



**To Book a trip call 270-703-6133 or visit our website
www.kicknbass.net**

Sept 26, 2014

I can tell you with the very limited time I've been on the water this week that bass fishing is good and they're going shallow. My regular fishing report will resume next week but I thought you might want to know what I've been up to so enjoy! – Kick'n Bass

Kick'n Bass Goes Out West



Coach and Kick'n Bass on the Teton River

So, what does a fishing guide do when he goes on vacation? Well ... he goes fishing, what else! In this case it's called Kick'n Trout not Kick'n Bass. This past week a group of us were the guest of my good friend former University of Louisville and Hall of Fame Basketball Coach Denny Crum. We holed up in Denny's beautiful Idaho cabin nestled between two mountain ranges on picturesque Henry's Lake and fished a different stream everyday including the famous South Fork of the Snake, two sections of the Henry's Fork, the Teton River and Sheridan Lake. All famous trout waters and we caught fish every day. My goal on this trip was to learn the art of fly-fishing from a Hall of Famer and hopefully catch the Grand Slam Trout Species... Cutthroat, Brown, Rainbow and Cutt-bow, which is a hybrid cross between a Rainbow and Cutthroat trout.

Day one was spent on the famous Henry's Fork one of the most famous trout streams in all of the United States. The Henry's Fork is a tremendous dry fly fishery loaded with many species of trout, large wild rainbows and the ever-elusive brown. The river flows through gentle flowing ranch land, timber covered canyons, and spring creek like sections, with tributaries that are spectacular fisheries in their own right.

I found out quickly that being a fishing guide on Kentucky Lake doesn't mean a thing in trout country and my inexperience with a fly rod was apparent when my errant back cast snagged coach's line. What a mess, Denny was real patient and coached me on the finer points of proper casting etiquette while our guide Eric untangled the mess and retied us both. By the way, Denny has the same gift for coaching rookie trout fishermen as he did molding inexperienced freshmen into fine basketball players. He had me go to work on casting and mending my line.

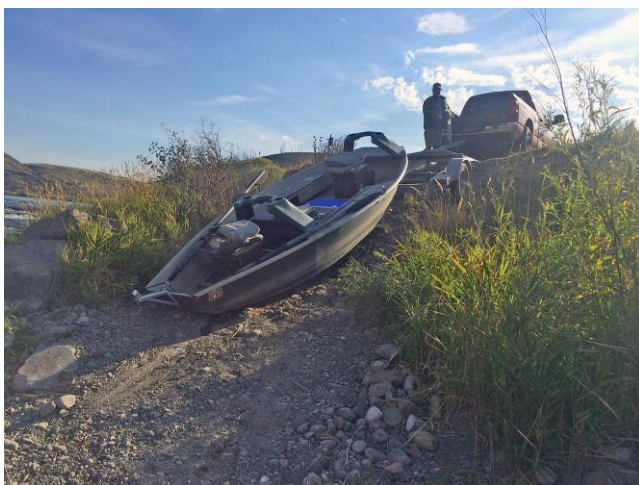


Learning to mend is essential and is done at the end of the cast. Mending is positioning the line upstream in order to allow the fly to float naturally down stream unrestricted. With Denny and Eric taking turns coaching me I caught my first fish on a fly rod in a small pool of cool, crystal clear running water. It was a stunningly highlighted 16-inch Brown Trout. Not a bad first day, fishing with a legend and catching my first trout ... a Brown one at that.

Day two was spent fishing another stretch of the Henry's Fork between the Chester Dam and Farm Bridge. My fishing partner for the day was Mark Viehmann from Louisville (*Photo L*). Mark is a big man with a big personality, a very good angler and is a pretty good trash talker too. I had a lot of fun with Mark and learned a lot, he was entertaining to be around. Mark is a practical joker too but has a very serious side when it comes to trout fishing. I saw his demeanor change when it got time to get down to the business of catching fish and he caught one of the biggest fish of the week, a huge Cutt-bow, which put up a great fight in some very swift water. I observed how Mark played the fish and stayed focused on the task at hand until the fish was in the net. Watching Mark and how he expertly played the fish would serve me well, should I have the opportunity. My casting improved some the second day and I managed to catch a few nice fish including a 16" Cutt-bow. Although my casting was getting better, I was no way near where I needed to be. At least I was making progress, didn't cause any huge line tangles and I did catch a few more fish.

