

## Spring 2010 Steelhead Trip

Five hard days - 9 fish landed out of 18 hookups. The percentages were good, but the number of hook ups were low. This was a result of very few fish in the section of river that I fished. I was told by several fishermen that the upper section of the river had lots of fish, but it also had lots of fishermen. I don't travel that far for combat fishing. I would much rather have the space and water to fish and only get a few hook ups than fight fishermen for that space. The largest fish I had on and landed was a hen about 30 inches. A drop back on her way to the lake to feed and rest after a hard journey up the river and working the spawning gravel to deposit her eggs.



This was a drop back hen. She had already laid her eggs and was on her way back to lake Michigan.



My good friend Barry landed this beautifully colored, 30 inch, double red striped, buck the same day that I landed my hen. Barry is an excellent fisherman and knows this section as well as and better than most guys that fish here. I am fortunate to have met him and to have him as a fishing partner. We were 5 for 7 the first day, I was 2 for 5 the second day, we were 5 for 6 the third day, I was 2 for 5 the fourth day and 1 for 1 on Friday.



©Nice view from the hill top



©

To give you an idea of the river we fish, it is about the same size as the upper Meramec River by Cardiac Hill. Average is about 75 feet wide. It is full of log jams and buckets. If you are wading you need to be very careful about stepping into one of these drop offs. You can go from knee deep to chin deep with one step. The log jams are mostly a result of the stream bank sliding into the river and carrying the trees with them. Great places for the steelhead to hold up and great places for them to break off.

The river is a beautiful stream with clear water most of the time. The River level does not change much. When it gets high it may go up 3 feet. When our streams get high they go up 10 feet plus. The river bottom, and the river banks are primarily sand. The key to finding steelhead is finding the gravel and the key to catching steelhead is fishing below the gravel. Unfortunately too many fishermen target the spawning fish and as a result disrupt the reproduction process. One of the methods used by fly fishermen is to swing weighted flies, attached to a leader with an ounce of lead, through the redd, resulting in foul hooked fish. That much weight isn't made for a fly rod and defeats the purpose of a fly rod... in my opinion it isn't fly fishing. They would be much better off using a spinning rod with that kind of weight. Swinging streamers in front of an aggressive male is a good way for fly fishermen to produce a hard strike. IN FRONT of the redd not through the redd should be the target for the streamer.



© This is a gravel bed with a deep hole just below-- A Perfect Location to find feeders



©

Late evening hen with some excellent silver colors.



©

A beautiful River, but there are some heavily used fishermen paths that run up and down the stream that deter from the natural beauty.

Unfortunately there are some fishermen that leave behind evidence of their visit. I always picked up what I could, at the end of the day, on my way to the truck.