

Awesome Patterson Lake

By: Bob Morenski



Author with a 25 inch male brown trout caught on a size 6, 2XL Red Ice Leech.

I just returned from a trip to Patterson Lake and it was the most awesome trip to that body of water that I have ever had. For those of you that have not fished this lake this year, you are missing out on some of the best fishing in our entire region. It is fishing ten times better than **Twin Lake** this year. Also, if you have a camper, it is one of the cheapest trips that you can make. I bought a seasonal camping permit at the beginning of the season. That has already paid for itself. The rates are otherwise \$15 a night. If you do not have a camper, there are other places to stay in the area. I don't have the addresses for them but I know that there are several bed and breakfasts in the area. If you have a larger group, **Arrow Lake Lodge** would be a good place to stay. That is only 9 miles from Patterson. There are so many 20 inch brown trout in the lake right

now that it is unbelievable. I would say that over 70% of the 254 trout that I landed on this trip were in excess of 20 inches. There were a lot of rainbows in that mix.

I fished a total of ten days. I only failed to land twenty or more fish on three of them. That was the first day that I arrived when I only fished for 3 hours. I still landed 10 trout. On the other two days that I failed to land 20 trout, I was driven off the water early by thunder storms. Even on those days, I managed to land 12 and 17 respectively and I know that I would have landed at least 20 fish on each day had it not been for the weather. On my best day, I landed 48 trout. As good of a day as that was, I had an extremely high loss rate that day. I think that I hooked at least 75 fish. I followed that up with a 41 fish day. That morning session was awesome. I landed 33 before I came in for lunch. We went back out at six but the fish were turned off in the evening. I only managed to coax eight more to the boat.

On the last day, I finished with 33 trout but it was one of those evenings that will make me think about my return trip all summer long. It started a little slow but ended with a bang. In all, I landed 19 fish but my last 6 were all browns. The first of these was a 25 inch hen. I followed this up with a 20 inch brown and then landed a 23 inch brownie. It was 9:30, so, I started back to camp. Just after crossing over the saddle that separates the west from the east basin of the lake, I landed a 23 inch brown and followed that up with a 22 inch and 21 inch fish. It was like the browns did not want me to leave. Finally, I just had to reel in and head back to camp.



This was my best brown for the trip at 25.6 inches. It fell to a size 6, 2XL Rusty Brown Ice Leech.

Ice Leeches and Ice Minnows were the ticket for this entire trip. These are quite similar patterns. The only difference is that you tie in strip of chenille and rib the fly with wire to secure the back. In all, I had 9 different variations of these in my box and I caught fish on all of them. I had tied these up last winter and my only regret was that I did not have at least a half dozen more of each color in my fly boxes. I had fished these last fall a lot in Rusty brown and Caddis green with good success. On this trip, the rusty brown took a lot of fish but an even hotter color was red. An all yellow ice leech proved to be a hot fly early and late in the day and an olive and yellow ice minnow was often sizzling on the bright mid day periods.

I found a different set of colors hot during cloudy conditions. My black and silver Ice Minnows worked well and I found one version of the Ice leech that fished just crushed. I have it listed as UV lavender with a black tail but I can not find the package of Ice Dub that I bought. So, I can not confirm the exact color. It worked well though.

Since returning, I have tied up a couple more versions that I think will work. One is all purple. I used purple **Lite Brite** for this and the other is Peacock Fire Fox **Lite Brite** with a black tail. Both of these have silver beads.

The hot colors were as follows:

Hook:	Bead Color:	Tail:	Rib:	Body: (Ice Dub)	Back:
Size 6, 2XL	Silver	Yellow	None	Hot Yellow	None
Size 6, 2XL	Silver	Olive Grizzly Marabou	Gold	Hot Yellow	Black Pearl
Size 6, 2XL	Silver	Brown w/ Copper Crystal Flash	None	Rusty Brown	None
Size 6, 2XL	Silver	Black	Red	UV Lavender?	None
Size 6, 2XL	Red	Claret	Red	Red	None
Size 4, 2XL	Silver	Black w/ Peacock Crystal Flash	Silver	Silver	Peacock Black
Size 6, 2XL	Orange	Black	None	Peacock	None
Size 6, 2XL	Silver	Olive Grizzly Marabou	None	Caddis Green	None
Size 6, 2XL	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	None

The water had started warming and for the most part, the fish were deep on this trip. I typically was working over fish in 13 to 20 plus of water. I used my *Airflo Sixth Sense DI 5* for at least 90% of my fishing. When you are working water this deep, a good depth finder is an invaluable tool. A *Fishing Buddy* may show you the depth but it only has a narrow 19 degree cone. While you may mark the odd fish, you simply do not have a good sense of the number of fish down there. I fished with **Dave LaFrance** for eight of the days that I fished. While Dave used a *Fishing Buddy*, I was using my *Hummingbird 565* Depth Finder with a dual beam 60 degree cone. At times, I might have up to 20 fish on my screen while Dave was lucky if he could see one. This provided me with a distinct advantage which really showed up in our catch rate. It drove Dave crazy enough to where he ordered a new depth finder as soon as he got home. This extra visibility provided me the ability to employ a neat trick which drove the fish nuts. I call the trick, "*The Crazy Ivan.*" This is actually a submariners term for when would follow Soviet submarines. The Soviets would suddenly do a hard left and then a hard right to try to get the US submarines that might be following them to betray their position. I do nothing that drastic but if I marked fish while trolling my fly, I would suddenly go into a fast strip and retrieve my fly all the way to the surface. Strikes would come at any time; so, that once you started the retrieve, you had to stay with it all the way up. This bumped my catch rate up by over 60% over just trolling.

The trick was really when to start doing the "***Crazy Ivan.***" I would wait until the fish just went off my screen. If they had not hit by then, I would start the retrieve. If I found a large stationary concentration of fish, I would adjust my trolling motor to try to maintain my position and cast to them. Depending on the depth, I would count down to between 25 to 40 seconds to let my fly reach the bottom. Then start ripping. Besides **Dave LaFrance**, **Gary Mourhess** from Bismarck fished with me the last evening that I was there. I do not know what brand of depth finder that he had but it was better than a ***Fishing Buddy***. He was so overwhelmed by the disparity in our success that he told me that was calling his wife and telling her to buy and bring up a ***Hummingbird 565*** depth finder when she planned to come up in another week to stay with him. It did make that much of a difference.



This brown fell to a yellow Ice Leech using the technique that I call the "***Crazy Ivan.***" This technique proved to be deadly throughout the trip. I would say that it increased the number of fish that I caught by 60%.

Patterson Lake just keeps getting better and better. If you get an opportunity to fish it this Fall, do it! The lake is at its peak and it should fish very well for the next few years. With the two new **FLIPPR** lakes **Pybus** and **Corstrophine** now on line plus **Tokaruk** coming back, this area just south of **Riding National Park** is fast becoming the best still water trout fishing region on the continent. To live this close as many of us do, it is silly if not down right dumb to not take advantage of it.