

ST.MARY ANGLER FLY SHOP

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[June](#)[July](#)[August](#)[Sept.](#)[October](#)

St.Mary Angler: 2013 Season in Review

Overview of the Conditions.

Fishing Report

Last winter left us with an average sized snowpack in the mountains of southeastern British Columbia. As of May 1st the Snow Survey Bulletin described the snowpack in the Kootenay River watershed as 101% of 'normal' and in the Columbia it was 106. When we saw these numbers we were confident it would leave us with adequate flows in our rivers throughout the 2013 season. We also thought it meant the likelihood of any flooding would be low, unfortunately this did not hold true for all our rivers as the Elk was hit pretty hard.

Rainfall during the spring of 2013 played a big roll in the flow of the rivers and when we were able to start fishing them. Both May and June were wetter than normal in East Kootenays, but the big problem came on June 18-20 when a very intense rainstorm hit parts of our region. The result was 130 mm (5.2 inches) of rain falling in 24 hours and a sizable flood on the Elk River and to lesser extent over on the St.Mary. When things finally settled down, the Elk had experienced a completely reconfigured river channel and a big delay when the River became fishable. As bad as it was it turned out to be only a fraction of the rain that fell on the eastern side of the Rockies causing the Bow River to burst its banks flooding the City of Calgary, causing billions in damage.

Once the water associated with the big June 'rain event' finally passed, the conditions on our rivers were excellent in terms of fishability, floatability and having lots of cool water. The higher than normal rainfall in May and June was followed by lower than average precipitation in July. August and September were wetter than normal, but not enough to have any negative impact on our fishing.

In terms of temperatures in the East Kootenays, they were higher than the long term average in May, July, August and September. So on the whole, the season was wetter than normal with temperatures warmer than usual.

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 mid July and late July on the Elk and Bull rivers. We were on the Skookcumchuck River in late August into September. The season lasted into late September on the St.Mary and late October on the Elk. Over in the West Kootenays we fished the upper Columbia River into early November. We enjoyed a longer than usual fishing season in 2013 with lots of great days of fly fishing for rainbows and cutthroat on the rivers of southeastern B.C.

Rainfall (Millimetres at Station ‘Cranbrook A’):

Month	May	June	July	August	September	October
Rainfall in 2013	73 mm (2.9 in.)	109 mm (4.3 in.)	16 mm (.6 in.)	58 mm (2.3 in.)	87 mm (3.4 in.)	17 mm (.7 in.)
Rainfall in 2012	9.8 mm (.4)	123 mm (4.8)	43.8 mm (1.7)	10.6 mm (.4)	21.8 mm (8.6)	57 mm (2.3)
Average Monthly Rainfall (long term)	42.6 mm (1.7 in.)	52.7 (2.1 in.)	38.2 mm (1.5 in.)	31.6 mm (1.24 in.)	27.3 mm (1.08)	18 mm (.7)

Temperature (Millimetres at Station ‘Cranbrook A’):

Month	May	June	July	August	September	October
Temperature in 2013	19 °C (66.2°F)	21 °C (70°F)	28 °C (82.4°F)	26 °C (78.8°F)	20 °C (68°F)	9 °C (48.2°F)
Temperature in 2012	17.6°C (63.7°F)	18.9°C (66°F)	27.4°C (81.3°F)	28.4°C (83.1°F)	22.7°C (72.9°F)	10 (50°F)
Average Daily Max. Temperature (long term)	17.7°C (63.9°F)	21.6°C (70.9°F)	25.6°C (78.1°F)	25.4°C (77.7°F)	19.6°C (67.3°F)	11.7 °C (53°F)

Temperature and Rainfall (Trail, B.C. located on the upper Columbia River):

Month	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
Temperature in 2013 (Average Daily Max.)	9 °C	15 °C	23 °C	32 °C	30 °C	21 °C	13 °C
Rainfall in 2013	85 mm	126 mm	89 mm	4 mm	39 mm	93 mm	4 mm

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

The stretch of the upper Columbia River we fish for big rainbows is the 35 mile portion from the city of Castlegar to the Canada-U.S. Border. For a description of the four distinct sections of this unique trout stream click [here](#). We fly fish this great tailwater from our nimble jet boat which we have customized to allow us to row through the large eddies, riffles and long runs.

The Columbia River provided fly fishers with lots of excellent fishing days from late April to early July and produced very well. We would have started even earlier in April, but we were very busy moving the fly shop to our new HQ in Cranbrook, B.C. Next year we will be guiding on the Columbia from early April through to early July. In 2013 we were fishing the Columbia in typical fashion; with a dry fly rod, a nymphing rod, and a sinking line rod at the ready to go depending on what the conditions called for.

The bulk of the rainbows caught again this spring were in the 18-22 inch slot with the odd big fish 24 and up landed. The rainbows on the Columbia are very thick, colourful and strong. There were many occasions when these fish took the anglers into their backing and kept the line tight during a long fight. This stretch of the upper Columbia River fished very well and we had some excellent days with good catch rates of big rainbows this spring.

As our stretch of the Columbia is a large tailwater regulated by upstream dams, the spring flows on the upper Columbia are moderated greatly. As such the Columbia had excellent early season conditions in 2013 when others rivers like the Elk and Bow were experiencing heavy flooding.

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

The big ‘rain event’ of late June meant we did not start guiding on the St.Mary until July 15th and Elk and Bull rivers until late July. This was about two weeks behind when we usually prefer to hit the rivers. We had thought things were going to start early as our June 16th reconnaissance float on the St.Mary looked excellent, but then came the deluge! The St.Mary and Bull rivers were in great shape once the waters receded, but the course of the Elk was largely reconfigured by the big flood flows.

By mid July the St.Mary River was rebounding well from the big rain. This was due in part to its headwater lake that does a good job of moderating the flows into the top of the St.Mary. The top three sections of the St.Mary were fishing very well in mid July. Good catch rates and some nice size cuts were showing up as the annual stone fly hatch was working its way up the River.

While the Elk was taking its time to round into shape, the Bull River came up to speed quickly after the runoff passed. By late July the Bull was fishing very well. For those of you that have been there you know the Bull is blessed with an abundance of structure including

that have been there, you know the Bull is blessed with an abundance of structure including big river rocks, lots of logs and plenty of nice pocket water along its edges. This gives the anglers lots of places to focus their dry flies in search of fish. On a float in late July, each angler landed 20 nice wild Westslope Cutthroat trout, with a couple over 17 inches. As an added bonus this summer, the average size of the cutthroat landed on the Bull seemed bigger than in recent years.

Early August saw the St.Mary River clear from top through the bottom section and the bigger cuts over 17-18 inches start to show up. Meanwhile the Elk was finally coming into form in mid August, but the look and feel of the River had changed. The Elk River was almost like a brand new river to fish; all the old runs and pools were gone as the gravels had been resorted and the channel pushed around. While this renewal is excellent for fish habitat and river health, floating this 'new river' was a short term challenge. However, once we figured it out, the old game of 'fish pursuit' was on again! On a float in mid August the anglers caught 15-20 fish each including a cut over 18 inches and a bull trout pushing 25! The average size of cutthroat landed was 14-16 inches. The Elk really hit its usual summer groove in late August. Near the end of the month we started fishing the Skookcumchuck River which provided a few magical trips for those adventurous enough to hike back into the emerald canyon.

Come September the St.Mary, Elk, Bull and Skookcumchuck rivers were all at their optimal flows and clarity. In addition to all the grasshoppers dominating the stream banks, the October Caddis, Mahogany Dunns and Blue Winged Olive hatches provided some awesome fishing. On a trip to the St.Mary on the 12th the anglers caught over 20 cutthroat trout each, as well as a big cut-bow cross over 19 inches that put up a great fight. The Elk was now

crystal clear and producing plenty of 16 to 17 inch cutthroats from its new assortment of braids and pools. It continued to fish well through the various BWO, Mahoganies and October caddis hatches into late October. The Skookcumchuck River was also producing good catch rates of cuts with the odd bull trout thrown in. Fall was a wonderful time to fish the rivers of southeastern B.C. in 2013.

Fall Fishing for Big Rainbows on the Upper Columbia River.

Over on the upper Columbia, mid September brought the start to the fall fishing season for big rainbow trout. The flows were optimal and the River was clear. The fishing was very good with anglers catching trout on dries, by nymphing, as well as throwing streamers, everything seemed to be working. Good catch rates of rainbows up to 12 per angler per day were being enjoyed with most fish in the 18 to 22 inch slot, nice! On one October trip the biggest fish landed was a robust 26 inch rainbow which ran like crazy and took the angler 50 yards into his backing! It was awesome. The whole fall fishing season on the upper Columbia was awesome!

So there you have it, another year of fishing with the St.Mary Angler is history. In 2013 we enjoyed a lot of great fishing in both the East and West Kootenays of southern British Columbia. The spring fishing on the Columbia was excellent and the fall component was

COLUMBIA. THE SPRING FISHING ON THE COLUMBIA WAS EXCELLENT AND THE FALL COMPONENT WAS awesome (really). The summer season on the St.Mary, Elk, Bull and Skookumchuck rivers produced some great catches of hungry wild Westslope Cutthroats and plenty of fun.

