

# Creel Notes from the



P.O. Box 639, Mercer Island, WA 98040



Website: [www.wffc.com](http://www.wffc.com)

Member of



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November 2016 Creel Notes



Well, here we are in November. I will start off with a short reminder the WFFC fund raiser is coming up next month. This is the event which keeps the WFFC going. If you do not support the fund raiser as a member no one else will. Give Kerry Oldenburg a call to arrange for delivery or pick up of your donations and sign up now for the event. Space is limited.

On October 18, 2016 the WDFW issued a News Release which states in part:

“Low returns of upper Columbia River steelhead mean no fishing season. \*\*\*A precipitous drop in the abundance of the upper Columbia River steelhead run means there will be no fishing season for them this year in northcentral Washington.”

The news release goes on to report:

“The latest forecast anticipates count of 6,300 steelhead at Priest Rapids Dam, far short of the minimum 9,550 NOAA Fisheries requires to allow a fishing season on the mainstem or tributaries of the upper Columbia.”

[For those of you who like to keep track of my writing ability that is a direct quote.]

Webster’s New World College Dictionary fourth Edition defines the word “Abundance” as meaning “a great supply, more than sufficient quantity.” Does WDFW mean to suggest that prior to this “precipitous drop” in 2016 there existed an abundance of steelhead in the upper Columbia? There may have been an abundance of steelhead in the upper Columbia; however, exactly when that may have been?

Since the degradation of our steelhead and salmon has been ongoing for at least 100 years (eighty some odd of those years under stewardship of the WDFW) I suggest it has been many, many years since there has been anything close to an abundance of steelhead in the Columbia.

Abundance? What number in excess of NOAA Fisheries minimum of 9,550 is an **Abundance**? Spare me. The WDFW assertion the drop from 9,550 to 6,300 is precipitous ignores the last 100 years and suggests that it, and we should be, is satisfied with a run of 9,550 steelhead.

At times it has been a challenge for me to find material or a subject for this column. As chance would have it, the September 2016 issue of *The Osprey*, A Journal Published by the Steelhead Committee; International Federation of Fly Fishers (“*The Osprey*”) came into my hands last night. What a gem! writes that by the late 1800’s the runs were then in decline.....

A chart at page 12 of this issue of *The Osprey* caught my eye. This chart sets out the species and populations of Salmon and Steelhead threatened with extinction in the Columbia River System.....

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One Hundred and Ninety. That is right.....190. Sort of makes me wonder how many species and populations in the Columbia River System are NOT at risk of extinction. There are a couple of other articles in this issue which I think are “must reads”

“The Damning Economics of the Snake River Dams” and “Judge Says Columbia and Snake Rivers Continue to “Cry Out”. The latter article is a short history of litigation which was started in 2001 over National Marine Fisheries Service’s dismal attempts to discharge obligations imposed on it under law to ensure the survival of certain salmon and steelhead population. Although I wrote (ranted) in an earlier edition of Creel Notes about the latest decision in this case, you should read this article and, as I have earlier recommended, Judge Simon’s full opinion. The conduct of the federal government is this matter over the last 15 years or so has been, in my view, so egregious I am surprised Judge Simon did not appoint a special master and, in effect, strip the Department of Commerce (in which NMMFS is housed) of any further authority in this case.

[A matter of full disclosure. The WFFC is a member of the IFFF and a financial contributor to The Osprey and two of our members, Doug Schaad and Bill Redman are contributing editors of *The Osprey*.] This is my penultimate column in Creel Notes (Hooray!! most will say). While I have been critical of the local, state and federal governments’ failures to protect our waters and fisheries and unwillingness to at least maintain some modicum truthfulness on the destruction of our steelhead and salmon I do not ascribe those sentiments to those employees who are trying to right the many wrongs wrought by our local, local, state and federal politicians. Oh, the politico’s and their hired bureaucrats will say, “This is complicated”. No, it is not complicated, it is all about the money.

