lazy, hazy days. "I still fish for trout a lot in late summer," says Zach Brantley, whose guide service, [Blue Ridge Fish Adventures](#), is based in Rockbridge Baths, Virginia.

"Obviously finding appropriate water is the No. 1 step. I'm really never going to fish for trout where the water is above 68 degrees, but you can find other options." Here are some ideas from guides on how to salvage an otherwise dull chunk of the calendar and get in some good late summer trout fishing.

1) Turn to the Tailwaters for Late Summer Trout

Tailwaters, also known as tailraces, are rivers downstream of deep impoundments that are kept cold by water released from the dams. From the Swift in Massachusetts to the Lower Sacramento in California to the mighty White in the Ozarks, tailwaters provide cold-water environments on rivers that would otherwise be shallow, warm, and trout-unfriendly. Not only do the conditions

keep the trout frisky, they often provide spring-like mayfly hatches right through the summer.

As Brantley notes, the ways the rivers are managed can impact the fishing, but most tailwaters are fishable at least some of the time in late summer. Tailwaters tend to produce prolific hatches of small mayflies, and their trout tend to refuse flies that don't imitate the real thing. Fly-fishers are often humbled by the fussiness, but at least they have healthy, rising fish. Local fly shops usually post suggestions about what may be hatching and what flies to use.

Tail waters stay cool in the summer and can produce great trout fishing all season long. *Zach Brantley*

2) Move Upstream for the Coldest Water

Even tailwater streams are subject to warming during really hot weather. The water may be cold when it is released from the dam, but as it progresses downstream, the temps go up. If your first-choice spot has a borderline reading on your stream thermometer, try relocating upstream. "The less time that water's had to sit in the sun, the better chance it'll be fishable," notes Chris Galvin of Galvin Guiding in Denver.

Here's a good example. As I write this on a warm day in July, the temperature of the West Branch of the Delaware River where it's released from Cannonsville Reservoir is a chilly 51 degrees. At Lordville, 22 miles away from the dam, the water was an unfishable 71 degrees. These readings come from the U.S. Geological Survey's [water data website](#), which lists real-time flows and, in many cases, temperatures of rivers across the country. It's a big help for late summer trout fishing.

3) Get an Early Start to Beat The Heat

Everyone enjoys the evening hatch, when emerging insects and spinner falls (mating swarms) put trout on the feed. But it's a mistake to think that water cools rapidly as the sun goes down. Water that was warm at 6 p.m. will still be

warm at 9 p.m., and probably later. You will find much better conditions in the morning.

“Take advantage of the overnight cooling,” Galvin advises. Summer trout are at their most vigorous at daybreak—and first light is a great time to pursue most kinds of fish, at any time of year. You’ll have more water to yourself, since not many people are willing to make the effort, and you may well find a hatch or spinner fall in progress. The much-anticipated Trico hatch, for example, takes place first thing in the morning. (Make sure you have fine tippet and tiny flies for this important hatch.)

Read Next: [5 Hot Summer Hatches to Remember](#)

Fish at night when big trout go on the hunt for food. *Joe Michl via Getty Images*

4) Fish the Late Shift

Any river that’s fishable during the day can provide some serious excitement at night—not because the water is cooler, but because night is when the big fish like to feed.

“Most of your big fish are going to switch nocturnal, at least here in the northeast,” says Derrick Kirkpatrick, owner of [CT Fish Guides](#), president of the [Farmington River Anglers Association](#), and host of the Catching Alphas podcast. “We’ve seen those fish eat baby ducks on the river. You see some crazy stuff where these alpha brown trout, that go unhooked throughout the year, feed in a way that other fish don’t.”

The fishing isn’t all that technical, but night fishing requires considerable prep. It’s best in a spot that you’ve gotten familiar with in daylight. You’ll need to know where you can park after hours. And a bright light—say, 1000 lumens—is handy to see what you’re doing, and to scare away beavers or bears.

5) Target Spring Creeks for Summer Trout

If you have access to spring creeks, count yourself lucky. No public works projects here—these rivers have year-round groundwater flows with temperatures that are comfortable for trout in the summer (and are often fishable in winter.) Like many tailwaters, spring creeks hold bug-sized crustaceans like scuds and sow bugs, essentially freshwater shrimp that are easily imitated with simple patterns on a natural drift. They also tend to have nutrient-rich water that supports great populations of mayflies and caddis.

