

ST.MARY ANGLER FLY SHOP

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June

July

August

Sept.

October

St.Mary Angler: 2014 Season in Review

Overview of the Conditions.

Fishing
Report

Last winter left us with an above average sized snowpack across the mountains of southeastern British Columbia. As of May 1st the B.C. Snow Survey Bulletin described the snowpack in the East Kootenay region, including the St.Mary and Elk Rivers, as 135% of ‘normal’. Over on the upper Columbia it was 104% of normal. When we saw the East Kootenay snow numbers we were a little concerned we might see some flooding on the St.Mary, Elk or Bull rivers come runoff. Fortunately, a combination of a cooler and unsettled spring led to a delay in the onset of the snowmelt and a gradual spring freshet with no significant high water. It also left us with good flows in our East Kootenay rivers throughout the summer and fall of 2014. The flows on the upper Columbia are managed by upstream dams so the spring, summer and fall flows were all good for fishing.

Rainfall during the spring of 2014 did not create any high water problems so we were able to start fishing the St.Mary and Elk rivers early on. May had more rainfall than normal, but June and July were more than half of what we usually see in the East Kootenays. August, September and October were a little wetter than normal, but not enough to have any negative impact on our fishing. Once the season started the conditions the St.Mary, Elk, Skookumchuck and Bull rivers were excellent in terms of fishability, floatability and having lots of cool water right into fall.

In terms of temperatures in the East Kootenays, they were higher than the long term average in July and October. The hotter October temperatures made for a warm and prolonged fall. So on the whole, we had excellent conditions on the East Kootenay rivers throughout the season with a warmer than usual fall, we could not have asked for anything better.

Over on the upper Columbia the rainfall did not create any condition problems in the spring and fall when we like to fish for big rainbows. The weather in the spring was normal and again we were a little warmer in the fall, providing us with excellent conditions on the upper Columbia.

The fishing season started in late April with us guiding for the big rainbow trout on the upper Columbia River south of Castlegar B.C. We started the summer fishing season for wild Westslope Cutthroat on the St.Mary in the second week of July and on the Elk and Bull rivers about a week after that. We got on the Skookumchuck River in August. The season lasted into late September on the St.Mary and Elk rivers. Over in the West Kootenays we fished the upper Columbia River with spey rods into late October.

East Kootenay Rainfall (Measured at station ‘Cranbrook A’):

Month	May	June	July	August	September	October
Rainfall in	60 mm	30 mm	11 mm	51 mm (2)	60 mm	31 mm

2014	(2.36 inches)	(1.18)	(.43)		(2.36)	(1.22)
Average Monthly Rainfall (long term)	42.6 mm (1.7 in.)	52.7 mm (2.1 in.)	38.2 mm (1.5 in.)	31.6 mm (1.24 in.)	27.3 mm (1.08)	18 mm (.7)

East Kootenay Temperature (Measured at station ‘Cranbrook A’):

Month	May	June	July	August	September	October
Temperature in 2014	17°C (62.6°F)	21°C (69.8°F)	30°C (86°F)	26°C (78.8°F)	20 °C (68°F)	14°C (57.2°F)
Average Daily Max. Temperature (long term)	17.9°C (64.2°F)	21.6°C (70.9°F)	26.2°C (79.2°F)	26.0°C (78.8°F)	19.9°C (67.8°F)	11.7 °C (53.1°F)

Columbia River Temperature and Rainfall (Measured at Castlegar, B.C.):

Month	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
Temperature in 2014 (Average Daily Max.)	15°C (59°F)	22 °C (71.6°F)	23 °C (73.4°F)	32 °C (89.6°F)	30 °C (86°F)	23 °C (73.4°F)	15 °C (59°F)
Rainfall in 2014	63 Mm (2.48 inches)	41 mm (1.61)	77 mm (3.03)	14 mm (.55)	43 mm (1.69)	30 mm (1.18)	80 mm (3.15)

The Spring Season on the Columbia River in the West Kootenays.

We fish the 35 mile section of the upper Columbia River from the City of Castlegar, B.C. down to the Canada-U.S. Border. in 2014 this tailwater fishery provided fly fishers with plenty of excellent fishing days from late April to early July. This year we hit the water in the last week of April with a new toy. This spring, in addition to bringing along rods set up for dry flies, nymphing and tossing streamers, we added double handed spey rods. While the boat provides an excellent platform for nymphing, casting streamers and dries; the spey rods allowed us to take advantage of the lower spring flows to fish from along the cobblestone shorelines and bars with lots of success.

Most of the rainbows caught this spring were in the 18-22 inch slot with the odd large fish, 24 inches and up, landed. The Columbia rainbows are very strong and colourful; a product of their big river environment. They like to fight hard, running out of the big eddies into the river current whenever possible to drag you into your backing. The upper Columbia River fished very well and we had some excellent days with good catch rates of big rainbows this spring.

Summer Cutthroat Fishing on the St.Mary, Elk, Bull and Skookumchuck Rivers in the East Kootenays.

By mid July the St.Mary River was in good form and ready to go as the spring freshet came and went without a hitch. We experienced good catch rates of healthy wild Westslope Cutthroats right from the start. At this time the annual stone fly hatch was working its way up the River, backed up with hatches

of caddis and PMD's. The Elk was rounding into form about a week after the Mary.

By late July the weather was hot, the rivers were crystal clear as the pools, riffles and runs were completely formed. This led to some excellent days of fishing. On the St.Mary we were dry fly fishing from the boat, working the banks, as well as getting out to fish up the backchannels with good success. Late in the month we were nearing the end of the stonefly hatch and seeing lots of grasshoppers. Anglers were now catching and releasing over 20 cutthroats each during a float.

By early August the St.Mary, Elk, Bull and Skookumchuck rivers were in their prime and fishing fabulously. We were on the Bull River by the first week of August and this fast little river was producing a lot of cutthroats. On a trip to the Elk River on the 10th we caught lots of cutthroats with the largest being a nice 17 incher that looked very healthy and strong. The angler put a nice cast right out into the middle of the Elk behind a big rock structure and, "bam!", the cutthroat drove onto the bug and ate it. This fish took a nice run and the guide had to maneuver the boat down to an area where he could pull over and the fish could be landed. Wow that was fun.

By mid August the conditions were right for the drive and hike into the canyon section of the Skookumchuck River. The anglers had a blast on one trip catching loads of cutthroat in the 12-15 inch range and one whopping bull trout that was close to 30. The St.Mary continued to produce good catch rates of cuts with big cutthroats in the 17-18 inch range showing up on occasion, as well as the odd sizable cut-bow.

September saw the good fishing on the rivers continue. The grasshoppers were dominating the stream banks with the hatches of Mahogany Duns and Blue Winged Olives building as the month progressed. The St.Mary and Elk continued to produce well through the month with good catch rates and some sizable cuts being landed. On a trip into the Skookumchuck on Sept 17th the bull trout did not cooperate, but the cutthroat sure did. The largest cutthroat on this trip was a nice and chunky 18 incher that was landed amongst the hatches of Blue Winged Olives, Mahogany Duns, caddis and small midges.

Fall Fishing for Big Rainbows on the Upper Columbia.

In late September we made our way back over to the upper Columbia River for the fall rainbow session. The flows were optimal and the River was clear. Optimal at this time of year means flows have declined substantially from those of the summer to the point where there are many exposed cobble shorelines and gravel bars. Again we were ready to fish nymphs, streamers, dries, as well as use the spey rods. However, the expansive shoreline and bars meant we fished mostly with the double handed fly rods as the conditions were fantastic for spey casting.

