



## IN THIS ISSUE:

- MONTANA PRIVATE WATERS RANCH – TRIP REPORT
- A “FOREVER” AMAZON MEMORY
- SPECIAL PERMIT TRIP – 17 FISH RELEASED
- SEPTEMBER MEMORY PHOTO

We are in the eighth 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 destinations. 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.

## MONTANA PRIVATE WATERS RANCH – TRIP REPORT



John Gans and son, Henry (at right, below), find a way to get two or three fly fishing trips together each year. Henry, although just 15, has experienced Alaska twice and has already been introduced to the salt water flats (Belize) in addition to their other father/son fly rod adventures. In August, they visited the 15,000 acre working cattle ranch about 90 minutes from Bozeman that we've added to our “preferred list” of properties. What makes this ranch special is approximately 20 miles of outstanding private stream and river fishing on the property. Over the years, John has done an outstanding job with his trip recaps – this one is no different:

“You can't beat the private water at the Montana ranch you recommended. We did not see another soul on the water. We had miles of stream to ourselves, and in most cases no one had fished the streams for at least a week before we went in. If you put your cast in the right spot, you saw a fish. We fished two days in Sheep Creek (photo at left) where we caught roughly 20 fish each on small hoppers. Most of the fish were rainbows and cutthroat in the 11 to 14 inch range with a few each day around 16 inches. It was a beautiful stream with great scenery. We

spent a day fishing on the lake and caught some nice size Rainbow and Browns on the surface. The fish were cruising the banks, so we were sight casting to them. Henry was elated to see the fish sip his fly in and then take off. The highlight was fishing the 6 mile private stretch of the Smith River. It is a spring creek, quite narrow, with a grass bottom and cut banks. According to our guide, no one had fished there in a week. With the advantage of a rarely fished stream, and some cloud cover we were able to catch about ten brown trout each. Henry caught one 20 inch fish, and I caught one that was 23 inches. Huge fun.

The lodge was rustic, but had everything we needed. It has a VERY personal touch. We felt like we were visiting old friends at their ranch. The dining schedule was planned around our fishing. They were very easy going and made us feel more than at home. On average we fished 10 hours a day, but our guide would have kept us out there longer if we had wanted to. We had everything



we needed. Great water, good food, and a comfy bed. If you want more frills, this is not your lodge, but with the fish we had on the line, we needed nothing else. It was perfect.”



This particular ranch is further buffered by an additional 100,000 acres of surrounding ranches, and many of those ranches have private access waters (an additional 30 miles of spring creeks, streams, and rivers) that can also be accessed by our clients. At Fly Fishing Adventures, we place a high value on our fly fishing experiences having a certain feeling of solitude and exclusiveness. “Famous rivers” usually don’t supply that feeling – this spot does.

The primary waters on the ranch include the headwaters of the renowned Smith River, Sheep Creek, plus some small spring creeks and two lakes. Accommodations are in a two bedroom cabin. It’s a little on the rustic side, but clean and comfortable with good home cooked ranch style meals. Can sleep up to 8.



There are enough fishing options to supply a solid week of fishing – or more if you have the time. Based on the response from this summer, their first summer opening up the ranch to guests, space for next summer will be filled quickly. Price for a five night stay with four days of fishing is a very reasonable \$2,300 pp based on shared occupancy and shared guide (2011 rates are not yet finalized). There are still some available dates for this October and early November.

If you’d like more details or want to inquire about available dates, hit “reply.”

### A “FOREVER” AMAZON MEMORY

(Note: the following narration relates an experience I shared with Jim Hine on our trip to the Agua Boa River early in 2010; it is excerpted from a new chapter which is being added to THE HUNT on the Peacock Bass of the Amazon)



.....Near lunchtime, we approached a finger of land on the right bank that separated the main river from a small lagoon. At the end of the point, an underwater sand bar extended outward in a downriver direction. There was some light brush near the bank. As I glanced in that direction, some movement caught my eye. There was a school of about a dozen fish, swimming single file from under the brush at the base of the point, apparently moving from the lagoon into the main river. As they rounded the point, some of the fish broke away from the school and moved down the sandbar a small distance, possibly having spotted some baitfish. The rest of the school continued around the point, moved up the bank, and then disappeared under a large brush pile about

fifteen yards upriver. With all these peacocks being in the 8 to 15 pound range, this was indeed a unique sighting!

This was one of those moments when a fly fisherman with a passion to capture on camera the special moments is really torn – camera or fly rod, which to choose? Exceptional as the moment was, I opted for the fly rod, got the fly in the air quickly and let it go. It landed a few feet in front of one of those hefty peacocks.



Immediately, something grabbed the fly. At first, I was sure I was into one of the big guys, but after a few moments, it was apparent that a small, not visible fish had taken the fly before the large fish could respond.

Fish were still moving on the sand bar. Suddenly, the photo opportunity became far more important than that 3 pound peacock attached to my fly – I set the rod down, grabbed my camera, and shot the photo above.



What happened during the next hour was one of those angling experiences that stay etched in your memory banks, even as those memory banks weaken with age. The school had moved up the bank and under the brush pile. While Joseph held the boat in that spot, every cast that we made that landed anywhere near the brush pile resulted in an “eat.” It was “cast, set, fight, land, weigh and release.” We began keeping track of how many pounds of peacocks we were pulling out from under that brush pile. Thirty.....forty.....fifty pounds and counting. Some fish were smaller, in the 2 – 5 pound range, but many were well over eight pounds including a twelve, thirteen, and fourteen pounder.

After about an hour, it seemed as if we’d exhausted the supply of aggressive, eager, peacocks that had been schooled up under that brush pile. We were at eighty-nine pounds total weight, all without moving from that spot. Indeed, an amazing Amazon experience on the Agua Boa River.

Aqua Boa Amazon Lodge site: <http://www.aguaboalodge.com/flyfishingadventures>

### SPECIAL PERMIT TRIP – 17 FISH RELEASED

As we finished the production of this newsletter, I received a short report from a Belize mothership trip that just concluded. I don’t have all the details or photos yet, but this may be a record permit trip. The trip was on the Rising Tide. With a focus on just pursuing permit, they moved south from Belize City for their entire 8 night trip, fishing all the best permit flats. I’m not sure as of today just how far south they fished....whether they even got as far as the waters off Placencia.

What we do know is they released 17 permit with many others hooked and lost. Three of the guys caught their first permit on previous mothership trips that were focused on the variety options of Belize (tarpon, bonefish, snook, etc), but this was their first trip going south and dedicating the entire trip to just chasing permit. One of the anglers was a “permit virgin” and he released his first permit on this trip....he had five fish himself. The trip was sandwiched between two tropical storms, Karl and Matthew. More details and photos to follow in the October newsletter. Belize mothership trip website: [www.flyfishbelize.com](http://www.flyfishbelize.com)



## SEPTEMBER MEMORY PHOTO

Nature has endowed her swimming creatures with spectacular colors. The subtle beauty of a fish's gill plates or flank can make an interesting photo (or in some cases, their eye or tail or fins). Note the blues and purples on the flank of the striped bass captured in just the right light by Loren Irving. The colors, blended with the various markings, make this an interesting photo. When we're fishing, there's so much more we can capture with a camera than just the fish itself. And, since fly fishing generally takes place in the most beautiful places on earth, we also have the opportunity to get on "film" the spectacular settings in which we fish. That's part of the reason fly fishing and photography are such good bedfellows as hobbies.



**PHOTO CREDITS:** (top to bottom) Montana Ranch – John Gans and Brian Hodges.

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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