

October 17, 2017 - Fall Fishing Report

Written by Wayne Gustaveson

Monday, 16 October 2017 10:12 - Last Updated Monday, 16 October 2017 10:29

Lake Powell Fish Report – October 17, 2017 Lake Elevation: 3627 Water Temperature: 65-68 F
By: Wayne Gustaveson
<http://www.wayneswords.com>

Fall Fishing

The 10 day weather forecast is for calm water and perfect daytime temperatures in the 70s. Fishing success has been mixed recently with wind, dropping temperatures and finicky fish. My prediction is that that last two weeks of October will provide some excellent fishing success.

First the challenges: Recent tough fishing has resulted from abundant cover and forage which allowed all sport fish species to eat on their own schedules or not at all. These fish are now accustomed to eating at their leisure with plenty of forage, a luxury usually not found in this lake with the normal over population of predators always seeking after prey. Windy conditions resulted in rapidly dropping water temperature which was a problem that confused fish and put them off feed at times. Hopefully those negative points are now past history.

The new events include: Stable water temperature (mid 60s) that is favored by most predators as the most consistent feeding and activity conditions of the entire year. An abundant shad and sunfish population that is still readily available. Water levels will decline slowly which forces shad to leave the brush sanctuaries and encourages feeding from all the predators.

Here is what to expect during the last two weeks of October:

Striped Bass: Right now shad are hiding in the shallow brushy coves. By November shad will migrate into deeper water as water temperature drops. Threadfin shad need stable temperatures and do not like cold water. They seek constant temperature in 30-60 feet of water. Stripers will react to this migration by forming bigger and tighter schools which will make them easier to see on the graph and catch on spoons. As they make that transition from foraging in small pods in the brush to their normal large school mentality, fishing success will improve dramatically.

Until that happens they can best be found by trolling a shad imitating crankbait while watching the graph looking for small schools and individual stripers. In the northern lake, surface action may happen anytime as more shad are available for stripers to chase.

Smallmouth Bass: Bass are the best angling target now as they are abundant and feeding prolifically at their favorite water temperature. Both large and smallmouth bass love brush that

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houses the bluegill and sunfish forage that is so abundant in this high water year. Water temperature will remain at the peak bass activity level during the pleasant days forecast for the remainder of October. Start searching for bass on the prominent points and coves at the mouth of the canyon instead of the shallow water in the back of the cove. There is more shad forage swimming in deeper water (15-25 feet) than in the back of the canyon. Bass are currently holding in that deeper water but may move shallower as lake level and water temperature drops. Bass really like surface lures right now but will always eat plastic grubs bouncing along the bottom and dancing through the brush piles. Fast moving buzz baits are fun to throw over the brushy shoreline. Treat bass just as if it were springtime by fishing for them in the afternoon as water warms.

Walleye: These toothy critters are back on the bite now with many being caught in the northern lake on spoons fished at 15-25 feet, bottom bouncers trolled slowly at the same depth, and nightcrawlers fished slowly on worm harnesses over main channel points. The magic depth for trolling across treetops or main channel points is 12 feet. Let the walleye diving lure hit bottom at 12 ft and then catch a fish as it bounces into deeper water.

Crappie: Expect crappie catch rate to increase dramatically as water temperature continues to decline. Normally the first two weeks of November provide the best crappie fishing of the year. Some crappie are being caught now and that catch rate will increase over the next 3 weeks. The most important factor is finding the school. With brush being abundant, look in the back of the canyons where water depth is 12-20 feet deep. Drive the boat right into the brushy thicket and then drop crappie jigs straight down below the boat to prevent snagging as the jig is moved slowly up and down. It is also possible to fish from the old river channel where brush begins. Drop jigs to the bottom at the edge of brush where crappie can see the lure and still be in the brushy confines that they love. Expect to catch a few bluegill while fishing specifically for crappie. Tip the jig with a small worm to target bluegill.

Catfish: can be caught by placing bait on the bottom near the sandy beach behind the boat near camp.

This will be the last regular report for the year. I will be gone on vacation for 10 days but will keep up with the fishing action by reading the reports on Wayneswords. Annual netting starts October 30 and continues through November 10th. I will post random reports on the website through the winter as something good happens. The only time fishing at Lake Powell is not good is when we don't go. I will fish all winter and keep you advised of the fishing excitement.

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Wayne Gustavson is a professional fishing guide and author of the book "Crappie Fishing: A Complete Guide to the World's Most Popular Game Fish". He has been fishing for crappie for over 30 years and has written several books on the subject. He is also a frequent speaker at fishing seminars and has been featured in numerous fishing magazines and TV shows.