

# The Fishin' Magician

Welcoming  
**Dave Graybill**  
To The  
**Nickel Ads**  
*Classifieds*

Summer fishing is in high gear here in Central Washington, with sockeye fishing still big news in the region. Anglers are cashing in on the bumper crop of sockeye at Wells Dam and off the mouth of the Okanogan River near Brewster, and there was a short, but productive season on Lake Wenatchee. The abundance of sockeye in the Columbia River, coupled with a six-fish limit probably contributed to the light turn out for the season opening on Lake Wenatchee. Less than 100 boats were counted on the water this past Sunday. Those who did make it out were rewarded with limit or near-limit catches of 2- to 4-pound sockeye.

I had a great opening day, serving as deck hand aboard the boat of Rollie Schmitt of Lake Wenatchee. We ferried his family members to the fishing grounds, and his two grandsons caught their first salmon! A great sockeye fishing memory.

Boating a couple of kings and then finishing out the day with sockeye is the pattern most anglers are following at Brewster, according to Shane Magnuson, Upper Columbia Guide Services. "It has been really fun for the people that come here to fish. I have been sticking with Brewster and keeping everyone happy," he said. Magnuson also mentioned that the tribal seine net is going to be given a rest this week, which should boost the number of kings taken, and very good news for those who plan to participate in the 5th Annual Budweiser-Lowrance King Salmon Derby, sponsored by the Brewster Chamber of Commerce this weekend. The number of summer-run kings that have passed over Wells Dam and are "hovering" off the mouth of the Okanogan ranges from between 500 and over 1,000 per day, so fishing should

be great for derby participants. Registrations will be accepted until 9 p.m. on Thursday, August 5th.

I mentioned last week that the Central Washington Bass Club was holding one of their club tournaments at Desert Aire, on the stretch of the Columbia between Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dams. I got a chance to pre-fish here with Dave and Betty Hendergart. The one-day tournament was won by Mike Browne, with a total weight of 13 ½ pounds. Browne is also a member of the Potholes Bass Club, and fishes a tournament with this club every year. His knowledge of this part of the Columbia and the habits of the smallmouth here paid off. He also got big fish for the tournament, with a smallmouth weighing 3 ½ pounds. "One of the things that surprised many of us about the smallmouth in this stretch of the river, is that they are very spooky," said Hendergart. "There isn't a lot of pressure on the fish here, and you'd think that they would be curious to see an angler. If you get close enough to see them, they take off and they're gone."

Good news for fans of fly fishing on the small streams and rivers in our region. The water levels have dropped enough to allow wading in the Icicle and Entiat rivers. The water is still higher than normal for this time of year, and caution is advised, but fishing one side or the other of the Icicle is possible. I got a chance to try the Icicle one evening last week and the fishing was excellent. I stopped after releasing 30 rainbow. I also released a few cutthroat in my evenings fishing. Most of the trout were 7 to 9 inches, with a good number of them pushing 11 inches. I had picked a particularly tough stretch of the Icicle to

wade, and getting across wasn't easy. Fishing should be good through the month of August and well into September on the Icicle and the Entiat. Lower water makes it easier for anglers to wade these streams, and trout concentrate into deeper runs and pools.

The perch are starting to bite at Fish Lake, and this is something that many anglers look forward to every year. The height of summer perch action makes for family fun every year. I remember getting in on this when I was very young. My Dad would fill a rental boat with all of us kids, and we didn't even use a rod. He would hand us a reel, strip enough line out to reach bottom, and have us bring in the perch hand over hand! I think the thought of us youngsters all trying to cast in a small boat was just too much for him to bear. It worked just fine, though, and we would fill gunny sacks with fat perch.

If you want to get a mess of perch, you have to plan ahead. The perch are finicky, and you had better have periwinkles for bait. You can fish with worms, but periwinkles will out-fish worms ten to one. You need to stop on the Wenatchee River and gather a bunch these pebble-and-needle covered, rock clinging insects to really do well with the perch at Fish Lake.

You may have to look around a bit and spot schools of perch. I have a marker buoy in the boat and cruise around until my depth finder lights up with a nice big patch of fish. I toss the marker over the side and then go back and toss out a bait. If I hook up immediately I will then put out an anchor, both from the bow and from the stern. This will help keep me on the fish. If they move and the bite falls off, you



have to move. No point in sitting there waiting for them to come back. You have to pull the anchors and go look for more fish.

The hot weather of summer has settled into our region, so be sure to pack a lot of water, don't forget the sunscreen, a good hat and get out there and enjoy it!

Reach Dave at:  
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