

RRFF Steelhead Clinic – Saturday, December 14th

I. Introduction – Overview

A. Purpose – To introduce the equipment, materials and techniques conducive to fly fishing for steelhead in Northern California, specifically on the Russian River and nearby Coastal Rivers as well as on the Trinity River.

1. What are Steelhead?
 - a. When (and why) are they in our river systems?
 - b. What is the difference between a hatchery steelhead and a wild steelhead?
 - c. How have their populations in our rivers been influenced over time?
 - d. What is the life cycle of a steelhead?
 - e. When should we fish for steelhead?
 - i. The fish of a thousand casts – maximizing opportunities

II. Flyfishing for Steelhead – Tackle and Flies

A. Equipment (have rods strung-up for examples & demonstration purposes)

1. Fly rods – What to use?
 - a. Rod length and weight
 - i. One-handed
 - ii. Two-handed (spey and switch rods)
2. Selecting the appropriate technique – How should I fish?
 - a. Water conditions
 - i. Traditional swing – one-handed and two-handed
 - ii. Using an indicator – one-handed and two-handed
 - b. Line & Leader set-up for style of fishing
 - i. One-handed
Cover leader size & length considerations, using tapered leaders, and building your own leaders.
 - ii. Two-handed
Cover leader size & length considerations, using tapered leaders, and building your own leaders. Also, Skagit vs. Scandi systems – what to use when.
 - c. Knots – The knots that you should learn to tie well!
 - i. leader and tippet connections
 - ii. fly connections to tippet
 - d. Reels – The importance of a good drag system and fly-line backing.
 - e. Fly Selection (have samples for viewing)

- i. One-handed swing
- ii. One-handed indicator
- iii. Two-handed spey and switch

- f. Other equipment
 - i. Waders and boots
 - ii. Wading staff
 - iii. Net
 - iv. Eye protection

III. Where do I fish?

A. Reading water

1. Where do steelhead hold and what should I target?

- a. Depth
- b. Structure
- c. Current seams
- d. Riffles and runs
- e. Tail-outs

2. Presentation

- a. Determine the optimum fishing technique for the conditions.
 - i. Floating line
 - ii. Shooting head – (developed for the Russian River)
 - iii. Sink-tips
 - iv. Indicator w/ floating line
- b. Fishing the fly
 - i. Swing
 - ii. Indicator
- c. The importance of fly casting
 - i. Skills to develop – double-haul, shooting line, mending, roll cast

IV. Etiquette

A. General - Be Courteous

B. Specific etiquette traditions for North Coast Rivers (and how they differ from other rivers)

V. Catch and Release

A. When can I keep fish?

B. Techniques for releasing steelhead successfully.

1. Fishing Pictures

2. "Keep 'em Wet"

VI. Review Russian River Streamside map (identifying fishing locations and popular spots)

VII. On-the Water - casting demonstrations of different steelhead set-ups and techniques

A. One-handed steelhead swing – floating line and shooting head.

B. Indicator fishing

C. Spey & Switch Rod fishing

VIII. Final thoughts - Questions & Answers