

FISHING

The YELLOWSTONE

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #263 —

Early French trappers had already named it the Yellowstone River, when the Lewis and Clark Expedition arrived at its confluence with the Missouri River on the 25th of April in 1805. It joins the Missouri in northwest North Dakota, near Williston, after having traveled about 700 miles through Montana. Its origin is the mountains in northwest Wyoming in the area that we now call Yellowstone National Park – established in 1872.

We left Bozeman at 7:15 in the morning and met our three guides with their drift boats in a parking lot in Livingston at 8:00. More coffee, then our caravan headed east on U.S. Hwy 191/Interstate 90, which parallels the Yellowstone in this area. The plan was to launch at the Grey Bear ramp, a few miles upstream from Big Timber and cover about 12 miles of the Yellowstone – a pretty easy float.

We launched at 9:00 am and I had my first fish in the net in five minutes.

In the morning, I mostly fished a two-fly pattern with a strike indicator; in the afternoon, a floating

“hopper” pattern. Sam, my guide, continuously positioned me near the seams next to the fast water, and advised the best drift. My biggest fish of the day came early, but he was on for only a few seconds and we never actually saw him. The river is pretty wide in this section, and the channel moves from side to side, with various islands. We were back and forth all day, always looking for the best water.



Caught three rainbows about this size through the day, and many smaller ones, as well as white fish, goldeye and cutthroat – no browns.

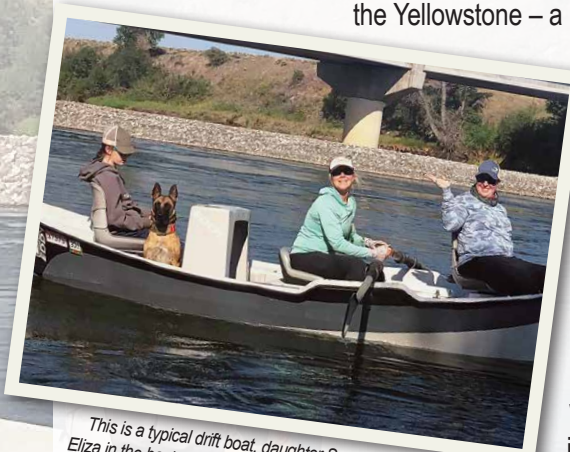
With three boats on the water, all seriously fishing, it was nearly impossible to keep track of who was where. We had scheduled lunch for 11:30 but it was an hour or so after that before we were able to hook up with the other two boats. It was a hot mid-day in Montana as we finally settled under some shade trees for a nice shore lunch.

“...my only dissatisfier was fishing too seriously...”

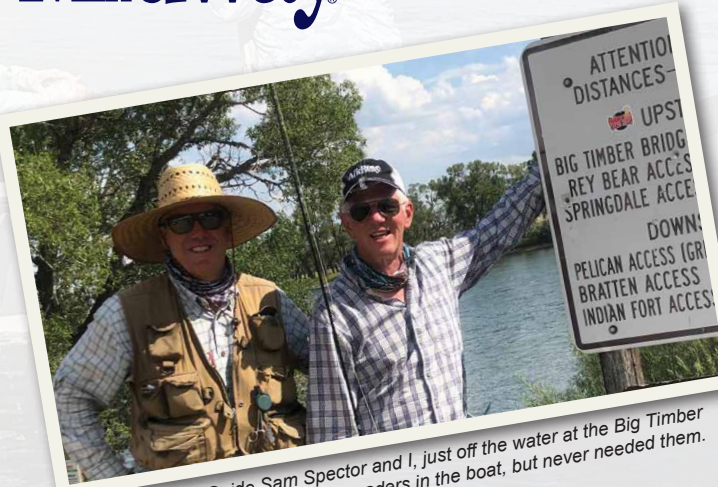
While we were enjoying our time on the water, someone moved our cars to the Big Timber ramp, to provide an easy transition from a long day of fishing. We arrived about 4:00 that afternoon. It was a great day; my only dissatisfier was fishing too seriously, paying too much attention to my fly or the strike indicator – and thus not being able to look around and enjoy the scenery as much as I would have liked. Beautiful area!

Larry Potterfield

The Yellowstone River
Grey Bear to Big Timber, Montana
30 July 2020



This is a typical drift boat, daughter Sara in the front, her daughter Eliza in the back, with Hale, a Belgian Malinois and guide Kara Tripp at the oars. They have just launched from the Grey Bear ramp.



Guide Sam Spector and I, just off the water at the Big Timber ramp. Had my waders in the boat, but never needed them.