We had a wonderful year of fishing in 2013 and greatly enjoyed and appreciated your patronage. We hope to see you next year and will be attending tradeshow in the New Year. I also will be making a number of presentations to fly clubs in the West.

We would like to wish you a healthy and safe winter. Feel free to call us at 1-800-667-2311 to talk about the rivers you would like to fish, or to book a float trip for 2014.

Take care,

Kelly & Karen

Kelly and Karen Laatsch, St.Mary Angler

PS To find out which tradeshow we will be attending after Christmas, [click](#) for dates,

locations and contact us for will call tickets if you will be attending. If you wish to book me for a speaking engagement, [click here](#).

2013 Fishing Reports

Report #26 (October 17th, 2013)

The Elk River continues to fish very well into October.

Contrary to popular belief, the fishing season is not over as the Elk River continues to fish very well. We decided today to float the lower section of the Elk from the Morrissey Bridge down to Elko. This is a long run, but, my oh my, it was worth it!

The past few days have seen the weather turn for the better. We are now seeing blue sky days that start off quite cool in the morning, but reach into the mid-fifties (13-14°C) by midday. Things have settled into the typical fall weather pattern now after we thought we had missed it due to the rain and cold we had at the end of September into October. The Elk River is at its normal flow for this time of year. It is very clear with many new channels holding some real nice fish.

Today we just fished dry flies since the fish were up and feeding on the surface and happy to do so. As soon as the anglers started to float down the River the fish were already active. They had a double header within a few minutes of leaving the launch point! As long as the fly was cast along the bank edge as tight as one could get it, the fish would come up and either check out the bug, or eat right then! Of course this assumes the anglers took the time to get a good mend on the line in order to execute that perfect drift

perfect sun.

The fishing today was fabulous with each angler landing 20 fish and missing many more. The fish were on and were hungry as they tried to eat as much as they can before the winter shuts things down.

Many cutthroat in the 15 to 16 inch range were landed, with the biggest cut being a nice 18 incher, very healthy and strong. This fish was hugging close to the bank edge and feeding, oh so very softly. When he was hooked up the big guy did not realize it until he was pulled from the comfort of the bank! At that point he tugged very hard to get away, and lucky for us he was landed and a nice photo taken. It was a very happy moment for the angler for sure, and probably even more happy for the fish once he made his way back thought the stream to the toe of the bank!

In terms of hatches on the Elk, there was very little activity on the River this day. A few Blue Winged Olives were seen in the late morning, but that was all. The flies that worked well included Blue Winged Olives, as well as, Mahogany Duns, Fat Alberts, and nymphs (Prince Nymphs, Copper Johns and Hare's Ears).

Many eagles, ospreys and mergansers, kept us company at certain times along the waters edge.

Rivers Round-up:

October is a beautiful month and the fishing can be spectacular up here in the Kootenays. If you can spare the time to get out on the river you can do very well. The other great thing about October is there is very little fishing pressure. You will be lucky to see anyone else fishing during your float.

Tomorrow we are back over guiding on the upper Columbia River for a few days. The Columbia is a river where if you do not mind the fall weather the fishing can be soooo good! Every time you throw your line into those big currents you never really know what size of rainbow trout you will hook up. It is so exciting!

Give me a call at 1-800-667-2311 to talk about it.

Take care,



St.Mary Angler

Report #25 (October 9th, 2013)

Columbia River Report: the water conditions are perfect and the fishing remains very good!

We have recently been guiding over on the Columbia River and it has been producing very well this fall. Today we fished the upper most portion from Robson down to the confluence of the Kootenay and the Columbia.

The weather was very nice today with a high reaching 60°F (15°C). The sun was out and

shining which made for quite a pleasant fall day on the River.

The flow in the Columbia River is now on the lower side of the curve at about 45,000 Cubic Feet per Second, which is great for fishing. The River is gin clear and just right for this time of year.

The approach to fishing on this trip focused on nymphing quite a bit, in addition to throwing streamers along the bank edges. The fish now have moved out of the back eddies and along the banks edges to find more food.

The rainbow fishing today was very good. The anglers landed over 20 fish ranging from 18-21 inches. The fish were very healthy and fought quite hard in the big current. The biggest fish landed was a robust 26 inch rainbow which ran like crazy and took the angler all the way into his backing! It was awesome.

In terms of hatches we saw a very large Blue Winged Olive hatch around noon today. The October Caddis were also coming off in smaller numbers in the afternoon. The effective flies on the trip included Hare's Ear, Pheasant Tails, Prince Nymphs, Kelly's Super Streamer and Blue Winged Olives (during the hatch).

In terms of the wildlife we saw ospreys, eagles and blue herons actively looking for fish as well.

The fishing remains very good this fall with lots of rainbows being caught and the odd really big guy showing up! All you need to do is dress for October weather and you will be ready to go! We still have a few weeks left in the season so come on up and try your hand at landing some nice big rainbows!

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

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

Report #24 (October 3th, 2013)

Columbia River Report: the big rainbows are taking everything, be it dries, nymphs or streamers!

We are now over on the Columbia River fall fishing for the big rainbow trout. The anglers were picked up from their hotel in Rossland and we headed over to the Sunshine Cafe for a

nearby breakfast before hitting the water. A visit to the Sunshine is a great way to start any fly fishing trip on the upper Columbia River.

The weather has been quite shaky these last few days with rain and cool temperatures. We have been seeing some snow up on the mountains already, but there is still plenty of fall left. Today we saw some sunny periods mixed in with overcast skies and a bit of rain, actually a decent fall day for fishing. With all the warm clothing on the market today, one can stay warm and dry throughout the day. The fish still have to eat and stay active as they know winter is coming so they don't care about the weather.

The water conditions are normal for this time of year. The nice thing about the Columbia is that the rain does not effect water colour or levels as it is controlled by upstream dams. Today the Columbia was very clear and crisp, with water temperatures reaching the low 50's.

All the rods were rigged in advance so we could start fishing as soon as the boat was in the water. The fish may come up for dries, or stay down for nymphs or streamers, so you want to be ready for whatever opportunity presents itself. We jetted up the River and settled in on a nice series of runs and back eddies. The motor was pulled out of the water and we began to row down through some of the nice structure. The fish can be spooked easily so we must enter the tops of the eddies quietly under the drift and steadied only by a rowing guide.

The fishing today was pretty unreal. In one eddy the anglers caught fish on dries, by nymphing, as well as throwing streamers, everything seemed to work! Let me tell you as they say, "the tug is the drug!" You never know what size of fish you are going to catch in some of these Columbia runs and eddies – so you must always be ready! On this trip to the Upper Columbia the two anglers caught 25 fish between them, a very successful outing.

The biggest rainbow was a nice 22 inch trout that took out a lot of line and almost got into the backing! What a joy it is be fishing at this time of year when these big guys come out to play.

In terms of hatches, there was very little action on the day, only a few small midges and some October Caddis were observed. The flies that were effective included October Caddis, Regular tan or black caddis (sizes 14 to 16). Kelly's Super Streamer, Copper Johns and, or Prince Nymphs were working pretty good as well.

During the trip we saw a black bear out foraging for food as it also prepares for the coming season of hibernation. There were also many ospreys and eagles patrolling the River.

River Roundup:

We are guiding on the upper Columbia River, as well as the Elk and St. Mary until late October. Fishing in the fall is very exciting as the fish want to eat as much as possible before the winter, and this creates lots of activity for us fishers!

Take care and see you on the water!

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

Ps call me at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss the fall fishing conditions on the upper Columbia River, the Elk or St.Mary.

Report #23 (September 22th, 2013)

Fall has arrived on the Elk River.

Today was the first day of fall and it sure felt like it. So we decided to float the Elk River where the fall fishing can be outstanding. Along the drive we stopped in Jaffery for a coffee and strudel, which is a must. Once at the Elk we slid the boat over the bank into the water and were off.

The weather was overcast and raining on and off today. It was not cold, but this past week the temperature has definitely dropped. There is already a dusting snow high up on the Rockies!

The Elk River looked great today as it was crystal clear. The River has changed quite a bit this year. The Elk braids into sections a lot so at times it feels like you are floating a small creek. Today the fish are stacked up along the bank edges in these braided sections.

On this float we found fish throughout the River, mostly along the bank edges and behind the bigger rocks in the middle of the stream. We chose to fish mainly dry flies all day, but did cast the nymph rig through some of the runs.

The fish were coming to the surface nicely during our float. The anglers definitely had to make sure the fish took the fly before they moved to set the hook as they were turning on the fly slowly.

Some nice 16 inch cutthroat and a husky 17 incher were landed during the trip! The fish were very healthy and they fought hard as well.

The only hatch coming off today was a bunch of size 16 Blue Winged Olives later in the day. The most effective artificial were the foam patterns including; Fat Alberts, Black Beetles, Blue Winged Olives and Mahogany Duns.

During the float we saw the typical assortment of ospreys and eagles circling above, or

perched in their nests along the River.

River Roundup:

We are guiding over on the upper Columbia River this week and next as the fishing has been very good so far this fall. It has been good, but we have had to battle the rain the last few days. However, the weather looks better next week once the front moves past us.

