



## Stonefly Maidens Women's Fly Fishing Club

### Winter Steelhead, Sandy River

**Mark Bachmann, The Fly Fishing Shop**

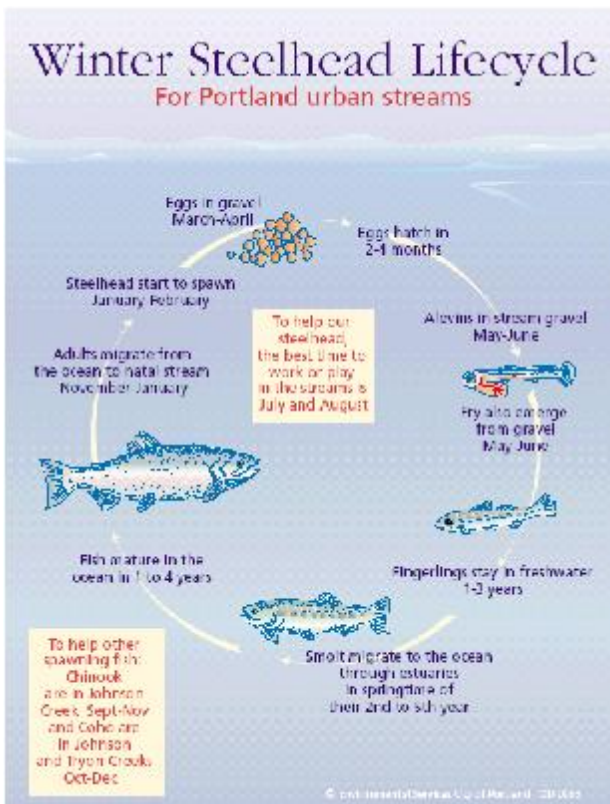
Winter steelhead provide the most popular sport fishery on the Sandy River. The Sandy River has the most reliable and longest lasting Winter Steelhead run in the region. Some years more than 10,000 fish enter the river from November through May. (Runs in the 1970's and 1980's averaged 4,000 to 10,000 fish. Runs in the 1990's have averaged about 1,000 - 3,000 fish. 2002 will probably produce a run of from 3,000 to 6,000 fish. Totals are wild and hatchery combined). These winter steelhead comprise three different runs and can

weigh from four to thirty pounds. Seven to twelve pound fish are average. Most have spent two full years at sea.

#### How To Catch Them

The Sandy River and its winter steelhead have a reputation for being difficult for the fly angler. The winter weather and water conditions, as well as sexually developed fish, create some of the most demanding conditions that the angler will encounter all year. Sandy River winter steelhead are bottom hugging denizens of this cold, often rain swollen river. However, new developments in tackle and cold weather clothing and a superior understanding of the quarry have combined to make winter steelhead extremely vulnerable to the fly rod angler.

Fly speed, pattern and depth are important. Because of their mating instincts, winter steelhead, especially the males, can be territorial and will attack a fly to drive it from their hold. Large flies dressed in steelhead spawning colors can bring jolting strikes. Fresh steelhead have an acute search image of the marine



weigh from four to thirty pounds. Seven to

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#### Meeting Information

- January 12, 2005  
6:00 pm—Social Hour  
7:00 pm—Business Meeting and Speaker
- Iron Horse Restaurant  
6034 SE Milwaukie Ave  
Portland, Oregon  
(503) 232-1826
- Speaker: Mark Bachmann  
Fishing for Winter Steelhead

#### This Month with the Stonefly Maidens

This month Mark Bachmann will be speaking about fishing for winter steelhead. He has over 20 years experience as a guide on the Sandy and Deschutes Rivers with an occasional sojourn to the Clackamas River. Mark is also the owner of The Fly Fishing Shop in Welches, Oregon.

This month's fish-a-long is to the East Fork of the Lewis River for winter steelhead. We will be learning some techniques for both single-handed and two-handed rods. We are also planning a trip to see the fish restoration project that Lisa

Wassgren's friend Dave has established on his property. Trip sheets will be available at the meeting. Ride sharing and equipment needs will also be discussed.

We will also be having election of officers. Don't forget that dues for 2005 are now due.

Mark and Patty and the rest of the crew at The Fly Fishing Shop are great supporters of the club. Invite a friend to hear the great information that Mark will be sharing with us.