The fall weather over on the Columbia was very welcoming. On our October 6th trip the weather was a balmy 75°F (24°C) amidst a beautiful fall colour scheme. The average sized rainbow released on this day was 17 to 19 inches with a beautiful 26 inch rainbow topping it off. This rainbow was very chunky and healthy and provided quite a good fight as it took the fly fisher into his backing a couple times. We just love October fishing for big rainbows on the Columbia.

So there you have it, another year of fishing with the St.Mary Angler is in the books. 2014 was a consistently excellent year in terms of conditions as water levels were optimal throughout the season and all our fisheries were as good as they have ever been for us. This was the case in both the East and West Kootenays of southern British Columbia. The spring fishing on the upper Columbia was excellent and the fall component was equally productive. The summer season on the St.Mary, Elk, Bull and Skookumchuck rivers produced a lot of fun and great catches of wild Westslope Cutthroats for our guests.

We greatly appreciated your patronage of our guide service and the fly shop in Cranbrook, B.C. this season. We wish you a safe and enjoyable winter and hope to see you next year.

We will be attending tradeshows in the New Year. We are also hosting a trip for bones and GT's to Christmas Island in late February. While our February 2015 trip is full, if you have an interest in coming along in next year, just drop us a line as we are now booking for 2016.

Feel free to contact us via our [email](#) or at 1-800-667-2311 to talk about the rivers you would like to fish, or to book a float trip for 2015. Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#).

Take care,

Kelly and Karen Laatsch,

St.Mary Angler Fly Shop

PS To find out which tradeshows we will be attending in 2015, click [here](#) for dates, locations and to contact us for will call tickets.

St.Mary Angler: 2014 Fishing Reports

Report #21 (October 26th-31st 2014)

Upper Columbia River Report: Spey rods in the last week of October make for some wonderful fishing!

We stationed ourselves over on the Columbia River in the west Kootenay's for most of October to fish for the big rainbows on this exciting piece of water. Over the last week of October we fished all four sections of the upper Columbia from Castlegar down to the U.S. border. I am happy to report that we caught fish throughout the **four** stretches of the River and had a lot of fun in doing so.

October was a very nice month to be on the Columbia with daily high temperatures ranging from 50-60°F (10-15 °C) accompanied by many sunny days. It has been a beautiful fall. This last week we are starting to see a few rainy days, but things remain pretty mild.

The water flow on the Columbia for most of October has been relatively stable, only rising some in the last week to around 48,000 cubic feet per second. The latest increase in flow made it more fishable along the banks edges and into some structured areas — behind rocks and through boulder gardens.

All forms of fishing can be used effectively on this River at different times, but this last week everyone put away the single hand rods and fished with their Spey Rods, aka two handed rods. Most of the anglers used 12'6", 6 or 7 weights with a T-11 8' sinking head. All flies fished were the classic steelhead style on the swing. This technique can be very effective as one can cover a lot of water and find fish throughout the system by making much longer casts

much longer casts.

This fall, with the weather staying quite nice throughout October, the fishing remained excellent. During the last week, even with the rain, the fish were still up and feeding throughout the day. The guys would get out on the water around 10:30 a.m. and fish to about 5:00-5:30 p.m., as dusk approaches early now.

Each angler would land between 8 to 10 fish a day, a little less than normal with regular fly fishing techniques. But this catch rate was more to do with using the Spey Rods than the fish availability. On the positive side, the Spey technique resulted in larger fish with each rainbow running over 20 inches.

The biggest fish caught was a nice 25 inch rainbow, just over 6 pounds. This trout was caught on a standard Spey fly pattern, mending and swinging it through a run. This big rainbow definitely took the angler into his backing. He had to run down the river just to land this beast! The fish was chunky and it had beautiful rainbow colors. It was a very exciting experience for all involved!

The dominant hatches over the last week were limited to a few midges, as well as some small caddis flies emerging in the middle of the day when it was the warmest. On the whole there was not a lot of activity.

The flies that were working well this last week were the standard Spey flies in the darker colors. These Upper Columbia rainbows take a fly almost like a steelhead does. It is very exciting to catch these big trout because you truly do not know how big this fish is until you get them close enough to land. Even the smaller ones fight extremely hard!

Upper Columbia River Wrap-up:

This stretch of the Columbia River is truly a spectacular river and this fall we have the best October fishing in years. Not only can you Spey fish, or use the regular fly rod, you can use all the techniques to catch these magnificent fish. From streamer flies, to nymphing, to using dry fly patterns, they all work well. It is a river that can test your ability in many ways!

Maybe you should come up and try the Upper Columbia River. I can honestly say that you will not be disappointed.

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS this is the last Fishing Report of 2014! You will hear more from us as we tee things up for the trade shows in the New Year. Until then, if you wish to discuss a trip for next year, call us at 1-800-667-2311.

Report #20 (October 6th 2014)

Upper Columbia River Report: the big rainbow trout are still there!

Well it is that time of year once again to head back over to the Mighty Columbia River for some fall fishing. The section we decided to fish today is the **Castlegar Run**, starting from the put-in at Genelle and cruising upstream. The morning started off at the Sunshine Restaurant in Rossland, B.C. for breakfast. The locals love to chat with the guys that are coming to fish and the food is terrific!

The weather was absolutely beautiful today with some high clouds and temperatures reaching a balmy 75°F (24°C). It was a great fall day on the water as the colors were spectacular. The fish are feeding actively on nymphs, streamers and if you throw the right dry fly, they will take them as well!

The water levels on the Upper Columbia River are controlled by upstream dams. Today the River was running at close to 50,000 cubic feet per second with excellent water clarity, normal for this time of year.

So we rigged up three rods differently. One had a streamer on a fast sinking line. The second with a dry line with a Rio Versi - Tip Sinking Line attached so it could be used to nymph under an indicator. The third rod had a dry line rigged up and ready to go. On the Upper Columbia it pays off to always be ready for any opportunities that may rise. After all, time is critical once on the water and the hatch could be over by the time you have changed over to a dry fly rig! The fishing was very good today with each guy landing and releasing 15 rainbows each. The fish were all very healthy as they have been eating quite well this summer. Most of fish fell in the 17-19 inch slot.

The biggest fish caught was a nice 26 inch rainbow with bright red marks on its body. The fish was very chunky and looked healthy. This rainbow gave a good fight and went into the backing a couple times. The Upper Columbia has very strong currents and this can help the fish take a lot of line off your reel. After a very good fight we finally got him in for a great picture! You got to love October fishing for big rainbows on the Columbia!

The hatches that were coming off River on this trip included caddis, some big October caddis, as well as, small midges. The flies that were working included; Elk Hair Caddis, Blue Winged Olives, Kelly's Super Streamer, Lightening Bugs, Copper Johns and Prince Nymphs. We saw a lot of bird life out on the Upper Columbia today, but remember that the bears are out so be careful when in the back country.

Booking for 2015:

We are taking bookings for the 2015 season now. So call in early to secure your time slot on

We are taking bookings for the 2018 season now. So call in early to secure your time slot on your favorite river of choice.

As always the Columbia River is spectacular and we have a couple of openings so come on out and enjoy the fun! Catch some of these big guys yourself.

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us about booking a trip on the Upper Columbia River at 1-800-667-2311.

Report #19 (Sept. 28th, 2014)

A busman's holiday provides us a chance for some great cutthroat fishing on the Elk River!

Wow, Karen and I finally had a day off together so we decided it was time for us to go fishing. It has been a very busy summer and now fall is here. So off we went to the Elk River along with a couple of our guides. We had two boats and floated the lower section of the Elk River down to Elko.

The weather was pretty nice with the sun poking out from behind the clouds on and off all day. Temperatures reached the high 60's °F (20°C), which meant we could eventually take off our jackets. However, by late in the afternoon the wind did pick up somewhat.

The water on the Elk remains clear and is getting lower as we move into fall, normal for this time of year. Some of the back channels on the lower section are no longer fishable, so the mainstem of the River is holding a lot of fish. We are seeing a lot of fish along the bank edges and they are still feeding on dries, if you have the right bug on.

