

YOUR Outdoors

Fall rejuvenates angling opportunities

The morning was crisp and cool, but the sky promised a hot afternoon. The leaves on some of the smaller trees were already turning red, and there was a hint of smoke in the air. I was not inundated by mosquitoes, as I was the last time I hiked up this stream, but instead kept walking into spider webs.

At the main pool I set up my fly rod and tied on a colourful streamer, a wet fly imitating a rainbow smelt. It took only three casts before I was wrestling with

a nice-sized brook trout. It was very fat, and I noticed tiny eggs protruding from its underside. Gently, I eased the fish back into the water to continue a crucial part of its life cycle.

Fall is a great time to be fishing in Nova Scotia, as biting flies are inconspicuous, trout become more active with cooling waters, and fall salmon begin entering select rivers. Fish such as bass and pickerel can be caught in record sizes, and if you make your way to the coastline, salt-water fishing is at its best.



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There are things to take into consideration, however. Unlike most freshwater fish species in Nova Scotia, speckled or brook trout spawn in the fall. While you are allowed to fish for them, September has been designated by the government as catch-and-release only. I have a soft spot for our native "brookies," and they are considered by many anglers the world's most beautiful fish. Releasing speckled trout in this spawning period gives them a better chance to compete with other species and a changing climate.

The other species speckled trout compete with include smallmouth bass and pickerel, and these hardy fish provide great angling in the fall.

While neither is fussy, baitfish such as minnow species and juvenile fish like gaspereau are reaching their largest sizes, and corresponding lures can entice monsters. I found this out on a lake where I cast a huge floating rapala lure near a dropoff, and watched spellbound as a bass smashed it like a great white shark hitting a seal.

Fall is also that magical time many anglers wait for, when schools of salmon gather at river mouths, waiting for a rain to prod them upstream. Once an angler is hooked on this epic ritual, there is little hope of release. chasing pisces@hotmail.com
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FALL FISHING FACTS

● Speckled trout and lake trout, Nova Scotia's native trout, are both fall spawners. It is illegal to keep speckled trout in September.

● As speckled trout return to more accessible waters, rainbow and brown trout also become more active, especially in the daytime. Traditional springtime trout lures, spinner baits and streamer flies will get action. Fly fishing with ants, wasps and other late-hatching insects can also be extremely productive.

● Fall fishing for smallmouth bass can be great, with large presentations and trophy fish. Slow retrieval is more likely to entice strikes, as bass prefer moving vertically to horizontally.