



Welcoming
Dave Graybill
To The
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The Fishin' Magician

The opening weekend for the lowland lakes is just a couple of weeks away, and anglers are already making plans to visit their favorite destination for the annual event. I love the opener. When my wife I and make our swing through the region we see families that have been going to the same location for decades. We have met families that have four generation along to enjoy their annual trip to Eastern Washington.

Weather was perfect for the opening of the lakes in the Columbia Basin on April 1st but participation was very low, mainly due to the fact it occurred on a Monday. Fishing was good at most of the lakes, though. North and South Teal and the Hampton lakes produced as expected, providing anglers with rainbow that ranged in size from 12 to 17 inches, with some to over 20 inches. The best success was seen at Dry Falls Lake, which saw very good participation. It was estimated that over 50 pontoons, u-boats and other craft were on the lake on the opener. Success was very good, too. The average catch was at least ten trout with some anglers catching twenty or more. Those fishing chromids did the best. The average size of the trout taken was 12 to 14 inches, with many in the 16-inch class.

Looking toward the big opening weekend at the end of the month two lakes near Dry Falls, Park and Blue lakes attract thousands of anglers. Of the two, Park Lake is expected to provide the best action for rainbow. Blue Lake could be off the pace due to the fact that perch populations are on the rise in the lake and there are now smallmouth bass in here. It appears that fry survival is not good.



There is a lot of good news for fans of fishing at Jameson Lake. The lake suffered from algae blooms for a couple of years and fishing was disappointing. This is one of the region's long-time favorites, and I have met families here that have been coming to Jameson for decades. I have seen four generations of fishing families on their annual opening weekend trip. The lake is in great shape now and not only has survival of fingerlings been very good, plants of bigger fish have been stepped up. Last fall there were 10,000 12-inch catchables placed in the lake, and they should be a solid 14 inches for the opener at the end of April. An additional 3,000 large catchables and 600 "jumbo" triploids will be in the lake just prior to the opener. There is plenty of good feed in Jameson again and fish are very fat and healthy. I am very happy to learn that Jameson Lake is back as one of the better trout lakes in the region. It is served by two resorts and has a large public camping area, so it accommodates very large numbers of anglers.

Families making plans for the annual opening of the lowland lakes at the end of the month should consider traveling to Okanogan County. Fishing this spring is expected to be very good on the many trout lakes in this region. All of the lakes are ice-free now so trout are already feeding and getting aggressive. Fish Lake, which is not far from Omak, should offer excellent fishing for rainbow of 10 to 12 inches. Limits should come easy here. Blue Lake, which is a quality lake in the Sinlehekin Valley, will be one of the best this year. It has both rainbow and brown trout and 12- to 16-inch fish are common, and there are good numbers of them to 18 inches at Blue. In the hills above Palmer Lake is Lake Chopaka. A long-time favorite of fly fishers, Chopaka has been terrific the past two seasons, and is expected to be great again this year. There are plenty of 16- to 18-inch rainbow in Chopaka and triploid rainbow were introduced to the lake three years ago and could be getting really big by now. Wanacut Lake, north of Tonasket is deep and cold, and produces rainbow of excellent table quality. Near here is Spectacle Lake, which is another popular trout lake that opened on the first of April.

Things look good this year for the opening of the popular lakes in the Wenatchee Heights. When the roads are passable to allow planting the fishing has been very good at Beehive Reservoir and Lilly and Clear lakes. Of the three Lilly has been the least favorite the past few years, but still gets a plant of rainbow. Beehive usually gets the largest number of planted fish. It would be a good idea to check with the

Forest Service to see if the road to these lakes has been open in time for planting and are clear for anglers to try them on the opening weekend.

Fly anglers will want to attend the Fly Fishing Rendezvous at Conconully on Saturday April 13th from 9 a.m. to 2:30. Bill Taylor will be there tying some of his best patterns for fishing North Central Washington and British Columbia lakes. There will be some other experts tying their favorite patterns, too. There will be some fly fishing lessons and hourly raffles. For more information contact the fly shop at the Big R Store in Omak. Call the store at 509-442-9840 and ask for Greg or Tom for details.

There is a new rule in place now pertaining to walleye on Lake Roosevelt, the lower Spokane River and the lower San Poil River. The daily limit on walleye has been raised to 16 fish per day, with no size restriction. Visit the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife web site for the specific boundaries for the new rule.

I won't be waiting for the opening weekend to do some trout fishing. There are many year-round lakes in the region that offer great fishing right now. I plan to get out and try out the new Kingfisher on them before the end of the month!

Reach Dave at:
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