

Salmon in the Snow

by Kevin Brennan

I have just gotten back from my annual pilgrimage for Michigan to chase the monsters that live in the rivers. This was the first returning spawn since the No Kill Zone on the PM was put into place 4 years ago. I am here to tell you that it worked. There were more fish in the system than I have ever seen before, but there could be other reasons for this also. Central Michigan has not had much rain to speak of for the past month. But the week before we got there it rained every day which is a big factor to moving fish up the river. With there being more fish in the river, the odds of a fair hooked fish were definitely more in your favor. I will be the first to tell you that the majority of fish will be snagged, but this year I had more honest to goodness takes. I actually took pictures of a bunch of fish hooked in the mouth, Yes, in the mouth, but as luck would have it the camera was screwed up at the One Hour Photo place, so you are just going to have to take my word for it.

This year I did do a few things different. I used flies that were much smaller than in years past. Size ten's and twelve's Green Caddis Nymphs, Stones and Sparrows were my main stay with only a couple of Estaz Eggs. Since we were using the smaller flies we caught a couple of trout each day but they sure don't give much of a fight on a nine weight rig.

I know. I have told you how many fish and to tell you the truth

I am not completely sure. My best guess is that I landed about 30-40 with 80-100 more hook-ups over three and a half days of fishing.

We did a couple of other things that we haven't done in years past and had a lot of fun at. One day we rented canoes and took a trip down the river and just hit the open holes that we found along the way. This proved to be an awesome way to see a bunch of the river that we haven't seen in years past and just a great way to spend a day on the river relaxing. On what proved to be the best day of fishing that we had, we got up late. Went and had a hot breakfast then hit the river for a beautiful Bluebird day, or so we thought. We parked at the walk in just above Green cottage and were going to wade down the river hitting what ever hole we could get into (legal note: It will cost you \$180 if you get a ticket for stepping on private property, and no, we did not get a ticket, but some guy we talked to did). We were able to pick-up a pretty good hole just a mile down from where we got in. This hole was stacked with fish but there was not a bunch of room to cast so we had to take turns. We probably landed 15-20 fish out of this hole before we decide to move farther down. While walking down stream the sky grew dark and it was starting to look like rain and being that it was only about 35-40 degrees I was not looking forward to it. But a last it started to snow then sleet then snow again. This went on for about

four hours and pushed most of the fainthearted fisherman off the river and left it all to us. I could not begin to tell you how many fish we hooked over that day but it is the single best day of Salmon fishing that I have ever had. I also came up with all kind of saying for the passing fisherman that were retreating faster than any Frenchman. Sayings like "Go ahead and fish I won't tell your Mom your playing in the snow with out your mittens and hat on" and my favorite, "Don't worry the fish don't know it's snowing". All in all this was one of the best trips that I have been on in quite sometime. I found a place to stay right up in Baldwin which allowed us to sleep in a bit longer and with the help of the guy running the cabins we found plenty of good places to eat. So I got to eat, sleep hang out with a couple of my best fishing buddies and catch plenty of fish. That is all I need to have a good trip.

Anybody that would like help in catching a couple of the Michigan Monster just drop me a line and I will get you hooked up.

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This is the year we will see the 4 year olds returning from the fabled run of 1999 - the largest Salmon ever to inhabit the Great Lakes. If you ever wanted to have a chance at catching 30 to 50 pound Chinook Salmon without going to Alaska, this may be the year for you! - Bill Sherer, owner of Northern Adventures Guide Service in a letter to NKFF member, Bernie Blau.