

Dave Graybill

The Fishin' Magician

Nickel Ads

Holy cow, it's October! September sure flew by. It seems like fall used to be a slow time for fishing around here, but not any more. Summer run salmon fishing was hardly over before people were heading down to the Hanford Reach chasing fall salmon. There is still plenty of fall fishing down there ahead of us, and before we know it steelhead season will be open.

I was in Hooked on Toys in Wenatchee the other day and there was a fish from the Hanford Reach on ice in a cooler and it was as bright as a dollar. It must have been in a hurry to get here. The fish we were getting in the lower river were sure bright, and it is great to see some chromers being caught up here. There are still good numbers of kings coming over Bonneville Dam. Not as many as earlier in September and for the first time in about a month the count dropped to 10,000 in a day. Just 10,000; that's still a lot of fish! We have a long way to go to see the 1.2 million that was predicted. We'll just have to wait and see.

One of the things that I used to like to do is fish below Wells in September. There usually were some aggressive summer runs down there and an occasional fresh fall fish. I had a great excuse to go back and give it a try recently. Gary Feil had never caught a king in the Columbia River. That's good enough reason for me to go.

When we put in below the dam the water was so low my trailer was off the ramp. The wind wasn't blowing, but it was raining. It was very quiet. No other fishing boats, and except for a few fish rolling



near the ramp, very little activity. I had to drift down river a ways before I had enough current to make my divers work properly. Starting with some eggs recently cured, there were no takers. When we switched to sardine wrapped plugs, things took a turn for the better. The rods were working nicely as we drifted down stream, and turning around from doing something in the boat I noticed Gary's eyes get big. Sure enough the rod was bent solidly over and it was game on. It had taken a lot of line by the time the other rods got cleared, but we got the big unclipped male to the boat and released it. We had another one take the same plug on the next pass, but it spit the barbless hooks before we even got a look at it. We made a few more passes without any luck, and then called it a day. Mission accomplished, though. Gary caught his first king on the Columbia, and he saw what back trolling plugs and eggs was all about. It was a good day.

Now it's time to head for the Reach. I am getting

great reports on the fishing down there, and more and more fish are showing up every day. Before going to the Reach there is a trip to the Oregon coast that is an annual event. Richard Robinson has me and some other friends down every year to fish for kings and coho in the Nehalem River. This year Dennis Beich is going with me. Richard was on the tuna trip at Westport and invited Dennis to come down and the timing worked for both of us.

This time we may spend a day fishing the Tillamook River. This will be new to me and the reason we are going is that the crabbing has been slow in Nehalem. They are getting more big males out of Tillamook, so we might as well go there for a day, do some fishing and load up on crab. Richard has fished both of these rivers for decades so we'll do just fine. Also, joining us for dinner on Friday will be Dan Ross of Dan Ross Sport Fishing in Costa Rica. He has helped me get the best skippers available for our trip to Golfito in January. Ross has fished Costa Rica for 15 years, and he is very excited about me coming down with our group. He was very helpful in arranging the fishing and equipment and giving me some other information about what to do while there. If you want to learn more about our plans for January, visit my web site at FishingMagician.com and click on the Travel Page. Richard Robinson, who took the trip to Belize two years ago, is coming on this one, and so is Fred Lillian, who also was with us in Belize. It looks like a few others that were on our last trip to Belize are going as well.

I noticed that the steelhead numbers took a nice jump last week. When I asked about the season with the folks at the Department of Fish and Wildlife they thought we would get about 85 percent of what we got last year. With this recent spike in the numbers it looks like we may pass last year's final count. That would be a nice surprise. We had right at 15,000 over Priest Rapids last year and we're over that now.

I was disappointed in the steelhead fishing last year and didn't do much of it. I caught fish every time I went out but not like I'm used to. Hope things are different this year. Steelhead fishing is something that we all enjoy in the winter here. There were some other things I did last winter that just didn't make it on my calendar and fishing at Lake Roosevelt, for example, was a great way to spend some winter days.

Here's hoping there is a good report on fishing off the Oregon coast for you next week. There should be some good eggs to bring home for use below Priest Rapids at least. Boy it will be great to try them down there!

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