



## June 27, 2014 Henry's Fork (Harriman Ranch) Dry Fly Fishing Report

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### Wind 5-10 MPH out of the South

**Day 3:** I awoke to the sound of hard rain pounding on the roof of the vehicle. I was in a campground called Cherry Creek along the west shore of Hebgen Lake. The low clouds had set in and not only was it raining, it had all indications it would rain for a long time. I loaded the rig in the rain and headed for the Henry's Fork, Harriman Ranch section. I had fished it about a week and a half ago and thought I might want to refresh my memory. Refer to blog dated 6-19-2014 for details.

By 10:00 AM I'm hiking down the fisherman's trail in a driving rainstorm asking myself what in the hell am I doing? There's something about the lure of a giant rainbow that makes a man do stupid things. I was late and there were already a couple dozen fishermen dispersed along the trail deep in the belly of the Ranch. I walked by all of them, waded the river at the Bone Flats, and tucked in along a high bank and began eying the surface. There were zero fish peeking their noses through the rain-speckled surface. I sat on the grass along the edge hunting fish and listening to the rain splat on the back of my rain jacket. In that first hour I knew that something special could happen when a Size 8 Green Drake floated by. It was a low-light day which could inspire a mega hatch if I could only wait it out.

I sat for another hour then "Searcher" fished the edge for a couple hundred yards. I got one good shot at a big fish feeding along the edge, but he false took my Searching Emerger #14 and was gone. I saw a few more drakes float by and not one single fish ate one of them. Things were looking pretty bleak at 3:30. It was still raining, the wind was blowing, and the fish felt stuck to the bottom. All of the fishermen who had ventured deep into the Ranch had long since disappeared. All that was left was a wacky, old "Dry Fly Guy" waiting for a drake hatch that didn't want to happen.

Around 4:00 for the first time all day the rain quit and the wind died down. I looked upriver a couple hundred yards and I thought I saw a fish rise and then another. I started walking upriver and yes there were fish rises and lots of them. I waded the river to an island and walked the island until I was straight across from the fish. For 200 yards of river the fish were beginning to take up feeding lanes and the green drakes were beginning to litter the surface. In ten minutes every fish that lived on this stretch of river was at the surface.

I scoped out where the heart of the fish were feeding. It was a tough approach at best. Most of the fish were in center stream or closer to the far edge which meant I'd have to wade a long ways in shallow water to get close enough to cast. There was a 60-foot long shoal that ran out into the river with a choppy little riffle that ran around it. I snuck in behind the shoal and started slowly wading toward the fish with the wake of my wading being blocked by the shoal. It was a perfect approach and I was now in range to deliver a fly to the inside edge of fish.

As I'm preparing to make the first delivery, I see a big rainbow head appear on the edge of the chop riffle running around the shoal. My tie-on bug was a Black Colored Emerger #20 which I'd hope to use on a lone wolf feeder earlier in the day. The fish was only 20 feet below me at a perfect angle. I waited and he fed again. In a heartbeat, the Emerger landed about a foot in front of his nose. In almost slow motion I see his head appear then his big mouth opens right at me and he eats the bug. I softly set the hook and all hell breaks loose. The fish roars downriver into my backing and

I'm in hot pursuit. It was a ridiculously long fight but I ended up winning as I slid the fish into the net 150 yards below where I hooked him. She was large, fat, and wide. If she'd have entered a beauty contest, she'd have won hands down. I released the fish and moved back to the gravel shoal.

The surface of the water was now carpeted with drakes in one of the most intense hatches I've ever seen. I put the Colored Emerger over a few feeding fish and it was obvious they were looking for a beef steak not an hors d'oeuvre. I changed flies to a large "Searcher" pattern #10 that I use for an adult drake and started serving it to fish. I get four straight false takes and then change flies to the new Flav Searcher #16. Even though I got a few false takes, I hooked and landed two big fish on the Searcher.

I then noticed that the fish were rarely eating an adult bug so I changed flies to our Hatching Drake #10. I never took that fly off for the rest of the day. Even though I was still getting a few false takes, I started hooking fish, big fish. The one drawback to hooking big fish on the Ranch is it takes a long time to land them and you almost have to chase them sometime in the fight. I was lucky--I lost only a few fish.

There had been about a half hour break in the rainstorm and I took full advantage while I could because another black, ominous cloud was building with vengeance. The surface of the water began to pop with rain and the wind intensified. Here I was all alone in the belly of the ranch in a torrential storm and the fish are still feeding all around me. What's a man to do other than run a Hatching Green Drake #10 down their throat? I started catching fish above me, below me, and as far out as the far shoreline. It was surreal and the gifts just kept coming, one of which was a big rainbow 22½ inches long.

The hatch began to wane around 7:00 and I started hiking out of the canyon. Every so often I'd run into a group of feeding fish and of course I'd serve them a fly. I picked up two big fish on the walk back to the truck. I finally reached the truck about 9:30 and a heater was what I needed most. The red beer was pretty essential also. It was a spectacular day on the Ranch for idiots who don't mind being in a rainstorm all day!!!

Flies that Caught Fish:

[#20 Black Colored Emerger](#)

[#10 Green Hatching Drake](#)

[#16 Flav Searcher](#)

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**Henry's Fork** (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.)