Hope you get a chance to make it out on the water this fall.

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

Ps call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss available days for fall fishing on the upper Columbia River. We will post a Columbia Report soon.

Report #22 (September 15th, 2013)

Any day, is a great day, for a busman's holiday on the Skookcumchuck River!

After lunches were made for the guided trips and shuttles were done for the day, Karen and I decided to hike into the Skookcumchuck River and fish for some beautiful West-Slope cutthroats. The weather was gorgeous with a beautiful blue sky and temperatures reaching the 77°F (25°C). A very nice afternoon to be outside enjoying the weather, the scenery and the fall colors!

The water conditions on the Skook are excellent now, crystal clear. They are perfect for watching a cutthroat rise to your fly! The upper section of the River we fished today has the feeling of a small creek. The runs are small and up tight against the bank edges, which allows an angler to cast short distances to the fish.

We hiked into the upper Skookcumchuck to find a nice run and strung our rods with dry lines and hoppers. We casted into and along the bank edges and tried to float the fly naturally, mending it appropriately and often to the accommodate the flow conditions. Sometimes we used the “high stick method” where the fly is dropped into a small run, lifting the rod up high to make it float through the section as naturally as possible.

The fishing was quite good as we landed 10 fish between the two of us in a couple hours of angling. It was really fun to be out and actually fishing! I love to guide, but you know....

The biggest fish landed was a nice 15 inch cutthroat which came up and hammered the fly on the surface. The fly was floating just right and the fish was hungry. The cutthroat was in very good condition after eating a lot of bugs throughout the summer.

The grass hoppers are becoming a main source of food for the fish now. As of late they have been making their way down to the riverbank in search of the greenery along the edges. It seems they have eaten everything up on the hills, but soon will be food for the fish themselves.

The flies that are producing well recently include the H&L Variants, Royal Wulffs and Stimulators. In addition, the foam patterns such as Fat Albert's, or Stone type patterns, have also been working quite well.

Regional Report:

Fishing is still great and we have trips booked till the middle of October, with some days still open. Fall is such a great time of year to angle if you like to fish hatches. Come and check things out either on the St.Mary, Elk and Skookumchuck, or over on the upper Columbia River where the fall fishing is heating up.

I hope to see you on the water soon,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

Ps call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss available days.

Report #21 (September 12th, 2013)

St.Mary River Report: Crisp, clear and fishing fantastic!

The St. Mary River has been fishing very well so we decided to float the lower section of the River; from the Mission down to the Fort Steele takeout.

The weather was absolutely wonderful with highs reaching 86°F (30°C). There was very little breeze and clear skies across the Rockies. The mornings are definitely cooling down now and the evenings are as well. The trees are now starting to turn color. So hints of fall are in the air. This is a wonderful time to be out on the River as everything seems to be so crisp and clear! Fall in the Rockies... there is no place better to be!

The water level on the St.Mary continues to drop as per the season and is clear, just right for this time of year. The kokanee (land locked sockeye salmon) are running up the St. Mary River to spawn. Fortunate for us they seem to be moving far up River and leaving the lower

section alone. The kokanee spawn in all the tributaries of the Kootenay River and tend to start moving into these streams in late August.

Today the anglers were picked up at their hotel and headed directly down to the put-in on the St. Mary River. Once the rods were strung with dry lines and 9 foot leaders, they tied on a Dave's Hopper and climbed into the raft. On this particular section of the St. Mary the River braids quite a bit which allows anglers more of an opportunity to get out of the boat and cast from shore. This is in addition to the advantages of fishing from the boat where the guide will slide the craft into the nice runs allowing anglers to cast along the bank edges, logs, or any piece of structure on the River.

The fishing on the bottom today was fantastic. Each angler landed over 20 fish and as the guide would say, "it was a big fish day!"

The largest fish landed was a nice cut-bow (a rainbow-cutthroat cross) that reached 19 inches. These fish like to jump right out of the water and make a run for it so the angler had a real fight on his hands. The guide slowly moved the boat into a position and gave the angler the choice of landing it with a net from the boat, or getting out to land this beauty from shore. It was a lovely fish. On the whole it was a very exciting and eventful day with many fish feeding on the surface!

The only hatch coming off the water today was a short burst of small midges. Fortunately for anglers, the trout on the St. Mary are not hatch orientated and feed on anything that floats down the River, as long as it looks natural. That is why every angler must mend their line to keep the float looking real and stopping the bug from being tugged across the water and through the run.

The flies that were very effective today were the Hi-Vise Parachute Adams, Mahogany Duns, Dave's Hopper, and of course, the Fat Albert—Black Beetle type (sizes 12 to 16).

Many ospreys and eagles have nests on the lower section of the St. Mary River which meant we saw a lot of them searching for their next meal on this trip!

Fall Fishing Forecast:

The Upper Columbia River is looking really good now and the guides will be heading over there soon to take anglers out for the big rainbows. Fall fishing on the Upper Columbia is always outstanding and a must for those who like casting for big rainbow trout!

Take care,

Kelly

St. Mary Angler

Bookings at 1-800-667-2311 or call Kelly at 611-411-6666 for more information.

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to talk about a fall trip for cutthroats or big rainbows.

Report #20 (September 2nd, 2013)

Skookcumchuck River Report: the pools and runs have changed, but the fishing remains the same!

We decided to get up early and head on up to the Skookcumchuck River to experience the cutthroat fishing via a walk and wade trip. It takes about an hour and a half to drive over to Canal Flats and then down the logging road to the trailhead.

The weather was a mix of sun and cloud throughout the day with temperatures reaching the high 70's°F (25°C). It was a beautiful day with just a hint of fall in the air. A cool morning with things warming up by the afternoon.

The conditions on the Skookcumchuck River are pretty much normal for this time of year. That said, the River changed quite a bit from last year after the freshet got through with it. The runs and pools have moved around and some roads and bridges were washed out by the June floods. Now that things have normalized again, all we had to do was get down on the River, read the water, and find the fish in their new pools and runs. We know they are in there, even if their home “addresses” have changed around a bit.

After we spotted the trailhead along the road, we pulled over and proceeded to string the 5 and 4 weight rods and ready our day packs. We then proceeded over the lip of the road and hiked back into the canyon. It can take up to an hour of walking before we reach the place where we like to start casting into the Skook's emerald waters.

The fishing was very good today as the cutthroats were hungry for dries on the surface. In addition, we came across a few pools where we could peer down and see good sized bull trout laying at the bottom... very exciting. During the walk and wade, the two anglers released 25 fish between them, a very good day indeed.

One angler was fortunate to hook up a bull trout and had a great fight bringing it closer and closer until the big fish broke free in the shallow water. Oh well, that is what brings the anglers back for more!

There was not much of a hatch on this trip. We saw some small midges and hoppers along the bank edges, but nothing significant. The flies that worked quite well included; Hi-Vise Parachute Adams, H&L Variants, Fat Alberts, as well as streamer patterns for the bull trout.

On the drive up to the Skookcumchuck we spotted some Elk out in the fields and lots of bird life along the River's edge.

The Fall Fishing Season is Coming:

The fishing is always good here in September. With this year's high spring flows leading to a later start, we expect September to be exceptional!

So come on up and check us out.

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

Ps call us at 1-800-667-2311 to talk about a fall trip for cutthroats on the St.Mary, or big rainbows over on the Upper Columbia River.

Report #19 (August 27, 2013)

The Elk River has finally rounded into form and is fishing very well.

Today we decided to head over to the Elk River and run the lower section down to Elko. The weather was pleasant, sunny with some high clouds. The temperature reached a nice 77°F (25°C). Unfortunately, the wind came up at the end of the day which always makes the row out a little more difficult! Fortunately, the fish are unaffected by the wind and remained hungry and ready to eat.

The Elk River is finally coming down and fishing well. Clarity of the water is excellent - up to 8 feet. This is pretty good for the Elk which by its nature, never clears up completely. The top section of the River was hit hard from the floods this spring while the bottom sections were less effected. Thus on balance, the fishing has been quite a bit better on the bottom this year.

After we put-in on the bottom section we floated down to a nice run and began to cast. The rods were all set up to dry fly fish and that is what the anglers did!

Many fish were found in the runs along bank edges, or near the rock and log structures in the water. The average fish caught was 14 to 16 inches. The two anglers caught and released about 30 cutthroats on this float. The fishing was steady throughout the day and the excitement of seeing the fish come to a dry fly was just outstanding!

The highlight of the day was the landing of a nice 18 inch cutthroat. Just as we were about to break for our shore lunch, we saw him come up and refuse one of the flies. So we decided to let this big guy settle down and think about it while we ate our food. Over lunch the tippet was changed to a 6X and the angler put on a smaller fly. Then after some more contemplation the cast was laid and... "Bam!", "Fish on!" It was very exciting as the fish put

up a good fight and a nice photo was taken! It is not too often we get a chance to sit back and reset on a nice fish we have missed, but it goes to show how effective being patient can be!

Hoppers, midges and some Blue Winged Olives were seen on the Elk River today giving us some moderate bug action. In terms of artificials, the anglers used Rick's Stick Midge and the New Zealand Mahogany Dun mostly and these two flies worked very well. They also used Chernobyl Ants, hoppers and small ant patterns as well.

