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2010 FISHING REPORTS

St.Mary Angler: 2010 Season in Review.

As usual we start the review of the fishing season with an assessment of the amount of snowfall we received last winter. After all, snowfall is the lifeblood of our rivers, streams and lakes. Last winter saw a snow pack that was well below the long-term average for the Kootenay Region, with anywhere from 50-80 percent of normal snowfall depending on the particular watershed. In terms of the spring runoff, most of our rivers experienced their freshet flows without any flooding as they peaked in around the third week of May. By the end of the third week of June, the St.Mary River was clear enough to fish. So at the start of the season we were happy to see any early freshet without any flooding, but wary of the implications of the low snow pack on water conditions come late summer.

Rainfall:

Rainfall during the fishing season was below the long term average in May and July, and above in June, August and September. The June rainfall really helped overcome the low snow pack to ensure our rivers had enough water later in the summer.

Rainfall (Millimetres at Station ‘Cranbrook A’):

Month	May	June	July	August	September
Rainfall in 2010	36.9	81.8	22.2	45.8	42.4
Rainfall in 2009	19.2	52.4	53.6	64.2	12.6
Average Monthly Rainfall (long term)	42.6 mm	52.7	38.2 mm	31.6 mm	27.3 mm

Temperature:

Daily temperatures are also an important factor in understanding the fishing season on the whole. The daily temperatures in the 2010 season were below the long term normal from May all through September. Both May and September were both quite a bit cooler than normal at 2.2 C° (4 F°) below the long term average. So we experienced a cooler spring and summer in 2010.

Temperature (Celsius at Station ‘Cranbrook A’):

Month	May	June	July	August	September
Temperature in 2010	15.5	20.6	26	24.5	17.4
Temperature in 2009	18.7	22.1	27.1	26.1	23.3
Average Daily Max. Temperature (long term)	17.7 C	21.6 C	25.6 C	25.4 C	19.6 C

On the whole, conditions on our rivers were very good in terms of floatability and having lots of cool oxygenated water for the fish to thrive in. The season lasted into the second week of October in the East Kootenays and until the end of October over on the Columbia River in the West Kootenays. So once again we were blessed with enough precipitation and good warm weather to undertake another passionate season of fly fishing in South-eastern British Columbia.

April to June:

We were very excited to start the season earlier than normal as we were guiding clients for the big trout over on the Columbia River in the West Kootenay region. This is the 35 mile portion of the Mighty Columbia that stretches from the city of Castlegar B.C., down to the Canada-U.S. Border. We fly fish this stretch of big water from our 16 foot jet boat which we have customized to allow us to row as well. The jet allows us the luxury of getting quickly to the prime runs and the ability to row allows us to work the section quietly as not to spook the big rainbows. Once at our run of choice we get into position against the casting braces and start fishing.

The Columbia River really produced some dynamic days on the water from mid April through June. The weather and water conditions on the Columbia this spring were very good. The fish that were caught using both streamer and dry fly fishing techniques generally ranged from 17 to 23 inches and were stout and strong. Tying into a nice rainbow on this stretch of big water often takes one into the backing once or twice before subduing the prey. With a flow rate as much as 50 times that of the Elk River we are talking some serious water here! In addition to some nice sized fish landed consistently, we caught a few monsters. We consistently caught fish over 20 inches on the trips and fish into the mid 20's were not uncommon. That said, the 29 inch brute that was wrestled in was a rare occurrence, but was incredibly exhilarating none the less! See Fishing Report 1 for 2010 for more background on this majestic piece of water.

In between trips over to the Columbia River we did get out onto some of our favourite alpine lakes

around Kimberley. In particular we love to fish Premier Lake with its beautiful setting and prized Penask Lake Trout who love to jump once hooked. We spent most of the time tempting them with our chironomid setups and had lots of great days on the water. It was common for a couple of anglers to catch 30 fish in a day while landing the odd trout pushing 19-20 inches. We continued to fish the lakes and followed the steady hatches of chironomids, damsels, Callibaetis mayflies and flying ants into mid June. By the end of June the freshets were waning over on the St.Mary and Elk Rivers so we turned our eyes towards them.

July:

In the first week of July we were running floats down the St.Mary River. The River was still a little high from all that June rain, but working the banks from the raft produced good catch rates. The River itself

did not change a whole lot during the freshet. The early hatches of Stone Flies and Yellow Sallies were plentiful and the wild Westslope Cutthroats had wintered well as they looked bright and strong.

About a week after getting onto the St.Mary we were floating the Elk River. The Elk was also running a bit late in terms of water clarity, but produced well on the first time out when the two anglers caught close to 40 fish. The average size on that trip was 15 to 16 inches with the biggest fish a nice 17 inch cutthroat – very healthy and chunky! So we knew we were off to a good start of the 2010 season.

By mid July we were seeing summer temperatures and the fishing on the St.Mary and Elk were rounding into summer form. We were fishing from the rafts as well as getting out at the more promising runs to fish them from shore. At this time the anglers were experiencing some really great days out on the water with catch rates of over 20 per angler and with cutthroats of over 17 inches showing up. By late July the grasshoppers were starting to dominate as the food source and we were running floats on the Bull River which was really producing good results as well.

August:

By August the rivers were in their summer groove with optimal flows, excellent clarity and the anglers dry fly fishing from beginning to end of the float. The weather was very nice and the anglers were catching some nice big cutthroats over 18 inches on both the St.Mary and Elk Rivers. The average sized fish caught was in the 14-15 inch range on the St.Mary and 15-16 over on the Elk. The anglers were also landing the odd rainbow-cutthroat cross which tended to be in the 18 inch plus range. Everyone was doing well out on the rivers in August.

September:

September continued to see the rivers fish well. On September 5th we saw a little rain, which brought out a huge hatch of Green Drakes on the St.Mary. The result was an excellent day of fishing. The two anglers landed 30 fish each and saw the average cutthroat caught come in at a hefty 15 to 16 inches, with a few cut-bows ranging from 15 to 18 thrown in. The fish were a good size and provided plenty of excitement on the day. We also continued to have good success on the Elk and Bull rivers.

October:

We kept fishing the St.Mary and Elk rivers through late September into the first part of October as the weather was now getting pretty cool. Our last trip to the Elk on October 12th produced some really nice sized cutthroat as they were all fattened up for the winter to come.

We then took off over to the West Kootenays for a couple of weeks of big rainbow fishing on Columbia River. As a big piece of water regulated by a series of upstream dams the Columbia produces some premium fall fishing opportunities as the water levels are stable. In addition, the weather is generally milder than in the East Kootenays in the fall. On our final trip of the season in late October the anglers caught and released several rainbows in the 18 inch class. The biggest fish came early in the day and took the form of a trophy rainbow over 25 inches in length! It ran the angler into the backing twice. It was a big male rainbow trout of close to 7 lbs, a beautiful specimen! What a way to end the season!

So there you have it, another year in the books. 2010 was a great year for dry fly fishing on the Columbia, St.Mary, Elk, Bull and Skookumchuck rivers. We had good weather during the season and had no forest fires or significant other natural hazard to deal with. We had a wonderful year of fishing and greatly enjoyed and appreciated your patronage. We hope to see you next year and are booking 2011 trips now.

Have a healthy and safe winter and don't hesitate to call us at 1-800-667-2311 to talk about the rivers you wish to fish or next year's available days.

Take care,

Kelly

Kelly and Karen Laatsch, St.Mary Angler

PS We will be attending tradeshows shortly and hope to see you there. Click for dates, locations and contact us for will call tickets if you will be attending.

2010 Fishing Reports

(Report #28, 2010/10/21)

The last trip of the season produces big fish on the Columbia River.

Today was our final trip of the 2010 season as we put in just downstream of Castlegar B.C. This was our last chance to cruise around the different runs and back eddies of this robust piece of water in search of the big Columbia rainbows.

The weather has been good all week as a high pressure system has been holding steady. The weather outlook kept calling for the system to break down, but today it was still holding strong, much to our benefit. The temperature for the day topped out at a comfortable 14 degrees C° (58 F°) with clear blue skies. This made for an awesome day on the water.

The water temperature in the morning started off at 50 F° and stayed constant throughout the day. The water levels are pretty low these days as the River now runs at about 46,000 cubic feet per second. This level is normal for this time of year.

The Columbia River can throw many things at you in a day of fishing. Therefore, we like to make sure we are prepared with all the rods strung with the suitable gear in advance. In the morning we fished with a wet line, swinging streamers and or nymphs. This turned out to be very productive as by the second run the angler was already into a few nice rainbows.

The day started out and remained very good, with several rainbows in the 18” class landed and released. Our biggest fish came early in the day. It took the form of a trophy rainbow over 25 inches in length! It ran the angler into the backing twice. It was a big male rainbow trout of close to 7 lbs, a beautiful specimen!

In terms of hatches, we saw a few Caddis flies coming off. They started to emerge in the afternoon once it warmed up somewhat. The hatch lasted for about an hour.

The most effective fly used today was a size 8 Red Shoulder Prince Nymph which is a custom fly we tie specifically for this stretch of the Columbia River.

That's all folks!

Well, I hate to admit it, but we are now finished guiding for the year. Our clients enjoyed a great year of fishing, with little in the way of fires, floods or other natural hazards to get in the way. The staff at St.Mary Angler is very grateful to all those fishers who came and spent time with us in 2010. We would like to wish you all a safe and fun offseason and look forward to seeing you at the Tradeshows this winter or on the water in 2011!