The second outing to Lake Hanon this year was held on October 29th and very well attended. The morning was cold and wet. Really wet. After lunch many elected to pack up and head out. Too bad for them. The afternoon was absolutely gorgeous.....blue sky, sun and a lake surface like glass. Mike Wearne is responsible for the WFFC having the opportunity to once again fish this lake. Make sure Mike does not have to buy his own beer at the next meeting.

## Creel Notes

...is the official publication of the Washington Fly Fishing Club. Subscription is free with membership.

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Club officers and chairmen can be contacted by logging in the WFFC website then selecting **email** (upper right corner). Button selec-

## Club Aims and Purposes

The purpose of this club shall be:

1. To improve and increase the sport of Fly Fishing in the State of Washington.
2. To promote and work for the betterment of trout streams and lakes.
3. To encourage and advocate the conservation and increase of trout, steelhead, and salmon in state waters.
4. To promote a campaign of education against pollution in streams, lakes or Sound waters of the State of Washington.
5. To encourage and assist others—particularly young persons of high school age—to become fly fishers and true conservationists.

## On The Fly By David Ehrich

Please welcome our new Creel Notes Editor David Ehrich. David takes over January 2017. Please welcome David and enjoy reading his column!

Well, I made the mistake of saying yes to Gary Berquist's request to take over Creel Notes next year at the October meeting, so I thought I might dust off "On the Fly" and get back in shape. Pre-dinner conversation revolved around troublesome seals and sea lions that used to be shot "in the good old days", killer whales that the commercial fisherman used to hunt with grappling hooks anchored to oil barrels, and other topics immune to political correctness.

But before I carefully record the meal, let me tell you a joke. Once upon a time a bunch of anglers headed up to a cabin for a couple weeks of fishing. Cooking duty was hired, but the deal fell through with the relentless complaints, most by a guy we'll call Larry, who savaged the cook three meals a day. You know how grumpy old anglers can be. So when the hired hand left, the gang elected Larry cook with a simple deal: the next guy who complained had to take over the job. Larry gave it his all for a day or two, but soon tired of the job. So he started sabotaging the food, pouring in the salt. That night he just about buried the pasta sauce in enough salt to pucker lips. One of the guys came in, sat down, spun a fork load of pasta in the sauce, took a big bite and nearly gagged. When he was done picking the noodle pieces off his lap, he shouted, "This food is damn salty...." and you could see the grin spread across face, "....damn salty, but good." Let that be a lesson to anyone who complains about Creel Notes, circa 2017.

Gary gaveled the meeting into order and turned our attention to Stephanie Hagen, who invited donations of gear and time toute suite. D-Day for the Christmas Party is December 20. Gary reminded us to step up when the call comes. The President went on to report of a happy call he had with Roger Rohrbeck who reports being happy as a geoduck. Fishing reports ensued with acknowledgement of less fish, bigger, more slippery rocks, and other infirmities of our older age. Some heroic attempts were made in wind and rain in punctured float tubes on the Olympic Peninsula that netted only the Skunk for Craig Crumbaker. The mic went in and out, so I can't tell you much more.

A few guests, one in tennis shorts just off the nearby courts, got introduced amid the clank of spoons in a velvety chocolate mousse and another claims to be a oyster farmer. Guests ceded to inductions with another heroic effort by Gil Nyerges who gave his famous mini lecture to new member Dexter Brown and gift of flies, each one with its own history and authorship.

Welcome Dexter. And at this point in Gil's renown, Dexter might be wise to frame them.

And we might all be wise to remember Gil's admonition that the WFFC is a service club with social aspirations, not the other way around.

Bob Burdick, who needs not introduction outside of "best fly tier in the world" introduced Rick Hafele who among other renowns, is acknowledged as an expert in the art of emergers. Rick immediately got the love by donating to the Christmas auction a copy of his CD on the same topic along with a card game that helps kids and coots alike in identifying the various stages of a fly.

