

REEL LIFE

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EARLY ICE FISHING TACTICS

PHOTO BY ALEX PRINGLE

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EDITOR'S CORNER:

Winter fishing in the Pacific Northwest means Steelhead time. In year's past we had bountiful opportunities and locations to fish. Sadly, with a multitude of factors, our once abundant fisheries are a thing of the past. That said, you still have a chance at hooking into these amazing fish. Jason Brooks discusses the state of steelheading for the Pacific Northwest. Randy Castello knows a thing or two about catching kokanee and he shares his knowledge of making kokanee lures with readers this month. Britton Ransford and John Kruse focus on hard water fishing with excellent info on ice fishing. As for me, we are experiencing our first "cold" weather in Montana, a balmy minus 25. I'm guessing the ice should be safe... more articles await you in this month's issue. Enjoy, and good luck fishing, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all!





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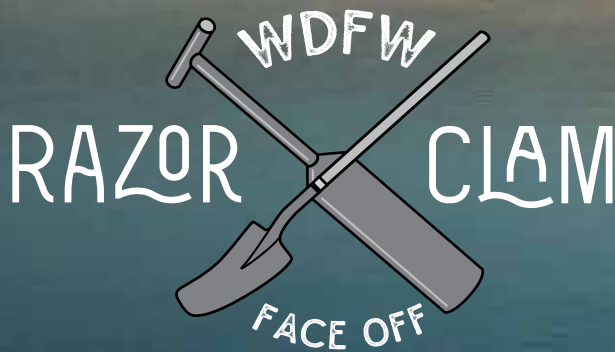


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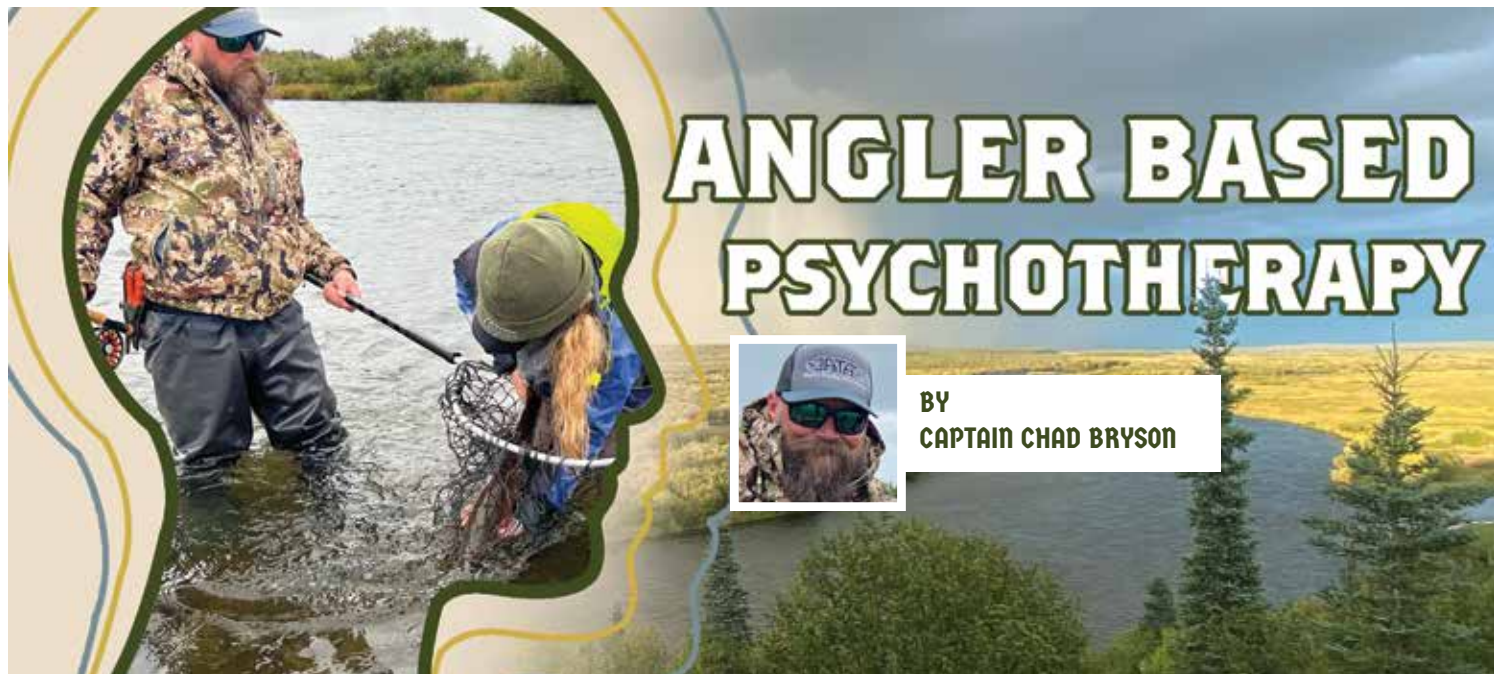
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"Welcome back to the 'Winter Doldrums'", read the message on the marquis in front of the local fly shop. My buddy and I just glanced at each other and went inside anyway. I was hosting a bonefish trip to Mexico in less than a month. I had chosen a local fly shop to meet with everyone on the trip to assist with gear prep, clothing needs, travel details, etc. You know, all those things that a good host should do instead of just sending a pack list/itinerary and hoping for the best. Once we were inside the shop, it didn't take long for me to realize the twelve inches of newly fallen snow and more than 60 days of frigid temperatures had won the battle for "chipper attitude of the month." Hence the marquis message. Notice I said "a local fly shop", not "my local fly shop." The majority of the guests on that

particular trip were from the upper Midwest, so I chose a fly shop most convenient to them to meet. Plane tickets were cheap for me back then. Alas, the old days of AirTran. I had spoken with the shop owner in great detail about our trip meeting. I had hoped it would generate some revenue for the shop as well as help him get into the travel fishing business. It seemed like a grand idea to use his shop, and it was. As the group started filing in one by one, the vibe in the room went from mass melancholia to downright elation in just a few minutes. It's funny how just a little bit of talk about planning a fishing trip can change the mood.

Nowadays, I plan all my fishing trips in January/February. It is a superb time to have a get together with my buddies and plan a trip. My family calls it angler-

based group psychotherapy. Either way, the timing works. Over the years, we have put together so many trips. Some turned out beyond great, others not so much. Through all the group therapy down in the fly-tying shop, I have learned that following a particular planning protocol will lead to a more successful trip, no matter if I am booking a lodge or going full DIY. In addition, the amount of flexibility I am willing to bestow makes a difference as well. The following is the way I plan not only for myself but for anyone who asks me to help them plan their fishing trip. Since the last two decades of my guiding career have been based in Alaska, we will work with that planning protocol. However, you will find that using this protocol will work for just about anywhere you want to go, third world countries included.

1) Decide what species of fish you want to target.

This seems simple, doesn't it? One would think so. Put 10 anglers in a room and start the discussion and you will find out that 6 of them are like minded when it comes to what species they want to target on any particular trip. Singling out a particular species to target for this fishing trip is the very most important part. Everything else will fall into place after that. Once this obstacle is overcome, move to step 2. Don't jump ahead in line. Trust the protocol.

2) Decide where you want to travel to target the chosen species. This is the part where you get to control the financial commitment towards your fishing trip. For example; I have decided that I really want to catch giant, clowned up, sea run Dolly Varden. I would love to travel to some remote portion of Siberia to cast to a Dolly that has absolutely never seen a human, much less been fished to. Without a doubt, it would be the trip of a lifetime, right up until I see that it's gonna cost a second, third, and fourth mortgage. So that gives me the opportunity to reevaluate my financial commitment to another location. Once you've got this nailed down, move to step 3.

3) Deciding when you go is pretty easy after steps one and two are done, especially with Alaska trips. Most of the

fishing is based around the migration of Pacific salmon and their lifecycle as a target species, or a food source for another species of fish that capitalizes on salmon eggs and flesh. So, if I wanted to target king salmon during the peak of the run on the Nushagak River, I would plan to be there in late June. But, if I wanted to target leopard rainbows behind spawning sockeye in a creek, I would go mid-August. Now we have that established, go to step 4.

4) Last, and certainly far from least, is how to go.

