

February 1, 2011

I was gone for the first half of January. Luckily I was able to fish while gone, but I was not in the area. I was able to fish several times over the last couple weeks locally for Steelhead. Before I left on vacation (See Honduras report) the catch rate was very consistent with good numbers every day. I contacted the anglers I knew and trusted about the fishing while I was gone. Overall there was a reported drop in the catch rates after the first week in January.

The weather has been very variable between warm and very cold. The catch rates have been a little lower the last couple of weeks. Other reports are the same with everyone telling me they have had a drop in catch numbers lately. I talked with a couple of the WDFW creel staff and their counts have also seen a decline. The water temp was just barely 38 degrees last weekend. A 10 degree drop came after the weather warmed up I the 40's and well above freezing over night. The snow melted noticeably and dumped large amounts of very cold water into the Columbia. Not only did the temp drop but the huge influx of new water caused a noticeable change.

I have noticed there and have been fewer anglers out on a regular basis then at the end of December. I have talked with a few and many are frustrated with not catching fish or catching very low numbers. Combine cold weather with low numbers being caught can cause people to fish for other species or take some time off from fishing. I hope anglers understand the number of Steelhead over Wells dam is about half of what it was last year. It can be easy to compare years and have the same expectations. If you are getting frustrated or hearing negative reports on the fishing please look at the overall numbers for comparison. It is still some great fishing with some of the best hopefully to come. February and March historically have gotten better as the season progresses as far as overall numbers and willingness to bite.

Rufus Woods: There are still solid numbers of fish being caught and the size is good. Many anglers are reporting two to four fish being caught during a trip. During a half day trip recently we boated one (7lb) and lost a couple on the way to the boat. Trolling and bank fisherman are catching about the same numbers. The Colville Tribe will be releasing several thousand on a monthly basis. The fishing should remain consistent and steady for quite a while.

Ron