

I heard the announcement that Idaho Fish and Game was releasing Steelhead into the Boise River between Barber Park and Glenwood Bridge so I went over to the river on my lunch hour with a few coworkers to give it a try. They released 23"- 30" Steelhead, which ranged from 4lb to 10lbs. I took my 6-weight fly rod with 9lb test and tied on a Purple Egg-Sucking Leech.

It wasn't 15 minutes before I hooked in to my first Steelhead ever. Talk about a blast! I fought with it for a while and after holding off a couple of runs I got it into the shallow water for Karl to net. As soon as that fish saw Karl, it raced back into the current leaving me with line tangled around my reel. It darted so fast and strong that my line reversed on itself around the reel a few times. I had no choice but to bring it in by hand. Luckily it never made another hard run or I would have probably broke off. I finally landed it and it ended up being a 26" Steelhead. It is small for a Steelhead but boy was it fun on my 6-weight fly rod. I had just enough time to take a few pictures and get back to the office, which is within walking distance. The skills I learned while fly-fishing in Alaska really paid off. I doubt that I would have been able to feel the Steelhead bite my fly if it wasn't for the experience of hooking several fish in Alaska.



Waiting for Fish & Game before the crowds arrived



My first Steelhead and Karl's 30" Steelhead

I had so much fun that I decided I'd try it again the following week on the afternoon before Thanksgiving. I again went over with a few coworkers to get our same spot in the river. We got there just before the masses arrived. The word was out! The number of lines in the water from both sides of the river at the hole I was fishing was ridiculous. Bait fisherman lined the opposite side of the river while my side of the river was lined with fly fisherman. People on the opposite side didn't seem to care that they were crowding other people out of the hole. It was combat fishing at its finest! I'm surprised it wasn't one big tangled mess although we all had our moments thanks to a few people that didn't have any fishing etiquette. I wondered how I was going to get a good drift with all the other lines in the water. I had a hard time holding back the laughter when somebody fell in on the opposite bank. I wish I could have had a picture of all the people on the opposite bank throwing their lines at the feet of the fly fisherman standing in the shallow water. One fisherman actually wrapped his line around Jim's (coworker) pole the week before so I wasn't sure what to expect with this many people. All I knew is that I was one of the first people there and I wasn't giving up my spot.

I didn't cast my line very far due to all the lines in the water. It didn't matter because I found the right place in the current not far from where I was standing that was dynamite. That didn't mean I wasn't untangling my line with the bait fisherman that couldn't seem to get a pattern going. It was actually just a few people on the opposite side ruining it for everybody. I ended up catching my limit of 3 Steelhead within the first hour and a half of fishing. I had learned from my mistake the week before and lightly held the line between my fingers as the fish ran ensuring that the line didn't reverse on itself in my reel. The fish I caught were between 24" to 26". I never did hook into one of the 30" fish like Karl did the week before. The last fish I caught was the biggest and it gave a great fight and aerial demonstration. I also caught a 10" Rainbow and 10" Brown trout to add to the excitement. It is frustrating dealing with the lack of organization between the fishermen but it can be very rewarding if you can put up with it.



My limit of 3 Steelhead along with Karl's Steelhead on the afternoon before Thanksgiving