

NEWSLETTER #14 - JULY 2003

TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE:

- Fast Action Dry Fly Trout Fishing in British Columbia – plus Dean River Steelhead
- The Chilean Andes and Fjords – an exciting package
- More Comments – No. Platte River
- Salt Water Tip

This is the fourteenth edition of our monthly newsletter with updates on great fly fishing venues 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 sites. 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.

50-100 FISH DAYS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA – PLUS, DEAN R. STEELHEAD

Having spent the last five years running around much of our globe with a fly rod looking for the largest trophy fish of each species (both fresh and salt) I was surprised at how much I enjoyed my recent experience catching small, native rainbow trout on dry flies – lots of rainbows. We were fishing out of John Blackwell's wilderness fly-in lodges at Moose Lake and on the lower Dean River. This was a special week they operate once each year when you can split your time between the world famous Dean and some spectacular trout fishing out of Moose Lake.

We did daily fly outs to small streams/ivers like the Blackwater, Upper Dean, and others with only local recognition. We waded and floated. On most stretches of water, every seam or riffle that you thought would hold a fish, DID hold a fish. And, equally important, they would rise to the fly. The fish and the waters were beautiful – native rainbow trout in nature's unspoiled wilderness. Most fish were on the small side (9-11 inches) with about 15% of the fish 12-13 inches long, but it wasn't the size that made this extraordinary. It was the constant rise and the feisty nature of these wild fish. We also used the float plane to get in some fast action for native cutthroats in the watersheds of the stunning B.C. coastal mountain range.

What a contrast to the effort expended on the Dean to hook one of its "world class" summer run steelhead! In fact, it may have been the contrast that made it so special. The summer run on the lower Dean River delivers some of the most spectacular steelheading on the planet, but it can be fickle. Additionally, many of the primary Pacific salmon use the Dean and this was the period of the King Salmon run. One of our party, Bob Noyes, had a spectacular hour when he released two "fresh from the ocean with sea lice" steelhead of 10 and 15 pounds. For most of us, it was fickle. The river was low due to less-than-normal June rainfall - the runs would pick up in the next week.

Timing issues: The spectacular trout dry fishing period has about a 3-4 week window of opportunity. The lower section of the Dean River steelhead run is at its strongest for about a 4 week period ending around the 10th of August. The Dean and many other coastal rivers have good silver salmon runs in late August and early September. With Blackwell's float planes and his personal expertise and understanding of the area, there are many rivers and small streams he accesses for multiple species of salmon at different times during the summer.

Restrictions: The Dean is protected by a permitting law. For instance, Blackwell's lower Dean Lodge is restricted to only six fishermen per week. This permitting law makes getting space a premium and protects this special fishery.

Space for 2004: The combination trip week mentioned above will be July 2 – 9 in 2004. Last year, this limited space was sold out before the end of August. Regarding the prime Dean steelhead weeks, we're holding space for the last week of July and the first week in August. If you're interested in getting on this list, let me know as soon as possible. Both the combo week and the Dean River weeks are \$4,250 pp and include all fly outs.

THE CHILEAN ANDES AND FJORDS – A CONTRAST THAT WORKS TOGETHER

Chile is a wonderful place to visit during the cold, gray, US winter and some of its' fly fishing opportunities are among the finest in South America. During our three years of exploratory trips in Chile, we found the best of our experiences to be centered in an area about midway between Puerto Montt and Coihaique. The fishery here has two distinct flavors. One is the traditional Andes rainbow and brown trout fishing. In rivers, streams, lagoons, and lakes, this area presents a wide variety of fishing. From casting to the large cruising rainbows in Lago Yelcho during the dragon fly hatch to small streams near Lago Verde on the Argentine border or drifting the Rio Palena, this is an exciting area. We're now representing a first class lodge on the Rio Palena with a package that can include stays in two or three different locations during your trip, providing for a variety of Chilean adventures.

The second dimension that makes this area special is the fjord fishery. If you look at a map of Chile, you'll see a series of many islands just off the coast. These "mountains in the sea" create the Chilean fjords and also a very unique fishery. The fishing is primarily large rainbows and silver salmon. Most of the fishing centers around river mouths and rivers flowing into the fjords. A great way to access the fjords is with a stay at the Puyuhuapi Hotel and Spa. This is a spectacular property nestled into the fjords and can only be accessed by small plane or boat. It's not a fishing lodge, but has a fly fishing program that can cater to a maximum of four fly fishermen per week.

Combining both these venues in one trip provides an experience with great contrasts, wonderful food and ambiance, and productive fishing opportunities.

MORE NORTH PLATTE LODGE COMMENTS

The North Platte in Wyoming may be the best early season fishery in the Rockies. For the past three years, we've had groups visit the North Platte in early April reporting wonderful trips with productive fishing. Recently received these comments from John Wiedwald on his trip: "The fishing was superb, in number of fish and especially in size. Rob got a 23 incher. Our hosts, Brett and Candy, made us feel welcome and Cecilia's cooking was yum, yum. All this is coming from one very picky guy who found absolutely nothing to fault. We'll be going again."

The average size of the fish is constantly mentioned in our trip reports – Don Nelson took a 9 pound rainbow last April for the largest we've heard of.

Availability: Once again we're holding space for the first two weeks in April – timing is right for a father-son adventure over the Easter holidays. They have a five night - four day package that is one of the best bargains available in the Rockies for under \$1,500.

SALT WATER TIP

A key issue in salt water fly fishing is to have nothing that can restrict the free flow of the line off the casting deck. Shoe laces can be one of those restrictions (I learned this the hard way in my early salt water fly fishing days when I lost an excellent shot at a 100+ tarpon). One way to deal with this is to go barefoot (with socks to protect from sunburn) or get some deck shoes without laces. However, if your feet need the support that laced shoes provide, here's an idea. While in Belize a few months ago, a fellow salt water angler, Buck Levy, showed me his approach. He wraps duct tape around his shoe securing the laces underneath – no loose ends.

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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