

Spokane River Scavenger Hunt 2024

Hosted By Spokane Falls Trout Unlimited



What is the Spokane River Scavenger Hunt?

It's a scavenger hunt with a fly rod! This is a free and fun fly fishing adventure where you have the chance to experience and learn more about fishing on the Spokane River and the opportunities to catch fish right here in the city! It's also a chance to hang out with other anglers and learn how to fly fish or help someone get into fly fishing.

The Spokane River Scavenger Hunt is open to anyone and all skill levels whether you are brand new to fly fishing or very experienced. It is a one-day event where participants will pair up in teams of two anglers and explore the Spokane River together with the goal of catching different species of fish and completing other objectives along the way.

To provide a little incentive for participants, the winner of the scavenger hunt will receive a free guided fly fishing trip down the Spokane River with local fly fishing instructor and guide, Marc Fryt (from FlyFishSpokane.com).

When and Where

The scavenger hunt will take place on Saturday, September 14th. All participants will meet at 8:00am at the [Riverfront Park Clocktower](#).

Once the event starts, anglers can only fish along the Spokane River between the [Washington-Idaho border](#) to the [boat ramp](#) at the Spokane Wastewater Treatment Plant. Fly fishing in Idaho or downstream of the boat ramp is out-of-bounds.

Participants must be back at the Clocktower by 4:00pm.

Signing Up for the Event

Participants will be in teams of two anglers. You can sign up as a team or as an individual. Individuals will be paired with another fly fisher ahead of the event.

To sign up, email Marc@SpokaneFallsTU.org

Scoring and Earning Points

The winner of the event is the team with the most points. Teams earn points by catching different species of fish and taking a photo of the fish species in their net. Fish species are awarded certain points:

- 1 point for a redband trout
- 1 point for a cutthroat (or cutbow) trout
- 1 point for a mountain whitefish
- 1 point for a northern pikeminnow
- 3 points for a largescale sucker
- 1 point for *either* a smallmouth bass, brown trout, or any other species

Note- The purpose is to catch different species of fish, not quantities of the same fish species. For example, Team A catches one redband trout, one whitefish, one pikeminnow, and one largescale sucker, so they receive 6 points. Team B catches six redband trout, three smallmouth bass, and two brown trout, but they only receive 2 points.

For information about these fish species and fly fishing techniques you can use to catch them, check out the **Fish Species List** further below.

Additional Points Teams Can Earn:

- 2 points for filling up a Spokane Riverkeeper bag with garbage and returning with it to the Clocktower (one bag will be provided to each team at the start of the event).
- 1 point for finding and taking a photo of a crayfish.
- 1 point for finding and taking a photo of a stonefly, caddis, or mayfly.
- If one person on the team is new to fly fishing (i.e., less than a year of experience) then that team automatically starts out with +2 points.

Rules for the Scavenger Hunt

- All participants must have a valid Washington fishing license. You can purchase that online [here](#).
- You can use whatever flies you'd like so long as Washington fishing regulations are followed. Refer to pages 73 and 20 in the [Washington Fishing Regulations](#) for more information. Also, download the free [Washington Fishing Regulations Mobile App](#) which provides an easy and quick way to click on the Spokane River and read the regulations.
- Clean catches, no snagging. "Scout's Honor"
- You have to take a photo of your fish while it's in a *rubber* net.
- Each team can only have two fly fishing setups (i.e., two rods, two fly lines, two reels). Tenkara rods are allowed.
- Only one person on a team can be fishing at time. The other person will act as a safety-observer (in order to prevent any bystanders/onlookers from being hooked by a backcast).
- Once the scavenger hunt begins, personal vehicles/taxis/Uber/Lyft are *not allowed*. But teams are allowed to walk, use public transportation, bikes (Lime Bikes/Scooters are allowed), roller blade, or whatever else.
- Personal watercraft are not allowed *unless* one person on your team has a handicap that limits how much walking and maneuvering over rocky areas they can do. If this pertains to your team, then you can use one or two watercraft. However, you can only

use *one* boat launch (i.e., no float trips or using multiple boat launches). Also, you may have a third person to act as an assistant who can help launch, handle, and recover the watercraft, but the assistant is not allowed to fish at all. Lastly, only one person on the team may be fishing at a time.

- In the event of a tie between teams, we'll have a cast-off: The first team to cast and land a piece of yarn on a paper plate at 30 feet wins. The judge will supply the fly fishing setups for the cast-off.

Safety

A safety brief will be provided the morning of the event.

Participants will need to sign waivers the day of the event.

Anyone in a watercraft must wear a PFD at all times while on the water.

