



TECH BULLETIN

UTAH

STRAWBERRY/ SOLDIER CREEK RESERVOIR

Compiled from the Diaries and Logs of the Luh Jensen Fishing Research Team.

"The Berry", a 17,000-acre trout factory, is well known to purists and rated as one of the superior waters in North America for both quality and quantity of trophy-sized cutthroat trout. Early in the 1900s, the construction of Strawberry Reservoir was touted as one of the country's first Bureau of Reclamation projects and provided some of the finest fishing recreation of the time. The Utah state record cutthroat trout was taken here in 1930 - a brute weighing 26 lbs. 12 oz. During this early era, anglers also harvested brown trout in the 20-pound class. Currently, the lake is once again producing 10-plus pound cutthroat and rainbow trout, kokanee approaching the 6-lb. range and year-round fishing opportunities.

By Mike Hall

In 1990, Strawberry was treated to remove millions of rough fish and reaffirm this lake's status as a premier trout fishery. Special emphasis programs of conservation and recreation were begun at the same time by both state and federal agencies to protect this one-of-a-kind fishery and the adjoining forest. Private property adjacent and surrounding the lake was purchased and turned over to the U.S. Forest Service. Unsightly shore line fishing shanties were removed, new marinas, boat ramps, camp grounds and a visitor center with nature trail were constructed. Restocking was undertaken during that fall with hundreds of thousands of Bear Lake cutthroat trout, hybrid sterile rainbow trout and kokanee salmon being released into the impoundment.

According to present data collected by the I.G. F. A. and the Fishing Hall of Fame, angler's dreams are woven from waters such as this with trout approaching record sizes. Better yet, they are still growing and many world class fish are sure to be recorded here!

TROUT TACTICS

Locating fish is the single most important factor in consistent angling. "The Berry" is well known for trout

empty stories at the dock. This lake is alive with all types of microbiology, providing a smorgasbord of abundant feed and giving trout renowned growth. These bountiful food conditions often perplex and confuse one's ability to locate active concentrations of trout.

Although there is no replacement for time on the water, many key areas and fish-holding structures can be identified on detailed fishing maps offered at local stores. Early study of those, plus checking with the local marina will often identify the best areas.

Sight Methods are also effective for finding concentrations of active fish at any location, especially trout. This basically means watching for fish to rise to the surface. Even so, this type of locating is somewhat limited to early and late fishing while light levels are low or during the daylight in super-clear water. This method is always an effective angling tool and will often shorten the search for meandering trout.

A Graph Or Locator is a definite plus for any angler making a quick survey for prime areas. One can easily consider and interpret information for structure, current, depth, temperature, size, number, activity relationships of fish as well as the most productive trolling speed.

