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TIPS FOR FISHING LOW WATER CONDITIONS

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* **Wade carefully and Don't get in a hurry.** I would say this is the #1 thing I see that people could change right away without spending any money, buying any gear, and so forth. In fact, it has nothing to do with skill and everything to do with patience. Instead of false casting a ton make one cast and make it count. If the cast didn't result in a fish, pull in, think for a second, then try to figure out what was wrong. Make an adjustment, cast again. In low water conditions ideally your presentations per fish should go way down.

* **Do a little study about what the fish might be feeding on.** Again this can be done for no \$, learn the types of insects that fish feed on this time of the year and what size they are. Then pick a fly from your box that most closely matches it first in size, then shape, and lastly color. On average, low water dictates the use of smaller flies on all waters.....something I have found to be true no matter what trout stream I am fishing.

* **Adjust your presentation .** Sometimes the **angle** is everything. In low clear water **never** cast straight upstream over a fish....doing so will almost certainly line him and send him fleeing in terror. An angle from the side while you stay low is a better angle, as is casting to the **near side** of the fish. If you cast to the near side you might get more than one shot at the fish. Overshoot him and you are almost certainly going to line him, again putting him off and often ruining your chances of catching him. Sometimes when I get to a well fished spot I know holds fish I think about trying to present my fly from a different spot than everyone else who fishes the spot fishes from. I mean if everyone casts from the same spot wouldn't fish learn that anything that comes from that angle or spot (or maybe just the presence of a person alone) is a phony.

* **Adjust your terminal Tackle.** Use longer, lighter leaders when you can. Like going from 7 1/2 leaders to 9ft leaders if the water is low, and going from 4x and 5x to 6x and 7x, or going to fluorocarbon which may be less visible under low water flows. When I fish 6x and 7X tippetts where I know folks might be into some large fish I tie an 8 inch piece of Shock Gum into the butt of the leader. It prevents many light tippet breakoffs if you hook a large fish. Finally, as mentioned above going to smaller flies is a good move. Low water generally occurs in late summer through early winter here in our area, that is small fly time anyway. Stocking your box with a few size 18 and smaller flies is a good way to prepare yourself. And big fish do eat the tiny stuff. We've registered a half dozen citation sized fish this month for clients and our largest fish of the year for the most part have been caught on flies size 16 or 18 and smaller. Almost 90% of the fish over 18 inches the past month and a half have been caught on size 18-22 flies.

Hopefully this will help you deal with some of those "low water blues" moments you have encountered. One thing is for sure, fish still eat and you can still catch them if you are willing to change your tactics a little. Good fishing...!

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