

May 31, 2017 - Fish are biting and spawning

Written by Wayne Gustaveson

Wednesday, 31 May 2017 09:04 - Last Updated Wednesday, 31 May 2017 16:18

Lake Powell Fish Report – May 31, 2017 Lake Elevation: 3618 Water Temperature: 68-73 F

By: Wayne Gustaveson

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Lake Powell has risen 4 feet in the last week. Expect the same for this week. Inflow is over 80K acre feet with only 21K AF being released. Retie your boat anchor lines each morning and then enjoy the day. Rapidly rising water is flooding vegetation that has not been wet for a while. This new habitat attracts largemouth bass, bluegill and crappie like a magnet.

Water temperature is in the high 60s in the morning and mid 70s in the afternoon. Warmer water means spawning time for bluegill, carp, channel catfish and threadfin shad. Bluegill and catfish are very active during the spawn and easy to catch. Bluegill can be seen guarding nests and will respond to a chunk of worm on a very small hook. Attach a bobber about 6 feet above the bait so the subtle bite can be seen as the bobber wiggles. The size of bluegill is very impressive for a panfish and the fight is like a roller coaster ride. Give it a try.

Water clarity is decreasing lakewide as algae numbers increase making the water a lovely blue green color in the southern lake. Sloughing banks make many mud lines that just float on the surface while giving walleye a pleasant place to hide as they wait for the next meal to swim by.

Walleye are ambush feeders that lie in wait for a tasty morsel to swim in view. If that happens to be your night crawler towed behind a bottom bouncer, or a plastic jig with a chunk of worm attached, the chances are good the hungry walleye will bite the bait. The northern lake, from the San Juan to White Canyon is the walleye hotspot. There have been over 20 tagged walleye captured in the last two weeks. Chris Crosby was the winner when he caught 2 tagged fish in one day in Good Hope Bay. He reports water clarity to be only a few inches upstream from Red Canyon, 2-3 feet in Ticaboo while Blue Notch had over 6 feet visibility. Good Hope Bay is fishable despite the high runoff.

Smallmouth bass fishing is amazing with active fish in rock structure lakewide. I took a break from striper fishing over the weekend and pulled into an isolated main channel rock slide in Last Chance Canyon. My goal was to see how many bass I could catch in 10 casts using a 4 inch Senko lazily attached to a jighead. The bait was cast to the rocks and then let sink 6 to 10 feet.

When the lure hit bottom it was tested gingerly to see if there was extra weight on the uplift. If so the hook was set and fish reeled in. The count was 7 bass caught on 10 casts. That was better than expected but disappointing because fish number 8 got away. Oh well, next time!

Striper fishing is still as hot as the weather from Wahweap to Bullfrog. Stripers were kind enough to delight most of the anglers who went to down to the dam over the Holiday weekend. Anchovy bait was used effectively at the dam, Buoy 3, Antelope Canyon mouth and first point, Navajo Canyon first two points beyond the double islands, and Warm Creek Wall (intersection of Warm Creek and the main channel at Buoy 12). Further uplake stripers were caught on bait

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in Last Chance, Rock Creek, and the steep walls near Dangling Rope. Stripers are still being caught on bait at Bullfrog, Moki Wall and mouth of Moki Canyon. It will be possible to catch stripers on bait in most canyons on the lake for the next two weeks. However the end is in sight.

Stripers are waiting for shad to become available so they can revert back to what they do best, which is chasing shad relentlessly. Shad have spawned and tiny fish are growing. Striper slurps have been reported in the channel from the mouth of the San Juan to the Escalante. Shad may be hidden by the cloudy water in the northern lake. If looking for surface action this week head downstream from Bullfrog or upstream from Rainbow Bridge. Shad like to spawn in the backs of canyons so the young shad and hungry stripers will most likely be seen first in the backs of major canyons lake wide.

Lake Powell has an amazing fishery which means that some fish will be available to catch at any time of the year. Right now there is a wide variety to choose from. The scenery is incredible and the fish are amazing. I love this place!

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