## Fly Lines

I hope all of you had a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year's. Now it's time to get back to fishing.

I am really looking forward to this month's fish-a-long. I have not been steelhead fishing in longer than I care to admit. I am planning to do a lot more this year. I really need to be able to say that I have caught more than one steelhead. My spey casting needs a lot of work, but the best way to get better is to go fishing.

One of the great things about our club is the willingness of the members to share their fishing knowledge and their equipment when they can. Please remember that even if you don't have the appropriate equipment for a particular fishing

trip, that someone else may who is willing to loan or share it. Sometimes it's good to try a type of fishing first before investing money in equipment that you may only use once.

Check out the fly to the right. This is the first Name This Fly Contest. Do some research before the meeting. At the meeting, write your name and what you think the name of this steelhead fly is on a raffle ticket. The first correct ticket that is drawn will win 6 of the month's flies. The object of the contest is to familiarize you with the many different flies that you might use. If you want, we can even discuss how to fish them.

Don't forget to give me a call if you need a fishing partner. My casting arm needs a workout.



### Name This Fly Contest

Write the name of this fly on a raffle ticket with your name. The first person drawn with the correct name of the fly wins six of them along with the recipe for tying your own.

## Goings On

### BOW



January 22—Small Game Hunting Clinic, E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, Monmouth

January 29—Fly Tying, Valley Flyfisher, Salem

February 12—A Day at the Range, Josephine County Sportsman Association, Grants Pass

March 5—Fly Tying, Pendleton

March 6—Sporting Clays and Shotgun Clinic, Central Oregon Sporting Clays at Bend Trap Club, Bend

April 2—Clamming, Tugman State Park, Near Reedsport

April 23—Kayaking the South Slough Estuary, Charleston

May 7 - 8—Kayaking and Hiking, Cove Palisades State Park, Culver

May 21 - 22—Fly Fishing Workshop, Wizard Falls Hatchery, Camp Sherman

June 25 - 26—Wild Coastal Edibles, South Slough, Charleston

June 11 - 12—Multi-activity Workshop, La Pine State Park

More Information

If you have questions about BOW, any workshop, or the registration process, do not hesitate to call or e-mail the BOW staff:

Paula Booth, BOW Coordinator, 503-947-6016, paula.p.booth@state.or.us

Colleen Till, BOW Registrar, 503-947-6017, colleen.e.till@state.or.us

Mary Hoverson, North East Regional BOW Coordinator, 541-963-2138, mary.e.hoverson@state.or.us

Nancy Smogor, High Desert Regional BOW Coordinator, 541-388-6365 ext. 234, nancy.e.smogor@state.or.us

### Fly Fishing Shops

Don't forget to check out the links on the Stonefly Maidens website for the fly fishing shops that support the club. Many of them have great classes available.

## Winter Steelhead

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organisms that nurtured them. Flies dressed in the form of squid or krill can trigger a feeding response. Steelhead will also consume spawn. Roe type flies can be deadly.

In any case the fly must be presented deep and slow. A custom floating line with interchangeable sinking tips will present the fly at different depths when covering large expanses of water. The angler controls the speed of the fly with mends to the floating portion of the line. Many different depths and speeds of water might be encountered in a single run. Line tips and flies are changed as necessary. The same latitude in presentation can be accomplished with a complete selection of factory made fly lines on extra reel spools.

Leaders attached to sinking tip lines are usually short and stout. Nymphing with a floating line, a long leader, a glo bug and lead weight can be very productive if fish are encountered in small water.

### TACKLE

A long authoritative rod will help you control the line at all ranges. Single handed rods of 9 1/2 - 10 feet balanced with an eight or nine weight fly line are ideal when covering small and medium size water at ranges to forty feet.

Two handed fly rods of nine or ten weight give the best control of fly speed at all ranges. These ranges can extend beyond eighty feet. Rod lengths of thirteen to fifteen feet are most popular.

The angler who can cover the most water, the most efficiently always wins at steelheading. Even when runs are at peak, steelhead fly fishing will demand more than a casual approach.

Although a forty five minute drive from Portland International Air Port will put you on any stretch of water, the basic nature of the Sandy River is wild. It is a demanding river to wade, even at summer levels. Its water can be very cold for the majority of the year. A dunk can be extremely unpleasant and a wading staff and traction devices are highly recommended.

