

# Dave Graybill

## The Fishin' Magician

Nickel Ads  
Classifieds

I could see the snow and cold weather coming so I got a couple of steelhead fishing trips in last week. I was able to test the waters on the upper Columbia River from Wells Dam to Bridgeport. Steelhead were caught everywhere I went, but some areas were better than others.

Some one told me that the steelhead fishing at Wells Dam was fantastic, so I called my fishing buddy Rollie Schmitten and we ran up there last Monday. We drifted the bar with bobbers and jigs, and didn't even get a bite. We ran over to the eddy on the far side and tried bobbers and jigs over there and I had a very light bite. This was surprising. Although Wells Dam is usually at its best later in the season I felt that we should have got a couple fish here. I decided to switch to plugs and run those down the bar and around the corner. Our Mag Lip 3.5s were working great, and I was ready to give up on Wells altogether, when the rod on Schmitten's side folded over. It turned out to be a very healthy wild fish of 8 or 9 pounds that we released. We ran our gear through this spot a couple more times but apparently this was the only biter.

We pulled the boat out of the water and headed for Pateros. I had good fishing there a week or so ago and we still had time to give the Rocks and the Point a pass or two. We saw a boat on the Rocks as we approached town and when we headed down to the Point they saw us coming and shot across the river. We turned over to the Rocks and I set up a drift. We had good current



but the top end produced no strikes. As we got to the bottom of the hole though Rollie's bobber went down and after a good fight he got a very nice wild fish to the boat. We made another drift through here without a take and saw the boat that was fishing the Point leave. We ran over there and on our second pass Schmitten hooked and landed a very nice hatchery fish of about 7 pounds. It showed us that even if another boat was working the water you want to fish you may still find a biter that passed on whatever they were offering.

This was a good afternoon of steelhead fishing to break in Schmitten's new rod. We are eager to get out again and try some other water that has proven to hold fish for us in past seasons.

On Wednesday of last week I had promised Gary Feil, of Bob Feil Boats and Motors, to take him out on the Columbia and try to get him his first steelhead. He was very excited. He had heard my stories of how great these fish are to catch and was ready to go. I called

Shane Magnuson on the off chance that he was free for the day, and it turned out that he could come, too. We threw our gear in the Smoker Craft and headed for Bridgeport.

There was good current below Chief Joseph Dam so we started at the point below the bridge. I had Feil make a cast with one of the steelhead rods and explained how to mend his line and keep a straight line to his bobber. He listened and on our first pass his bobber went down and he got his first steelhead to the net, and it was a keeper! We celebrated and took some photos and went back to work. The point produced two more fish for us and then we ran up river above the dam and tried along the island. I got a triploid there, and we continued our drift along the rock below the bridge, which didn't produce anything. We ran down river and tried some other spots without success. Heck, it was early, so we pulled the boat and drove back down to Pateros. Magnuson was sure that we would find some fish at the Rocks.

There was one other boat working this area, and when we arrived and we saw them land a fish. We set up our drift and wouldn't you know it, Feil got another steelhead here. When we finished the day Feil had recorded his first limit of steelhead. He has already ordered some new gear to get his own steelhead fishing set up. He has had a good year. He got his first perch, first walleye, and first king salmon and now he can cross steelhead off the list of fish he has caught here in Central Washington.

I wanted to let everyone know that we have just posted a new program on the Fishing TV Show. It is dedicated to fishing plugs, and also shows how to rig them and a special trick using Hevi-Beads. You can view the show by going to my web site at FishingMagician.com and click on the Fishing TV button on the Home Page.

It snowed here in Leavenworth again, and it got cold. It made me think of our trip to sunny Costa Rica, planned for January of next year. If you would like to join us we will be fishing for marlin, sailfish, roosterfish and other species and a tour of one of the national parks out of Golfito. To learn all about it contact my travel partners at Journey Travel at 509-662-7775. This going to be a good one!

I got word that repairs have progressed to the point that the water level above Wanapum Dam is going to be gradually raised. Grant County PUD is on track to have everything done by first quarter of next year, and hopes to have their fish ladders to resume normal operation and to open recreational facilities by spring.

It's going to be cold all week, but that doesn't mean there isn't some good fishing available. I may try Rocky Ford Creek with my fly rod. I may try Lake Roosevelt from shore, or Rufus Woods. There are a lot of good options all winter long and I am eager to get out and try them!

Reach Dave at:  
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