We could have used nymphs or thrown streamers out on the water today to catch a lot of fish, but we decided to remain with the dry flies. We spent the front end of the float in the boat not getting out onto the shore until after it warmed up around 10.30 a.m. We starting catching cuts from the start, but noticed that these big cuts were coming up to the fly very slowly. One almost had to look away when the fish came up so it could turn on the fly and hook itself. There was a real temptation to always pull the trigger too fast. Fortunately, after a few fish dialled in the correct timing.

The fishing was just great today with everyone catching many cuts in the 15 to 17 inch slot. Some small fish were caught trying to eat the big flies we had on, but most of them were

very healthy and chunky. The colors on these cutthroat trout in the fall is just amazing. The underside of the fish can be bright orange and the cut on the jaw is almost radiant. The biggest fish caught today was a nice 18 incher that put up a good fight before coming in to be released.

The hatches on the Elk observed today included Green Drakes, October Caddis and small midges. The flies that worked best today were Fat Alberts, Blue Winged Olives, October Caddis and Green Drakes.

We saw lots of bird life today, as well as a lot of bear droppings. The bears are out and about getting ready for winter and eating as much as possible. So remember to be aware of your surroundings when you are out enjoying the back country.

Fall Fishing Update:

The rivers are still fishing great. We invite you to come out this fall to enjoy the beautiful colors of nature and cast a line in. The days are shorter, but it is still nice to get out!

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us to talk about our fall fishing opportunities at 1-800-667-2311.

Report #18 (Sept. 17th, 2014)

Blue Winged Olives, Mahogany Duns, Caddis and Midges are all hatching on the Skookumchuck River this day.

We had a group of guys from the Eastern U.S. fish with us recently. A couple of them really wanted to see the Skookumchuck River while in the Rockies. So they loaded up their fly-fishing gear into the truck, and with coffee in hand, headed out early for the hour and a half drive to the Skookumchuck.

The weather was beautiful today so it was a good day to see the Skookumchuck in all its fall glory. The temperature got to a high of 74°F (23°C), but the morning started off quite cool as is now the norm.

The look and feel of the Skookumchuck River has changed quite a bit since the floods of 2013. A number of pools filled up with gravel only to reappear further downriver. Other sections that used to hold fish are now filled up with sand and dirt with the River channel

sections that used to hold them are now filled up with sand and dirt with the river channel

shifted over to the other side. As we drove up we saw a truck pulling out a section of bridge that used to cross the River. In 2013 many bridges in the backcountry were taken out by the high water. So with this in mind the vehicle was parked close to the section we wanted to fish and we got out and put our gear together. We then hiked about an hour back into the canyon of the Skook and proceeded to rig up the dry fly rods.

The Skookumchuck River has a lot of fishable terrain with many nice areas to cast to. These include large rocks and boulders, log structures, and numerous new pools that were formed from the previous year.

The fishing was quite good today. In terms of bull trout, the fishers spotted a few nice sized ones in the pools. There was one particular bull that was big, around 27 inches with absolutely beautiful markings. Unfortunately, the bulls were not interested in the flies we had to offer, but thankfully we did catch many cutthroat trout. Each angler caught and released 20 nice cuts. The biggest fish caught was a nice chunky 18-inch cutthroat that was hooked up from behind a rock in a nice little pool. On the whole it was a really good day of fishing on the Skook.

There were lots of hatches coming off all day including Blue Winged Olives, Mahogany Duns, caddis and small midges. The flies that worked best were the Yellow Stimulators, Black Beetles, BWO's, Brown Duns and Parachute Adams.

In terms of wildlife, we saw nothing but bird life while out on our walk and wade. This was actually a good thing because it meant we did not run into a bear during our travels!

Fall Fishing Round up:

Our rivers are fishing quite well as the fish are feeding as they sense winter is coming. The fall can be the best time to fish providing the weather is on your side. We are seeing many hatches on the rivers at this time of year and the fish are hungry and feeding as much as they can!

Columbia River Bound:

We are heading over to the upper Columbia River soon to fish for those big rainbow trout. If you want the challenge of fishing for big trout on an impressive piece of water, call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss a float.

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

Report #17 (Sept 7th, 2014)

The weather is gorgeous and the St.Mary River is producing well!

Today we choose to fish the St. Mary River from the Kimberley Golf Course down to the Wycliffe take-out. This section of the St.Mary holds lots of cutthroat in its numerous pools and runs. It is also a very scenic section of the River.

The weather turned out to be gorgeous this weekend which was a nice reprieve from the cool temperatures of last week! The mornings, however, continue to start off quite cool at 40-44°F (4-6°C), but by lunch time the days are warming up nicely into the 65-70°F range (18-20°C). The day was mostly sunny today with only a few high clouds. It was a beautiful early fall day!

The water levels are very good for this time of year as we seem to have received just the right amount of rain over the summer so the rivers are not too low. The fish are not stressed at all and they appear to be feeding well and looking healthy.

Being dry fly loyalists, today's group started with them in the morning and continued all day as things warmed up on the water. The fish seemed pretty happy feeding on the surface. It was a little slower in the morning, but they did manage to land a few with the dries on top. By mid morning the fish just kept looking up and if one made a proper mend and drift on the fly, they would land quite a few of these hungry fish!

With the combination of the nice weather and the feeding fish, each guy landed about 20 cutthroat trout. The biggest fish on the day was a nice 18 inch cut-bow. The angler almost pulled the trigger too fast on this nice fish by yanking the fly out of the trout's eager mouth. We find the bigger fish like to take the fly very slowly. On this fish the angler had luck on his side as the fish hooked up and took off up the run and across the River. The guide had to do some quick paddling in order to chase the fish and then pull the raft to the side so the fish could be landed. It was a fun fight and snap shots will be a good reminder of it come this winter when sitting in front of the fire.

With the cool mornings and things warming up later on, the St.Mary River did produce some hatches today including Blue Winged Olives and small midges. The flies that worked on this day included black ants, Klinkhammers, Parachute Adams and Purple Haze (sizes 14-18). Blue Winged Olive patterns, sized 14-16, also worked well and foam patterns produced later on in the afternoon.

Again the bird life was very abundant on the River. We also saw a number of mature kokanee cruising upriver to spawn. The kokanee are also bringing down the bears as it is protein rich food for these guys as they bulk up for winter hibernation.

With the snow on the peaks of the Rockies and cool mornings, the trees are already turning that beautiful hue of orange, yellow and red! Fall seems to be here even though it is not official till Sept 22nd on the calendar.

That said, there is still lots of fishing to be done this season so come on out and enjoy the outdoors in the beautiful Rockies!

Take care

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS you can talk to us directly about fall fishing opportunities by dialing 1-800-667-2311.

Report #16 (Sept 3rd, 2014)

Water, water everywhere, so off to the Elk we go!

This morning we awoke to torrential rain here in the shadow of the Rockies. The weather bureau told us to expect heavy rain all morning, slowing down by mid-afternoon with the storm moving through our area by tomorrow. So with this in mind we decided to go out and look for some fishable water. The anglers on this trip are hardcore fly fishermen and weather considerations are secondary when they go fishing!

The morning was a cool at 41°F (5°C) in Cranbrook and 37°F (3°C) 3 in Fernie! So dressed up in fleece, rain jackets, waders and warm hats the guys were ready to head for the Elk River.

As we drove closer to Fernie along the Elk River we realized that the River was getting big and definitely coloring up. The rain was coming down like crazy and it looked like it was going to be with us all day. So we decided to drive way up above Fernie by Elkford to find some clear water. Finally we arrived to an upper section of the Elk River that was clear.

