

# Details make difference in landing steelhead



**GREAT OUTDOORS**  
**BILL PARKER**

Details. Overwhelming to some, overrated by others. But to charter captain John King of Redford details often make the difference on whether or not an angler lands a steelhead.

"The steelhead is a very acrobatic fish," explained King, during a recent presentation at the Four Seasons Fishing Club in Garden City. "The big thing with steelhead is to pay attention to details. If you pay attention to the details, the rest will take care of itself."

So what does King mean by details? How about sharp hooks, tight, strong knots and straight running

lures, for starters. Through his 23 years of drifting and pulling plugs for river steelhead, King has found the round-bend hook, by Eagle Claw, suits his purpose best. The point of a round bend hook doesn't close as tightly to the shaft as other hooks, allowing for better penetration. Since steelhead don't have a bony mouth at the front of the mouth like salmon and other game fish they are usually hooked strictly in skin and flesh. Consequently, hook penetration is a top priority.

"Steelhead are always jumping around so you need a hook that will penetrate and hold a fish," King said.

Nothing helps penetration more than razor sharp points. Considering the fact that steelhead reside at the bottom of a river, lures must run deep and hug the bottom to reach the fish. With the hooks always dragging over rocks, gravel and logs anglers

must constantly stay on top of hook points.

King suggests anglers replace the standard hooks that come on a new lure with No. 4 roundbend hooks on medium size lures such as Wiggle Warts and Wee Warts, and No. 2's on larger lures such as half-ounce Hot-N-Tots and No. 25 Hot Shots.

Knots should be tight and secure and King recommends anglers become familiar with several different knots — triline, clinch, improved clinch and surgeon knots to name a few. The line and leader should routinely be checked for nicks and scrapes to ensure its strength.

King also has a little trick he uses to keep his lures clean. He attached a small lead above the in-line swivel at the leader which catches debris such as weeds and algae before it gathers on his lures.

Anglers should also be sure

their lures are running straight.

"When you're fishing in a river, your lures are only a couple feet apart so if you have one that isn't running in a straight line it will get tangled up with your other lines and you'll have a mess on your hands," the Captain said. A small adjustment to the bill of the lure will straighten out a crooked runner.

King also suggests anglers adjust their drag to the weather conditions. In cold weather the drag will be much stiffer than in warm weather and it must be adjusted. "A steelhead can accelerate from zero to 20 with the flick of its tail so the drag must be set for the conditions," he said.

King has been running a charter service for 11 years. He spends upwards of 100 days on the Big Manistee between September and April in his 18-foot Jet Sled which is enclosed with a heater.

King can be reached in Redford at 255-7877.

## Buck pole report

To say Bob Branton had a successful 1992 hunting season is like saying it snows in Alaska.

The Farmington Hills resident has been a regular in the successful hunter listings the last couple of years and the absence of his call this fall was puzzling. The mystery was cleared up Monday when a letter arrived at my desk.

"I had a great season and have been so busy figuring up venison recipes maybe that's why I forgot (to call)," Branton wrote.

In Mid-September, Branton was hunting elk in Wyoming when his guide bagged in a beautiful 5-by-6 bull. After watching the elk "tear up pine trees for about 15 minutes" the animal passed through a clearing. Branton made a 27-yard double-lung

shot. On Oct. 4, Branton took a 125-pound, 4-point buck from a tree stand in Tuscola County. He was back in the same area on Oct. 29 and arrowed his second buck of the season from a nearby tree stand — a 160 pound 6-point.

Last spring, the local archer took a 250-pound black bear from a tree blind in north central Idaho.

"It was quite an exciting experience and at one point it looked as though he might come up the tree in which I was sitting," Branton wrote. "Talk about an adrenalin rush."

(Anglers and hunters are urged to report their success. Questions and comments are also encouraged. Send information to: Outdoors, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI, 48002, or call Bill Parker Monday evenings at 644-1101, ext. 241.)

## OUTDOORS CALENDAR

### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

#### AUDUBON TRIPS

A trip to Rouge Park in Detroit begins at 9 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 23, 525-8630 or 545-2929.

