



PERMIT – BELIZE MOTHERSHIP OPTIONS



Permit are found throughout the Belizean waters, but the greatest concentration (with the least fishing pressure) of fish is on the stretch of flats inside the world’s second largest barrier reef, off the central coast, of this small, English speaking country. These flats begin about 15 miles southeast of Belize City, extend southward for about fifty miles (see Belize map below), and provide what most knowledgeable permit anglers feel is the greatest opportunity to get numbers of good shots at tailing fish. However, if you’re looking for bones or tarpon, very few of them are reliably found in this area – these are permit flats.

The most effective approach to accessing these waters is by use of your own comfortable, private, air conditioned, liveaboard lodge, i.e. a Belize mothership. Above, skiffs departing the mothership *Rising Tide* for a trip to the flats. The last two months have provided examples of the basic approaches to pursuing permit via a Belize mothership.

“THE” PERMIT TRIP

Tom Walther and Michael Hormaechea (at right) were part of a group of six friends who were looking to commit to a full week of fishing for permit. For anglers like them, there’s the dedicated permit trip which focuses on the 50 miles of permit flats referenced above. This trip can either depart from Belize City, or to eliminate some motoring time, from Dangriga. Tom and Michael’s group departed from Dangriga.



Tom took his 5th and 6th permit on this trip and had the unique experience of having a permit slurp his fly on the surface: “Got this one on day five (at left). The take happened at the surface, and the last I saw of that fly, was it being engulfed by a set of white, rubbery lips (lips at right). My retinas will never be the same!a great trip! The guides were game to fish from sun-up ‘til sun-down. I just can’t think of how that situation could be improved!”

Michael got his second permit and had these comments on the experience: “I had a great time on the *Rising Tide*. Captain Dean and his crew took very good care of us. I can’t think of anything they didn’t have covered. We did manage to catch a few permit, despite an unusual cold front showing up mid week. All in all, it was a blast, I’d recommend it to anyone.”



THE “ALMOST” DEDICATED PERMIT TRIP

This trip begins in Belize City and fishes the productive permit flats from fifteen miles southeast of Belize City to the cays at Bluefield Range, approximately another 8-10 miles south. The term “almost dedicated” applies because you’re not far from the variety waters north of Belize City - if the permit are not cooperating, you can move north and fish (in addition to the occasional permit) bonefish, tarpon, snook, etc.

For years, Tom Brutsche, Lee Lewis, and Ron Knowles used their trips to fish primarily tarpon with permit the secondary species. In recent years, their focus has changed to permit as primary. However, they keep themselves within range of moving back north for the variety if the permit are too stubborn. On their last trip,

they stayed south as Lee and Ron added another permit notch on their rods. Tom added four to his collection and is up to a total of 14 permit released with a large fish of 24.5#.

Comments from these mothership veterans: “Enjoyed the accommodations plus the food was very good. The new chef, Velda, was great and Ron loved her deserts.” Lee.

From Tom: “The trip was great. Velda was a great addition to the crew and a very happy person. The only negative, like always, was the trip was too short.”

Below: Tom – left and right; Lee – left, middle; Ron – right, middle.



THE “HALF WAY” TRIP

John Britt, Jeff Aldridge and their group of six are regulars in Belize – this was the group’s ninth year in Belize on the Meca or Rising Tide (John’s fourth trip). Like the Tom Brutsche trip above, this group did the variety trip for years before slowly becoming more focused on permit. This was a special trip for John as he released his first permit (at right).



This is a competitive group who held their annual Belize Invitational Tournament on this trip. They assign point values to each species of fish to make every fish count. It does get competitive.....Jeff was fishing with Michael Berard on a permit flat and using a “30 minute shift approach” on the casting platform. Michael’s 30 minutes expired while they were approaching a tailing permit. Jeff replaced Michael in the casting position and took that fish (at left). Michael got more than even by taking two permit and winning this years trophy.



About their “half way” trip: “Upon our arrival, Captain Dean wanted to fish south for permit because of the favorable weather. We averaged two permit per day (mostly 8 to 10 lb range) even though the permit were a bit scarce and finicky. We put the blame on either a May spawn or the Super Moon (unusually high tides). We moved north for our last three days and scratched out one more permit to make it seven for the trip. At the reef, near Gallows Point, we had several really great shots at some huge permit (25-30lb) but got no eats. We really only got to tarpon fish the last 1½ days. Saw a few large tarpon but only had luck with the juveniles.”

“VARIETY TRIP” – 1ST PERMIT BEFORE 1ST BONEFISH!

Does anyone know of someone who took their first permit before their first bonefish? I’m sure it must have happened to someone, somewhere.....just never heard of it. We know of many fly fishers who have spent years trying to take their first permit and have not had the “fishing gods” smile on them. Mike Cirello got that “smile” on his second day of a “variety trip” with a group of friends. Near the reef, Mike and his guide found a school of four fish (the first permit that Mike had ever seen), and one of them ate his fly and was photo’d and released at the skiff. The next day, Mike caught his first bonefish.....also added tarpon and snook to his “first ever” list on this trip.



To see a photo essay of variety trip that Mike was a part of, click on this link:
http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/Belize_variety.pdf

SALTWATER FLY FISHING VALUE

All things considered, the Belize mothership trip is still the greatest value in the realm of salt water fly fishing with trips ranging from \$2600 for seven nights on the Meca (group of four). The website with additional information and pricing is www.flyfishbelize.com

PHOTO CREDITS: banner photo – John Landis; Rising Tide and first permit – Michael Hormaechea; second permit – Tom Walther; lips – Jeff Aldridge; four in a row, l to r – Tom Brutsche, Lee Lewis, Ron Knowles, Tom Brutsche; “Half way” first permit – John Britt; “30 minute” permit – Jeff Aldridge; Mike C. first permit – John Landis.

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
Fly Fishing Adventures
www.flyfishingadventures.org
888-347-4896
flyfish@napanet.net