On top of the great day on the water, we were lucky enough to see a baby moose crossing the Elk in front of us during the float! That was very cool.

River Roundup:

The rivers are all fishing great now. There is still lots of summer left and the fall, which really can be the best time of the year to fish here, is still to come! Come on up and check us out!

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to book a trip this summer or talk about the hatches we anticipate this fall!

Report #18 (August 18th, 2013)

The St.Mary River is consistency fishing very well as it hits its summer groove!

We have been primarily fishing the St. Mary River over all of the others this year because of how consistently well it has been fishing! Today we floated the Canyon Section and again everyone was very pleased with the results.

The weather was beautiful and hot with temperatures reaching a wonderful 83°F (28°C). There was a little wind on the St.Mary today, but not enough to impact the dry fly casting. It actually was a very nice day out on the River.

The water conditions are now at summer normal in terms of flow and clarity. There are many channels and pools nicely formed up and they are fishing awesome! The Wild Westslope Cutthroats seem to have finally found their summer holds in the pools and runs and they are eager to eat. So we are experiencing the summer conditions that every fly fisher is looking for!

IS LOOKING TO:

The dry fly fishing on the St. Mary River can be spectacular. Most anglers who come with us love to dry fly fish and that is what they did today. To begin with the guide pushed off from the bank and headed downstream while the anglers casted along the shore edges, behind rocks and along logs to lure out any unsuspecting cutthroat trout. Today the cutthroat were eager to play and the anglers could not have been happier to oblige. In some areas the anglers got out of the boat and walked up the channels, in others they just fished along the main channel to feeding fish.

The fishing was very consistent throughout the day, with the average size fish being landed in the 13-14 inch slot. The cutthroats are feeding quite well this summer and are chunky, bright and healthy looking. The biggest fish caught and released on this trip was a nice 18 inch cutter that ran and pulled the line off the rod like crazy. After the hook-up the guide maneuvered the boat through the section and pulled over so the angler could get out and land this nice fish from shore. It provided a very good fight and a wonderful picture of a large St.Mary cutter for the angler to review in the off season.

In terms of food for the fish, the grasshoppers are all over the banks and making the trout quite happy when they fall into the water. They make for a sizable meal for the cutthroats and that is why the anglers cast along the bank edges as we float downstream. The trout definitely are there in wait for a tasty treat be it natural, or an angler's artificial. The flies working well all day included Grasshoppers, Caddis and Foam Terrestrials, such as Fat Alberts and Chernobyl Ants and Stones.

In addition to all the action on the River today, the group saw a lot of wildlife on the float including; a black bear, deer, ospreys and eagles.

The St.Mary River is really producing well right now and we expect it to continue into the fall as per usual. So think about coming up and fishing in September and into the fall. The fall is the time we get many specific hatches coming off including Blue Winged Olives, Mahogany Duns, etcetera. If you like to match the hatch the fall is the perfect time to come and fish with us!

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to book a trip or talk about conditions on a specific river.

Report #17 (August 12th, 2013)

The Elk River has a new 'look and feel', but is fishing the same old way!

Well we decided to head over to the Elk River this morning and try our luck on the lower section; the River down to Elko.

The weather was very nice today reaching a high of 79°F (26°C). There was very little wind which was nice because the lower section of the Elk tends to be tough when it gets windy. This applies to the guide rowing the boat, as well as to the angler looking to make that perfect cast!

The present water conditions on the Elk are not what we usually see this time of year. The River now has around 3 to 4 feet of visibility. The heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding the River experienced in June caused a number of changes to its geomorphology, you know, the look and feel of the River. The Elk River is almost like a brand new river to fish; all the old runs and pools are gone as the gravels have been resorted and the channel pushed around. Floating a 'new river' can be a short term challenge, but once it is figured out, the old game of fish pursuit is on again!

Today we fished dries, as well as nymphs and streamers as the fish are still in the process of adjusting to the new River. We found some fish holding in deeper water, while others have found their summer lies. It was apparent that there are a few fish still scattered around from the floods slowly making it into their summer holds. We expect them to sort themselves out in the next week or so.

The fishing was very good today on the 'new' Elk River! So things are on, finally! The anglers landed 15 to 20 fish each, with an average size of 14-16 inches. All the cutthroats looked very healthy, bright and chunky.

The biggest fish landed included a nice 18 inch cutthroat in addition to a couple of 25 inch Bull Trout. The Bulls were very healthy and in good shape as well! If you nymph or throw streamers in the deeper pools, you will tend to see more Bull Trout come for your fly! So be prepared.

The hatch that came off was a mix of a few Green Drakes and Calabetis flies. The hatches seem a little suppressed for this time of year as well. The most effective flies on the Elk included the small streamers (white), Copper-John Nymphs and Green Drakes (sizes 12-14).

Seeing wildlife is always treat when fishing the Elk and on this trip we saw many eagles and ospreys, in addition to a few deer grazing along the way.

River Roundup:

The dry fly fishing on the St.Mary and the Bull rivers has been fabulous the last few weeks. The water levels Skoocumchuck River are dropping nicely and the dry fly fishing has become very good there as well. We will have a Skook report soon!

The fishing conditions are close to prime so hope to see you soon!

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

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

Report #16 (August 5th, 2013)

St.Mary River Report: we have found the holes where the big ones have been hiding!

Well it has been a crazy year so far in terms of weather with all the rain, then the extended hot and dry period and now more rain. On the one hand, the St. Mary River has been holding her own. On the other, the Elk and Bull Rivers have blown out the last few days as a result of the recent cycle of thunder and lightning storms which brought massive rain fall. The secret to the St.Mary is the headwater Lake which acts to moderate flows in the River downstream.

So on this day we decided to stay on the St. Mary River which turned out to be a good call. The weather was mixed on the day, but by the afternoon the sun was out shining and things cleared up nicely. The temperature reached a high of 81°F (27°C) which made for a very pleasant float.

The St. Mary River has been clear and fishing well for some time now. The erosion of the clay bank that was creating some color early in the season has ceased. The headwater Lake is absorbing and moderating the rains from the occasional thunder storm so we have nice clear water to fish in!

We put our boat onto St. Mary Lake and rowed down to the outlet where the River begins and fished from there. As for the fishing we continued to fish dry flies all day with good success! Our approach included fishing on the float, as well as getting out and casting into the runs. The River has changed a lot since last season due to the freshet and the rain storms this spring. Many new channels and pockets have formed along the River, in addition to the main River channel shifting several feet laterally in some places.

The fishing was very good on this trip. Many fish came for the fly and decided to eat it. The cutthroat were very aggressive and if the angler got a good drift on the fly, the fish were up and ready to go! Today we caught lots of fish in the 13-16 inch range. We were also fortunate to land a couple in the 17 to 18 inch slot, which was awesome. We have been on

the hunt for the big cutthroats and I think we have found a few holes where they have been hiding!

In terms of the hatches on the St.Mary today, some stones are still hatching their way up River. We also saw a few Yellow Sallys and the grass hoppers are starting to become more prevalent. The flies that were most effective included the Lime Trudes, Royal Coachman, Parachute Adams, Fat Alberts and Stone Patterns.

In addition to the great day on the River, we were fortunate to see many deer on this upper stretch of the Mary, as well as eagles and ospreys patrolling the River as we moved downstream.

So come on up, or over, to fish the St. Mary River. The water levels and clarity are in the optimal range and the fishing is great!

Hope to see you soon!

Take care and great fishing,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to check on the conditions of the St.Mary, Elk and Bull rivers or to book a float.

Report #15 (July 28th, 2013)

The Bull River is On!

Well today was a spectacular day to head out on the Bull River. We generally float two different sections on the Bull River, an upper and lower section, and today our choice was the lower.

The weather was spectacular as we drove up the Bull River road to our launch site where we readied ourselves for the day's adventure. The temperature on the day reached a toasty 90°F (32°C). There were a few high clouds and some thermal wind, but overall a wonderful day to be on the Bull River.

The Bull River is now completely clear and continues to drop daily. It really is at its optimal flow right now. The scenery is just amazing with the high mountain peaks and gorgeous landscape all around, and the fishing is on!

On this trip, we dry fly fished all day! The Bull River has an abundance of structure including big riverrocks, lots of logs and plenty of nice pocket water along the bank edges. So the anglers did their best to cast their dry flies along these many structures in search of the hiding fish. Our guides can find the fish and as long as the angler can cast and get a good mend on the line, many hook-ups of greedy cutthroats are sure to follow!

The fishing was very good on this float with each angler landing about 20 cutthroats. That was in addition to the many cuts that were hooked up and lost before they could bring them in! The biggest fish caught today was a nice 17 inch cutthroat. It was very chunky and brilliantly colored in very good health.

In terms of hatches there really was not much coming off the Bull today. A few midges made an appearance, but that was about it. The most effective flies on the day were an assortment of orange and yellow stimulators, Parachute Adams, Hi-Vis patterns, and Black or Tan Caddis (sizes 12-14).

Driving up to the Bull River today provided a little excitement early on as we saw a bear run across the road!