Spokane River Fish Species

Redband Trout



The redband trout is a native fish species to the Spokane River. The Redband Trout is similar in appearance to the rainbow trout but has larger, more rounded spots and parr marks that remain into adulthood.

When water temperatures are above 50F on the Spokane River, these trout like being in fast moving/chaotic water such as riffles and especially rapids. Often, you will find them amongst the most chaotic water on the river. They prefer places that have a lot of boulders, rocks, and gravel where they primarily feed on aquatic insects. On the Spokane River, they mainly feed on those aquatic insects below the surface of the water, but you may find them feeding on insects as they float atop the water. Larger redband will also feed on other fish and crayfish.

Fly Fishing Techniques to Try:

- Indicator nymph fishing
- Euro nymphing
- Dry-droppers
- Swinging wet flies
- Streamer fishing with wooly buggers or crayfish patterns

Westslope Cutthroat (Cutbow) Trout



The westslope cutthroat trout is native species and can hybridize with rainbow and redband trout (i.e., 'cutbow' trout). On the Spokane River, this fish species tends to prefer water that is not as swift/chaotic as what the redband trout like. They can be found near rapids and in riffles and calmer water upstream or downstream of those rapids, runs, and riffles. This species is more often found above the Spokane Falls.

This trout will eat lots of aquatic insects like the redband trout but they are more easily found eating bugs on the surface of the water.

Fly Fishing Techniques to Try:

- Single dry fly fishing
- Dry-droppers
- Indicator nymph fishing
- Euro nymphing
- Swinging wet flies
- Streamer fishing with wooly buggers or crayfish patterns

Mountain Whitefish



This is another native fish species to the Spokane River. It predominantly feeds on aquatic insects under the water and rarely will be found eating bugs on the surface of the water. On the Spokane River, they will be found downstream of riffles/runs in slower, deeper water. They stay closer to the bottom of the water and can sometimes be found eating insects off the bottom of the river.

Fly Fishing Techniques to Try:

- Indicator nymph fishing
- Euro nymphing
- Swinging wet flies

Largescale Sucker



This is another native species to our river. This fish is found in some of the slower, deeper parts of the river where it feeds off the bottom of the river by eating algae and aquatic insects. These are some of the easier fish to find, but most difficult fish to catch on a fly rod! As an angler, it is best to find a spot where you can observe the fish from a high vantage point (such as around Riverfront Park) and then drift a bright, colorful nymph pattern (such as orange or green [perdigons](#)) along the bottom of the river and watch them eat it.

Euro nymphing or tight line nymphing without an indicator is perhaps the most effective way to catch this fish. You really need to watch them eat the nymph before setting the hook...it's easy to snag them so watch out and make sure you actually hook them in the mouth!

Fly Fishing Techniques to Try:

- Indicator nymph fishing
- Euro nymphing/tightline nymphing without an indicator
- Tenkara fishing with a single, bright nymph

Northern Pikeminnow



This species is native to the Spokane River. While there is a [bounty](#) to kill this fish along parts of the Columbia River there is not a bounty to kill them on the Spokane River. So please release them safely back into the water!

On the Spokane River, these fish are primarily found in slower, deeper parts of the river downstream of runs and rapids. They will ambush crayfish and smaller fish as they swim by

amongst the boulders or sunken trees/logs. Sometimes, you will find them near the heads of runs feeding on aquatic insects.

Fly Fishing Techniques to Try:

- Streamer fishing with smaller streamers or crayfish patterns
- Dry-dropper fishing near heads of runs

Brown Trout



This is a non-native fish species to the Spokane River (it's native to parts of Europe). This fish is found mainly above the Spokane Falls amongst fallen trees and sunken logs where it will ambush and eat fish (including other trout like the redband trout) and crayfish.

Fly Fishing Techniques to Try:

- Streamer fishing with smaller streamers or crayfish patterns
- Dry-dropper fishing near heads of runs

Smallmouth Bass



This is another non-native fish species to the Spokane River (it's native to parts of the [Midwest and eastern US](#)). It is found further up the Spokane River where water temperatures routinely exceed 70F during the summer months (state line to Harvard Road is a common stretch to find these fish). WDFW has been conducting a smallmouth bass kill off on the upper Spokane (state line to Harvard Road) over the last couple years, so there are fewer of them in the river (WDFW have *not asked* anglers to kill any of the bass). This is part of a study to see if the redband trout populations might rebound along that stretch of the river (because smallmouth bass predate on fish like redband trout).

Smallmouth bass prefer areas with rocks, boulders, and gravel to hunt for crayfish and other fish.

Fly Fishing Techniques to Try:

- Streamer fishing with smaller streamers or crayfish patterns
- Dry-dropper fishing near heads of runs