

5/23/80

Natural History Notes

MIKE DOMBECK grew up in the Moose Lake area and graduated from Hayward High School and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. He has a B.S. degree in Biology and an M.S. degree in Aquatic Biology. He has taught Zoology at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and is now a fisheries biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, living in Munising, Michigan. Mike has also been an area fishing guide since his high school days.



SOME SECRETS to TROUT FISHING

There may be more fact than fiction to the old saying, "all fishermen are liars except me and you. And I'm not so sure about you." Can you blame an angler for not wanting to share secrets that have taken a lifetime to accumulate? Most anglers are at least a little possessive of their favorite fishing holes and any good businessman knows you don't help the competition, at least not too much.

If you are a beginner or an old-timer you are continually trying to improve your fishing techniques, for we all want to be in that ten percent who catch ninety percent of the fish. Trout fishing has the reputation of being difficult, requiring skill and patience. Of the three species of trout we have, the brown is the most temperamental and often difficult to catch, the brook trout is the most common and easiest to catch, and the rainbow is somewhere in between.

First, you must know where the fish live and what its requirements are. Secondly, you must become an astute observer. Good anglers are aware of even the most minute details. Trout habitat consists of a cool or cold lake or stream with plenty of food and hiding cover, as well as good spawning areas. The trout species can tolerate a wide temperature range but like most fish they feed most actively within certain temperatures. Brookies feed most at temperatures ranging from 40 to 63° F., while browns and rainbows feed best at temperatures between 45 and 72° F. Feeding usually is at its peak for all species at temperatures between 55 to 60° F. Locate trout water within this temperature range and your fishing success will increase.

Another key requirement for trout is hiding cover which provides protection from predators. This is especially important in small shallow streams where deep pools are sparse or lacking. In lakes or larger streams, deep water can provide the necessary cover but in small streams rocks, logs and undercut banks are extremely important. While fishing, look for spots which provide cover for trout.

Like all other living things, trout require food. When you approach a lake or stream look closely at the water's surface for floating insects and the tell-tale rings of a fish feeding. Scan the submerged rocks and logs for attached insect larvae such as caddis flies or black flies. Turn over a few rocks and you may see stonefly or mayfly nymphs. The abundance of these organisms is an indicator of a productive stream.



Most of us are basically lazy and the trout is no exception. Its objective is to get the greatest amount of food with the least amount of energy. They also prefer the largest type of food available, provided it is easy to catch. Trout are territorial, especially in streams. They don't forage or hunt for food like walleyes or pike. They place themselves in a strategic spot and eat organisms as they drift by. The largest trout is always in the best feeding spot and when it is caught the next larger trout takes over and chases other trout away. If you have ever caught a trout from a good pool you may have seen a larger trout chase the fish you are reeling in. The larger fish is reprimanding the smaller fish for feeding in his territory. If you are fishing properly you should catch the largest trout in a pool first. The best bait to use is the bait that best imitates the most abundant food organism naturally occurring in the stream.

While fishing, walk very softly for trout are extremely sensitive to vibrations. You should also fish upstream because trout lie facing the current and are less apt to see you approaching. Catch only what you can eat because overfishing is the prime enemy of good trout populations. If you like to fish but don't eat what you catch, carefully remove the hook and release the fish for someone else to catch. As our population increases and our fisheries continue to decline, catch and release may be the answer to preserving the fishing experience for future generations.



YEAR ROUND CABINS • SANDWICHES & PIZZA
FOR THE FIRST TIME... LIVE MUSIC AT
Pine Ridge Resort
FRIDAY OR SATURDAY NITE
(Call 865-2796 For More Information)
3 MI. SE of STONE LAKE on BIG SISSABAGAMA