Here's the dilemma; fish are rising all other the place and you're not hooking up. Key to success includes the answers to three questions: Who is emerging? How are they emerging? And where in the stream are the fishing eating them? I'll spare you the science, but let's keep it simple; some flies emerge at the surface and many don't. Watch for emerging mayflies, caddies and midges. When they get ready to hatch with their stubby dark wing pads, they crawl to the film, break out of the exoskeleton and give their best efforts to emerge. Our job is to get them on the way up, either as a nymph or floating nymph, otherwise known as a wet fly emerger.

Mayfly duns get targeted eventually, although you might put on a trailing emerger, and then latter in the day, we see fish rising without duns in view and that means it's time to put on a spinner. The key message from Rick is when the fish seem to be feeding on the surface but aren't taking your dry, put on an emerger. That said, you'll do even better if you get the right pattern and right size. Color is the least critical.

On to caddies. After the pupae stage, they too develop dark wing pads and move quickly to the surface. Some action on your fly might help. News to me, the egg laying caddis swim down to the stream bed and lay eggs then emerge again. Put on some split shot about 14" above the hook and sink her six inches and you might get surprising action. All these underwater stages do well with some CDC sparkle that catches air and attracts the fish.

Midges move slowly and wiggle. You will find them in all rivers all the time and you stand a much better chance getting them at the pupae stage then as a tiny midge on the surface.

Don't ignore the bottom and deeper sub-surface with your emerging patterns. Most of the time, whether on the surface or deeper, your cast will be typical presentation to a dry fly. Observe your river carefully and when you spot fish that aren't rising, put on a soft hackle, get it down a few inches ahead of the fish and hope for the best. Caddis emerger like a lift at the end of the cast, get it to sink with a bead head, or a split shot to get it two or three feet deep. Stop your rod, lift it, and hold on! Deep into the evening, the caddis seem to create dry fly swirls, but they are really below two to three feet, so put on an emerger with some split shot and let the drifter the fly down.

Rick ended with a few jokes, left us smiling and then took some questions. Naturally, the erudite members of WFFC did their best to stump the speaker, but this time failed miserably. He handled all the question with aplomb.

Greg took over, announced the break and then the door started swinging both ways as my dad would say.

## Wetbuns Outing

Rain, rain, and more rain! That's why we call it wetbuns! About a dozen hardy souls braved the elements to participate in this year's outing. Some fished the far south sound, a couple worked Vaughn Bay, a few more hit Chico creek and the bays around Penrose point. And a few just came for dinner and the company!

The tide was the highest any of us "old salts" had ever seen, with the water well up into the branches on the beach trees. With so much water on the beach, the fish habitat is much larger, and the fish are more spread out. That's one excuse anyway... The crew that fished Hammersley inlet and Squaxin Island caught quite a few nice cutts, a bunch of little blackmouth, and were greatly entertained when their host broke off a bright chum that then jumped around the boat 8 or 10 times. There were cutts in the usual places out of Vaughn, and in front of Penrose, but slow fishing everywhere else.

The dinner prep crew started in right on time, cutting, cracking, cussing, and drinking. The canopies went up, and the bonfire warmed. The seafood stew was better than last year, and there were even leftovers to take home! Many thanks to all the volunteers who labored over this great meal. The raccoons enjoyed Pratt's pumpkin pie almost before we could get any! A good time was had by all! Thanks again for helping and showing up! See you there next year!

Dave Schorsch

## November Speaker Jacque White

Jacque White (Managing Director, Long Live The Kings) will make a presentation on Surviving the Salish Sea--Why are salmon and steelhead dying in our shared waters?

Mr. White is a local Washingtonian having been born in Olympia, has degrees from 3 different universities, and has been involved in marine research on each of the 3 different coasts of the USA. He directs numerous research projects for LLTK (Long live the Kings)

Fly tier: Ron Dion

## Fishing Report

Last week Rich Gaspar and John Callahan and I spent three days in the Chelan area. The first day Rich and I spent on Rat lake near Brewster. It never stopped raining from the time we left Seattle till the end of the day. This did not mean fishing was slow however, as we had a fabulous day catching 30+ fish between us mostly on a egg sucking leech pattern.