Take care,



on behalf of all the staff at the St.Mary Angler Fly Shop and Guide Service.

(Report #27, 2010/10/12)**Elk River Report: a big fish day.**

At this stage of the season we are spending our time between the East and West Kootenays. The fishing on the rivers has been very good across the region this fall and today we decided to float the lower stretch of the Elk River.

The weather was typical for an October day with cool temperatures in the morning and things warming up to a nice 17 C° (63F°) in the afternoon. The sun was out and there were very few clouds in the sky. That said, we could see that Old Man Winter is on his way as a dusting of snow is evident on the peaks of the Rocky Mountains.

The rivers are still holding their water levels and the Elk River is no exception. The rains earlier on in the month did cause the Elk rise quite a bit, but today she is back to normal level for October.

The morning started off quite cool so in order to entice the fish to take the fly the anglers started off using nymphs. By mid morning the temperature was rising and they switched their rods over to dry flies. The cutthroats know that winter is coming so they are feeding aggressively to build up their body mass in order to sustain themselves through the winter. Any type of food floating down the run now will attract the cuts if properly presented. The Elk River fish are very sensitive to a good drift so you really have to make that fly look real as it floats through the run. If it has any drag on it at all, regardless of the pattern, the fish will not even look at it.

The fishing picked up in the afternoon and the anglers began catching and releasing some nice and chunky cutthroats. Between the two of them they caught and released 25 healthy fish. The average size was 15 to 16 inches. It was definitely a 'big fish day' as the average fish size was pretty good. The biggest fish caught was a nice 17 inch cutthroat. One can really see the orange cut below the jaw line of the fish now. The fish have been feeding well and they are extremely chunky!

In terms of a hatch on this fall day we saw a few Mahogany Duns, Blue Winged Olives and some small black midges coming off. Pretty good action for mid October. The flies that were quite effective today included Blue Winged Olives, Mahogany Duns, Tan Caddis and Parachute Adams (sizes 14 to 18). Foam patterns were producing later on in the afternoon.

Columbia River Bound: The guides of the St. Mary Angler Fly Shop are back over on the Columbia River looking for big rainbows for the remainder of this week and all of next. Watch for another Columbia River Report next week.

Hope to see you before the season is over!

Take care,



St.Mary Angler

PS We can be reached at 1-800-667-2311.

((Report #26, 2010/10/02))

Columbia River Report: The big rainbows are out there!

The stretch of water we fish on the upper Columbia River starts near the City of Castlegar, British Columbia and runs about 35 miles downstream to the Canada – U.S. border. Today we floated the 'Big Rock' section on the upper Columbia River which is in the upper half of this stretch of big water. The weather was quite good as we headed out for breakfast at the Sunshine Cafe in Rossland at 8:00 a.m. After fueling up on eggs, bacon and coffee we were ready to head out to the River in pursuit of some nice big rainbow trout. The sky was clear and absolutely beautiful. The colors on the trees at this time of year are bright red, orange and yellow which made for a gorgeous scene set against the brilliant blue sky. As we approached the River the mist was rising off the water and the anticipation of a day on the River was in the air. The temperature topped out at 27° C (80° F) today. It felt like summer had come back with a vengeance!

The water conditions on the River are normal for this time of year. This stretch of the upper Columbia is controlled upstream by the Keenleyside Dam just above the confluence with the Kootenay River. The River was running medium-low today at about 54,000 cubic feet per second. As you can see this is big water even though we are about 800 miles upstream of the mouth at Astoria. The runs can go for a half of a mile long and there are plenty of good spots for fish to hold in. The back-eddies looked just great as we rode the jet boat up to the first run to fish.

To start with, we set up three different sets of rods. We had one for every possible application including; dry fly fishing, streamer fishing and nymph fishing. It makes sense to prepare for whatever the fish are interested in, then go from there.

The fishing started off slow in the morning, but by mid morning the River turned on and the anglers were landing some nice sized rainbows. The fishing was very good all day long. Each angler caught and released 10 rainbows, which is very good when the fish being landed are averaging 19 to 20 inches in length.

The biggest rainbow caught and released on the day was a nice 23 incher. It had a beautiful crimson red slash with a bright silvery body. These Columbia River rainbows are very much like steelhead and fight just the same. This fish jumped three times and ran the client into the backing several times. What a fight.

In terms of the hatch, October Caddis were coming off, but the trout were not interested in them. The anglers used Wooley Buggers, Black Streamers and Tan Caddis (sizes 8 to 14) to land the rainbows today.

Besides the action on the water the clients watched a beautiful kingfisher fishing in an eddy while they were casting on a nice run. They also noticed a lot Canada Geese feeding during their stop over on the trip down south.

The Columbia River is fishing very well right now and it is no surprise as October is a great month on this piece of water. The fishing season is far from over so come on up as there is another 3 weeks of great fishing to be had.

Take care,



St.Mary Angler

PS You can call us directly at 1-800-667-2311.

(Report #25, 2010/09/20)

St. Mary River Report: the fish are on the move.

Today we floated on the St. Mary River from the power-line down to the pump-house. The weather throughout September so far has been cool and rainy. The temperature today topped out at 14 C° (60°F). We experienced some wind and a little rain on and off throughout the trip.

The water in the St. Mary River rose about a foot from all the rain we have been having lately, but remains very clear. The Elk River on the other hand was blown out last week as the Elk Valley just got pummelled with heavy rain leading to the small tributaries running chocolate milk. The Elk River has since been clearing and by the 24th should be back to around 3 to 4 feet of visibility - all you need to fish for cutthroats.

Today we dressed warm with a number of layers of clothing and put on the waders. With the fly rods in hand we got into the boat and began a day of fall dry fly fishing.

The kokanee have now moved up into the River system to spawn. Kokanee are a small landlocked sockeye. This year we are not seeing the numbers of kokanee that we have seen in previous years, but there is still quite a few of them holding in the deeper water. The cutthroats do not seem bothered by the kokanee and continue to feed on the dries on the surface. Soon the cuts will be feeding on the kokanee eggs which should make things interesting!

The angler hooked about a dozen fish on the trip averaging 13 to 14 inches in length. He caught a couple nice fish in the 15 to 16 inch range. We are starting to notice a lot of fish moving out of this section of the St.Mary into their late fall/winter holes downstream.

There were a few hatches on the River, but they were very small and late in the afternoon. The flies that were working today included the traditional in the morning; Elk Hair Caddis, Lime Trudes, Royal Wulffs, H&I Variants, Orange and Yellow Stimulators (sizes 14 to 18). Later in the afternoon the foam

Wrens, HCB variants, Orange and Yellow Stimulators (sizes 14 to 16). Later in the afternoon the foam patterns were a good choice with the Fat Alberts and Chernobyl Ants producing well (sizes 8 to 12).

Today we saw a few deer moving along the bank edges. First thing in the morning we saw a female moose and her young one grazing their breakfast in a marshy area adjacent to the St.Mary River.

We are off to the Upper Columbia River:

We are excited to be heading over to guide clients on the Upper Columbia River this October. The streamer and nymph fishing are great at this time of year. If you come, you may get a chance at some dry fly fishing as well, but that will depend on the weather. We are guiding full time on the Columbia River this October, so if you want to tag a nice rainbow before the snow flies, come and check us out!

Take Care,



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 to talk about fishing for big rainbows on the Columbia.

(Report #24, 2010/09/07)

Bull River Report: water levels are holding and the fish continue to feed actively.

Our destination today was the Bull River. We decided to go up and check it out even though the weather has been a little cool and damp of late.

The day was overcast and cool, but we had very little rain. The temperature saw a high of 14 degrees C (60°F). It almost feels like the end of September now. So remember to dress warm and the weather will not bother you. Good rain gear and a few layers of warm clothing is what you will need to stay comfortable out on the water.

The Bull River, as well as all the rivers of our area, has held its water level very well this season. The Bull still has many nice pools and runs where the fish are holding and feeding regularly as they bulk up for winter. Thank God for us fishers that they just keep on eating and eating!

We floated our usual section of the Bull, casting out the dries for some surface action. The Bull is much easier to fish from the boat as the steep rocky shoreline is very difficult to traverse on foot. The boat also allows for some excellent casting opportunities as it gets us into some prime cutthroat water that is not available by any other means.

We floated and casted for a while before the fishing turned on. The River actually had to warm up somewhat before the fish started to actively feed. Once the fish began to get active, the well-presented flies got some big time action! On the float each angler caught and released 20 cutthroats with a few big ones included in the group.

During the float we covered many good producing holes, but the biggest fish were taken where one of its tributaries joins the Bull. This included a couple of nice 16 inch fish, as well as a robust 17 inch cutthroat. The 17 incher really is a nice trophy of a cutthroat for the Bull River. All the fish hooked today looked chunky and healthy with that bright red slash beaming along the jaw.

In terms of the hatch, October Caddis were coming off, in addition to some late afternoon size 14 Green Caddis. The flies used effectively today included small Tan and Green Caddis (sizes 14 to 16), Orange and Yellow Stimulators (sizes 10 to 12), Royal Wulffs and H&L Variants (sizes 16 to 18) and regular Adams (sizes 14 to 18).

During the trip we saw a lot of bird life in and about the trees, singing and chirping away as we floated by. We also could not help but notice that the leaves on the trees are turning yellow and orange — the sure sign of fall. It all made for a great ambiance to accompany a fun day of fishing on the Bull River.

We are still experiencing great fishing on all the rivers we frequent. So before you think about putting your equipment away for the season, give us a call about a float in the East Kootenays or over on the Columbia River.

