

Local Fishing Report 03/02/23

By Matt Morrison/shop guide



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Toccoa Tailwater: The tailwater has been fishing great lately. The black caddis hatch started early for us in the beginning of February. The hatch is winding down, but there are still some caddis flying around on the warmer days. So, if the weather looks nice that day, make sure you have a few size 16 Black Elk Hair Caddis in your box.

So far, this month has been very rainy for us, and according to the weather forecast there is more on the way. Usually after about a half-inch of rain, the tailwater may start to get blown out. But if you're wading and willing to brave the rain, the river at Tammen Park will stay clear since all of that water comes from the dam.

On those rainy days, a Pat's Rubber Legs and a worm will usually get the job done. If not, try black Wooly Buggers or try some flies that are black, purple, or blue. These colors show up well in low-light conditions. On normal days, my go to rig has been a Pat's Rubber Legs with a caddis emerger, such as a Holy Grail, behind it. I've been going back and forth between bobber rigs and dry-dropper rigs. That way, in deeper holes I can make sure I'm getting deep enough. But in shallow pockets, it doesn't help to slap a bobber down on the fish. If you're wading, stick with a dry-dropper because most of the holes at the access points are fairly shallow.

If you're looking to get on some dry-fly activity, warmer days at midafternoons have been best (somewhere between 3pm-5pm). As this warmer weather continues, keep an eye out for other bugs hatching. There should be a variety of mayflies coming off soon. Keep some Pheasant Tails, Hare's Ears and Parachute Adams in a variety of sizes ready.

Spring is here, so get in on some awesome fishing before the heat of summer comes! Call the shop to book your spring float trip at (706) 946-3044.



22-inch lower Toccoa River brown trout caught on an Elk Hair Caddis in black by shop staffer August Briggs.

Upper Toccoa: With all the rain we've been getting, wade-fishing isn't much of an option on the upper Toccoa River right now. Every time it drops close to a wade-able level, we get more rain spiking it back up. As I'm writing this, the upper river is currently flowing around 700 cfs. These flows are great for float fishing when the water isn't blown. Pat's Rubber legs and Rainbow Warriors have been king on the upper's

delayed-harvest zone for me. With these flows, I've mainly been using bobber rigs and split-shot, trying to make sure I am getting the presentation deep enough.

Small Streams: The small streams of the upper Toccoa River watershed can be your best bet when everything else is blown out. Usually these are the first to clear up, even if they blow out. And some days can produce really good fishing when these creeks are high. Dry-dropper rigs with a Pat's Rubberlegs and a caddis emerger or Pheasant Tail has been finding fish



Wild brown trout caught on a stonefly out of one of the local National Forest streams after a big rain.

You might be wondering why I have been running a stonefly on all of my rigs. Stoneflies are great for when the water is high and stained. They are easy for fish to see in murky water because they are bigger, but stoneflies also begin to hatch in March and April. Before they hatch, they get really active, and unlike most bugs, stoneflies don't float up to the surface to hatch. They crawl out on rocks and logs to hatch. While they are moving around on the bottom, it is easy for the current to sweep them off, making a big easy meal for trout. And the last reason, BIG FISH LOVE STONEFLIES!

This Month's Hot Flies:

- Pat's Rubber Legs, size 8-10 (brown/black/olive)
- Tungsten Pat's Rubber Legs, size 8-10 (brown/black/olive)
- Tungstone, size 8 (black/brown)
- Holy Grai,l size 14-16 (black)
- Birds Nest, size 16 (black)
- Swing Caddis, size 16-18 (black/brown)
- Elk Hair Caddis, size 14-18 (black)
- Rainbow Warrior, size 14-18
- Squirmy Worm, (pink/red/purple)
- San Juan Worm, (pink/red/purple)