Hood River Fishing Report

by ODFW

Unlike most steelhead streams, the Hood River offers year-round steelhead fishing opportunities for both summer and winter-run steelhead. Angler opportunity peaks, however, when the winter run steelhead return in late winter or early spring. Being one of easternmost populations of winter steelhead in the Columbia Basin , the Hood River run is later than most winter run populations. The hatchery population is comprised entirely from wild broodstock, so hatchery and wild fish return at nearly the same time.

Winter run steelhead typically begin returning to the Hood River in late January and continue through May, with the peak of the run returning in April. Anglers have the opportunity to catch winter run steelhead, as well as summer run steelhead on the same trip while fishing the Hood. Summer run steelhead have a very protracted run timing in the Hood River and are available to anglers throughout the year. Approximately 50,000 winter steelhead are planted annually in the Hood River , and should be good fishing opportunity for this years run. The 2005-06 Hood River wild winter run is predicted to be less robust than last yearâ€™s run, up to 1,500 first run hatchery fish.

The ODFW operates an adult steelhead trap at Powerdale Dam approximately 4.5 miles upstream from the mouth, where numbers of hatchery fish escaping into upstream spawning areas are controlled. Hatchery fish in excess of natural production needs are trapped at the dam and returned back to the mouth river providing significant additional angler opportunity on hatchery fish.

The Hood River is open to adipose fin-clipped steelhead the entire year from the mouth of the river to Powerdale Dam, located about 4.5 miles upstream. While public access is permitted throughout most of the open area on PacifiCorps lands, river access is limited to just two entry points. Anglers generally access the river at the Powerdale Dam, or just upstream from Interstate 84 at the Dam Powerhouse, located near the mouth. Successful anglers use a variety of techniques, casting flies, pitching spinners or spoons, or drift-fishing with a variety of baits. Anglers are allowed an additional adipose fin-clipped steelhead per day, for a total daily limit of 3 adult fish.