



Tom Claycomb/Contributed Photo
Mormon crickets — they're actually a type of katydid — can grow to about 3 inches long.



TOM CLAYCOMB
 BASE CAMP

Big bugs: Watching the Mormon cricket migration

If you suffer from bug-a-phobia disorders then you might want to skip over this article! My wife suffers from it to the extreme level and wouldn't even get out of the truck while I was taking pictures for this article. I've been traveling a lot lately and have only been home just three days in the last 32. So it was nice to be home this last week.

I had an article written for this week but on a Saturday Katy and I were driving down towards Jordan Valley, Oregon, and saw the annual Mormon cricket migration and I bumped this article ahead of the previously designated one.

I hate to call it a banner year but I guess from a cricket perspective that's what you'd have to call it. Some years I don't see mass amounts of them and other years I do. I guess according to weather conditions it fluctuates. Years ago on Memorial weekend we were going up to the mountains to camp. Right before we got to Horseshoe Bend there were a million trillion crickets crossing the road. That was the first big swarm of them I'd ever seen.

There were so many crossing the road that they had up a flashing "SLICK ROAD AHEAD" warning sign. The road had a slick mahogany-colored covering due to all of the smushed crickets. It was like driving on an oil slick. When you drive over them it sounded like popcorn was popping.

Years later I was flyfishing the stonefly hatch behind Anderson Ranch dam and there'd been so many crickets migrating that the swirl pools and back eddies in the river were 1 inch deep in dead crickets. There were so many dead ones that there was a stink in the air.

This year is not a total banner year but still, there are a lot of them out right now so if you've never seen them, you ought to take a drive down towards Jordan Valley. I didn't notice the exact mile marker but it's about halfway down to Jordan Valley where the concrete barriers are on the left side of the road. They are swarming over the barriers thick as a herd of ants.

I always have to stop and take pics and a few videos and then observe them whenever I see them. Yesterday I noticed a few dragging dead ones that had been run over. I don't know why they didn't just eat them right there? Maybe they were dragging them home to feed the family for a July 4th reunion? I also observed a live one and there was a cricket on each end of him trying to eat him. Maybe that's why they keep moving? If they stop someone will eat them!

If you have relatives visiting from out of state you might want to take them out to see this weird phenomenon. Probably the first thought to cross your mind will be the old Biblical plagues like on the show the 10 Commandments! If you take kids, don't let any of them fall or they'll eat their eyeballs out! OK, maybe I made up this last sentence just to add a little excitement to the article.

See, **Crickets**/Page B2



A superbly colorful rainbow trout that could not resist a big stimulator fly.
 Brad Trumbo/
 Contributed Photo

Wild flowers of the Blue Mountains

Brad Trumbo
 Contributed Photos

TROUT & TRAILS

The Blues are the perfect place for a day of mountain biking and fishing

One of the many beautiful things about summer in the Blue Mountains is the opportunity to



BRAD TRUMBO
 UPLAND PURSUITS

pack up a mountain bike and fly rod and hit

the trail for a little surf-n-turf adventure. The rainbow trout are on the rise, wildflowers are in full bloom, and wildlife is at its peak activity for the year.

With streams and trails in close proximity, biking and fishing are a match made in heaven with seemingly endless opportunities.

Recently, I found myself casting big fluffy stimulator flies to feisty rainbows in a canyon bottom. The stream was swollen, colored, and cold from rain and runoff. My mountain bike was in the truck and the plan was to catch rainbows for a while, then head to the mountaintop for a wildflower ride in the wilderness.

The river reach I selected for the day was lousy with large woody debris and prime pools. I had not fished it since before 2020 and the high flows that year and this spring had carved new side channels, deposited massive log jams, and allowed for trout to sprinkle out all over the place. Few fish were looking up, but the stimulator grabbed the attention of those willing to play the game.

The first pool I approached was formed by a channel-spanning log in which water was spilling over, creating a scour hole on the downstream end with a gentle glide off

to the right side. Dissecting the habitat suggested fish would be holding at the head of the pool by the log, on the left where flow slowed against a root wad, in the flow seam between the pool and glide on the right, and through the glide itself. Maybe even a fish in the pool tail-out.

Starting on the left side of the pool, a few small fish came to hand from the root wad, many of them bumping the big fly as it bobbed along but struggling to fit the hair mass into their small gapes. But big or small, watching trout attempt to smash a big dry fly is always exciting.

Turning my attention to the head of the pool, a few more dinks challenged the fly, each brilliantly colored like jewels in a treasure chest. It seemed odd that a bigger fish didn't come from beneath the log. Shifting right a little, I cast toward the glide.

See, **Blues**/Page B2

A mountain meadow with a Blue Mountain view is one of the many rewards of biking in the Blues.
 Brad Trumbo/Contributed Photo



Crimson Indian paintbrush steals the show among sulfur lupine.



The striking Bonneville shooting star, aptly named for its intriguing shape and colors.



The peculiar ballhead waterleaf is a modest plant with subtle beauty and character.



The yellow fawn lily standing like a lamp shining on its leafy feet.