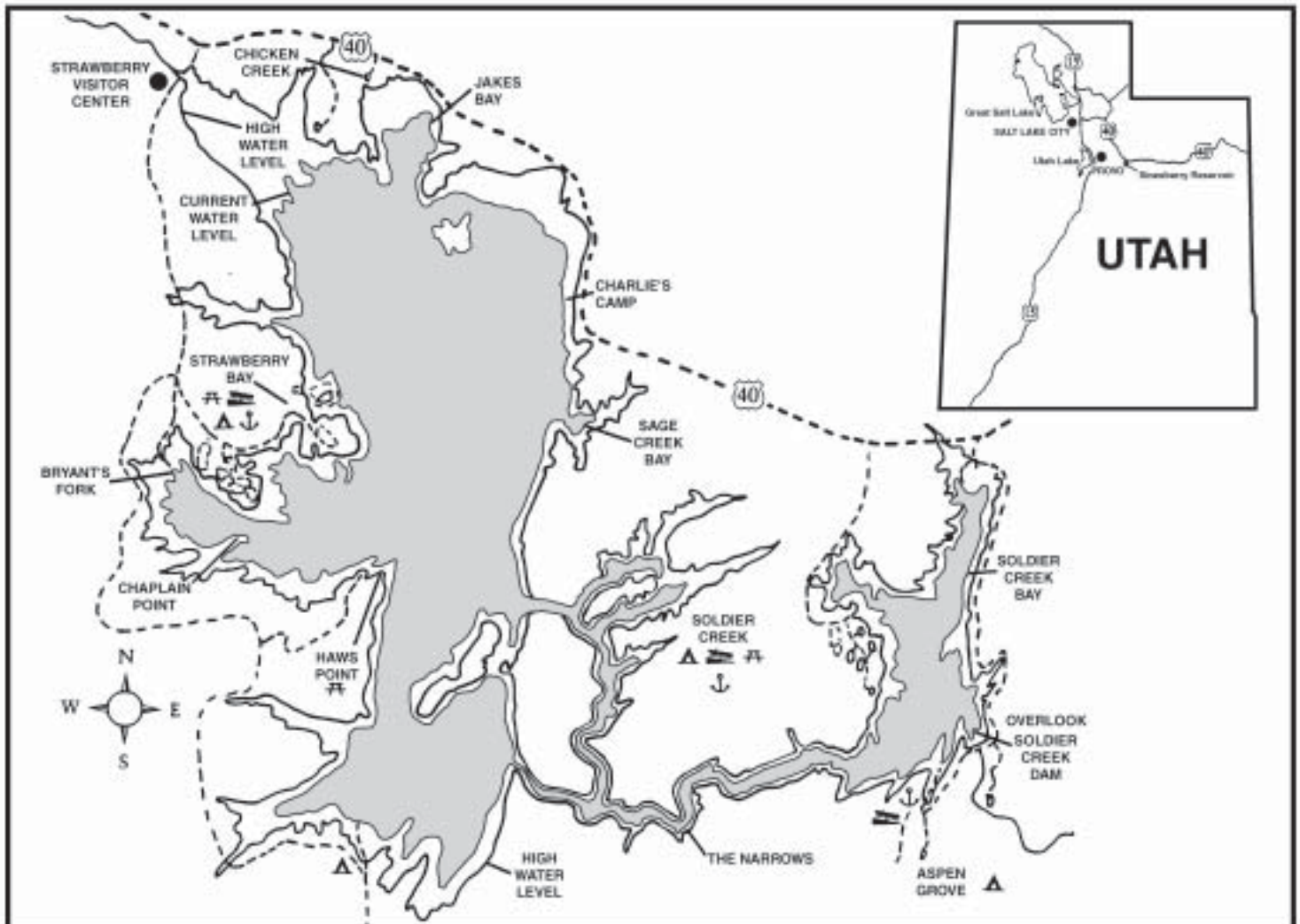
water provide excellent trolling opportunities. Fish holding on the bottom or under structure will respond best to bait or lures cast to them. Trout that display vertical movement often signal feeding activity while fish maintaining consistent depth show an angler where to search for concentrations of fish.

A Deliberate Plan of dividing a large lake into smaller areas for locator survey will help add to your success. Further dividing these smaller areas into sections will assist in eliminating unproductive areas of the lake and help find the best fish concentrations.

Depth of Lure is the most critical lure presentation factor on this water. Trophy fish generally prefer deeper water adjacent to weed beds, river and stream channels, underwater points or shelves. Consistent depths for big fish can vary from day to day but the most successful depth here is always near the bottom.

Fishing Line Clarity is not a determining factor for success although most anglers here elect traditional crystal-clear lines and leaders for trout. Just remember, this water is noted for trophy-sized fish and heavier line and leader are a necessity for 6- to 14-lb. lunkers.

The pros know that motor noise has a tremendous



attention should be given to the distance the lure is presented behind the boat. If the fish are unwilling to strike or seem to be spooked, let out more line than usual. These conditions are usually noted during graphing when anglers have trouble remaining over schools or group of fish under power. Distances from 100 to 400 feet are not uncommon to overcome motor noise, depending on the mood of the fish on any particular day.

Many trollers overcome this problem with **stealth** and **silent** presentations using oars or an electric motor to give the quietest presentation possible. Drift trolling using the current or wind is another popular method at "The Berry". These type of trolling presentations also offer the added plus of super-slow speeds that frequently add to any angler's success.

METHODS

Traditional angling methods include drift trolling, drift-and-cast, using downriggers, long-line trolling, lead core line trolling, drift jigging, fly fishing and bait fishing. All of these are potent presentations, particularly for trout. Information on these angling methods derived from field research and thousands of on-the-water hours by professional anglers are described in detail in the many **Luhr Jensen Tech Reports** available from your local dealer or by sending a self-addressed, stamped business-size envelope to Luhr Jensen Customer Service, P. O. Box 297, Hood River, OR 97031.

TROLLING

The top basics making trolling simple, enjoyable and more productive are:

1. Troll S-I-o-w-I-y - Fish do not grow big by chasing their dinner from one end of the lake to the other. They prefer an easy meal, the easier the better. Additionally, optimal presentation speeds for most lures are slow so trolling too fast will NOT allow proper actions. Slow is best, the slower, the better.

2. Vary Your Speed - Subtle, momentary adjustment slowing or increasing boat speed every few minutes causes your lure to have an irregular action and vibration which triggers strikes and consistently produces more fish.

