

Chilcotin (Flashback to 2016)

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The best thing about the end of February is just that It marks the beginning of a new fishing season and fishing dreams of where to go on this year's club Fish-out to the Interior....Last year I promised myself that I was going to the Chilcotin having never been there before.

Ah, Chilcotin



I mean this goes way back to being a kid when we were going to go to the Chilcotin but first my Dad and I fished every Walleye lake in Alberta which was awesome but we simply ran out of time...his time. Then as a young adult it was fishing the glorious Peace, the Skeena, the Kispiox, the Nass and beyond to the NWT, Yukon and Alaska, Haida Gwaii but never to that “out of the way” corner of BC, the Chilcotin. Then when the club elected last year to go to Roche Lake, I kept my life-long promise to go to the Chilcotin, didn’t want to miss it like my Dad did.

My buddy IWFFer, Glenn Rogers practically grew up in the Chilcotin and talked glowingly of it, so I left it up to him to plan the trip and he included his life-long friend from Merritt to join us which was awesome as he is a gourmet chef. Then Ian said he and his brother Wayne were planning a Chilcotin odyssey and the plot thickened. However Ian was busy until June 15th and Glenn was brewing that we will probably miss the best hatches as it is an early spring and should probably plan to be there the first week of June. Then over brewkies following a club meeting, lawyer Bob spoke poetically about matching the hatch on the Stellako River and being more of a “lotic than a lentic personality” I was creaming to go to the Stellako, and so was Glenn...

Bob and family were meeting his buddy Tony there on 5th or 8th of June and we were going to join them after fishing the Chilcotin and possibly then join up with Ian and party on the 16th back in the Chilcotin or the club in Roche Lake....oh, it’s so great to be retired... decisions, decisions....Lawyer Bob emailed us a detailed list of about a million (that’s a Trump million) flies to tie that work on the Stellako that kept us busy for the next couple of weeks.

May 31st saw Glenn and I board the ferry and venture onto Merritt for the traditional “Wine and ~~Cheese~~ and Booze send off” at Alistair’s place before the three of us headed for the Chilcotin the next day arriving ‘whenever’ at Fletcher Lake to set up camp and get into our first fish. While setting up camp, I noticed a couple of signs with Big Letter, “**Loon Alert**” warning fishers of the aggressive nature of the local Loons....hmmm. Most places have “beware of bear” signs, Fletcher Lake has beware of Loon signs....how frickin loonie is that...

The next morning we were up at the break of dawn responding to the ‘call of the wild’, when I noticed a fuzzy, fungal 16 inch rainbow doing final Hail Mary’s along the shore of the lake with interesting longitudinal scars along its body similar to net scars without the cross-hatching of the fish net. Bummer I thought and carried on into the lake fishing my trusty emerger patterns when I realise I was being watched. Then a one meter (from beak tip to tippy toe) or so long black submarine Darth_Vader crossed beneath me as I sat in the Water Master, did I mention Rubber Water Master? On the second pass, I noticed the extent of the long sabre beak and the damage it could potentially do. Then I noticed how many Loons there were on Fletcher, wow,

this lake must have a lot of fish to support this many loons, good stuff!



Fishing was slow until the sun climbed high and it was safe to take off the sweater marking the start of a mayfly hatch and returning adult caddis flies. I was doing OK fishing emergers but Glenn was doing super every time I looked down the lake he seemed to have a fish on. It was pretty neat matching the



hatch and watching trout sipping and boil and loons flashing underneath like phantom jets.



That evening as we enjoyed our supper of gourmet trout and regurgitating the events of the day, I asked Glenn what flies he was using to match the hatch that was going on as he caught too many trout to possibly count. I was very surprised that he said he was not fishing the hatch but was using weighted woolley buggers that **Ian** told him to use on Fletcher. Obviously I did not get that email. Glenn also told another great story that he caught a 15 inch rainbow that was intercepted by a loon, hell swallowed by the loon. Glenn, being Scottish, wanted his fly back so he gently persuaded the loon to upchuck the trout....and he did just that! So Glenn got his fly back but the poor trout did not survived the ordeal and is one of the fish on the grill.



Note the “Loon Scars” on top two trout.



Always good planning to have a gourmet Chef along



Fishing at sunset Fletcher Lake June 3rd

Next Week: The Stellako River with Bob Leverman and gang of River Rats



Hey Bob...Are you sure this is the way we go?..... **Bob?.....Bob!**