

Trout Site - Tiger Trout

By Bob Willis

On a recent trip to the western part of the United States, I decided to try to combine fishing for Tiger Trout with the opportunity to catch some Splake. There is one western state that has been stocking Tiger's for several years. Tigers are extremely resistant to whirling disease and several lakes in Utah have been stocked with Tigers for this reason. I settled on Forsyth Lake on the Fishlake National Forest for several reasons. It was within a days drive from where I was staying in Arizona and it had good roads into the area. Tigers have a great reputation as fighters and I couldn't wait to see how they compared to rainbows and browns. I got into Richfield, Utah about five in the afternoon and decided to run up to Forsyth to get a few casts in that evening. The choice when I got to the lake was what fly to use. I decided to go with a silver bullet clouser minnow and fished with that pattern all evening. There was a reward. I had several hits and caught an 18-inch tiger. The fish took the fly fairly close to the tube and immediately dove right under me. He also stripped out line from the reel, so I knew it was a good fish. He did fight hard and didn't give up even when I netted him. It was a good fish and worth all of the effort to find.



An 18-inch Tiger Trout caught in Forsyth Reservoir, Utah.

I decided to give Forsyth a try the next morning and go on to some of the smaller lakes in the afternoon. It is about an hours drive from Richfield, and I was at the Lake about 9:00

that morning. I started fishing with a sinking tip line and a silver bullet clouser minnow. That combination got several hits, but no fish. I changed up in about an hour, and went with a sinking line and a little larger fly. I fish long leaders in the lakes and had a 12-foot 3X leader that was eight-pound test. This combination immediately got three hits and a really nice tiger--17 inches that had lots of nice color.

There was a good mayfly hatch on at the time and action was continuous for almost two hours. Another storm came up about noon and I had to get off of the water (the wind was blowing hard) and it was time for lunch. My change in pattern and method was a total success. I caught 10 fish that morning and all were at least 12 inches with the nice 17-inch fish at the top of the food chain. The rain started to come down in buckets just as I reached the jeep and it was nice to get inside. So after a good fishing morning was it worth moving to a different place, or should I spend the last afternoon on Forsyth? I had time to think that over because it blew and rained for almost two hours. I just couldn't turn down more tigers for some of the other lakes, and I hadn't caught a splake, which was one of the goals of the trip.

That afternoon was a repeat of the morning with many hits and fish caught. Several tigers jumped while being brought to the net, I had to change my opinion about their fighting characteristics. I first thought they would be more like browns and fight down in the water. But they showed me something different that afternoon. There were many jumpers and all were great fighters. That made me wonder if the fish were named for the tiger stripes on their sides or for their attitude when they get hooked. I think maybe attitude. There were eleven trout that afternoon, and it was a great afternoon of fishing. But many tigers were caught and still no splake.

I thoroughly enjoyed this area of Utah. If I had several more days I would have fished several different lakes. Fish Lake is the biggest fishing attraction in the area, and that is where most people fish. It is a large reservoir with some Tigers and Splake, but those are not the fish people are there to catch. There is some bank fishing, but most people fish it from a boat. There are not many tubes in this part of Utah. With enough time, I might have gotten around to Fish Lake, but my next choice after Forsyth would have been as many of the lakes in the 1000 Lake Mountain area as possible. There are lakes with Cutthroat, some with Tigers, and some with Brook Trout. It does take local knowledge to know which lake holds a specific species, and I did have some information on a few lakes. In a situation like that, part of the adventure is fishing to find what is going to show up.

I was happy with the success in Forsyth. Tigers are terrific! If you want to learn more about Tiger and Splake Trout try the book or e-book **Trout Adventures – North America** to be published by Wilderness Adventures Press sometime in 2012. Their website is www.wildadvpress.com and they specialize in Fly fishing books.