Take Care,



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 to talk about fishing this fall.

(Report #23, 2010/09/05)

St.Mary River Report: wet weather brings a *huge* Green Drake hatch!

Our destination today was the bottom section of the St. Mary River from the Mission down to the where it joins the Kootenay River. The weather was rainy and overcast. It was one of those days when you wish you could stay home and keep warm. The temperature was a ‘nippy’ 9°C for a high (50°F)!

So we bundled up into our polar fleece, waders and rain gear and off we went. The water conditions were pretty well optimal for this time of year. Some areas are running a little skinny, but overall the St.Mary has been in great shape the whole season. You sure can tell it is September now as the trees are starting to change colors, the deer and grizzly bears are beginning to move down into the valleys and everything is happening against the backdrop of a dusting of snow on the peaks of the Rockies! While we still expect plenty of quality fishing time washed in lovely warm afternoons, we have said goodbye to the heat of summer.

So the anglers tied on their dry flies of choice and began their float on the River. As they pulled away from the shore, one of them hooked up a fish right away and landed three in the first 20 minutes. So the day was starting off very well.

Over the course of the float, the light rain did not stop the fish from feeding. In fact the rain actually seemed to enhance the fishing! Before lunch each of the anglers had landed about a dozen cutthroat. The day was looking good, but the weather continued rainy and cool. After starting a fire and setting up a place to eat lunch in a dry spot under a grove of trees, we spotted a massive Green Drake hatch coming off down River. After a quick gobble, the guide quickly packed away the lunch and rigged the dry lines with Green Drake patterns.

The fish were up and feeding on the surface and the day became very exciting from here on in. During

the afternoon both anglers landed another 20 fish as they floated and fished the runs. So on the day each angler landed over 30. That is why one can never be deterred by a little rain!

The biggest fish hooked was a nice 20 inch rainbow that managed to break the fly off at the last moment. The average cutthroat caught was a hefty 15 to 16 inches, with a few cut-bows ranging from 15 to 18 inches thrown in. The fish were a good size and provided plenty of excitement on the day.

The main hatch of the day was that monstrous aforementioned Green Drake hatch. So we really like those rainy days when they produce this type of hatch. In terms of artificials we tied on; Green Drakes, Tan Caddis, Green Caddis, Lime Trudes and H&L Variants (sized 12 to 16).

Fall Advice:

If you are dressed properly you can stay warm on the water even on the most rainy days. This will allow you to take advantage of the type of hatch we had today. September can be a great fishing month in the Rockies. The kids have gone back to school and taken the adults with them, so there is very little pressure on our rivers now. Come and check it out, it is like having your own personal trout stream!

Take care,



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 to book a trip or talk about fishing this fall.

(Report #22, 2010/08/30)

Everyone is happy on the St.Mary River!

Today's float was the Canyon Reach of the St. Mary River from Wycliffe down to our pullout at the St. Eugene Mission. The temperature was quite cool as things have really dropped off in the last couple of days... could this be the beginning of fall? Anyways, last week we were in the 30° Celsius range (mid 80's F.), but this week we are in the teens (60's F.). It was around 19° C. today (66 °F) which felt pretty good in the sunshine. So today we were back to using the waders again.

Just a note to say that when you come to fish in the Rockies, always bring clothing that you can layer under a rain jacket. The weather in the Rockies can change from day to day, and even throughout the day, so it is advisable to be prepared!

The St. Mary River has had great water conditions this year. Thanks to the cool spring and summer the fishing has continued excellent throughout the season as well. The fish are not stressed and they are up and feeding continually as the summer rounds the corner towards fall. The runs have kept their form very nicely and the guides have not had to get out of the boats to drag them across tumbling stones. Therefore, on the whole, the fish, the guides and the anglers are all happy these days!

So the anglers rigged up their 4 and 5 weight dry fly-rods with 5 or 6X tippet to start with. They went 5 or 6 depending on whether they were fishing small traditional flies, or choosing big attractor patterns. The primary approach today was to use the boat to float down to the runs where the fishers would get out and work the pools from the low bank gravel shore. The St. Mary River has a lot of nicely braided runs so it is great to get out of the boat in order to cover the River more effectively in waders.

The fishing was on again today, as the anglers had so many doubles that they lost count of them. By the end of the day each angler landed about 30 fish. The average size was 13 to 14 inches, with many in the 15 inch range. One client had a "triple slam" as he caught and released a cutthroat, a rainbow and a cut-bow over the course of the day. The biggest fish landed was a nice 19 inch cut-bow which ran and jumped many times before it was subdued for pictures.

The cooler weather is producing some nice hatches on the St. Mary River these days. Today we saw some small Tan Caddis and small Black Midges hatching later in the afternoon. The dry flies used today included a selection of Orange Stimulators, PMDs, Parachute Adams, Royal Wulffs, H&L Variants and Lime Trudes - sized 12 to 16. Later in the afternoon the anglers used Tan Caddis (size 14) and some foam patterns including Chernobyl Ants and Fat Alberts - sized 10 to 14.

About Town:

Hunting season is about to begin in the Kootenay Region so we are seeing many big bucks moving into town. It is quite something to see a big buck in the back lane or in the back garden!

Fall Fair:

After we finish off the season on the St. Mary and Elk rivers, we will be moving over to fish the Mighty Columbia River for the big rainbows in October. So there are still lots of opportunities to come fishing with us before the season ends.

Call me at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss fall fishing options in our part of the world.

Yours truly,



St. Mary Angler

(Report #21, 2010/08/18)

St. Mary River Report: conditions are great and the big fish are showing up!

Today's float was the top section of the St. Mary River. We put in just below the outflow of St. Mary Lake. This section is quite narrow and closed in compared to further downstream and makes one feel like you are in a real mountain wilderness setting. The trees hug the banks closely while you wind your way through this beautiful scenic corridor.

The weather was quite good as we headed out to the River. The skies were clear and bright blue with temperatures reaching 30°C (86°F).

The St. Mary River is still holding its water well which has been good news for the fish population. The River is crystal clear and the runs, pockets and pools are well formed and looking excellent this time of year.

It was so warm today that the fishers decided to wet wade (no waders) so they could keep themselves cool in the water. They strung their 5 weight rods and tied on the guide's choice of dry fly and began casting shortly after we arrived.

The River fished very well today as the father and son team landed 45 fish between them. The average size of fish caught was 14 inches long and chunky in size. The biggest cutthroat caught was a feisty 20 inch fish that looked strong and healthy. After the pictures were taken and the fish was released back into the River they began fishing again and within minutes hooked into a 23 inch cut-bow which jumped and shook its head like a fighter. What a day!

Hoppers are now very noticeable on the banks and a few tan caddis were hatching as we ran the River. The anglers used small sized (14 to 16) tan caddis, H&L Variants, Lime Trudes, Royal Coachmans and Royal Wulffs, as well as Parachute Hoppers sized 12 to 16.

Clear Air:

We have been lucky this summer in the West and East Kootenays to avoid the forest fires that have been plaguing the rest of B.C. So we have good air quality and beautiful days to go along with the scenery all thanks to the rain earlier this summer!

Hope to see you on the river soon,



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 to book a trip or talk about fishing this fall.

(Report #20, 2010/08/17)

Elk River Report: the conditions are perfect.

Today was a great day to head to the Elk River and float one of the lower sections. The gear was packed into the truck and off we headed towards the town of Fernie. The drive is always made pleasant by a stop in Jaffery for some strudel and coffee; it always goes over well with the fishers. Once everyone saw the River flowing through the Rockies, the urge to get fishing was overwhelming so we worked quickly to get on the water.

The weather was just perfect, clear blue skies with temperatures reaching 30°C (86°F). The River conditions are now optimal with good flow, crystal clear water and spectacular looking runs.

After the all the leaders and tippets were checked over and adjusted according to the size of fly the fishers were going to use, we hit the water. If we are fishing small patterns we use a 5X or 6X leader and around 12 feet in length. If we are going to start with a big terrestrial pattern, then a 5X tippet is fine and 7 to 8 feet of leader. This morning we decided to tie on small patterns. One with a midge pattern and the other with an ant pattern to start things rolling.

The morning started off a little slow, but by 11:30 the fish had started to take the flies. The fish in the Elk River are very 'drift sensitive', so one must concentrate on making the float of the fly as natural as possible. Absolutely no drag at all or the fish will not take the bug!

Each client caught and released 15 fish on the day. The fish were an average of 15 to 16 inches and were very chunky and healthy looking. The biggest fish caught were a couple of nice 18 inchers. That was

later in the day as they gobbled up the big terrestrial bugs.

In terms of hatches we saw some small midge type flies and lots of grasshoppers on the River. The most successful flies were the midges and ants in the morning, and the hoppers, Chernobyl Ants and Fat Alberts in the afternoon.

Before we left the shop in the morning, there was a mother deer with her two fawns grazing near the truck and boat. As we drove out to the Elk we saw a black bear run across the road. There is a lot of wildlife to view in this area so please drive carefully.

Fall Floats:

Summer is flying on by, but the fall brings us other fishing opportunities. If you will not been able to get away this summer, think about coming up in September and fishing for these wild Westslope Cutthroats. If you like to fish Blue Winged Olive hatches, this is the time to fish for them.

Hope to see you on the river,



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 to book a trip.

(Report #19, 2010/08/9)

St.Mary River Report: the trip starts and ends strong!

Today we floated the St. Mary River from the St. Eugene Mission down to the Fort-Steele takeout near the confluence of the St.Mary and Kootenay rivers. This is a beautiful float with plenty of spots to get out of the boat and fish up the channels or along the nicely formed runs.

