

The Fishin' Magician

Welcoming

Dave Graybill

To The Nickel Ads Classifieds

I knew the first snow would do it. All of a sudden I am getting good reports on fishing for a variety of species throughout the region. It just took a reminder that winter really is coming and the fish have responded. If you have given up on fishing this fall, better drag out the gear and get ready to get back at it. I am now more convinced than ever that this late fall and winter season is going to be a dandy.

On the steelhead front, the fishing on the upper Columbia in the vicinity of Pateros is really getting in gear. I got a phone call into Shane Magnuson while he was fishing near the bridge, where the Methow River enters the Columbia. He said he was disappointed in the fishing that morning. His clients had only hooked six fish and released three wild fish so far. It wasn't 10 a.m. yet! Magnuson said that he is averaging about four to six fish a day, and some days are better.

To my mind this is when winter steelhead fishing really gets going. It takes some really chilly weather to get the fish in the mood. Although the fishing in the smaller rivers, like the Methow and Wenatchee hasn't been that good yet, I expect to see better fishing soon. The water temperature in the Columbia finally dropped below 60 degrees and that should help move some fish into these other rivers.

I also got a good report on the fishing at Rufus Woods Reservoir. Anton Jones, Darrell and Dads Family Guide Service, sent me a report and some good photos of a great day on the reservoir. His party got limits of triploid rainbow, and most were in the 4- to 6-pound class. He said that the best action was had on worm-tipped jigs, but there were fish taken with other methods. His group was fishing near the net pens on this particular day.

This is really good news for anglers who like fishing Rufus Woods. I know there are a whole lot of you that like to spend your weekends up here in the winter. The clear and calm weather that we have had this late fall and early winter can make for some great days up there. If the fish are getting active there are some great ways to catch them. I like to troll Woolly Bugger flies. I have had great success using these flies, starting as soon as I leave the launch above the dam at Bridgeport.

Another method that is hard to beat is putting a 3/0 or 4/0 dodger way back behind the boat and putting Double Whammy or a Kokanee Pro spinner behind it. When the fish are showing on the surface this can be very deadly. This rig can be trolled along the "cans" across from the launch, or even through the open water. Another place to run this set up is below the shallow water markers near the pump point on the east side of the reservoir, above and across from the State Park.

Bass anglers that have long ago put their tackle away may want to consider digging it out and heading for Banks Lake. According to Lou at Coulee Playland the fishing for smallmouth is very good. The Frostbite Tournament, the traditional last tourney of the season, was a huge success this year. Lots of smallmouth were caught during the event and there are some fat smallmouth being taken.

Anglers are making the error of thinking about the calendar and not the water temperatures, said Lou. The water temperature on Banks is still hanging at a balmy 52 degrees, and the smallmouth will be feeding heavily usually until it dips to 45 degrees. These fish have the feed bag on in

preparation for winter, and are still even hitting top water baits in the morning. Some anglers are having success fishing off weed lines in 12 to 15 feet of water, while others are fishing as deep as 30 feet, off the areas like the Poplars at the bottom end of Steamboat Rock.

Another species that is worth fishing for right now on Banks is rainbow trout. Every fall rainbow to 22 inches and even a few a bit larger are taken in good numbers here. I have often thought that the fall and winter fishing for rainbow is one of the more overlooked opportunities here in Central Washington. Rapalas and Flatfish are very effective lures to use to take fish.

Speaking of trout, the fall fishing for Lahontan cutthroat on Lake Lenore is the best it has been in years. I talked to one angler who had fly fished here recently and he said he hooked a dozen and landed five. The five fish ranged in size from 19 to 27 inches. Some fly anglers are sticking with pulling big Woolly Buggers, but others have suggested that chironomids are the way to go on some days.

If you like fishing for big Lahontan cutthroat you may want to give Omak Lake a try. Anton Jones also reported going up there recently



and having a ball. He caught big numbers of large Lahontans on Omak Lake, trolling a variety of lures. Remember, Omak Lake is a Colville Tribal lake and requires a Tribal Permit to fish it. You also need to crimp the barbs on your hooks when you fish here, and no bait is allowed.

See. If you're not fishing you're missing out. There's some super fishing going on out there right now!

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