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Montana Fishing Report Overview
October is here and it is time to swing for the fences! October is well known for being one of the best months for landing trophy sized brown trout. Browns will be beginning to spawn in November but they are already moving in the rivers and becoming more aggressive. The fish are colored up and spectacular right now. Doug Casey landed a 25" brown with the Hixson party last week and the Allison party roped a 22" and 25" brown the other day with guide Adam Shaw-Doran on the Yellowstone River. The hunt for big fish should only get better as we move farther into the fall.

So where to go to target huge browns? Any of the larger river systems that hold big fish can produce a monster including the Yellowstone, Lower Madison, Upper Madison, Jefferson and Missouri to name a few. There are also some interesting locations where big browns run out of lakes and into rivers that include the Madison in Yellowstone Park, the Madison between the lakes and the Missouri both above Canyon Ferry and between the lakes near Beaver Creek. The better known fall spawning runs aren't a secret so expect to see a few other anglers on the more famous ones like the Madison in the park and between the lakes on the Mo. Some of the "regular rivers" like the Yellowstone and Madison are still a great bet in the fall and you won't see a lot of pressure and you often have a great shot at roping big fish when playing with the resident population. Big trout fall to a variety of patterns and techniques. Stripping streamers on clouding days can be exciting and productive, especially when the water temps aren't too cold. As water temps become cooler traditional nymphing techniques are still productive. Dead drifting favorite streamers trailed by baetis nymphs is a good bet. Egg patterns also become productive again since both whitefish and browns spawn in the fall.

Fall water temperatures result in great fishing on all of our regular summer time favorites like the Gallatin, Upper Madison and Yellowstone but there are several low elevation fisheries that come into shape in the fall. Some of the waters around Three Forks like the Lower Madison, Jefferson and Missouri are too warm most of the summer but when temps start dropping they are a viable option. The catch on the lower rivers is that there aren't a lot of trout but if you don't mind just a few hookups it can be a fresh option this time of year.

October isn't completely about catching huge browns. There is also some great dry fly fishing to be had in the fall months. Baetis mayflies rule the roost when it comes to autumn hatches. These smaller size 18 and 20" insects will be in much greater abundance on cloudy days but even on a sunny day they can be important. Don't forget about terrestrials in early October. Hoppers and ants can still turn fish on a warm and sunny afternoon in the fall. If you are a dry fly aficionado the spring creeks near Livingston are a great option with reduced rates and a daily hatch of BWO's.

Upper Madison River Fishing Report Red Hot
The Upper continues to be the bastion of predictability, reliability and dependability. The entire upper river above Ennis is fishing well, but with lower waters we are enjoying the lower stretches below Varney now that the

buckets are clearly defined. The trout are looking for old favorites like sculpins and stonefly patterns, eggs and baetis nymphs. Stripping massive streamers is now a legitimate option as well.

Lower Madison River Fishing Report Red Hot
The Lower has been sensational on good days and good enough on slower days. It is as good of a bet as any location in the state right now for consistent fishing with a shot at some decent fish. We have been pulling some big trout off of skinny water over and between the weed beds on small buggers and crayfish trailed by baetis nymphs. Stopping to deep nymph the bigger buckets is also a good option although those trout are starting to see a few flies. Stripping big streamers is also a good option for large trout but less overall action.

Yellowstone River Fishing Report Very Good
The Yellowstone was inconsistent for much of the early fall but things seem to be on the upswing. Baetis hatches on cloudy days are starting to turn on and some big browns are showing themselves both above and below Livingston. One of our guide boats landed a pair of big browns taping 22" and 25" on the same day recently. Big ugglies on a slow strip or dead drifted is the ticket for the big browns.

Gallatin River Fishing Report Good
The Gallatin is low and gin clear right now. The fish are starting to stack up in the slower slicks and runs with some depth and slow to medium speed currents. Nymphing has been most productive most of the day with smaller baetis patterns offering the most productivity. Egg patterns are also producing in wake of the whitefish spawn and before the brown trout spawn. On cloudy days the baetis have been coming off in the later afternoon producing some outstanding but technical dry fly fishing.

Boulder River Fishing Report Good
The Boulder is low and very clear right now. Fishing is still good but requires a stealthier approach and a decent cast to get to fish before they see you. Nymphing smaller patterns has been productive and there are afternoon risers over the baetis hatch.

Jefferson River Fishing Report Very Good
Water temperatures on the Jefferson are great right now and this is a nice fall option. A good day on the Jeff won't produce the numbers on some other rivers due to the lower trout density but it is a good place to find solitude and some nice sized average trout. This is also a good location to pull streamers the size of your forearm in hopes of roping a stud brown.

East Gallatin Very Good
The East fishes more like a spring creek than a freestone stream in the fall. The waters are low and the trout are very spooky. Afternoons are still producing some rising trout, but you only get a few casts before you either hook or spook the pool. Stripping small streamers can also turn some decent browns.

Ruby River Fishing Report Very Good
The Ruby is a fun option in the fall. The waters are low but this is a good place to swing small streamers for the high brown trout population. There aren't a lot of monster fish in the Ruby but there is a healthy population of trout above 15" which makes it an attractive fall option.

Missouri Fishing Report Very Good
The river between the lakes is starting to see some bigger trout (and a lot of anglers). Nymphing is the ticket for the larger fish. The famous tailwater near Craig is seeing good hatches of baetis in the afternoon and the streamer bite is picking up. The upper waters are also producing some big trout with low pressure just don't expect big numbers.

Ennis, Hebgen and Harrison Lake Fishing Report Fair

The dry fly bite is done for the year and the big browns are moving out of the lakes to spawn so we really haven't been on them for several weeks.

Spring Creeks Fishing Report Red Hot

If you enjoy technical dry fly fishing the spring creeks are a terrific option in the fall. The fishing pressure is much less than during the PMD hatch and you can spend the entire afternoon casting to rising trout, especially on a cloudy day. This is probably the best time to fish the creeks besides the PMD hatch in late June.

Other local fisheries

The smaller waters are pretty skinny right now but if you are stealthy they can produce some nice fishing options and you might even run into some bigger trout running in from other fisheries. A few of the trophy stillwater fisheries on private ranches are also a good wild card right now.

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