



July 13, 2022 Hebgen Lake Dry Fly Fishing Report

Nate Brumley

82°/Partly cloudy/Mild breeze in all directions

Hey! The fishing is picking up at Hebgen as giant callibaetis hatches are kicking off a gulping event. I've waited three days for this hatch to finally blow up and this morning it finally happened!

The action started early around 8 AM as I launched my boat. There's a boat tunnel through the grass to my campsite and as I entered open water, boom! Two fish rise about 60 feet away straight out. I gave the boat one strong push in the direction of the fish, grabbed the rod, and started peeling line. By the time I'm prepared to cast to the fish, the fish are moving out, but I land a #18 Black Emperor Caddis just out ahead of the closest target. There's a slight delay, then a fat green head is at the hook. After hookset, a strong 18-inch brownie is jumping and racehorsing around the bay. It took several minutes to tucker him out, but the first fish of the day finds the net.

After release I scope the giant expanse of lake out front and there's already sprinkled rises. I move the boat to the point south of Cherry Creek and park it in the grass line. The wind is coming out of the southeast, so I walked across the point and entered the lake on the south side of the point. Now all targeted casts could be launched slightly down wind. The action starts slowly, but shortly callibaetis inundate the system and a small number are riding on the glassy surface. A few rises appear with the bugs, but they're out of casting range. The direction of the mild breeze is moving the bugs toward me which should get a few fish in casting range.

Over the next hour that's exactly what happened as few gulpers ventured within my 80-foot casting range. I hook two fish in this window—landing a 17½-inch brownie and losing a bigger fish in the fight.

Then all hell breaks loose as millions of callibaetis materialize; some are on the water and others hovering in clouds above the surface. And that opened the floodgates with rising fish. There were still numerous fish out of casting range, but now a good number of them were in range. For the next 90 minutes it was Hebgen the way I remember it...with big trout on the move gulping the ever-present mayflies. I thought I'd have to change flies to a callibaetis pattern, but the fish seemed to like the #18 Black Emperor Caddis I was throwing, so I never had to change. I find myself in a perfect position with the right fly and plenty of targets to serve. Over the next hour and a half I hook six big fish and land five of them. It was a beautiful mix of both rainbows and browns in the 17 to 19-inch range.

Around 11:30 the breeze changed directions and intensified, and the rises instantly slowed. Ten minutes later I'm looking at a riseless lake and although the bugs were still floating, the fish gave up chasing them in the freshening wind. But it had been the best morning shift yet. I'd hooked nine fish with seven of them finding the net.

One other promising sign from yesterday...there was a night shift with quite a few rises going into darkness. I couldn't fish last night because I was in the middle of dinner, but tonight I'll be ready should the targets reappear.

Epilog: In today's blog I netted seven fish, but keep in mind it took 3½ hours with opportunities to get the work done. I'd like you to visualize how hard it is to hook one of these devils. So, you're crotch-deep off a point hunting a transition line shallow to deep. A rise may occur only a flip to serve or use most of your fly line to reach. An

appearance is never stationary...this is a fish on the move at high speed. Most of the time you have no idea which direction the target is headed. For every successful hookup, there's two other gulpers that don't connect with the hook. "You fail way more than you score." Even when you master the delivery, you're serving a tiny hook on a giant lake, and that fly must be exactly on the nose of a fish. That fish may have an 18-inch window out ahead which is his feeding slot. In the slot in a heavy hatch, there may be multiple mayflies to choose from; yet you want him to eat your caddis in a crowded field. Thus, most fish don't find your hook.

Multiple precise casts will always pay dividends. You never own it here...you just keep pounding the trajectory line, and the law of averages begrudgingly lets you win. Of course, that's what I love about this game!

Flies that Caught Fish:

[#18 Black Emperor Caddis](#)

© 2022 DryFlyInnovations.com All Rights Reserved. The information in this blog is provided for the sole purpose of assisting our fellow fishermen in the art of dry fly fishing. Any use of this information for commercial purposes without the expressed written consent of dryflyinnovations.com is strictly prohibited. Any violation of plagiarism or unauthorized use of the information contained in this blog will be vigorously pursued through legal action. Thank you for respecting the originality of our work.

Hebgen Lake, Montana (Note: Photos here are thumbnails and will not enlarge like the blog photos do. This is a representation of what displays in our Fishing Report Blogs.)