Spring creeks tend to be weedy with flowing green plants like elodea and watercress. This vegetation provides a sanctuary for trout and habitat for aquatic insects and crustaceans, but it can also make the fishing tricky. By summer's end, the fishable water of many spring creeks is reduced to narrow runs between the greens.

“Try floating dry-dropper rigs down the little channels,” Brantley recommends. The dry fly may do the trick, and will also suspend the sunken fly above the weeds.

Look for spring creeks that are naturally cool during the summer. *Zach Brantley*

6) Look for Trout in Lakes, Ponds, and Reservoirs

Stillwaters are subject to the summer's heat, too, but mostly near the surface. The deeper water provides a refuge, from which trout can venture out to feed.

Stillwater fishing can be dry-fly fishing, often for caddis flies or stillwater mayflies such as callibaetis, or, close to the shore, beetles and ants. Of course, on a stream, the current sets the tempo; when you cast a dry fly on a lake, it will stay put until a fish bites or you lift it to recast. How long should you wait? “It could be two to five minutes, depending how patient you can be,” says Chris Galvin. “Let it drift with

the wind. And keep your rod tip down near the water for the most direct contact. A slack line from holding your rod tip up causes lots of lost fish.”

Subsurface fishing is always an option, too, regardless of what is or isn’t happening at the surface. Galvin recommends [balanced flies](#), a style that has seen a resurgence lately among Stillwater anglers. Tied on a jig hook, a balanced leech or wet fly features a heavy bead positioned forward of the eye. Standard beadhead nymphs or streamers hang almost vertically in the water, while balanced flies lie horizontally, the way most aquatic creatures swim. Suspended under a suitably buoyant strike indicator, a balanced leech pattern will move gently in response to waves or wind affecting the indicator on the surface.

Nymphs, wet flies, and leech patterns are always good bets, but so are streamer patterns. Just about all fish eat smaller fish. Your floating fly line will work, but you’ll find it easier to get a fly down deep with a line that’s made for the job. A sink-tip or full-sinking line works wonders, but Galvin finds a 1.5”-per-second intermediate line the most useful. A clear-tipped line is nice, but not mandatory. “You can run an 8- or 10-foot leader, and the fish don’t seem to care,” he says.

7) No Hatch? Try a Terrestrial Pattern to Catch Trout on the Surface

There are certainly mayflies, caddis flies, and stoneflies that hatch right through the summer months and into the fall. But there are nowhere near as many as in the early summer and spring. But you can enjoy plenty of summer dry-fly action with terrestrials—floating flies that imitate land-based bugs such as beetles, ants, and hoppers.

“Pay attention to the bankside vegetation,” Galvin says. That’s where terrestrial insects belong, even though some wind up in the water by accident, and observing streamside brush will tell you what’s on the menu.

In case the trout are not inclined to grab a terrestrial from the surface, consider dangling a subsurface fly below it. “If I’m searching or prospecting, I’ll do a lot of dry-droppers,” Zach Brantley says. “We have a ton of terrestrials, especially when it’s dry and windy—grasshoppers, crickets, flying ants, Japanese beetles.” All are common just about everywhere, and all are protein-rich trout snacks.

Read Next: [Flyfishing Tips for Catching Late-Summer Trout on Terrestrials](#)

Look for brook trout in streams at high elevations. *Cavan Images via Getty Images*

8) Look for Brookies

High-elevation brook trout streams tend to be shady and cooler than the bigger rivers down in the valley—and they can offer an exquisite fly-fishing experience.

“Our local brookie stream is 59 degrees, and it numbs you to the core in minutes,” says Boyne City, Michigan guide, sales rep, writer, and advocate Brian Kozminski. There Kozminski says the brook trout average 9 to 10 inches but an occasional 12- or 14-inch fish can catch you off guard.

“Short, tight roll casts are essential on small mountain streams, so work on casting before showing up and discovering the futility of a backcast,” he says. “Late summer, and early fall can be very rewarding for those looking to discover some thin blue lines, so do yourself a favor and explore. It makes you feel like a 12-year-old on a summer day.” —M.L.

NAF EVENTS SCHEDULE

BBQ Thankyou for Game and Fish in lew of September meeting

Under discussion by board

Fishing outings to local lakes

Fly casting sessions on a regular basis.

Work project with game and fish

The Board welcomes suggestions from members.

NAF CLUB OFFICERS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

President	Charles Simpson
Vice-President	Tom Hudnall
Secretary	Mac McIlwaine
Treasurer	Denise Dean

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