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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.

**ALASKA REPORT #2 – A TOP FLY OUT LODGE**

Last month’s newsletter discussed a stationary Alaska lodge, a non-fly out experience. In the case of a stationary lodge, location is the primary issue. This month, our focus is on an Alaska fly out lodge. Alaska has 5 or 6 top notch fly out lodges – what we term the “A” lodges. They are expensive and provide a quality Alaska experience with access to a great variety of waters and species daily, weather permitting. These two reports focus on one of our favorites. We give an edge to this particular lodge because of the variety provided by their fly out, remote, outpost camps. They have two of these stationary tent camps and you spend one night at each providing a “wilderness edge” to their regular quality lodge experience. Like all Alaska destinations, timing is critical in determining the “prime time” for each species.



Excerpts below are from reports on Bristol Bay Lodge by John Gans and Ken Yabusaki. John, accompanied by his son, Henry, and another father-son team (Chris and Will Kirsten) visited Bristol Bay two years ago and this was a return trip for them in a different time frame. For Ken, this was his first Alaskan adventure and a “couples trip” with his wife Ann who just began fly fishing last summer – note that she seems to be learning (Ann and Ken at right with Ann’s big Silver salmon)!!

**FROM KEN:** “The highlights of our Alaska fly fishing adventure were the two outpost camps, Birch Creek and Rainbow...We started the day fishing for silver salmon and managed to land at least ten fish in a couple of hours. ....Since we had caught numerous Silvers the day before on our fly out to the Togiak River, we decided to fish for Dolly Varden (dollies) and the famed Leopard Rainbows of this particular river. Our guide took us to a section of the river, after a shore lunch of freshly caught Silver salmon, where large Dolly Varden were jockeying for position behind spawning Sockeye and Silver salmon. We hooked some nice Dollies before heading to another section of the river. We cast a mouse to the edge of the banks and retrieved so the fly created a swimming wake - that was the key to entice a large leopard rainbow to suck it in. This was a gorgeous river....where we saw a large Grizzly on a gravel bar checking out the salmon.



(photos - l to r: Will with rainbow, Henry and Silver, Ken with Dolly, and Grayling)

Rainbow Camp was a lifetime experience. The camp is unique because Bristol Bay Lodge has an exclusive lease on this section of the river. Rainbow Camp sits at the mouth where two rivers empty into the Bering Sea. The scenery is spectacular..... we lost count of the numbers of silvers we hooked but on average they were between 13-14 pounds and some were 17 pounds or more.

Our entire fly fishing experience at the Bristol Bay Lodge exceeded our expectations. During our seven day adventure, we fished several different rivers via the float plane. The lodge's "home river," which empties into the lake where the lodge is situated, also provided rainbows, dollys, arctic grayling, char.....On other fly-out trips, besides the outpost camps, we fished rivers with great rainbow and dolly varden action and silver salmon action mixed in between."



**FROM JOHN:** (I to r: Henry, John, Chris, Will) "We had a great time and the lodge continues to be run with military like precision. The 7 day river rotation works great. The guides are focused and really invested in the guest experience. The pilots are confident and very experienced. We always felt that we were going to be put on a lot of fish and arrive safely. You fish a different river each day which gives you a lot of variety of casting conditions, depth of water and species. As usual, the number of fish in these rivers is staggering.

The difference with this trip and the trip we took earlier in the summer two years ago was the presence of the Silver salmon. They are fun to catch and fight hard. On the days we targeted the Silver's we caught between 15 and 20 fish a day ranging between 8 and 17 pounds. It is especially gratifying for less experienced fly casters to hook into a fish like that. My son, Henry, age 14, was yelling with joy as he hooked fish after fish. His arms were exhausted by the end of each day, but with some great BBL cooking he was ready for more the next day. The Char and Dolly Varden's were abundant and were in the smaller rivers feasting on the salmon egg drop. Many of the Char were over 20 inches and fought hard. We caught a few Rainbow's in the 25 inch range."

This link will take you to a more complete report on the trips referenced above and additional photos.....  
[http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/Fish\\_trip\\_report\\_AK.pdf](http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/Fish_trip_report_AK.pdf)

Note about booking Alaska trips: if you want to book a top notch lodge when the Silvers are in the rivers, you should be planning far in advance as these times at the "A" lodges fill very early.

## A BELIZE TARPON TALE THAT KNOCKED US OVER

(NOTE: Tom Pribisco and Keith Hallman and friends have visited Belize several times using a mothership as their headquarters in pursuit of bonefish, tarpon, permit and the variety of shallow water sport fish that inhabit those flats. Tom relates a tarpon incident which is truly a unique and exciting Belizean fly fishing adventure.)

