

NCCFFI President's Message, August 2021
Mark Rockwell



We Need to Protect our Fish During this Hot & Dry Summer

The Heat Is On

Mother nature is serving up a blow this summer? 2021 is way hotter than average across much of the United States. What does that mean for trout? What does that mean for those of us that fly fish for trout? These questions have been on the minds of many of us this past month as temperatures soared here in California and across the west.

HOW HOT IS TOO HOT FOR TROUT?

In the heat of summer, water temperatures increase, which can be troublesome and often fatal for trout, especially during extended periods. If water temps get above 68 degrees Fahrenheit, fish begin to struggle to breathe, get stressed and need a little extra TLC from us. How hot is too hot for trout? Here

are a few tips courtesy of Trout Unlimited based on water temperature:

- Below 65 °F – Fish are happy, healthy, hungry, and ready for a fight.
- 65 - 68 °F - Trout are starting to slow down and are feeling the heat. Rope up with heavy tippet and land fish quickly. Skip the picture and give them plenty of time to revive before release.
- Over 68 °F – Heads up: Too hot for trout. Trout are feeling stressed and need a break! Mortality rates increase even with proper handling.

PACK A THERMOMETER

How do you tell if the water is too warm and causing the fish stress? Pack a fishing thermometer with you and when you get to the stream check the water temperature. If the water is too hot (out of the trout comfort zone), have a beer, take a nap, read a book, chase warm water species, fish a spring creek or a tailwater, or head for the high country and try again when the water temperatures drop. In other words, give the trout a break. We all have a responsibility to protect the trout we love.

My Personal Actions for Trout This Summer

1. I will always carry a thermometer and check water temperature every hour. If water temperature goes above 65 degrees I will stop fishing.
2. I will consider not fishing cold water fish if air temps go above 95 degrees and water temps are not below 65.
3. I will consider fishing only early morning & late evening. Measure water temperature before starting, hourly thereafter, and I will stop if temps go above 65.
4. Every day will be different. Some days just will not be trout days.
5. I will consider only fishing warm water fish if the heat prevails, and I will do so into the Fall and until water temps are below 65 throughout the day.

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The point here is to protect our cold water fish so they will be with us in the winter and next year. As some of you already know, Oregon has issued a set of regulatory changes to protect its fisheries (see emergency regulations for angling zones: <https://myodfw.com/recreation-report/fishing-report/>). We've not yet heard anything from CDFW but I do expect it. Let's band together and do our part to care for and protect our fisheries in this, our most severe summer in years, if not ever. I salute all of you who join me in this effort. We're in this together - we and our fish.