River Round-up:

The Elk River is fishing fairly well now, both in terms of nymphing and dry fly action. Another few more days and it will be into the normal range for this time of year. The rain early this spring set the opening of the Elk back a few weeks, but things are improving daily!

The Skookcumchuck River is producing quite well now. The Skook has dropped quite a bit and still has some room to improve.

The St.Mary River is fishing quite good now and we expect some very good fishing as the season proceeds.

When thinking about exploring for fish along the back roads of southeastern B.C., make sure to check for road and bridge closures before you head out into the back country.

Take care and great fishing,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to check on available days on the St.Mary, Elk and other rivers of southeastern B.C.

Report #14 (July 21th, 2013)

REPORT # 1 (St. Mary River, 2013)

The St. Mary River is settling down and fishing well!

We have been floating the St. Mary River for the last week as the top three sections have been clear and fishing quite well. The run we choose on this day was from the Power-line down to the Kimberley Pump-house. It is a beautiful section of water made up of a series of runs and back channels.

The weather has been absolutely wonderful lately as we have gone through a run of 25 days of sunshine and warm temperatures! Today the temperature reached into the mid 80's °F (35°C). It was nice and warm, which made it right for wading into the water and hunting fish.

The water conditions are very good on the upper stretches of the St. Mary, but there is still a clay bank shedding into the River lower down near Wycliffe that is dirtying the water somewhat. That said, the amount of eroded material seems to be slowing down and less is dropping into the water as each day passes.

On this trip we remained true to our dry fly fishing instincts and fished dries all day. Our approach included floating along the nice bank edges and difficult spots that an angler can't reach from shore. This allowed the anglers to cast their dry flies up along the structures including rocks and fallen trees. Once the boat was in position it was up to the angler to ensure a good drift on the cast as the cutthroats waited eagerly below the surface for food to drift along. Getting a good drift will mean that 9 times out of 10 a fish will come up and take that well presented fly.

The fishing was very good on this float as we landed many fish in the 12 to 14 inch range. In terms of numbers, about 35 fish were released between the two anglers. The biggest fish landed was a nice chunky 16 inch cutthroat. It hammered the dry fly on a great drift right behind a rock structure that was close to the bank edge. The cutthroat was not happy it was being pulled downstream before the guide pulled the boat over and the angler landed this nice fish. When you fish with lighter gear such as a 3-5 weight fly rod, the fight of a cutthroat can be very exciting!

The only hatch of note today was the continuing stone fly emergence along the River. The hatch of the stones migrates its way up River during the month of July. However, on balance, the St. Mary River is not a hatch oriented river as the cuts will feed on almost anything if you get a good drift down the run.

The dry flies that were very effective today included tan and black Fat Alberts, orange and yellow Stimulators, Caddis patterns and H&L Variants (sizes 10 to 14)

River Roundup

The rivers of the East Kootenays are now back in shape and fishing well. There is a lot of

water in this country this season which will make fishing great throughout September and October. Make sure you know the fishing regulations before you venture out to fish in B.C.

Take care and great fishing,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to talk about the great dry fly fishing on the St.Mary, Elk and other rivers of southeastern B.C.

Report #13 (July 15th, 2013)

St.Mary River Report - things are rounding into form!

The St. Mary River is finally looking good. So we decided to fish two sections today. Early season conditions often allow us to run a couple sections so we floated from the Kimberley Pump-house down to the Mission take-out.

The weather conditions in the Kootenays are now absolutely beautiful. Today temperatures reached 80°F (26°C) with very little wind. The clouds were high, white, and puffy, making it a very nice day to be on the water.

The water levels on the St.Mary River are coming down fast. When one looks up into the mountains it is easy to see why. There is now very little snow left in the high country. The water clarity in the Mary is now around 5 to 7 feet and clearing steadily. The clearing is good news except for that one clay bank just up from Wycliffe that keeps letting loose – like it always does in the spring. However, the River level is almost down to the gravel stratum at the clay bank section, so everything should be clear soon!

Today the anglers dry fly fished most of the day, it was only the section below the clay bank where they had to throw some nymphs. We like to call using nymphs on the St.Mary as “going to the Dark Side”. The fishing was quite good though. They fished hard in the morning and caught many fish. The afternoon slowed down a bit because of the clay bank, but they still did ok! As they floated down the River they would stop, and walk and wade up the back channels, where many fish are still holding. You can see the trout coming to the surface to feed on the dries — very exciting spring activity.

The average size fish released was 12 to 14 inches and they were very healthy and active. The biggest fish was a nice 16 inch cutthroat. It was good to see a chunky healthy cutthroat in the system fighting hard and willing to run! The cutthroats are still moving up into their summer holes, but everyone should be tucked away in their respective ecological niche

soon.

The hatches on the River today included a few Yellow Sallys and the stone flies working their way upstream. We could see the stone flies along the banks and on the rocks as we fished along the bank edges. The flies that were effective on this day were the Royal Wulffs, H&L Variants, Lime Trudes and Stimulators (sizes 10-14). We also used foam stone patterns with success, as well as Fat Alberts (sizes 10-12).

Everyone was excited to see a mother deer with her babies, to go along with the ospreys and eagles high up in their nests tending to their young.

River Round-up

The Elk River is clearing and getting closer to fish, it should be good by the end of this week. The Bull and the Skookcumchuck are clear and dropping fast, they are fishing quite well. As for the St. Mary, the season has started! So come and enjoy the beautiful East Kootenays and fly fish for wild Westslope Cutthroats.

Take care and great fishing,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

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

Report #12 (July 7th, 2013)

Things are starting to clear, we start guiding this coming weekend.

As we wait for the rivers to settle down and clear, we decided to take a drive up to the Bull River and check out the conditions.

It was an absolutely beautiful day. A little breeze was blowing and the temperature reached a comfortable 79°F (26°C). A few people were out enjoying the back country as we saw a group of white water rafters floating down the Bull River having a good time! We drove up the Bull River road till we came to the pair of small creeks that flow into the Bull and immediately noticed how clear they were.

The Bull River itself is still high, but dropping and clearing. Along the bank edges and where the small creeks joined in, the water was clear to about a foot and half.

So we pulled off the side of the road and took out our 4 and 5 weight rods. We put 4x tippets onto our leaders and tied on the drv flies. We also strung a nvmnh rod. We then hiked down

One our readers and me on the fly, most the day being a fly fisher. We then moved down to the Bull and began fishing along the bank edges and behind/around the big rocks.

The fishing was actually quite good considering the water clarity. I caught and released around 10 cutthroats in the couple hours we were there. The average size was 10-13 inches, but we did catch a nice cut throat behind a big rock in the River. I casted out and let the dry fly float naturally down along the rock and a chunky 15 inch cutthroat grabbed onto it and took off! The trout made a couple of attempts to get away, but I brought him into calm waters and flipped him upside down to remove the barbless hook. I then sent him on his way. It is always a good idea to revive the fish by slowly moving it back and forth so they get water through their gills. They usually splash you as they make their escape from your hands. Their way of saying “goodbye” I guess.

The big dragon flies were out over the River patrolling today. The flies that were very effective were orange or yellow Stimulators (size 12-14), H&L Variants, Royal Wulffs and Tan Caddis.

During the trip we saw many birds including eagles, ospreys and ravens, as well as a few white tail and mule deer along the side of the road.

We Are Ready To Go

We start guiding this weekend on the St. Mary River as it has come down quite a bit and is clearing up... finally! The Elk River will take longer, about 10 more days till it is back to July “normal”.

Take care and great fishing,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss available days.

Report #11 (July 4th, 2013)

River Roundup: The Bull River looks likes it will be fishable soon.

This report covers the conditions on the Elk, St. Mary and Bull Rivers. In a nut shell, because of the big rains two weeks ago most of the rivers and small streams in this region remain high and cloudy. On the positive side, it looks like the Bull River is going to be fishable soon. The Bull should be fishing well this upcoming weekend as the water has started to clear and is coming down steadily. The Elk is about 10 days away, and the St. Mary River is a week away from being fishable. There is very little snow left in the

mountains, so when the river levels come down the fishing will heat up very quickly. We have noticed the St. Mary coming down as of today and is starting to clear.

We expect the fishing to be fast and furious as soon as these hungry trout can clearly see their food in the water column! Call us at 1-800-667-2311 for up to date condition reports on these rivers.

The forecast is calling for beautiful weather over the next couple of weeks with highs in the mid 80's °F (30's °C). A few thunder showers are also predicted, but overall an absolutely fabulous forecast for our area. The one bright spot in our region remains the Upper Columbia River, which as a tailwater fishery, has been unaffected by the rain and is fishing exceptionally well. Call us if you want to go out on the Columbia to chase these big river rainbows.

We hope to see all of you again this 2013 fishing season. As you know the trout fishing will run well into the month of October here. Once the rivers all clear, be ready to come on up and check us out.

Take care and great fishing,

Kelly and Karen

St.Mary Angler

PS call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss river conditions and available days throughout the season.

Report #10 (June 24th, 2013)

The fishing for rainbows is excellent on the Columbia River, while floods hit the East Kootenays and southern Alberta.

