

September 25, 2025

A mostly sunny day greeted us at Belize international airport, temps about 90F winds 3-6 knots. Captain Dean was waiting for us as we exited the terminal and greeted us with a big, warm smile. Lisa and I were excited and anxious as we drove to Old Belize harbor to board our home afloat for the next 8 days, The Rising Tide. With permission to come aboard, old Naval courtesies never leave me, we were introduced to Georgia and Kanye, Dean's lovely wife and chef and Dean's nephew and First mate, respectively.

Lisa and I retired to our stateroom to change and unpack while Dean and Kanye readied the ship for departure. We were a little bit hungry at this point and when we got topside, Georgia had whipped up a quick bite for us to eat to slay our hunger. Underway, Lisa and I enjoyed the view as we headed out.

Our first anchorage for the TRT (The Rising Tide) was among a group of tightly connected cays a short motor from the marina. After securing the anchor, Kanye readied the panga for our first excursion out for fishing. This would be the 4-6 evening fish. We motored over to a spot near the reef where Cap'n Dean got a chance to inspect our fly-casting skills, provide guidance and instruction and scope for tailing permit. We saw numerous spotted eagle rays, multiple red starfish, some barracuda and one or two permit. We never had a chance to cast due to the distance and the fact that the fish went sinker as we approached them. Back to the TRT for a delicious dinner of baked snook, scalloped potatoes and a cool dark rum and tonic.

September 26, 2025

Morning fish out at 6:00, went to flats S.E. of Robb's point, saw 1-2 permit submerged swimming quickly away from boat. No opportunity for cast. Saw 3 more headed towards boat and as I went to cast they turned abruptly and swam away. Stayed and worked flats until rtb for breakfast. Back out to flats for late morning/early afternoon fish. No fish spotted except sting and eagle rays and the occasional dolphin or barracuda. Motored up north along the reef and went to a channel to start a troll for barracuda. Within minutes I had hooked a 5-6lb. 'cuda and Lisa a 2.5' houndfish. We had a fun time retrieving these fish to the panga, they both put up a nice fight. Dean did us favor by letting us do some trolling. It gave us the opportunity to not only hook and land fish but, it helped our confidence level too. We kept the 'cuda for fish tacos the next day and watched Captain Dean very carefully disengage the houndfish from the line. What a long set of teeth that slender denizen has. Back to the TRT for another delicious lunch from Georgia's kitchen. Dean pulled anchor after we ate and we transited up to a new spot. Moored at near a Cay, near the reef, headed out to the reef and saw permit but, ended up casting behind the fish and the fish never saw

the fly. Went to the honey hole for tarpon. Saw one fish but no bites. Home for shower and dinner.

September 27, 2025

Up and out by 6 am as usual. Captain Dean took us out to the point for a variety of fish to include permit, bone and tarpon. We had plenty of opportunities for tarpon. There were multiple feeding groups. All was going well until the dolphin moved in and were crashing the fish hard. They moved the tarpon away from us.

We waited awhile and the tarpon moved their way back toward our skiff. Lisa had a tarpon on, but a little slack or not a good hook set and poof he was gone. It was very big but, would have been nice to get him to the net. Dave had 2 fish on, one tarpon and one bone fish. They fought well and seemed to be on the hook but got off. Though we did not bring the fish to the net, it was an exciting morning with so many fish in the area.

Our casting is getting better each day, but it is hard not to get excited when fish are in sight. A fast-casting speed and extra force make for a sloppy or inaccurate cast. Also, Captain Dean likes us to side cast, which we are not used to. We headed back to the TRT for breakfast.

After breakfast, we headed to the honey hole and casted to a school of bonefish. Dave and Lisa landed their first bonefish of the trip. We saw 4 cuda, numerous eagle rays, and rolling/submerged tarpon. Dave and Lisa had numerous casts to tarpon with good placement, but only one strike.

Back to the boat for lunch and “yummy barracuda” tacos. Georgia cooked up the barracuda Dave had caught from the day before.

After lunch, we went to reef. There were some snorkelers in Dean’s honey hole that were looking for lobsters. It was the only time that I heard Dean grumble about not being able to fish a specific spot. So, we had to skip our fishing spot and move on down the reef. There were no fish sightings, plus the wind had kicked up and the lighting made it hard to see fish. We went to 3 different spots(holes) with the intent of hooking a tarpon or permit. We made numerous 60 foot blind casts hoping for some action but no bites. We headed back to the TRT to shower up and have a cocktail. Dinner by 7, and then to early bed 9-9:30.