John joined us the next day for an adventure "driving" (using the term loosely) into Smith lk. This is just above Mallot and was in the great fire of 2014. After a very difficult drive through downed trees and BIG rocks in the road we finally got there to find No fish. That afternoon we returned to Rat lake to find it was still fishing well.

The fish here are mostly 14 to 16" and several were caught at 20". These are very big for this lake and must have been planted as jumbos this spring. You should keep this lake in mind for next spring. Chuck Ballard


## Project Healing Waters Mallard Lake

On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, we had a fantastic outing on bright sunny day at Mallard Lake near Graham on a private ranch. In the 8 years that I have been active in PHW for the WFFC it was by far the best! We had nine veterans from American Lake VA and ten veterans from Seattle VA. We had four volunteers from WFFC, Bob Young, Chuck Ballard, Rich Gaspar and Jim McRoberts. We had three nonmember volunteers. The lake has fish from 10 inches to 5+ pounds. ***Remember the fish must make the choice to play or not!*** We had over 75 players that day. One of the vets caught 19 fish all over 20 inches on one fly, a size 8 Teeny nymph before he broke it off, should have checked the leader!! He landed 31 fish in all. Lots of smiles. Several vets caught over 12 fish apiece!

Jim McRoberts

*Jim*





**COME ONE – COME ALL TO THE  
DECEMBER 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 WFFC Christmas Holiday Party and Auction!  
Asking each member to donate Auction and Raffle Can items to make this evening  
even more memorable!**

*By Kerry Oldenburg*

*Help make our Christmas Holiday Party a great Success. PLEASE CALL 206 226-8828 OR  
EMAIL [Kerry.oldenburg@gmail.com](mailto:Kerry.oldenburg@gmail.com) and the Holiday Committee will make arrangements to pick  
up your donation items.*

Now is the time to make your donation and your reservation! The WFFC web site is now taking reservations for our WFFC Christmas Holiday Dinner and Auction. Enjoy a lovely and lively holiday event. Treat your sweetheart, family (adults), prospective members and friends to a fun, entertaining, and delicious Christmas Holiday Dinner and entertaining Auction. Support your club's primary fund raiser and meaningful community service programs such as Healing Waters and Reel Recovery while reeling in fabulous auction items and having a good time with fellow club members!

Mark the Date and Donate! Save December 20<sup>th</sup> for the WFFC 2016 Annual Holiday Party at the Seattle Tennis Club. Register on line and make a call to donate an auction item in support of this great event.

As our annual and **primary** fundraiser, we count on your support of our club activities through attending and participating in the silent and live auctions and raffle selections. We also count on the generous support of members and businesses that donate to help us fund our conservation projects, veterans programs, youth programs, homeless outreach and outings.

Know a vendor? Make a call. We need **YOUR HELP** compiling a great selection of auction items. If you have items, ideas, outings or services you'd like to donate to a great cause, now is the time! We can also provide ideas for you to consider. Please contact **Kerry Oldenburg** (206) 226 8828 or email: [kerry.oldenburg@gmail.com](mailto:kerry.oldenburg@gmail.com) and like Santa, she will pick up your items or arrange printed auction gift certificate for items such as trips, dinners, weekend stays, or guided fishing outings.

Weekend getaway at a cabin or condo? Guided fishing day on local waters? Spare rod, reel or gear that you've rarely use? Artwork you are ready to part with? Recommendations for guides, lodges, local activities or restaurant contacts? Now's the time to make a call for a good cause!

REGISTRATION IS OPEN on the WFFC web site for dinner selections and to register guests. Reserve your spot now! You can also print a form from the web site to mail in registration with a check, to **Kerry Oldenburg**, 9120 S.E. 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Mercer Island, WA 98040. The cost for this gala event is \$85.00 per person. This will include dinner, salad, your choice of entrée, scrumptious dessert, and wine.

The camaraderie and fun are free!

