

## Salmon River April 7<sup>th</sup>

Bruce Murray [drbm@shaw.ca]

During the week leading up to Friday April 7<sup>th</sup>, I was planning on attending Normie's last fly tie for the season in Royston when I got a call from Dan the Man from Lotus Land saying we should steelhead the Nanaimo as this was their run time when he was in school; then Basher emailed to say checking his journal that yes this was (historically) steelie time in the Nanaimo. Sooo sorry Normie, we decided to go steelie hunting on Friday April 7<sup>th</sup>. However, on the morning of...the Nanaimo blew out as all local streams, so checking the hydrographs ....ah the Eve and the Salmon appeared to have been missed by this front so off Dan and I went pursuing the wily steelie, waving of course to the crew of tiers as we passed Royston Hall.

First stop was the Salmon, just got set up on the first run, when behind us appeared the "previously reported extinct species" ... two CO's.....awesome they live and they are working, walking the streams. I was so shocked and happy I asked if I could take their photo as proof that a few survived Kristi's budget knife and are thriving. I must thank Normie and all the others that pointed out that it was April and new licences needed to be purchased. And a special thanks to Jason who printed 4 copies and insisted I put one in my waders, one in my wallet, one in my jacket and one in the SUV.

Next surprise was on my first cast through the third run a gorgeous 20 inch rainbow doe slammed me and tap danced her way to the bottom of the run, posed briefly for a picture then headed back to the wild. I was ready to move on downstream when Dan reminded me to fish "my spot" again as these fish are holding in groups, so I returned upstream and cast to the same gory hole when I was hit by a thunder bolt. He made 4 monster runs over 10 + minutes as I fought him downstream through the run and into the next before it became a stalemate...a little to him and a little to me and more to him....and it gave Dan time to race downstream to position himself with the net when my line broke at a knot junction to the backing... Next thing I know Dan is heading out into the river, grabs my broken line and wraps it around the net handle preparing to bulldog this monster buck steelhead. That gives me time to catch up and rap the broken line around my arm while Dan frees the net and nets the trophy. What a sight! After a photo for the grand kids, "my" trophy rips my hand off and charges back upstream to his buddies and girlfriends while I, completely exhausted, and happily experiencing either a heart attack or a hernia...or both... until the muscle spasms in my arms, shoulders and groin subsides. Wow, the thrill of experiencing the power of a winter steelhead....exhilarating and infectious! "I am haunted by monster winter steelhead". I wish everyone could experience the excitement and appreciation for **wild** (big gorgeous, powerful) **fish**.

A very, very special thanks to my good buddy Daniel Krenz.



**Bruce's Big Steelie Buck....34 inches of unbelievable power**