



ELECTRIC EXPERIENCE:

Flyfishing for trout

Camp Chef/Contributed Photo

Releasing a cutthroat trout that fell for a deep-running swung fly.



GARY LEWIS
ON THE TRAIL

Rain had been steady for the last hour. Soaked, I looked forward to climbing back in the Mustang and turning up the heater. I reeled up the loose coils of line and clipped the fly off the line. The bug was still serviceable after more than two dozen trout caught and released.

Upstream from a two-lane bridge, the river cut a channel through rock leaving a pool deeper than a man's head. In the winter, an angler might catch a steelhead here; in the spring it was chinook, but the river offered a trout fishery too.

Today's lipstick was a Muddler Minnow tied on a No. 8 long-shank hook, unweighted, with a turkey feather dorsal.

With no one else for company, it was easy to start at the top of the run, shake out a bit of line and stack-mend to get the fly to work into the seam this side of the riffle.

Lengthening the line, making micro-mends, the diminutive sculpin imitation presented to the trout below, and rainbows streaked up from the bottom to follow the Muddler across its arcs. And the longer the arc, the more likely the trout would grab.

After several trout I was startled to realize I did not feel a single bite. Instead, at best, it was a movement of the line, a 2-inch indication, not even a tick that I responded to. Now and then a trout would give itself away with a flash below the surface. Trout after trout bit. Almost every cast they grabbed, but I only counted them when I could fight them all the way to the bank.

As time passed, I stepped downstream, roll-cast the same length of line each time and teased trout out from beneath the shadow of the bridge. When, properly soaked from the rain, I saw another angler headed toward me. He cast a glance toward the fly I had just removed from my line.

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Gary Lewis/Contributed Photo

Trout flies for swinging and drifting in late winter and spring when the rivers run bank full with snowmelt and runoff.



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

Pilcher Creek Reservoir is on Tucker Flat Road about 10 miles west of North Powder. The reservoir, seen here on Feb. 6, 2022, is a popular ice-fishing destination.

Fish for free in Oregon Feb. 19-20

EO Media Group

Everyone can fish for free in Oregon during Presidents Day weekend, Saturday, Feb. 19, and Sunday, Feb. 20.

Anglers, both Oregonians and nonresidents, don't need a license or tags on those two days to fish, crab or clam.

All other fishing regulations apply, including closures, bag limits and size restrictions. See the Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations for rules and remember to check for any in season regulation changes, especially for salmon and steelhead fishing, at <https://myodfw.com/recreation-report/fishing-report/>

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's weekly recreation report — <https://myodfw.com/recreation-report> — lists some of the better places to fish.

The winter steelhead run usually peaks in mid-February, and many reservoirs and lakes in North-eastern Oregon have sufficient ice for safe ice fishing.

Recent fishing reports from the region:

- Grande Ronde River: Over the past week, flows have remained consistent, and some anglers have been catching steelhead. It has frequently warmed by mid-day. However, when the air temperature does not warm enough, freezing conditions can make fishing difficult.

- Kinney Lake: Ice fishing has been good with anglers catching 12- to 16-inch rainbow trout. The road is not plowed all the way to the lake so anglers will need to walk about half a mile to access the lake.

- Wallowa Lake: Ice has begun to form recently, but it is very thin, and recreationists should not attempt to ice fish or venture out onto Wallowa Lake until the ice on the lake becomes thick enough to be safe.

- Wallowa River: When the weather warms enough to keep ice from being problematic, anglers can catch both rainbow trout and mountain whitefish in the Wallowa River. Fish with a slow presentation in slow runs where fish can conserve energy. Small nymph and egg patterns may be effective for trout and whitefish, and spinning gear such as spinners or spoons, could be a good option for targeting trout.

Some steelhead anglers have been successful this winter on the Wallowa River, and fishing for hatchery steelhead should improve throughout the next several months as they make their way up the Wallowa River to Big Canyon and Wallowa hatcheries.

- Malheur Reservoir: Ice is currently at least 7 inches thick. Fishing has been good for rainbow trout.

- Pilcher Creek Reservoir currently is frozen over and is slowly filling. Anglers should use caution near the edge of the ice where rising water levels leave a gap between the shore and thicker ice over the lake.

- Thief Valley Reservoir: Some trout are available for anglers, and there are reports that fishing can be fairly good at times.

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Gun shows never disappoint



TOM CLAYCOMB
BASE CAMP

I love the show season. And if you've been reading any of my articles lately then you know I've been flying around the country hitting the Dallas Safari Club Conv. & Expo, the Safari Club International Conv. and the mother of them all, the SHOT Show.

Even though I love the big shows, I have to admit — I've been stretched out thin. Between giving seminars at all of them and working the shows from daylight to dark, maybe flying in late to one of them at 2:30 a.m. and getting up some mornings at 4 to write articles covering them I was drained by the time I flew home from the last one on a Saturday night at midnight. Only to have to get up at 3:30 a.m. to



Tom Claycomb/Contributed Photo

I love discovering new local companies at gun shows. This young man that owns Dakota Prairie Ammunition is trying to make it in the ammo world.

fly out again for 2½ weeks on a Wednesday morning.

But now it's time for some more relaxing type of shows. Gun shows! I don't think that

I've ever been to a gun show that it didn't have something that I couldn't live without. Gun shows have something for everyone.

If you need a brand-new rifle, shotgun or pistol have no fear, you'll find it there. Want an old M1 Garand? Saw a collection of them today. What about cowboy pistols? Yep, you'll see a plethora of them. Then there's always a few vendors with a ton of old Army gear.

Then if you're looking for knives, you'll find a ton of them. A lot of old school leather handle knives on up to some modern ones that are good for. ... I just don't think their use has been discovered as of yet. Knives that fit into my hunting world, I usually don't see too many of them although today I did.

And who isn't infatuated with old lever actions? There are always a few tables of them that I have to stop and goggle over. The old lever action has to be the coolest rifle ever designed, doesn't it?