

Dave Graybill

The Fishin' Magician

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I have been talking about the great run of fall Chinook coming up the Columbia River, and I made a couple of trips to the Hanford Reach to see if there are any in our area yet. Well, they are here and there are lots of them. I caught fish both above and below the Vernita Bridge. So many fish are here that the limit has been raised to three adults per day, wild or not.

I had my brother Rick Graybill give the seminar at Town Ford last week and he wanted to display some fish at Hooked on Toys and at the dealership that night. We launched above the Vernita Bridge and ran up river a ways. We hadn't been fishing long, when his rod folded over. We soon realized that what we had hooked wasn't a king but a large sturgeon. It jumped once and we saw that it was probably ten feet long. We finally broke it off so we could get back to fishing.

We weren't seeing many fish in the screen, so Rick decided to run to one of his favorite spot below the dam. He had us set up with jet divers and eggs and when we made our first drift he was convinced that this was the method to use. We got hits or fish on five drifts. We were one short of a limit by 11:30. It was up to me to land the last fish, and of course that was going to take a while. We tried a hole even closer to the dam and I hooked a nice fish, but lost it right next to the boat. We moved back down to the original hole and got the last fish. It was now 12:40. We would have been home a lot earlier if I hadn't lost that fish. The only one we lost all day. The kings ranged in size from 10 to 16 pounds, and all but one was full of eggs. All of them were in great shape and one in particular was extremely bright.



Rick provided a great seminar, and I wanted to thank Town Ford for giving all of us anglers a place to get together.

On Thursday Eric Granstrom and I went back down to Vernita. This time we had the camera gear along and jumped aboard with Shane Magnuson, Upper Columbia Guide Service, and three other anglers. We ran down river below the Vernita Bridge, and Magnuson ran out some Mag Lip and Haw Nose Flat fish, wrapped with sardine. We made two drifts without any action, and that was enough for Shane to change tactics.

He switched our gear to jet divers and eggs, and then ran a little further down stream and made our first drift. We picked up two fish right away, but then the action slowed. We had noticed quite a few fish rolling across the river

from us, so we moved over there. It turned out to be a great move. We started getting fish on every drift. They would grab the eggs and head downstream with the reel screaming. It was a blast. The fish box filled fast. By one o'clock we had three jacks and 13 big kings and decided to head for the launch. There was a lot of fish to clean, and Shane had promised to do a segment on how to cure eggs for the new "How To and What's New" TV Show.

If you missed the seminar last Wednesday, you missed learning the details about the techniques that work to catch kings in the Hanford Reach. You can always talk to Rick Graybill at Hooked on Toys in Wenatchee and he will be happy to help you get set up properly. If you spend a day with Shane Magnuson on the water, you'll save time and money by learning how he catches fish. It's a great short cut to fishing success and you'll come home with fish in your cooler, too. One thing I know that they will tell you when you are jet planning eggs, and that is when you get a hit to leave the rod on the holder! Don't pick up the rod until they reel is screaming and the fish is hooked.

The numbers of fall salmon coming over Bonneville Dam has slowed down, but they are still coming. We have never seen this number of fall salmon in the history of record keeping. The bag limit has been raised to three fish below Priest Rapids. The bag limit is now two adults, wild or not from Wanapum to Rock Island Dam. It wouldn't

surprise me to see a change in the fishing regulations for fall salmon to change from Rock Island dam to further up stream as more fish move up the Columbia. To learn about the current rules and to check on changes always go to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife web site. Rule changes and other announcements can be found right on the Home Page of this site.

I have also received word about the steelhead season for the upper Columbia, above Priest Rapids Dam. There are already about 12,000 steelhead that have come over Priest Rapids, and they expect the total to reach somewhere between 12 and 15 thousand fish this year. It has been reported that the season on the main stem Columbia and the tributaries, including the Wenatchee, Methow and Okanogan will open on October 16th. The data collected by fish checkers will be evaluated at the end of November and then we'll see if the season will be extended or will end at that time.

I am off to the Oregon coast for an annual fishing trip for Chinook and coho on the Nehalem River. The weather could be rough on this trip, but the lure of fresh ocean fish is just too great. When I get back, you can bet I will be making some trips to the Hanford Reach. I'll try to fish down there as much as I can until steelhead season opens!

Reach Dave at:
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