Today's group are big time dry fly fisherman so they rigged up their rods with dries and set out on foot to fish along the bank edges. By this time it was 11:30 a.m. and by the time we found some good pools and began to fish, the rain was starting to taper off.

The fishing, as you would have guessed, was tough, but if anyone could catch fish these Colorado natives can! They casted over one particular feeding fish at least eight times before the big cutthroat came up and hammered the fly. Not many fish caught, about 10 each, but they were all big and chunky! The biggest cutthroat trout landed on the day was a nice 18 incher; bright, healthy and chunky.

In terms of the hatch, some small Blue Winged Olives managed to come off in the rain. Artificials mimicking Blue Winged Olives and Mahogany Duns were working, but you had to fish size 18-20 to fool these big guys in these wet conditions.

This day definitely tested everyone's endurance level. But when you are an avid fly fisherman, simple rain will not stop you! After all, it is just rain and if one has the proper gear, staying dry can be achieved. Once the rain stopped and the clouds disappeared, we noticed that the Rockies had snow on them! It is only Sept 3rd, oh well, the weather is clearing up and things are now looking fabulous for the next week.

Fall fishing, my favorite time of year.

Fall is here, whether we like it or not, and that brings fall fishing conditions; trees turning color and cool mornings and evenings! This time of year is my personal favorite to fish the hatches of Mahogany Duns and Blue Winged Olives. So come on out and see why for yourself!

See you on the water soon,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to talk about our many fall fishing opportunities.

Report #15 (August 24th, 2014)

The St.Mary River continues to produce great dry fly fishing for cutthroat!

The St.Mary River has been fishing very well this season so our destination today was the lower section of the River from the Mission to Fort Steele.

We met the anglers at our Fly Shop in Cranbrook. Armed with a few new fly patterns and a Timmy's coffee, we headed out for the day. The weather was very nice, but once again it felt a little like fall with a cool morning warming up throughout the day to the high 70's °F (25°C). There were a few clouds with very little wind which made the day just wonderful!

The St. Mary is definitely at its normal summer low now. But we did get some rain earlier in the week which really benefited the River. It also made for some happy fish because when it rains different hatches seem to come off and the fish become very active in response.

Once at the put-in, the guides put the boats in the water while the anglers strung their 4 and 5

weight rods outfitted with a select dry fly to begin the day. Once settled into the boats the casting began; along bank edges, behind big river rocks and up against logs or any other structure in the River. The guides pulled over at the back channels, or the best looking runs where the fly fishers wished to get out and work a section.

The fishing was very good today with many cutthroat caught in the 13-14 inch slot. In addition, they also caught some nice 15-17 inch fish as well. On the day the anglers caught and released 20 fish each.

The biggest fish on the day was a nice cut-bow that was 18 inches and very chunky. Many of the runs on the bottom of the St.Mary have produced very well this year; the fishing has been awesome on many days.

The dominant hatches today include the omnipresent grass hoppers occupying most of the brush and tall grass areas along the bank edges, as well as a few caddis and small midges. The flies that were working today included the orange and yellow Stimulators, Olive Duns, Blue Wing Olives and Fat Alberts (red and black).

During our float of the lower end of the St.Mary we happened across a two year old grizzly wandering along the bank edge. Maybe it is heading towards the Rocky Mountains, or more likely, it is on its way to eat the kokanee (a land-locked sockeye) as they have begun to stage and head up the tributaries to spawn and die. Rivers such as the St. Mary, Bull and Skookumchuck are now seeing the kokanee moving up in preparation for their spawning migration.

Preparing for Fall: Mahogany Duns and Blue Wing Olives

Fall fishing is just around the corner. It is a good time of year to fish the hatches as Mahogany Duns and Blue Wing Olives come off with regularity. The beautiful fall colors of the trees are stunning as the season progresses and the fish feed aggressively as they prepare for the inevitable season of winter.

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss our fall fishing options in the East Kootenays on the St.Mary, Elk, Bull and Skookumchuck rivers, or over on the Upper Columbia River in the West Kootenay region.

Report #14 (August 17th, 2014)

Skookumchuck River Walk and Wade; lots of cutthroat and one big bull trout!

Today looked like a good day to head out north of Kimberley up to the Skookumchuck River. We decided to drive north up to Canal Flats and enter the Skookumchuck from the top.

The weather was a little overcast with a few showers rolling through the valley. We were hit by a couple of rain showers, but for the most part the day was pretty good. It kind of felt like, and I am reluctant to say it, an early fall day! The temperature still got up into the mid 70's °F (25°C), nice and comfortable.

The River conditions are now optimal with crystal clear water and a normal summer level. It was easy to cross the River in sections giving it that small stream feel!

The drive up to the “Skook” is about an hour and a half from Kimberley. So once we reached the trailhead, the anglers were all revved up to get rigged and start the hike down into the canyon. It is recommended that you wear good wading boots with studs, or some form of traction, as it can be very slippery traversing the rocks, or wading in the water. We walked about 30 minutes from where we parked before we reached the pools and runs we know are inhabited by cutthroats and big bull trout!

The anglers started with dries on the surface and managed to catch quite a few cutthroats residing behind big rocks, or in the small runs. The two anglers landed 25 cutthroat trout between them with an average size in the 12-13 inch range. They also caught a nice 16 inch cutthroat on the surface which put up a nice fight.

During the trip we saw a couple Bullies in a pool and decided to try and catch them. We threw a few streamers into one of the pools and then, “Pow!” a big bull trout grabbed on and took the fly with a strong pull! After a good fight the angler was able to land this bull trout which was close to 30 inches in length! It was the type of fish that brings one back for more!

The only hatch on the day was some green drakes starting to pop off and a few small caddis. The most effective flies on this trip this were Fat Alberts (red and black), Royal Wulffs, H&L Variants, and of course a few different sized streamers (white with red, or tan and white).

While walking up to the River early on in the day, we spotted a fox running across the road. Once it got across it just sat there as we went by, really cool! He was checking us out I guess.

River Roundup:

While summer is pleasantly rolling along, fall will start to show her colors soon enough. Early September is a great time on the East Kootenay rivers for hatches of Blue Wing Olives

and Duns. Then at the end of September we are over to fish the upper Columbia River! It has been a great season so far as the fishing has been outstanding, and we expect it to continue through the fall.

Hope to see you out there on the river this season.

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss fishing venues, or to identify available days to book a trip.

Report #13 (August 10th, 2014)

The Elk River is producing very well!

Today our destination was the Elk River. We headed out from the shop in Cranbrook at around 8:00 a.m. to fish the lower section of the Elk from Morrissey down to the take-out at Elko.

The weather was quite nice today with temperatures reaching the mid 80's °F (low 30's °C). There was very little wind on the bottom section, which is great because it can be very difficult casting into a head wind. When it blows on lower end of the Elk it always seems to be a head wind! So the weather conditions were optimal for this summer day.

The Elk River has cleared up well over the last week and the fish seem to be a hungry bunch now.

Once we arrived on the Elk we loaded the gear into the boat, grabbed the dry fly rods and pushed off from shore. We floated and fished from the boat mostly; casting along bank edges, beside logs in the water and behind the big rocks and boulders. We would get out of the boat to fish if a run looked particularly good. We would fish the section for a short time, then continue to move downriver. On some areas of the Elk you can walk up the small back channels and find some eager fish to take your fly. There is so much water to cover on the bottom section of the Elk that one just can't fish it all in one try!

The fish were up and feeding aggressively on this day. They were taking dries on the surface all day long from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. when we pulled off the river. Each angler landed 25 fish and probably lost that many more! It was a great day to be on the water.