It now was my turn to be on the casting deck as we cruised the mangroves in the transparent waters of Belize. Our guide (and captain of the mothership Meca) silently poled our panga skiff into a lagoon that he claimed often held young tarpon just under the edge of the canopy. I traded my 12 weight tarpon rod for my lighter 8 weight bonefish set-up. As I was stripping line out on the deck, the guide whispered, "There are some big rollers in here." An extra jolt of adrenaline shot through me to go with the heat, sweat, and escalating pulse that always accompanies me to the casting platform.



We were now in stealth mode as we stalked toward our recent sighting of a rolling tarpon and only 10 feet from the mangrove leaves. As I glanced to my left I was surprised to see two tarpon lying motionless under the branches. I reacted by flipping the fly toward them. The only line between the boat and the splash of the fly was the leader. The outside tarpon immediately wheeled on the fly and surged toward us. The tarpon engulfed the fly and continued on a collision course with our panga. He hit the side of the boat in mid-air shaking, rattling, and knocking all of us off our feet.

The events that followed could have only occurred with luck on my side. The pile of fly line that I had carefully arranged on to the deck was jumping off and began to go tight. Unfortunately, my rod was still facing the

mangroves while the tarpon had the line under the boat, screaming across the lagoon. I jabbed the 8 wt. into the water and quickly worked the line from under the boat around the bow of the boat. The tarpon responded to my recovery by peeling backing off the reel and took a hard left through a narrow mangrove opening to open water. My situation had improved since he was now only 90 degrees from the rod tip, but he had the advantage of open water and a mangrove jungle between us.

The guide poled us quickly to the cut in the mangroves through which my “baby tarpon” had escaped as I reeled feverishly trying to take up slack. After I finished my usual litany of “expletive deleted,” our guide reminded me there may still be a fish on, even though the tarpon had escaped the mangrove lagoon and was out of sight around the corner. I discounted that because on the previous day my fishing partner, Keith, lost a tarpon that had tangled his line in the mangroves. Ever the optimist, the guide skillfully followed the line with the panga through the niche in the mangroves to the open water.

As we unraveled the backing from the snags in the mangroves, the line was still tight. As in... fish on tight. The rest of the fight was not anticlimactic because I still had lots of work to do in bringing this 40-50 pound “baby” to the boat with my now too flexible eight weight rod. After attempting to capsize our boat, running 200 yards, dragging a small nursery of mangroves and, not to mention a fully loaded panga, the tarpon finally tired and was brought to the boat. This fisherman however, has never tired..... of recalling the action that day with guide and captain, Martin McCord, and my good friend and fishing partner Keith (Keith, above right, with Martin and a “baby tarpon,” though not the fish in this story which was released without posing for a decent photo).



This is one of many stories that recall with fondness, Martin McCord, the builder of the Meca and founder of Belize Fishing Adventures.....indeed a tribute to the good things that Martin, now deceased, brought to the beautiful waters of Belize.

### A NEW ZEALAND “OCCURANCE”



After reading Jim Miller’s description of his experiences in New Zealand, I have come to revere the term “occurance” as it relates to memorable fly fishing events. Simply stated, an “occurance” is one of those rare events that happen with your fly rod in hand that are never forgotten....that bring a smile to your face whenever recalled. New Zealand may be responsible for more “occurrences” as the term relates to brown and rainbow fishing than any destination on the globe. Certainly, that is true in my personal case and includes anyone who has made more than a few trips to the land of the Kiwi’s. Following are some excerpts from Jim’s NZ report.

“In regard to Scotty and Kevin (at left), both are phenomenal guides. Both areas are drastically different. Both are to be returned to and explored and savored much, much, more deeply. Perhaps it’s no surprise

that I stumbled upon many areas with great fishing.

I also had an experience on a backcountry river that I have termed the ‘occurrence.’ I will verbalize this to you someday, but would prefer the details not end up in a newsletter. It still lives in my mind as clear as day, but the actual experience was more like a dream happening in reality. As I share the ‘occurrence’ with friends, most people cannot get their heads around how intense this was nor how this could happen. Someday it will become part of my book. Perhaps the moral of the story is to just get out there and do it. You will never really know until you go and when you do, it’s so rewarding.....especially as your expectations are smashed and, of course, as you are humbled by NZ’s fish.”

(Of course, we are honoring Jim’s request to not make public the actual details and location of the “occurrence” he experienced in New Zealand)



## OCTOBER MEMORY PHOTO

Jim Nix with a fly rod taken, 50 inch Labrador pike is our October Memory Photo. In the same trophy brook trout waters that Labrador is famous for, the pike grow large and are present in great numbers.

**PHOTO CREDITS:** (top to bottom) banner photo – John Gans; Alaska – Ken and Ann Yabusaki, John Gans; Belize tarpon with guide – Steve Pribisco; New Zealand – Jim Miller.

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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