This summer has been somewhat cool with more showers and cooler temperatures than usual. We have had a lot of very nice days, but not the usual run of several in a row like we are used to. Now you would think this would adversely affect the cutthroat fishing. But, as some of you know, once the storm rolls through the valley the barometric pressure changes and the fishing gets crazy as they come up to feed non-stop! Sometimes the passage of a storm brings really good hatches that occur on the water as well.

The good thing about the increase in rain this season is that the rivers are in really good shape for this time of year. They are holding their water and the fish are not stressed at all. One of the other benefits of consistent moisture is that we have no forest fires active in our region.

We floated with our dry lines rigged up and ready to hook into some nice cutthroats. A few casts into the trip and the anglers hooked into a nice 16 inch cutthroat. The fish in the St. Mary River tend to fight hard and as they brought this one up to the boat they took a nice picture of it. It was a great start to their day.

The St.Mary fished slow in the morning and after the storm rolled on by, picked up quite a bit by the early afternoon. The anglers only caught a few in the morning, so the guide had to work a little harder to find a bug that would work under these conditions. As the afternoon picked up quite a bit, both anglers ended up catching and releasing 20 fish each. The biggest fish caught on the day was a nice 18 inch

cutthroat which fought hard and had striking colors with that highly defined red slash under its jaw. It was a real gorgeous specimen of a wild Westslope Cutthroat Trout. They fishers really hit it strong near the end of the day where one of the last holes produced many fish to bring their catch numbers up. Maybe that is why they stayed on the River a little longer than usual!

In terms of hatches, we are seeing more and more grasshoppers on the bank edges now, but no particular hatches of note. Sometime we are seeing small midge hatches or Green Drakes coming off, but the St. Mary tends not to be a hatch orientated River. So when we say there is no hatch on the day that is no big deal. The key is for you to make sure your fly floats naturally enough that it fools the fish into eating it!

The flies used today include the Royal Wulff, Lime and Royal Trudes, Green and Tan Caddis, Orange Stimulators and Adams, sizes 12 and 14. They also used foam patterns including Fat Albert's and Chernobyl Ants, sizes 12 and 14.

Today we saw many birds including the eagles and ospreys looking for their next meal on the River. We also saw quite a few thirsty deer wondering around the valley.

Fall fishing can be spectacular in this part of British Columbia with many good hatches of Blue-Wing Olives or Duns coming off, so the fishing can get really interesting. Give us a call and come and fish these hatches against the spectacular backdrop of the Rocky Mountains decked out in its beautiful fall colors.

Hope you are getting out on the water this summer.

Yours truly,



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 to book a float or chat about conditions.

(Report #18, 2010/08/5)

Elk River Report: Perfect conditions lead to near perfect results!

Today we decided to float the lower section of the Elk River. This float is a great trip as it is very scenic and full of feeding fish. The only problem that can occur on this stretch of the Elk is if the wind picks up and blows like crazy, which it can on the bottom end. However, today it was absolutely perfect as the wind stayed away.

During the day the sun was bright and the temperature reached 29°C (84°F). We had big puffy clouds that floated high in the sky. It was just a wonderful day to be out on the River.

The water conditions are now at their best for this time of year. There has been no rain for the last few days so the clarity of the Elk is very good and many pools and runs have formed up nicely.

We dry fly fished all day from the boat, as well as from the shore. We would float and fish from the boat till we got to a nice run and then stop and get out and fish from shore. Our approach is to start at the top of the run and work our way all the way down to the bottom. We like to cover as much water as possible when working these runs. Surprisingly, the fish can be holding in very shallow water. or they

might be moving about in the faster water. You just never know for sure, that is why we take a methodological approach to cover as much water as is possible.

Today was another really good day with the lone angler landing around 40 fish. He was by himself and had a real blast. The average size of fish landed was in the 14 to 15 inch slot and he landed many in the 16 to 17 inch class as well. The biggest fish landed was a nice 18 inch cutthroat and when it was brought to the boat we were impressed with just how chunky these fish are getting.

In terms of hatches: PMD's, midges, and a few Green Drakes were hatching on the Elk, as well as a few Mayfly Duns. The angler used Green Drakes, Parachute Adams, Adams, Lime Trudes, Fat Alberts and Chernobyl Ants (sized 14-18) during the trip.

As we were getting rigged up this morning two otters popped their heads out of the water and just sat there watching us. They were living in the log jam along side of the River, and they were so cute. We also saw quite a bit of bird life on the trip, including a group of Canada Geese bathing themselves at the River's edge. Somehow they looked more comfortable than the ones we often see in city parks!

All in all, it was a great day to be on the Elk River!

I hope you can make it up to fish with us this summer.

Yours truly,



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 to discuss river conditions and available days, or to book a float.

(Report #17, 2010/07/29)

The St. Mary River is producing very well!

Today we floated the bottom section of the St. Mary River. The St. Mary has been fishing so well lately that the group decided to avoid the much busier Elk which is currently seeing a lot of fishing pressure. As the St. Mary does not have a lot of easy River access, the amount of fishing pressure is always much lower than the more easily accessible Elk River.

The weather today started off hazy and overcast with the potential for some thunderstorm activity. However, as the day progressed the haze burned off and it turned out to be a wonderful day with the temperature reaching 29 ° C (84°F).

The water levels on the St. Mary River are optimal and holding nicely. The runs are nicely formed up and you can still get your boat in close to the edges were the fish like to hang out and feed. The St. Mary River tends to braid a lot so our rafts work very well under these conditions. Hard shell boats (drift boats) do not work well on this River as it is too shallow for them to run without scraping the bottom.

The anglers dry fly fished all day. The morning started off slow, but as the day progressed the fishing picked up and was very good – just like the weather. When the barometric pressure is dropping – as it does before a storm - the fish stop feeding and hunker down. As the storm passes the fish come back un

and start feeding again. So as the threat of thundershowers made its way through the Rockies, the cutthroats responded by coming up and feeding aggressively.

The two anglers caught and released 35 fish between them. They tagged a couple cut-bows on the lower stretch of the River, and these fish sure put on a air show. One fish hooked took off across the River and had the angler into his backing. The guide put the oars in the water and took off in pursuit so the cut-bow could be landed - very exciting indeed! The largest fish landed was a nice 18 inch cut-bow.

It was a lovely looking fish as it had the colors of a rainbow with the orange cut under the jaw. The condition of all the fish being caught now is excellent as they are healthy and strong.

There were no hatches to speak of today, but the hoppers are out in force and the fish are starting to key on them now! The flies that were used on this trip included the Royal Wulff, Royal and Lime Trudes, H&L Variants, Grasshopper patterns, Fat Alberts and Chernobyl Ants - sized 10 to 14.

The St. Mary River supports a lot of wildlife and if you are looking and lucky enough to be in the right place, it can be very rewarding. Many birds and deer can be seen throughout the day. We are still waiting to see the mother moose and her young that frequent the road between Kimberley and Marysville. You just have to drive by at the time she is out grazing on the long grass by the road, so keep an eye open on this stretch of pavement.

Lately we have been concentrating our fishing the St. Mary and the Bull Rivers as the fishing has been so good on these two streams.

I hope you can make it up to fish them for yourself this summer!

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 to book a float trip.

Report #16, 2010/07/25)

The St. Mary is hitting its Summer Grove!

The St.Mary River was our destination today as we floated from the Power-line Road down to the Pump House. The weather conditions were beautiful with the temperature reaching upwards of 32 degrees C (90°F). It was a very warm summer day here in the East Kootenay Region and we spent it the best way possible, on a river fly-fishing!

The St. Mary River is at its normal height for this time of year. The fish seem to have found their summer lays and they are feeding on regular basis. There are many nice runs that have formed and some great looking pools to cast your fly into!

The anglers dry fly fished all day, and it was great. The rivers in this portion of B.C. are known for their ability to start and end an anglers day with a dry fly. Watching a big trout rise out of the depths to grab one's fly perched quietly on the water surface never gets old!

The St. Mary River is fishing very well lately and today was no exception. The fish were up and

The St. Mary River is fishing very well lately and today was no exception. The fish were up and feeding from the start. The anglers approached the day by floating down the stream, casting their flies along the bank edges and along logs, or behind big rocks. When they floated across the deep pools, the anglers would drift their dry flies through in hopes of enticing a big cutthroat out of the dark green waters.

Today was a big fish day as the two anglers caught and released 40 fish between them. The average size was 14 to 15 inches and they managed to land three nice 17 inch cutthroats! These cutthroats are very healthy and strong. The pronounced red cut under the jaw-line is very beautiful and along with the beautiful body colour makes these fish camera ready!

Grasshoppers are starting to show themselves in the fields along the river banks now. That said, the fish are not quite keying on them yet. A small hatch of PMD's and Yellow Sally's were coming off the River today, but the fish seemed to be keying on anything that managed to get caught in the flow of the River and pass into their feeding range!

In terms of the flies we used, the most productive were Adams, Parachute Adams, Royal Trudes, Royal Wulffs, Orange and Yellow Stimulator and H&L Variants - all in the size 12 to 16 class. We also used a few bigger Fat Alberts and Chernobyl Ants in the 10 to 14 bracket.

The bird life on the St. Mary River is plentiful now and the deer are often spied making their way down to the water for a drink. The black and brown bears also make their way down to the River to drink in the early mornings, or late in the day. So keep an eye open!

