

Fly Fishing Travelogue

Lake Taneycomo

Branson, MO

By Dr. Bob Lewis

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Mode of transportation: SUV. From Columbus, Ohio it is an eleven hour drive. Follow route 70 through Indianapolis and through St. Louis. To avoid St. Louis traffic take Route 55 South to 270 South around to Route 44. Then on to Springfield, MO. Go South on Route 65 to Branson. It is an easy drive and mostly flat.

Accommodations: We stayed at a timeshare. There are numerous hotels, motels, and resort places. The weather in July was mid 80s in daytime and 70s in the evenings. Branson is a half mile from pristine fly fishing. It is a family town with attractions for kids and adults. There is a great amusement ride area, and the shows... well, they are plentiful. Don't miss the Jim Strafford show !!! Shows are three times daily. I fished all day. My wife went to shows during the day with her sister. I joined them in the afternoon and evening for more shows. All shows are "G" rated. Branson was an ideal place for a vacation... plenty of fishing with great entertainment for the non-fisher. If you like bluegrass music, travel South about two hours to Mountainview, Arkansas. Every evening in the summer they jam downtown. Prices for everything are very reasonable. Bargains for shows are plentiful. A lot of "twofers."

Fishing experience: In July there are mostly 18 inch (+/- 4 inches) rainbow trout. In the Fall, the brown trout arrive and are reported to be mostly 22 inches (+/- 4 inches). The trout can be annoying. They will peck at your boots and legs so you will move. That will bring up the scuds and then they will feed. Lake Taneycomo is a tailwater. About ¼ mile downstream is the cable. From that point starts the fishing. At that point is the first of three shoots from the hatchery. The hatchery has a gazillion trout and is quite a sight to see. I used an 865 rod with 5x tippet. That's pretty ideal there. A 906 is okay, but, probably more rod than needed. A four weight is probably too light. The fish know only one food – scuds. Some folks tried streamers, but, scuds I found work the best. I rigged for tight line bottom bouncing. The water is 200 feet below the top of the dam which holds the water from Table Rock Lake. Water discharges from the bottom of the dam and it is COLD – 52 degrees. Although the air temperature might be 90, wear warm boots and waders. Rolling fog is a problem if you are on a drift boat. There is no speed limit with power boats and every year there are fatal boat accidents. The water is wadeable with no generation. With no generation the water from bank to bank is about knee-high or less. With each generator put on line the water rises about 1 ½ feet. A horn blows up and down the lake (it is really more like a river than a lake) with each generator put on line. Two generators and it starts to get difficult. Put your rod away if they are generating 3 or more. They usually do not generate Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. A drift boat is a great way to go. I did both drift boat and wading. Night time fishing from 9pm to around 3 am is popular (but not for me).

Outfitter: I used the guides from River Run Outfitters (Stan and Carolyn Parker's place). They are an ORVIS approved guide service. We went on their drift boat program. There are a few other guide services, but, my research found them to be the most reliable, friendly, and reasonably priced. Some of the other guides use motorboats. River Run only uses drift boats. They have a shop with lots of goodies. My brother-in-law had no boots and waders. They rented him a set for ten bucks! They are located at 2626 State Highway 165 just north of the Table Rock Dam. There phone number is 417-332-0460.

Check out these websites:

<http://riverrunoutfitters.com/>

<http://ozarkanglers.com/reports/lt.php>

<http://charteredwaters.com/>

<http://www.bransonchamber.com/>

I give this trip an A+ because it is really a family friendly activity. Everybody was happy.