Day three was spent fishing the South Fork of the Snake River. Few rivers in America can provide a fly-fishing experience like that of The South Fork of the Snake River. The Snake River begins high in Yellowstone National Park and flows through Grand Teton National Park into Palisades Reservoir, which borders Wyoming and Idaho. Below Palisades Dam begins the stretch of the river, referred to as the "South Fork". The South Fork of the Snake boasts over 5000 fish per mile, which makes it one of the most productive Blue Ribbon rivers in the country. Today

was special for another reason; I was going to fish with my good friend Roger Burkman (*photo R*). Many of you may remember Roger; he was a guard and a clutch performer on Denny's first National Championship team. Roger and I have fished several times together on Kentucky Lake and he's a pretty fair bass fisherman but it can tell you first hand that he is an above average fly-fisherman and loves to fish streamers. Streamers are hair flies that are weighted on the tie end and you work them by stripping the line in an erratic manor or jerk the rod to impart action to the lure imitating a baitfish. Not an easy thing to do especially for any length of time. Due to my lack of experience fishing streamers, Roger and our guide Matt decided that it would be best for the two of us to fish with a floating fly and dropper. The floater is a dry fly, which is also used as a strike indicator, and the dropper is a small fly with a mono leader tied to the hook of the floater and rides slightly below the surface. There were times when Roger and I caught trout on the dropper and other times on the floater. We caught several fish this way. Right before lunch we all three saw a big trout boil the surface in a current break next to a lay down. Since I hadn't really caught a big trout yet, Roger and Matt decided that I'd fish the hole. Matt positioned the boat so I could cast the flies where they could drift along the current break. It took me several casts to get the drift just right and finally after several near hook-ups I connected with the most beautiful cutthroat trout I'd ever seen and it was a fighter too! The only way to learn to play and land a good fish is to hook one first. There's no Youtube video or book in the boat to teach you how, it's just you against the fish and whatever Mother Nature has in store for you. Being inexperienced at fighting a big native 18" Cutthroat trout in swift water with line-breaking obstacles all around and with Roger and Matt both coaching me, it was pretty unnerving. After some pretty hairy moments the fish was finally landed, photographed and released to fight another day. This was a special experience for me in a lot of ways. Sure it was a great fight and it was huge to have landed the fish but for the first time I realized what it must be like for my clients when I coach them thru a fight. It really felt odd to be on the other side of the rod for a change. LOL! The day ended on a positive note when Matt deciding that I was ready for a challenge, rigged a Streamer on my line. I caught a 17" Brown Trout about a hundred yards from the take out on my third cast with a streamer. Trout fishing was starting to look better to me!



On day four our group fished the Teton River, a river with a lot of history ... some not so good. On June 5, 1976 on a sunny Saturday morning, the Teton Dam upstream collapsed releasing a 15-foot wall of water that devastated the valley below. The flood was 8 miles wide in places. Hundreds of homes were lost; property damage was estimated at \$2 billion. If our guide Eric hadn't told us of that story and pointed out the remains of the dam structure, we wouldn't have known about the disaster because the Teton river valley in it's present form was exactly what you would want to see, postcard perfect. The river drains the Teton Valley along the western side of the Idaho-Wyoming

border. Its location along the Tetons provides the river with more rainfall than many other rivers in the region. The river has good flow even when other rivers are low which accounts for the fantastic fishing.

As we slowly descended the canyon on an unimproved road in Eric's 4-wheel drive, I could see the Teton River valley and it truly was a breathtaking site. Folks, this is strictly remote backcountry trout fishing. There are no paved parking areas or launching ramps. The boats were lowered down a rocky ledge to the river, which was no easy task in itself. Unusual rock formations and wildlife are everywhere, especially eagles.



