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We are in the seventh year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on great fly fishing venues, trip reports and insights for our traveling fly fishers. We want to help you match the right location with your fly fishing goals and objectives and properly prepare you to fully enjoy the experience. We’ve been to most locations and pride ourselves on our ability to research new sites. One of our services is to compare and contrast different lodges/outfitters. Whatever unbiased information on timing and locations we can provide comes at the same cost to you as booking direct – i.e., NO EXTRA COST.

DEFINING FISHING IN NEW ZEALAND

(Note regarding New Zealand planning: creating the perfect itinerary for a NZ adventure should begin as early as possible to have all the best options available. We have many clients who will be embarking on NZ trips in the



next 30 to 90 days and most of those itineraries were begun over a year ago. Beginning the process of identifying objectives, budget, and discussing possible routes, lodges, guides/rivers, and stops is best done early.....especially with the exchange rate as favorable as it is today. The best NZ trip planning aide is our “New Zealand Slide Tour,” a slide presentation visiting the best options throughout both islands.)

One of our favorite outfitters in New Zealand recently put together the following general description of the types of fishing days that occur in New Zealand. We think this is an accurate explanation of the possibilities when fishing with the right guides in the right places and should help create reasonable expectations.

An “AVERAGE day:”

This would be a day where, depending on the weather and fishing conditions, you and your guide ‘spot’ (locate and get an opportunity to present the fly) 12-30 trout. Anglers on their first visit will normally have around 8-12 ‘takes’, hooking on average 5-7 of these fish. The average number of trout landed per day last season was 3-4, averaging 4lbs. It is not uncommon to hook a couple of 5-6lb fish per day and your skill level (and a bit of luck) will determine your chances of landing those trout. Obviously the fishing and techniques are unique to New Zealand and your ability to listen, learn and adjust your fishing style to suit plays a major role in the number of trout you will catch in a day. The average distance you will walk in a day is approximately 3-5km (2-3 miles) on reasonably easy river stones. Often there could be a walk down a river terrace (40-50m elevation) at the start of the day, which often means a short walk back up at the end of the day. These walks can be steep in some locations, but there isn’t a rush and your guide will assist you where required.



An "OUTSTANDING day:"

Would be a combination of perfect weather conditions, with no wind or cloud, matched with a good angler and good river conditions. A rising or stable barometer is always a bonus! These are a guide's dream days, and the reason why anglers continue to fish NZ day after day and year after year. The more days spent fishing, the more chances likely of getting 'an outstanding day'. When these days occur it is not uncommon to hook around a dozen fish averaging closer to 6-7lbs, with the occasional opportunity at catching a large fish of 8-11 pounds. There are plenty of opportunities for these days to occur each summer.

A "BELOW AVERAGE day:"

Occurs normally as a result of poor weather and a dropping barometer. You guide may only find 6-12 fish, and these fish may be selectively feeding or relatively inactive. The wind may be strong and your ability may be limited. These days do happen occasionally and getting a fish in the net can be a challenge, but we believe any day out on a New Zealand stream, under any conditions, beats most other options.



One of the most "outstanding days" we know of from New Zealand is a day had by New Zealand veteran, Don Nelson. It involved releasing 11 browns from 4 to 8 pounds, all taken on dry flies after stalking and sight casting to individual fish. For those that have never been to NZ, it is difficult to visualize what a day like this looks like – the photo essay in the link below contains all the fish – click on it if you'd like to see what a NZ fantasy day can be like:

http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/pe_Don%20Nelson.pdf

HOSTED BELIZE MOTHERSHIP TRIP OPENINGS



The variety of salt water flats fishing in Belize, ranging from bonefish to tarpon and snook as well as the finest permit fishing on the globe, is the main attraction. The best way to access this fishery is from a comfortable live-aboard vessel with good, experienced, local guides to steer you to the fish. This is a spectacular marine environment with the second largest barrier reef in the world protecting the inshore, shallow waters where you spend your time in pursuit of the different species. The only way to enhance the experience further is to take your trip with a seasoned, salt water fly fisher along.

The Fish First! shops in the Bay Area and Chico are hosting two trips in 2009 on the Meca and Seaduction motherships in Belize and both have openings for a few rods. Shop managers Leo Siren (July 10 – 17) and Mac Noble (April 13 – 20) have prime time weeks reserved. The price is \$2,600 per person and includes virtually everything except fishing equipment, tips, and personal alcoholic beverages (a good supply of local Belikan beer, bottled water, and soft drinks is on board and included). From a "dollars and cents viewpoint" and considering the long fishing hours you spend on the water daily, this is the greatest value in the realm of salt water flats fishing.

For additional information, you can hit "reply" or contact Leo at 510 526-1937 or Mac at 530 343-8300. Clicking on the link below will take you to a newsletter on the Belize mothership trip:

<http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/66A.pdf>



THE PERFECT MIX OF FLY FISHING TRIPS?



Quite often, seeking out new fly fishing venues isn't as exciting as revisiting old and familiar destinations you've enjoyed in the past. "First time" destinations have the allure of something new and the unknown, but that doesn't provide any assurance you'll enjoy the overall experience. Revisiting destinations you've enjoyed and found interesting offers its own anticipation of the opportunity to build on memories and experiences you've had there in the past.

Experiences you've enjoyed should be sacred. It takes many trips to unlock all the treasures available in a fly fishing destination. There are places which we repeat regularly – Belize (usually two or three times a year), New Zealand every year, and the Minipi River in Labrador every other year. There's a familiarity and comfort level that is reassuring and is associated with many fond memories. There is always the excitement of exceeding past experiences which are fixed in your fly fishing memory.

For some traveling fly fishers, today's economic climate may slow them down a little. However, if you have the budget, what is the perfect mix of adventures to pursue? Should you return to the same fly fishing location each year or should you constantly be pursuing new destinations? I believe the perfect mix is a combination of the "familiar" and the "new." If you can do two trips a year, one should be a new destination and the other should be a spot you've enjoyed in the past. My main objective in visiting a new destination is to find places I enjoy enough that I want to add it to my list of repeat locations.



If the time comes when you don't smile when anticipating a return to one of your favorite places, that's a signal to find another "repeater" – but don't rush off too fast. Familiarity can be a good thing. As one of my favorite New Zealand guides once said, "Don't leave fish to go find fish!"

JANUARY "MEMORY PHOTO"

The smiling faces and big New Zealand brown trout at right belong to Nancy and Wayne Badovinus – photo taken by Nigel Birt.

PHOTO CREDITS (top to bottom): winter stalk (banner photo) – Kim Laur; NZ brown – Don Nelson; tarpon – Scott Muelrath; snook – Steve Mitchell.

Either phone or drop us an e-mail if you have questions or would like more information about any of our destinations.

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