



Angler's Notebook

by Jerry Bush



photo-PTBCardinals

In the fall, tributary steelhead are energetic, large and strong. While these are great characteristics for gamefish, these characteristics may also harm steelhead during catch and release. Steelhead are powerful fish, which may require the fish to be played before reeling it in. However, it is best to remove steelhead from the hook before exhausting the fish. Proper handling of fish for photographs includes removing your gloves, wetting your hands, supporting the fish's weight when lifting and avoiding a death grip. Return the fish to the water after taking a few quick photographs. Handle the fish as little as possible during the release. Use a net with slick, rubber mesh as opposed to nylon string netting.

Fishing patterns change when November arrives. High-speed, turbulent winds are disruptive to anglers and boaters. Anglers may have to change tactics and accept limited distance casting, but the fish do not disappear. Some anglers are successful by maintaining a positive attitude and recognizing that stirred up sediment contains food sources for baitfish. Gamefish lurk near areas where baitfish congregate. Strong winds may help predict where fish are located. Baitfish seeking dislodged nutrients will likely be found just offshore, on the side of the lake, being splashed by waves. These waves may also dislodge other food sources, such as crayfish. Look for

structure where gamefish may seek protection from turbulent water, and drop a baited hook into these potential hotspots.

Knot tying is important for anglers to master. Learn how to tie the knots most crucial for your fishing needs. Knots that are important to fly anglers may not be critical to spin casting anglers.

Enjoy solitude during the last few months of the year by fishing trout streams designated as Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only sections. Fly anglers may find streamers invaluable when fishing for trout. Throughout most of the year, trout are caught using insect imitations. However, colder temperatures reduce insect activity, so minnows and similar baitfish become prime forage for trout. Ignore shallow, fast moving water, because most of the fish will inhabit deep pools.

When targeting Muskellunge and Northern Pike, have needle nose pliers and a set of side cutters ready. Fishing for these fighting gamefish requires lures with big, sharp treble hooks. When netting and during the release, hooks present a hazard to anglers and fish. Also, Muskellunge and Northern Pike have sharp teeth. Both are known for continuing the fight even while in the net, so getting fish untangled is a challenge. Be prepared with the proper tools.

Fishin' from the Kitchen

Steelhead stuffed with spinach, onions and cream cheese

by Wayne Phillips

This rich steelhead dish is the perfect end to a winter day.

Ingredients for four servings:

- 2 12-ounce boneless, skinless steelhead fillets
- 2 Tbsp. canola oil
- 1 package frozen spinach
- 1 medium onion, small dice
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 4-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Procedure

Sauté onion and garlic over medium heat in 1 tablespoon of canola oil until softened. Squeeze the moisture from the thawed spinach. Add spinach and lemon juice to the onion mixture, and sauté until most of the moisture is gone. Allow to cool. Season the steelhead with salt and black pepper. Spread the top of one fillet with softened cream cheese. Layer the spinach

mixture on top of the cream cheese. Place the other fillet on top. Rub a baking dish with the remaining canola oil. Bake in a 350-degree F oven until cooked through, about 20- to 30-minutes.

Serve

Use a serrated knife to cut portions of the steelhead. Serve with lemon zest scented steamed rice and roasted beets.

Tips

For a more robust cheese flavor, use softened goat cheese rather than cream cheese. Spinach and fish pair well together. By using the mixture as a stuffing, the flavors blend into the fish. Spreading cream cheese over the steelhead fillets adds richness and also helps to bind the stuffing and the fish. Make sure the mixture is cool before placing it on the steelhead.

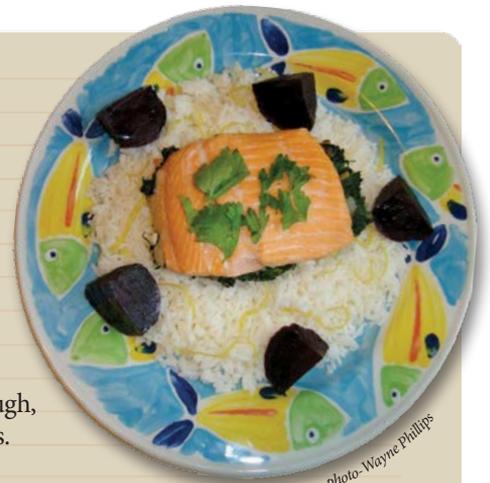


photo-Wayne Phillips