



Joining my son, Scott, and I at Anne Marie Lodge were Jeff Reinke, Don Nelson, Josh Luftglidden, Paul Wilms, and Neal McNamama.



The short report of our week pursuing giant brookies at Anne Marie Lodge on the Minipi River in Labrador: It was a week that served up all that Labrador has to offer – from the mean and nasty to the truly spectacular. The first two days were the coldest we’ve ever seen up there and, with the wind, truly nasty. And the fishing was difficult – very little

happening with just a few fish over 5# taken by the group. The third afternoon saw some warming and the wind settled and we had a large brown drake hatch that provided some of those classic stalking and sight casting experiences for big brookies – everyone’s spirits brightened and the fishing results



showed. The rest of the week continued to be very positive culminating our last evening with Anne Marie at her best. The water was glassy and there was a massive brown drake spinner fall – fish were cruising and doing the classic “head to tail” rise, gulping those drakes. At times, you could see 10 – 12 fish working at once, all big fish. There were several successful stalks from paddled canoes and fish up to 7.5# taken, including Jeff’s first 7 pounder (at left). Great finale to a week of mixed results, given that four of us had fished the Minipi River in previous years. Our overall numbers of fish released was far from our best trips of the past, but the average size of the fish was incredible – our best trip ever for numbers of large fish. We ended up with 43 book fish

(over 3#) with over 75% of them taken on the surface on dries with a highlight of eleven fish over 7#.

- 5 to 6# – 8
- 6 to 7# – 9
- 7 to 8# – 8
- 8 to 9# – 2
- 9+# - 1

We had some caddis “blizzard” hatches in addition to a variety of mayfly hatches. However, never previously have we seen as many large caddis – they were big enough that a #6 Stimulator looked very similar to the huge caddis sitting on the surface.



Some other highlights – on one day, Scott and I fished mayfly hatches from 9am til the dinner break – literally 8 hours of fishing large, working fish in three different areas. Hatches varied from small grey mayflies to the big drakes which make the fish appear truly stupid. We did have a few hours with one pod of fish who were so selective we couldn’t get an eat – never did figure them out. Our numbers were 12 eats, two breakoffs, 5 released for 25.5 pounds. On past trips dating back to ‘97, we’ve had several days of over 30# (3 days over 50#), but never a full 8 hours of constant dry fly activity, starting

that early in the morning – very special day considering the size of the fish and the visual excitement that accompanies that experience. These particular conditions may not repeat themselves often, but it's good to know it can happen.

There were several successful stalks of 10 to 20+ minutes by guys in our group, but the classic was a 60 minute stalk, all from a paddled canoe, by Paul Wilms. Paul had of a fish which kept working up and down this one particular bank, approximately 200-300 yards long. About 20 minutes into the episode, he got the fish to eat, but just pricked him and it didn't stick. However, getting stuck didn't stop him from eating and the fish kept feeding until Paul finally got him after about an hour of intense pursuit – 7.25 pounder!

The new lodge at Anne Marie was close to being completed when we were there and will certainly be finished by the end of this season. Although the old lodge was one of those famous hallmarks in the fly fishing world, the new lodge is spectacular and will add a new dimension to fishing Anne Marie.

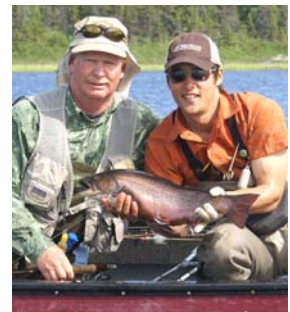


The outlet at Anne Marie – aerial view of the outlet downriver to Woody's

Josh with 6# brookie



New lodge at Anne Marie and the group in front of the old lodge



Paul on a successful 7# hunt in the Narrows



The focus of our "big fish" champ for the week, Don Nelson, was intense – Don with a 7 3/4# brookie





**Scott wades the Little Narrows for a pretty 6.5# fish.....**



**.....that was carrying a partially rusted size 8 Grey Wulff in it's lip**



**Idiot Point produced brookies, pike, and land locked artic char – could need lip replacement!**

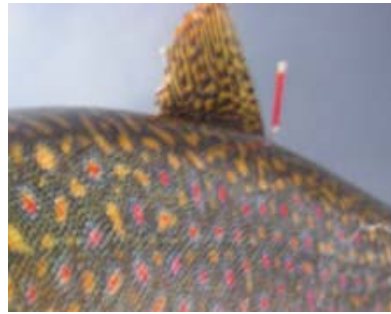


**Portage to Portage Pond involves the guide dragging the canoe up small stream and a short hike**



**Petches produced two 8+ and one 9 pound brookie and lots of excitement**





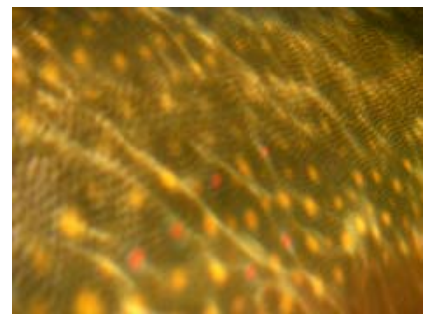
All brookies are weighed and recorded – many are tagged to track movement in the watershed



The rise and the 7# brookie that caused those rings



Skittering bombers in inlets and outlets can produce explosive takes



Stoneflies are also part of the aquatic mix – underwater flank of a colorful brookie



In this land of spruce trees, water, and caribou moss, maybe someone from above will finally, after a few years of delays, smile on the new lodge at Ann Marie.



**Photos contributed by Jeff Reinke, Josh Luftglidden, Paul Wilms, and Seumas Shezli**