How you go encompasses everything left about your trip. Are you going to DIY or book a lodge? Maybe you want to do a combination of DIY and day trips with a guide. I look at every option available, how much it costs, and figure out the bang for the buck. In some cases, a DIY trip turned into a fully guided lodge booked trip, only because the lodge had a special price that coincided with my species and timing. The lodge price wasn't much more than the DIY price estimate, and all the guess work was taken out of the program. Therefore, it was easily worth doing the lodge deal. This doesn't always happen, but it's worth doing the research.

If you are like most of us self-taught anglers and wouldn't dream of doing a guided lodge trip even if budget wasn't a concern, I implore you to do

your research. Make sure that where you are going and what you are targeting is still a viable thing. If you are doing a DIY raft trip for trout, make sure the river you chose has a good trout population in it. Alaska seems like a dreamy wonderland for all cold-water salmonids, but everything is cyclical. Just make sure. Don't trust social media. Not all lodge owners and booking agents are telling the truth, some are just selling empty beds and boat seats. Probably the most valued asset you can find is a trip consultant. A trip consultant doesn't have any allegiance to a lodge or travel company, and for a couple hundred dollars, you will gain more information than you bargain for.

So, call your friends over, smoke a brisket, and plan a trip. It will do wonders for your mental state and seasonal affective disorder.



WA WINTER STEEL HEAD

BY JASON BROOKS



Back on November 30th, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife announced the winter steelhead seasons. The season was set after a series of meetings with fisheries managers from the agency, Ad-Hoc Coastal Steelhead Advisory Group, co-managers from several tribes, and the public. They all got to voice their concerns and ideas on the state of winter steelhead. After some deliberations and negotiations, the seasons were finally set as the first fish began to arrive. While some rivers will get to have a fishery this year, including some with the ability to fish out of a boat (where last year this was outlawed), other rivers came with the “no boat” restriction and a reduced season, while other fisheries were closed altogether, again.

What is so important is to realize that steelhead are revered in the Pacific Northwest. They are the state fish of Washington, and many anglers look forward to the opportunity to stand along the banks of a glacier fed river and cast a line. The fish could end up being an 8-pound hatchery brat or a 20-pound “fish of a lifetime” native sea-run rainbow trout. That is the beauty of winter steelhead, you never know what will bite. The fish themselves are known for their aggressive fight and willingness to grab a spoon swinging in current,

or chomp onto a plug slowly making its way past a garden of sunken boulders. The issue at hand is the wild or native fish, the ones that most anglers are drawn to along the coastline. These large fish are the definition of winter steelheading and have been under strict catch and release regulations for several years. Even with these protections, along with the most notable rivers having bait restrictions, single point hook regulations, and other ways to help the fish-including not being able to remove them completely from water-the wild fish are still struggling. The argument can be made that it is fishing practices by the co-managers, as tribal fisheries still allow the use of gill nets. But tribes also play a key role in raising broodstock fish, which are native runs of fish to the rivers that are raised in hatcheries to supplement the wild runs but keep the genetics specific to the river system. Tribes also have federal safeguards with rights established by the Boldt decision as well as other rulings, treaty rights, and heritages that go back thousands of years. There is no use arguing or blaming, as that is for the courts and federal regulators to decide. Instead, anglers need to realize that the seasons are based on wild fish return expectations and escapement goals.



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First, here are the rivers where you cannot fish this winter, and why. The Chehalis River system has not met its wild escapement in recent runs and this is concerning. Even on certain tributaries such as the Skookumchuck and Wynoochee Rivers that have robust hatchery returns, the wild fish are not making it to the spawning grounds. Both of these rivers have dams on them, and hatcheries that produce abundant returns in the thousands. Both are also closed. This is a two-fold problem, as the wild fish need spawning grounds as well as the ability to reach them, but the hatchery fish are plentiful. That creates the problem. Sport fishing anglers want the opportunity

to catch the hatchery fish, but the low returns of wild fish are just too fragile to risk the impacts. Then there are all those hatchery fish and what to do with them, as WDFW does not want them spawning in the river. This means keeping the hatchery gates open, and some will be donated to food banks while others will be collected and then planted in local lakes. But steelhead don't die when they spawn, which means if WDFW collects all of the hatchery fish and removes them from the system then they can't return in subsequent years as much larger fish. The Wynoochee is known for putting out some very large hatchery fish each winter, but that is because this occurs when fish are

left in the system by either bypassing the hatchery or being released back into the river where they go back out to the ocean and then return in another year or two.

The Chehalis and its other main tributary, the Satsop, are also now closed. The Satsop, like other rivers, was open in early December, but mostly because of a robust coho run. A few miles away is the Hump Tulips River, well known for late coho and a run of hatchery steelhead. This river as one of a few that you could go out on Christmas Day and catch either species of fish. It too closed to steelhead on December 16th, well before the main run of hatchery steelhead showed up. The reason



why the Humptulips will be closed when the bulk of the steelhead arrive is due to wild escapement.

Last year the escapement goal was 1,600 fish, but only 928 showed up. Again, this year the escapement goal is 1,600, but the run is predicted to be 1,222 wild fish, which is 24% below the escapement goal. The "Hump", as it is known, was a good fishery in February and March, when the steelhead runs were intermixed with hatchery fish and wild fish. This year it will be closed, but there is hope for the Humptulips as it does not have a dam and the forks of the river still run clear and cold for the native steelhead to spawn in. This river also has a decent lower river estuary, which floods with each tide change, and brackish water helps smolts on their short journey out into Gray Harbor and Pacific Ocean.

Further up the coastline are rivers steep in native traditions. The Upper Quinault, Queets and

Clearwater flow out of the Olympic National Park, which also announced a closure to the portions of the rivers within the park boundaries. Following the ONP, the WDFW has closed them until an agreement can be met with the Quinault tribe. It isn't until you reach the Hoh River where you will find a steelhead season, but once again this year you cannot fish from a boat on the Hoh. The town of Forks is known for winter steelheading, and this year there will be a season on most of the rivers that this region is known for.

The Quillayute River system, made up of the Bogechiel, Sol Duc, and Calawah have a steelhead season this winter. And unlike last year, when you had to get out of the boat, these rivers won't have that restriction this year depending on which sections of the rivers you are one. Guides and sport anglers complained this is a safety concern for these rivers that are known for steep gradient drops and huge boulder gardens. The

Quillayute system is one of the few that still makes the wild escapement goals and even has a few fish to spare which means it should stay open until the end of March when they are set to close.

So, for the angler that can't make it all the way out to Forks, where can one fish for winter steelhead? Southwest Washington's famed Cowlitz river will be the "place to go" once again. WDFW shifted the winter steelhead plants to align more with the traditional runs, with the height of the run being in February, where in years past it was more likely to catch a hatchery fish in December. Luckily the Cowlitz is a big river and there is a lot of room to roam and a lot of hatchery fish to catch. Those with jet sleds do best here as they can hit terminal areas such as Blue Creek and Mission Bar repeatedly. Bank anglers have options here too and the technique of "glow balling" started here. This is when anglers hike down the riverbank just before



midnight and cast glow-in-the-dark lures, hoping to catch their limit before the new day starts, then catch another limit before making the hike back to the parking lot.

There are several other rivers in Southwest Washington where winter steelhead will be returning, and all an angler needs to do is look up the smolt plants, hatchery locations and regulations. The regulations are the most important part, as they can change depending on escapement of wild fish and hatchery returns.

Back to the wild fish. One of my favorite times to fish for winter steelhead was in late March and early April. Those days are gone, for now. One thing we can do to help

native steelhead so we can once again fish in late winter and early spring is to support restorative projects and organizations. Complaining and finger pointing won't help the fish, but donating to a conservation organization or better yet, joining one and becoming active in it will help. WDFW often looks for volunteers to help fin clip or mark hatchery fish, and so do other groups needing help with nutrient enhancement projects and river clean-ups. Become active in sport fishing organizations that support hatchery fish like the CCA, Hatchery & Wild, and Puget Sound Anglers, and most of all, keep up to date on what the WDFW Commission is doing and the direction they are going.



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STAY SAFE ON THE ICE



John Kruse

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I drove down to Meadow Lake today. It's a small irrigation reservoir surrounded by orchards, near Malaga. The lake was frozen over and from the footprints left in the snow I could see two intrepid souls had ventured about 15 yards out onto the ice-covered lake before coming back to shore.

When it comes to walking on ice covered lakes or rivers my number one rule has always been, "Never be the first one out on the ice". I lived at a nearby lake, Three Lakes, for several years and remember one winter day venturing halfway across the lake on the ice when I heard a loud **CRACK!!** in the area I was walking. Needless to say, I shuffled back the way I had come and didn't venture out onto the ice again for a couple more weeks.

