

Dave Graybill

The Fishin' Magician

Nickel Ads
Classifieds

When the outside temperature is in the single digits in the morning, it's hard to get motivated to do something outdoors. There are opportunities, though, and I just had to make a fishing trip somewhere. Fortunately I had talked to Bob Baker, with the Department of Fish and Wildlife office in Colville, about fishing in the winter at Lake Roosevelt. He told me that the fishing for rainbow was terrific. That's all it took. I hit the road the very next day. It was a balmy 16 degrees when I left Leavenworth.

I took my time driving to Coulee Dam, and made several stops along the way. There wasn't any hurry, because I passed through Soap Lake and saw how hard the wind was blowing on Lake Lenore. I cringed at the thought of what the wind chill factor was. Just getting out of the car to get a carton of night crawlers or to fill my coffee cup was bracing. The wind was blowing pretty good on Banks Lake, too, but by the time I arrived at Spring Canyon, there was just a breeze. The sun was out and that always helps take the edge off the chill of the day.

I hadn't fished from the shore here before, so it took me a couple of passes to find a parking area near the beach. I hiked down the improved trail with my gear and then walked up the sand a ways to where it looked like there was a sharp slope under the water to put my bait in deep enough water for the trout to find it.

My two rods were rigged with slip sinkers. I tied some leaders the night before and on the end of three-foot, 8-pound test fluorocarbon leader, I had added size 1 octopus



circle hooks. The hope was by using large hooks I wouldn't hook any small fish. Since I was using bait I would be keeping the fish I caught, and after driving this far, little trout were not what I was after. Also, by using spinning gear it reduced the time I would spend casting, and avoid getting ice in my guides or even freezing the line on my reels. There were two, one ounce egg sinkers on one rod and just one on the other. The weight was to give me the ability to cast a good distance from shore. The hook was baited with a medium sized marshmallow and a single shrimp left over from sockeye season on one rod, and a marshmallow and a chunk of crawler on the other. I gave both baits a good

I made my casts and then walked up the beach to see if there was a steeper drop off than where I was set up, and looked back to my rods. One of them was skidding across the sand! I raced over, grabbed it before it hit water and reeled in a fat rainbow. It was 15 inches long and weighed probably a pound and a half. I rebaited and cast again.

I didn't have to wait long before I got another fish on the same rod. Reset it and then checked the other rod, and found the bait intact. Stripping off this bait, I put a fresh marshmallow and shrimp on this one. Casting this out I decided to check the bait on the other rod. It was gone. While baiting up, the other line went tight, but the bait was gone when checked. This is how it went for the next hour and a half. Running from one rod to the other I had five fat rainbow in my stringer in less than two hours. No one else was anywhere to be seen on the beach. I did exchange words with a troller that passed by, and later saw his catch. He had three rainbow, the largest being 3 pounds, 10 ounces, and one kokanee that weighed 2 1/2 pounds.

The real treat was filleting these trout and finding that the meat was a rich red color. We had some for dinner and they were outstanding. Lake Roosevelt is the place to go for some fast action on trout and some great eating when you get home. This was my first trip, but something I'll be doing as often as I can this winter.

The official word is out now, about the closure of some of the steelhead waters in our area. Somewhat different than expected, it leaves quite a bit of water open through the winter, and saves some other areas for potential reopening in the spring. The areas that are now closed include the main stem Columbia River from Rock Island Dam all the way up to Wells Dam. Also closing is the Wenatchee River and the Icicle River. The return of steelhead to these areas was much lower than anticipated, and by closing them now there is the possibility of being able to fish them perhaps in February or March of next year. These closures also mean no whitefish season on the Wenatchee River. The closures will not affect the steelhead and whitefish seasons on the Okanogan, Similkameen, Methow and main stem Columbia River from Wells Dam upstream to Chief Joseph Dam.

This cold weather sure has me thinking about how nice it is going to be in Belize in May. Wish I was there now! If you want to get in on this year's trip, go to my web site at fishingmagician.com and click on the Travel Button for the details. This is so much fun we just keep going back year after year, and I am sure you will enjoy it, too.

It's good to know that we have a lot of good steelhead water open to us, and some great trout fishing, too. The temperature just has to climb a couple more degrees and I will be out there after 'em.

Reach Dave at:
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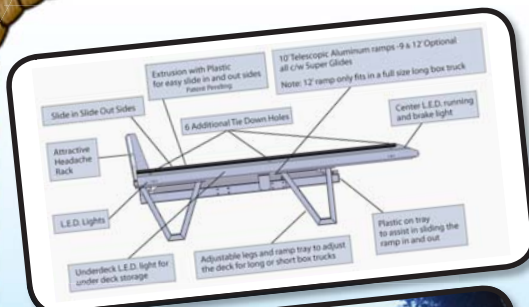
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