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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’ve been to most locations and pride ourselves on our ability to research new destinations. 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.**

NORTHERN CANADA REPORTS: LABRADOR AND MANITOBA

MANITOBA

Jim Hine and son, Andrew, returned to the land of the midnight sun in northern Manitoba this summer along with friend, Steve Simco. This years trip was in late June and, as usual in these cold and wild waters, multiple species were an attraction. At right, Jim hoists a 44” pike he took on a barracuda fly. Steve’s comment on the pike fishing: “the popper fishing for pike was extremely entertaining.”



Jim’s concise comments on what brought him back to northern Manitoba: “Big pike on poppers, multiple species, midnight sun, and beautiful scenery.”

This time of the summer makes taking lake trout near the surface possible and at left below is a beautiful laker taken by Steve on a fly.

The grayling (center, below), with their distinctivne dorsal fin, are a prime dry fly target and are plentiful in this region.

At right, the big catfish was supposedly taken on a size 16 Adams.....but I’m not buying it.



FANTASY DAY IN LABRADOR



We first met Dave Ellis and his brother, Dan, on one of our early trips to the Minipi River in Labrador, some 13 years ago. Dave has been a regular on this watershed for many years and recently, his trips have been taken in the late summer (end of August) due to family considerations.

This fishery changes dramatically throughout the course of the summer. In late June and through the first three weeks of July, this fishery has been famous for its massive mayfly and caddis hatches. During that timeframe, it is the best spot on earth to take a five pound or larger brook trout on the dry fly. As the late summer approaches, the brookies go into their spawning mode and they gather in certain inlets and outlets for their mating ritual. Generally, this is a

time for streamer fishing. As part of their spawning ritual, the males take on brilliant color (Dave with 6.5# male at left in spawning dress).



On Dave's fourth day, he experienced a day that would have to qualify as one of the those special fantasy days when the fishing gods are smiling.....actually, more than smiling, they must have been laughing out loud on this day. They did a fly out to a popular spot for a day trip.

Dave's rendition: "The fourth day we flew out and I had the best day I have ever experienced in Labrador. If I said I caught 20 fish in the five hours we fished I would be underestimating my catch.....and 35 would probably be too high. It was an overcast day and the fish were all over surface flies like Bombers and Mice. 90% of the fish were 6 pounds or better and the males were BRILLANTLY colored. Normally, the fish in this area weigh 3.5 to 5.5 pounds.....even the head guide could not explain the size of fish we took. Things were so frantic that on one occasion, I cast to the middle of the river and hooked a nice brookie about 5 pounds. I had him ready to net about six feet out in the river from me. For some unknown reason my orange Bomber pops out of his mouth and lands a foot closer to me. INSTANTLY, another brookie hits the Bomber and I land that fish - it was almost 7 pounds."



"THE LADIES" IN WESTERN COLORADO

In our office, they are just known as "The Ladies." Each year they give us the task of finding a location for their annual fly fishing get together. They have repeated one destination, but generally, we have to beat the bushes to come up with new options. At right, stylishly decked out in their waders, the Ladies are (l to r) Jackie Voigt, Pat Winther, Betsy Bingham, Kit Bedford, Jane Ryan, and Evie Cranston.



This year, the choice was a private waters ranch in the White River Valley with miles of private access water. Accommodations and meals were provided at the tastefully restored old ranch house. They hit warm and low water conditions making the fishing somewhat challenging, but some great fish were still released and all enjoyed the overall experience. At left, Evie with a nice White River bow.



Each year, a different lady is in charge of the planning details. This year's group leader was Kit and she registered these thoughts on the trip: "I think I can easily say that you 'hit a home run' with the private ranch in the White River Valley for this years fly fishing experience for the Ladies. We had a fine old time. The manager, chef, and guides were all exceptional and just plain fine people. They did everything possible to assure our comfort and

pleasure...always at the ready to respond to our ideas and requests. Having the whole place to ourselves was just perfect....and it was kept spotlessly clean. The Ranch is located with beautiful outlooks all around. We all agreed that we would welcome the chance to go back!"

RECORD PERMIT WEEK – ALMOST

A few years ago, one of our long term Belize mothership groups decided to do something other than the standard Belize variety trip they had always done. They opted to devote their entire trip to going south and fishing all the top permit flats on the globe, waters which extend about 60 miles south from Belize City. They picked a week in mid September and ended up releasing 17 permit on their trip, setting a record for numbers of permit on one Belize mothership trip.

