

Subject: : Paflyfish General Forum

Topic: : Steelhead 2013-2014 Thread

Re: Steelhead 2013-2014 Thread

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URL:

I used to do a fair bit of Erie fishing. I now live far enough away that I make far fewer trips, but I try to get 1 good long weekend trip per year. It's always a weekend, though. Day trips are out from this distance. So I only see weekend type crowds.

It is a great fishery. And before my yearly trip I get all amped up about it, like I'm getting now. But after fishing it, I always feel a little dirty for having been so excited about the circus.

When it's up and fish are spread out, the crowds aren't terrible, you can find plenty of elbow room with fish, and I usually do well. But doing well drives home how good, and ultimately, how fake the fishery is. It begins to feel like one of those trout tubs at the outdoor shows for kids to fish in. It's like, "I just drove 6 hrs for ridiculously easy fishing for a bunch of pelletheads that are way too big for this water."

When it's low and clear, in upstream areas there may only be fishermen every 100 yards or so, but often there are only fish every hundred yards or so, and the two are in the same places. Even if it doesn't get to the point of being disrespectful, it's still combat fishing. You're trying to get there "first" and set up on a pod. If you succeed, you spend the next few hours defending said pod, watching all anglers who even approach with nervous suspicion. Full defense mode. Someone below you is fishing towards you, in that riffle, where you know there's 3 totally fed up fish. They came from you're hole, you landed one and scared the snot out of the other two. He hooks one and you can see he lands it tail first. "Snagger", you mutter. You shuffle down to keep him from getting too close to your hole. When he gets out of the water to walk by, you shuffle back up, always keeping yourself between him and that pod of fish! But it is a shuffle, not a walk, the goal afterall is to look like you're not purposely moving to keep him away, but rather just wondering around a bit while fishing. This can go on for many hours. You're catching some fish. Remember, this was the GOAL!

If you fail to get a good spot early, you end up walking all day looking for those few un-pestered fish, and everyone you walk by eyes you with that same nervous suspicion. You often find a few in a run somewhere that nobody else is fishing. Sort of. I mean, there's a guy in that pool up there, and one in that pool down there. I'm 50 yards from either, but "am I too close?" You can see that the guy up there shuffled down, and the guy down there shuffled up, so obviously your close enough to make them nervous, even if you really have no intention of moving into their pods of fish. And there look to be like 3 fish here in this shallow little run. Maybe one will hit. A minute later, you have one hooked, by the tail. It wasn't on purpose, but that's what happens in shallow runs. And you only fished that run because that's all that was available, and you gotta fish somewhere. You know dang well the guy up there, and that guy down there, are muttering "snagger" under their breaths.

After landing and releasing it, you're embarrassed so you start walking again. Down around a bend you lucked on a guy who looks to be packing up to leave for the day, in front of a honey hole. So you stop to give him time and make sure that's what he's doing. You can't just stare at him, that's so obvious that your looking to pounce

on his spot. So you pretend to look close for fish in that thar 2" deep riffle. He is leaving! Right around that time, another dude comes in sight moving towards the hole from the other direction. And dang it, he thinks your actually looking for fish in this riffle, rather than waiting for the hole! Ok, who's closer? The race is on!

Ah, steelhead fishing....