

Steelhead Trip 2020

My annual steelhead trip was very good this year as far as size goes. The average size in the net was about 10 lbs. My fishing buddy in Michigan and I had several in the 12 to 13 pound range. We didn't land any monsters. We had our hands full with the low teens much less the upper teens. The smaller ones this year were 7-9. Normally the smaller ones are about 5 to 6 pounds. In past years we caught some that were 2-3 pounds called "skippers" because they jump like crazy. This year we only hooked one skipper.



This is my Michigan fishing buddy Barry with a nice female steelhead about 13lbs

All the fish were fresh chrome colored and full of energy. They all made knuckle busting runs and several jumps. The warmer water along with log jams and the downed timber made it difficult to land them. Steelhead have a knack of heading for cover when hooked. The entire stream has dead Ash trees along the banks that have fallen in the river and log jams from land slides on the high banks.

We usually use 8 pound tippet and sometimes 6 when the water is very low and extra clear. This year we went up to 10 pound for a little extra leverage and it helped that the water was off color.

We put 23 out of 64 in the net between the two of us which was our lowest landing percentage ever in the 14 years we have fished together. Number wise we

have had some tremendous years with over a hundred hook ups for the week, but that has fallen off for the past half dozen years or so.



late fall colors... note the dead trees on the right bank and the dead tree in the water down stream.

The key for good migratory fishing is to be there when the run is going strong and the weather is overcast or rain, there is color in the water, but not muddy and the river up a bit.... this year we hit it perfect. I have no idea how many we saw going past the boat or pushing them out of holes we went over. Some stretches would have a hundred per mile then there would be stretches of the river that had very few for a mile or so. The pods seemed to stay together as they made their way up stream... on the fourth day it turned sunny so we were walking the banks looking for fish when we found 8 that we could see stacked together under a log jam... it was an impossible place to fish from both sides of the stream.

This winter will be a great opportunity to land a Steelhead of a lifetime when the water turns cold their metabolism slows and the fight is subdued. I'm sure there will be several over 20 pounds caught.