Rivers Update: The Elk, Bull and Skookcumchuck Rivers are also fishing very well now. If you are thinking about coming up to experience some great fly-fishing and everything else that goes along with it, give us a call.

We hope to see you up in our area this summer,

Kelly

St. Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 to chat about conditions or available days.

Report #15, 2010/07/21)

It's Bull River Time and the Fishing is Fine!

The time is right for a trip up to the Bull River, so off we went for our first foray of the season. What a beautiful drive it is up behind the stretch of the Rockies, called the "Steeple". Once you **see them** you will understand the rationale for the name. On the way we saw many deer - a plethora of mothers with their young and bucks popping up all over the place.

The weather was very nice today with a temperature around 28°C (84°F). We had clear skies in the morning, with a few high clouds appearing later in the afternoon. Overall it was a very pleasant day to be out and fishing in the scenic backcountry of British Columbia.

The Bull River is still a little higher than normal for this time of year, but running crystal clear with the fish up and feeding regularly.

The anglers stayed in the boat quite a bit today. The approach was to fish towards the bank edges, working the structure created by large boulders and fallen trees. At this time there are a few spots where they could get out and work the bank edges of the Bull. But the advantages provided by the boat to reach those hard to get areas just couldn't be matched by the walk and wade fishing. We dry fly fished all day, and it was outstanding!

The fish were up and feeding aggressively today. If one could overcome the temptation to prematurely pull the fly away from them, one could catch a lot of fish on this day! On this trip, the two anglers caught and released 50 fish for a very active day. The average size caught and released was in the 12 to 14 inch range. The biggest fish landed was a nice and chunky 16-inch cutthroat who took off like a bullet and ran into one of the big pools, which made for an interesting chase. All the fish were very healthy and strong!

In terms of the hatch, we observed a few PMDs and midges coming off, but nothing too remarkable. The flies that were the most effective were the Yellow Stimulators, Royal Wulffs, H&L Variants, Caddis and Parachute Adams - all in the size 12 to 14 window.

On this trip we were lucky to see a small black bear. It jumped into the water and swam as fast as it could across the Bull. I guess it just wanted to get as far away as it could from the boat and its motley crew of fly fishers.

Rivers Update: All the rivers are in prime condition now and the fish are up and feeding. As the summer is short they only have a few months of good meals so they are prime targets for the fly fisher now.

Hope to see you this summer.

All the best,



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 to chat about conditions or available days.

Report #14, 2010/07/15)

The bottom end of the St. Mary provides spectacular scenery to go along with some excellent fishing!

The section of the St. Mary River from the Mission down to Fort Steele was our destination today. The weather was absolutely wonderful with temperatures reaching 28°C (83°F). There was a little breeze throughout the day, but nothing like earlier in the week. On this section of the St.Mary you float towards the Rockies so the scenery is just beautiful!

The St. Mary is continuing to drop and the fish are finding their summer lanes and holes. On this bottom stretch of the River there is so much water to fish, with many back channels and pools where

you could spend a good portion of the summer if you had the time!

Today we mostly floated and casted our dry lines along the bank edges, behind rocks, and along log jams in an effort to draw out the hungry cutthroats. The anglers also got out of the boat a few times to fish the back channels and pools behind the log jams. The fishing was very good today as the cutthroats were looking up and feeding regularly which made it great for the angler with a dry fly and some good form. All one has to do is make a good cast, put in a good mend so you get your fly to float naturally down the seam, and if the fly floats without any drag for a short time (or as long as you can) the fish will come up and eat it!

The guys caught and released over 40 fish between the two of them on this float. The fish are looking very healthy and the St. Mary fish seem to be pulling very hard early in the season. The biggest fish caught today was a nice 17 inch cutthroat and the angler had a good fight before he landed it and posed for pictures.

The St. Mary River cutthroats tend not to be hatch orientated, however there was a small hatch of PMD's coming off. But regardless of the hatch, if you get a good drift on the fly the cuts will come up and slam it! So a lot of flies will work if your technique is on.

The flies pulled out of the boxes today included Stim Chew Toys in orange and yellow, Hi Vis Parachute Adams, Red and Orange Humpies, Fat Alberts, and Royal Wulffs - sizes 12 to 16.

During the float we noticed many eagle nests on the River, as well as number of osprey nests up in the high trees. It is wonderful to see them flying and looking for food for their young, even if they are chasing the same fish we are!

In general our rivers are fishing very well right now and as always there really is not that much angler pressure over here.

Hope to see you this summer.

All the best,



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 for conditions or to book a trip.

(Report #13, 2010/07/14)

Elk River is rounding into form.

Today we floated a 6 mile portion of one of the lower sections of the Elk River.

We are now happy to report that the weather has turned back to summer again. The past few days were cool, bringing with it a lot of wind and rain. It was crazy weather for this time of year. But today the weather improved a great deal with temperatures reaching a nice and toastie 28 degrees C (83°F), with no wind!

NO WIND:

The water visibility on the Elk today was around 3 feet, which is all you need to fish for these cutthroats. That said, it is clearing up after that spate of rain and is dropping again. The Elk is a little high for this time of year, but this added flow will be good for the fish as the summer progresses.

On this trip the anglers wanted to spend more time out of the boat, fishing from shore. So we shortened up the distance covered on the water and instead fished a shorter stretch of the Elk more intensely.

The fish are still on the move as the River settles into its summer groove. So by fishing from the shore the anglers were able to key on the cuts that were forming into groups in the runs and making their way upstream.

In one particular run the fishers caught and released many cutthroats as they were up and feeding like crazy on the surface. During the day the two fly fishers caught and released around 30 fish between them. The fish were pulling very hard, and are already showing some nice girth early on in the season.

The average size cutthroat caught today was in the 14 to 15 inch slot, with the biggest one being a nice 18 inch cutter. Wow was it ever a nice looking fish. It took off into the pool and the client had to run downstream to land it! It was a lot of fun and some unexpected exercise to boot!

Caddis, Green Drakes and midges were popping off throughout the day. There was lots of food on the water for the fish to eat while the ospreys circled above. The flies we keyed on included caddis, Turk's Tarantulas, Fat Alberts, Stimulators in orange and yellow, and of course, the Chernobyl Ants!

Other Rivers Update:

The St. Mary is fishing very well now. The Bull and the Skookcumchuck rivers are still somewhat high, but are dropping steadily. Another few days and they will be fishing great. We will let you know when they are ready to go.

All the best,



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 for conditions or to book a trip.

(Report #12, 2010/07/06)

It is smoking hot over on the Elk River, and the fishing is pretty good too!

We have been thinking seriously about floating the Elk River for over a week, so today we fished the section near Fernie B.C. The weather was absolutely splendid today with temperatures topping out at around 30 degrees C (86°F). There was no wind today, which is not abnormal for the Elk. After a few days of hot weather, it is now official, summer has finally arrived in the East Kootenays!

The Elk River has many tributaries that contribute to its flow, so it tends to stay high and slightly off color a little longer. Last week the Elk only had three feet of visibility, but the River has dropped since

then and is clearing up more each day. Today the Elk River is at its normal fishing conditions for this time of year with 4 to 5 feet of visibility.

Most of the fishing today occurred while on the float. That said, on a number of occasions the guide pulled the boat onto the shore allowing the anglers to fish a few nice long runs from the edge. The fish were feeding on the surface, readily passing up the nymphs on the bottom to take a fly floating down a seam. Fishing from shore seemed to be the most productive way to go today. The fish are still in the midst of moving upriver to their summer feeding stations, so are hugging the bank edges. Just a reminder to not step too far into the water or you will spook the fish out into the mainstem and away from you!

The fishing was very good today, as both anglers landed 18 to 20 fish each. The average size was 15 to 16 inches. The biggest fish was a nice 17 inch cutthroat – very healthy and chunky! The early season size is telling us the fish are feeding well on the hatches and bugs in the system.

Stone flies, Pale Morning Dunns, caddis and Yellow Sallys were all hatching out on the Elk today. There were stone flies everywhere on the water, but funnily enough the fish were keying on the caddis instead. The flies we used included; Elk Hair Caddis, Stimulators, Chernobyl Ants, Parachute Adams and even H&L Variants — the sizes ranged from 10 to 14.

In terms of wildlife, we saw all kinds of osprey and eagles flying over head fishing to feed their young.

St.Mary River Update:

The St. Mary River is fishing very well right now. The River is dropping steadily and looks very enticing to anyone who owns a flyrod. If that includes you, give us a call to discuss conditions and available days!

All the best,



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 for conditions or to book a trip.

(Report #11, 2010/07/04)

St. Mary River Report: Things are very good right out of the chute!

Today we celebrated the 4th by floating the Canyon Section of the St. Mary River. It turned out to be a good call as the wind picked up on other sections of the River and caused nothing but grief for the ones who had to shoot 'laser dart' casts into the wind. But the Canyon was not too bad for casting!

It has been a crazy spring and early summer as the weather has refused to cooperate thus far. We have had windy and wet weather the last week or so. However, the front is moving out and we are supposed to have summer temperatures starting tomorrow, we will keep our fingers crossed. The temperature today was around 18-19 degrees C (65°F), with those occasional windy gusts.

The St.Mary River has cleared up, and, frankly, looks beautiful. The water is dropping everyday. It has gone down two feet since Friday and continues to drop. With the great weather coming the fishing should be outstanding!