The biggest fish landed on the float was a nice 17 inch cutthroat that looked very healthy

and strong. The angler put a nice cast right out into the middle of the Elk behind a big rock structure and, “bam!” the cutthroat drove onto the bug and ate it. The fish took a nice run and the guide had to maneuver down to an area where he could pull over and the fish could be landed. Wow, very exciting stuff for both the guide and the angler alike!

The hatches coming off the Elk included small midges, lots of hoppers in the trees, bush and grass and just a few caddis. The most effective flies were the Royal Wulffs, tan and black caddis, H&L Variants, grasshoppers and black ants.

In between the scenery and all the fishing we noticed lots of bird life throughout the float. We also saw a couple of deer drinking water from the Elk.

River Roundup:

All the rivers are fishing great now. Come on up and see what I am talking about in these reports and check out this beautiful place called the East Kootenays.

Hope to see you on the river soon.

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to identify available days or book a float trip.

Report #12 (August 3rd, 2014)

The Bull River is in prime summer form!

Today looked like a great day to head up to the Bull River and check out the water levels and the cutthroat fishing! The weather again was cooperative with temperatures reaching a wonderful 86 degrees F (30°C). It was a great day to be up on the Bull with the type of weather that makes it worth the drive. One does not want any storms to roll through while on the Bull as it can really put the fish down.

The water conditions on the Bull River continue to drop and are now running at summer flows. The River is crystal clear, so on the whole, the Bull is in prime condition aside from being absolutely beautiful.

The Bull fishes very well when one uses dry flies. The cutthroat will take the fly on the surface even when there is no hatch coming off. However, you still need a good drift on your fly to have real success. You may fool the some small guys with a bad drift, but the big trout will not even look at it if they see the fly dragging.

We fished mainly from the boat today and only got out a few times. This River is fast; with lots of rocks and boulders to cast behind and some real nice habitat along the bank edges to cast to. We did anchor the boat up in places so the anglers could cast to harder to reach spots that one could never reach from shore. Overall the Bull is a great place to dry fly fish for cutthroat trout.

On this float each angler landed around 18-20 cutthroat with the average size of 12 to 14 inches. The biggest fish was a healthy looking 15 inch cutthroat caught in a classic boulder strewn run. These cutthroat are nicely colored with the bright red slash along the jaw — very pretty looking fish that photograph well.

In terms of insect activity we saw some hoppers along the bank edges and a few midges coming off the Bull during the day. The flies that were effective on the River were the foam patterns such as Fat Albert's (tan, orange or black), as well as, grasshoppers, Parachute Adams, H&L Variants and Royal Wulffs.

During the drive up to the Bull River we saw a lot of deer along the way. On the float we saw our main competition – the eagles and ospreys tending their young.

Bull Trout flies now available:

If you want to target bull trout with your fishing, then come on into the shop as Brennan has some great bull trout fly patterns he has been tying up.

River Roundup:

The St.Mary, Elk, Bull and all the rivers of the East Kootenays are in their prime now and fishing fabulously. I recommend you get out there and fish them yourself!

Hope to see you on the river soon.

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to book a trip for this summer or fall.

Report #11 (July 27th, 2014)

Fishing on the St.Mary is fabulous right now!

Today we were off to fish the St. Mary River again because it has been fishing very well

ately. We floated the top end of the St.Mary from the Lake down to the Pump-house takeout. This section has that that remote wilderness feel as it is away from roads and obvious human activity.

The weather was absolutely beautiful on this day with clear blue skies and a temperature reaching a high 95°F (35°C). The water levels are still coming down and are now into their summer groove. The fish have moved up into their summer feeding spots and are happily going about their business of eating! The St.Mary is now crystal clear as the pools, riffles and runs are completely formed.

Today we dry fly fished throughout the float as we made our way down the headwater leg. We pulled over to fish a few back channels getting out of the boat and walking up to fish to the risers. On the float the anglers casted their lines up against the bank edges in the hope of hooking up those aggressive cutthroats that lurk under logs and the overhanging branches.

The St.Mary fished very well on this day with each angler catching and releasing around 24 fish. The biggest fish caught was a nice cut-bow at about 17 inches. This trout was quite rambunctious as it jumped quite a few times. When they jump like this one did, we knew right away that it must have some rainbow in it!

The hatches coming off the River included PMD's and a few stones, but there were lots of grasshoppers. The best flies on the day were the Fat Alberts, Stone Patterns, grasshoppers, Lime Trudes, Royal Wulffs and Purple Haze. But remember as long as you get a good drift on your fly, these cuts seem to try to eat pretty well everything!

During the float we again saw a lot of bird life and a couple whitetail deer down for a drink.

We are out on the Bull River tomorrow, so a report will be forthcoming.

The fishing conditions are really good right now; hope to see you on the river soon!

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to talk about the dry fly fishing on the rivers of the East Kootenays.

Report #10 (July 20th, 2014)

The Elk River is rounding into form!

Today was a good day to check out how the Elk River and its fine assortment of wild westslope cutthroat were shaping up for the season. So we floated one of the lower sections of the River. It was evident from the start that some of the runs, pools and riffles had shifted

of the river. It was evident from the start that some of the runs, pools and riffles had shifted with the big spring flows from early in the year, so it made it fun to search out the new cutthroat resting places!

The weather has been absolutely beautiful the past couple of weeks and the temperature today reached a high of the mid 90's°F (36°C). The Elk River seems to be leveling off in terms of flow as it is slowly dropping each day. The water gave us about 3 feet of good visibility.

Bank fishing on the Elk is a must as the fish are usually tucked up against the bank structure, or along whatever logs and rocks are available. We could have easily spent our time nymphing on a day like today, but we chose to stay with dries to see if we could entice the fish to come to the surface. Most of the day was spent floating in the boat, but we left it on occasion to fish up the back channels.

Casting from the boat can be a bit of a challenge, which makes it a lot of fun, because one has to present the fly with accuracy to these wily cuts. If you can get your fly to land as close to the bank edge as possible, then make it look like it is floating down a feed lane naturally with no drag, then there is a good chance you will hook a nice fish. Trust me on this point, casting from a boat gives one plenty of opportunity to perfect this technique, which can be so productive when done right.

The fishing was good today. Each angler caught and released 10 to 12 cuts. But remember, this was on dry flies only and everyone was quite excited to see the fish come to the surface looking for their meal! The biggest fish caught was a nice and chunky 16 inch cutthroat which looked very healthy. All the trout put up a good fight before being landed and released on this trip.

There was not much of a hatch on the Elk River today, only a few caddis and midges were of note. The flies that were working on this day included Stimulators (orange and yellow), Tan Caddis, Lime Trudes, Royal Wulffs and H&L Variants. We also tied on some foam patterns as big attractors at the end of the day.

Today we saw a lot of bird life. There were a number of eagles and ospreys tending their young which are still bound to the nests. Fun to see.

River Roundup:

The last couple of days have seen a few storms roll through the area which caused the Elk to get cloudy again. By this weekend the River should be back in good shape. The St.Mary and the Bull rivers have both been fishing consistently very well in the last few weeks.

Hope to see you on the water soon!

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS We have booking trips through the summer into late September on the East and West Kootenay Rivers we fish. Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to book yours now.

Report #9 (July 15th, 2014)

It is early in the season, but the St.Mary River is already fishing very well!

Today we floated the Canyon section of the St. Mary River which stretches from the put-in at Wycliffe down to the Mission take-out. The weather was absolutely gorgeous on the River with temperatures reaching the low 90's°F (34°C). The Canyon can get even warmer during the middle of the day as the sun bakes the rock outcrops, but we came prepared with lots of water and sunscreen. A hat and sunglasses were also a must today. One has to be very careful out there as you don't want to get dehydrated or sunburnt.

The water conditions are very good now, probably the best early season conditions we have seen in four years. The water is dropping everyday and it is very clear... and the fish are hungry!

