



www.FishingCoaches.org



Fishing Scenario ID #360

© **Guided GAMEPLAN**

Stamp/Somass Steelhead



“Stamp/Somass/Sproat” this Scenario should be called, or maybe “The Best and Brightest.” What’s important is that these three rivers join to provide what we believe is one of the two finest steelhead destinations in the Pacific Northwest. That’s partly due to the relatively limited access throughout their systems, also to management practices, including supplementation of smolts by the Robertson Creek Hatchery.

Back to brightest: catches of both summer and winter runs here are more often “chromers” than elsewhere. That means terrific battles...and lots of lost fish that live on as memories. It’s lucky that a boat with two anglers will average seven hook-ups a day here—Dale had 20 on his trip with this outfitter—of winter run fish averaging nine pounds or better, and ranging beyond 20.

Remember—that’s a *bright 20*.

We should mention old growth forests, waterfalls, the chance to watch belted Kingfishers and American Dippers, not to mention eagles. Odds are the black bears that feed on the earlier runs of Sockeye, Chinook, Silver and pink salmons may have moved on; but maybe not..and waving, *from a boat*, is allowed.

Note: FC research points to these January and Feb dates, but our recommended outfitter, Nick Hjennyj (rhymes with “penny”), is also keen on times November and December, so you might ask about those!



Stamp/Somass Steelhead Timing Details

- 1. **DATES: Jan 1-10 AND Feb 1-14**
- 2. For information and reservations, contact Nick Hnennyj at West Coast River Charters, Toll-Free: 1-866-839-8411, Port Alberni, BC 723-0136 / 720-5449 or at nick@westcoastrivercharters.ca or see www.westcoastrivercharters.ca/rivers
- 3. For information about Vancouver Island fishing, call the Vancouver Island Fisheries Branch, (250) 751-3100
- 4. Depending on conditions, angler's preferences and availability, trips will involve float fishing the river with bait or lures, from either a motorized drift boat or 80 horse power jet sled.



Special Regulations/Conditions

- 1. Anglers need a BC Freshwater License, <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/index.html> available at any tackle store, also at West Coast River Charters. Be sure to pick up **and read** the BC regulations booklet. See www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/documents/Region%202.pdf for current regulations, and <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/index.html> about licenses.
- 2. To find out what you may bring into Canada, check *in advance* at Canadian Customs. Carry a US Passport for return: check [US Customs](#) to review current regulations, At both checkpoints, all occupants of vehicle should remove sunglasses: making wisecracks can *easily* set your trip back an hour, longer if an agent decides to remove seats, wheels, gas tank and camper shell. **Often overlooked:** If you have a small child in your vehicle, he or she must have a permission-to-travel note signed by any parent(s) not in the car, stating where parent(s) expect the child to go, and for how long.
- 3. For Westcoast River Charters rates, see their website at www.westcoastrivercharters.ca/rivers, or contact them directly at nick@westcoastrivercharters.ca.
- 4. Fishing Coaches strongly recommends that members commit themselves to learning as much as possible from a guide. In simplest terms, this means asking many as many questions as you can think of, and following directions as carefully as possible!

While the goal at Fishing Coaches is to provide information that will lead members to become more expert at every level, in some cases a guide's services provide a large advantage; and, on occasion—as when angling for giant sturgeon—fisheries require such unique knowledge, skills and tackle that a guide is all but mandatory. For this Scenario, Fishing Coaches is comfortable recommending Nick Hnennyj.

Note: Fishing Coaches does not receive commissions or compensation of any kind for recommendations of equipment, tackle or services.



Stamp Somass Steelhead Equipment

- 1. All fishing gear is provided, including limber 10.5 foot rods and quality conventional casting reels for fishing float rigs. An angler unfamiliar with conventional casting tackle might borrow an outfit to practice in advance; otherwise, Nick will teach novices on the river. For questions, contact West Coast.
- 2. Cool, cold, and rain weather gear:
 1. Thermal undergarments
 2. Warm wool or thermal socks (+ spares).
 3. Rain proof or wind-stopper pants.
 4. Fleece or wool shirts and spares
 5. Warm, water-proof headgear w/ brimmed hat
 6. Water-proof gloves, spare pair
 7. Light color lens (amber, rose) polarized sunglasses
 8. Lunch and beverages
 9. Camera



Rigging/Techniques

While you'r entitled to enjoy the luxury of having all tackle set up for you, Fishing Coaches urges Members to ask about rigging or technique unfamiliar to them, from knots to the angle of inclination of the float. Guides typically know plenty about standard practice, and have often developed variations specific to their own waters or personal styles. Guides like Nick NHennyj can also answer important questions about rivers and how anglers can play an important role in conservation issues.

More than one river—hundreds now—owe their “lives” to the activism of guides, and of anglers guides have helped inform.























