**Spey fishing, Steelhead Clinic 12/3/2016 – Mike Spurlock**

I am not an expert, largely self-taught, my casting sucks but spey is my favorite way to fish for steelhead. Have to admit, I don’t fish the Russian very much.

1. What spey is used for:

* Rivers vs lakes
* Uncommon = surf (overhead casting with lots of stripping)
* Wading vs boat
* Swing vs indicator
* Good when little room to back cast
* Can cast farther and cover more water
* Can mend better (longer rod)
* Steelhead, Chinook, Atlantic salmon
* Landing fish is hard without a partner, need to tail them, no net w/o a guide.

1. Typically catch fewer fish than indicator fishing, so why do it?

* To feel that tight line grab!
* Fun to cast.
* For the challenge.
* Cover more water.
* To not have to watch the fxxx-ing indicator, watch the scenery instead.
* To avoid having to fish in a line-up (can’t fish in a lineup).

1. Rods:

* Spey weight scale is different from single hand standards. Examples:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 6 wt | 7 wt | 8 wt | 9 wt |
| Spey gr wt | 420 + tip | 470 + tip | 530 + tip | 600 + tip |
| Single hand shooting heads | 250 | 300 | 360 | 430 |
| Single hand gr wt | 160 | 185 | 210 | 240 |

* Typical rod lengths 12-15 ft, switch rod is a hybrid
* Traditional rod is slower and easier to learn on vs fast action. Bamboo is slower yet.
* My rods:
* 7136 Sage or 6126 Echo. I use for steelhead on Russian, Gualala, Garcia, Klamath, Trinity and smaller rivers in BC or Alaska.
* Fly Shop Signature 2 H2O 8 wt 13 ft. I use for BC steelhead.
* 9150 Sage for BC for big river steelhead and for chinook.

1. Lines:

* Confusing. Use Rio or Airflow website line selector to match lines to your rod.
* Skagit
  + winter, big flies, tips to get into the zone, when the fish needs to have the fly hit its nose, splashy doesn’t matter
  + belly+tip lengths = 2-3 x rod length. Limited by keeping from blowing the anchor and ability to keep arms close to body during cast for less effort.
  + Tips – 15 ft tips to get fly in the zone: float, intermediate, type 3, 6, 8. Probably normally use type 3, type 6 on the Russian.
  + Or make your own tips: 7.5 ft-15 ft lengths of T-8, T-11, T-14, T-20
  + MOW tips have become popular – 10 ft lengths made up of combinations of 2.5 ft sections of foating/sinking.
  + Running lines – floating or monofilament
* Other lines (I don’t use):
  + Scandi (summer, small flies, floating, poly-leaders instead of tips, easier to cast, when the fish will move for the fly, casts are not as splashy)
  + Mid-spey or grand spey have longer bellies and are much harder to cast.

1. Reels:

* Click drag – when you want to hear that scream (and show off to others when you get a fish).
* Adjustable drag

1. Flies:

* Regular straight hook flies
* Articulated flies such as intruders, etc.
* Tube flies
* Can be weighted or unweighted
* Typical for Russian – orange or black, comet or boss, size 6-10, bead chain eyes.
  + Bright day, clear water – use smaller fly, orange.
  + Overcast, dirty water – use larger fly, black (better silhouette).

1. Leader:

* 12# maxima, Rio 2x, 1x, 0x.
* Typically use straight 4-5 ft leader with sink tips
* Longer and tapered with full floating lines.

1. Casts:

* Important – always cast over the downwind shoulder (could be either right or left).
* Use protection (glasses, hat, hood), especially with heavy flies and sink tips.
* Watch your anchor, stop cast if it is not right.
* 180 degree rule for anchor/D-loop/cast
* Aim for the tree tops to get a tight loop for distance.
* Don’t power the cast with top hand like I do.
* River left, right hander:
  + U/S wind: snap T – right shoulder
  + D/S wind: Double spey – left shoulder (cackhanded or left hand on top)
* River right, right hande
  + D/S wind: Double spey – right shoulder
  + U/S wind: Snap T – left shoulder (cackhanded or left hand on top)
* Use Perry poke when obstacles at your back
* When there is lot of current, learn to hold running line in loops.
* Splash & go casts (I don’t use) which are more efficient but have more difficult timing (can use with scandi or floating lines):
  + Single spey vs snap T
  + Snake roll vs double spey

1. Fishing the Russian:

* Get a Streamtime map.
* Set up a river flow alert for your target river at the USGS streamflow website.
* Is the river mouth open?

1. If you want to get tips on spey fishing:

* Hire a walk & wade spey guide (Jason Hartwig, Dillon Renton, Tony Wratney).
* Attend a class (Jeff Putnam, Bill Lowe).
* Go to Pleasanton (Feb 24-26, 2017)
* Go to Spey-0-rama in Golden Gate Park (April 22-23, 2017).
* Go to a lodge or float trip that offers spey fishing.

1. Locations where you can spey fish:

* BC - Skeena, Kalum, Kitimat, Nocansaye, Dean (steelhead, chinook)
* Oregon - Deschutes, N Umpqua (steelhead)
* Washington- Olympic Pen (steelhead)
* Coastal Calif – Russian, Gualala, Garcia (steelhead)
* Trinity, Klamath, Eel (steelhead)
* SE Alaska –Prince of Wales Island, Situk River in Yakutat (steelhead)
* Canadian Arctic (sea run char)
* East coast & Europe (Atlantic salmon)
* Tiera Del Fuego (sea run browns)
* Patagonia Jurassic Lake (Rainbows)