There are better ways to stay safe on the ice and it's important to do so because falling through the ice into the water can lead to hypothermia and drowning. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has these suggestions when it comes to staying safe:

Ice needs to be a minimum of four inches thick to walk on. Use an auger or chainsaw to measure it and make multiple holes to check as you work your way out to where you plan to fish.

Never fish alone.

Spread members of your party out to avoid too much weight on one area of ice.

Bring a spare set of clothes just in case, and have a game plan on how you will rescue someone if they do go in.

Consider purchasing ice picks- steel spikes connected by a cord and worn around the neck. In the event that someone falls in, they can be driven into the ice to offer a stable handhold for the person to pull themselves out. They are very inexpensive.



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Bring floating rope to throw to someone who has fallen into the water. Get a long length, as ice near the edge of a hole can be fragile and continue to break off.

Some people purchase spud bars; a long piece of steel with a tapered point that can be driven into the ice to determine how thick it is without having to drill multiple holes with an auger.

Ice cleats are inexpensive and can save you from bumps and bruises from falling on slick ice.

Looking for more information about how thick the ice the ice should be? The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has published a good guide to follow that says:

At Three Lakes it was common to see folks walking around the lake after it iced up, skating, cross country skiing, and ice fishing too. As a matter of fact, ice-fishing is a sport enjoyed by many hardy enthusiasts in North Central and Eastern Washington. If you are wondering where to go to catch trout, perch or other species, here are a few suggestions from WDFW:

STEVENS COUNTY: Lake Gillette, Lake Thomas, Coffin, Heritage, Jump Off Joe, Pierre, Waitts and Williams Lake. Hatch Lake is normally on this list but was rehabilitated this year.

FERRY COUNTY: Curlew Lake is an excellent destination for perch and there is no limit on them here. You will also like catch rainbow trout and may luck into a tiger muskie.

CHELAN COUNTY: Roses Lake in Manson is good for both trout and panfish. Fish Lake west of Leavenworth is a perennial favorite for both yellow perch along with rainbow and brown trout.

OKANOGAN COUNTY: This county is full of lakes to fish in the winter. Some of the more popular ice fishing destinations here include Rat Lake as well as Patterson, Bonaparte, Palmer, Sidley, and Molson Lakes. Sidley Lake hosts an ice fishing tournament every year, sponsored by the Oroville Chamber of Commerce. This year's 18th annual Northwest Ice Fishing Festival is scheduled to take place on Saturday, January 14th. Contact the Oroville Chamber for further details about this even.

Ice fishing isn't for everyone, but if you are bundled up and can stay warm and catch some fish while you are at it, you just may want to give it a go. And now you know how to do so in a safe manner.

USING GOVERNMENT FISHING WEBSITES TO RESEARCH LOCATIONS



BY PAUL LEWIS

Congratulations! You've had the opportunity to expand your fishing horizons and fish different areas of the northwest! You have your rods, the car is packed, tackle box securely placed in the passenger seat (seatbelt on!), and you are on your way. Everything is set, but wait... where do you go? Finding new fishing spots can be a challenging task. Luckily, there are ways to find that new spot in short order online, cutting down the time spent searching and maximizing the time spent on the water. Many of us use mapping services to track areas, but this article will focus on the power of using government sites to find that next spot!

Like many of you, fishing is my passion. When I am not working in the fishing industry, however, my job travels me around the

nation and the Northwest, which always leaves me looking for fishing spots. In my experience, there are a few different ways to follow through with this research, but a great way to start is by looking at the regulations in the state you'll be fishing.

Reading the general rules section gives a great idea of what is in the area to catch. Taking Idaho for example, the state is broken down into regions, all with slightly different regulations. If I'm taking a trip to the Idaho Panhandle, a look at the general rules lets me know there are lots of trout species, burbot, bass, salmon, and others to chase in the area. From here, the adventure begins.

One fishery I always enjoy is trout, so knowing there are trout in the area, the next stop to visit is the state published trout stocking

website. Every state in the Northwest (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana) has a database of stocked fisheries, a fantastic tool for finding a new spot. In addition to helping find a spot, these databases can be broken down by county, time of stock, and in many cases, how many fish were planted and even the species. Take for example the Montana trout stocking website. Montana stocks multiple species of warmwater and coldwater fish. Their website allows a search to be broken down by species, county, specific water body, time of stock, heck, even size of the fish planted! If I know I am headed to a specific area of Montana, I can jump on this website and check my county for fishing opportunities with ease.

Suddenly, I am on the water during a work break or a day off from an out-of-state conference.

Another reason to use government websites is to find new fishing spots on water bodies anglers are already familiar with. This is especially useful on rivers. The northwest, as we all know, is salmon country. At many times of the year, the rivers are full of fish waiting to be caught, but many bank spots will be shared shoulder to shoulder with a whole assortment of other anglers. Combat fishing is one way to go, but in some cases, secluded areas of public land can be found! Washington and Oregon have intricate details on the rivers, which are often broken down into sections in the regulations. In these regulations, we can see spots where the river is open in certain areas that coincide with things such as hiking trails, parks, and state forest lands.

One great practice is to find your preferred river on a map, zero in on the section you're looking to fish, and search around for trailheads, public land access, or public forest roads that can be walked down to the bank. Many states and counties also publish maps of hiking trails, many of which are along rivers and can be walked down! Combine this with a little work putting the boots on the ground, and you'll be able to find yourself a secluded

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stretch of open bank.

We all know the web is a powerful place, and government websites are a fantastic tool to find fishing information and new places to wet a line. From checking out their newsletters to using posted regs and stocking info, state websites prove very helpful in finding success on the water. Whether you are at work and looking to wet a line on lunch break, or you are hoping to access public waters which many don't know about, check out the state fishing websites to point you in the right direction!

Remember to always have a valid license, check emergency rules, and stay safe on the water!



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TELLING THE TRUTH

ABOUT SURPLUS STEELHEAD



BY GARY LEWIS

“Recycled” ocean-going rainbows breathe big fish bounty into Oregon’s small lakes and ponds.

I didn’t want to tell a lie in front of the pastor. But I had a ten-pound hatchery steelhead and I didn’t feel like blabbing to this guy about where it came from. My pastor wanted to go steelhead fishing and we picked a Monday morning. To get to one of my favorite pieces of river, I had to walk past a trout lake.

This lake was stocked a half a dozen times in spring and summer, and sometimes ODFW would put surplus summer-runs in it. Coming back from the river, I carried my ten-pound spinner-caught prize past the end of the lake. At that moment, a fisherman, spinning rod and worm carton in hand, appeared in our path.

“That’s a huge trout,” the angler gaped. “Did you get THAT in the lake?”

“Yep.” Bald-faced lie.

“Where did you catch it?”

“Right there at the end of the lake,” I said. Bald-faced lie Number Two.

We walked on, the pastor and I, and after a suitable space had been put between us and the fisherman, he said, “I guess sometimes you have to lie.”

Truth.

In fact, I could have caught that steelhead in the lake because that lake was, and still is, one of the spots where the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife deposits surplus fish they don’t need for spawning purposes. On any given day, a trout fisherman with a jar bait or a worm could luck into a steelhead.

Wherever fish and wildlife agencies artificially spawn steelhead, there is likely to be a surplus of sea-run rainbows.

And when that happens, the fish have to go somewhere. In some cases, steelhead are picked up and trucked back downriver for another trip past the fishermen. Another option are local food banks. Sometimes surplus fish end up going into a big hole in the ground to feed the worms. The highest use might be to give anglers one more chance. That’s why ocean-going steelhead (and sometimes salmon) end up in lakes and ponds.

WHERE AND WHEN

Decisions on whether or not to stock lakes and ponds are based on the numbers of fish and the run timing. Most of the summer steelhead in the surplus program on the North Coast come out of the Cedar Creek Hatchery.

In most cases, the steelhead at the end of the line is likely

to be a buck. The policy on the north coast is for female steelhead to be stripped of eggs, then put back into the river, while the males are separated to spend the rest of their days in a lake.

On the Oregon Coast, the Cedar Creek Hatchery at Hebo raises fish that end up in the Nestucca and nearby streams. Both summer-run and winter fish can end up in the recycling program, but summer fish, when they are stocked in a lake, usually hit the water in November, while winter-runs might be available in February and later. In any case, the steelhead don't seem to last in the lakes past mid-summer.

