

February 23, 2011

The weather has been pretty decent for fishing with cold mornings but most of the days warmed later. The water has cooled noticeably to very close to 37 degrees. The variable weather caused some different water conditions and some clarity changes. The lowest temperature I saw was 36.8. The water started to clear up again towards the middle of the month. I have been holding pretty steady with numerous fish being boated every trip. I have not heard of the bite increasing to the numbers early in the season or to the level that normally happens in February. I did expect a more noticeable increase as the month went on, but it remained pretty much the same so far.

From what I am hearing the catch rates for the majority of anglers are lower than normal. I know one boat last week that boated 11. They are good anglers for sure, but they were fishing bait I have heard of no one else fishing locally. Unfortunately for me I don't have access to what they were using. I will keep it on my list and if the opportunity shows up I will fish it for sure. March is going to be here soon enough and everyone is talking about the normal increase in the bite. I have to go with the averages and expect it to pick up as spring arrives. We will just have to see how it turns out.

There were some concerns after WDFW was forced to shut down the Steelhead fishing in western Washington due to low numbers. I have talked with WDFW staff and based on the numbers and catch rates it looks like we will be able to complete the season. I have not talked to a single WDFW employee who wants to shut down our fishing, but they have to answer to the federal agencies. I do not agree with everything WDFW does, but I really believe the WDFW staff works very hard at keeping recreational fisheries open. The new Colville Salmon hatchery construction has started near Chief Joseph Dam. It will be really exciting to see how the fishery will change after those new fish start to return. I believe it will really help the sport fishery grow and become better. No doubt there will be areas of concerns from recreational anglers, but we have to work to make sure our concerns are heard. I also read in the paper that the CCT has submitted an application for a hydraulic permit to install the fish weir in the Okanogan River. Check out the YouTube video put out by BPA by searching upper Columbia Salmon Fishing. Interesting video but it seems they left a huge component of this fishery out of the video.

Rufus Woods: Has stayed the same with nothing super spectacular for numbers but some big fish caught. I talked with one angler headed out this morning and he caught a 22lb last weekend but it was their only fish.

Lake Chelan: This is the time of year the Lake Trout bite picks up. I have not gone to Chelan as I have been busy fishing Steelhead. I plan on heading up for at least one day just to see how it is.

Ron