I fished with Paul Upchurch also from Louisville (*Photo L*) who had fished the river on a previous trip and informed me that the Teton had the best potential for numbers of fish as well as size. Cutthroat is the predominant species on the Teton. Paul is a pretty reserved guy but trout fishing really brings out the best in him. His personality really came thru when we shared a boat plus he was definitely the best-dressed fisherman in our group. With his variety of hats and clothing he looked like he could step out of an Orvis catalog. Looking the part is only half of it though, Paul is a very good fisherman and it took him no time to begin catching fish and some good ones too. Early it

seemed each pool had fish and they were easy to catch but I struggled early on because the casting was somewhat technical due to the overhands and swift water. I did manage to catch a few once my casting improved and by lunch we'd caught about a dozen fish with Paul catching most of them. We ate lunch as a group in a small quiet pool below a long rock garden and watched the eagles. Mid afternoon I will never forget ... cloudy and calm. In a span of about an hour and a half clouds moved in and the fish got super aggressive. The Teton River really showed us what great trout fishing was all about. Paul and I caught one Cutthroat after another with me catching a fish on four consecutive casts. It was then that I leaned to strip set. Unlike many of the skills needed to be a successful fly fisherman, it is impossible to practice setting the hook without a live fish on the end of your fly line. Strip setting is a technique whereby the angler, while gripping the handle with the right hand and pointing the rod at the direction of the fish, strips line as the hook set is employed. This takes up the slack line and usually and I say usually, gets a good hook set on the fish. I honestly can't tell you how I came to do this, it just came naturally. I can tell you this though, it sure was fun to hand line the fish in rather than use the reel and from that afternoon forward that's how I brought my fish in ... no cranking a reel for me!

Day four was spent fishing Sheridan Lake, a private 200-acre lake on Sheridan Ranch. Denny knew the owner and he had a smile on his face that told me that something special was in store for me today ... BIG RAINBOWS. Now in Kentucky a "Ranch" is a few hundred acres ... well, Sheridan Ranch was a "few miles" big! Everywhere I looked I could see cattle and lots of them. My fishing partner for the day was Dr. Larry Loehle (*photo R*) another former University of Louisville basketball player. I first met Larry on Kentucky Lake with Roger and we wound up doing an on the water sonar class together. He's a really good fisherman and even better person. I really liked being with Larry, he didn't get to excited when I messed up a couple of times. I guess being a physician for over 30 years you do get to see a lot of worse things. LOL! Larry and I caught some nice fish right away and I broke off two really huge fish and Larry broke one off



too. A big fish in this lake was going to be a problem and would not come quietly. Fishing suffered as we fished thru wind, thunder and some distant lightning bolts as they silhouetted off the Mountains. Except for a brief burst we never got wet.



After lunch more favorable weather conditions brought the chance of better fishing for us. We caught a fish here and there but nothing like what Roger and Paul were doing about 100 yards in front of us. They were killing it! Sometimes doubles but one of them had on a fish all the time it seems. Roger motioned for us to come on up and join in on the action and even told us what and how they were biting. Our guide Logan prepared our Hopper, a grasshopper looking fly and promptly rowed us up above the boys. My first cast was met with a huge boil; I set the hook but whiffed. Larry did the same but then connected with a 20 inch Rainbow that looked like a football. My second cast I caught a wide 22 incher. On my next next cast my hopper disappeared in a huge boil made by a huge Rainbow. You could clearly see the

fish as the water in the lake was Gin clear. The big Rainbow made several lunges and then a huge run stripping line and blistering my finger in the process and then ... the fish was gone. Larry estimated the fish to be in the 25-inch class. The Big one that got away. We fished for a while longer to no avail and then it was time to depart.

Well I've got a lot to learn to be a master of the fly rod but I did catch all four species of trout. This trip was special for a lot of reasons; the group of guys I went with treated me better than I probably deserved. They put me in front of the boat everyday, showed me a lot of forgiveness and patience and did their best to help me have a good trip. I got to share a boat with coach ... being coached by a legend is a very special thing to experience. I'm too short to play basketball so this is as close as I'd ever come to being coached by a Hall of Famer. Last of all but certainly not least I got to experience the very special places you have to visit to catch these magnificent fighting fish ... as usual coach had the perfect game plan!

If you want to experience Trout fishing at it's best contact the folks at Three Rivers Ranch in Aston, Idaho. www.threeriversranch.com or call 208-652-2750.

For 2015, Kick'n Bass Guide Service will offer Fly-fishing trips on Kentucky lake. For additional info Call 270-703-6133 or email rk@kicknbass.net