The last few days has seen a deluge of rain in the East Kootenays and Southern Alberta. The Bow River in Alberta has topped its banks due to a combination of heavy rainfall and snow melt in the Rocky Mountains. The Elk River and its tributaries in the East Kootenays of B.C. has also overtopped their banks and flooded roads, homes and bridges! It has been very serious and we wish those impacted the best of luck in the cleanup. However, lucky for us we were able to go fishing for rainbow trout on one the only fishable waters in Western Canada. The Upper Columbia River was not only fishable, but delivered some fantastic action!

While it poured in the Rockies and southern Alberta, the Upper Columbia River saw only a sporadic drizzle. The temperature on the trip reached 68°F (20°C) by mid afternoon.

The water conditions on the upper Columbia are normal to slightly high, with clarity down to 6-7 feet. The water temperature was 53 °F (12°C) which again is normal for this time of year.

Our approach today was mainly nymphing and some dry fly fishing. That said, all the rods were strung for the different types of fishing as we like to be ready for anything the River throws at us. On the front of the trip in the morning, the nymphing techniques worked the best. We fished a lot of the smaller back eddies with good success. The fish were tending to stay down deep in the back eddies in the early morning, but as the day progressed they came closer to the surface.

This June trip provided some of the best fishing of the 2013 season. The fish were very active today. All the anglers got into double digits in terms of numbers, with most rainbows in the 17-23 inch slot. Nice fish. There were several double hook ups throughout the day and the anglers had some tough fights on their hands. The rainbows are in prime fighting condition now and look very healthy.

The biggest rainbow trout landed was between 4 and 5 pounds at about 24 inches. What a fight! This bow jumped three times and took the angler into his backing twice. These rainbows pull very hard and they like to take you into the fast moving current, which means an awesome fight!

The dominant hatch on the River today was to no surprise, the caddis fly! Yes the caddis hatches have begun. We also saw a few midges and a size 16 Blue Winged Olive coming off which produced some outstanding dry fly fishing! These Blue Winged Olives were large for this River at a size 16. The flies that worked well included Kelly's Prince Nymph (size 16), Blue Winged Olives and a size 14 Gold Bead Pheasant Tails.

While on the water we saw an assortment of Blue Herons, Bald Eagles, Canada Geese and ducks enjoying the River and its shoreline.

River Roundup:

All the small streams are high and cloudy at the moment in the East Kootenays. They will most likely clear near the end of next week. The lakes are still fishing quite well.

If you are looking for an awesome river to fish during this time of floods and high water, call us about a trip on the [Upper Columbia River](#).

Take care,

Kelly

St Mary Angler

St. Mary Angler

PS call us for 1-800-667-2311 to a book a float on the Columbia this week.

Report #9 (June 13th, 2013)

Columbia River Report: Spring fishing for rainbows is “unreal”!

Today we fished the **Genelle to Murphy Creek** section of the upper Columbia River. After a good breakfast at Clancy's in Rossland, we headed down the hill to the put-in site on the "Big River" upstream of Trail, B.C.

The weather was a mix of sun, cloud and rain, but that did not impact the quality of fishing at all. Matter of fact, the fishing was very good today! The temperature got up to 66°F (19°C) by mid to late afternoon.

The water conditions on the Columbia River are low for this time of year as we anticipate the freshet. The water temperature was a cool 48°F (9°). We expect the recent warm weather to force the River to start warming up. There was not much in the way of floating debris on the River today, which is good for us. That said, we always keep an eye out for logs when fishing in the big back eddies. They tend to come in and get caught in the back eddies, riding the swirl up stream – so always be careful!

On this trip we choose to fish mostly with nymphs and streamers, but we had our dry fly lines set up just in case the caddis flies started to come off.

The fishing today was unreal! We caught and released 25 rainbow trout. The fish were very active throughout the day. In the springtime you can afford to get out on the water later in the morning, like we did today. As summer comes the caddis fly hatch becomes enormous causing the fish to become more nocturnal feeders. At this point they feed more in the early mornings and late into the evenings. But on these spring days like today the fishing activity was pretty well constant throughout the day. And these rainbows were hungry!

The biggest fish caught and released today was a nice 23 inch rainbow. It was very healthy, chunky and strong. The strength of this fish was apparent from the start and its pull increased significantly when it took the fly and bolted out into the current. When this happens sometimes you win and sometimes the fish wins!

In terms of hatches on the Columbia today, the Blue Winged Olives, Black Caddis and Green Drakes were coming off along with some small midges. There was a lot of food on the water for the trout to feed on and it will increase significantly as the weather warms up. The flies that were effective on this Columbia trip were Prince Nymphs, Small Streamers (Black and Brown) and a few Black Caddis patterns for the dry fly action.

During the float we saw some Blue Herons fishing on the River. We were also pleasantly

During the float we saw some Blue Herons fishing on the river. We were also pleasantly surprised to see an otter swimming near his home in one of the back channels.

Lakes are still fishing well

The lakes are still fishing quite well, and some of the rivers are coming on stream, so there is a lot of choice when it comes to fishing in the Kootenays now. Things will only get better as the Elk, St.Mary, Bull and Skookumchuck rivers come on stream.

Remember be safe out on the water and always check your regulations as each stream, river or lake can be different.

Take care,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call us directly at 1-800-667-2311

Report #8 (June 16th, 2013)

St.Mary River Spring Reconnaissance Trip: things are looking promising early!

The St. Mary River is now open! So all the St.Mary guides wanted to check out the River and see if any changes had occurred over the winter. On this Father's Day weekend we put seven boats in the St. Mary River and floated from the Pumphouse put-in all the way down to the Kootenay River take-out at Fort-Steele.

The weather was fabulous with temperatures reaching 75°F (24°C). The sky was blue, so this was a day to lather on the suntan lotion for sure! The water in the St.Mary is now clear down to 6 feet and it is improving daily. Things are definitely way ahead of last season as the snow-pack is melting quickly. The River is now at 'medium-high' and is completely fishable.

All the side channels are high, but fishing extremely well. If things continue, within two weeks the St. Mary should be at a 'high-summer' level already.

Our primary goal of this trip was to check out changes to the River's geomorphology. That is to see if there have been any big changes in channel depth, velocity, log jams, meanders, etc. Oh ya, and given the conditions this year, we were also there to fish for wild Westslope Cutthroats! So some of us chose to throw dry flies, but a couple guys used nymphs as well.

The fishing was a little slow in the morning, but by the afternoon it definitely picked up. The

The fishing was a little slow in the morning, but by the afternoon it definitely picked up. The lower section of the St. Mary River fished much better than the upper section. Our boat caught and released 15 nice cutthroats.

The biggest fish on the day was a nice 20 inch cut-bow. It did have a scar on one side so it looked like an osprey or eagle had tried to lift it out of the water. We could tell right of way it was a rainbow-cutthroat cross because it jumped clear out of the water on the initial hook up.

The reason why the bottom section of the St. Mary was fishing better, was due to the stone fly hatch that had started to come off. This happens early in the season and the hatch slowly makes its way up the length of the River as temperatures rise. In the back channels the fish were feeding on stones and on nearly every cast a cutthroat would jump out of the water to slam the fly. It was a lot of fun seeing the fish active like that!

The flies that worked best were the yellow or orange stoneflies. The big attractor patterns such as Stimulators and Lime Trudes also performed well. The nymphs that were producing included the big Prince Nymphs and medium size Copper Johns.

I am pleased to report that there were no significant changes on the St. Mary over the winter in terms of depth or flow. That said, there are a few new fallen trees and log jams to be wary of.

It was so fun to be out on the St.Mary chasing cutthroat again, and it really looks like the River is coming into form early this season.

River Roundup

All our rivers are open. The Elk River is still high and dirty, so we will keep you posted as it improves. The Bull and Skookumchuck rivers are also still quite high, but usually start fishing well by the middle of July.

Take care and good luck on the water,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler, 1-800-667-2311

Ps Make sure you know the regulations before you head out fishing on any river and remember to be safe out there!

Report #7 (June 9th, 2013)

Premier Lake Report: strictly chironomids makes for fantastic fishing!

Premier Lake has been fishing so well lately it had to be our destination this weekend! We headed out in the early morning to fish this beautiful Lake about an hour's drive from Kimberley. Premier Lake is part of a Provincial Park with camping spots located at one end of the Lake making it a great place to camp for a few days. It also has good hiking trails in addition to the fishing. Yankee and Canuck lakes are two little spots you can hike to above Premier Lake to fish as well. Quartz Lake is another small lake you can fish very close to Premier. So once you set up camp at Premier Provincial Park, there are many venues to fish during your stay.

The weather this weekend was absolutely spectacular. There were high clouds and blue skies with temperatures reaching 70°F (21°C). There was very little wind making for calm lake conditions. Overall it was a wonderful early summer day! The water conditions were normal for this time of year, very clear.

Today we fished strictly with the chironomid set up. Some folks like the deep water chironomid fishing were they use a wet line. They measure the depth of where they like to fish, and then hang a chironomid, or a may fly nymph. Sometimes they go as deep as 50 to 60 feet! They then move the fly up and down. This method can be very effective.

We decided to boat around the Lake, going from one dropoff ledge to another till we identified some cruising fish. At this point we anchored in about 30 feet of water, put our backs to the wind and set out the chironomid rods with a 15 foot leader. The hatch was just starting when we put our first casts out over the dropoff ledge.

