

## **Module 7 – Fall Fishing**

### **What is Fall Fishing?**

1. Fishing from mid September to ice-up on the lakes
2. Early fall has some hatches
3. Late fall is similar to early season fishing
4. As there are no hatches to focus the fish, you have to hunt for the fish using various imitator or searching patterns

### **Why Fall Fish?**

1. Early fall can have some of the most pleasant weather to fish without the crowds
2. The water has cooled and the trout are on the hunt again, they are trying to build fat reserves for the winter
3. Hatches are few, light and far between so feeding fish are not very selective
4. After the water temperatures have cooled, most of the available food is concentrated in the shallow water so the fish are concentrated as well
5. Many fishermen have stopped for season, fishing is not as crowded
6. Beware of lake turnover
  - a. Turnover is when the water in the lakes does a mass flip over
  - b. It happens at least twice a year, usually once in the spring and once in fall
  - c. The cause of turnover is unbalanced water structure
  - d. The surface layer being heavier sinks, which mixes the oxygen rich upper layer with the oxygen-poor lower waters, creating poor oxygen levels throughout the lake
  - e. The low oxygen can make the fish sick and unresponsive for a few days

### **Where do you Fall Fish?**

1. The fish are usually concentrated in the shallow areas as this is where the oxygen is greatest and the water temperature the highest.
2. Drop-offs next to shallow areas
3. Weed beds
4. Stream inflows and outflows
5. Look for surface action, or fish moving in shallow water.

## **When do you Fall Fish?**

1. Any day that the weather is suitable
2. In September and October; clear calm sunny days can bring on water boatmen , backswimmer and chironomid hatches
3. Before and after fall lake turnover
4. In the late fall, when the water is very cold the bite might only be during the midday period.
5. If fishing the shallows, cloudy windy conditions are usually better as trout tend to avoid the shallows if it is sunny and calm
6. Until the water freezes - sometimes the best fishing is the last few days of the season

## **Fishing equipment needed**

1. **Fishing Equipment needed:**
  - I. Fly rod set up with a floating line and indicator
  - II. Fly rod set up with a slow sink line (type I or II)
  - III. Fly rod set up with a fast line (type 3, 4 or 5) with a boatman pattern
  - IV. Float or strike indicator
  - V. Lots of leader,
  - VI. Tippet material (6-8lb)
  - VII. Small swivels
  - VIII. Weights to keep your line strait
  - IX. Fly patterns:
    - a) Water boatmen
    - b) Backswimmers
    - c) Micro leeches
    - d) Balanced leeches
    - e) Leeches
    - f) Shrimp
    - g) Dragonflies
    - h) Attractor patterns
  - X. A method of measuring water depth, sounder, forceps etc.
  - XI. Throat pump
  - XII. Sample jars
  - XIII. Magnifying glass

## Fall Fishing Strategies

- 1) Work the shallows and most likely areas.
- 2) You will probably have to keep moving to keep catching fish. When there are no hatches to key on, trout become more territorial and there may only be a certain amount in each zone.
- 3) Once you fish a zone out, you move over to the next zone to start catching fish again.
- 4) If it is clear, calm and sunny, watch for water boatmen and backswimmer activity. Around midday or mid afternoon they will be swimming and flying. If it looks like raindrops hitting the water, but there is no rain, it is probably a boatman or backswimmer flight.

## Fall Fish Food

The most abundant food species available at this time are:

1. Freshwater shrimp
2. Damselfly nymphs
3. Water boatmen
4. Backswimmers
5. Leeches
6. Dragon fly Nymphs

You should be using patterns that imitate these.

## Fall Fishing Methods

Your first decision is to decide which food species you want to imitate and how to fish it.

The most popular fly choices and methods on our local lakes are:

1. **Indicator (float) fishing** with a micro leech or balanced leech.
  - a. **Show indicator set up**
  - b. To fish this way you need to:
    - i. Anchor your boat
    - ii. Cast the fly.
    - iii. Let the fly sink to the feeding zone
    - iv. Keep your line straight
    - v. Watch your float for a strike.
      1. Sometimes it is better to let the float sit still, or wind drift it.
      2. Sometimes you have to slowly move or twitch your float and fly to get a strike.
      3. When you see the float move, set the hook and the fight is on.

## 2. Casting and retrieving with a wet line and wet fly

- a. Cast the fly out and use the count-down method,
- b. When the fly is just above the bottom, start your retrieve, slow or fast
- c. Trying to keep the fly in the feeding zone as long as you can
- d. When you feel resistance set the hook
- e. Some of the more common flies used with a wet line are:
  - i. Shrimp
  - ii. Immature Damselflies
  - iii. Leeches
  - iv. Dragonfly nymphs
  - v. Water boatmen
  - vi. Backswimmer
- f. **Show wet line set up, show different retrieves.**

3. When you start catching fish it is a good idea to pump the occasional one to see what type of food they are eating.

### **Demonstration Equipment needed:**

1. Photos of different life stages
2. Vials of sample insects
3. Fly samples
4. Rod set up with a floating line, indicator and the rest
5. Rod set up for wet line fishing
6. Tippet material
7. Leader material
8. Swivels
9. Strike indicators
10. Small weights
11. Depth sounder
12. Forceps
13. Throat pump
14. Sample jar
15. Magnifying glass