A trip to the Canadian side of the Detroit River (Sarnia) to view waterfowl begins at 9 a.m. Friday, Feb. 6, 525-8630 or 545-2929.

#### GREAT LAKES SPORTFISHING

A class titled "Sportfishing in the Great Lakes" begins at 7 p.m. Monday at the Farmington Community School. Art Dittmar, Michigan United Conservation Club Region IV vice president, will teach the 10-week class, which will meet Mondays for two hours, 489-3333.

#### FAMILY FISHING CLASSES

A seminar titled "Ice Fishing for Family Fun" will be conducted by naturalist/outdoor educator Joe Derek beginning at 7 p.m. Monday at the Farmington Community School. There is a \$6 registration fee and advanced registration is required, 489-3333.

#### HUNTERS SAFETY

The Wayne County Sports-

men's Club and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources will offer a Michigan hunter safety certification course beginning at 8 a.m. Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 23-24, at the Wayne County Sportsman's Club in Romulus. The course will cover firearms history, use and safety, archery safety, hunter ethics, first aid, survival techniques, wildlife management, game care, wildlife identification and hunter/landowner relations. Course fee is \$5. Class size is limited, and advance registration is advised, 532-0285.

#### CARIBOU HUNTING

A caribou-hunting seminar will be conducted by naturalist/outdoor educator Joe Derek beginning at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 25, at the Farmington Community School. Registration fee is \$6, and advanced registration is required, 489-3333.

#### FLY TYING

The Challenge Chapter of Trout Unlimited is offering a class titled "The Challenge of Fly Tying" beginning at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 25, in Room F-101 at Seaholm High School in Birmingham. The class is designed for the

beginner and those who already tie flies. Course fee is \$30, and advance registration is required, 433-8444.

#### DETROIT BOAT SHOW

The 1993 Detroit Boat Show, featuring the latest boats, accessories, services, electronics, fishing gear and more, runs Jan. 30 through Feb. 7 at the Cobo Convention Center. Special attractions include "Nautical Village" — a historical look at the Michigan Lighthouse, fishing and boating seminars, state champion water skiers and offshore racers from the APBA Gold Cup Races. Show hours are noon to 10 p.m. Saturdays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays, and 3-10 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Admission is \$7 adults, children (younger than 12) will be admitted free. Senior citizens enter free on Monday.

#### WILDLIFE ART EXPO

Northern Wildlife Art Expo,

featuring the work of 50 wildlife artists, will be Feb. 6-7 at the Lansing Civic Arena. Admission is \$5 adults, \$3.50 senior citizen and children (younger than 12) will be admitted free. Weekend passes are available for \$8.

#### SPORTFISHING EXPO

The Greater Detroit Sportfishing Expo will be March 4-7 at the Palace of Auburn Hills.

#### WILDLIFE ART FESTIVAL

The Michigan Wildlife Art Festival will celebrate its 10th anniversary April 2-4 at the Southfield Pavilion.

#### DATES & DEADLINES

Rabbit season ends March 31. Application deadline for the spring wild turkey season is Feb. 1.

#### FISHING CLUB MEETINGS

The Four Seasons Fishing Club

meets 7:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month at the Maplewood Center in Garden City, 477-3816.

Romeo B.A.S.S. Busters meet 7 p.m. the first Tuesday of each month at the Romeo Community Youth and Civic Center, 286-6469.

## METROPARKS

### NATURE STORIES FOR TOTS

A program for children ages 2-5 in which participants will learn about insects in the winter through a puppet show, a story and a special craft, begins at 1 p.m. Saturday at Indian Springs.

### ANIMAL TRACKING

A naturalist-led hike in which participants will search for animal tracks begins at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at Kensington.

### SLOPPING THE HOOPS

An opportunity to help the farmers feed the animals at the farm center begins at 3 p.m. Saturday at the Kensington Farm Center.

### WINTER BIRDS AND BRUNCH

Participants will watch and learn about birds in this program, which begins at 9 a.m. Sunday at Stony Creek.

### WILDLIFE IN WINTER

A nature walk to look for ani-

See CALENDAR, 4B

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