

Welcoming **Dave Graybill** To The **Nickel Ads** **The Fishin' Magician**

Boy, February just flew by. Not fast enough for most anglers here in Central Washington, though. Spring fever is running rampant and most people are ready for some spring weather and the early-season that comes with it. Although there was a big crowd of anglers on the ice at Fish Lake, near Lake Wenatchee, last weekend, fishermen are hoping that the ice will disappear on the lakes that are open year-round and those that open on March 1st.

There is quite a list of lakes opening on March 1st, but the two that will draw the most interest this year will be Burke and Quincy lakes in the Quincy Wildlife Refuge, off Whitetrail Road. These two lakes are always popular on this early opener, but this year is something special. Quincy Valley Tourism has come up with a terrific idea to draw attention to their area. They are holding a Trout Derby on Saturday, March 5th, and three rainbow will be planted in these two lakes with a total value of \$5,000.00 to the lucky anglers that catch them. There are some other fun things planned for that Saturday, so I would suggest that you arrive at the lakes early to get a spot on the bank. If the lakes are more than 50 percent covered with ice the event will be postponed until Saturday April 2nd, so as many anglers as possible get a chance to catch one of the prized fish. To get all the details and even a registration form, log onto quincyvalley.org. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and you'll see an ad that you can click-through to the information.

Another lake that gets attention in the Quincy Wildlife Area when they open on March 1st is Dusty Lake. There is a trail down to a bench where the lake sits against a high basalt cliff. The joke is



that the hike is one mile down and three up. It does get steep toward the top, but many carry a float tube or pontoon boat to Dusty. The lake is planted with rainbow, browns and even tiger trout. Dusty is a selective gear (no bait, single barbless hooks) lake and is primarily visited by fly anglers. There is a one fish catch limit on the lake.

Further south, and just across Highway I-90 are a couple of other lakes that attract very good crowds and produce good catches of rainbow on this early opener. Martha Lake, which is just east of the town of George, is a real trout factory. It is always planted with plenty of rainbow, and there are a surprising number of holdover trout in the 20-inch class taken. Martha is a long, narrow lake and offers very good shore access.

To the west of George are the Caliche lakes. These are small lakes and although there are three (upper, lower and west) lakes listed in the regulations booklet, Upper Caliche is the largest and offers the best trout fishing. Limit numbers of rainbow are taken from this lake. There is good bank access and a rough boat launch next to the parking area.

Even further south in the Crab Creek Wildlife Area, and near the town of Beverly there are three lakes that are a big draw for fly fishers: Lenice, Nunnally and Merry. These are quality, selective gear lakes.

Lenice is always the most productive and commonly produces trout over 20 inches. The lakes are planted with rainbow, brown trout and tiger trout. Anglers are allowed to keep one fish a day from these lakes. A short hike is required to reach them from the parking area.

North of the town of Soap Lake, is another lake that opens on March 1st, but only for catch-and-release fishing. Lenore is a selective gear lake and all fish caught must be released from March 1st through May 31st. After June 1st anglers may keep one fish. This lake is inhabited with Lahontan cutthroat trout and they can get quite large. I know that many fish over 25 inches are taken every year, and I heard of a couple just over 30 inches were

caught last season. The early season is very popular with fly anglers and the primary fishing areas are at the very top and bottom ends of the lake. There are some restricted areas detailed in the fishing regulations and if you haven't fished here it would be a good idea to take a look at them.

I usually get a forecast, which includes a planting report for the lakes that open on March 1st, and I will share that with you next week. I will also get a detailed report on the success rates right after the lakes open, and I will give you the high points of that report, too.

You would think with all the good fishing coming up on these lakes that people would have given up on ice fishing. Spring fishing is just too close at hand. Well, I made a run up to Fish Lake on Saturday last weekend and found the ice crowded with folks drilling holes through the ice. It was a perfect day for it. It was a clear, sunny day with no wind at all. They just wanted to get another taste of winter fishing.

I'm not ready to call it quits on the steelhead season. I plan to get out on the upper Columbia this week and drift some bobbers. I want to get a few days on the Wenatchee and Methow rivers, too!

Reach Dave at:
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 or Fishboy@nwi.net

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