Coffenbury Lake, near Astoria, is one of the beneficiaries when there are surplus steelhead in nearby hatcheries.

Town Lake, near Pacific City, is one of the first to be stocked with steelhead when there is a surplus (summers or winters) from the Cedar Creek and Nehalem hatcheries. Vernonia Pond, Lost Lake (in the Nehalem drainage), Lake Lytle, and Sunset Lake are also stocked with steelhead.

Cape Meares Lake, north of Tillamook, and Loren's Pond, east of Tillamook, are the other candidates for stocking if there are enough fish to go around.

On the mid-coast, 120-acre Olalla Reservoir occasionally gets steelhead when there is an excess in the Siletz River trap.

South along the coast, inside the city limits of Port Orford, an angler can sit on the shores of Garrison Lake and have a pretty good chance at tangling with a big steelhead at the right time of year.

Middle Empire Lake in Coos County is another place where surplus steelies are deposited in late winter.

In the Willamette region, Faraday Lake, east of Estacada, is one of the first waters to get steelhead if there are too many for the hatchery to handle. Walling Pond in Salem and Junction City Pond are also on the surplus stocking schedule.

In Eastern Oregon, surplus fish from the Big Canyon hatchery often end up in Roulet Pond near Elgin and also in Weaver Pond (a.k.a. Wallowa Wildlife Pond). Surplus steelhead that

return back to Enterprise are recycled to Marr Pond.

Peach Pond in Ladd Marsh is another potential steelhead fishery if surplus numbers are high. March and April are the best timing for these eastern Oregon waters.

Gary Lewis is the host of Frontier Unlimited TV and author of Fishing Central Oregon, Fishing Mount Hood Country, Hunting Oregon and other titles. Contact Gary at www.GaryLewisOutdoors.com



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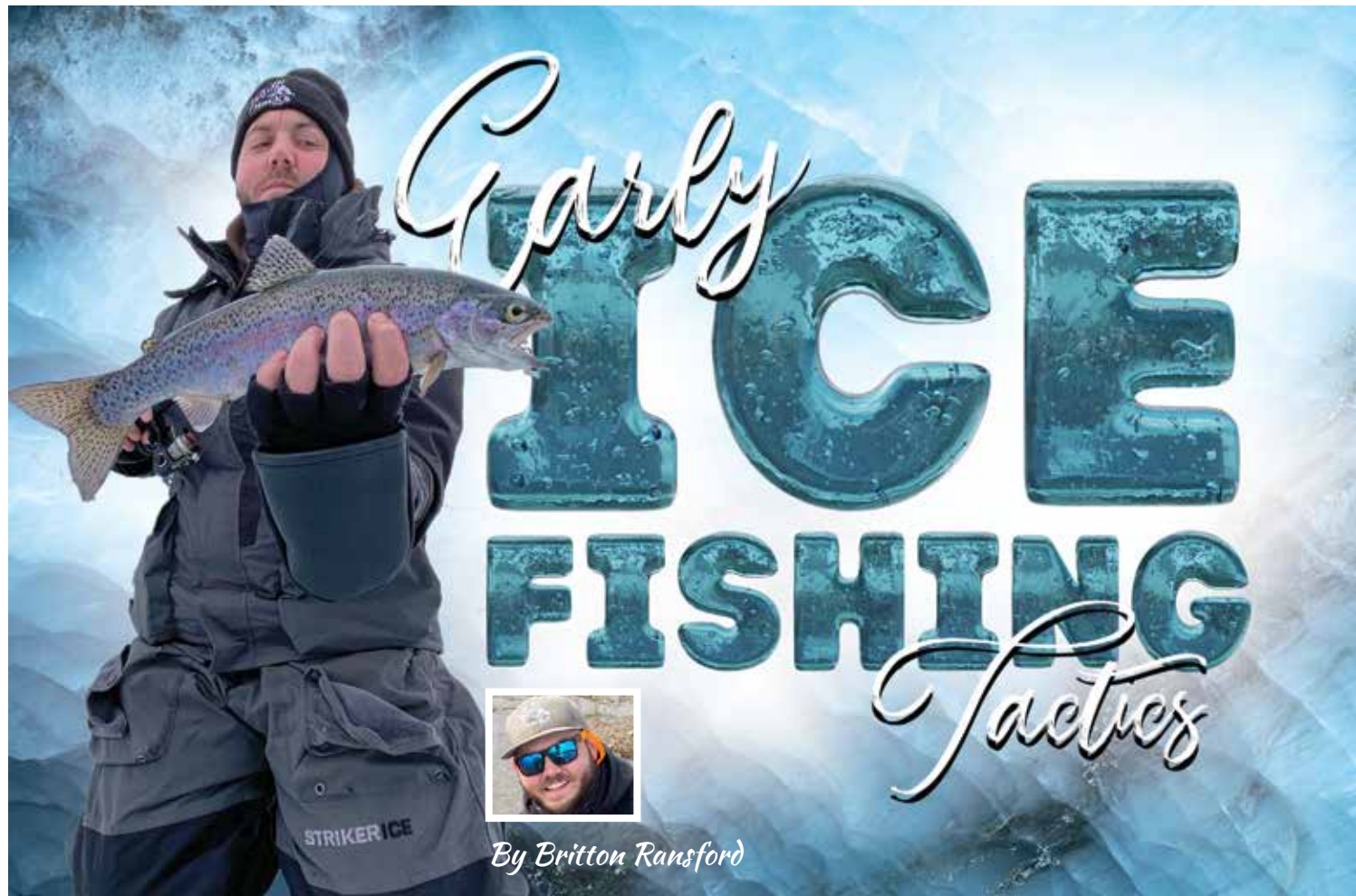


GARY LEWIS BIO

Gary Lewis is an award-winning author, TV host, speaker and photographer. Recent books include Fishing Central Oregon, 6th Edition, Fishing Mount Hood Country and Bob Nosler Born Ballistic. Gary has hunted and fished in eight countries on three continents and in the islands of the South Pacific. Born and raised in the Northwest, he has been walking forest trails and running rivers for as long as he can remember. Lewis is twice past president of the Northwest Outdoor Writers Association and a recipient of NOWA's Enos Bradner Award.



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By Britton Ransford

While frigid temperatures and dustings of snow mark the end of the open water fishing season for some, it signals the beginning of another exciting ice fishing season for others.

Previously a sport dominated by anglers in the Midwest and Canada, ice fishing in the inland Pacific Northwest has boomed in recent years thanks to its reputation as a fun winter activity for the entire family, as well as the vast number of accessible lakes in the region.

Northwest lakes offer plenty of hard water game fish opportunities, including yellow perch, walleye, and other schooling fish, but

there's also plenty of trout species ripe for the catching — and these salmonids should be at the top of any ice anglers' target list. Ice fishing for trout, however, is different than other species, but it can be just as plentiful. Using the correct gear when ice fishing for trout

While not impossible to use when ice fishing, a typical 6- to 8-foot trout rod is likely to be a nuisance relatively quickly on the ice, as you'll be sitting on a bucket most of the day. Instead, an affordable, 30- to 36-inch ice fishing rod with light- to medium-action is plenty sufficient for nearly any type of ice fishing adventure.

Spool your spinning reel with 4-pound fluorocarbon line and you'll be in good shape for anything that bites, but especially trout. If you're concerned about your line, there's many fluorocarbon options that are designed for ice fishing that will handle the conditions better, but that's simply personal preference.

In addition to your rod, reel, and line, you'll want all the ice fishing staples, including an ice auger, as well as a bucket, a rope, ice scoop, warm, layered clothing, and a sled to tow it all onto the ice with you — or, even better, a snow machine.

Locating trout through the ice in early winter

To catch the fish, you first need to find the fish. On ice, that can be tricky, but trout, including rainbow, cutthroat, and browns, all cold-water species, are predictable in the winter months.

Trout crave cool, highly oxygenated water. Thus, as the lake turns over, they move into cold, shallow water, while panfish, including yellow perch, evacuate the shallows and head into deeper drop-offs. The trout's migration into shallow water is ideal for ice anglers, as you can target them in flats as shallow as 4- to 8-feet. This is ideal for early season ice fishing, as it's just short walk from the shoreline, an area that typically features the safest ice on the lake.

