



## Casting to Bones, Seychelles



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We are in the 15th year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on the great fly fishing venues, trip reports and insights for our traveling fly fishers. We've been to most locations and pride ourselves on our ability to research new destinations. 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.

### THE SEYCHELLES – PHOTO ESSAY TRIP REPORT

This is a two-part newsletter – the first photo essay report is from the sister atolls of Alphonse and St. Francois in the Seychelles. The second includes photo highlights from several different safari adventures in Africa, including tigerfish on the Lower Zambezi River.

John Landis is a globe hopping fly fisher who annually visits places like his favorite haunt in Patagonia, New Zealand, and different areas in Africa. Over the years, he has mixed in saltwater destinations like Belize and the Seychelles, which he ties to African adventures. In recent years, he has been joined by good friends, Annette and Rob Pizzie, and John's wife, Dana. All contributed to the outstanding collection of photos below.

Earlier this year, a return to the Seychelles (Alphonse and St. Francois atolls) was on the calendar. A primary focus was for Dana and Annette to experience their first saltwater flyfishing, and this pristine marine environment is an excellent place for newcomers to the salt water flats. And, additionally, the ambiance of Alphonse makes for a very comfortable tropical couples adventure.

Below l to r: Bonefish were plentiful with some large ones in the mix. Dana with one of her first bones, one to remember. Rob with a nice bone. Double header for Dana and John. Annette took the largest fish of the week, 28 inches and 8#!



Above l to r: Aerial photo of Alphonse Atoll, intersected by the airstrip. This atoll is the location of the resort. Most of the fishing is done at the St Francois Atoll – see the expansive flats surrounding the atoll and lagoon in the center. There is a deep channel separating them and it is the interaction of the currents with the channel, flats, and atolls that creates the vibrant marine environment. Sea turtles are common on the flats. The skiffs are staked out at St. Francois and a large catamaran makes the 20 minute commute between the atolls daily.

Below l to r: GT's come in all sizes; bones swimming onto a flat; Rob with a Trigger, one of the flats prizes in these waters; John brings a fish to net.



Below l to r: Outstanding snorkeling and diving is available. Time was taken to do some snorkeling resulting in some outstanding underwater photos: Bluefin Trevally, various coral reef fish, an amazing shot of a school of permit, and an octopus huddled under a rock.



Below l to r: The comfortable Alphonse A-frames have become famous. There are also Beachfront Bungalows and Beachfront Villa's with accommodations for children. Dana and Annette with a resident Alphonse tortoise. Bikes are the primary method of transportation on the atoll. A flats BBQ at low tide makes lunch a special event.



Below: An incredible array of colorful reef fish can be taken on a fly. There is also an offshore fishing option.





Dana expressed her feelings about her first exposure to saltwater flats fishing and the Alphonse – St Francois experience with these words: “The Seychelles experience left me speechless as I stood in the middle of the Indian Ocean, walking the sand flats, seeking the shadows of the bonefish. It was amazing to watch the guides use their expertise to determine where to stop, hop out, and begin the hunt. Having never fished for ‘bones’ before, it



was thrilling watching them hit the fly hard and listening to the zing of the reel. It made it all worth it after spending the day under the hot tropical sun in a cloudless sky. It looked like a picture postcard everywhere I looked.”

**AFRICA.....AMAZING PHOTO COLLECTION – PART ONE**

Dana and John spent two weeks in Africa prior to their time in the Seychelles. This was John’s fifth game-viewing adventure trip to Africa. Dana and John have taken an amazing collection of outstanding photos in Africa, including basically all the major creatures. We will use this newsletter for Part One, and the following newsletter for Part Two, to display them.

Watching the big cats hunt is a usually a star attraction. Below: a Lioness stalks a herd of Zebra and Wildebeast – it usually begins with a chase. The King gets a death grip and then straddles his prey to let all know that this is his dinner.



Below: The Wildebeast and Lioness square off.....this usually does not end well for the Wildebeast.



