



Welcoming
Dave Graybill
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The Fishin' Magician

Now I'm excited about steelhead fishing. We've got our first serious snowfall, and some very chilly weather. This is what I call steelhead weather. This will sort out the true steelhead anglers from the fair weather anglers. Only the hardy will be venturing out when conditions are like this, and they will be reaping the rewards!

As I expected I am getting reports of good fishing on all our area rivers. The cooler water has pulled fish from the Columbia and I got my first indication of good fishing on the Wenatchee River. Up until just recently even the good local anglers that know the river very well were only getting a few fish a week. Just last week that changed. Jeff Stroup, who is a fish checker for the Department of Fish and Wildlife, told me he got a big surprise when he checked the boats that had floated the upper Wenatchee. For the first time he found most of the six boat he checked had fish. In fact he counted a total of 16 steelhead! This is a great indicator that there are now fish dispersed throughout the Wenatchee.

Of course a few days later the river blew out. The cfs rate doubled over one night. This is good news and bad news. This is making fishing conditions tough on many of the holes in the Wenatchee for a while, but you can bet that more steelhead are moving into the river with the increased flows.

I had a hunch that anglers fishing the Methow River were having a similar experience with those on the Wenatchee. My buddy Kevin van Bueren, North Cascades Fly Fishing in Winthrop, confirmed my suspicion. Although he had been getting fish from the beginning of our early season

this year, many anglers had begun to grumble. They were even questioning if the counts were correct! Where were the darn fish? There were a lot of fish bottled up in the lower river and quite a few still swarming around in the estuary, near the mouth. Now, though, the fishing in the upper river is starting to happen. There are some big fish, too.

There is some very cold weather forecast for the coming days, but not enough to create adverse conditions on the Methow. In fact, the colder weather will stabilize flows and could be a good thing. The severely chilly weather won't last long enough to create ice problems, which can be an issue in the mid season on the Methow. As most of you know, the Methow is a huge draw, and if you can fish this stream during the week you will find a lot more elbow room on the river.

When the steelhead fishing gets good it gets some anglers out that haven't done much fishing for them. Last year's record return of steelhead prompted many people who had never fished for them out on our area's rivers. The fishing is really getting good and I know that many of these folks have been discouraged. I want to help them get prepared for what is going to be the best steelhead fishing of this year's season.

I am offering a seminar on bobber and jig fishing for steelhead at High Mountain Hunting and Fishing Supply. It will be held on Wednesday, December 8th, starting at 6 p.m. I will be showing everyone how I rig up for bobber and jig fishing, describing the rods I use, the reels, what kind of line and leader I prefer. I will also have a variety of jigs that I like, and demonstrate how I bait them, where legal, and some other tricks.

I want to give everyone that attends a very detailed seminar, to give them the best chance of landing some steelhead this season. High Mountain Hunting and Fishing Supply is located at 223 North Mission Street in Wenatchee. There is no charge for the seminar, and space is limited. Please call the shop at 509-665-9362 if you plan to attend.

Time is running out for anglers who want to get in on some of the best Lahontan cutthroat fishing in quite a few years at Lake Lenore, near Soap Lake. The season will close at the end of November. If you want to try for some big rainbow and brown trout at Dry Falls Lake the same is true. It will close at the end of November, too.

Fly anglers that prefer to catch big rainbow through the winter months will be heading to Ephrata to fish Rocky Ford Creek. This is the time of year that I like to fish here, too. The crowds can be lighter than usual, although since Rocky Ford offers open, running water throughout the winter, it can still be busy. Of course the chance of catching rainbow trout that can be almost as big as many of the steelhead taken in the winter is an attraction as well.

Rainbow at Rocky Ford are known to be finicky, sneering at what fly fisher offer, but there are



days when the fishing can be something else. There are few places in the western region where anglers can take double digit numbers of rainbow averaging 3 pounds or better on one of those days.

Call me crazy, you wouldn't be the first, but boy, do I like this time of year. Nothing takes the chill off a freezing cold day than a steelhead sizzling line off your reel. I gotta get me some of that!

Reach Dave at:
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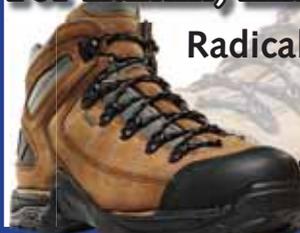
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