Experienced ice anglers will troll during the open water season to scout areas on the lake that will inhabit trout in the winter months. To locate these trout-rich areas, use electronic depth finders to look for areas with large, shallow flats, between

4- and 20-feet, and drop-offs adjacent to weed lines. It's common for trout to cruise these drop-off edges and seek forage along the weed lines.

Once you've settled on a spot to fish for the day, it's time to start drilling. Trout, though, are easily spooked, therefore moving around and drilling holes throughout the day can be counterproductive. Instead, pre-drill your holes early in the morning. Using your ice auger, begin drilling holes close to shore in 3- to 6-feet of water, drilling into deeper water every 5- to 10-feet until you see weeds. Once you've found the weed line, begin pre-drilling holes from the weed line into deeper water in a Z-pattern to cover more ice.

If the lake you're fishing doesn't feature many weeds, you'll instead look for large, flat regions with muddy lake floors. Use the same technique, drilling in a Z-pattern, into deeper water, as later in the day, the trout will become less active and move into these areas, suspending themselves

in the middle of the water column chasing small prey.

Selecting the best tackle for targeting trout through the ice

Trout, being the apex predator in most lakes, will cruise the weed lines looking to aggressively find any snack available to them, thus it's imperative that you have reactionary type baits that emulate a dying baitfish to entice them to bite.

Small spoons, such as the Mack's Lure Sonic BaitFish (1/16 oz. to 1/6 oz.) and the Mack's Lure Hum Dinger (1/8 oz.), tipped with artificial pink maggots, meal worms, or corn will do the trick — and don't be afraid to add scent to the lures and bait as well. When aggressively jigged, these spoons will create flutter and vibration, attracting trout from further distances.

If you're not having luck with spoons, it likely means the trout aren't as aggressive. Instead, use the smallest bait possible to reach your target depth. Try a Mack's Lure Glo Hook (#6), tipped with maggots, corn, or meal



Early
ICE
FISHING
Tactics

worms, and a little split shot to get your presentation to the bottom.

Don't be afraid to mix up your colors often. Begin with natural colors, including silvers and whites, but be quick to shift to brighter colors, including chartreuses, reds, and oranges if they're not taking your offering. The trout will tell you what they want, so be versatile in your tackle selection and change often if they're simply not biting.

Effective jigging techniques for targeting trout through the ice

When fishing closest to the weed line, make sure your presentation is hugging the bottom, typically 8- to 12-inches from the lake floor. Drop to the bottom, then a couple cranks up and you're in the strike zone.

There's no jigging cadence that's tried and true. Really, it's whatever you feel comfortable with. One thing that is for certain, however, is that your jigging cadence needs to be consistent and in rhythm. If you're erratic, the trout will have a tough time attacking your presentation — and we're in the business of making it easier for trout to bite your lure, not harder.

The only exception to rhythmic jigging is, occasionally, dropping your presentation to the bottom to drum up some silt and create a disturbance. Trout, in shallower water, are constantly feeding on prey

that burrow in the sand, thus anything out of the ordinary is sure to catch their eye, especially from further distances. Alternatively, on really slow days, you can try dead sticking, just a few inches off the bottom, meaning you're doing nothing with your presentation (tipped with a worm or bait) except holding it still.

Later in the day, when the trout move deeper, you're going to follow them, as you've already pre-drilled holes in this deeper water. Fish to these suspended trout, at least six feet from the top of the water column, using the same, rhythmic jigging cadence as before.

Practice safety at all times when ice fishing

While ice fishing is a perfect activity for the entire family, it can quickly go badly if you're not prepared. Use common sense, dress warm and, especially early in the season, always check the ice conditions before venturing out. To do so, drill your first hole, then measure its thickness. Ice 4-inches and thicker is safe for small groups, but be sure to spread out.

At the end of the day, just being out on the ice with friends and family is a blast. Hooking into some trout on super light gear, however, is the prize. Hopefully, by using the tips here, you'll be well on your way to a successful ice fishing season targeting trout.

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BEGINNER WINTER STEELHEAD



by Hannah Pennebaker

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Slap on your earmuffs and grab that tacklebox, it's winter steelhead season here in the Pacific Northwest! Steelhead, which are sea-run rainbow trout, call out to devoted anglers like a siren's call. There's just something special about these fish. They are elusive and wary. Some fishermen go their entire lives without landing one. These silver bullets are well worth pursuing, however. They make delicious table fare and put up terrific fights. Winter weather can create extra challenges, but it just makes netting these beautiful fish even more rewarding. Many anglers are tight lipped about their steelhead tips, which can make steelhead fishing intimidating to beginners. Let's go over some tackle ideas, clothing tips, and hot spots to help make your first winter steelheading trip as productive and safe as it can be.

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TACKLE

In order to understand how to catch winter steelhead, you must know that there are some differences between summer and winter steelhead. Summer run fish head into the rivers early, and mature in the river over several weeks or months. Winter runs go into the river mature and ready to spawn. In general, winter steelhead are less aggressive. The cold water slows down their metabolism and makes them less willing to grab your offering. If you're able to entice one into striking, hang on! Steelhead are famous for their long, athletic runs. Winter steelhead are often a bit bigger and fatter than their summer-run cousins as well.

One of the most convenient things about winter steelheading is that they are perfectly willing to bite cured salmon eggs!

Around this time, I always have a fresh supply of eggs leftover from the previous salmon season. They are one of the best baits for winter steelhead! However, you'll generally want to use a different strategy for curing them.

Steelhead generally like a sweeter cure than salmon do. Most egg brines meant for steelhead create a harder, more durable egg, while salmon cures will make a softer, "milkier" egg. You can either drift your eggs or float them with a bobber. If you're all out of salmon eggs, don't fret. Winter steelhead absolutely love sand shrimp and coon shrimp! Make sure to tie a good egg loop knot and tuck your bait inside the loop. You can use stretchy thread for extra security. You can use a combination of eggs and shrimp to make your bait even more enticing.

If you're fishing on a river where bait isn't allowed, or you don't feel like covering your winter gloves with shrimp and dye, spinners, spoons, and jigs are deadly effective on steelhead. Just remember that the fish will be holding near the bottom, and let your lure sink before reeling it in. Bring a variety of different colors and weights: river flows and depths change constantly, and you may need a heavier lure than you were using the other day just to reach the bottom. Steelhead can be surprisingly light biters despite their size, so make sure you are attentive and ready for the strike. One of the most popular ways to catch steelhead is to float a 1/4 oz jig under a bobber.

Make sure to adjust your bobber stopper so that your jig is floating just above the bottom, however. You can tip your jig with a bit of prawn if bait is legal where you're fishing. There are a wide variety of jigs out there, and many anglers even tie their own! Experiment with a variety of colors and jig materials until you find what the fish are keying into.

CLOTHING

Nothing can ruin a fishing trip like the cold. Layers are the winter steelheader's secret weapon! The fish don't wait for good weather before moving in, and you may not be willing to wait weeks or days for a clear day. Check the forecast, but we prepared for sudden inclement

weather too. Neoprene waders offer good insulation from cold water, but a good base layer and loose, warm pants can also work. Wool socks are a must! Gloves can make a huge difference. Even on relatively mild days, my hands can get cold, making it difficult to switch lures or apply scent.

Hand warmers have come a long way these days. In addition to disposable, shake to activate handwarmers, there are also reusable ones. Many sporting goods stores in the area offer lighter fluid powered and battery powered hand warmers. Test out your options and figure out what you like best. Propane space heaters are also great options.

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My friend recently put a diesel heater in his Thunderjet, and it makes a world of difference. I'd recommend pre-tying your leaders, to minimize the amount of tying you have to do while fishing. It's a good idea to bring a change of socks too, just in case. Nothing will make you feel more cold and miserable than wet socks. Earmuffs, hats, or head bands will help, but partnering them with a warm scarf will make all the difference on those frigid winter days. Be prepared! I would recommend gearing up the day before and spending some time outside. If you're already cold, pack on a few more layers and try again until you're comfortable.

LOCATIONS

More so than any others, steelhead fishermen tend to be the most tight-lipped about their secret spots. While it's not my intention

to "blow up" anyone's honey hole, I do want to at least steer beginner anglers in the right direction. I'll always remember the euphoric rush from landing my first steelhead, and I wouldn't have known where to go without guidance. As previously mentioned, summer steelhead enter the rivers sooner in their life cycle, and spend months maturing and moving upriver. By contrast, winter steelhead don't travel nearly as far upriver, and some spawn within a few days of going in the river.

