



Poled skiff in the Amazon



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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.

#### FERNIE, B.C. – NEW BULL TROUT OPPORTUNITY



The Fernie, British Columbia area may be best known for spectacular scenery and its productive native West Slope Cutthroat fishing. However, the Fernie area just may be the best remaining native Bull Trout fishery in the west. Primarily, this is due to the fact that regulations to protect this fishery have been in place for many years. Our outfitter in Fernie has extensive experience in getting clients into big Bull Trout and several over 10# are taken each season. Now, he has negotiated an important new access point on the the Skookumchuck River, one of the largest spawning streams for Bull Trout. Since the Bull Trout have over 100 miles to travel in this stream, they get an early start beginning around July 1. Our outfitter reports on the importance of this new access: "Access is very limited on this small river. Our new access point combined with the use of our jet boat provides the ability to fish much of the river that we have only thought about fishing for years. The

difficulty of reaching this water means that we can pretty much ensure we have it all to ourselves. The Skookumchuck is very similar to the Wigwam River where difficult hiking can be the norm. Our jet boat takes out most of the hiking and gets us to the water fast without the work. The Skookumchuck also has great cutthroat fishing and rainbows are found frequently as well. This will be one of our most popular fishing options this summer."

Fernie already has numerous and varied fishing options. This addition will certainly add an important Bull Trout option, especially in the early and middle portions of the summer.

#### BELIZE GRAND SLAM.....BABY TARPON

This was the second trip for Jim Hine and Steve Mitchell to fish the inshore shallows of Belize using a mothership as their base of operations. While Steve is an experienced salt water caster, their first trip was Jim's initial exposure to the challenges and thrills of the salt water flats. On that "break in" trip for Jim, he probably used his spinning rods more than his fly rods. The second trip (taken last month) started fast with Jim taking an IGFA inshore grand slam on a fly during his first day on the water. Jim's (with "Grand Slam bonefish" at left below) comments on their trip: "Fabulous trip.





Dean and Noel were great guides. Though we didn't land any large tarpon, we stung a couple of big ones, and Steve boated double figures of baby tarpon to 30 pounds, as well as numbers of nice snook, many pulled from some of the gnarliest mangrove messes imaginable. Had some great bonefish action when we were in the right place at the right tide, and blew some as well. Noel commented after I spooked a huge pod of bones with an errant cast 'no problem, there couldn't have been many more than A HUNDRED in there.' Gained 5 pounds from Carol's cooking. We'll be back - again."

Steve added: "Belize was perfect – except for the fact that I seem to have mastered the art of losing tarpon. I did land 10, but lost a host of others. Also lost a 15 pound snook right at the boat. A true pig." (note: Steve did take a 10 pound snook off the surface on their first trip so he has some experience with big snook).

## MONGOLIA – GIANT TAIMEN

When time and logistics allow, John Parsons and Jay Strako like to mix some cultural experiences with their exotic fly rod pursuits. On their recent trip to Mongolia in pursuit of the giant Taimen caught in the rivers and streams there, they mixed in a stop in Beijing and China. The Taimen of Mongolia are a giant Asian salmonoid. They are not a sea or lake run fish – they spend their lives in freshwater streams and rivers. The conservation effort in Mongolia is very strong to preserve this monster sport fish. All fish are photographed, tagged, and released.



John, in the photo with the Great Wall of China, commented: "It was a great trip. My biggest Taimen was only 35 inches. Jay caught a monster 48 incher and some other big ones."



Jay mentioned that all his fish, except the one in the photo above taken on a streamer, were the result of explosive strikes on the surface. "The Taimen has an awesome take on the surface, really something to see!! It was a very good camp and I really enjoyed that style of fishing.....running the river in a boat and then getting out and wade fishing, hitting the holes. ....my 'Big One' was 48" long with a 25" girth, 30 minutes to land it. The scientist with us filmed the entire catch and got some great underwater pics as well as video of a late jump! It was good fun!!!"

There are generally two prime time windows for Taimen fishing in Mongolia – early summer and early fall.

## SEYCHELLES – GIANT TREVALLY EXPERIENCES.....AND FAILURES – PART 2



St. Francois Lagoon – Alfonse Island at upper left in background

(Note: this is the second part of a three part series relating some of the spectacular failures which have been mixed in with the victorious episodes I've encountered since I focused on taking Giant Trevally on a fly rod two years ago.)