September 28, 2025

After some coffee and homemade Johnny Cake, we were out by 6 am headed back to the point. There was a group of permit in the area. We followed them a bit, and Lisa was able to land her first permit. It was just about 5-6 lbs. It put up a good fight for about 15 minutes. Though it was early am, she worked up a big sweat as the permit had the upper hand for a

while until it was landed! Dave then casted to some tarpon, with a couple of strikes, but could not get them to hook up. Dave did catch another bone fish, snapper, and a grunt. Back to the TRT for pancakes, eggs, and crispy bacon.

We headed back out for the mid-day hunt to the reef in hopes for more permit and tarpon. It was quieter than the am fishing. We saw some rolling tarpon and tried to go for them, but no takers. We saw some bone fish, and cuda. The cuda went after the bone fish set up/fly, but it broke off clean as we expected. We went back to the large reef area for permit and tarpon, but we had no sightings. Lisa hooked a trigger fish, but it got off the hook after a short fight. We brought another grunt in, but not what we were seeking.

After no sightings of tarpon or permit, we trolled for cuda. We both got some hits, but no strikes. After about 30 minutes we headed back to TRT for lunch and siesta. We had delicious chicken tostados, which were very tasty. Watermelon and pineapple to complete the meal.

It was time for the evening hunt and we headed to an east side channel in an area that Captain Dean calls "tarpon channel". We saw a couple of tarpon roll, but not anywhere near the panga. Dave casted for 45-50 minutes with weighted line to go deep. There was just one hit that hooked into a small jack. No tarpon strikes and we headed home for dinner. We were now at the mid-point of our trip. It was a 3rd day of great weather, sunshine, rolling white clouds, minimal wind to deal with, except some wind during the evening casting. We were having a great time.

September 29, 2025

Morning cup of joe and back out to the cays where Lisa caught her permit. Numerous tarpon with many casts but, no takers for me. Lisa had a good size fish on for about 6-7 minutes, but the fish jumped and spit the fly. Saw a school of permit swim under the boat and I quickly changed rods. A couple of casts with no luck and we headed back for breakfast. Lots of fish to see with good casts but, not in the right place at the right time to excite the fish.

Midday fish we went to drowned cays looking for permit and bonefish but spotted none. With the tide starting to fall, Dean took us over to some mangroves in hope of maybe running across some snook. Lisa had a couple of follows but no bites. Dean crashed the skiff pole numerous times to arouse the snook and it did cause some to come out of their tight confines. Again Lisa casted without any luck. We did see another large snook cruise right under the panga, however, he quickly darted back into the mangroves before Lisa could turn and cast. Back to the TRT for a lunch of fried chicken with a honey ginger sauce for dipping and some French fries. We pushed back from the dinner table with smiles on

our faces; we almost consumed the whole plate of chicken. Captain Dean decided that we had seen enough of this area and made the call to unmoor and sail up north a bit. Each transit took approximately 90 minutes and it was a great way to relax and catch some breezy time up on the bridge.

Moored now we went out for permit with a steady 10kt., wind and seas rolling at 1-2'. We searched for about 45 minutes with nothing seen and went to a channel where Dean says some big tarpon cruise thru. Hoisting the hefty double corked 11wt., brown colored Sage, I casted for at least 35 times with no success. Lisa had a couple of strikes but was unable to set the hook. Not sure what beast was out there. Back to the TRT for dinner and drinks.

September 30, 2025

Another beautiful sunrise that was blocked by a rather large cell until 8am. We didn't get wet and we stayed rather cool; it was a respite from the previous mornings. We motored to an area that was on the east side of our anchorage. It had a rather strong odor of sulfur gas do to the bubbles that were being released from the seabed. It also had a lot of tarpon rolling but we couldn't pole any closer to within 100' of the fish. They would go sinker and rise a couple of minutes later about another 100' away. Finally, Lisa and I had some shots and Lisa was able to hook one but lost it when it performed a rather large jump. She lost tension on the line and once again the silver king spit the hook...photo worthy if I had a camera ready. Dean attributed this to a poor hook set...as if we can ever be perfect. Back to the TRT for another filling breakfast. Georgia really is an excellent baker.

