

THOMPSON RIVER BRITISH COLUMBIA SEPTEMBER 2016

My Canadian friend Frank picked me up at Vancouver airport on Tuesday 30 August 2016. I was pleased to stay the night at his home where he and his wife Mary made me welcome.



Smoked trout and crackers by the Fraser River

Next morning we headed north from Vancouver to fish the Thompson River. After travelling alongside the mighty Fraser River and passing the long Fraser Canyon we reached the Thompson, a tributary of the Fraser.



The Thompson

The Thompson itself is a big river. Its headwaters are above Kamloops Lake and it flows into and out of that lake. We checked into our motel at the small highway town of Cache Creek, about 340km north of Vancouver.

The Thompson is known for its steelhead runs. Frank explained that it wasn't a case "should've been here last week." I was there in early September and I "should've been there NEXT MONTH" ie early October when the steelhead usually start to run. There is a monitoring station downstream and the steelhead season may be restricted if numbers are low.



Thompson River Rainbow

The saving grace is that there are always rainbows to catch during the June to December season. In June the river is high and wading is near impossible. For our trip the river was still dropping and so not all Frank's favourite runs were accessible. He reckoned about two weeks after my visit it would be ideal!



Hoodoos

We fished around the town of Ashcroft in spectacular sagebrush/desert country with "hoodoos" adjacent to the river in most places. Both the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National railroads have tracks heading north along the river. It is not uncommon for trains of 150-200 cars to pass by.



Stonefly shuck

Frank ties all his own flies. The successful flies were McKillop's sedge, a stonefly tied Copper John and a soft-hackle wet. The stoneflies are huge and Frank ties flies accordingly.



Stonefly shuck and Copper John

The technique is across, down and retrieve. We caught rainbows at all stages of the drift, including some rising fish which took the fly as soon as it landed. My first outing resulted in many missed takes as the fly swung across at the end of the drift and also as it was slowly retrieved.



McKillop's Sedge

The best fishing of our two and a half days on the Thompson was when it rained all day! There were more rising fish that day and the fish seemed to be feeding more actively. I enjoyed my time fishing with Frank on the Thompson, his favourite river.