Today the anglers floated mostly and only got out of the boat at a few nice runs. They keyed on casting close to the bank edges, around structures and behind rocks. The water is still a little high for this time of year and the fish are still working their way up the River to their summer holding spots. Therefore, one needs to cast the fly close to the bank edges to find these early season cutthroats. In addition, one has to be ready to mend, and then mend again, to present the traditional fly naturally on the water. If you are using a foam pattern fly then you have to move that fly continually to entice the fish into taking it hard.

The fishing was very good today as the two anglers caught and released 35 fish. There were a few fish in the 16 inch range, but the majority were 13 to 15 inch cutthroats. They were all very healthy and colourful fish. The biggest cutthroat caught was a nice 17 incher. Very healthy and already starting to get chunky! All the fish seemed very hungry and fed regularly on the surface during the day.

The hatches on the day included Stone Flies and Yellow Sallys. The flies that are most effective this time of year are the big attractor patterns such as Yellow or Orange Stimulators, Fat Alberts, Truk's Tarantulas, Royal Wulffs, Parachute Adams and Lime or Red Trudes (sizes 8 to 12).

We always see deer out and about at this time of year and right now the bucks have their fuzzy antlers and the mother deer are looking after their fawns. It is very cute to see a young fawn with all its spots following after mother on the way to the water's edge for a drink.

Elk Update:

The Elk River is now fishable and with this warm weather moving in, we expect it to get better.

We are expecting a busy fishing season, so hope you can make it up to take part.

Take care,



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 to talk Karen or myself about the latest conditions and to book your trip.

(Report #10, 2010/06/24)

Columbia River Report: smaller in the morning and bigger in the evening.

Today we were back on the stretch of the Columbia River downstream of Castlegar, B.C., over in the West Kootenay region of British Columbia. The weather was quite good as we headed out onto the River at 5:00 in the morning. Later in June we have to split the days as the fish are keying on the early morning caddis hatch, then after taking the afternoon off, we venture out again into the evening. The temperature on the River was just over 20 degrees C (70°F), with only a few clouds overhead. There was a slight breeze in the late afternoon for a short while; but nothing strong enough to affect the fishing!

The water conditions are high at this time as we are in freshet and there has been a lot of rain this spring. So today the River was running at about 90,000 cubic feet per second. As a comparison the Elk River is running at 5,120 c.f.s. So we are fishing some big water.

On this trip the anglers fished mostly from the boat. The approach consisted of the guide motoring to the top of the eddy and cutting the engine while positioning the boat so it would not spook the fish. Then the guide would begin to row down into the eddy while instructing the anglers where to cast their flies along the edges. To start with they tossed streamers and when they saw a pod of fish feeding on the surface, they would switch to their dry fly rods. The dry fly rods were already set up with caddis flies. This allowed the anglers to make a very quick transition to dries as they started to throw good long casts right in front of the feeding fish.

The anglers fished the morning from 5:00 a.m. till 10:30. They caught and released 6 fish during this span. This group of fish were on the small size for the Columbia River as they all fell into the 15 to 17 inch class. However, the rainbows looked really healthy and were very good jumpers! After taking a break in the afternoon, they returned to the River from 4:00 p.m. till 9:30 p.m. where they caught and released another 9 fish. This later group of fish, all caught on dry flies, are more typical of the Columbia as they averaged 18 to 20 inches in length.

The biggest fish caught was a nice, big, 21 inch rainbow! Hooking a fish of this size, on a small dry fly is when skill comes into the picture. While it can be a real challenge to land one under these circumstances amongst this strong current, when it is accomplished you feel great!

The dominant hatch was the caddis, which can be incredibly huge on the Columbia! You can barely breath without eating a few caddis there are so many in the air. In the evening there are so many hatching you can actually hear the rainbows slurping them off the surface!

In terms of artificials, they used Kelly's Super Streamer, size 8 to 10. In addition they used some of Kelly's specially tied caddis, plus elk hair caddis and winged caddis, sizes 14 to 16.

St.Mary River Update:

We floated the St. Mary again on June 27th and while still quite high it is dropping daily. The River is clear and will soon be fishing quite good along the bank edges, or up the back channels. We will be checking out the Elk River soon, so I will give you an update shortly.

Hope to see you up here this summer!



St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 for available days or conditions.

(Report #9, 2010/06/19)

St.Mary River Reconnaissance: things are looking good early on.

Our trip today was our first float down the St. Mary River this season. Our goal was to see as much of the River as we could in order to report back to you, so we floated three of the four sections. We put in at the Pumphouse and hauled out at Fort Steele on the Kootenay River.

This spring has seen a lot of rain and cool weather after a winter of low snow. So while we initially thought we were going to have very little runoff, the wet spring has kept the rivers flowing high longer than we anticipated. All that said, the weather today was very nice as the temperature peaked at 20 degrees C (68°F). There were a few clouds in the sky and a little breeze, but on the whole it was a

beautiful day for our first float!

The St. Mary is still running high, which is normal for this time of year, but is clear and dropping every day. Most of the snow in the high country has melted, so the rain is what is now keeping the River level up. So we are past the peak of the freshet and the River is on its way to setting up for early summer.

In our effort to cover as much water as possible, we floated and fished from the boat for most the day. We were really keying on seeing how the River has been effected by the spring freshet, and where the fish are holding at this time.

On an early season float like this we often find some trout in one area, but then do not touch a fish for awhile. As soon as the River settles down, the relationship between what water looks good for fish and where the fish actually are will become stronger.

During this float we noticed a lot of fish are still holding up in the back channels, avoiding the fast moving water of the main channel. Soon we expect to see more of them moving towards their summer lanes as the River settles into its new hydraulic groove.

On this float we dry fly fished. Our approach was to cast along the bank edges, and behind rocks and the structure in the River.

The biggest fish caught today was a healthy 15 inch wild west-slope cutthroat. It put up a good fight and was a very healthy looking fish! Between the two anglers, 10 fish were caught and released. Judging from the fish we saw, these St. Mary fish are finishing up the spawn and beginning to feed more. While we did not catch many fish today, we now have a good handle on how the season is progressing and know where the logjams have reformed this spring!

In terms of the early season hatches we noticed some Yellow Sally's, Pale Morning Dunns and some Stone flies coming off today. With respect to our use of artificials, we used Stone Fly patterns, Orange Stimulators, Chernobyl Ants and Royal Wulffs - sizes 8 to 12.

In terms of wildlife, we saw a few deer feeding along the water's edge, as well as, a big Elk on the bank. We also saw a number of eagle and osprey nests with the young ones bobbing up and down.

Other Rivers we like to fish:

The Elk, Skookcumchuck and Bull rivers are still running high, but are dropping every day. They are at their normal height for this time of year.

We are over on the Columbia River for another week, then back full time on the Rivers of the East Kootenay's till early October.

Hope to see you up here this summer!

Kelly



St.Mary Angler

(Report #8, 2010/06/06)

Premier Lake is producing lots of Silver!

Today we were off to Premier Lake to check out the June fishing conditions. We arrived around 11:00 a.m. and found the Lake both beautiful and calm. There was only a slight breeze, which felt good on the face. It has been pretty cool and damp this spring, which has been a bit deceiving in terms of the progression towards summer, but summer will be here soon as the rivers are opening next week!

The nice thing about fishing Premier Lake is that it is quite large for an alpine lake at about 3 miles long. This size advantage tends to spread the fishers out so there always seems to be enough space for everyone. The temperature today was a comfortable 19°C (66°F), and when the sun was out it felt hot. Sunscreen was a must as one can easily get burnt this time of year and a set of good polarized sunglasses for eye protection is also an asset. The water level is normal for this time of year and the run-off is almost done as it was early and muted this time round.

We fished using chironomid gear in search of the big rainbows. We cruised the various drop-off ledges, anchoring up with our backs to the wind and casting our rigs out and letting them sink. We were fishing in 12 to 16 feet of water, as the fish have moved into the shallows to feed.

Between the two anglers we caught and released 30 fish. A few were at the tail end of the spawn, but most were nice big, healthy "silver bullets". The average size fell into the 15 to 19 inch class. We caught a few at the end of the 19 inch range and they were very active. One fish took us into the backing and put on quite an aerial display!

The hatch of Callibaetis Mayflies came off for most of the day. A few chironomids came off as well, along with a good showing of dragons and damsels along the Lake edges.

In terms of artificials, the Callibaetis Mayfly worked very well in sizes 14 to 16. In addition, leeches, damsels and dragons sized 10 to 14, and chromies and snowcone chironomids also work well.

River Update:

The Rivers of southeastern British Columbia open June 15th, next Tuesday. The St. Mary River already looks clear enough to fish. This year will be early so if you want to get out and wet a line, come on up, fishing will be great!

Hope to see you soon,



St.Mary Angler

DS Call 1-800-667-2311 for more details

1-800-667-2311 FOR MORE DETAILS.

(Report #7, 2010/05/24)

The Columbia River is producing some nice rainbows!

This morning we started off with a good breakfast at the Sunshine Cafe in Rossland B.C., then headed down the hill to fish on the Columbia River. We fished the section of the River upstream from Trail B.C.

Today the weather was absolutely beautiful! By the end of the day it reached 24°C (75°F). Wow, what a nice day to end our long weekend as Monday is Victoria Day in B.C. The added bonus was only a very light breeze and just a few clouds in the sky. Be sure to dress in layers when you come fish on the Columbia because the weather is quickly changeable and it is nice to be comfortable.

The Columbia River is up a bit recently as more water is being released from the upstream dams, but the fish are holding in the big back eddies. This way they can feed easily while using very little energy. They have now moved into their spring and summer holding areas. They seem content to sit and wait for the food to accumulate along the seams between the eddy and the main current where they can eat all day with little effort.

