



Alaska, someplace I only dreamed about, but WOW. I won the bid at the 2009 SCI Fund Raiser, on a 6 day 5 night fishing trip, and I didn't waste any time making arrangements.

When I called MacDougall Lodge I was given two dates, early June for King Salmon, and late August for Silvers, Trout, and Grayling. I chose the August date. I think the dates I was given had a lot to do with the fact that I was going by myself.

I went a few days early, and also decided to stay in Anchorage a few days after the fishing trip. I figured this would give me time to "check things out", and I wasn't disappointed. I stayed at the Inlet Tower Hotel in Anchorage (highly recommend) and it was easy to get around (Watch out for one way streets).

I went to Rust's Flying Service ahead of time, paid for my flight to and from the lodge, and purchased my fishing license. This saved a lot of time on Monday morning when we flew out, as I was surprised by the number of people flying on the same day. After about an hour's flight, we arrived at the lodge.

As soon as we got off the plane and had introductions, breakfast was on. Twenty minutes after breakfast, we were in a jet boat heading up river to our first fishing. The water was crystal clear, but was loaded with dead or dying salmon. Ted, our guide, told us that's what happens at the end of the season. Hmmmm, if I go again, it will be earlier.

Since I was the only one fly fishing in our group, I kind of stayed by myself, and was catch & releasing what I caught. The fishing was great when I stayed in running water. Ted would take us to where a smaller stream came together with larger water, where a pool had formed, and you could see the salmon just laying there. That's where the others fished, while I waded out in the moving water. The water was so clear I had no problem wading and caught plenty of salmon.

Later, Ted asked me if we could save some of the fish I was releasing, because a lot of the fish the others were catching were no good to keep. When he was filleting what they caught, he showed me how the fillets looked like a pink sponge. My catch was in better shape, so I agreed, since they were going to die anyway.

I should have kept my fish, but I wasn't sure what to do with 50 pounds of salmon, since I wasn't leaving Alaska right after the fishing trip. Now I know Rust's Flying Service has freezer storage when you return, and the UPS Stores in Anchorage can ship the fish home. I ended up purchasing some salmon that had been caught earlier and was vacuum packed and frozen and had it shipped home. There were a lot of things I should have done differently, but all in all, I had a very memorable trip. Would I go again, You Bet !