

MINIPI'S TROPHY BROOKIES - 2006 TRIP REPORT

During our second trip to Labrador's Minipi River in 1999, we met Dave Ellis who had been making a two week trip to the Minipi annually for several years. When I asked him why he keeps returning, his reply was: "my brother and I have fished all over the world searching for opportunities to sight cast to big trout with dry flies. While New Zealand does offer some comparisons, we have not found a spot where we can consistently catch and release 5-to-8 pound fish with over 90% of them taken on the surface like we can here."

Couple Dave's answer with the remoteness (we haven't seen another fisherman except those with us) and you can understand why we just completed our fifth trip to this wilderness destination. This is one spot on the globe that hasn't changed. Everything is the way it's always been, including the giant brookies and the massive mayfly and caddis hatches. While weather can always be an issue in Labrador, we've been fortunate during our five trips, including our most current one.

Bob Noyes and Lisa, Jeff, and Bill Reinke joined us (Jim and Andrew Hine were on their second trip to the Minipi, but had to return home upon arriving in Goose Bay due to a family emergency). The guides monitor the fishery carefully. All fish over 3 pounds (termed "book fish") are weighed and the information on where caught, which fly, and who caught it are recorded. That information is consolidated into an annual report which they have published for many years. If you want numbers of small brookies, you can fish the faster riffles – however, the only reason that justifies going that distance is to take a real trophy brook trout on a dry fly. Some trip highlights:

- Bob bookended his trip with spectacular days starting with a 6.5# beautiful male brookie in spawning dress on his first day and wrapping up with five "book fish" to 5# his last 24 hours, most on small caddis flies. Bob also had the largest pike at 8.5 pounds.
- Lisa, a relative newcomer to fly fishing who's skills are quickly developing, took a 6# pike on the surface in some lily pads and had the largest fish on our last day, a 6.25# brookie near a small inlet into a lake.
- Jeff had the highlight day of the week with three 6+ pound brookies on the surface, in addition to smaller fish.
- My son, Scott, and I had our usual collection of the good, the bad, and the ugly managing to take 6 fish over six pounds and several five+ among our mix for the week. However, for us, the main highlight of our trips to the Minipi is always just watching those big fish sipping flies, sometimes small caddis and at other times large mayflies, on the surface!

When the flies are hatching and the big brookies are on the surface, this is one of the great hunting and stalking experiences in fly fishing.

TRIP REPORT
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