We had all our rods rigged and ready for any type of fishing today. After all if you are fishing with streamers and the dries start to come off and you are not ready, this can lead to missed opportunities! After we launched we took the boat directly upstream and fished the back eddies. Our modus operandi was to sneak into the top of the run, turn off the motor and then row down casting into the seam. You have to make good casts under these circumstances in the order of 40 feet as the fish are easily spooked at times.

The fishing was very good all day. Each back eddy we pulled into we land 2 or 3 fish, then move on to a different part of the River. On the day the angler caught and released 15 rainbows in the 17 - 20 inch range. A very productive day for one angler. He landed 3 fish at 22 inches and one fish at 23. Most rainbows were chrome bright – already starting to bulk up off the huge caddis hatches that are prevalent on this River. There is a lot of food in this eco-system and it will be readily evident when you observe the hundreds and hundreds of swallows devouring the hatches up and down the River.

The 23 incher was the biggest fish caught and released, and it had a big red stripe down the side of this chrome bright fish! Very beautiful and a nice fight.

Today there were huge numbers of caddis flies coming off the trees- mating with each other and then the females swooping down and bumping the surface of the water to lay the eggs. The fish do not seem to bother the caddis at this time, they seem to focus on the emergers on or near the surface.

The flies used today focused on a couple of my streamer patterns, as well as some specially tied caddis patterns sized 16 and 18.

The Columbia is providing some excellent fishing this spring so if you have the time, come on up and experience it for yourself

Hope to see you soon,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 for more details and available days.

(Report #6, 2010/05/22)

Premier Lake Report: plenty of chironomids and mayflies.

Today we decided to take advantage of the nice weather and headed out to Premier Lake. Premier is a big lake with a lot of drop-off ledges and plenty of good water to fish. All of the lakes in our part of the East Kootenays have been fishing very well this spring.

The weather started off good in the morning and the temperature reached 18° C (65° Fahrenheit) in the afternoon. The wind picked up after lunch so we moved into a back bay out of the wind. The weather has generally been cool in the month of May, but the upside is that it has extended the chironomid hatches and the fishing has remained good as a result.

The Lake level is normal for this time of year and the water is nice and clear. The Lake temp. today was a cool 7° Celsius (45°F). The nice thing about Premier is you can often see the fish circle below in the shallows, so you know they are here!

Our approach today was to fish closer in to the shore along a drop off ledge using basic chironomid techniques. We rigged our leader to 12 - 14 feet, added a strike indicator, a b-b shot and a chironomid pattern. Then we began casting.

The rainbows today averaged between 16 to 18 inches with a few in the 19 inch range... all nice fish. They were very healthy and chrome bright and we did not catch any in their spawning colours. We did get one nice surprise today when we landed a pretty 16 inch brook trout. The brook trout pulled very hard and was chunky and healthy. There is one particular hole on Premier where we seem to catch the odd brookie when we work it.

In terms of the hatch, the chironomids were coming off for part of the day, in addition to a hatch of mayflies. Now we are also seeing more food in general on the water, including damselflies, and the dragonflies are routinely seen cruising along the edges of the shore.

The chironomid flies of choice today included the chromie, snowcone, red daiichi - sized 14 to 18. If you are out on the water, feel free to try mayfly patterns such as red or green copper john, green-flashback pheasant tail, callibaetis mayfly in the 14 to 18 slot. They should produce well.

River Runoff Report:

The rivers of the East Kootenays are in full runoff now as they are high and dirty. The rivers open on June 15th and given the runoff is somewhat early and muted this year, we expect to see good conditions fairly early in the season.

Hope you are able to get on the water soon.

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call 1-800-667-2311 for more details and available days.

Report #5, 2010/05/14)

The Columbia River is Producing Well.

We have been guiding trips on the Upper Columbia River through the month of April and will be here for the balance of May. Today we went out on the Columbia in anticipation of catching more of those “stainless steel” rainbows. Today the weather was absolutely gorgeous with a clear sky and highs reaching 25° Celsius (77° Fahrenheit). What a wonderful day to be out on the water. It was one of those spring days when you recall why that sunscreen is buried deep in your day bag as the sun really heated things up!

The water is running gin clear. The River is also fairly low at this time of year running at around 42,300 cubic feet per second. I meant fairly low for this stretch of the Columbia!

The Columbia River is a unique fishery, but can also be a difficult one at times. This stretch of the River lends itself to being fish easily from both the right type of boat or from along the shore where one can walk and wade the runs. The techniques we use are a combination of streamer fishing, nymphing and casting dry flies. Therefore, we have all the rods strung and ready for each application in advance. Luckily the boats we use are set up perfectly for this multipronged approach.

We started off the day streamer fishing in the morning and landed 5 rainbows in the 17 to 21 inch range. The fish looked very healthy, with a couple of them in their post-spawn condition. That said, they all fought like crazy. If you hook a fish here and it gets you into the current then you can have your hands full in a hurry! Around 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon a good caddis hatch started to come off, so we put down the streamer rods and picked up our dry fly setups and began casting to the rising fish in the slower water of the big back eddies. We proceeded to catch and release 8 fish, missing another 8, with

our caddis pupa fly. The smallest was a 17 incher and the largest was a nice healthy 22 inch hen rainbow - chrome bright – that fought extremely well. The lone angler in the boat was pretty happy with his catch.

The dominant hatch of the day was the caddis that came off in the afternoon which really made the day on the dries. The flies we used in the morning included Kelly’s super streamer and Kelly’s custom Prince Nymph sizes 6 to 8. The dry flies in the afternoon consisted of a few different caddis pupa patterns sizes 14 and 16.

During the mid day, while we were having lunch on the shore, a small black bear crossed the River. One forgets just how strong a swimmer these animals are. We also noticed a few ospreys and eagles going about their day while we out on the water today.

East Kootenay Update:

The St. Mary, Elk and Kootenay rivers are in full run-off mode now as the weather has warmed up and some spring rain storms have moved into the area in the last couple of days.

The runoff is moving well in the East Kootenays and the fishing is good on the Columbia in the West, so the season is starting off well. We hope you get a chance to get out on the water soon.

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Feel free to call us at 1-800-667-2311 to talk conditions, techniques or available days.

(Report #4, 2010/05/02)

Premier Lake Report, take two.

Today we went out to fish Premier Lake again. It has been windy the last couple of days and Premier gives us the option of moving into the back bays and continuing to fish when the wind comes up. So we thought it to be a safe choice for the best conditions.

Recently the weather has started to move in and cool down with snow falling in the mountains, but today was not so bad. The sun was in and out and the temperature rose to around 13° Celsius (55° Fahrenheit). Our approach was to dress in multiple layers and go out and have some fun!

The Lake conditions are great right now as it is very clear and you can easily see the fish moving throughout the shallows. There was a nice ripple on the water, and the wind picked up and blew at us

hard for a while, but for the most part the fishing was good.

Today we decided to go with two different setups, one with the chironomid rig and the other strung with a wet line and a leech. Shortly after we were in the water we picked out a drop off ledge to park our boat over, then began casting our rods. The chironomid rig was built so our leader/tippet was anywhere between 15 and 20 feet in length. As always we added the strike indicator first, then an arms length above our fly, we added the weight. Once the chironomids started to hatch this method was very effective.

The day started out slow as the weather was bouncing around a little bit. Around 1:00 pm the chironomid hatch started to come off and the wind died down. This allowed us to cast our flies out over the drop off ledge and we started to pick up fish pretty regularly.

The biggest fish of the day was a nice 19 inch rainbow which had that nice chrome sheen. This one definitely pulled hard and took a few good leaps out of the water. On this day we caught and released 25 fish with many in that 15 to 17 inch range.

At this time of year the chironomids are hatching at certain times of the day. If you hit it right, you will be able to hear the buzzing of the freshly hatched insects in the trees around the shore. It is simply amazing how many can come off in one hatch!

In terms of the artificials; leeches, Half Backs, Full Backs, Doc Spratleys (sized 12 to 14) performed well. On the chironomid side; Chromies, Red Daichii's, and Snow Cones (sized 14 to 18) also produced a bunch of fish.

St.Mary and Elk River update:

It has been so cool lately, with snow still accumulating in the mountains, that the runoff on the rivers has slowed right down. This week coming up it looks warmer so we should see more melting action and the subsequent rise in the rivers again. The Columbia River is currently fishing very well.

Feel free to call us at 1-800-667-2311 to talk conditions, techniques or available days.

Hope to see you on the water soon,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

(Report #3, 2010/04/25)

Premier Lake Makes for Primo Fishing!

Today we decided to stay a little closer to Kimberley as we headed out to Premier Lake to fish for rainbows. Premier is blessed with a beautiful setting as it is nestled in the mountains surrounded by amazing views and lots of wildlife.

The weather looked threatening on the drive out, but once we arrived Premier was calm and the sun was shining. During the day it looked we were going to have a couple of storms roll in, but they managed to get blocked out by the mountains and skirt the Lake completely. We had to put on our jackets a couple of times as the sun went behind the clouds, but other-wise we were in short sleeves with the temperature reaching a comfortable 18° Celsius (65° Fahrenheit). By the time we dove out and got set up, we did not hit the water till around 12:30.

The Lake has already finished its spring turnover and is now very clear. The fish are currently in the process of moving into the shallows from the depths of winter. As this is one of our first trips out, our strategy was to move around the Lake from area to area to test out the various drop-off ledges to see where the fish are. We could see at least a few fish cruising in all the spots we investigated today.

