

Big Chromes

Fishing for Steelhead, is a blast. They are powerful, fast and acrobatic, fresh run steelhead are hard to beat for a freshwater sporting fish. My fall trip to the waters of my choice for steelhead fishing was excellent for size but only average for hook ups. I hooked up 37 times and landed 19 in five long days of fishing. Barry, my fishing partner up there, hooked up 38 times and landed 21. The difference between my fish and Barry's fish was size. While he was hooking mostly 6-7 pounders I was getting mostly 9-11 pounders. Barry landed a total of 5 double digit chromes and I had 8. Barry did have the biggest fish of the trip and his largest to date. On the fourth day and our second day floating he had a 15 pound chunk that got a big WOW out of both of our mouths when it jumped 4 feet out of the water. My largest fish of the trip was a long 13 pounder. We thought it weighed more when we landed it because of its length. It never did jump, but Barry told me that they don't jump much when the water is cold. Water surface temperature was a cool 42 degrees the first day and the second day. The third day the temperatures got up to the 50s and warmed surface temps up to the mid 40s. The fourth day it started raining and fresh fish started showing up. By the 5th day the water temperature was up to 50 with the run off from the all night rain and the CFS went up 140 overnight. On the 5th day, with all the fresh water coming into the river we saw fresh fish, out of the lake, moving past us all day long on their way up river. We were fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time and managed to hook up 21 times in one hole without moving.



Prior to the warmer temperatures and the heavy rain we were not doing too well with our numbers. The river was low, cold and very clear. We were using 6lb tippet because of the water clarity and the bright sunny days. The fish were not actively feeding so perfect presentations were necessary. We managed 5 out of 19 the first day including my 13 pounder. It's hard to handle steelhead on 6 lb tippet. The second day we were 4 for 6, a good ratio but low hookups. The Third day we were 4 for 8 including an 11 pounder, which is still a good ratio. The fourth day it was slow until the early afternoon when it started raining. Our numbers went up to 8 for 14 and we managed two big

chromes. The fifth day, as noted above, was exceptional with hookups, landings and size. We hiked up and down the river the first day and fifth day. We took the drift boat out and floated for 3 days.

As you can see from the photos we had a mixture of bright chromed steelhead and some that had been in the river system long enough to start changing colors to look more like river rainbows than the bright chrome lake colored steelhead