### SEASONAL CHANGES:

#### NOVEMBER though APRIL

Early November is Indian Summer in the Sandy River canyon. Days are mid-fifties and nights are in the forties. The first light rains of the fall season raise river levels and many summer steelhead and a few winter steelhead are available. The first wild winter steelhead are some of the most aggressive biters of the year.

November can be a most interesting month as the angler may catch steelhead that have been in fresh water for six months or six days. Their form and color will vary

greatly. Most are two salt fish from seven to twelve pounds. The upper watershed above Marmot Dam is closed to angling in the winter. Water temperatures in the lower river can vary from 44 degrees to 38 degrees with 42 degrees average.

Steelhead runs are very fluctal. Sandy River winter steelhead runs have varied from about 4,000 in 1951, to 16,000 in 1980, to 3,000 in 1995, to 500 in 1999. Fish run sizes are determined by a number of natural and man made factors such as: weather cycles within the drainage, ocean rearing conditions and angler harvest of the parent run.

The hatchery run of about 2,000 to 6,000 winter steelhead peaks during the holidays. These fish average eight pounds. All hatchery steelhead are adipose fin marked and two may be harvested per day. No hatchery are allowed above Marmot Dam.

The best winter trips are by drift boat in the lower 15 miles.

### SANDY RIVER WILD WINTER STEELHEAD

The Marmot Dam fish ladder camera film has revealed that "sexually mature" steelhead can be in the river system from early November through early July. All of these fish are classed as winter steelhead. Tagging programs have shown that some of these fish may spend six months in the river before spawning and going back to the Ocean.

The largest and most vigorous run of wild endemic Sandy River steelhead enters the river from mid-February and continues through May. The majority of these fish have a two year fresh water and two year Ocean life cycle. However, some of these fish will stay at sea for three or four years and can be trophies from eighteen to thirty pounds. A forty year average is about 3000 of these beautiful fish spawning within the watershed. ***All are protected by "catch and release" regulations.***

These wild winter fish are aggressive biters, but not risers. Low water temperatures and sexual maturity keeps the fish hugging the bottom. This same sexual maturity makes these fish very territorial. A big black or red fly fished deep and slow is often the answer. Polarized glasses are indispensable for spotting and stalking fish.

Spawning fish are most visible. ***The angler should not bother spawning fish and one should be careful not wade across redds.*** Pocket water or slots down stream from spawners may hold bright fish that will serve the sport much better.



*Our mission is to create opportunities, encourage, educate, and mentor women's participation in the sport of fly fishing.*

*Our goal is to bring women together who share a love of fly fishing and the beauty of nature to create friendships and lasting memories.*

*Stonefly Maidens Women's Fly Fishing Club*

**An Oregon Council-Federation of Fly Fishers Member Club**

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**Calendar**

Date	Meeting (Speakers subject to change)	Fish-a-long Date	Location (Locations tentative)
January 12	Mark Bachmann, The Fly Fishing Shop Winter Steelheading	January 15	East Fork Lewis River, Winter Steelhead
February 9	Fly-Tying Demonstration, Gary Muncy	February 12	Crooked River, Trout
March 9	Video Night	March 12	MacKenzie River, March Brown hatch for trout
April 13	Members Roundtable: Fly-Fishing Skills	April 16	Coastal Lake, Trout
May 11	Marty Shepard, Smallmouth Bass on the John Day River	May 14	John Day River, Smallmouth bass (Women Only)
June 8	Kathryn Hart, Casting Demonstration & Practice	June 11 June 12	Casting Clinic, Blue Lake Park Clackamas River, Trout (Women only)
July 13	Michael T Williams, Backcountry Fly-Fishing	July 16 July 23	Big K Ranch, Smallmouth Bass (Women only) Merrill Lake, Hexegenia Hatch Bonus
August 10	Andy Pibal, Carp Fishing	July 13	Carp Fishing
September 14	Patty Barnes, Saltwater Fishing in Mexico	September 16-19	Skagit River, Pink Salmon (Women only)
October 12	Judith O'Keefe, Float Tube Fly Fishing	October 15	Hosmer Lake (Women only)
November 9	TBA		None scheduled
December 14	Christmas Party		None scheduled