**See you in December, Reserve your spot and make a call now to support  
your club with a donation!**

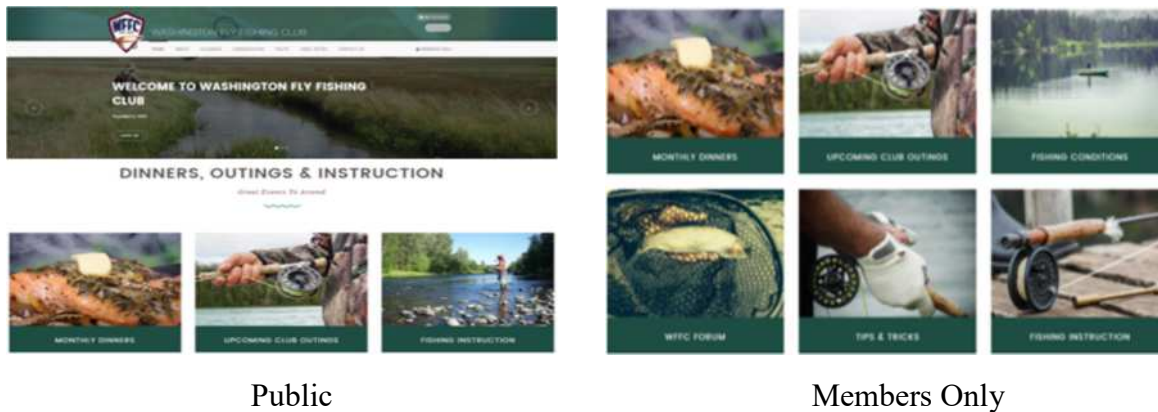
## New WFFC Website Launch Announcement

The new WFFC Website will be launched on December 21<sup>st</sup> ready for your 2017 Dues renewals payments and the January Awards Dinner Meeting signups replacing the current website which is over 15 years old.

A “First Look” pdf will be emailed to you shortly, showing several screen shots of the WFFC.com “Public” and “Members Only” features of the new website.

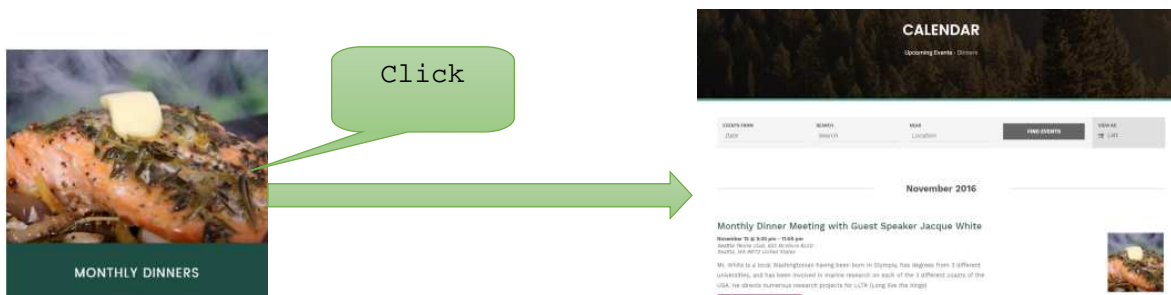
What’s New:

\*Public and Members Only content viewable on a PC, iPhone or iPad



\*Login to Members Only content with your email address and your current WFFC Password

\*Click on the Menu Tile Subject Pictures to access the subject content



\*Stripe Credit Card payments are used pay for Meals, Education Classes , Dues and to make Donations (WFFC will no longer accept PayPal for payments)

A full presentation of the new website’s capabilities will be presented at the November 15<sup>th</sup> Dinner Meeting with a Q&A time to ask questions.

Tight Lines – Jim Goedhart, Website Development Committee Chair



**Washington Fly Fishing Club**  
**P.O. Box 639**  
**Mercer Island, WA 98040**  
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here

**November, 2016**

**Meeting Announcement**



**Meetings are held on the third Tuesday November 15, of each month at the Seattle Tennis Club, 922 McGilvra Blvd. E.**

**The Wet Fly hour begins at 5:30 PM and dinner is served at 6:45 PM.**

**This month: The presenter at our November 15 meeting will be: Jacque White (Managing Director, Long Live The Kings) will make a presentation on Surviving the Salish Sea--Why are salmon and steelhead dying in our shared waters?**