Check the WDFW hatchery escapement report daily for updated numbers. The Skykomish River, Cowlitz River, Humptulips River, and Wynoochie River all boast good returns of winter steelhead every year. The Cowlitz River is usually open every year, but the Humptulips and Wynoochie River may be closed if they do not reach their

escapement goals. You can try coastal rivers such as the Hoh, Sol Duc, and Calawah if you are willing to make the drive. Make sure to check the regulations though, several of these rivers do not allow fishing from a boat. Be respectful of private property and tribal land. Drift boating is always hazardous, but the frigid waters during winter create extra danger. It's never a bad idea to go out with a guide on your first winter steelhead trip. They can show you the right way to drift the river safely. Remember that rivers change every year, and always be on the lookout for submerged rocks and trees.

While looking up popular locations for steelheading can be a good way to get started on your journey, you should also be able to recognize water that fish are likely to be holding in. In case your desired location is already full of anglers, or you just want to try a new spot, familiarize yourself



with “steelhead water”. These fish are looking to spend the least amount of energy to get upriver and will take the path of least resistance. Sometimes the path of least resistance is right next to the shore, so make sure you fish your lures all the way to the bank. Look for calm waters near tailouts where fish are likely to be resting. Also check behind boulders and logs, but be careful of snags. I'd recommend thoroughly fishing one hole before moving on. Try both bait and lures, you never know what the fish will want that day. Winter steelheading can be a bit of a grind, but you'll forget all about the cold and your numb hands and ears when you're fighting a 15 pound silver bullet!

Wherever you decide to fish for winter steelhead, make sure you check your rules and regulations. Familiarize yourself with catch and release best practices. All wild steelhead in Washington

State must be released. Make sure to check for an adipose fin before removing your fish from the net or pulling it into the boat—it's illegal to remove wild steelhead from the water. Never grab a fish you intend to release by its jaw or gill plate. Wet your hands before touching the fish, to avoid damaging its protective slimy layer. Rather than just throwing the fish back, it's a good idea to gently put the fish back in the water, facing it into the current so that water can flow over their gills. Let it swim off when it's ready. If you must take pictures, take them quickly, and prioritize getting the fish released as soon as possible. Wild steelhead are beautiful, rare creatures that should be treated with the utmost respect and care.

Good luck on your winter steelheading adventure! Bundle up and stay warm out there!



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THE OUTDOORS ROUNDUP



John Kruse
northwesternoutdoors.com and
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When it comes to catching bass between Thanksgiving and the end of February in the Pacific Northwest, it would be fair to say, “The struggle is real”. As a matter of fact, my chances of catching a bass at this time of year are about the same as winning the lottery. I have simply not had success (in either endeavor).

That’s why I decided to reach out to Glenn May. He is the man behind BassResource.com, a website he launched in 1996 that is full of articles, how-to videos, and an active forum. I have been a big fan of Glenn for several years, especially since he films quite a few of his instructional videos at the place I consider to be my home water, Potholes Reservoir.

www.BassResource.com attracts anglers from all over the nation but Glenn actually lives in Edmonds, Washington and has been bass fishing for 50 years. In addition to fishing for fun, he has fished a number of tournaments in the Western United States and has even been a television guest on Lunkerville and the Hank Parker TV Show. Many with his wealth of knowledge and experience would be close-mouthed, but Glenn is very approachable and truly wants

others to succeed when it comes to catching bass. Here’s some questions I posted to Glenn along with some good advice.

WHERE DO THE BASS GO IN WINTER?

Glenn says generally speaking the bass go deep, where water temperatures are warmer and more stable. The bass are also following the baitfish they prey upon that are doing the same thing to survive. Generally speaking, they are deeper than 15 feet and may be as deep as 55 feet, but under certain conditions they may come into the shallows.

A case in point would be a reservoir where water levels are drawn down during the winter months. If crawdads are in the reservoir, they will emerge from the mud to get back into the water. The bass know this and will be waiting in the shallows to feed on them when this occurs. Another time bass may come into shallower water is after several consecutive days of warm weather. That’s when the baitfish will head to the shallows and the bass will follow them there.

WHY ARE THEY SO HARD TO CATCH IN THE WINTER? Glenn explained the metabolism of bass really slows down during the winter months. Whereas bass might feed seven times a day in the spring and summer, they

may only feed once every seven to ten days in the winter. According to Glenn, that goes a long way towards explaining why bites are few and far between, even when you locate bass during the cold weather months.

SLOW DOWN: The forage base bass feed off of, including bait fish, sculpins and crawdads, also lower their metabolism and barely move. That's why you want to slow down your presentation when fishing. A prime example of this would be slowly dragging your lure across the bottom, with long pauses in between each dragging movement.

LURES AND TECHNIQUES THAT WORK:

Glenn has a number of lures he uses to catch bass in the winter.

Try dragging a ¼ to ½ ounce football head jig with a five-inch white grub on it along the bottom. In deep water colors don't show up well, but the white contrasts better than a dark color, making it easier for the fish to see on the bottom.

As the water gets really cold the perch will ball up into schools and the bass will sit below them, picking off the perch that

are dying off and falling out of the bait ball towards the bottom. You can take advantage of this by dropping a ½ ounce hair jig through the baitfish ball to where the bass are.

Try a drop shot rig with a four-inch finesse worm. Fish it on the bottom with a very slow presentation, barely moving the bait at all. As for colors, try using a pink worm, which works very well this time of year. The drop shot will also work on suspending bass you locate on your fish finder. Drop the finesse worm to where the bass are and just hold it there. The small finesse worm will move around enough on its own to elicit not only attention, but oftentimes, a bite.

If you follow all of this sage advice from Glenn May you should be able to grind out some bites and bass during the holiday season and well into the winter. If you want to find more information about catching bass through all four seasons of the year, go to www.BassResource.com

John Kruse – www.northwesternoutdoors.com and www.americaoutdoorsradio.com

The advertisement features a black background with a red fish silhouette logo on the left. Three men are shown holding large fish. The man on the left is holding a large rainbow trout. The man in the middle is holding two large fish. The man on the right is holding three large fish. The text 'YOUR PREMIERE PNW FISHING GUIDE SERVICE' is at the top in large white letters. Below it is 'Austin's Northwest Adventures' in a script font. At the bottom, it says 'Now Booking Trophy Kokanee, Triploids, and Rainbow Trout for December, January, and February!' and 'Call 509-669-3557 to book' with the website 'www.austinsnorthwestadventures.com' below that. A red text box on the left identifies 'Austin Moser, Professional Guide and Instructor'.

KOKANEE LURES: MAKING YOUR OWN



**By Randy
Castello**



Although there are a limitless variety of both the latest, tried and true kokanee lures hanging from the pegs at your local purveyor of tackle, many people choose to hit the water with at least a few home-tied lures. There is nothing wrong with ready tied kokanee lures and depending on the location, many shops will have a section catering to kokanee fishing. Even tackle stores far from a kokanee lake seem to have enough kokanee gear in stock to get you started. Here locally, Holiday Sports in Burlington has an aisle dedicated to kokanee lures, flashers, and lure components. So, with the variety of prepackaged kokanee lures available, why create your own?

I think that the answer is in kokanee fishing overall. Sure, they are a scrappy opponent, taste fantastic, and here in Washington most lakes have a 10 fish bonus limit. But more so, kokanee fishing is a mental game. A successful kokanee fisherman understands both the regional and seasonal adjustments required to consistently put fish in the net. Much of the fishery is spent massaging the grey matter while trying to figure out the trick of the day or even hour. Kokanee are very fickle and when you entice a bite on a lure you tied the whole experience is enhanced.

My personal history of fishing custom lures goes way back. I have always been an avid fly-tier and enjoy making one-offs or attractor flies. In my youth I used a black marker or nail polish to doctor up Oakie-Drifters and Steel-Lee spoons to enhance my steelhead offerings. I spent 20+ years in Southern California chasing anything that swims. I would often put a short notch in the body of small curly tail grubs when fishing for trout in the Sierra's. The cut would give the tail action a little extra vibration that drove the trout nuts. When fishing the bays and nearshore I would modify my swimbaits with a marker or colored Sharpie. I even bought a mold to cast my own 4 and 5" swimbaits.

I poured many crazy colors; I even modified the 5" mold to incorporate a scent chamber where I could squirt a bit of scent into the swimbait. These are just some of the ideas that constantly bubbled from my head on their way to the end of my line. So, why the effort when there is plenty of excellent gear on the market?

