

Subject: : Gear Talk

Topic: : steelhead setups

Re: steelhead setups

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URL:

ahh... the first steelhead thread of the year. I can't wait already.  
(unfortunately with the next kid on the way, I'm already anticipating a lack of fishing it)

Good advise so far. I moved from a 9' to a 10' rod last year and will never look back. It was easier to mend line and had a longer reach for high sticking.

Erie's fish are typically in the 5-8lb range. A 6 or 7wt is just fine there. If you're headed to the Salmon River in NY, then I'd at least go with a 7 as the steelhead are bigger, but you also have the salmon up there. You won't be casting this rod, it's a chuck and duck game with steelhead. The lighter the rod, the easier on your arm all day, but don't spend an arm and a leg for a rod that you don't ever need to really cast.

For a reel, you want a good drag system. If you're planning on heading up in below freezing temperatures, you can check out some sealed drag systems, but they're not completely necessary. Most fishing is done in October and November for most people. I'd spend more money on a reel, than a rod for steelhead, which can be opposite in trout fishing.

Be prepared with lots of flies and a good amount of split shot. Not the tiny flyfishing split shot, but the regular spin casting stuff with the tabs to remove it. You can lose a lot of flies, and a lot of split shot in a single day up there. That's usually a good thing. Snapping off fish and snags on the bottom are pretty common.

Good steelhead patterns are eggs (glo bugs, sucker spawn, estaz), woolly buggers, other streamers like zonkers, and basic nymphs will get you by all season long. Keep it simple. Sometimes it's color for a certain day, and other times it's just hitting them in the feeding lanes.

We do a steelhead JAM every year and it's a good place to learn from some experienced anglers and learn your way around up there too. I usually organize it but may have to pass that on to someone else this year as I may not make it.

Keep asking questions though.

Ryan