

August 9, 2017 - Water level declines, Fishing good

Written by Wayne Gustaveson

Wednesday, 09 August 2017 10:00 - Last Updated Wednesday, 09 August 2017 10:21

Lake Powell Fish Report – August 9, 2017 Lake Elevation: 3633.9 Water Temperature: 79-83

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Lake level is declining slowly. It would be great if the lake stayed at or above the current level forever, but there are some advantages of declining water in the late summer and fall. First, the flotsam the rushed downstream with the huge runoff will be stranded on shore making boating much safer. Next, clean sandy beaches will be increasingly available for shore camping and daily visits to the lake.

Most important to me with my total focus on fishing success, is that fish habitat is much easier for anglers to find and identify which fish should be in each type of habitat. Bass anglers are habitat oriented as they search for the best structure that holds the fish they want to catch. Largemouth bass are often in thick brush in relatively shallow water. Smallmouth bass will be prowling along the edges of a brushy ridge or cove. As the water declines those habitats will be easier to find and then successfully catch fish.

This week the common smallmouth habitat was rocky points that extend out into the bay (Primary points) separated by a cove or indented shoreline. Smallmouth bass were consistently holding on the points and ignoring the coves. Once this is discovered it is easy to just fish the primary points, ignore the coves and shoreline, and catch lots of bass. I caught a few nice smallmouth bass while fishing open water reefs looking for striper boils.

Stripers are also starting to follow the rules established over the last many years. Normally stripers chase shad to the surface at first light in the morning and go quiet after about 9 AM. We left Stateline ramp at first light, ran uplake, and found boiling stripers in Warm Creek, Face Canyon, Gregory Butte main channel, and mouth of Rock Creek. We did not stay long at any one spot as we tried to see how far uplake the boils persisted.

We found stripers were still feeding quickly and stayed on top less than a minute. We quickly ran to the feeding spot and hoped to be close enough to catch fish when the school resurfaced. If in range we caught fish, if not we repositioned and hoped for them to come back up in range. Our best success came when the boat was in range for the second uprising and not many stripers were caught when trying for the third boil from the same school. Surface lures worked better than shallow runners and spoons. Remember that as soon as the school leaves the surface it dives for deeper water. If the school appears on the graph, more fish can be caught by dropping a small, heavy spoon to the depth indicated on the graph. White or speckled Bomber slab spoons (1ounce) have been working well to catch fleeing stripers.

Stripers in the southern lake are still feeding closer to the main channel than the back of the canyon. There are many more shad schools holding in the backs of the canyons but stripers are gradually working toward the back and seem content to stay in open water until the shad disappear at which time they will head further back in the canyon. For now, stripers are in the bays and can be seen from the main channel and main canyon mouths.

The best boil reports this week came from the main channel between the Escalante Arm and

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Halls Creek. The San Juan was great as well. Very few reports were received from the northern lake so the results were inconclusive. I would not be afraid to head north to Good Hope to find boiling stripers.

The only other successful fishing technique that works lakewide is down rigger trolling. Stripers quit boiling at 9 AM and can start up again anytime they want. When they are not boiling they are holding at 30-50 feet. Down riggers can deliver a shad shaped lure to stripers at their holding depth and keep the catching going all day long while waiting for next boil. Afternoon wind prevents boils but downriggers can overcome that as well.

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