It's that kokanee mental thing, catching a fish on something that you concocted. I think that with kokanee fishing, when you can consistently catch fish on a lure that you developed or modified, it just plain feels good! Hooked yet? How does one get started?

The answer may vary a bit depending on your goal. Do you want to invent the next hot Kokanee fly, design a new spinner blade, or just hobble together some random spinner blade/bead combos? Whatever your goal is, it may be a good idea to ease into your new interest; don't go out and buy the stuff to make 250 kokanee lures. Start slow; a few spinner blades, beads and spinner clevises. If you're a fly-tier, you probably already have the basics for any number of kokanee flies. Tying kokanee flies is fun and with some basic skills your imagination is your only limiting factor.

Although I'm fortunate that I have a dedicated tackle workbench that is well stocked with just about everything needed for making lures, it's not necessary. Your kitchen table, garage workbench, or even your lap while watching a game are perfect for making lures. I also carry a spinner/lure making Plano box on almost every fishing trip. One never knows when you'll have to make mods or throw together an emergency lure.

A problem I have is that I have kind of settled into a given group of custom spinner/bead combos and a handful of kokanee flies that consistently produce fish. Good or bad, not sure. I enjoy making lures but do I need more kokanee lures? No, probably not, but I'm sure that I'll hatch a new batch of kokanee lures this year anyway.

I may even explore the world of tube flies!

Where do you start? I think that before you spend any money, turn the trusty old trout tackle box upside down, give it a good shake and step back to see what you have. That big ball of old tangled up wedding ring spinners will be gold. Is there a handful of small spoons or old flies? Look in the tackle box and you'll find an old rusty spoon stuck under one of the shelves. Pry it loose, maybe hit it with a drop or two of penetrating oil, and start dissecting your treasure pile. In



the end it is likely that you'll have quite a collection of small Colorado blades, wedding rings, beads, and a variety of components that may fuel your lure making passion all winter.

You can also purchase the components through one of the many lure making supply websites or your local tackle shop, but be aware that many are either wholesale or cater to the bug-eye crowd. Size 1 and 2 spinner blades are hard to find. If you don't find any at your local tackle shop, ask if they will make a wholesale purchase and then package in smaller quantities for retail sale. Beads? I think that every fisherperson has wandered down the bead isle at your local hobby store and thought "If I was a fish..." If you are anywhere close to Lacey, Washington pay a visit to Shipwreck Beads, www.shipwreckbeads.com. Believe me, as a tackle crafter you will be blown away!

Now that you have a box full of doohickies to start making kokanee lures with, now what?

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Regarding spinner blade clevises, try to find either the small plastic clevises or the spring type. The folded metal ones are great if you are making wire spinners but with manufacturing inconsistencies, they may abrade the light mono or fluorocarbon that you will be using as leader material.

I own a couple different wire benders and have tried to fabricate wire kokanee spinners. Even using a very fine wire gauge, the spinners end up being too heavy and rigid. When making kokanee lures, you want the action of the lure to just sort of flutter or follow the attractor action. Wire spinners tend to just hang there.

Line size? I used to believe a lighter leader line would draw more strikes than a heavier leader. Apparently in the underwater world of kokanee fishing I was WRONG, kokanee are not leader shy. In fact, there are a couple Washington State kokanee fisheries where I start with 20# fluorocarbon leaders and have no shortage of bites. I guess that it is mildly comical. Some days kokanee can be very boat shy, where they won't bite anything running on less than a 70' setback. Or crazy stuff; like a boat must be heading east instead of west with Jimmy Buffett, Son of a Sailor on the Bluetooth to get bit, but they have no problem smacking a spinner on an 8" hunk of 20-pound mono. That said, with few exceptions I tie my kokanee leaders on 12-14# fluorocarbon.

Hook size and color are kind of a personal preference. Many of my kokanee lures are tied using size 4 or 6 black octopus style hooks. I typically tie a snelled rig with 2 hooks. With my standard rig the hooks are pretty close together



but there are times where I want a trailer or stinger hook in the set up.

Maybe a note about leader length; I tend to have spools of ready to go lures when I'm on a lake hunting kokanee. Typically, they are the correct leader length for that fishery. It is a good idea to have a handful of pre-tied leaders that haven't been cut to length available. The thought is that you'll be able to assemble your lure then set leader length as required quickly. An 8-10" is kind of a standard kokanee leader length, but sometimes the fish want something different.

Ok, you have a sizable collection of kokanee leaders, now what? How do you store them without ending up with a large cocoon of fluorocarbon? Speaking of...when I was a child, I used to have a recurring nightmare where I got caught in a spider web and then wrapped up for a later meal. In hindsight, maybe what I thought was a spider web was really kokanee leaders. I need to get organized...

A couple of leader organization concepts are either sealable sandwich or snack bags, or,



my favorite, the slotted foam tubes. If using the resealable bags, gently coil your kokanee leader and seal it in the bag. Store the sealed bags in something with a latching lid. With the slotted foam tubes, set the hook in the foam and wrap the leader securing the end in one of the slots. You can store the tubes on a rack, in a 3-5-gallon pail, or a 2-gallon resealable bag. I have found that using an empty 5 gallon to hang your leaders on during the day does wonders for keeping the boat organized as you cycle through set-ups. No point in becoming a fluorocarbon-spider meal, come up with an organizational plan



that works for you and your boat.

Previously I mentioned that kokanee fishing is a mental game. As prepared as you are in the comfort of your living room, sometimes once on the lake you will need to think out of the box. My lure/spinner box allows me to tweak my presentations. I might add a couple beads and a second spinner blade, make a leader with a fly, then add spinner components. The box has small spin n glo floats, extra beads, various kokanee flies, wedding ring collars, some kokanee bugs, and a few other things to dress up your lure.

Whether you are making spinners, tying flies or concocting something else, much of your kokanee lure making will be done at home. Enjoy the time and let your imagination go wild. Shoot, most small children love making lures, make it a family affair. Finally, lures made during the offseason should be stored in a cool, dark place.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

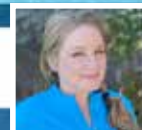


SPORTSMAN

SHOWS

BY

HILLARY HOLMAN



Trade show season is here and calling all sportsmen and women. It is the time to ponder and think about what changes we will make to our game this year, and wonder at the opportunities to be had this coming season. Trade shows give us sportsmen an upfront and personal glance into new products, new technologies, current trends, seminars, show specials, fishing ponds, tackle talk, gear, guides, lodges, food, and even more. It's worth getting out to a show near you. The NW is home to competitive sportsmen and women, and the NW Trade Show circuit comes out swinging, just like its sportsmen. This traveling circus changes from city to city, each attracting local vendors, manufacturers, NW brands, and national companies.

The NW trade shows are built upon this premise: To Educate, Equip, and Execute make the sportsman and the adventurer. The shows encompasses this.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

The Big Horn Show in Spokane is my favorite, and not just because it's close to home. The Big Horn Show gets its name from its origin over 60 years ago, starting off as a competition for big game trophies using

Boone and Crockett. It still brings in champion trophies, but alongside totes seminars, music, and some of the NW's finest vendors and manufacturers. It's a small city in a big town! Fly in! It's just a pond hop away. Proceeds go to INWC a 5013c.

Boise is home to Kryptek. Making a presence with their camo apparel sale tent out front, Boise wears Kryptek proudly. They support the military and their local community. It's Boy-see, not Boise, folks! Wear your boots! Buy a belt! It is also a pond hop away. Great access to the airport and nice hotels makes this a great weekend getaway. Buy luggage here to bring home your goods.

Tri Cities is sponsored by Griggs Ace Hardware! It's a smaller show, but has all the fixings a show could offer.

Yakima! It's not a big show and you will get to know people by the time you are through. It is a strong community. People here enjoy learning about new things going on in the industry, and I love that. The rifle range and the stories are prominent. The SunDome is fun, the people are friendly, and the tacos are muy bien. Bring the kids!

The Puyallup is a large show and brings in people far and wide: from Alaska to Nebraska, you will find it here. Stryker Rods

comes in from Oregon, so pick up your NW manufactured rod while you have the chance. Buy an RV. Buy a boat. They have it in Puyallup. Book your hotel early for this one! Do the Puyallup!

Portland is the show that never ends. It goes on and on, my friends. Wear your Danner's or your Nikes: you will get your steps in here. There is no sales tax in Oregon, so save 9% on top of the bargains already being offered. The beer flows in Portland, so be safe! Have fun! I wear my knife.

