

Chapter 7 – Brown will Bite

I can't say that I have ever picked up my fly rod and thought, today I am going to go Brown Trout fishing. I have caught a lot of brown trout, but they seem to show up uninvited. The largest Brown I have ever caught was caught while fishing for Rainbow and Brookies' in a small stream just outside of West Yellowstone, Montana.

Duck Creek always has a great hatch in the evening and I make it a point to fish it at least once every time I am in the area. There are a lot of Rainbow and a few Brook in the stream, and an average evening will net 20-30 fish. The action is fast and furious while the hatch is on and it doesn't take long for the dry fly to get wet and start sinking. Early in the hatch you have to have a good floater, but later in the evening fishing a fly just under the surface works well. The fish are still feeding, but there are a lot of spent fly that the fish are taking under the surface. In the later part of the evening I was fishing a #14 female Adams this way when I got a hard hit and set the hook in something that was not a typical Duck Creek fish. This was the largest hole in the stream, but it was still only 100 feet long and 25 feet wide. The one way to tell if you hook a Brown Trout is that they will try to dive as deep as possible. The fish's first move was down (the water was only four feet deep) and then away. I was fishing a short line and leader and he actually took out line to the back of the hole. I didn't want him to go downstream where the water got faster so I eased off a little bit to get him back upstream. He turned and went back into the hole. He set on the bottom for a while pulling as hard as he could and I just let him work against the rod. I always fish 8-10 pound test line in the west and seldom get broken off. After about ten minutes I made a little headway and begin to reel him to the bank. I always play the larger fish off of the reel and let them work against the reel drag and well as the rod. What a surprise when I got this fish to the bank. I don't carry a net on these small streams and that was a mistake on this fish. It was by far the largest Brown I had ever caught and had to be the largest fish in Duck Creek. I do have a digital scale I keep with the fly boxes and this fish weighted right at 6½ pounds. The next largest fish I have taken out of Duck Creek was a 15-inch Rainbow. Browns do show up when you least expect them.



A Montana Brown that weighted over three pounds.

Brown's live in the same water as rainbow, but like slightly different feeding habits and in lakes will be in a little deeper water. In the western lakes, if you fish deep enough for Brown's you will also probably catch a few chubs. I have caught lake browns using a sinking line allowing it to sink to the bottom and retrieving the fly from the bottom in short jerks. This simulates a nymph leaving the bottom to hatch and on some days this retrieve really works. I have also had good success using the same retrieve with a black leech. There are many good western lakes where browns exist in good numbers. One of my favorites is Hebgen Lake about 10 miles west of West Yellowstone, Montana. You have to take a Forest Service road to reach the lake. I have fished

all over Hebgen and caught fish everywhere that I have put in a tube. It is a perfect tubing lake and when the wind is blowing there are locations where it is still possible to fish. There are a few other good places to catch Brown's, but there is one place above all of the others. As I mentioned in the Arctic Char article, Iceland is partially on the North American Continent and it is one of if not the best place to catch Brown Trout. I don't just mean two or three pound fish but the real large Brown's in the ten pound range. Iceland has native Brown Trout and they are common and get large. The Sea Trout are the best. I watch Sea Trout jump up a 15-20 water fall while I was in Iceland and it is something I will never forget. They did it in stages by jumping the first five or six feet and swimming the rest of the way. I was impressed!

Brown's are one of the most difficult to catch Trout. They are wary, like cover, and the big fish prefer to feed at night. They fight hard, fight down in the water, and will make long deep runs. The big fish can have hooked jaws and they all have sharp teeth. When you are able to land a Brown it is a special fish.

If you want to find out more about Brown Trout and the Sea Trout of Iceland read about them in the book or e-book **Trout Adventures – North America**. It will be published in 2012 by Wilderness Adventures Press a publisher that features fly fishing books. Their e-mail is www.wildadvpress.com.