Premier Lake has been fishing absolutely fantastic this past week and it continued today. While we caught quite a few fish that were in the smaller range of 12-14 inches, we also caught many in the 16 to 17 inch class. These rainbows love to jump and are very healthy fish. They now have a lot of food on, and in the water, and these rainbows can grow quite quickly.

On the day we caught a few fish in the 19 inch range, with the biggest being a nice 22 inch rainbow. It gave us a solid fight and jumped out of the water three times!

In terms of the hatch, chironomids came off for a while at the start of the day, and a mayfly hatch showed up in the afternoon. The most effective flies were the larger chironomids, specifically the snow-cone sized 10 to 12. Other patterns such as the chromie, black bead and the white beaded chironomid worked at times.

Premier Lake is rich in interesting wildlife ranging from birds to be game animals. Today we saw ospreys, eagles and kingfishers, as well as whitetail and mule deer and Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep. The bighorns are often seen on the drive as you get close to the Lake, very cool.

River Roundup:

All the rivers in our region that have been closed due to run-off and spawning, open this Saturday June 15th. In terms of opening, the St. Mary River looks awesome right now, much better than last year at this time. We are going on our annual preseason reconnaissance float down the St. Mary River this Sunday, and I will be sending out a report on the river conditions shortly after.

Meanwhile the upper Columbia River is still fishing very well. The big rainbow trout are wonderful to catch and I will be doing a report in the next few days on the Columbia. There are a lot of places to fish in the Kootenays, you just have to come on up and check it out.

Take care and good fishing,

Kelly

St. Mary Angler

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

Report #6 (June 5th, 2013)**Whiteswan Lake Report: the fish are feeding heavily on chironomids!**

Today was a great day to head out into the back country to fish beautiful Whiteswan Lake in the East Kootenays. Like most of the lakes, Whiteswan is fishing very well.

The weather was nice today with temperatures reaching 75°F (24°C). Because this is a higher altitude lake, we never know for sure what the weather will be like. It seems wind and rain are always a possibility in the mountains. Fortunately, this was not the case today. Should you ever find yourself on Whiteswan battling the wind and rain, I suggest going to nearby Moose Lake to fish. Moose Lake is more sheltered and protected than Whiteswan and is a good backup when the rough weather shows up.

The water conditions on Whiteswan are normal for this time of year. The Lake turned over some time ago and the water is just warming up as it has been quite cold on Whiteswan until this week.

We fished mostly chironomids as other food on the Lake is not hatching quite yet. So we got our boat all ready to go with the rods strung up with a dry line and a 18 foot built leader. Another rod was outfitted with a medium sink fly line and a 9 foot leader with a leech tied on. We motored around one end of the lake in search of cruising fish. We looked along the dropoff ledges and in the shallows. Today the fish were out a bit in the deeper water so we added a bubble shot a foot above the fly on our 18 foot leaders, as well as an indicator. We began

added a 50 shot a foot above the fly on our 10 foot leaders, as well as an indicator. We began casting out over a dropoff ledge and let the fly sink down. We then slowly retrieved the fly back towards the boat.

The fishing was very good as we caught and released about 20 fish between the two of us. We caught a couple on the wet line technique, but we had most of the success with the dry line setup. The average sized trout caught and released was 16-18 inches. The biggest fish landed was a nice 22 inch rainbow. We had another bigger fish on the line, but it popped off!

The fish in Whiteswan are very healthy and really like to fight.

The most robust hatches coming off today were the chironomids. A few days ago the chironomids were very small, size 18-20, but thankfully the chironomids are now a bit bigger in the 14-16 range. The most effective flies were Callebatis, Chromies, Snow-Cones and Red-Daiichi chironomids. It is good to have a selection of chironomids in your fly-box so you can try small ones, black ones, green ones and Big Snow-Cones when you need to. One never really knows what will work in a pinch.

On the drive up we saw a bear run across the road. On the Lake there was a lot of bird life including eagles, ospreys and loons.

Regional Roundup

All the lakes are fishing very well now. Most of the hatches have already happened on the lower valley lakes leaving the fish with a lot of choice on what to feed on (i.e. damsels and dragons, to mayflies). On the higher mountain lakes the chironomids are still the main diet. So go out and enjoy the outdoors as the weather is looking nice for the foreseeable future.

Take care and we hope to see you on the water soon,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

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

Report #5 (May 28th, 2013)

Premier Lake Report: the feed is changing, but the fishing remains excellent!

Today was another great day to go fishing in southeastern B.C. There are so many lakes to choose from and they are all fishing great! So we decided to go out later in the day for an ‘afternoon into the evening’ fish on Premier Lake.

The weather was somewhat mixed today with cloud, sun and a little rain. We started fishing late afternoon and went till around 10 p.m. The fishing can be spectacular in the evening, especially when the fish move into the shallows and start feeding aggressively. If you hit it right, you can also see them cruising around the dropoff ledges and watch them surface to feed on the hatches.

The water conditions are normal for this time of year. Premier is up a bit from the snow melt, but it is clear down to 20 feet. This clarity is very helpful in spotting cruising fish!

From late afternoon into the evening we fished chironomids, as well as dragging damselfly, dragons, mayflies, and leeches along the dropoff areas. As we are near the end of May there is a lot of food hatching on the water now. The fish are happy to feed on the many selections and thus are not keying on just chironomids anymore. Some of the high mountain lakes are running behind on the hatches due to the timing of the snowmelt and their associated elevation. Lakes such as White-Swan and Whitetail are running behind so chironomids are still the key food for them when the hatches come off. But over at Premier Lake we are seeing the seasonal variety of food explode.

Even with the variety of feed items, Premier Lake fished very well today. We found ourselves a nice little dropoff ledge and anchored the boat on both ends. You only really need two fifty foot anchors and they allow the boat to remain still. Keeping the boat still is very important in chironomid fishing. Make sure however, to have the wind at your back as it makes casting much easier.

We were fishing in 18 feet of water so we set up our leader for 15 feet and ran a strike indicator and a b-b shot plus the fly. The cast does not have to be very far, you just have to get 20 feet out and let the fly slowly sink to the bottom. After you have left it for awhile, you can strip it in with quick pops, and then stop, and let it rest. The fish do like to follow the fly right to the surface so you have to be patient!

We caught and released 15 fish in the 16-18 inch slot. We did catch some of the smaller fish which are stocked in the Lake, but most were a nice size. The biggest fish was a 20 inch rainbow which hammered the fly as soon as it touched down on the water. This fish was feeding very close to the surface which made it an exciting fight! The trout was very healthy looking, what the locals like to call a “chrome bar”. Some of the fish caught looked to be in spawning mode, while others are finished and some just have that incredible chrome look to them. Very nice to see.

Mayflies and Chironomids were hatching on the water during the late afternoon and evening. Along the bank edges we could see the damselfly, dragons and leeches. The flies that were effective today included; the Olive and Red Chironomids, Lightning Bugs, leech patterns hung off of a chironomid rig, Damselfly, and we even caught a couple of fish on a Water Boatman pattern

In terms of the local fauna viewed, Premier Lake has two sets of loons who like to believe they own the whole place. There are also eagles, ospreys and Canada geese about the Lake.

they own the whole place. There are also eagles, ospreys and Canada geese about the Lakes. When we get lucky we get to see bear from time to time as they roam around grazing after a long winters sleep. We saw lots of deer and elk during the drive up.

Columbia River continues to fish very well

The **Columbia River** has provided us with some outstanding fishing days this spring and we will continue to fish it into June. This month has been a great month to fish the Lakes in the East Kootenays as well.

Take care and we hope to see you on the water soon,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss fishing current conditions on or to book a summer float on the Elk or St.Mary rivers.

Report #4 (May 26th, 2013)

Columbia River Report: the Genelle to Murphy Creek Run is producing lots of nice rainbow trout!

Today we fished the stretch of the upper Columbia River situated in southeastern B.C. This stretch of the Columbia is from the City Castlegar to the Canada/U.S. border. It is about 35 miles in length and is broken into **4 distinct fishable reaches** based on geography and water type. The section of the Columbia we fished today was the “Genelle to Murphy Creek Run”. Our jet boat allows us to travel up and down the River in search of the big back eddies and productive runs, so we can find the prime locations to fish for the big rainbows.

The weather has been a ‘mixed bag’ these last few days ranging from snow storms to rainfall warnings. However, today we had a nice day with temperatures reaching 65°F (18°C) with some sun and high overcast cloud. As for fishing, this is great weather to have!

The water has been clearing quickly after the recent stretch of rain. The depth of clarity is around 5 feet and the temperature of the water is 50 to 55°F. Still mighty cool, but it is a big river to warm up.

Our approach on the River today was to use the jetboat to cruise to a section of the River that looked very fishable, then float down the run. We also stopped in some of the big back eddies and floated around the swirl, casting out into the big water. Fishing from the boat has it obvious benefits, but we also will beach and fish from shore in many areas over the 35 miles of water

THE RIVER

The River fished very well again today. The month of May seems to be one of the best months for early River fishing. On this day each angler caught and released about 15 rainbows. The rainbows fought with aggression, and once we got them close to the boat we could see they were very healthy. The average size of trout caught today ranged from 17 to 20 inches.