Today we mainly tossed dry flies, but at a couple of the deep holes we dragged a streamer through to see if we could entice a bull trout. Actually we had a bull trout chase a cutthroat that was hooked on a dry fly, but that was as close as we got today.

The cutthroats are moving into their summer lays now so we would find them in one hole and then not in the next. So we beached the boat on a number of occasions and hiked up the back channels where some of the fish continue to hold. We made some casts of our dry flies along logs and rocks, any good structure we could see.

The fishing was very good on this trip as each angler landed 25 cutthroat with many more hooked up. A great day on the water! The cutthroats look very healthy and put up a good fight each time they gobbled up the dry fly.

The biggest fish was a nice 16 inch cutthroat we found when casting up in a back channel. We had found a nice run flowing against a log just along the edge of the bank. It also had a good amount of over hanging brush. The angler made in a nice cast with a stone fly and gave it a twitch as it floated down the run. The cutthroat lunged upward and grabbed onto the stone pattern. It was a very nice take and the angler fought the fish with huge excitement! Finally, it was landed and we took a picture of it. It was a lot of fun!

Big stone flies were hatching on the St.Mary today, as well as, caddis and PMD's. We are now also seeing many grasshoppers in the fields and along bank edges on this section of the River. The grasshoppers seem to be appearing in numbers a little earlier than usual this

season. We countered with stone patterns, caddis, Fat Alberts (red and black) and hoppers.

In terms of wildlife we saw a few osprey and eagles near their nests, scanning the River food.

River Roundup:

The guides plan on getting out on the Elk River this weekend as it is dropping daily, but still has only 2-3 feet of visibility. So we will see how it fishes and the Elk will be the subject of the next report. As for the Bull River it is very clear and dropping daily. In terms of the Skookcumchuck River we will probably have to wait a little longer to get out on it, closer to the end of July when it should be fishing great.

The fishing is really starting to take off now. I hope to see you on the river soon!

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to book a float.

Report #8 (July 6th, 2014)

It was a beautiful day for a walk and wade along the St.Mary River today!

With the shop closed for the day, Karen and I decided to venture down to the St.Mary River to do a little walk and wade along its banks. We grabbed our gear from home and were off. We fished one of the accessible low bank areas on the middle section of the River. As we approached the River we noticed the water had gone down a bit from the last time out, so we are now in a definite downward trajectory towards summer flows. Every warm day we have from here on in causes the River to drop a little more, so things are looking very good.

The weather was absolutely gorgeous on this walk with temperatures reaching the low 80's °F (high 20's °C). There was no wind, fortunately for us the heat was moderated nicely by the cloud cover which caused the sun to fade in and out throughout our time on the River. When the sun was out our dry flies were very visible on the water, but when it went behind the cloud we had to focus on the rise. I must admit that I did miss a couple of fish when I did not see the take...

The water is still a little high, but as mentioned above, dropping daily. It is clear down to 5 or 6 feet now. The runs, riffles and pools are starting to form up nicely so the classic areas where the fish hold are appearing before our eyes. It is kind of nice having the water still a little high as it allows one to fish structures like rocks and logs that are out of the water come summer. Right now there is also the opportunity to fish up the back channels were the fish

tend to hold at this time of year. So the St.Mary has a little bit of a different feel now, that only makes it even more fun to fish.

Dry fly fishing was the first choice today for the St.Mary River. As we walked the river bank we could see many hatches taking place so it was only natural to fish dries. So we strung our 4 and 5 weight fly rods with dry line and leaders, tied on a big stone fly and began to cast upriver into the run. We would work our fly through the riffles and then finally down into the pools.

We did not have to go far before we hooked up our first fish. During our fairly short outing we caught and released around a dozen fish. I probably lost a half a dozen by short striking, or not striking on the hookup fast enough. But it sure was fun to get out for a couple hours to enjoy the cutthroats on the St.Mary!

Most of the cutthroats we caught averaged 12-13 inches. However, we did catch a couple of nice 15 inch cuts that were hiding close along a big rock in a deep pool. All our cutthroats looked very healthy and strong, and of course they were hungry!

The hatches on the River were very good today, both in terms of variety and size. We saw lots of green and grey caddis coming off, as well as the big stones and PMD's. The flies that worked well were the Orange and Yellow Stimulators, Golden Stones, H&L Variants and Deer Hair Caddis.

We usually see lots of bird life on the River, but today we just saw an osprey flying upriver. This is not too surprising as we were on foot and only there for a couple of hours.

River Update:

All the rivers are dropping and clearing up more every day. The Elk and Bull Rivers might have another week or so before we can get out on them to fish, but the St.Mary is ready now. So come on up and check us out!

Hope to see you on the water this season.

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss available days on the St.Mary, Elk, Bull and Skookumchuck rivers this summer... and the Columbia River this fall.

Report #7 (June 25th, 2014)

The St.Mary River is looking good early on!

Today we decided to put the drift boat into the St. Mary River to check it out. It has been looking very good over the last week, just a little high which is normal for this time of year. As our goal was to see as much of the St. Mary as is possible, we floated two sections from the Pumphouse all the way down to the takeout at the Mission.

The weather was pretty good today with some high clouds and a little rain in the afternoon, overall a very nice day. The temperature reached a nice 70°F (21°C). We are hoping for the summer weather to arrive soon, but it is still too early to predict exactly when it will come.

The water conditions on the St. Mary are normal for late June. The River has about 4 feet of visibility and is dropping steadily. This season the run-off is coming off at a nice even pace with no big flood pulse. While the days are definitely warming up nicely, it is still cool in the evenings which may be playing a role in the steady runoff this season.

So we put on our dry fly lines, jumped into the boat and began our reconnaissance mission to see if any cutthroats wanted to come out and play. The setup included our 4 and 5 weight rods strung with good dry lines and 9 foot leaders. The River was flowing pretty quickly near the put in so we initially had to choose our casts carefully. We also pulled over quite a bit, beached the boat and hiked up the back channels to cast. At this time of year the cutthroat like to hide up these channels and feed on the hatches while the mainstem of the River is high.

The fishing was not too bad today. The two of us caught and released 17 cutthroats. Pretty good for 4 hours of reconnaissance on the River!

The biggest fish landed was a nice 14 inch cutthroat that put up a nice little fight! The colors on all the cutthroat were very bright and healthy looking. It was very satisfying to hold one of these beautiful animals again.

The hatch of note on the water today was the Pale Morning Duns which were coming off. We also noticed some stone flies starting to hatch along the River's edge. The flies that worked well included the PMD's, Yellow Stone flies and Royal Wulffs. If you are interested in fishing for Bull Trout then you want to be using streamers.

On this float we saw a lot of bird life including eagles and ospreys flying around their nests. We also saw deer coming down for a drink in the morning, so there was lots of stuff going on out there today.

River Roundup:

The freshet flows in all the rivers around our area are coming down, but the St. Mary seems to be the clearest of all and is fishing quite well. The St. Mary River has the benefit of a headwater lake which always moderates the flows in the spring (keeps them lower) as well as the fall (keeps them higher). The Elk River is still dirty, but should form into shape in the

next 1 to 2 weeks. The Bull River is actually quite clear now, but remains too high for walking and wading for now.

In general the rivers are looking great. We are especially excited after all the high water we received last year. We are very happy to just be out fishing, but as we all know things can change fast in the spring!

We have two boats out on the St.Mary River this Friday so we will have an even better understanding of the River then. Karen has made her first batch of carrot cake for the lunches so the season has officially begun!

Hope to see you on the river this season!

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss conditions and available days on all the rivers we fish.

Report #6 (June 8th, 2014)

The Upper Columbia River is seeing a lot of water now and producing well!

