

Muchalat Lake Fishing Report Sept 2018

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I just returned from an overnite trip to Muchalat Lake. I brought my 14 ft aluminum boat, the mighty Bullship, and explored the entire lake and the outlet river down to its confluence with the Gold River. I did not bring a flyrod and did not fish much, but I thought some club members might be interested in a background report. So here it is.

The lake is 30 k north of the town of Gold River. The first 20 km are paved. Then, another 10 Km on well-graded gravel. This road is the Woss Main and is very busy with logging traffic all day. There is a provincial campground on the north shore of the lake. Beautiful waterfront campsites in old growth forest with picnic tables, fire grills, and outhouses, plus an excellent boat launch. All free now after Labour Day.

I launched early in the morn. The lake is swarming with fish right now, big and little. Unlike Kennedy Lake, which seems to have very few visible salmon/trout juveniles, this lake has lots of small fish in the shallows. The lake was also loaded with adult sockeye. When the water is calm you can see schools all over the lake rolling and swirling. The lake has 2 main tribs, the Upper Muchalat and the Oktwanch Rivers. The sockeye are stacked up around the mouths of the 2 rivers. I tossed small spinners around the river mouths and caught some small-medium cutthroat, 10-14". I drifted down the long outlet channel which is a spectacular piece of fishing water with boulder strewn shallows, a bit of current and back eddies, and some more active fish swirling that did not act like sockeye.

I could not get a bite on spinner until just above the spot where the lake spills out into fast water, where I hooked a big silver fish. I was hoping it was one of the steelhead or huge cutts that this lake is noted for, but it turned out to be a beauty



one of the biggest and fattest I have ever caught (15 lbs?). A perfect chrome ingot fresh from the sea, immaculate C&R on video, and quite a tussle on a \$10 ultralite rod with an old beater reel that has no functional drag or anti-reverse, especially since I had to hold the fish with one hand while I started the motor with the other, and eased my way back up thru the boulders to keep from getting pulled downstream into crashing white water and certain doom. But all's well that ends well.

On Day 2 I tried trolling Rapala lures for a half hour (no bites) and then shut down fishing. I did some underwater filming, trying to capture video of the sockeye off the mouth of the Oktivanch. (I have not looked at this video yet. It is always exciting to see what may be seen when you look at underwater shots.) Then I hiked a short ways up the Oktivanch River, which is being killed by clearcut

logging. I hope to do an episode for my YouTube series that will be called "Oktwanch - Anatomy of a Murder". Absolutely stunning devastation. I suspect that is why the sockeye are roiling about all over the lake. They cannot go up into the rivers because there are no longer any pools, just a vast wasteland of shifting gravel and driftwood. What a tragedy.



Oktwanch River

I loaded out and spend some time filming clearcuts and burn piles. You cross the lower Muchalat River just above its confluence with the Gold. I drove up the south side of the Muchalat and hiked thru the second growth down to the river in

a couple places. But it looks too fast and rocky to fish. It looked like a super area for shrooms but I saw none, and the locals I talked to at the lake said they have not found any Chanterelles yet. Any day now, since they had much rain before I arrived, and I was dodging rain showers all the time. Then I hiked down to the Gold/Muchalat confluence. There is a beauty pool in the Gold there, which is closed to fishing because the fish are almost extinct. Not a single fish visible in that pool. Shocking to me, I did throw a spinner over some great looking water on the Muchalat side, which is open to fishing. No bites. Shocking! In case anyone is interested in floating the Gold, there is a huge wicked log jam just below this confluence. You MUST find a way around and you dare not get near it in any boat.

On my way back I was hoping to launch at Buttle Lake narrows, explore there and then zip up to explore Ralph River mouth, but I wimped out due to rain. I shall return.