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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 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 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.

**KAMCHATKA TRIP REPORT**



Chip Fudge (below right with rainbow) and Chris Degner (left with Kunza) visited the Kamchatka Peninsula in eastern Russia in August. As this group often does, they added a week's cultural and historical experience touring the Ukraine and Yalta in the Crimea.

This newsletter report is a slimmed down version of the complete trip report. The complete report includes options for Kamchatka trips, logistics, pricing, and the touring element of Chip and Chris' trip and will be available in next months newsletter. Technical difficulties prevented it making this newsletter.

Regarding the fly fishing aspect of their trip, here are comments on some of the most memorable moments.

From Chip: "Memorable moments included getting a double hook up with Chris with giant rainbows - 28 inches. Also, catching a Kunza, a prehistoric looking Arctic Char (also known as the Siberian White Spotted Char). 33" for me and 35" for Chris."

From Chris: "First and foremost, the thrill of monster Rainbows on a mouse. Everything from a gentle sip off the surface to a full launch out of the water landing on top of your floating mouse."



Regarding the memory of the remoteness of a Kamchatka experience.....

Chris: "The remoteness, quiet except for nature...never saw sign of another person."

Left to right below beginning top left: Chip with bow, guide with Kunza, rainbow double, friendly(?) native, Chip with Kunza.



There are three basic approaches to fishing the wilds of Kamchatka: using a stationary lodge, a true wilderness float/camping trip, and, on the “roughing it” scale, the middle of the road version, a float trip with permanent camps for your overnights. Chip and Chris opted for the middle of the road version. The itinerary was floating and fishing 6 – 7 miles of the Zhupanova River each day and overnighing in permanent camps with wood framed huts and flush toilets.

L to R below beginning top left: Floating the Zhupanova, two man huts, casting while floating.



Chip and Chris comments on food, guides, etc:

Chris: “The huts had plywood bunks and foam pad. Actually, fairly comfortable. The mosquitoes were vicious making it almost impossible to sit outside at night. The camps and personel were excellent and things ran smoothly. The guides and staff were a pleasure to be with.

Chip: “Accommodations were fair on the water, very nice at the guest house before and after the trip. The food was better than I had expected and good for the remoteness.”

L to R below: breakfast before heading to the river, chow, furry visitor, and Chip displaying Russian vodka.



Chris: “Truly a trip of a lifetime, both the touring/history/cultural aspects and the fishing.”

### FLY FISHING - BEGINNING AT THE TOP



Recently, while visiting with Jeff Aldridge about his August Belize mothership trip, I learned how Jeff got his start in fly fishing.....and it was a story worth repeating here. Today, Jeff is an accomplished and well traveled fly fisher who's spent many weeks fishing the salt water flats, Alaska, New Zealand, etc. The tarpon with Jeff in the photo at left was taken on his August Belize trip (this 60+ pound fish was hooked about an hour before dusk, but by time it was brought to the boat it was near dark – no flash, but some vivid memories of this fish tailwalking against a tropical sunset).

The saga of Jeff learning to fly fish begins ten years ago. A close friend of Jeff's was a fly fisherman and it appealed to Jeff to learn. His friend was going on a bonefish trip to Mexico and invited Jeff to come along. Jeff took a few casting lessons in preparation for the trip, but his first real exposure to casting a fly to a live fish was going to be on that trip. It turned out that Jeff's friend got delayed and didn't arrive at the lodge in Mexico until the day after Jeff. So, Jeff's first day on the water with a fly rod in hand was alone with a Mexican guide.

Most anglers who encounter the challenge of casting a fly to permit (being released below, right) on the salt water flats have a backlog of fly fishing experiences and many successful adventures under their belt.



However, on that fateful day, the FIRST fish that Jeff was to cast a fly to was a permit.....and the fish ate his fly. In his excitement, he yanked the fly right out of the permits mouth and his guide went ballistic.

The "fishing gods" were determined that this was going to happen on his first day ever fly fishing and, soon after the episode with the escaped first fish, another permit was sent in Jeff's direction. Jeff's cast was true, the fish ate, and Jeff landed his first fish ever on a fly - a permit, the greatest of all fly fishing trophies! And, on his very first day ever casting a fly. The next day, Jeff's friend (who wouldn't catch his first permit until a few years later) arrives to help Jeff learn to fly fish only to find that he already had a permit notch on his rod. Some things just aren't fair!



### THE MINIPI IN LATE SUMMER – GIANT BROOKIES STILL ON THE SURFACE?



We met the Ellis brothers, Dave and Dan, in the mid-90's on our second trip to fish for the giant brookies of the Minipi River watershed. Dave is a retired dentist who has converted the technical skills of his dentistry profession to fly tying and is a master fly tier. Throughout the past 15 years, we often exchanged stories and compared results of our trips to the Minipi. We always seemed to schedule our trips during the three week window where the bug hatches were most prolific, between the last week of June and the first three weeks of July. Our impression of the fishery was that later in the summer (August and early September) offered brilliantly colored, full bodied brookies due to the proximity to their spawning time, but the spectacular hatches of July were over and most of the

fishing was done subsurface with the occasional mouse thrown in the inlets and outlets. This impression was supported through conversations with other anglers who fished the late summer, primarily with streamers and nymphs.

Last year, Dave had reason to be in Labrador in mid to late August and he returned again this summer. Both trips, Dave was in camp with "streamer, bomber, and mouse guys and they don't even look for dry fly opportunities."

Excerpts from Dave's report on his experiences with the late season fishery: ".....I was not too surprised to find the brookies feeding on the surface at this time of year as I found the same thing last year. The rises we see are subtle, but definite and there are not a lot of them as there is not a lot of bug activity. However when a bug comes thru, the fish seem to be looking up for them. The bugs I see are very small. Both caddis and mayflies. Another thing that has really



paid off for me is fishing a spinner. In the evening you can frequently see spinners in the air. Not many, but enough so that I put one on, even if I can't see any on the water. Last year I caught several fish on a spinner and the same was true this year at both of the different Minipi lodges I fished. My dry fly choices this year were #20 caddis, #20 compara dun, and a #14 hackle wing spinner."



Dave's August approach certainly is a different one from the early July time frame when a size six Stimulator is one of our favorite flies. But the results with giant brookies were the same – on one evening he took two six-plus pounders and one seven-plus on a size 20 dry fly. Another day on a river section resulted in six fish between 4.75 and 6 pounds.

So often, we as fly fishers think we've learned all there is to know about waters we fish frequently. However, the fish often have more lessons to teach us if we'll just dig in a little deeper.

### RETURNING TO FERNIE.....GUIDES!

The August newsletter carried a story about why Julie and Phil Dupuis continue to return to Fernie, BC, for fly fishing fun. It's more than the fish and the ambiance of the destination. Guides play a very important role for them in the appeal of the area. "Curtis, Spencer, and Joel really know what works and where the big fish live."

## SEPTEMBER MEMORY PHOTO

The Golden Dorado has become a very popular fly rod target fish in South America. This golden beauty is surface oriented and can put on a spectacular aerial display after hooked. Jack Edict took several trophy Golden Dorado on his trip and he's pictured at right with a 20 pound fish.

PHOTO CREDITS: Kamchatka - Chris Degner and Chip Fudge; milkfish – Richard Cheatham; tarpon – Jeff Aldridge; permit release – David Rogers.

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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