3. Work in "S" Curves - Covering the water is the largest single advantage to trolling and every consideration should be given to keeping your lure "in the fish" for as long as possible. It's important to do everything possible to keep from trolling in a straight line. When trolling from point "A" to "B", consider that the shortest distance between those two points is a straight line. A longer distance is covered with an "S" shaped pattern which covers a wider area much more effectively. Moreover, your lure will drop deeper and slow down on the inside curve of the turn and then speed up and rise on the outside. This creates different actions, covers different depths and allows the lure to remain in the strike zone for longer periods of time, prompting and provoking fish to take your offering.

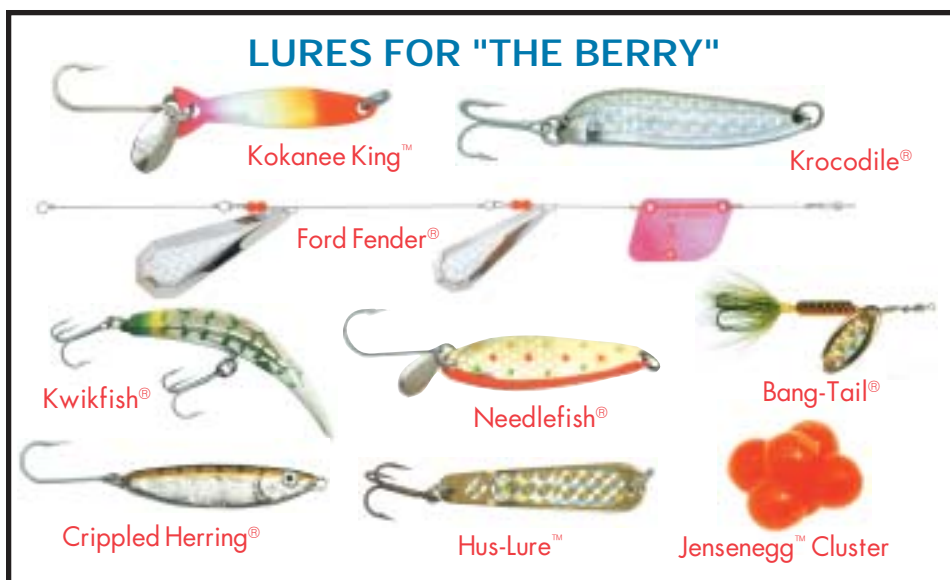
TROUT & SALMON

Kokanee - This landlocked sockeye salmon is noted for fantastic, line-sizzling action and unbelievable, above-water acrobatics. The kokanee are an immensely popular food and sport fish. However, their diet consists primarily of plankton, a small aquatic crustacean. This makes it a difficult fish to catch with most traditional gear. Small baits have been used with limited success, but the most productive methods are trolling and jigging with spoons.

This species is noted for schooling in 20 to 70 feet of open water. Hence, a locator or graph is essential to find them. Most often they show up as groups or schools of medium-sized fish at or below the thermocline. However, in high mountain lakes such as Strawberry, water is often much cooler, causing them to cruise the upper water layers, closer to the surface. Occasionally they will be observed jumping much like schools of miniature dolphin on the surface, notable during their fall spawn.

Precision depth control of your lure is a must when after kokanee as they are not known for changing depth to take a lure. Preferred angling methods include trolling with downriggers, long line trolling, lead core trolling and jigging.

A note: Speed trolling or trolling at a faster-than-normal speed is extremely effective for fresh water salmon and speeds from 1.5 to 4 m.p.h. are common. Presentations with speed generally require the use of a



lure alone with no other attractor.

Cutthroat Trout - This species is the most widely-distributed of all the western trout of North America and shows up as many subspecies. The sub-strain at Strawberry is known as the "Bear Lake Cutthroat", named for the waters where it originated on the Utah-Idaho border. As a rule, the Bear Lake cutthroat prefers deeper and colder water than other trout. They most often appear as single, medium-to-large fish in a widely dispersed school at random depths on the graph screen. There can be several single fish or loosely-formed schools throughout a given area.

Cutthroat are well-noted for a voracious, eager appetite and prefer aquatic insects and minnows. Larger lures usually pay off in larger fish. They are also a noteworthy fish for solid strikes and deep, strong runs. The cutthroat is not shy about attacking any presentation. Yet, because of their widely scattered nature, trolling has been the most consistent means of catching numbers of this trophy trout.

