

Welcoming Dave Graybill To The Nickel Ads Classifieds

The Fishin' Magician

Daylight Saving Time is extending our days, and spring fever is rampant among anglers here in Central Washington. I had a chance to take an early season walleye trip to Lake Roosevelt. It seems that even the fish are ready to go this year, even though winter is reluctant to release its icy grip.

We were breaking a thin layer of ice as we left the slip in the marina at Two Rivers. Rick Rovegno, of Big Wally's Guide Service, assured me that the ice layer wasn't as thick as the day before and we could expect temperatures in the 50s. He and his son Hayden had a good trip the day before and although I thought the conditions were more like winter than spring, he laughed and said things were shaping up for a great day of walleye fishing on the main lake and up the Spokane River.

If the name Big Wally's sounds familiar, it is for good reason. Gordon and Marge Steinmetz had owned and operated the Big Wally's gas station, store and restaurant in Coulee City for years. Gordon was a tournament walleye angler and guide. He founded the Big Wally's Spring Classic Walleye Tournament that takes place in May every year on Banks Lake. The store was sold a couple of years ago and Gordon retired from the guide business. He passed the guide operation on to his nephew Rick Rovegno to continue the tradition of offering an excellent guide service on the many walleye rich waters of Central Washington. Rovegno has been a tournament



walleye angler for over ten years and has now been guiding for over five. He and I had been talking on the phone since last fall. At the sports show in Puyallup we set this date for the trip.

We didn't have to run far to find one of his favorite spots to catch walleye this time of year. Running out of the mouth of the Spokane River, where the Two Rivers Marina sets, there is a ridge that he likes to check for fish. This time of year the fish are deep, and we were into walleye right away, at close to 50 feet deep. Rovegno set us up with jigs. These were 3/8th ounce glo jigs in chanteuse with a red eye. The jigs that worked best had no skirt, and he would thread a piece of nightcrawler on the hook, leaving just an inch or two trailing. He had a nifty tool to zap the jigs with light to make them ultra bright. It is made by Rapala and looks

like a hard case for eye glasses. Inside are a series of LED lights. He closed the lid around the rig and hit a button for a few seconds and the result is a jig that will really stand out in the darkness at 50 feet deep.

We would either "dead stick" these jigs, leaving the rod in the holder and let them drag across the bottom, or would give them just a slight action with the rod in our hand. This time of year with the chilly water temperatures a walleye isn't likely to chase down an active bait. A smaller bait, presented slowly is more effective. Rovegno tried to keep our speed close to just a half mile an hour.

This ridge produced some fish for us, but there was a spot up the Spokane River that had really paid off for him and his son the day before. We reeled up and ran up under the bridge over the Spokane River and maybe about a half mile up to where he had found hungry walleye. We used the same tactics, but found fish anywhere from about 35 to 45 feet in this area. Looking at the exposed shoreline I could see that there were a lot of gentle humps carved out by the river current and the walleye were moving around this structure. The same jigs worked just fine here, too, and we had some good flurries of action where we would put two or three fish in the boat very quickly and then hunt around for another group of fish looking for lunch.

We did run down lake about four miles to try a flat. The wind had come up on the main lake and Rovegno put out a wind sock to try to keep our drift within that five mile per hour speed. I missed a good fish and Hayden landed one in this area, but we soon decided to head back up to the ridge we first fished, and get out of the wind. It was a good choice. Hayden brought a nice fish on board soon after we arrived, and when Rick and I landed a double we decided to call it a day. We had left the marina at about 9 a.m. and quit at 2:30. There were 17 walleye in the live well and they ranged from 12 to 17 inches. Not a bad day of fishing for walleye anytime of year.

Rovegno sure knew where to find fish on Lake Roosevelt and I would suggest that if you would like to learn more about the fishing here or even book a trip with Rick to give him a call or shoot him an e-mail. His phone number is 509-954-4570, and his e-mail address is dikntam@comcast.net.

This week and I am going late season steelhead fishing on the Okanogan River with Jerrod Gibbons. I am taking care of my spring fever by getting out on the water, and I hope you do, too!

Reach Dave at: www.FishingMagician.com or Fishboy@nwi.net

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