

## One Armed Fishing Report, 2017

November 1<sup>st</sup>, a fresh snow is falling and another Alberta winter is looming. Ugh. But, I shouldn't complain too hard. A week ago my son and I were happily fishing the Bow River in plus 20 degrees. I still haven't landed my 20 inch Bow River Rainbow but I've hooked him a twice now and I'm looking forward to our next rendezvous.

2017 featured a new grandson (Jack) and some truly awesome fly fishing trips on the Panther, the Ram and the Bow Rivers, as well as my first saltwater fishing trip to Graham Island on Haida Gwai.

The Bow remains one of the most productive Rainbow and Brown trout fisheries in Canada and we are fortunate to have this amazing waterway in our back yard. (Boos to the Highwood River Watershed logging plans in Kananaskis) We had good luck on the Bow using size 18-22 zebra midges or pheasant tails, black micro-leeches or streamers. It's a big fast water so be careful when wading.

After the unfortunate mauling incident on the Panther River earlier this year, we all need to be aware of the risks involved with meeting animals in the wild and take appropriate precautions. Start by not going out alone. Bull trout to 24 inches, lots of Cutthroat trout and Rocky Mountain Whitefish, are all very willing to give it a try. Adams, Stimulators, and a variety of nymphs, worked well and the Panther Valley scenery is among the nicest on the Eastern Slopes.

The Ram River has always been my favorite water and did not disappoint this year. There are numerous Cutthroat Trout in this fishery as well as a few Bulls. Be prepared to cross the river about 50 times and then walk up the gorge at the end of the day. Caddis in all stages, stimulators, and nymphs all work well in this river. Fish the runs and pools when the water is low. Stick to the bank when the water is high.

I added a Franco Vivarelli semi-automatic fly reel to my fishing kit this year and while the lever action retrieve has definite benefits to a one armed fisherman, the drag system is poor and can't be adjusted easily. I may look at upgrading to the external drag model but I had to import the reel from the UK and cost is definitely a factor.

I was fortunate enough to go West Coast Salmon fishing this year and spent 2 weeks at Rennell Sound on Graham Island. Haida Gwai is an absolutely amazing and wonderful place. That is if you like rainforests, mountains and oceans. We only lost 3 days to full 24 hour rain and a few half days here and there. Tidal fishing was a new experience for me and it was totally exhilarating to hook a big salmon on a spinning reel or haul up any number of multi colored monster fish from the bottom. I have lots to learn about this sport but I hope to be able to try again soon.

I needed a new rod holder for saltwater fishing and thanks to a bit of innovative design work, and a lot of help from friends, a prototype was constructed and field trials were successfully conducted on Haida Gwai. It is heavy, ugly and awkward, but this thing will catch fish.

For anyone interested, the materials of construction were: an old satellite dish holder, a used weight lifters belt, a wooden dowel, a re-purposed aluminum sign, an old hinge and several feet of PVC pipe. I also paid 12 bucks for a used toaster oven to reshape the PVC because Judy wouldn't let me use the

microwave. The unit is belt mounted with a standing leg brace but can be also used in a sit position with a suitable support (ie: cooler). The rod holder section is removable for use with either a spinning or a level wind reel. Both the salmon and the halibut rods required modifications in order to seat properly in the rod holder. The butt section of the salmon rod was cut short for ease of handling and shaped dowels were inserted in the butt end of both rods to prevent rotation. Cheap Canadian Tire rods were used for the trial and they worked just fine to land a couple of 18 lb Chinooks, and a mess of 10 to 12 lb Cohoe.

No Halibut or Bow River Rocket for Randy in 2017 but still a memorable year and something to look forward to in 2018.

Happy trails and all the best in 2018.

Randy Reaman