



## RILEY CREEK – HAGERMAN, ID

<b>Date</b>	Saturday, March 12, 2005	<b>Time</b>	10:00 am – 2:00 pm
<b>Location</b>	Riley Creek - Hagerman, ID	<b>Weather</b>	Clear but very windy
<b>Fish Species</b>	Rainbow Trout	<b>Size Range</b>	10-12" some to 14"
<b>Fish Caught</b>	A couple dozen		
<b>Flies Used</b>	Olive and Black Bead Head Wooly Buggers (size 6)		
<b>Techniques</b>	Cast slightly upstream letting the fly sink and strip back using small quick jerks as the fly gets carried downstream. I've found that varying the strip method can make a big difference and it's worth trying a few methods before switching to a different fly. I found that across stream perpendicular to the flow worked much better than casting upstream and stripping down stream. I think you get a lot more action with the fly stripping across stream.		
<b>Comments</b>	I saw a fisherman land two 3' – 4' Sturgeon using 50 lb test out of Riley Creek.  Note: I went back and fished Oster lake #1 in May and caught a 17½" <b>Yellow Rainbow Trout</b> on a black Wooly Buzzer. The fishing wasn't as hot at the places mentioned in this article but it was still good fishing.		

I went fishing with my in-laws for a ½ day at Riley Creek and a few ponds, which is part of the Hagerman Wildlife Management Area just south of Hagerman at the State Fish Hatchery near Thousand Springs. The season opens on March 1<sup>st</sup> for trout and ponds with Bass open up on July 1<sup>st</sup>. There are several ponds that are stocked by Idaho Fish and Game for recreational fishing and these ponds also serve as winter resting areas for waterfowl.

My brother in-law fished opening weekend with the scouts and said the fish would bite anything. I thought I'd go and get some dry fly fishing practice in but it blew like crazy the whole time we were there. I resorted to fishing Wooly Buggers because they were a lot easier to cast in the very strong winds. The rest of the family used spinners and didn't do very well but the fish went crazy on Wooly Buggers. I would have used worms and marshmallows if I wasn't fly-fishing.

I started out fishing the first pond that water enters into as it leaves the hatchery. It reminded me of a crystal clear spring such as Silver Creek with the mossy bottoms. I caught 10"-12" and the occasional 14" trout on every descent cast I could get into the wind. I looked down and noticed a fisherman playing a sturgeon so I decided to go down and watch. He landed and released close to a 4' sturgeon in the hole were the pond I was

fishing dumped into Riley creek. It really surprised me to see that size of sturgeon in that small of a river. Talk about an ancient looking fish!

I decided to fish Riley Creek to possibly catch larger trout. I caught a few fish in the same size range and decided to go explore more of the management area. I walked east to a few ponds and found them difficult to fly fish without a float tube due to all the high vegetation on the bank. I then walked west to the large lake west of the fish viewing area and discovered lots of people. I saw a little boy pull out close to a 20" Rainbow using a worm. It was awesome to witness the boy's excitement!

I noticed in the outlet of the lake, a couple of golden fish, which sparked my curiosity. The water clarity was poor, which made it possible to only see the silhouettes a few feet under the surface. I cast my fly from atop the bridge a few feet in front and behind the fish and began stripping. After the fly passed the fish, the fish darted for the fly but I was already close to the bank and the golden silhouette turned at the last moment. I got the fish to chase it one other time but with no luck. By that time, and after catching a few more fish, it was time to go.

I stopped at the viewing area on the way out, which had all the species that were on the management area. You can catch several species of fish here! This is where I found out that those golden silhouettes were Yellow Rainbow Trout. I had heard of Golden Trout, which you can catch in a few high mountain lakes in Idaho but these were different. The Yellow Rainbow Trout are trout that have been bred to produce the yellow color. They are not true albino strains because they have some color pigments and do not possess the classic pink eyes.

I never had a chance to fish the big lake but the next time I come down this way I want to float tube on the lake to perhaps catch some larger trout. I also want to try fishing Billingsley creek just outside Hagerman, which I understand is fishable all year using dry flies.