Stamp Somass Steelhead

Location Details

1 Directions from I-5 (Bellingham, WA, US)

 Merge onto I-5 N. 21.3 miles [Map](#)  7: Take the WA-543 N exit- EXIT 275- toward TRUCK CUSTOMS / H STREET. 0.3 miles [Map](#)  8: Stay STRAIGHT to go onto WA-543 N (Crossing into *CANADA* BRITISH COLUMBIA). 0.8 miles [Map](#)  9: WA-543 N becomes PROVINCIAL ROUTE 15 N / PACIFIC HWY. 12.5 miles [Map](#)  10: Take the ROUTE 1 WEST ramp toward VANCOUVER. 0.3 miles [Map](#)  11: Merge onto PROVINCIAL ROUTE 1 W / TRANS CANADA HWY W toward VANCOUVER. 33.0 miles [Map](#)  12: Stay STRAIGHT to go onto UPPER LEVELS HWY. <0.1 miles [Map](#)  13: UPPER LEVELS HWY becomes HORSESHOE BAY-DEPARTURE BAY FERRY (Check ferry schedule / fares). 35.8 miles [Map](#)  14: Turn SLIGHT RIGHT onto PROVINCIAL ROUTE 1 / STEWART AVE / TRANS CANADA HWY. <0.1 miles [Map](#)  15: Turn RIGHT onto BRECHIN RD. 0.6 miles [Map](#)  16: Turn RIGHT onto PROVINCIAL ROUTE 19A N / ISLAND HWY N. Continue to follow ISLAND HWY N. 16.1 miles [Map](#)  17: Stay STRAIGHT to go onto PROVINCIAL ROUTE 19 N / INLAND ISLAND HWY N. 8.9 miles [Map](#)  18: Take the HWY-4 exit- EXIT 60- toward QUALICUM BEACH / PORT ALBERNI. <0.1 miles [Map](#)  19: Take the ramp toward QUALICUM BEACH. 0.2 miles [Map](#)  20: Turn LEFT onto MEMORIAL AVE. <0.1 miles [Map](#)  21: MEMORIAL AVE becomes PROVINCIAL ROUTE 4. 23.6 miles [Map](#)  22: Turn RIGHT onto PROVINCIAL ROUTE 4 / RIVER RD. 0.4 miles [Map](#) 



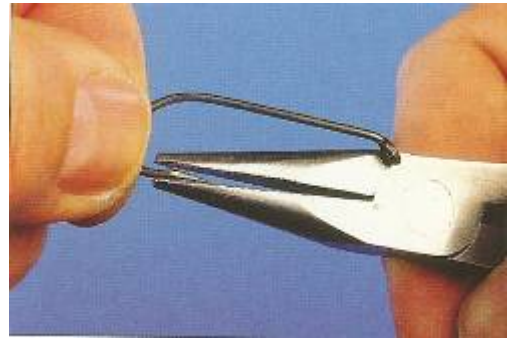
Davenport Maps



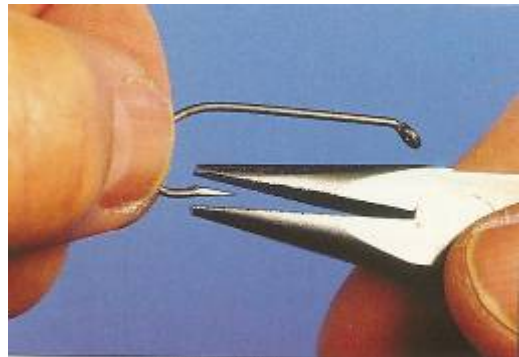
Responsible Catching

While opinions vary as to whether you'll land more fish with crimped barbs, or fewer, no one argues that improved *catching* makes it critical for anglers to practice the most responsible *releasing* techniques for fish they do not keep. This begins by pinching down the barb of hooks you use in nearly all Fishing Coaches Scenarios, and finishes with the proper landing and reviving of tired fish.

Step 1. Hold the hook by the bend and position the jaws of a pair of flat needle-nosed pliers over the barb. Only the flat hook spear should make contact with the jaw face. (Do not insert pliers far enough to press or scrape against the bend.)



Step 2. Squeeze the pliers to bend the barb down. Use the lightest pressure that will still do the job. Most barbs will not bend completely flat, and some may require touch-up with a file.



Text and illustrations courtesy of Ted Leeson and Jim Shollmeyer, *Fly Tier's Benchside Reference*, amatobooks.com

Catch and Release Tips

Adapted from the British Columbia Federation of Drift Fishers www.bcdf.com

Play the fish as quickly as possible.

Leave the fish in the water.

Never poke a finger in the fish's gills, or lift it by the gills.

After removing a hook, face the fish upright into [slow] current. When the fish is able to swim away on its own, release it to swim out of your hands.

If a photo is desired, quickly lift fish up (not longer than 5 seconds out of the water) holding it under the pectoral fins, and the other hand supporting the wrist of the tail.

Fish kept out of the water for more than 30 seconds will almost certainly suffer brain damage, and may not survive.