Back out to the same area where we fished this morning, we again ran across lots of tarpon rolling and swimming in schools just off the shoreline. I was up first throwing some good casts but, not having any takers. Dean decided to ditch the finger mullet fly in black which just didn't seem to be the right fly. He pulled out a red, white and blue deceiver that not only looked patriotic but, happened to be a great call. I was able to hook into a decent baby tarpon that jumped numerous times and went under the boat a few times as well. Dean netted it finally and was about to hand me the fish for a quick photo op and accidentally released it into the water. I said no big deal because I knew I would hook into another with the action that we had on that fly. Lisa took over and after a few casts was able to hook into another nice baby T. It fought well and did the obligatory jumps too and was landed without too much difficulty. We left the area that we had been successful in spotting and landing tarpon to go over to a beautiful flat over white sand and search for some permit. Once there we immediately spotted a few lone permit swimming by and then a whole school went right under the boat. All eyes kept them in focus as they cruised into the turtle grass and then circled around towards the boat. I casted numerous times to this school ~ 14 fish in all and had to wait for their return 3 times until I had a cast that caught their eye.

The school would come towards the boat; I would cast and then they would get skittish and swim away. This really was a true hunt as we would stop all motion, remain still and watch as they would circle out of the grass and back over the white sand flat. Dean had dropped the anchor and tied it off to the pole and that gave me an excellent chance of having a good hookup. Finally, as the school approached on the third pass, I was able to place a good cast that caught the eye of one of the permit. I stripped quickly and the fish took the fly. I had a nice fight and the other permit followed towards the boat as I reeled him in. It was an interesting sight to see about 4 fish act as wingmen to their buddy who was on the line. A quick net and photo and the fish was gently released back to his element. Lisa took over and had a few casts to some permit that were hanging around but, lunch was calling and we returned.

On the late afternoon fish we decided to return and give a shot to Lisa for another go at a permit. Saw a couple of lone permit and Lisa had a couple of nice casts but no luck with a hookup. Most of these fish were moving fast and we never really got to see any tailing permit. Dean decided to go over to an area by Georges Cay to look for some bonefish. He was trying to get a slam for me. I had 2 casts to some nervous water where Dean said he could see a few bonefish but, no luck. We were using a small shrimp pattern that had been successful previously with the other bonefish we caught. I thought that I might get lucky, however, the fish gods had other plans. After a bit, we headed over to an east side point where a channel was located. Hoisting the 11wt. I proceeded to cast for a possible large tarpon. This set up with the sinking line and large Puglisi fly easily casts 70-80' without any difficulty. After late afternoons with this rod, both Lisa and I have gotten used to it. After many casts and with dwindling light we headed back for drinks and dinner. WHERE HAVE ALL THE BIG TARPON GONE? A very pretty ride back to the TRT with numerous active cells over Belize City.

October 1, 2025

This was our last full day to fish, so we were anxious to bring some to the net. We were woken early, about 4am., to a banging at the back of TRT. There was rain overnight and the wind kicked up, which caused the skiff to bang against the boat. Captain Dean was up to secure the skiff. Our room was at the back of the boat where the skiff was tied up. We were up by 5am, ate a snack and quick cup of coffee, and we headed out on the panga.

We started in the tarpon area we fished yesterday. There were some tarpon rolling and Dave made some casts, but no takers. The area seemed a lot quieter, so Captain Dean made the executive decision to move to the mangrove area for snook. Dave was working the mangroves hard, with casts under the brush to coax a snook out of his hiding spot. It's not easy to cast the fly and get it in the right spot. The fly can get caught on the mangrove

branches/leaves/roots which did happen to us numerous times with our less than perfect casts... who said we were perfect. A quick yank always got the fly to release.

Dave targeted an area as directed by Captain Dean. After about 6-7 casts to the same spot, sure enough a nice size snook came out and followed the fly. It's imperative to keep the snook out of the mangrove. If the fish goes back on with your fly, it is sure to break off. Dave lured the fish and the snook took the fly. Dave gave it two hard hook sets and then started to strip the line in, making sure to do this by hand and not let it get on the reel. Lisa netted the snook. This was Dave's 2nd snook. We kept this fish for later.

Lisa's turn to catch her first snook. Captain Dean picked out some areas for Lisa to concentrate on. The fish were still active and we could see them coming out of the mangroves. Lisa casted for about an hour, working up a sweat. Finally, a large snook took the fly and the hook set was good. This was a larger snook than Dave's. The fish took off and Lisa tried her best to strip it in, but the strength of the fish challenged Lisa's grip and it was taking control over the fight. Dave stepped in behind Lisa to help strip the line but, after some rather violent head shakes, the snook swam hard parallel to the mangroves and "poof" he got off. Line and fly were cut and Lisa was left holding a naked rod. We found out snook have sharp gills/mouth and this likely caused the line break. Lisa was bummed of the loss but hoped for another chance for a hookup. It was time to head back to TRT for breakfast.