Wenatchee is home to Mack's Lure. Go out and meet the legendary Bob Loomis and his younger self, Britton. Tell them Hillary sent you, and take a selfie! #NWFishing #MacksLure

The Big Sky Montana Sportsman's Expo is here to stay. Can't find their website? No worries! Check out their social media @montanasportsmansexpo. Big toys, big furniture, big EVERYTHING is in Montana. Bring a trailer. It's worth the haul!

The BC Sportsman Show is just an hour and 45 minutes away from Everett. A lot is to be had in BC. Find a lodge and fisher's package. Connect with hunters and outdoor adventurers. Meet manufacturers. Friends are to be made in BC and friends are to be kept, AYE? Buy a BOOT! Or a boat, it will be swell either way! Book a fishing charter for sure.

Redmond, Oregon. Don't get this confused with Building 45 and the floating bridge. This is South. The traffic is much better, so hit the road and make the drive. Many people like to save on the sales tax in Oregon. The experience from vendors and guests is always the same, they say it is a great time. I have never been, but I trust Ed Iman, King of Walleye, when he tells me so.

If I missed any of your shows, please excuse me. I haven't heard from you and can't always be everywhere at one time. I would love to see what you are doing.

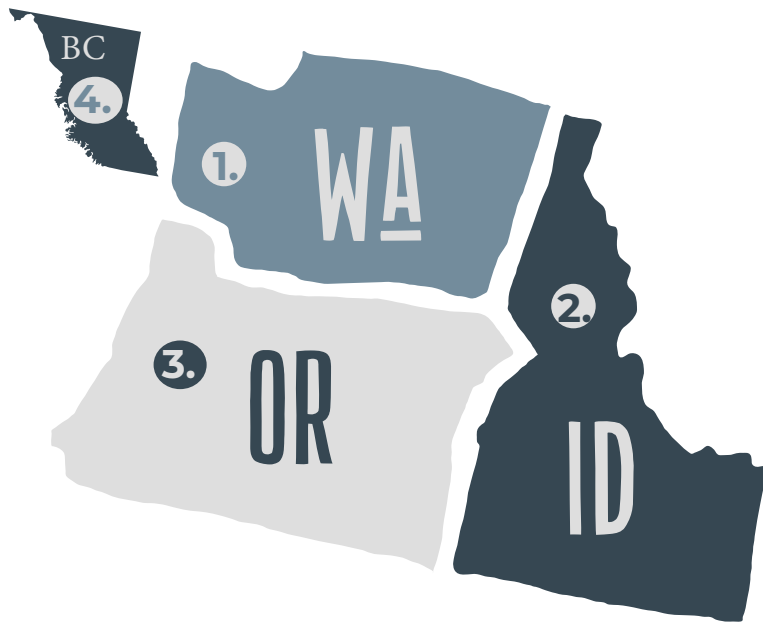
Email NW Fishing!

Check your dates and pick your shows. Attending more than one is part of the fun! It's a family and, like families, some family members won't go to certain shows. You'll see them at the next show, I bet.

Maybe I'll see you there? Safe travels!

PNW TRADESHOW		
SCHEDULE		
JAN	27-29	TRI CITIES SPORTSMEN'S SHOW PASCO, WA
FEB	1-5	WA SPORTSMEN'S SHOW PUYALLUP, WA
FEB	15-19	PNW SPORTSMEN'S SHOW PORTLAND, OR
FEB	24-26	WENATCHEE VALLEY SPORTSMEN'S SHOW WENATCHEE, WA
FEB	24-26	CENTRAL WA SPORTSMEN'S SHOW YAKIMA, WA
FEB	24-26	MONTANA SPORTSMEN'S EXPO KALISPEL, MT
MARCH	2-5	IDAHO SPORTSMEN'S SHOW BOISE, ID
MARCH	3-5	BC SPORTSMEN'S SHOW ABBOTSFORD, BC
MARCH	9-12	CENTRAL OREGON SPORTSMEN'S SHOW REDMOND, OR
MARCH	16-19	BIG HORN SHOW SPOKANE, WA

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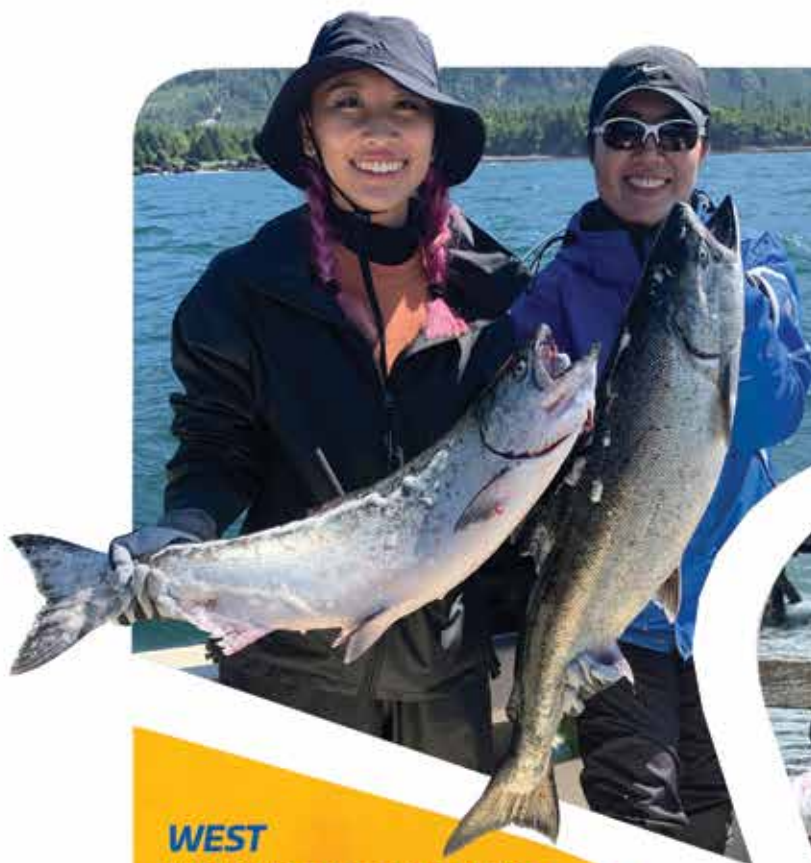
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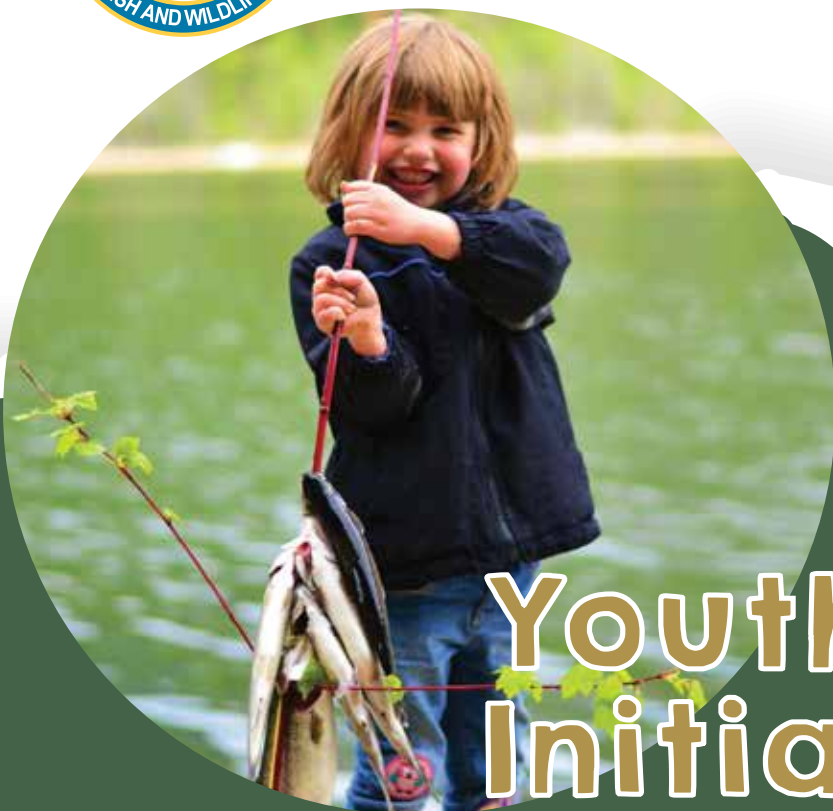


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