

Welcoming Dave Graybill To The Nickel Ads Classifieds The Fishin' Magician

Sockeye fishing on the Upper Columbia River is dominating the fishing scene here in Central Washington. An all-time record number of sockeye are making their way up stream, and although the counts at Bonneville Dam are starting to dwindle, they are coming over the upper river dams at as many as 20,000 per day. Excellent numbers of them are already in our area, but we still can expect a couple hundred thousand more fish to move up the Columbia on their way up the Okanogan River.

I fished the Brewster Pool recently, with my fishing buddy Rollie Schmitt from Lake Wenatchee, and learned some important things about when and how to catch sockeye in this part of the river. The first I would recommend to anglers who want to maximize their time on the water is to be on the fishing grounds early in the morning. We talked to a lot of anglers and the ones that were getting limit numbers of sockeye were trolling at first light. The action can be fast and furious the first few hours, but it gradually tapers off as the day brightens. We fished the afternoon one day and had very limited success. The following day we were on the water by 6:30 or so and were kicking ourselves for not being their earlier.

When you're on the water better have the right set up. I may be repeating myself here, but it is important to have the right gear. That means a size 0 chrome dodger, and I am using ones that have a cross-hatched, reflective inset.



Behind the dodger we had very good success with the Macks Lure Cha Cha Sockeye rig. This has a combination of a Smile Blade, a couple of beads, a squigger or small hoochie and two red hooks tied on the business end. If you can't find these off the shelf and need to make your own, you can buy small hoochie bodies separately and I would use size 1 red hooks. Leaders should be 15 to 18 inches in length, so the dodge imparts a good action to the bait. Leaders can be tied on heavy test line, too. It is not unusual to hook a king on this set up, and you want to have a chance at landing one if that happens. We also found it is very important to add a small, died coon shrimp on the lead hook, and give it a shot of Graybill's Guide Formula Salmon scent.

When fishing below the mouth of the Okanogan River, we had our best success trolling up stream and into the current. It is hard to gauge your speed when pushing against a varying current, but if I was reading point 0 9 on my Lowrance GPS unit I was in the ballpark. I would also recommend that you run your baits at 15 to 20 feet on the downriggers.

We spent most of our time trolling well below the mouth on the Highway 97 side of the channel below the Okanogan River. We would run up to the point and slide back down, but had better luck trolling up stream and although there are boats clear down to the bend in the channel, we started progressively higher. At one point Schmitt noticed quite a few fish rolling just off the shore. We were able to get within a short distance of the shore and still keep 30 feet of water under the boat. Passing through these rolling fish did put fish in the box, and I would watch for this activity. It will come and go as fish move through the pool. One last suggestion is to have a long-handled net along. Just like kokanee, these fish go crazy when they get near the boat and a long reach helps put more sockeye in the fish box.

Not only is the sockeye fishing tremendously good in the Brewster Pool, there are some nice kings being taken now, too. Everything is coming together for another great Budweiser-Lowrance King Salmon Derby in Brewster on August 3rd through the 5th. This is the biggest and

oldest salmon derby in our region, and not only has the reputation for good in fishing the first week of August most years, people have been coming to this one year after year just for the fun of it. The derby is very well organized. There will be well over \$20,000.00 in cash and prizes handed out at this one this year. If you haven't participated in the derby, this would be a great year to do it. Get all the details at brewstersalmonderby.com.

I hope you all enjoyed the seminar at Town Ford and I wanted to let you know about another seminar that is coming up in August at Bob Feil Boats and Motors. Mike Campbell is going to be at the store on Sunset Highway on Wednesday, August 22nd, starting at 6 p.m. Campbell will be bringing his boat, which is a traveling showcase of all the latest and greatest electronics available from Lowrance, and he will also doing a presentation and will be available for questions. We are very pleased that Campbell has been able to fit this visit to Wenatchee into his schedule, and I wouldn't miss this one.

While salmon fishing is getting most of the attention right now, I want to let anglers know that the smallmouth bass fishing on Banks Lake is the best I've seen in years. Not only can you catch bunches of them they are much larger than in past seasons. I can't wait to get back up there. It's tremendous fun!

Reach Dave at: www.FishingMagician.com or Fishboy@nwi.net

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