



Idaho Panhandle Rivers

Moyie River, N.F. Coeur D'Alene River, & St. Joe River

Moyie River

Date	July 5	Time	Evening
Location	Moyie River – Bonners Ferry	Weather	Sunny
Fish Species	Brook, Rainbow	Size Range	Smaller than 10"
Fish Caught	2 Brook, a dozen Rainbow		
Flies Used	Bead Head Pheasant Tail, Elk Hair Caddis, Royal Wulff		
Techniques	Float dry fly, drift nymphs		
Comments	This river is probably your best bet in extreme northern Idaho.		

The Moyie River flows down out of Canada into Idaho and dumps into the Kootenai River. I fished the stretch above Meadow Creek Campground where the road follows the river. The Campground is within 20 miles from Bonners Ferry. The stretch above the campground doesn't contain many tributaries for spawning so it contains mostly stocked fish. If you park at the campground and hike down you'll run into more wild trout. This area of the stream contains a lot more pocket water because of the steeper grade. Had I done my research before I went I would have fished this stretch of the river.

Nonetheless, I still had some good fishing for small Rainbow and a couple of Brook trout. I think smaller fish is the rule for this river although there are a few surprises. This river is probably your best bet if you want to fish in Bonner County. There is a good fishery over on the Yaak in Montana that I hear is good. Boundary County also has many alpine lakes on the Selkirk Range that contain Rainbow, Brook, Cutthroat, Golden trout and Grayling.

North Fork Coeur D' Alene River

Date	July 6	Time	Evening
Location	North of Prichard	Weather	Sunny
Fish Species	Cutthroat	Size Range	8" - 10"
Fish Caught	A dozen Cutthroat		
Flies Used	Bead Head Pheasant Tail, Elk Hair Caddis		
Techniques	Float dry fly, drift nymphs		
Comments	This is an awesome fishery but I didn't get into the bigger fish.		

This river is a beautiful river to fish not to take anything away from the others. The whole northern region is spectacular. I enjoyed this trip mostly due to all the wildlife I saw and the anticipation of catching a Cutthroat from a stream. I fished a couple of spots about 40 miles up the river. I did catch several Cutthroat but the biggest was 10". I hear the place to go is to continue up the road where the river doesn't follow the road and hike in a few miles. I talked to a fellow that had just caught a Cutthroat over 18" in this stretch and heard from another good source that this area is where the fishing improves a couple of notches.

As I traveled up the river I saw Grouse, Turkey and Whitetail Deer. The second hole I stopped at was created mostly from a downed tree and in a few minutes I was fishing amongst a couple of Beaver that didn't seem to mind my presence. As I moved down stream right at dusk I heard something coming out of the bushes just down stream. I looked down and three Elk walked out into the river without spotting me. I stopped fishing and watched as they made there way closer and closer. About the time I started to get nervous they put there noses in the air. After a brief moment they had smelled me and headed back into the woods. On my way out, I had to stop for a Moose that was in the middle of the road. I just love Idaho!

St. Joe River - BLUE RIBBON CUTTHROAT

Date	July 7	Time	Evening
Location	East of Avery	Weather	Sunny
Fish Species	Cutthroat	Size Range	10" - 14" saw larger fish
Fish Caught	Many		
Flies Used	Green bodied Elk Hair Caddis, Grey Wulff, Dave's Hopper		
Techniques	Float dry fly		
Comments	Dry fly fishing at its best		

I found out why this river was a Blue Ribbon Cutthroat stream. I stopped at the sporting good store in St Maries to buy some flies and I was told I would have a good time. I wasn't disappointed. Put away the Nymphs!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The first hole I fished was at mile marker 60. This hole produced some nice fish. I caught a couple 14" Cuts, a few that were slightly smaller and of course the big one that got away. I had an 18"-20" Cut follow my fly out of the current but I couldn't keep my fly floating long enough without drag. I could never get him to rise to my fly again. It was a nice healthy fish.

The river went into a steep canyon below this point for about a mile or two with the road high above. This looked like a prime area and I would have fished it if I had more time. It would have required a nice hike in and out.

The Cutthroat move upstream in the spring to spawn and migrate downstream in the fall to winter. If I were fishing in the fall I would probably concentrate my efforts near the town of Calder and the lodge. If I were fishing the summer I would fish in the mile marker range of the 60's. There were lots of good areas to fish. I would also like to drive to the campground at the end of the road and hike upstream a few miles and try it. I would always check with the local sporting good store or fly shop before fishing any unfamiliar river.

I ended up catching many more fish but they were mostly in the 10" to 12" range. There were stretches where I also caught fish under 10" on every cast but that got boring in a hurry knowing there were big fish in the river. As a general rule, you'll probably get your bigger fish in the late afternoon and evening rather than in the middle of the day.

This is definitely my favorite river to fish in Northern Idaho, although the North Fork Coeur D'Alene isn't far behind. There were many green Caddis hatching on both rivers. I just didn't get into the big fish on the Coeur D' Alene and I know they're in there. I guess I'll just have to get up and try it again.