We started guiding on the **Upper Columbia River** in southern B.C. at the beginning of June and will be there until early July. The Upper Columbia River has been very productive over all even though the anglers have had to work hard to locate and catch fish in the past few days. The flows on the Columbia have increased in recent days and coincidentally we did not see many hatches on the water. That said, we were still able to get into fish. Today we decided to put in on the top end of the river near the mouth of the confluence of the Kootenay River and then jetted down to fish the many back eddies of the **Castlegar Run**.

The weather was very nice today with blue skies and temperatures reaching a balmy 75°F (24°C). It was a very calm day which was a wonderful plus for anyone casting fly lines.

The freshet is really moving down through the Columbia system now as the snow melts, today the flow was 110,000 cubic feet per second (3,100 cubic meters per second). However, the Upper Columbia remains very clear. We just have to keep a keen eye out for logs, or branches flowing down the River and getting caught in the back eddies. Once in the eddies they tend to ride the spin until they get kicked out again and continue down river. The water temperature today was 53°F (11.5°C).

We are always prepared to use different fishing techniques when we pack the boat for the

Columbia. Today we focused on nymphing and streamer techniques to catch the big rainbows. After we launched and jetted downstream for a time, we immediately found very active fish as we worked along the bank edges and made our initial casts into the back eddies.

The fishing was very good today which was a welcome change after the past few days of picky fish! Between the two anglers they caught and released 25 rainbows which made for a very productive day.

The largest fish landed and released was a nice and chunky 23 inch rainbow who was not happy about our meeting! This rainbow jumped out of the water many times and made a few long getaway runs in earnest. The heads on these fish seem to look small as their bodies are big, they must be eating very well this spring.

There were a number of hatches coming off the Upper Columbia today. The main ones were small caddis pupas and small midges and they came off pretty steadily throughout the day. Anticipating these hatches we tied some modified caddis pupas in advance which worked fairly well. The anglers also used Prince Nymphs, Copper Johns, Lightning Bugs and Kelly's Super Streamer with good success.

Just before we launched the boat we saw a small brown bear making its way to the River. We also saw a lot of bird life on this run including Canada geese, as well as a number of ospreys and eagles out fishing and patrolling their territories around their nests.

River Round-up:

All of the small rivers in the East Kootenays including the Elk, St. Mary and Bull Rivers open on June 15th. The run-off is still coming strong now, but hopefully with a gradual decline everything will be good to go by the end of June. Dry fly fishing for cutthroats is just around the corner so give some consideration to coming up to our part of the world to catch them!

Tight lines,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to chat about conditions on the Columbia or book a trip for cutthroats come summer.

Report #5 (May 25th, 2014)

Whiteswan Lake has come alive and is producing lots of rainbows!

Whiteswan Lake has come alive and is producing lots of rainbows.

Today the shop was closed so we decided to head up to Whiteswan Lake Provincial Park located northeast of Cranbrook in the East Kootenay region of B.C. It was a beautiful drive up the valley and into the Rocky Mountains to Whiteswan Lake.

The weather was not as good as we would have preferred, but hey, when you have a day off you need to take advantage of it! It was overcast with a little rain now and then, with temperatures reaching highs of 60°F (16°C). But when you are dressed for the weather with proper rain-gear and warm clothes you can easily handle a day like today... so remember to “be prepared”.

The water conditions and clarity of Whiteswan are now excellent. One can see at least 10 feet into the water, which is very helpful in spotting cruising fish in the shallows. The water temperature was 53°F (11.7°C), which was also good as when it goes over 50 the fish become active.

As has been the case so far this spring, we again decided to chironomid fish. So we cruised around the one end of the lake and found a drop off ledge where we could see some fish cruising along. We set up our rods to the desired depth and positioned ourselves with the wind at our backs. We casted out the chironomid rigs and let them sink slowly down into the water column. The retrieve was a slow and deliberate with 3 pulls then a stop, then repeated again and again until retrieval was complete.

We had heard about a sizable flying ant hatch the previous Thursday on Whiteswan so we were wary the fish might have already gorged themselves and would be resting and digesting. However, we were fortunate that they were starting to eat again. Between the two of us we caught over twenty rainbows and they all looked very healthy and strong.

The biggest catch of the day was a robust 21 inch rainbow that fought well and jumped many times. This fish did not like being hooked up and had plenty of energy to fight hard until he finally gave up. It was very fun to have a big fish pull on the line like that!

The dominant hatch on the day was a smallish chironomid hatch in the afternoon. The flying ants were not very evident today. So the Black, red and green chironomids all worked quite well. We also had success with the micro-leech, as well as some ant patterns.

The only wild life seen on the day was a bald eagle protecting its nest and patrolling the land and water for food.

Lakes Update:

Premier and Whiteswan lakes have been fishing very well. Whitetail Lake is also fishing okay, but one has to go very deep using the deep line technique to get down to where the fish are. Overall the lakes are still fishing very well, but it can vary day to day. They tell me that is why they call it fishing and not catching.

that is why they call it fishing and not catching.

Columbia River Update:

The Columbia River is fishing great and we will be guiding there all of June. If you want to chase big rainbow trout come and fish the Columbia with us, you will not be disappointed!

Hope to see you on the water soon.

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss available days on the Columbia River in June..

Report #4 (May 8th, 2014)

Premier Lake has turned over and is fishing well!

This morning we decided to head out to Premier Lake to see how things are shaping up for the season. Many anglers have been reporting that Premier has been fishing very well so we wanted to check it out for ourselves and our fishers!

The weather was very nice with temperatures reaching a high of 66°F (19°C). Premier can often get a little windy and when it does we take refuge in one of bays. Today, however, was calm with only a slight breeze on the water in the afternoon.

The spring run-off has started in earnest so the Lake is coming up a bit. The water is very clear now as Premier has finished the spring turnover and has settled down.

After we arrived at Premier, we quickly built our chironomid rigs. We added enough leader and tippet so we could move the indicator up or down depending on the depth we ended up fishing. Today we fished in mostly 12 to 15 feet of water.

As you know, chironomid fishing calls for you to anchor up your vessel, be it a pontoon or regular boat, and make sure the wind is at your back. It is best to find a nice drop off ledge, cast out your line and let it sink. Slowly retrieve your line all the way back to the boat. Be prepared on the complete retrieve as sometimes a fish will follow it right back to your reel. So don't be in a rush to make the next cast before you complete the one you are on!

On the day we landed over 25 rainbows between the two of us. The rainbows were in the 15 to 18 inch slot. We also landed two Brook trout in a couple spots on the Lake, it was a treat to see these speckled beauties.

The biggest fish on the day was a nice 20 inch rainbow that jumped like crazy and made a couple of nice runs. The rainbow was very healthy and chunky, a nice fish!

Chironomids were hatching throughout the day. This time of year they make up about 80 percent of the trout's diet. We saw some small midges coming off as well. We were hoping for the Callibaetis mayfly hatch or even the annual flying ant hatch to occur, but not today!

The flies that worked best included the Snow Cone, the Double Chironomid, the Chromie, a small green Chironomid with a silver head, black or maroon leeches, Doc Spratley and Woolly Buggers. It is a very good idea to have a good selection of flies in your fly box because you never know which ones will work on a day to day basis. So make sure you have a lot of choices when you hit the water!

On this trip we saw two loons making their presence well known on the Lake. We also saw deer, eagles and ospreys, just to name some of the abundant bird life on Premier lake.

Lake Round-up:

The Lakes are really on fire right now so it is a good time to get out and fish for rainbow trout in the back country of British Columbia! Remember to check your regulations before you head out to the lakes of your choice as everyone is a little different.

Hope to see you on the water soon.

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss conditions and available days.

Report #3 (May 11th, 2014)

The Upper Columbia River is looking good and producing well!