Art Hinckley, Dennis Banks, and Don Wilkerson (with permit at right) had taken note of their results. These three dedicated permit anglers had been taking two permit mothership trips a year for many years, but had never tried the month of September. This year, they booked their second trip into mid-September to check it out.

They were having an exceptionally good trip with 13 permit released going into their last day. That last morning, Dennis had a three fish session before breakfast putting their total just one fish from the record trip. They scrambled hard all day to tie or break the record.....had one fish eat, but couldn't hold onto him, and finished with 16 fish released. All in all, a remarkable week of permit fishing, just one fish short of a record trip.

(Note: Art put together a day by day detailed report of their trip. If you'd like to see it, just hit reply and let us know. Art's permit count is now at 91 and soon he will join a VERY small group of anglers who have released over 100 permit.

HOW TO TELL IF A CERTAIN FLY IS REALLY SPECIAL?

Our newsletter has never touted any one fly as significantly "special." We may have mentioned that over the many years we have fished the giant brookies of the Minipi River, we've had very good results from a size 6 yellow stimulator, but never mentioning one particular tie from a particular producer.....until now. The specific results and responses from baby tarpon and snook to one particular fly on my last three trips to Belize warrant special mention. It is probably meaningful to mention that I have been fishing mangrove edges for snook and baby tarpon for about 30 years. Here's what I experienced on these three trips:

- On a snook trip last December, we found a tremendous concentration of snook and baby tarpon in one 50 yard stretch of mangrove shoreline. Over a period of a few hours, we released over 20 snook and several baby tarpon. It was insane! I was using this certain fly and after about an hour, I wondered if these fish would eat just anything.....were they just starving for anything that moved? I took off that fly and tried a few of my other favorite mangrove flies. Nothing, zip, zero – no even one eat. When I put the fly back on, the eats continued as before.
- We were fishing a mangrove edge with several baby tarpon rolling in one particular spot, fish between 10 and 20 pounds. My friend, an excellent caster, was doing the presenting and I was manning the camera, hoping to get some dramatic tarpon jumps. He cast for over an hour, using his favorite baby tarpon flies without getting an eat. Slightly frustrated, he decided to move up the shoreline and told me I could take a shot. My first cast, in the same place my friend had been casting for an hour, got a solid grab and hook-up.....baby tarpon in the air, but couldn't hold him. I cast the same fly we are referencing.
- A large school of small 8 – 10 baby tarpon were rolling on a mangrove edge, near a drop off to deep water. We jumped several of them and landed a few using the aforementioned fly. We decided to try a different fly – the eats stopped. We switched back to the "special" fly and the eats resumed.





These three examples were significant because they allowed for a comparative analysis. Additionally, on these three trips, I took several other baby tarpon and snook on that same fly in situations that didn't allow for comparison, but did convince me that those fish seemed to respond well to that particular "special fly."

The fly is one of the quality patterns from Enrico Puglisi – the pattern is Everglades SP. The fly I was using had a rattle tied in. I'm not sure the rattle made much difference because after it was eaten by 10 or 15 fish, the rattle became inoperative and the fish kept eating. However, I do think that if you were casting in water that is a little off-color, the rattle may help fish find the

fly.....not enough evidence to prove that is true, but I think it is likely. Certainly, the rattle did not hurt the productiveness of the fly.

Note: In the Memory Photo column below, coincidentally, Tim Bottoms used that same pattern to capture his large snook.

SEPTEMBER MEMORY PHOTO

By itself, the large snook held by Tim Bottoms would have been enough to make this a memorable day.....however, that fish was part of a special day that ended up qualifying as an IGFA Grand Slam that included a 25# tarpon and a bonefish. Tim's details on the taking of the snook: "Sighted him in the mangroves and he followed the fly out about halfway to the skiff..... then he ate it. Made a huge run back to the mangroves and I had to lay the lumber to him to keep him out. Very lucky. My arm cramped from the fight. Water was very shallow - probably two feet or so. Really fun stuff."



PHOTO CREDITS: Banner photo – Valentine Atkinson; Manitoba – Jim Hine and Steve Simco; Labrador – Dave Ellis; permit – Don Wilkerson.

Either phone or drop us an e-mail if you have questions or would like more information about any of our destinations.

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,

Don Muelrath

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