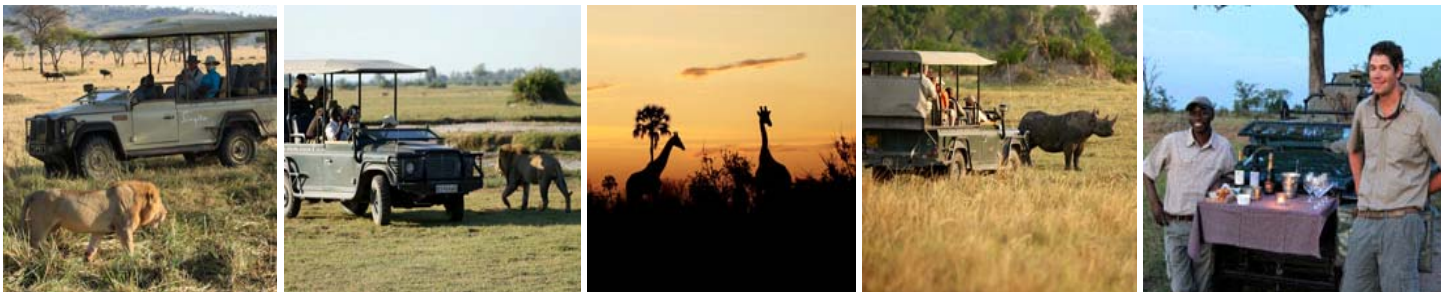
Below, l to r: Quite a set of choppers; the King in all his glory; two young males with manes just developing – they won’t be this friendly as they get older; the King drinks.



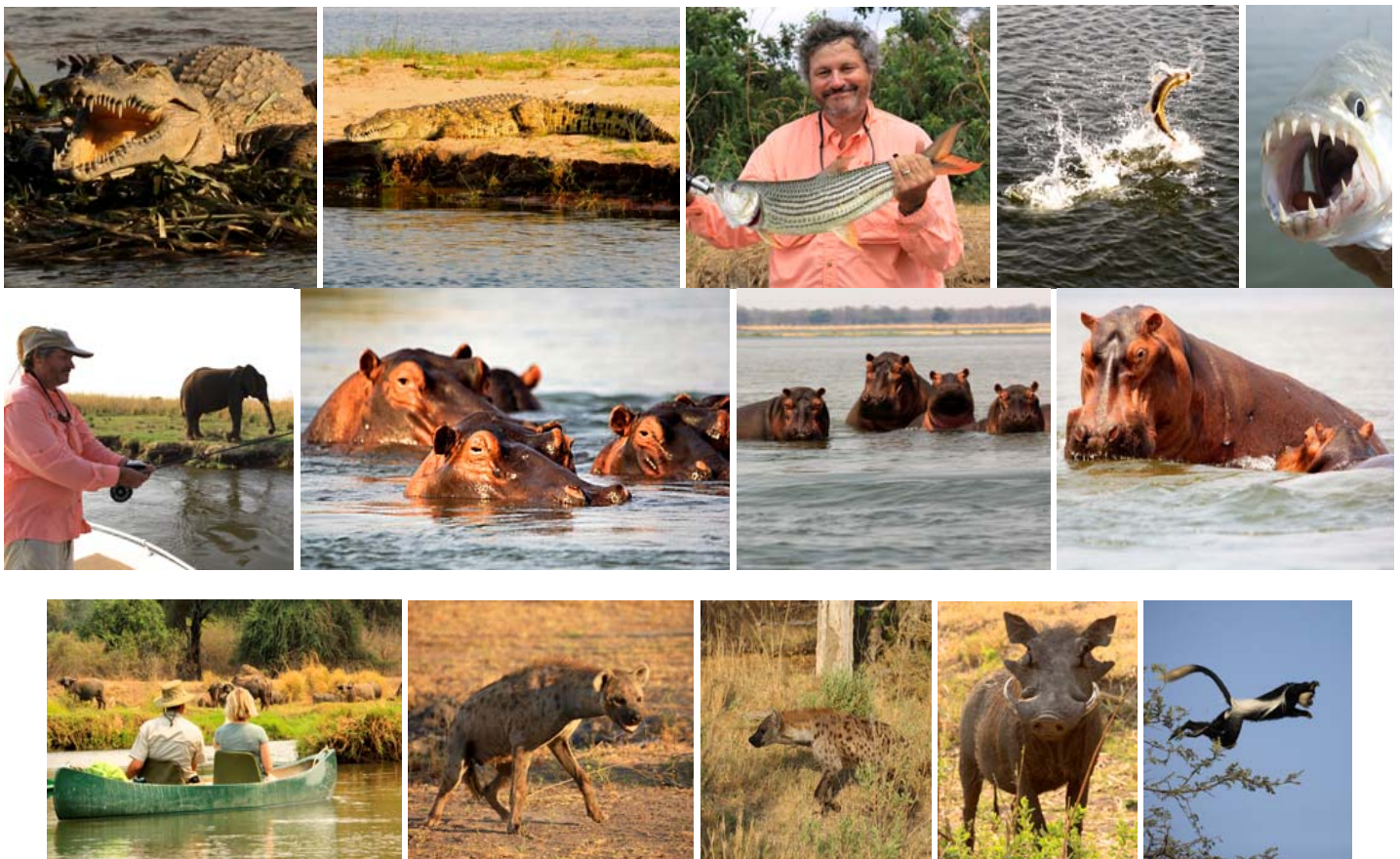
Below, l to r: her majesty; pride on the move; cubs on alert; Mom and cubs get a drink; the King and his Queen!



