Deschutes River Fishing Report

by bendweekly

While the Deschutes River is famous for its summer run steelhead, good fishing opportunities exist well into the winter for summer-run hatchery fish that remain in the river. Summer-run fish are slow to mature and do not typically begin spawning until early spring in the Deschutes . Slowly migrating or holding fish provide anglers opportunity throughout the Lower Deschutes for most of the winter. While not as popular as the summer fishery, winter steelhead angling offers anglers greater solitude than in the busy summer months.

The ODFW releases hatchery steelhead into the Deschutes from Round Butte Fish Hatchery, located near the base of Pelton Dam. In addition, hatchery steelhead from throughout the Columbia Basin also enter the Deschutes, and while most eventually leave the Deschutes and continue their journey to their native stream, many remain in the Deschutes, providing anglers additional harvest opportunities.

Fish can be found throughout the river during the winter, but areas upstream from Sherars Falls generally provide the greatest angler success.

The Deschutes River is open for steelhead angling the entire year from the mouth of the river upstream to the northern boundary of Warms Springs Indian Reservation.

While bait fishing in prohibited on the Deschutes , anglers use a wide variety of techniques. Successful anglers cast sinking flies, pitch spinners, spoons, or plugs, or drift fish with artificial baits and jigs. Large tracts of public land provide bank access, along with boat access throughout much of the river.

Anglers are allowed an additional fin-clipped steelhead per day, for a total daily limit of 3 adult fish.

Water Level Real Time Location Date Gage height (feet) Stream-flow (ftÂ³/s) Long-term medianflow
14092500 Warm Springs 02/17 5,010 4,910 14103000 Moody 02/17 3.29 6,280 6,615

Water Clarity: Warm Springs to White River - visibility is 5'-7' average. White River to Heritage Landing - visibility is 4'-6' average.

Water Temperature: 40-45 degrees.

40-45 degrees. Flow Conditions: dropping.

Hatches: Look for hatches & spinner falls of tiny mayflies during the early afternoon. Mayfly colors can range from charcoal to olive. You will want to be well stocked with a variety of nymphs, emergers, duns and spinner patterns. Small tan caddis are also hatching most days. You will find both pupa and dry patterns useful. Midge hatches occur nearly every day. Both sunk and floating midge pupa flies can be very productive. Back-eddies and slow side currents are a good bet for dry fly fishing. Morning and mid-day nymph fishing in riffle water can be very good. Remember that the water is still high and many trout can be concentrated close to the bank. Many days there is "behavioral drift", which means that many aquatic insects will be migrating

along the bottom and be available to feeding trout. Whitefish are spawning and very active. Nymphing with glo bugs, San Juan worms, mayfly nymphs, midge pupa, caddis pupa, caddis larva or stone fly nymph patterns can be very productive for trout and whitefish. The above situations are best covered with a floating fly line and all patterns are fished drag free. Fishing leach patterns with a fast sinking shooting head can be extremely productive for both trout and steelhead. Concentrate on the slower seams.

Steelhead:Steelhead fishing will remain steady above the mouth of White River. Approximately 10,000 will "winter-over" within the Deschutes. This is enough fish to provide a rewarding, but challenging fishery.

Book your Deschutes Fly Fishing Trip for the 2006 Season (April thru October)! 1-800-266-3971

***If you are going to fish the Deschutes or Crooked River, Hwy 26 is the most direct route from Portland to Central Oregon. Here is a good way to check out the road conditions through the Cascade Mountain Passes: Road Cams.

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