



Stalking In New Zealand, South Island



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We are in the ninth year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on the 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.

COBIA LOVE AROUND THE GLOBE?

The cobia has a profile similar to a shark and is not a readily recognized saltwater gamefish. There are several warm water areas around the globe where they are found and fly fishers who frequent the saltwater flats will occasionally run into them. Generally, they are not easily spooked and are an aggressive eater. They can attain a weight of over 100#, and finding fish of 20-40# on the flats is not unusual. The focus of this article are two pair of cobia encountered on flats on opposite sides of the world. What is similar about both stories is they were found as a pair and when one was hooked, the apparent “mate” would not leave its partner. As is true with the mysteries that surround so many sport fish, no one knows if they may seek out a permanent mate. Their spawning is normally done in large off-shore aggregations; however, whether these pairs were mated or just very good friends, they were inseparable.



Tanya and David Haight (at left) were on the last day of a Belize mothership trip and were fishing for bonefish on a shallow flat. David tells the story: “...I saw two cobia in deeper water just off the flat. I made several casts to them with a tarpon fly, but there was no interest. One of them took a spinning lure and gave Tanya quite a fight. As she was getting close to landing her fish, the other cobia was still hanging near it, so I changed flies and cast to it. It ate the Clouser Minnow and I fought that fish for a short time before the hook pulled out. It was pretty exciting, and Tanya was thrilled to land the fish.”

Part two of this story comes from the Ningaloo Reef on the North West Cape in Australia. Herle Hamon was fishing with our favorite Ningaloo guide on some of his best permit and bonefish flats and they were having lunch. While munching on prawns, Herle noted “two sharks behaving strangely.” His guide looked and identified two large cobia, accompanied by a school of big Golden Trevally, hovering over a giant bull ray who was stirring up the sandy bottom. Herle grabbed his 12 wt rod and they quietly moved to within casting range. The smaller of the two cobia ate the fly, but a few seconds later, it pulled loose and a Golden Trevally grabbed the fly and hooked up. Herle's guide finishes the story: “The bigger cobia was now right in front of



us. Herle handed me his fly rod with the golden attached and picked up another 12 wt rod rigged for Giant Trevally. The big cobia engulfed the fly. An epic battle followed as this massive fish towed us around the Ningaloo lagoon!”

“We agreed that there was no chance to land this huge cobia without beaching it. We made our way to a nearby suitable beach and were able to beach the fish. What was really interesting is that the other cobia refused to leave its mate. It followed it all the way into only centimeters of water (photo at top right)! The massive cobia was released in very good health.”

PERMIT FISHING – EXPECTATIONS, REALITY....AND FIRST THREE PERMIT!

Permit fishing – the ultimate fly rod challenge. Like many fly fishing opportunities, this is a guide-driven endeavor. Fishing in the right place with the right guides changes all the possibilities for success. We always enjoy the reports from Art Hinckley on his permit adventures because they bring a sense of reality to fishing for these finned devils.....and also prove that success can be attained. Art and friends take two trips a year on the



Rising Tide in Belize, dedicated entirely to permit. They fish the finest permit flats on the globe. Art has now released 116 permit. Art’s friend and fishing partner, Dennis Banks, began his fly fishing career fishing for permit in Belize with Art – certainly the most difficult place to start if you want to learn to fly fish. Dennis paid his dues to develop the skills and has joined a very small list of anglers who have taken over 50 permit (he’s now up to 60).

On their recent September trip, Art and Dennis were joined by a friend, Chuck Jeannes, who had never previously fished for permit. Chuck’s comments after his first four days of permit fishing are typical: “I have to say after four days of hard fishing, several shots and even a few decent casts, I was starting to think that permit fishermen were all crazy.” Chuck (at left with one of his first permit) went on to release three fish the last half of the trip, and concluded with.....“But once I finally hooked one, I quickly found out what all the fuss was about and now I’m the one who is hooked!” He ended up taking the largest fish of the trip and is signed up to join Art

and Dennis on their next trip early in ’17. Hooked indeed!

We appreciate Art’s reports on their trips. His reports give an accurate day-by-day accounting of the trip and make great reading if you have any interest in permit fishing. For example, here is an excerpt from his latest report:

“Day 3 - still fairly slow in the morning. After breakfast, I had one on for awhile that ended up breaking off on a stick. I caught another small one after that. Dennis and Chuck had minimal action so at lunch we moved to Blue Grounds. Dennis caught one of 11 lbs there and Chuck and I didn’t have any more shots.” Note: they move their floating lodge up and down the coast of Belize, in the sheltered waters inside the barrier reef, covering an area of about 40 – 50 miles. They encounter very few other anglers in this area and sometimes will go the entire trip without seeing any others.

His overall recap of their September trip:

“The trip was a lot of fun like always and Dean, Noel, Eddie and Velda were all great.....We did not see another skiff or angler the entire trip!.....We finished up with 12 caught, 3 others coming unhooked and 7 other eats without hooking up which we think is pretty good since we had quite a bit of slow fishing.” Their best trip to date resulted in 23 fish released.

If you’d like to see Art’s complete report, just hit “reply” and ask – we’ll forward the word doc to you.

PROMOTED TO “ADVANCED INTERMEDIATE” FLY FISHER

A few years ago, while fishing for the giant brookies of the Minipi River in Labrador, son Scott and I met a pair of adventuresome brothers. Bill and Royce Hudspeth had created a “bucket list” of the world’s greatest fly fishing destinations and, while relatively new to fly fishing, were in the process of crossing the Minipi River brookies off their list (Royce at right with a large Minipi brookie). At the time we met, they self-defined themselves as “advanced beginners” on their scale of fly fishing expertise.



Since that initial meeting, they have been traveling and crossing places off their list, fishing for permit from the Rising Tide in Belize, Golden Dorado in Bolivia, steelhead on the Dean, Atlantic Salmon in Canada, tarpon in Florida, etc. While Bill was fishing in the jungles of Bolivia, he released several “trophies,” including the Golden Dorado at right and the pacu at left, below. The experiences gained on this trip earned Bill a promotion to “beginning intermediate” fly fisher.

This summer, Royce sight cast to, hooked, and released a tarpon of over 100 pounds in Florida. Taking a 100+ pound tarpon is a special occasion in the life of any fly fisher. We’d like to make it official – Royce is now promoted to “advanced intermediate” fly fisher.

Below center, Royce and Bill enjoy a cigar together in the wilds of Labrador.



OCTOBER MEMORY PHOTOS

Evolution of a fly fisher – in 2013, at age 9, Nicolas Pillsbury accompanied his father, Steve, on his first fly fishing trip to the Salmon River (tributary of Lake Ontario). On that trip, with a large assist from Dad, Nicolas foul hooked an almost dead salmon for his first fish. 2014 saw Nicolas again on the Salmon River and this time he was hooking healthy fish himself, but Dad helped land them. By 2015, he was fishing by himself and spotted, hooked, and landed his own fish (photo below left). This year, Nicolas joined his Dad on two trips – one to northern Canada during the summer (photo below center), and a return to the Salmon River this fall (photo below right).



PHOTO CREDITS: banner – Zane Mirfin; cobia – Herle Hamon, Tanya and David Haight; permit – Chuck Jeannes; “Advanced Intermediate” Promotion – Bill and Royce Hudspeth.

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,
Don Muelrath
Fly Fishing Adventures
www.flyfishingadventures.org
888-347-4896