

Dave Graybill

The Fishin' Magician

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While salmon fishing on the Columbia River from the Gorge to the Hanford Reach has been stealing the show, there are still other opportunities for anglers to try here in Eastern Washington. Walleye fishing continues to be excellent in some locations and fall trout fishing prospects are increasing.

More and more salmon anglers are traveling to the lower river to fish for fall up river brights in the Gorge. These fish are on the move, and heading primarily for the hatchery below Priest Rapids Dam. Intercepting these migrating fish is a booming activity, with anglers fishing off the mouth of some of the tributary rivers in the lower Columbia. Big crowds of boats can be seen near the White Salmon, the Klickitat and Deschutes River mouths. A very popular method for taking these fish is "hover fishing" and anglers that fish the upper river are showing how effective trolling with Super Baits can be. Fish taken down here are in great shape, too. Very soon the attention of lower river anglers will be shifting to coho as they begin to appear in good numbers in this region. The annual big surge of coho has yet to appear, but will show up soon.

The seasonal pilgrimage of salmon fishermen to the Hanford Reach is well underway, and boats can be seen scattered from the old Ferry Landing (White Bluffs) to Priest Rapids Dam. Over 800,000 up river brights have passed over Bonneville Dam and continue to come at a rate of over 10,000 a day. Anglers have been fishing the Reach for a few weeks now, but the biggest effort will occur now through the 22nd of October, when the salmon season ends on this stretch of the Columbia. One of the reasons that fall fishing in the Reach is so popular is that anglers can keep three adult fish per day

and these fall fish can be big. Salmon of 30 pounds are not unusual and there are fish of 40 pounds and more are taken every year. There was a great seminar on how to fish for fall salmon at Town Ford last week, presented by Rick Graybill. Good news for those who missed the seminar is that there is a booklet on the tackle, techniques and even maps of where to fish the Reach, written by Graybill, available at Hooked on Toys in Wenatchee. They can be picked up at the store or ordered on line through www.hookedontoy.com.

Every year now there is a three-day event conducted through a partnership with Grant County PUD, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Tri-Cities Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA). Called the King of the Reach Salmon Derby, the aim of the event is to live capture natural origin fall-run kings in the Hanford Reach to be delivered to the hatchery. The need to improve the number of natural origin that are returned to the hatchery

inspired Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist Paul Hoffarth to come up with an idea of a way to partner with Grant County PUD and the CCA to work together to do just that. The event will take place on October 30th and November 1st.

Anglers that pay the \$25.00 entry fee get their CCA membership renewed, a \$25.00 value), and receive a goody bag worth at least that much as well. They are treated to a hot lunch and dinner on shore and enjoy the fellowship of the group all weekend. They can also buy a raffle ticket for a prize package valued at over \$1,200.00. Grant County PUD is a major contributor to the event, providing trucks, people and prizes, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife also provides staff. To learn more about the event you can visit the derby web site at www.cca.washington.org/kingofthereach.

I have never had better luck catching walleye on Banks Lake than this year, and I made another trip there last week. Brian Nielson, of BJ's Guide Service, and I took my boat to Banks last Saturday. I had been having terrific success trolling crank baits below Rosebush, but the walleye had moved out of there. Nielson caught a huge smallmouth and one small walleye in this spot, but we moved up lake after a short time. We tried a couple of spots near Steamboat and then headed over to Barker Canyon. Finally we were into fish. We were catching fish but as many weeds in the south side of Barker and had much better luck when we moved to the middle of the Barker Flats area of Banks. There were several other boats working this spot, too. We concentrated on water of 25 to 30 feet deep and had lots of fish on the screen. We got a bunch of the cookie cutter 13- to 14-

inch walleye and I got one that was 24 inches. We got most of our fish on Macks Lure Spin Drift Slow Death rigs with gold Smile Blades or worm harnesses with a gold blade. This is just one reservoir that is producing walleye in the region. Potholes Reservoir continues to produce very good numbers of walleye on most days, and the opportunity of catching fish over 20 inches is very good here. Lake Roosevelt is belting out its usual high numbers of walleye and I have had reports of good walleye fishing at Billy Clapp.

As the water temperatures cool in the fall the trout bite improves on many of the lakes that are open year-round. One of the more popular fall lakes in the region is Jameson Lake. This lake closes in July and then re-opens to trout fishing for the month of October every year. Trout that were planted last fall and have avoided anglers through the summer have grown to very respectable size.

I want to remind anglers that there are several very informative videos available on everything from salmon fishing in the Hanford Reach to walleye fishing in the fall on Potholes Reservoir and other fall fisheries available on the Fishing TV Page of my web site. Just log onto FishingMagician.com and go to the Fishing TV Page. Look for the shows listed on the page or go to Archives and search for the shows you want to watch.

There are so many great fishing opportunities this fall I am not sure which ones to try. I am going to try one or two and let you know how I do!

Reach Dave at:
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or Fishboy@nwi.net

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