The biggest fish on the day was a robust 24 inch rainbow trout. It was caught in a big back eddy and it took the angler into his backing. The fish fought hard and after 15 minutes the angler finally brought it to the side of boat and took a nice photo before the release. It was the highlight of the day for sure!

In terms of the hatches, some Black Caddis and Blue Winged Olives were coming off the Columbia during the day, but most of the fishing today consisted of throwing nymphs or streamers into the runs. In terms of artificials we used; Kelly's Super Streamer, Hares Ear Nymphs, Prince Nymphs and some selections of May flies, including Lightning Bugs and Copper Johns.

We saw a lot of bird life on the upper Columbia today including Canada geese, eagles and ospreys. We also spied a few turkeys cruising along the side of the bank like a pack of dinosaurs, so cool.

On the Columbia into June

We will be guiding on the Upper Columbia River into June and have days still available. The fishing has been very good this year with new clients coming up and checking it out. So give us a call to discuss this incredible spring rainbow fishery.

Take care and tight lines,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss fishing conditions on the Columbia River or to book a float.

Report #3 (May 20th, 2013)

Lazy Lake, this pretty little lake really delivers!

Today we decided to fish Lazy Lake which has been iced off for a few weeks now. Lazy is a

very beautiful small lake tucked away in the mountains of the East Kootenays.

The weather conditions were pretty good as we had mostly sun, with a little cloud and a bit of rain. The temperature reached 67°F (19°C) by mid afternoon, so we were blessed with very nice fishing conditions!

Lazy Lake turned over a few weeks ago and the spring runoff has caused the Lake elevation to come up slightly. The water was quite clear today and we could see the fish moving into the shallows.

We arrived at the Lake in the early morning and rigged up our fishing rods on site. Our intention was to fish chironomids, as well as to pull the wet line through the shallows and along the dropoff ledges. So we rigged up the rods; setting up the chironomid rig (12-16 feet leader) and another rod with a wet line. We then cruised around the small lake looking for feeding trout along the dropoff ledges. Once we saw some trout, we stopped the boat, anchored up and started casting.

The fishing started off slow and then picked up around lunch time. We had a mayfly hatch occur and the trout responded by feeding aggressively for the following two hours. During the day we caught and released over 10 fish each. These trout are funny in that they like to follow the fly right back to the boat before they strike, so one has to be patient to allow the fish to hook up before pulling on the line.

The biggest fish landed was a nice 22 inch rainbow. It hammered the fly after we let the line sit in the water for a few minutes before we started to strip it in. After the first pull the fish took hold of the fly and the fight was on. This fish jumped clear out of the water and made a few good runs... great fun! The fish was chunky and very healthy, a sure sign it must have had a good winter.

Right now the hatches on the lakes in our area are at their height. Not only are chironomids coming off with gusto, but we are seeing all types of may, damsel and dragonflies hatching as well. These hatches will bring the fish closer to the shallow waters to feed. On the downside, this variety of feed may make them a little more picky about what they eat. So if things are not working for you, "change that fly". The flies that were effective today included the Catatonic Leech, Red Daichii Chironomid, Chromie, Black or White Head Snow Cone, as well as the Mayflies such as the Copper Johns and Lightening Bugs (sizes 12-16).

The wildlife on Lazy Lake is amazing with many bird species including eagles, ospreys and loons just to name a few.

Lake Roundup:

The lakes are all fishing very good right now. The snow melt is happening very fast up in the high country so it could mean an early start of the river fishing this year!

Take care and tight lines,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss fishing conditions on the Columbia River or to book a float. When in town be sure to check out our new fly shop in Cranbrook.

Report #2 (May 12th, 2013)

The Columbia River is providing some excellent early season rainbow fishing!

This weekend we headed out to fish the section of the mighty Columbia River just above where it crosses into northeast Washington State. This section of the upper Columbia River has been fishing very well this spring. Everyone on this trip was excited to get some early season action with the big Columbia River rainbows!

The weather was slightly overcast today. In terms of the temperature we saw a high of 65°F (18°C) with very little wind. We did see a few drops of rain, but it was nothing to worry about.

The level of the Columbia River was up from a few days ago as the freshet has started in earnest. The increased flow has caused some debris and the odd log from along the river bank to enter the River. At this time of year we keep a keen eye out for stuff on the water as we motor and while we fish.

On the Columbia River we are always prepared in advance with rods strung for different applications. We have a dry fly rod, a sink tip rod and a sinking line rod ready to go when the opportunity arises. The Columbia is a big river with nice sized rainbows so we use 6 weight, 10 foot rods with lots of backing on the reels. Our jet powered boat is specifically outfitted for this River with front and back casting areas and braces to hold you neatly in place. Our approach is to motor up, or down the River to a nice run, or a big back eddy. Just before we reach the spot of choice the motor is cut as to not disturb the fish, then we quietly row in like a drift boat. This is very effective because these fish tend to be easily spooked.

Today was a very good day for catching fish! The rainbow trout seemed to be up and feeding pretty well everywhere as we caught fish in every back eddy we pulled into. One great thing about this River is that there are a lot of nice eddies which provides anglers with a multitude of distinct places to fish. On this day the angler caught and released around 15 rainbows. They ranged in size from the smaller guys in the 15-17 inch slot, to bigger ones in the 17-20+ inch range. The biggest fish landed was a nice chunky and healthy 21 inch

rainbow trout that took the fly very hard and then ran out into the current! These fish like to come right out of the water, and wow when it happens it is very exciting!

The dominant hatch on this trip consisted of Yellow Sallys, with some Caddis and small Midges hatching sporadically throughout the day. The flies used included Kelly's Super Streamer, Pheasant Tail Nymph, Copper-Johns Nymph and Prince Nymphs (sizes 12-14).

On the early morning drive to the launch site we saw a good sized brown bear grazing along the road. We also saw many Canada geese with their young on the water, as well as some ospreys and eagles high up in the trees scouting for their next meal.

The Columbia River is now fishing very well, so give some thought to coming up and getting into some early season rainbow trout fishing, you will not be disappointed.

Take care and tight lines,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss spring fishing conditions on the Columbia River or to book a float on the Columbia, Elk or St.Mary.

Report #1 (May 5th, 2013)

Premier Lake is awesome!

The weather in the East Kootenays has been absolutely wonderful these past couple of weeks. The run-off has begun on the rivers throughout B.C. and it is great to see the snow starting to melt. All the lakes, even those at the higher altitude, have iced off in the last couple of weeks and the fishing has been fabulous! Some lakes lower in the valley have been open a month, so there are plenty of places to fish right now in the Kootenays. Today we chose to head up to Premier Lake in the hopes of spending a nice day catching those active and hungry rainbows!

The weather was perfect with just a slight breeze on the Lake. Temperatures reached 77°F (25°C) and felt very warm for this time of year! The water conditions were up slightly which is normal for spring as the snow melts and the lakes fill up. The Lake was nice and clear as the spring turnover has already happened.

Today we strung one rod with a wet line and another with a dry line in preparation for fishing these rainbows. We strung the wet line with a type 3 sinking line and attached a 9 foot 2X leader on the end. On the rod strung with the dry line we attached a leader of around

foot 3X leader on the end. On the rod string with the dry line we attached a leader of around 12-16 feet. The leader was a 3X or 4X with a weight and a quick release indicator attached on the line. The use of weight allows the fly to sink much faster and with a quick release indicator you can get your fish into the net without struggling to reach it with these longer leader lengths. We positioned ourselves along a drop-off ledge, anchored up and began casting both rods.

Today the chironomid fishing was very good when the hatch was on, but pulling leeches and damsels along the ledges also was very effective. The fishing was very good today as we landed 12 fish each! The two of us hooked into 4 nice sized fish ranging from 19 to 21 inches. The biggest fish landed was a nice 21 inch rainbow caught close to the surface. The rainbow must have followed the fly all the way up to the boat before he decided to eat the bug! You could tell he was following the fly because he kept bumping it till he hammered it hard. You just have to be patient and not lift on the rod, because as we all know, that is a sure way to miss the fish... just let the fish take the fly! The average size fish caught on the day was between 14-16 inches. It was a lot of fun to watch these guys jump clear out of the water chasing our fly!

In terms of a bug activity today, there was a chironomid hatch and we saw some black ants buzzing around as well. The flies that were most effective today included the Catatonic Leech Pattern, the Red Daiichi Chironomid, the Chromie and the Snow Cone Chironomid.

There is a lot of wildlife here in the Kootenays and we were lucky to see a heard of Elk and many deer out in the fields as we drove the road to Premier. On the Lake we watched the bird life, including eagles ospreys and loons.

River Round-up:

All the rivers in Region 4 are closed from April 1st till June 15th for run-off and spawning. The only exceptions are the Columbia and Kootenay rivers which are open year round. The Columbia River Report is fishing very well, check back for a report soon.

Take care and tight lines,

Kelly

St.Mary Angler

PS Call us at 1-800-667-2311 to discuss fishing conditions on the Columbia River or to book a float.