



Date	Nov. 8, 2007	Time	Afternoon
Location	Boise River - downtown Boise, ID	Weather	Clear and Sunny
Fish Species	Steelhead	Size Range	4 to 10 lbs
Fish Caught	A few mid size Steelhead in the group		
Flies Used	Purple Egg Sucking Leech		
Techniques	Drift along the bottom with a small split shot		
Comments	This event is getting bigger every year!		

It's that time of year again to fly fish for Steelhead in the Boise River. I have been fishing this event since 2004 and it has grown a lot since that time. It makes it nice to not have to drive a few hours to catch a Steelhead but it is combat fishing.

Idaho Fish and Game dump Steelhead captured at Hells Canyon damn into the Boise River. This was the first and only week of the three weeks that they dump Steelhead that I fished. They are dumped at five locations in downtown Boise between Barber Park and Glenwood Bridge. They dump 1000 fish throughout the month of November.

I arrived at the river a few hours early which has always been plenty of time in the past but not this year. There was already a line formed with people positioning themselves in the best locations. Below: The scene a few hours before the Steelhead arrived and it got worse



I felt like a Sardine standing along the bank especially fishing with a fly rod. It had never been this bad before. It was difficult to maneuver and get a good drift with people standing so close together. You also had to contend with the lines in the water from the other bank. You just have to realize that it is a circus and “it is what it is” so you have to have the right attitude or you’ll just get frustrated.

The truck arrived and the battle began. I got a decent spot but I couldn’t fish how I liked to fish. It was just too close for comfort. After a few hours of a few fish being caught on both sides of me and me having just one hit I moved down river.



Looking down river from my first position after a few hours of fishing and a few fishermen had dispersed

I found a little bit of solitude as people started leaving the river as the catch rate dwindled. I was able to get into my routine. I knew I was leaving a better spot but I wasn’t enjoying the tight quarters where I was so what did I have to lose.

I was able to get a long clean drift and cast any distance without any interference. After just a few casts of testing my drift on the river bottom I got my take. “Fish on” I exclaimed.

It was a relief because this is the longest I’ve gone without catching a Steelhead at this event and I felt my odds of catching and landing a fish were greater when I arrived in the upper hole.

That fish quickly made its presence known as I could feel the force of its pull and the thrashing of its head underwater. It made a run but it was toward me. It took me a few seconds to gather all the line and realize that I still had a fish. I now had the luxury of fighting the fish in the slower water just in front of me. I was hoping I would avoid a run down the rapids into the deeper hole down river which was lined with fisherman. I was fishing the slower water just above the rapids.

Shane (whom I know from church) came over with the net. I told him it was still going to be a while. He waited patiently as I fought the fish out in front of me. As I applied more pressure the fish got more aggressive. What I feared would happen, happened!

The line came screaming off my reel as the fish headed straight down river. There was no stopping it. It must have been a decent sized Steelhead. It took me through the rapids and down into the deeper hole below. As I approached the hole and gained back much of my line, a few of the many fishermen warned me about a submerged branch out in the river. I soon realized that my Steelhead was right next to the submerged log which had never been there before when I fished this stretch.

Instead of being able to walk down and land it from below I had no choice but to walk out into the river from above and bring it up through the rapids. I knew my chances were slim at this point. The odds are greatly in the Steelheads favor when you have to fight it from upstream in a current. I applied the pressure and it wasn't long before the hook popped off. I had hooked a Steelhead last December in a similar situation and the fish straightened my hook.

I walked back upstream a little disappointed but at the same time it was another great memory and I got to be part of an awesome run. As I approached where I was fishing a fisherman came up to me and said the same exact thing happened to him. He got down to that same log and had to try to land it from above instead of being able to go down river.

The evening wore on and as the light was dispersing I found myself alone on the river. I gave it a dozen more casts and that was the end to another eventful day of combat fishing on the Boise River.



Shane whom I know from church with one of his Steelhead



Jim who use to be a fellow coworker with his Steelhead