

A Day With Idaho Joe by Lyall

The drive from Seattle in Washington State to Livingston in Montana, the destination being the site of the 2017 Fly Fishers International (FFI) Fly Fishing Fair, is ten hours. When planning this solo drive, my wife suggested I stay en route in a city named Coeur d'Alene (pron. Core da Leen) in Idaho as the famous Spokane River runs through its centre and is synonymous with fly fishing and trout. I always obey my wife so I said "yes dear".

In researching this part of my six weeks in the Pacific North West of America on the Internet I discovered Castaway Fly Fishing Shop on the outskirts of Coeur d'Alene which became my home base. What caught my eye was that the owner Joe Roope was a Master Fly Tyer with FFI. Joe's nickname is *Idaho Joe* which kind of makes sense doesn't it. He became a Master Fly Tyer as a boy and is a big personality in the industry.



I allocated two days to fishing with a rest day in between before driving the second leg of my journey to Montana. So where to fish? Well, one day had to be on the Spokane River which turned out to be on a rigid float boat. The other day? I don't enjoy lake fishing so clearly, I am no good at it. The theme of the whole trip was to do something each fishing day I had never done before and learn, learn, learn so fishing Hayden Lake in central Coeur d'Alene was the answer.

Picture a five star golf club surrounded by million dollar holiday homes, speed boats on the lake towing skiers and rubber doughnuts with screaming kids and you have Hayden Lake in summer!!! Idaho Joe had been given access to moore what I can only call The Party Boat at the golf club. It was an *aluminum* catamaran with a

dance floor deck surrounded by long lounges replete with disco speakers and drink holders, not to mention the dinner table and barbeque!!! This was fishing in style!!!



Out on the lake the 95 hp outboard pushed the Party Boat at a leisurely pace and, apart from the water skiers, wake boarders, kayakers, holiday houses and bait fishers, we were alone!



The deal was to cruise into a bay, drop in the remote control Min Kota and start searching amongst the weeds for cruising fish and drop a bead head nymph in their path then strip it away from the fish like fleeing bait. It was one hundred percent sight fishing for fish I had never caught before – small mouth bass, blue gills and crabbies ... but nothing huge.



These are two breeds of palm fish. Yeah – they live in palm trees!!!

It was a day of talking fly fishing and fly tying, landing flies in flower pots in the middle of the lake and catching new fish. This falls into the category of “great fishing snags of the world” - *“I said just short of the flower pot, not in it” – “oops sorry Joe.”*



It was a great day with a great fellow on a great lake with skiers who grate but clearly I am still no good on lakes!!! Idaho Joe’s quote of the day was *“Time to leave Idaho. We just got a second post code.”* You have to love it ...



The day on the rigid float boat with Castaways on the Spokane River catching west slope trout (aka black spot trout) on dry flies one after another was fantastic ... but that’s another story.

A link to Idaho Joe’s Castaway Fly Fishing Shop can be found under *International Fishing Guides* at <http://capitalflycasting.com/links>