After breakfast we headed to "methane beach". It had a rather pungent smell, which was the small bubbles coming up from the sea bottom. We looked for tarpon, but none in the area. We then headed south, and after 30 minutes we spotted some permit. It was difficult to get a good cast off. Lisa and Dave both had some good casts, but no takers. All of a sudden, Capt. Dean saw some tarpon rolling in the flats. Lisa casted, stripped the hook in and the battle was on. The tarpon made several jumps and then once again, the hook was out. Another tarpon got away and Lisa was not happy about it. But according to Captain Dean, about 1 in 10 hook sets (increase the number if it makes you feel better) on tarpon results in a fish to the net. Many do get off with the hard mouth they have, and only a small section is soft for a secure hook set. Dave took his turn casting, and spotted a school of tarpon right where Lisa caught her fish. With a couple of side casts, the tarpon hammered the fly. The patriotic deceiver was working its mojo again. He took 3-4 jumps, went 2x under the skiff, then had multiple runs. He took another jump and boom the hook was out.... aughh!! Same thing that happened to Lisa. Rats! We spotted some permit, nice size, but they moved so fast, there was no time to cast.

Back to TRT for lunch. Georgia made some fresh snook fingers for lunch. Snook quickly became our favorite fish. We had never tasted it before the trip on TRT and they were yummy!

Last fish of the day.....we saw 3 very quick permit flash by us, but too fast moving for any kind of cast. We finished up throwing the heavy weight line /11 wt. for deep tarpon in the channel. Numerous casts, but no hits. It was time to go back to TRT for a cocktail and lobster dinner.

October 2, 2025

We decided to fish the final morning, since our flight was leaving from Belize City at 1:50. As much as we don't normally get up at 5:15am, it was one last shot to get some final fish for this trip. What we didn't expect was a good rain overnight. We also woke to steady rain. But about 5:50am the clouds were broken, and the shower was headed off to the southeast. After some coffee/tea, johnny cake, and a small bite of homemade lemon cake, we headed out. We did pack our rain jackets just in case the weather did not cooperate. 6am we were on the skiff headed to the white sand flat. Captain Dean thought this was the area that looked most promising.

The bad news, it appeared we were headed right into the dark clouds. As we arrived at the flat, the rains let loose. We put our coats on quickly and got drenched as the cell above us unloaded. We got to witness a squadron of pelicans taking off from the water and dive bombing a school of baitfish that were off the panga by about 20 yds. The birds made numerous circuits as they feasted on the fish. It was our own airshow, mother nature style, with some very wet seating! The rain stopped after about 15 minutes and we were rewarded with a beautiful sky and double rainbows. As our bodies start to steam up from the rising sun and wet clothes, Lisa grabbed the 10wt, Reddington Predator with the very smooth Ross reel. That set up had been so good to us this past week. She stepped up onto the bow and started scouting. This was Lisa's last effort to catch a fish before departing Belize.

After a short period, there were multiple tarpon sightings. There was also a large group of bonefish swimming along nearby. After casting to several tarpon, she had one follow the fly. Dean had tied on our favorite deceiver, red, white and blue in color. The tarpon really liked it, and one went after the fly. Lisa set the hook with one strong strip and fought the tarpon for about 5 minutes. The tarpon jumped 3 or 4x and was stubborn to reel in. He was larger than her first tarpon (approx. 8 lbs.). Finally, success and the tarpon was gathered in the net by Capt. Dean. This tarpon was about 12 lbs. Lisa worked up a sweat again!

Dave was up next. Tarpon were still in the area. He casted, but no takers. We had limited time and only had about 2 hours total that am before we needed to head back to TRT. Dave changed rods then tried to catch a bonefish from the large school that was still in the area. After a couple of casts one fish went after the fly. As Dave stripped the line a barracuda steamed in and bit off the small shrimp fly. With no fly and no fish and time running out, Captain Dean made the call to take us back to TRT for our final breakfast. All Dave was thinking about was the fly fisherman's mantra, "just one more cast". We packed up our things and took the ride back to the harbor near Belize City. Captain Dean masterfully docked the large boat in a very narrow marina channel. It was cool to see Old Belize Marina which we took little notice of on our way in. This was a trip we will remember for a long time, our first saltwater fly fishing trip aboard a boat for almost 8 days.