The place is St. Francois Lagoon in the Seychelles, a spectacular, protected, marine environment with world class bonefishing, trevally, and milkfish along with a collection of other desirable shallow water species. We were using the very comfortable Alfonse Island Resort as our base of operations. Each morning, we would take a boat ride from Alfonse, crossing the cut between the two atolls, to meet our guide and skiff at St. Francois Lagoon. This particular episode takes place on the third day of our week. I had been fortunate during my first two days



with many bonefish and a GT of over 20 pounds each day, all taken sight casting in the shallows. However, I was hungry for one of those 50+ pound monsters. We had seen a few in that size range, but not in a situation where a reasonable shot could be had.

We were motoring slowly, crossing a channel which separated two flats. The day was perfect – very light winds and clear, blue skies. These flats are stunning with hard packed white sand, some coral, and a collection of sea life which often included large rays, sea turtles (it wasn't unusual to see 30 or 40 sea turtles in a day), and sharks. Often, large GT's could be found in very shallow water feeding on the backs of sharks and rays as they scavenged the critters and fishes stirred up by their larger predator associates.



As we approached the flat, about 50 yards from it's edge, it was obvious our guide was straining to see something. He slowed the boat as he looked out across the approaching flat. Finally, he pointed toward the flat and asked, "Can you see the dark spots on the other edge of the flat?" The flat had a narrow peninsula in the area we were approaching and he was looking across that 100 foot section of sand flat to the other edge where the flat dropped off into deeper water. Yes, I could barely make out some dark shapes and occasionally some water spray in the air, but I didn't have a clue as to what I was looking at. About that time, I noticed we had picked up a few inches of water in the bottom of the skiff and my fly line was laying in it, slightly moving with the rocking of the boat. I asked what we were looking at and he guide replied, "I'm not sure, but it looks interesting – I think there are some big sharks right on the edge of the flat."

As we stealthily approached, the scene came into focus. There were two large dark sharks, about a dozen feet long. They were lying right on the surface on the edge of the flat, their tails occasionally throwing spray in the air as they flipped out of the water. However, that's not what got my pulse racing – right behind the sharks were five other large dark shapes.....five very large, dark male GT's (the males can be very dark). These fish were LARGE, 50 – 60 pounds each. This was a collection of "happy fish," cavorting on the shallow edge of that flat, seemingly without a care. It just doesn't get any better than this. All I needed to do was get my fly close to these aggressive, carefree fish and one of the big GT's would be making my drag sing.

At about 80 feet, I began my cast. I just couldn't believe my good fortune – this was a scene I would never forget. Anything landing within ten feet of these fish would do it – even with my adrenalin rush, I knew I could manage that. I let the line go and the fly flew true, landing about five feet in front of the lead GT. OOPS – in my hand was the largest fly line knot I had ever seen. I quickly glanced at the fish – everything was set up perfect; however, if I stripped that fly, one of the dark shapes would shoot forward and grab it. The big knot I was holding wasn't going to go through the guides. Frantically, I began pulling at the knot, hoping for a quick release from a "slip knot." No such luck. This was a real mess caused by the fly line sloshing around in the bottom of the skiff. The guide, to his credit, patiently watched me as I struggled with the line, while glancing up occasionally at the fish. Yeah....I finally got the knot undone, but the fish were gone. An incredible opportunity squandered.



It was a great week fishing from Alphonse with many thrills including five GT's with two over 30 pounds. After the episode mentioned above, I never did get a clean shot at a 50+ pound fish, although one of the guys fishing with us, George Toledo in photo at above-right, did release one (his big GT was part of a GT, milkfish, and bonefish Grand Slam – the highlight of our week).

## KING SALMON – PRIME DISCOUNTED SPACE



The Goodnews River Lodge is famous for the way its August silver salmon run sets up for taking silvers all day long off the surface. Also renowned is their run of King Salmon in early through mid-July. Due to some late cancellations, there are some discounts available for the two prime King Salmon weeks:

July 8 – 15: first angler pays the regular price of \$5,250 plus the \$750 charter air from Anchorage and the second angler goes for half price - \$2,625 plus the \$750 air.

July 15 – 22: each angler pays half price, \$2,625 plus the \$750 airfare.

## JUNE MEMORY PHOTO

Your first permit is a “fly fishing memory” you’ll never forget. On a recent Belize trip on the Meca, Ron Knowles took his first. Photo at right of Ron and his guide, Noel Westby, courtesy of Lee Lewis.

PHOTO CREDITS: Amazon banner photo – Joe Bankofier; Belize – Jim Hine; Mongolia – John Parsons, Jay Strako; large GT – George Toledo/John Bartling.

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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