

Valley Angler

Fall Fishing

by Bill Thompson

Well, it looks like it's that time of year again. Labor Day has come and gone and fall is almost upon us. This, of course, can mean only one thing to fishermen. The time has come to get out there and fish because the season has almost come to an end.

Sadly this is all to true, however the good news that some of the best fishing of the year is ahead of us. The water temperature on the Saco has been running right around 60 degrees and the Ellis was 62 degrees at Timmy's Pool this past Monday. Oddly enough the dam operators choose that day to lower the water level. In the morning you could have walked across the pool, but by five o'clock that evening it was back to its normal level. One of our customers had a field day catching trout in the narrow stream left from the draw down. There must have been some kind of maintenance issue at the dam, however last year at about this time of year they drew it down and left it for some down for quite some time. Unfortunately for anglers there was still quite a few days left until the end of the season.

For fishermen the fall of the year is just as important as the spring. In the spring it is all about the renewal of the season and the promise of the year to come. In the fall it is all about the finality of the season and the race to get in a few more days on the stream before it is all over for the year.

The trout seem to know this as well and respond in kind. Some trout are entering into their spawning season and seem to feed with out the selectiveness that they normally exhibit. It would seem that almost anything that is tossed in front of them will draw a strike. All fish, in the fall, seem to feed with more vigor than at other times of the year. An uneducated guess would suggest that they know that winter is just around the corner and that leaner times are ahead. I am not sure if this is the reason, but trout so seem to take on a sense of urgency in the fall.

Trout ponds will start to turn on with in the next week or two. For most of the summer the trout have hunkered down in the cooler water found near the bottom. Now that surface temps. are cooler they will begin to take dry flies on top.

The fishing in the Valley has not been all that bad in the last couple on weeks. There seems to have been a lot of swarming ants in the area and as you might expect flying ant patterns have been very effective. Cinnamon ants in particular have been working very well, so well that we have sold out. It is always interesting how these things seem to come around every few years.

For those who like a challenge the Saco River has been the place to go. Just before dusk you will find rising trout in flat water sections of the stream. The glide at First Bridge has

been a perfect example. These trout are rising to midges and catching one is to put it mildly most difficult. Long leaders tapered down to a minimum of 6X are required. Midge patterns, size 20 to 22, are the only thing these guys will take and then only rarely. Fishing for these trout is not for the faint of heart. One must have extraordinary patience. Stealth is a must; the very act of wading into position will put these fish down. The cast must be perfect and the fly must not be picked up until well out of the fish's field of vision. Any disturbance of the water will tip them off and send them packing. Despite these draw backs it is a lot of fun. I call it a good night if I just get a hook up.

The message is clear now is the time to pick up the rod and head for the stream.

See you on the river.