At this time of year the fish are feeding primarily on chironomids as they are pretty well the only midges that are hatching. They only hatch at certain times of day. Today the hatch started at around 1:00 p.m. and ebbed and flowed till around 6 when it ceased. All winter long the trout feed on leeches and scuds so by the time chironomids show up the fish switch immediately to this new food source.

So we rigged up our gear with 5 or 6 weight rods and a dry line with a leader-tippet section running about 15 to 20 feet. We used a quick release indicator (to see when the fish takes the fly) and a b-b shot on the line to pull the chironomid down into the water column. We then cruised over to a nice drop off ledge and anchored our boat with the wind at our backs and began casting. Our approach was to let the fly sink a bit and then start retrieving it back with 4 or 5 short pulls at a time.

As soon as we hit the water we began catching fish and continued to do so at every drop off ledge we fished! We caught and released around 25 fish between the two of us and that was only in three hours of afternoon fishing.

The average fish we caught was between 14 to 16 inches. Today our biggest rainbow was a nice 18 incher. All the fish we landed and released looked very healthy and strong and some of them jumped

like crazy and provided us a lot of excitement and fun! We only caught a couple spawners with the rest looking their usual brilliant selves.

The only bugs that came off today was the prolonged chironomid hatch mentioned above. In response we used Snow Cones, Little Johnnies, the Red D and Snow-cones; all chironomids sizes 14 to 18. We also used a few leech patterns; black, green and red-blooded color sized 10 to 14.

We saw a few deer come down the bank to drink when we were fishing. On both the way out and on the way home we saw a good size herd of Elk out in the fields beside the Premier Lake road. In addition to Premier, all the Lakes around Kimberley are fishing great right now.

Hope to see you on the water soon,

Kelly

PS We are back guiding on the Columbia River for the next couple of weeks so we will let you know how that is fishing as well.

(Report #2, 2010/04/18)

Columbia River Report: big river, huge rainbows!

Our trip today was another float on the Upper Columbia River from its confluence with the Kootenay River down to the 'Silver City' of Trail, B.C. The weather was absolutely beautiful with the temperature reaching a high of 20° Celsius (68° Fahrenheit). Warmer temperatures are a plus for this time of year as the hatches get a chance to really get going!

The River is starting to come up a bit to fill Lake Roosevelt just downstream. The benefit to this stretch of the River is that it increases the wetted habitat prompting the fish to move into their selected back eddies or runs to feed.

Our game plan on this trip was to put in halfway down and run up River for quite a distance and then float back down through the many runs to fish. Some of the runs are half a mile long! These days the fish are tending to hold close to the shore line. By drifting the River we can get close to them without spooking everyone and as we you will quickly learn, these fish spook easily! At the bottom of the drift we can decide either to motor back up to the top if the run is very productive and do it again, or move down to the next one. We also have the choice of pulling up to shore and fishing from there, which the clients did quite a bit today.

Depending on what is working on the day, you have a few different fishing techniques to employ. There are some nice runs which you can get out of the boat and walk and fish. In addition there are extremely good sections on the River to either nymph, or throw streamers through. Each technique can work very well. Today one client was using a nymph and the other was using the streamer pattern and both tied into some really nice fish!

So how did it fish you ask? At one point, one run produced 7 to 8 fish with each fisher catching 3 to 4 each before we moved downstream to the next hotspot! There is a lot of water to cover and see on this

section of the Columbia so we had to move on! During the float most of the fish hooked were in the 17 to 23 inch range, nice fish. Between the 2 anglers they caught and released 20 fish on the day. The largest rainbow caught was goliath 29 incher and you can believe it pulled extremely hard, racing towards the current and jumping out of the water! What a battle. The 29er was dark in colour as it transitions from its spawning colours, but was still firm and very healthy looking.

In terms of the hatch on the River, there were some small midges coming off so at one point we hocked up our dry fly gear and tied on some small Blue Winged Olives. That said, the guys mostly fished with streamers and different types of nymphs today. Kelly's Super Streamer and Egg-Sucking Leech worked

very well. In addition, we had some good success with Prince Nymphs, San Juan Worms and chironomids - sizes 12 to 16.

All in all we had a big day on the Big River!

Come Experience the Columbia for yourself.

We are guiding the Upper Columbia throughout April, May and June, then returning again for October. Come and check out this last vestige of the Mighty Columbia by fishing this 40 mile stretch in the spring or fall. We supply the gear you will need to fish, but if you wish to bring your own please feel free to do so. A 6 weight 10 to 11 foot Switch Rod, or Spey Rod, will work well for this application.

As you can see from the two Reports so far, the fishing on the Columbia is off to a great start this season. Feel free to call Kelly or Karen to discuss the most current conditions, the tactics we use on the Columbia River, or available days at 1-800-667-2311.

I hope to see you on the water soon!



St.Mary Angler

PS we are currently booking dates for St.Mary and Elk rivers, as well as the Columbia, so feel free to call to investigate the best time for you to come fish.

(Report #1, 2010/04/16)

Columbia River Report: it's early but good!

We are now guiding anglers on the section of the Upper Columbia River in southern British Columbia. This section of the Big River is about 35 miles in length as it flows from the mouth of the Arrow Lakes down across the Canada/US border. Today we choose to fish just downstream of the Arrow Lakes where the Kootenay River spills into the Columbia.

In order to take full advantage of this big piece of water we are using our 16 foot jet boat which we have modified so we can row, as well as motor. The jet allows us the luxury of getting quickly to the prime runs we wish to work and the ability to row allows us to work the section quietly as not to spook the big rainbows. Once at our run of choice we get into position against the casting braces and start fishing.

This stretch of the Columbia is a big, deep and complex piece of water. Way up here we are about 400 miles downstream of the headwaters of this 1200 mile behemoth. On this stretch of the River you will

experience grand back eddies endlessly cranking round and round, boiling riffles and deep quite runs.

The weather today was a comfortable 16 degrees Celsius (61° Fahrenheit), with a light wind. The sky was partially overcast with the sun making the occasional appearance. These are perfect fishing conditions for this time of year.

This stretch of the Columbia is a ‘tailwater fishery’ with its flows controlled immediately upstream by three big dams on the Columbia and two on the Kootenay systems. At this point in the year with the spring freshet just starting, the engineers in Portland and Vancouver are holding back the flows in the rivers so as to fill the big upstream storage reservoirs behind the Mica, Libby and Duncan dams. So the flow in the Columbia where we are fishing is low by summer standards at about 30,000 feet per second, but is clear and still a lot of water compared to the Elk which is currently running at 530!

The Columbia River demands we use a diversity of fishing techniques that are suitable for a big river with a lot of deep water habitat. In the boat you will find we have rods set up for dry fly fishing, nymphing and throwing streamers. We use 10 to 11 foot ‘switch rods’ that are either 5 or 6 weight. You can single hand cast them, or put on the fighting butt and turn them into a 2-handed casting rod. These rods are reminiscent of the Spey Rod, but are a lot lighter. During a trip we will try a number of different lines ranging from dry to sink tip, onto the fast sinking lines. We will use whatever best suits the waters in which we are fishing on the day.

On our Columbia trips we supply the rods, however feel free to bring yours to try as well. The River is big and you need to be able to cover the water effectively — so our rods are a good choice. We also fish like one would fish for steelhead – a lot of swinging and mending the fly to cover the different depths of the river. In other words be ready for any situation one can encounter on a large river!

The possibility of hooking a big rainbow is so exciting that we could not wait to start fishing today. As it turned out we had a pretty eventful day. At the start, we pulled into a nice big eddy and immediately noticed the fish feeding on a hatch of Blue-winged Olives. So we picked up our dry fly rods and started casting a Blue-winged Olive, size 14-16. As they were feeding a good 40 to 50 feet away from the boat, we had to be able to throw some line to reach them. Good presentation is also a key factor because if it is not right in front of them, they will not even look at it. The leader must also be out of view or they will refuse your offering.

As the fishers were able to meet the presentation requirements of the rainbows, they hooked a couple nice 17-18 inch rainbows and watched these feisty fish take off into the current and put on a significant fight. A combination of strong fish and big water makes for a good fight by these rainbows! As the day progressed we changed over to the streamer technique and carefully worked the water to cover it. We also tried some nymphing.

The biggest fish we landed using streamers were a couple of robust 24 inch river rainbows, very healthy and strong. These rainbows jumped many times and gave an incredible fight. All together the two anglers landed about 16 fish on the day.

In terms of the dry flies, we pretty well stuck with the Blue-winged Olives. The streamers we used were a couple from the guide’s private collection that are only available when out on the River.

As the weather warms up and the fish move to their favoured spring and summer holes there will be more opportunity to hook up these big fellows. But it was nice to get out and start fishing as soon as possible and catching these big rainbows on this big river backdrop was exhilarating.

Updates on the Lakes and Rivers around Kimberley:

The lakes around Kimberley are pretty well iced off (Premier, White Tail, Lazy, Echo, etc.) and are fishing pretty well. The temperature has recently come up and the fish have moved out of the depths and are now feasting on the chironomid hatches. The St.Mary and Elk rivers are in the early stages of the freshet as they are starting to rise and grow murky. The Kootenay River has also turned color. With a snow pack of only about 64% of normal this winter we do not expect a prolonged freshet so the season should start fairly early this year.

I hope to see you on the Columbia soon, or on the St.Mary and Elk rivers sometime after July 1!

Take care,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly". The letters are cursive and fluid.

St.Mary Angler