Rainbow Trout - Strawberry rainbows are a hybrid sterile, sub-strain and grow big in these fertile waters. Being sterile, they cannot reproduce, which offers distinctive advantages. First, it protects the cutthroat stocks from interbreeding and secondly, provides much better growth and longevity over other stocks of hybrids. Some rainbows have shown growth to a behemoth ten-plus pounds since their stocking in the fall of 1990. This trout is continuing to grow, appearing frequently in anglers' catches. The best can be yet to come as more and more of them are stocked annually.

This trout prefers the shallower and warmer waters closer to the shoreline. Structures such as river channels, submerged islands, weed lines, points and shelves are favorite haunts. They most generally appear on the graph screen as medium-to-large fish in open water schools or as groups of fish lingering on underwater structure.

Rainbows are ravenous feeders and are exceedingly active when feeding. This makes them an easy target to zero in on. Favorite angling methods for this trout include all types of trolling, jigging, fly fishing and, most certainly, bait fishing.

TROUT LURES & RIGS

There are many classic lures recommended for trout and kokanee that have become legends on the water. Here are but a few of the finest:

Spoons for trolling, casting and jigging include the **Needlefish**, **Kwikfish**, **Kokanee King**, **Hus-Lure**, **Super Duper**, **Krocodile** and **Crippled Herring**.

Spinners for trolling and casting include the **Shyster**, **Bolo**, **Bang-Tail** and **Jeweled Bead**.

Lake Trolls, Dodgers & Flashers include the **Ford Fender**, **Jack-O-Diamonds**, **Cowbell**, **Willow Leaf**, **Jeweled Bead Kokanee**, **Herring Dodger**, **Abe & Al Flasher** and the **4/0 Jensen Dodger**. These all come with complete rigging instructions on the package. When making a purchase, give special attention to your dealer's recommendations for size and color.

Rigs for trolling and bait fishing. The budget angler can make great use of the **Mini Dipsy Diver**. This trolling aid is used with mono lines and can be run at speeds up to 4 m.p.h. The **Mini** covers depths of 14 to 20 feet, will handle lures from 1/8- to 1/2-oz. and gives anglers great trout trolling presentations without the expense of specialized rods and reels.

Tipping lures with bait has always been a surprisingly powerful method when trout trolling or casting. Using a lake troll with a night crawler has become a relished favorite and proved the demise of numerous "Berry" trout. Unfortunately, many anglers have had difficulty hooking up with rainbows here. Our field research has shown that these rainbows are frequently caught using drift tackle riggings to float a night crawler or Berkley Power Bait. **Jenseneggs** or **Jensenegg Clusters** rigged with these baits have taken countless 'bows using standard bait fishing tactics, drift trolling or power trolling them behind a lake troll.

ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES

Marinas

There are four marinas in the Strawberry and Soldier Creek complex. Strawberry Bay provides full services year-round including lodging, restaurant, gas & rentals, guide services; Soldier Creek, Aspen Grove and Renegade all have limited services. For further marina information, write Strawberry Bay and Soldier Creek Marinas, 882 East 880 North, Orem, UT 84057 or call 801-548-2261 (U. S. Forest Service permits).

Campgrounds & Recreation Sites

There are camp grounds adjacent to all four marinas, the Strawberry Visitor Center and several other recreational sites and access points to the lake. For more information, write the Heber Ranger District, P.O. Box 190, 2460 S. Hwy. 40, Heber, UT 84032 or call 801-645-0470 or the Strawberry Visitor Center at 801-548-2321.

FISHING REGULATIONS

For additional information on this water, write the Utah Division of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources, 1596 West North Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84116-3195 or call 801-538-4700.

A SPECIAL NOTE

The trout have done exceptionally well, firmly restoring Strawberry as one of the top cutthroat trout fisheries in North America. The sad news is that this species can be too easy to catch for its own good. Successful management for this water hinges on reestablishing the cutthroat as the dominate fish to control rough fish populations of unwanted chub and suckers. Current regulations allow a one-fish limit on cutthroat, permitting an angler to keep a trophy or damaged fish. While catch-and-release restrictions apply to the cutthroat, the rainbow are stocked in the millions and anglers catching fish are encouraged to keep them. The two species are very similar. The rainbow has a large number of spots on the head and has white-tipped fins. The cutthroat has neither but does have a red or orange "slash" on its throat - hence the name.

Remember the great outdoors is only renewable, not replaceable. Waters such as Strawberry breath life into us as anglers and are a brilliant light to the future of outdoor recreation. Respect your natural resources, practice catch-and-release when you can and please put litter in its proper place.

SEE YOU ON THE LAKE!