Below: For photo opportunities, it is hard to top Africa where you can watch animals up-close behave like animals. One of the most surprising aspects of game viewing for first-timers is how close you can get to the creatures with game viewing trucks. From the time they are born, the Africa animals have lived with game viewing vehicles.....they are so familiar with them that they treat the trucks like inanimate objects, almost like a tree. At right, champagne and hors d'oeuvres served during a late evening game drive.



Below: The Lower Zambezi National Park provides the opportunity to observe river life, like crocs and hippos, while fishing for tigerfish, a baby tarpon type fish with serious teeth (John holding).



Above, l to r: Using a canoe for game viewing on the Lower Zambezi gets you to eye level with the wildlife ; the Hyena is one of Africa's most vicious scavengers; some people think the Warthog is actually cute; Monkey in air.

Below, l to r: Baboons have strong family ties; the right lens gets a close up of monkey expression.



**PART TWO – NEXT MONTH:** Coming in Part Two will be a brief description of the different areas that Dana and John have visited including the different species available in each, plus the remaining wildlife from Africa captured by their cameras – elephants, leopards, cheetahs, giraffe, rhinos, zebras, wild dogs, bird life, and horned creatures.

### CAMERA LENSES – WHAT TO HAVE

Obviously, there are different versions of what camera equipment to have with you. I carried two cameras – one fit with a 28 x 200 telephoto lens and the other with a stationary 500mm lens. My 500mm lens was not of the expensive variety – cost me less than \$1000 in 2008. It is easy to spend \$5,000 - \$10,000++ on a fast speed, telephoto zoom, long lens. Also, I carried a collapsible mono-pod that allowed my cameras to easily screw on top. The mono-pod allowed me to shoot sharp, long distance, photos with the 500mm lens and also, for both lenses in low light, and it was easier to use than a tri-pod in the game-viewing trucks. The 28 x 200 was used the majority of the time, but the 500mm was critical for some of the best long distance shots taken. Without that long lens, I would have been very disappointed by missing some of the best photos.

Dana and John's collection of lenses was different than mine. Their lenses were of the faster (and more sophisticated and expensive) variety. They also carried two cameras equipped with different lenses. The lens choice was:

- A wide angle - Canon Zoom Lens EF 16-35mm 1:2.8 L
- Their long lens was a Canon Zoom Lens EF 100-400mm 1:4.5-5.6 L

Having much steadier hands than I, they only used a mono-pod about 10% of the time.

### PLANNING AFRICA TRAVEL

When considering Africa travel, we can be a good source of information if you want to include a stop in the Lower Zambezi National Park for game viewing and tigerfish. For overall Africa trip options, you can not do better than to use a source that is located in Africa itself. We have a "sister relationship" with a prominent South Africa travel company who can be of assistance in understanding the different possibilities, best times to visit each, etc. For travel outside of the Lower Zambezi National Park, we introduce our clients to a personal travel planner in this travel agency.

### WHAT WE DO AT FLY FISHING ADVENTURES

This is a link with a description of who we are and what we do.....also, listing the destinations around the world that we can provide reliable information regarding the experience and how to prepare for your visit:

[Fly Fishing Adventures - About What We Do](#)

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