



Weekly Fishing Report for October 19-26, 2003

Weather: Hi 7C / Lo -5C. Rain, snow and overcast

Guests: Julian Smith, Nico Rogerson, Ian Agnew

The week started with perfect water conditions and good steelheading weather. The water conditions were almost too stable over the last week and the fish were starting to hold tight and tank up in some of the deeper runs on the Bell Irving. At this time of the year the fish are generally less aggressive than the September fish and the proper presentation of the fly is essential for success. The floating lines and dry flies that had worked earlier in the year have been traded in for slow sinking tips or weighted flies to get the fly deeper, faster. Steelheading at this time of the year can either be very good or very frustrating. Many times the fish will "pluck" the fly. This is a take - but a very soft one. You need to have lightning quick reflexes or alot of PATIENCE. A bit of both will usually lead you into a few fish and this is exactly what happened this week.

Julian was a dedicated steelheader that loved the wilderness experience. He had been to BC to fish steelhead on a number of other occasions, but this was his first trip to Bell II Lodge. Although the first afternoon of fishing did not produce a fish, over the next two days we had a couple of hook ups each day and too many plucks to count. We averaged about a fish per day this week which was below the normal catch rates for this time of year. After coming off a "bonanza" the week prior, we had hoped for more aggressive fish.

Although we had planned to fish the Nass by helicopter later in this week, the weather was not cooperating. Nico and Ian could not fly into the lodge by helicopter and we had a major storm system approaching. Little did we know what was in store for the Pacific Northwest. It rained and rained and rained some more. Because of earlier snowfalls and a now constant heavy rain, all rivers in the Skeena district blew up. The Bell Irving River water level rose by over 8 feet in 24 hours. This marked the end to the steelhead season for 2003.

Water and weather conditions are unpredictable at best, but noone would have expected the last week in October to be as tough as it was in 2003. Many of the steelhead guides in BC had to cancel their guests and those guests that did not have this option wished they had. We always expect stable water and cold temperatures at this time of the year and feel that 2003 was an anomaly. The late season in 2004 vows to be better.