



ALL SEASON ANGLERS, LLC.

Trophy Trout on the White River



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About Me

- Full time fly fishing guide
 - White River Arkansas March thru August
 - Teton Valley Lodge, Driggs, Idaho
 - Mississippi Gulf Coast
- Fly tyer, casting instructor, boat builder
- Ole Miss Fly Fishing Club Founder
 - BS Mechanical Engineering 2021

Tonight's Goal: explore the opportunities and techniques of the White River system. Creating an advantage.





Outline

- Finding Trophy Fish
- Big Fish Habitat & Places They Like on the White River (& Beyond)
- Conditions & Environmental Factors
- Fly Selection Theory
- Presenting to Fish, Wading vs Boat Fishing
- Getting to Big Fish on Foot in Arkansas

**DON'T GET
EATEN**

SPAWN

GET BIG

**DON'T
WORK TOO
HARD**

Finding Trophy Fish

- Where fish hold
 - Shallow gravel
 - Large structure - downed trees, root wads and recliner size boulders
 - Limestone runs/shoals. top, btm and middle
 - Elevation change
- VS their priorities
 - **Hunting: Everybody loves hanging out at the beach**
 - Needs escape to deep water, or SIGNIFICANT structure, or both.
 - Feeding: Food of choice in the area
 - **Biggest fish get the best feeding lane. Some more aggressive than others.**
 - What they want to eat: hoppers, nymphs, dry flies, smaller fish, or simply opportunistic
 - Territorial claims
 - "Home" is usually a root wad, or a deep run or rock
 - Prespawn

White River

"The Beach"



Finding Trophy Fish (cont.)

- Identify conditions in which fish are inclined to feed/hunt
 - **Reduced visibility for overhead predators**
 - Dawn/dusk, low clouds, high water, water color change
 - High volume of food availability
 - Low stress air pressure and/or water flow
- They are comfy where we are comfy
 - “Water you’d let your kid play in”
 - Anywhere slow enough to anchor a boat = holding/ambush territory



Conditions - Playing the Hand You're Dealt

- On the White, WATER FLOW dictates access, and affects fish behavior & location more than anything else
 - Low water: light tippet, clever wading, stealth
 - High water: covering water, capitalizing on each opportunity as they come
- Weather: light is the kicker. Air pressure change can be important
- **River traffic: Fishing to unpressured fish**
 - When and where are you on the river?
 - Fish take time to settle back after being fished to







Fly Selection

- Arkansas tailwaters: midges, caddisflies, eggs and worms, mayflies
- Flies that kind of look like a lot of stuff
- **Trust the classics, with one twist**
 - Ruby midge, rootbeer midge, and variants
 - CDC attractor jig style nymphs
 - Sunday special, hares ear
 - Lightning bug



Fly Selection - Rigging

- Rigs:
 - 1 attractor + 1 natural. Egg to a midge, girdle bug to lightning bug, Mop to a duracell
 - 2 naturals. Sunday to a rootbeer
 - 3 naturals. Dally's Tailwater Jig, sunday, midge etc.
 - Dry dropper. Hopper to a frenchie
 - Dry emerger. X caddis to RS2, Hi Viz Parachute Adams to a cripple
- Go-to nymph rig:
 - 3ft 20# mono butt section. perfection loops each end
 - 3 to 10 ft, 8# or 10# fluoro. Clinch knot to P loop
 - Tippet section 3x-6x (optional) to point fly (bigger fly)
 - 2nd smaller nymph clinched to point fly hook bend or eyelet

Feeding Trophy Fish

- **Make your first cast your best one**
- Stay loose to the fly (dead drifting)
- Easy for the fish to eat, is better
 - Show them what makes the most sense for them to eat
 - Don't give them a reason to refuse it or have to chase it
- Rig tackle & adapt techniques to **reach** feeding fish
 - Water flow
 - River depth in target area
 - Food source most relevant
 - PROBABLY a 2 or 3 fly bobber rig



Being on Time - Drifting Bugs Via Boat

- Show them the flies before the boat
- Flies must be at appropriate depth. And it varies, a lot.
- Tactical mending
- Uber eats
- Line management



Drifting Bugs on Foot

- Make your first cast in a spot your best
- Cover water until you find your fish
- **Don't walk through fish to get to them**
- Mindset is key. Trust your gut, stay focused
- Be sneakier than you think you need to be.
 - Naturalistic flies not gaudy attractors
 - Appropriately light tippet.
 - Don't drag the bottom first time, don't slap the indicator down
 - **STAY LOOSE TO THE FLY**



Getting to Big Fish on Foot



- High water
 - water that can be covered. The beach.
 - Sharp elevation change, short drifts or streamer runs thru buckets
- Low water
 - oxygenated areas
 - Speed and elevation change

KEY: wade smart. Check flows on USACE [webpages](#) , reference timing on Dally's chart

Streamers If You Want

- Swim style flies 4-8" length on a 7wt+
- 1-4" Sculpins, Shad, Leeches, Craws, on a 5 or 6wt
- Match bug profile to conditions & food source
- Long casts, emphasize clean presentations
- Cover water OR hammer specific spots.
 - Doing both takes a long long time
- Trust your bug





Questions?

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