

# Dave Graybill

## The Fishin' Magician

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I was able to get in a couple of days of fishing this last week. One was a trip to Bridgeport with my wife Eileen for steelhead, and it was a wonderful day. I also spent a morning on Potholes Reservoir with Shane and Audre Magnuson and guide Jordan Osborn, of Upper Columbia Guide Services.

We put the boat on the water at the RV Park at Bridgeport at 10:30 and ran up to the point across the river. I set the Kingfisher 2025 up for a drift using the Minn Kota Ulterra electric motor. I paced my drift with the current and we began casting. About half way down, out of the corner of my eye, I saw Eileen set the hook. It didn't take her long to get her first fish of the season. We tried a couple more drifts and I got a nice triploid of about 17 inches, which are legal to keep this year. I was thinking of heading down to the Blow Hole, but Eileen thought we should try below the bridge. She was right. We got two steelhead and another triploid. One of the steelhead was a hatchery male that was 31 inches long. It was a real beauty. From there we did run down river and made a couple of passes at the Blow Hole. We only got one bite, and landed another 18-inch triploid. We decided to give the point another try before we called it a day, and it was sure worth it. I hooked one of the hottest steelhead I have ever had on my line. It ran 100 feet above the boat and jumped. Then it ran to the bank and almost beached itself. Then the fish turned back out into the river and jumped again. I thought I had lost it, but cranked like crazy, and the fish zoomed down to the boat. I could see it way down below,



twisting and shaking its head, and then it took another big jump and broke me off. Wow. What a fish and what a fight. It was a great way to end the day. We hooked five steelhead, landed four and three were hatchery fish. We also got three nice triploids. It was a great day.

I have heard that the steelhead fishing on the Methow and at Pateros has slowed down some. It makes sense. There was a lot of pressure on the fish in the Methow and they got scattered. The cooler and rainy weather should actually be a good thing for steelhead anglers, and I think the fishing will pick up in the next week. I am planning to run up to Wells Dam and see how the fishing is on the bar below the dam, and if I have time even fish off the rip rap above the dam.

On Saturday I had the pleasure of being picked up at my home by Shane and Audre Magnuson, of Upper Columbia Guide Service, and their guide

Jordan Osborn. With Jordan's boat in tow we headed for Potholes Reservoir. We were surprised to find heavy clouds instead of the clear skies that were forecast, but there was only a light wind. As we motored across the reservoir I noticed that there were a number of other boats out trying their luck for fall walleye. At one point I counted 25. Osborn put us over productive water, where the bottom was rolling dunes and our depth varied from 9 to 25 feet. It didn't take long for him to find fish. We put our first walleye in the boat just after 8 o'clock. Audre got her first ever walleye and got a big largemouth bass, too. We were putting walleye of 15 to 17 inches in the live well at a very good pace. By 10:30 we had fourteen. We got a few nice perch and some catfish while we were pulling in walleye, so we were busy the whole time. Osborn was running Slow Death Hook rigs that he had tied up himself. All had a pill of one color or another and he also had a Smile Blade and some beads on his rigs. Since Audre had dropped Shane's cell phone over the side, we needed to get back to Wenatchee in time get him a new one, and at about 11:30 we talked about heading in. We were just two fish short of three limits so figured we'd give it a little longer. I hooked up with a good fish and when it came to the surface I was sure I had the big fish of the day. Except—Shane had been fighting a fish as well. Keeping my fish in the net Osborn stood ready to scoop up Shane's fish. It was a monster! Both fish came on board in the same net, and Osborn figured he had close to 12 or 13 pounds of walleye in one scoop. I got beat for the big fish of the

day big time. Shane's fish stretched the tape to 28 inches and it was fat and heavy. We were done by noon, with three limits of walleye. Osborn really showed us what fall walleye fishing at Potholes can be like. What fun!

Pateros is Celebrating Steelhead Season on Thursday, November 19th with a night of free seminars, great food and the chance to win prizes that can be used in the community while you are there to fish. Everyone is gathering at the Central Building at 5 p.m. for an optional dinner of steak chili or a half smoked chicken, corn bread, pasta salad, mashed potatoes and gravy and veggies—all for \$14.00. At 6 p.m. the seminars will begin. The first speaker will be Jeff Brazda, who has been a fly fishing guide on the Methow River for over 20 years. He will show you his favorite techniques for taking steelhead. Next up will be Rick Graybill, a former guide and expert on fishing with a bobber and jig on the main stem Columbia River. He will share his secrets for taking fish from Wells Dam to Chief Joseph. Once again Shane Magnuson will show you how to take steelhead with different methods on the smaller rivers in the region. He will talk about fishing Corkies to pulling plugs.

I have heard some good things about the steelhead fishing from the bank both above and below Wells Dam. I think my wife and I are going to give it a try. I'll let you know how we do.

Reach Dave at:  
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