

Welcoming Dave Graybill To The Nickel Ads Classifieds

The Fishin' Magician

I just released my latest E-Letter. There are a couple of feature stories in this issue. One is on smallmouth bass fishing at Banks Lake and the other is on kokanee fishing at Lake Chelan. There is other information in the letter as well. It's free and it's easy to sign up. Just click on the E-Letter button on the Home Page of my web site.

Well we celebrated the first day of summer, and we are getting summer weather, some days. We had the hardest rain I've seen in quite a while, and then we'll get a very warm day. This has made fishing on the Icicle River a wild ride this year. There just doesn't seem to be any rhyme or reason to why the fish go on the bite. You can only hope you're on the river when the bite comes on.

They sure weren't biting when I went. I made my first drift on the Icicle last week. It has been hard to get excited about it. It has been high and muddy most of the time. When Kevin Winters, of Leavenworth, called me and invited me to come along I jumped at the chance. It seemed to me that there just had to be fish in the river by now. If they were there they sure weren't interested in what we were offering. In fact they weren't interested in what most were offering that day.

Jerrold Gibbons, Okanogan Valley Guide Service, was making his last float of the season with his Dad Tom, and he got the only fish that morning. Most everyone else



didn't even get a bite. Gibbons said this has been a weird year. Last week he got 23 fish in five days. Conditions were the same this week, but the bite sure wasn't. I checked in later in the day with Shane Magnuson, Upper Columbia Guide Service, and he got a fish. He didn't put in until 11:00. At least the folks that put in early in the morning missed the torrential rain storm that hit later.

The good news is that there are a lot of fish on the way. The water temperature in the Icicle is still running at just 42 degrees. That's chilly for late June. The water temperature in the Wenatchee is eight degrees warmer. Only 2,300 fish have reached the hatchery, and the tribal fishery has only claimed around 1,200 fish so far. Sport anglers have taken less than 200 so far.

By all accounts only half the run has hit the Icicle. When the water temperature in the Icicle climbs a few degrees the fishing could get wild as fish pour into the river. So don't give up on the Icicle yet. The best action of the season may be yet to come.

The summer run are on the way, and the season opens on Sunday, July 1st. There are about 50,000 summer runs over Bonneville Dam, and about 4,000 over Priest Rapids. That's not far off from what we had last year at this time. There was a big jump in fish in early June last year that we haven't seen this season, but fish are keeping pace with the ten-year average. Sockeye numbers are starting to take off. There was one day last week that saw over 26,000 sockeye come over Bonneville Dam. They are going to keep on coming, too. Over 460,000 are expected to return to the Columbia River this year.

Once again the place to be on the opener will be below Wanapum Dam. For many years now a huge crowd of anglers have been greeting each year's run of summer salmon right below Wanapum Dam when the season opens. It makes even more sense this year. The fish are coming but really good numbers of them probably won't be in Wenatchee until the big derby on July 13th through the 15th. Good timing for this one. If you haven't got your tickets yet, better log onto www.wenatcheesalmonderby.com and get all the details.

If you plan on fishing below Wanapum and haven't before there are a couple of things you should know before heading down there. First of all there will be a huge number of boats lined up to launch very early in the morning. Plan on getting in line at 4 a.m. You had better be good at backing a trailer, too. There is a tight barrier down to the water, barely wide enough to accommodate one boat. Then you beach your boat and wait for the guy that parked the truck and trailer. Better be quick, there is a rush to get on the water, and the water will be rough. There is a lot of water being spilled again this year and that makes for some big waves in the bay where the fishing takes place. If there is any wind the conditions will be even more difficult for boat handling. Better stay on top of things in this crowd. Everyone is trying to troll and keep their boats on track and keep an eye on other boats at the same time. It can get hairy. It's no surprise that so many anglers turn up here, though. This is the best place to be when the summer run season opens on July 1st.

I plan to get up to Chelan before I make my first trip to Wanapum and I will probably just head out from Mill Bay. There were plenty of fish there last time. I'll let you know how I do at Chelan next week.

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

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