Today was a wonderful day to be chasing rainbow trout on the Columbia River in the Southern British Columbia. After a round of Eggs Benny at the Sunshine Cafe in Rossland, we made the decision to put in at Genelle and cruise upriver in the morning. Our plan included heading downriver later in the day fishing until early evening.

The weather was quite pleasant today with temperatures reaching a balmy 70°F (21°C). As always we carried along the rain jackets and warm clothes, but today they were not needed. What we did need was sun screen.

The Columbia was up a bit today which made launching the boat at Genelle easier as it can

be tricky at lower flows. The River is in great condition now flowing at around 80,000 cubic feet per second with a temperature of 45°F (7.4°C.). Again we are not seeing much debris on the water, only a few logs which we look to avoid when we are fishing the big back eddies! Over all, the Upper Columbia River is in great shape and nice and clear up to 5 feet.

This trip was as much about doing some reconnaissance of conditions as it was about fishing. So we jetted up to the top of a number of back eddies and floated them for a short period to get a handle on their look and feel. We also floated along the banks edges to spot the places where the fish were hanging out in these habitats. We used the nymph technique when the water was perfect for it and we changed rods and casted streamers, stripping them through a run or a back eddy when that application was called for. So we covered a lot of water on this outing.

Each run and back eddy we fished was pretty successful. Of course some runs were better than others. At one point the River shut down completely for about an hour in the afternoon, but picked up as it got later in the day. During our trip we caught about 10 rainbows, each averaging 17-21 inches. All the fish caught fought very hard, jumping out of the water many times and making numerous runs. Even the smaller fish can fight hard in the River, so you never know what you have until you see it near the boat for the first time.

In terms of the biggest fish we caught, we definitely could tell he was larger than the rest by the way he took the fly. I do not think the fish knew he was hooked up at first, but once he made the realization, the fight was on! This fish was a robust 24 inch rainbow that was very healthy with a strong, big body and small head. There is so much food in this system the fish graze constantly in the feed lanes and that is where we found this fellow.

In terms of hatches, late in the afternoon we saw a small caddis hatch which is a little early for this time of year. We also observed a small midge hatch.

The flies that seemed to work well on this particular day included Kelly's Super Streamers, the Taylor Stones, Prince Nymph, Copper John's, Lightning Bugs and Hare's Ears. These are sampling of the many flies we used that worked better than others, and they all work at some point.

Today we saw the Canada geese with their young scattered along the shore line, bathing and enjoying the sun. We also saw an eagle and an osprey up in their nests checking out potential food sources for their babies... a little gosling perhaps?

River and Lake Roundup:

The Columbia and Kootenay Rivers are open year around. The Columbia is fishing very well now and the lakes of South Eastern B.C. are also producing well. It certainly is a great time of year to be up here and fishing for rainbows!

Hope to see you on the water soon

Hope to see you on the water soon.

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss conditions and available days. If you are in the area please come in and check out our Fly Shop in Cranbrook. We are right beside the Sandman Inn.

Report #2 (April 30th, 2014)

The spring weather is improving and the rainbows are active on the Upper Columbia River!

Today our fishing destination was the tailwater section of the **Columbia River** in the West Kootenay's portion of southern B.C. It was Easter weekend so we had a couple days off to get out and fish for these big wild rainbows. We put in on the upper end near Castlegar and headed downstream towards **the big river braid at Genelle**.

The weather this weekend was pleasant, but it was still cool on the River with a few light showers passing through; typical spring conditions! The temperature peaked at around 50°F (10°C) for the high today.

The flow of this tailwater stretch of the Columbia River is normal for this time of year at 64,000 cubic feet per second at a temperature of 42°F (5.8°C.). There is very little debris on the water now as the runoff really has not yet started and excess water is yet to be released from the upstream dams.

As we moved downstream from our launch point, we took the jet boat along the bank edges and into the big back eddies looking for fish. We were ready for throwing streamers, but also had a nymph rig set up on standby. As always we like to be ready to switch back and forth between rods as the opportunity arises! Spey Rods work very well on the Columbia as well. There are many areas where a fisher can get out of the boat and fish from along the cobble strewn shores.

On this trip we mostly fished the big eddies, looking closely for the pushes to cast our flies at. A lot of surface food gets drawn in these eddies then gets caught in the gyre attracting the grazing rainbows. If you put your fly in the right spot, man these fish can take it hard.

Today the fishing was quite good as we caught and released 15 rainbows between the two of us. Every time we threw out the fly we never knew what size of fish we were going to hook. This stretch of the Columbia, even 750 miles from its mouth on the Pacific, has such power

that once you hook a fish and it takes off into the current you are in for a really exciting dance!

The biggest fish landed on this spring day was a nice 23 incher and looked very healthy. As usual, these fish have fed well over the winter months! These Columbia rainbows are very chunky and have big shoulders so they are real treat to hook.

There were no hatches of substance today, just a few midges hatching here and there. In terms of artificials we had success with Prince Nymphs, Copper John Nymphs, Kelly's Super Streamer and Black Stone Flies.

In addition to the nice rainbows released out on the water, we saw a string of turkeys moving from the shore up into the trees, as well as some Canada Geese and a couple of eagles circling their nest.

The Columbia River is fishing very well now so give us a call to talk conditions and available days. We expect the temperature to climb up over 70°F (22°C) this coming weekend, which should spurn some awesome hatches and some big action on the water!

Hope to see you on the river soon.

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

Ps call me at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss the rainbow fishing on the upper Columbia River.

Report #1 (April 27th, 2014)

The lakes have turned over and are starting to produce well.

Today we decided to try our luck at Lazy Lake here in the East Kootenay region of southern B.C. It was a nice morning to get ready and head out into the spring outdoors for the day. It is still quite cool this late April day as we only hit a high of 45°F (7°C). The sun came out on occasion, then the wind would pick up. It feels like winter is not quite ready to release us from his grip, which is not uncommon for this time of year in the Kootenays.

Lazy Lake has recently turned over, but is clearing more every day. It seems to be a little lower than this time last year, but the runoff has yet to start. We prepared the boat and launched. Our first action was to cruise around Lazy looking for some sign of moving fish. Once we were happy with our location we anchored the boat with the wind to our backs and rigged up our fly rods for the day. We setup one rod with a wet line and the other with a chironomid.

We used the chironomid rig to measure the depth of water where we were anchored and then built our leader to that depth of 12-18 feet. We added a strike indicator and then the weight a foot above the fly. With the wet line rig we just ran a 9 foot leader on a type 3 sinking line and tied on a leech, or a woolly bugger and after the cast we stripped it in slowly.

The fishing was a little slow today with the weather being the issue as the squalls were rolling in and out. We caught 4 nice sized fish over 20 inches and 8 smaller fish in the 12 to 15 inch slot during the afternoon of fishing. We did have some fun, but that count is a little low for Lazy Lake.

The biggest fish was a nice 24 inch rainbow. When it hooked up it jumped quite a few times and put up a good fight. Once landed, we managed a nice photo before we released her back into the Lake.

In terms of bug life, a small chironomid hatch came off around 3:00 p.m. The cool weather kept things pretty quiet today. The flies that were most effective were the chromies (made with black or white beads), the snowcone chironomid, the black body chironomid with a red or silver ribbing, and the leeches, black or maroon with the red heads.

During the afternoon we watched an adult eagle cruise around the Lake. At one point the eagle dive bombed one loon many times. The loon had to keep diving under the water to get away from the much bigger eagle. Nature at its best!

Regional Lake Update:

The lakes are all open now as White Swan and Whitetail lakes just opened in the last couple days. Most of the lakes have turned over as well, so get out there and enjoy the great fishing. All the rivers are closed right now from April 1st to June 15th except the Kootenay and Columbia Rivers. So please check out your regulations before you head out on the water.

Hope to see you on the water soon.

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

Ps call me at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss available days in the upcoming season, its going to be a good none!.